

JUNE 15, 1980

# THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**THE HARVEST THAT CAN  
MAKE YOU HAPPY**

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**OUR COVER:** When the earth has been very productive, there is great rejoicing at harvesttime. Yet, much greater happiness is enjoyed by those sowing with God's kingdom in view. But what do they sow? And what do they harvest? Consider the answers given on pages 11 to 22

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Ten cents (U.S.) a copy

| Watch Tower Society offices                              | Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| America, U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589          | \$2.50                                                                |
| Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135    | \$2.50                                                                |
| Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5    | \$3.00                                                                |
| England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN | £3.00                                                                 |
| Hawaii, 1228 Pensacola St., Honolulu 96814               | \$2.50                                                                |
| New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3         | NZ\$3.00                                                              |
| Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State    | ₦2.40                                                                 |
| Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800                  | ₱17.50                                                                |
| South Africa, Private Bag 2, Elandsfontein, 1406         | R3,60                                                                 |

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589, U.S.A.

Printed in U.S.A.

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The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087), Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

**Average Printing Each Issue:**  
**8,750,000**

Published by  
Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society  
of Pennsylvania

117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.  
Frederick W. Franz, Pres. Grant Suiter, Secy.

# ***You Can Control Your Temper***

**A** man was calmly going about his business for the day. Suddenly, his pulse rate shot up. The pupils of his eyes dilated. His blood pressure rose. His facial expression changed and he started to breathe rapidly. Chemical changes occurred within his body. What happened? Did he have a seizure? No, the man merely lost his temper.

When people lose their temper, a personality change occurs, and unpleasant things are almost sure to result. One young lady will never forget the time she lost her temper. It was her wedding day. As she was leaving the reception with her new husband, she had an argument with him. Then she ran him over with the car, killing him—a tragic result from a lack of control.

The Bible, too, reports that many sins have resulted from the loss of temper. Remember, Cain “grew hot with great anger” and killed his younger brother, Abel. Then there was evil King Herod who “fell into a great rage” and had the baby boys in Bethlehem and vicinity murdered.—Gen. 4:5-8; Matt. 2:16-18.

Hence, “fits of anger” are listed in the Bible as a ‘work of the flesh,’ something Christians have to fight to overcome. (Gal. 5:19, 20) The degree to which we can control our temper partly measures our progress as Christians. That is why men who have a serious problem in this regard are not used as elders in the Christian congregation.—Titus 1:7.

Should a Christian, then, never feel angry? Well, the Bible tells us that Jehovah God is sometimes angry. (Ps. 110:5) Jesus was angry or indignant at the insensibility and lack of compassion shown by the Pharisees. (Mark 3:4-6) Hence, a Christian may have a feeling of anger if, for example, he sees Jehovah’s name being defamed or a fellow human being ill-treated. But he is advised: “Be wrathful, and yet do not sin.” (Eph. 4:26) It is when anger gets out of control, and a person loses his temper, that sin is likely to result.

Remember the case of Simeon and Levi, sons of the patriarch Jacob. Their sister Dinah was raped by a young man named Shechem from a nearby city. Was that a reasonable cause for anger? Certainly. But the reaction of the brothers was extreme. They killed all the men in the city, including Shechem.—Gen. chap. 34.

This illustrates an important point. Often there is real provocation for anger. But losing self-control can lead to words and deeds that are later regretted. Then we have not one but two problems: the original irritation and the angry reaction. Often, the outburst of temper will be remembered longer than the provocation that led to it. In the case of Simeon and Levi, which do you think had greater effect on the minds of the inhabitants of those regions—the rape of Dinah, or the murder of all the men of the city?

On the other hand, controlling one’s anger, even under provocation, can yield

good results. A certain Christian woman, for example, was married to an unbeliever who was a gambler. Because of his gambling, he wasted much of the family finances. One day he told his wife that he was going out to sell fish. When he did not return for some time, she went to look for him, and found him, not selling fish, but in the middle of a noisy game of Mah-Jongg. What a provocation! She did not scold him in front of his friends, however. And when he eventually got home, she merely explained to him gently the problems his vice was causing for the family. The husband was impressed with this example of a "quiet and mild spirit." He abandoned his gambling and eventually became a Christian.—1 Pet. 3:1-4.

#### CONTROLLING THE TEMPER

Christians are advised: "Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you." (Eph. 4:31) True, people are different. Some are quite placid, while others are naturally hot-tempered. Nevertheless, many seemingly placid people could testify that at one time they, too,

erbs 15:1 and 22:24; and Romans 12:18.

In this regard, it is good to remember how the quality of love can help us. No one likes to be the object of "anger and wrath and screaming." (Eph. 4:31) Hence, if we truly 'love our neighbor as ourself,' we will not want to subject other people to such unpleasant experiences. (Matt. 22:39) A parent losing his temper can terrify a small child. An appointed Christian elder doing the same can nullify the effects of his good work in the congregation. Someone may say: 'Well, that is the way I am. I cannot help myself.' But the Bible says: "Love . . . endures all things. Love never fails." (1 Cor. 13:4-8) A deep love for our fellows will move us to fight any tendency to be hot-tempered.

Finally, and very importantly, Christians can call for God's help by means of his holy spirit. Qualities such as love, peace, long-suffering and mildness—which will help us to overcome our lack of self-control—are fruits of the spirit. (Gal. 5:22-24) So if a bad temper is a problem personally, why not plead with Jehovah God for help? Ask for his spirit to strengthen you to control your emotions. With Jehovah's help, you *can* succeed!

Yes, we must be "slow about wrath," since "man's wrath does not work out God's righteousness." (Jas. 1:19, 20) A bad temper can make us look ridiculous, can damage our relationship with others and can betray a lack of love. Moses, because of losing self-control on one occasion, was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. (Num. 20:9-13) Do not allow a lack of self-control to affect your blessings. Rather, always bear in mind King David's words: "Let anger alone and leave rage; do not show yourself heated up only to do evil. For evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth."—Ps. 37:8, 9.

## In Coming Issues

- The Watchman Said: "She Has Fallen!"
- "Do Not Be Anxious over Anything"
- John Wycliffe, Champion of the Bible

had a problem with self-control. However, they solved it by following fine Scriptural counsel, such as that at Psalm 4:4; Prov-

# Why Must Christians Keep Separate from the World?

**T**oday there are many, many millions of persons who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ. However, it is one thing to claim to be a Christian and another thing actually to be a Christian. Jesus himself made this point in his Sermon on the Mount: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, . . . and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matt. 7:21-23.

Among the many things that differentiate genuine Christians from those who are such in name only is their keeping separate from the world. Jesus made this very emphatic on the night of his betrayal, saying to his followers: "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you." He made the same point in prayer to his heavenly Father that evening, stating: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world."—John 15:18, 19; 17:16.

"No part of the world." That means keeping separate from the world. There is

no question about that. But to what was Jesus referring by the expression "the world"? Jesus made a distinction between his followers and that "world" when he said in prayer: "I make request concerning them [his disciples]; I make request, not concerning *the world*, but concerning those you have given me; because they are yours." (John 17:9) By the expression "the world," Jesus there shows that he means the wicked ungodly world, or *kosmos*, made up of those whom the apostle John describes as "lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 2:15-17; 5:19) Its god and ruler is Satan the Devil.

## OF WHAT THE WORLD CONSISTS

Satan has organized this world into various parts or divisions. One of the foremost of these is Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, described at Revelation 17:3-6 as "the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth." She is said to be drunk with the blood of the holy ones, the witnesses of Jesus.

Also a very prominent part of Satan's world are the political kingdoms of the earth, described by the apostle John as a beast that came up out of the sea, having seven heads and 10 horns. (Rev. 13:1) That these kingdoms are part of Satan's world is seen by the fact that he was able to offer them to Jesus Christ if Jesus would do an act of worship to Satan.—Matt. 4:8, 9.

Satan also controls, as part of his world, a ruthlessly greedy and oppressive commercial system, referred to, at Revelation 18:11, as "traveling merchants." This exploits the common people and endeavors to keep them in slavery, in an economic bondage, even as Babylon the Great tries to keep people in religious bondage and the governments of this world endeavor to keep people in political bondage.

Satan's world is also corrupted by all manner of immoral practices, even as the apostle John indicates at 1 John 2:15, 16: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world."

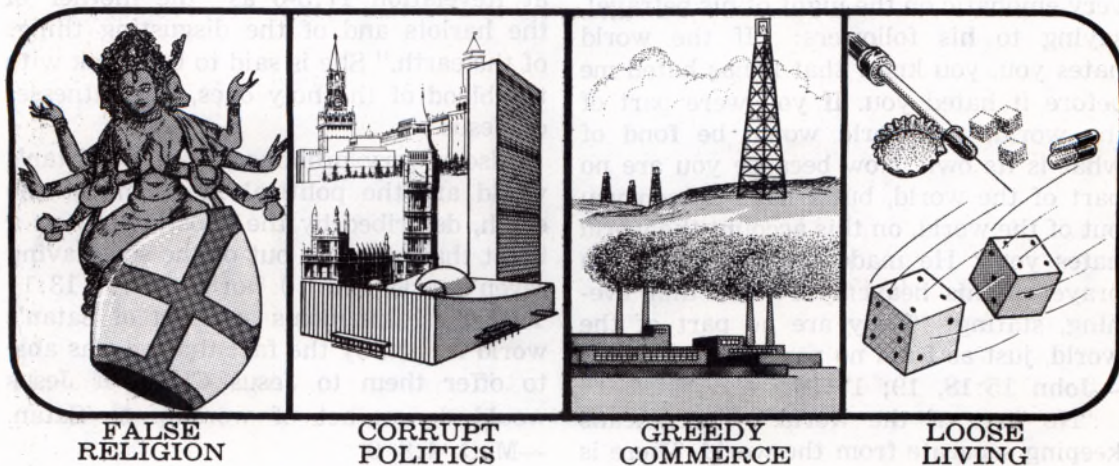
#### WHY KEEP SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD

Why are Christians commanded to keep separate from the world that is under the control of Satan? First of all, let us note what keeping separate from the world does not mean. It does not mean that we should have absolutely nothing to do with those

who have the spirit of the world, who are involved in false religion, corrupt politics, or in greedy commercial or immoral enterprises. For then, as the apostle Paul reminds us, we would literally have to get out of the world. (1 Cor. 5:9, 10) Nor does keeping separate from the world mean that we may not enjoy wholesome entertainment or that we may not visit relatives or have them visit us just because they are unbelievers.

Rather, keeping separate from the world relates to the issue that had its beginning when Jehovah God foretold that there would be enmity between the seed of the woman, God's holy organization, and the seed of the god of this world, Satan the Devil. It means keeping balance, not becoming a slave to whatever this world has to offer. It means avoiding compromise with this world. Compromise obviously would be displeasing to Jehovah God. It means 'not walking in the counsel of the wicked ones, not standing in the way of sinners and not sitting in the seat of the ridiculers.'—Ps. 1:1.

Of interest here is the view of the world as held by the Christians of the second



century C.E., as reported by the historian Cadoux in his work *The Early Church and the World* (1925 C.E.): "Of the state of the human race beyond the limits of the Christian Church, the writers of this period take on the whole a very black view. A large number of evil characteristics are held to apply to 'the world' or to 'this age': thus, error, darkness, blindness, drunkenness, deceit, evil, iniquity, defilement, corruption, futility, baseness, godlessness, impiety, unbelief, and blasphemy."

We must keep separate from Satan's world because of its godlessness and hatred for Jesus Christ. To fraternize with this world, or to become a part of it, causes us to be what? The disciple James answers: "Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." (Jas. 4:4) Can we afford to have Jehovah God as our enemy? The apostle Paul answers that question at 1 Corinthians 10:21, 22: "You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of 'the table of Jehovah' and the table of demons. Or 'are we inciting Jehovah to jealousy'? We are not stronger than he is, are we?"

The "cup" and the "table" of demons is found with "Babylon the Great." She teaches lies, slanders Jehovah God and has been used by Satan to mislead the entire inhabited earth. (Rev. 12:9) So how can God's true servants make common cause with any of the religions of this world? Jesus did not practice interfaith. He did not unite himself with any of the sects of Judaism in their opposition to the Roman yoke. Neither can there be any interfaith practiced on the part of his true followers today. They must heed the words of Isaiah 52:11: "Turn away, turn away, get out of there, touch nothing unclean; get out from

the midst of her, keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah." What powerful reasons there are for Christians to keep separate from the religious part of Satan's world!

There are also powerful reasons why God's true servants, sincere followers of Jesus Christ, must keep separate from the political part of Satan's world, from all nationalism and politics. Are not these also opposed to God's kingdom? When standing before the representative of the Roman Empire, Pontius Pilate, Jesus testified: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from this source." (John 18:36) Since neither Jesus nor his followers were part of the political world back there, neither may Jesus' followers be today. That the nations of the world have nothing in common with the true God can be seen from the fact that they are being gathered by the god of this world, through his inspired expressions, to the war of the great day of God the Almighty at Har-Magedon. (Rev. 16:14, 16) As the apostle Peter so well notes, Christians are aliens and temporary residents. (1 Pet. 2:11) In keeping with that fact are the words of the apostle Paul at Philippians 3:20, showing that the citizenship of Christ's true followers is in the heavens. That is why the Christian witnesses of Jehovah do not engage in politics, nor do they buy or carry political party cards.

And since 1 John 2:15, 16 warns us against the world's materialism and immorality, the very opposite of godly devotion, we must also stay clear of these if we would be holy as Jehovah God is holy. —1 Pet. 1:15, 16.

What does it take to keep separate from the world? The next article will answer that question.

# What It Takes to Keep Separate from the World

**W**ithout a doubt, our appreciating just how wicked and corrupt Satan's world is will help us to keep separate from the world. Such appreciation will make it easy for us to obey the command found at Psalm 97:10: "O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad." No matter how pleasant, how enticing, wicked things are to the fallen flesh, we must abhor them, even as the apostle commands. (Rom. 12: 9) More than that, we want to hate those who willfully show themselves haters of Jehovah, haters of what is good. As David of old expressed it: "Do I not hate those who are intensely hating you, O Jehovah, and do I not feel a loathing for those revolting against you? With a complete hatred I do hate them. They have become to me real enemies." (Ps. 139:21, 22) We hate them, not in the sense of wanting to do them harm or wishing them harm but in the sense of avoiding them as we would poison or a poisonous snake, for they can poison us spiritually. That is why we are warned: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Cor. 15:33.

And let it be noted that this staying clean from wicked persons applies not just to persons whom we may happen to meet or be thrown together with in our everyday affairs of life but also to those whom we choose as associates when it comes to entertainment. Remember, we are commanded: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits

holy people; neither shameful conduct." (Eph. 5:3, 4) This means that we not only avoid making such things the subject of our own conversations but also do not let such things be mentioned in our presence, as by watching a TV program or attending a motion picture where such things are the subject of conversation. Instead, let us make it a point to cultivate associations with fully devoted fellow believers, not only at the congregation and in the field activities but also socially. Yes, to keep separate from the world we must watch our associations; on the one hand, avoiding bad ones and, on the other hand, being diligent to associate with those who, like us, are no part of the world.

## FAITH AND COURAGE NEEDED

To keep separate from the world also takes faith and courage. To build up our faith we must cultivate a healthy spiritual appetite, being conscious of our spiritual need at all times. (Matt. 5:3) That includes both making personal Bible study a habit and regularly attending Christian meetings. This is an area in which many of Jehovah's people come short. Every one of us should regularly set aside time for personal Bible study. If need be, get up a half hour earlier. Many do, so as to be able to engage in such study. We want to have the appreciation of God's Word that the psalmist did when he exclaimed: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern. I am exulting over your saying

just as one does when finding much spoil.”  
—Ps. 119:97, 162.

The role that strong faith plays in our keeping separate from the world can be seen from the example of faithful men of old. At Hebrews chapter 11 we read of these that “the world was not worthy of them.” They had set their hopes on God’s kingdom and so ‘saw these things afar off and welcomed them and realized that they were aliens, strangers, temporary residents’ as far as this world was concerned.

Courageously going from house to house with the good news of God’s kingdom is not only a demonstration of our faith, serving to strengthen it, but is a great help in our keeping separate from the world. It impresses on our minds what a great gulf exists between those of the world and Christians; and as we note the apathy, indifference, prejudice and outright opposition of many of those whom we meet, we are helped to resist worldly temptations. The same also applies to informal witnessing. Because of doing this, former hippies seldom have any difficulty breaking off from old associates; these stay away because they do not want their former companions to preach to them.

#### FAITHFULNESS IN LITTLE THINGS

To keep separate from the world also requires being faithful in little things. As Jesus said: “The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much.” (Luke 16:10) If we are careful not to follow the world, not

to be influenced by it in little things, such as in provocative dress and grooming, in dishonest money matters, in cheating on taxes, in sluggish work habits, or in taking needless risks, in careless conduct between the sexes—all these things will keep us from transgressing God’s laws in more serious matters.

Illustrating this principle are the four Hebrews that were taken captive to Babylon, as recorded in the book of Daniel. Because of proving faithful in the seemingly little matter of food, they were able to come off victorious in matters of life and death, involving the issue of whether to obey God or men.—Dan. 1:1-17; 3:1-30; 6:4-23.

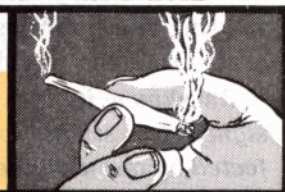
#### HUMILITY AND SELF-CONTROL

Humility is another quality that will greatly aid us in keeping separate from the world. This means having a lowly opinion of ourselves, never thinking more of ourselves than it is necessary to think. (Rom. 12:3) Those who think too highly of themselves are easy targets for the flatterers of this world. It might be said that Satan used a flattering argument to deceive Eve. (Gen. 3:1-7) Being humble will help us to be content with our blessings spiritually and materially. If we have godly devotion and self-sufficiency, as we are urged to have at 1 Timothy 6:6, we will not restlessly be craving forbidden pleasures, excitement or thrills in watching violence on the screen; we will not be tempted to be dishonest in our relations with others, or to become greedy of selfish

#### HATE AND SHUN THE BAD



VIOLENCE



VICES

#### BUILD STRONG FAITH IN GOD



STUDY



PRAYER

gain. Having a lowly opinion of ourselves, we will be content with our mates and will not be casting longing eyes toward others who might seem to be offering more glamour, pleasure or companionship.

To keep separate from the world also takes self-control. Self-control will enable us to endure pain so as not to compromise under severe persecution, as we at all times look to Jehovah God for needed strength. The same is true when it comes to temptations that Satan's world or circumstances put in our way, that is, temptations to yield to the works of the flesh. (Gal. 5:19-21) If we have cultivated the fruitage of self-control, we will be able to resist all such temptations, doing as the apostle Paul did: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow."—1 Cor. 9:27.

#### **FEAR OF JEHOVAH AND UNSELFISH LOVE**

To keep separate from the world also requires the fear of Jehovah, which is the beginning of wisdom. (Ps. 111:10) The godly fear of displeasing our heavenly Father will keep us separate from the wicked world. The world is very bad, and the fear of Jehovah means the hating of bad.

But above all, it takes unselfish love to keep separate from the world. The world appeals to selfishness. To the extent that we are unselfish, to that extent the world's temptations will have no attraction for us. If we truly love Jehovah God with all our heart and soul, with all our mind and strength, we will be loyal to him and so will not consort with his enemies. We will not prove unfaithful to him. And if we love our Christian brothers, we will keep separate from the world, for failure to do so may stumble them, because of our setting a bad example. If we love our own families, we will keep away from all worldly enticements that may tempt us to be disloyal to them in thought, word and deed.

#### **REWARDS FOR STAYING SEPARATE**

What are the rewards for keeping separate from the world? For one thing, we can enjoy the pure friendship of Jehovah God, Jesus Christ and our Christian brothers. Furthermore, by keeping separate from the world, we will maintain clean consciences and avoid the bad fruits that result from the works of the flesh. (Gal. 6:7, 8) By keeping separate from Babylon the Great, we will not share in her guilt nor receive her plagues.—Rev. 18:4.

Keeping separate from the political nations also has its rewards. While it frequently has resulted in true Christians' suffering hardships, yet time and again keeping separate from nationalistic conflicts has also worked to their advantage. In such strife-torn lands as Lebanon and northern Ireland, their neutral stand has enabled them to move about freely in their witness work and has even saved their lives.

And by keeping separate from the world we will be able, with benefit to ourselves, to heed the command found at Zephaniah 2:3: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger." Thus we may go through the "great tribulation" to enjoy everlasting life in God's new order.—Matt. 24:21; 2 Pet. 3:13.

So may all truly dedicated Christians ever bear in mind the need for them to keep separate from the world dominated by Satan the Devil. May they always appreciate the many reasons why they should do so. And may they be diligent in cultivating the qualities needed to keep separate from the world.

*As shown in the following articles designed for study, we are profoundly affected by our attitude regarding this world. Indeed, 'we reap what we sow.'*

# ***Sowing with God's Kingdom in View***

**T**he emperor of a Middle-European country was making an inspection of a public school of his subjects. He asked the school class a number of questions. As the story goes, he asked a little girl about "the plant kingdom" and "the animal kingdom" and was pleased with her answers. Following this up, he asked her: "To what kingdom do I belong?" Expecting the answer, "The animal kingdom," he had tears well up in his eyes when the little maid replied: "The kingdom of God." Though the church to which the emperor belonged thought the girl's answer to be correct as well as reverential, did he belong to God's kingdom? Had this political ruler of a worldly government really been admitted to "the kingdom of God"? Here is room for thought!

<sup>2</sup> Admittance to the kingdom of God is the greatest honor that could be bestowed upon a person on earth. The kingdom of God is the greatest of all governments. This was the government about which the Founder of Christianity preached in the Middle East. History says of Jesus Christ: "Now after John [the Baptizer] was put under arrest [in the year 30 C.E.] Jesus went into Galilee, preaching the good news of God and saying: 'The appointed time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn

near. Be repentant, you people, and have faith in the good news.'" (Mark's account, chap. one, vss. 14 and 15) However, the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people did not repent and have faith. Appallingly, they had Jesus put to death as an enemy of the Roman emperor, Caesar. Figuratively, they did not sow with God's kingdom in view. But who of us today is doing so? How can we know? We shall see.

<sup>3</sup> Most of us today like illustrations of things. Jesus Christ became famous for making illustrations or telling parables. As an itinerant preacher, he drew large audiences. Once, from a boat on the Sea of Galilee, he taught a seashore audience. He gave an illustration of four types of agricultural soil. Privately, his intimate disciples asked him about the meaning of this. After explaining and making additional comments, he said, even to these close associates: "Whoever has ears to listen, let him listen." (Mark 4:1-23) How many of the seashore audience had such kind of ears, we do not know. But Jesus expected his disciples to whom he gave the explanation to have listening ears. By means of such ears what they had heard from him would find permanent lodging within them and furnish enlightenment to them. Who of us today has such kind of listening ears? It will help us in sowing aright with God's kingdom in view.

1. To what kingdom did a schoolgirl assign the inquiring emperor, and was her answer beyond question?

2. (a) Admittance to God's kingdom is to what grade of government? (b) How did the Jews' day show that they were not sowing with that kingdom in view?

3. About what illustration given by Jesus to a seaside audience did his disciples ask, and what did he say about the ear?

<sup>4</sup> If we do not have "ears to listen," we shall not pay attention to what Jesus taught. Attention is important, for the Bible writer Mark goes on to record: "He further said to them: 'Pay attention to what you are hearing.'" (Mark 4:24) Never should we be like the first kind of soil in Jesus' parable. This was the soil alongside the road. It was packed down so hard that it would not let the seed sink in, but left it exposed for the birds to pounce down upon and eat. (Mark 4:4, 15) We do not want Satan the Devil, by means of his agents, to snatch Christian truth away from us due to our inattention. This would betray a lack of respect for what the Teacher, Jesus Christ, was and now is in God's arrangement.

<sup>5</sup> A rule oft stated is that we get out of a thing what we put into it. Jesus indicated the benefit that we would get from paying the deserved attention to what he was saying. He did this by adding to his admonition on attention the words: "With the measure that you are measuring out, you will have it measured out to you, yes, you will have more added to you. For he that has will have more given to him; but he that does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."—Mark 4:24, 25.

<sup>6</sup> Consequently, if we measure out to Jesus little interest and attention, we cannot expect to get much from him, at least from what he is saying for our guidance, for our benefit. But if we show that we do appreciate him as our Teacher and we deal out to him our fullest measure of attention, then he will respond by giving us a comparative amount of information and enlightenment. In this regard, how-

ever, he is not concerned with just even-  
ing up things and balancing accounts. Rather, in his generosity and according to his ability, he will favor us with more than we expected. Thus we are enriched and are more able to share with others our own abundance, imparting to them the understanding of things.

<sup>7</sup> A favored disciple must have the humility and willingness to learn, yes, genuine regard for his Teacher and an appreciation of what he teaches. Being thus disposed, he will have more given to him. For instance, after Jesus' speech from aboard the boat, his intimate disciples did not at once dismiss the matter as of only passing interest. They kept his parable in mind. Later, privately, they asked him to explain. For their extra efforts to learn what his teachings meant, more was given to them than to the seashore audience. They were not discouraged by Jesus' earlier remark: "You do not know this illustration, and so how will you understand all the other illustrations?" (Mark 4:13) That was the state in which most of the seaside audience remained. But Jesus' apostles had the urge to learn and understand. Therefore, they made it their business to ask for more than the mere outline of things. So more than the expected was given to them. In their case, Jesus' words proved true:

<sup>8</sup> "To you the sacred secret of the kingdom of God has been given, but to those outside all things occur in illustrations."—Mark 4:11.

<sup>9</sup> The outsiders remained satisfied with merely the outline of things set out in the illustrations. They lacked the driving urge to learn the facts behind the illustrations. So they gained no understanding of the illustrations. They did not want to act on

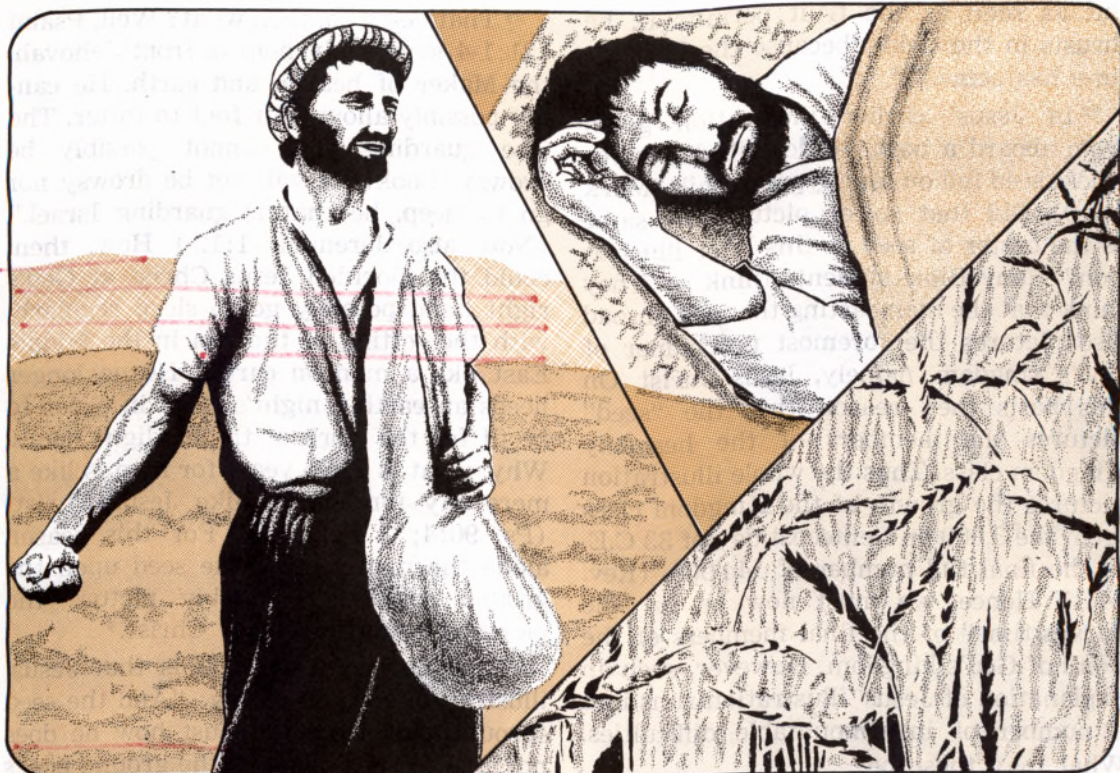
4. Of what importance is it for one to have a 'listening ear,' and why do we not want to be like the soil along the roadside?

5. After giving his admonition on paying attention, what did Jesus say about measuring out and receiving back?

6. As regards the measuring out of interest and attention to him, did Jesus promise merely a balancing of accounts in return?

7, 8. How did Jesus' foregoing words prove true in the case of his intimate disciples, and why?

9, 10. How did matters work out for the outsiders, and why?



**"In this way the kingdom of God is just as when a man casts the seed upon the ground, and he sleeps at night and rises up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows tall."—Mark 4:26, 27.**

what the illustrations taught. So they avoided the greater responsibility that comes with understanding. Not caring to seek God's kingdom first, they appreciated material things more than spiritual things, "the sacred secret of the kingdom of God."

<sup>10</sup> By not inclining to seize hold of the opportunity opened up to them by Jesus' illustrations, the outsiders, in effect, lost everything. What they had in the way of familiarity with Jesus' illustrations, or parables, was taken away from them. By means of human agents or by means of occult arts, Satan the Devil snatched it away from them. What light they may have had through hearing Jesus' illustrations became overtaken by darkness. The light of truth, advancing beyond what

grasp of things they had from Jesus' illustrations, left them in relative darkness, with only a rudimentary knowledge of Biblical things. So they groped like blind persons.

#### **THE PARABLE OF A MAN CASTING THE SEED**

<sup>11</sup> In illustration of the foregoing, Mark 4:26-29 records: "So he [Jesus] went on to say: 'In this way the kingdom of God is just as when a man casts the seed upon the ground, and he sleeps at night and rises up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows tall, just how he does not know. Of its own self the ground bears fruit gradually, first the grass-blade, then the stalk head, finally the full grain in the head.

<sup>11</sup> According to Mark 4:26-29, what illustration did Jesus then give?

But as soon as the fruit permits it, he thrusts in the sickle, because the harvest-time has come.' ”\*

<sup>12</sup> In Jesus' earlier illustration given from aboard a boat, he described a sower whose seed fell on four types of soil. (Mark 4:1-9) Did that sower picture the same as the caster of seed in this later illustration? Many Bible students think so. They think that the man casting the seed abroad also pictures the foremost proclaimer of God's kingdom, namely, Jesus Christ. On this basis they reason that the "seed" pictures the members of the heavenly Kingdom class. Thus the whole illustration pictures the growth of the Kingdom class from the 3,000 on Pentecost day of 33 C.E. to the final full number of 144,000. (Rev. 14:1) Hence, we must now be in "the harvesttime" of the final members of the heirs of God's kingdom. However, such an explanation of Jesus' illustration runs into a number of insurmountable difficulties. What may these be?

<sup>13</sup> Well, the illustration says that the man scattering the seed "sleeps at night and rises up by day." How does such a description fit the glorified Jesus Christ since he began building his spirit-begotten congregation on the day of Pentecost? It does not fit at all! First Peter 3:18 speaks of Jesus as "being put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the spirit," so that he no longer is the perfect man that he used to be on earth. Ever since God the Almighty raised Jesus from the dead on Sunday, Nisan 16, 33 C.E., the exalted Son of God "is the reflection of his glory and the exact representation of his very being."—Heb. 1:3.

\* Compare the following with *The Watchtower* of December 1, 1950, page 492, paragraphs 34 and 35.

12. What do some Bible students think this illustration teaches as respects God's kingdom?

13. When did Jesus begin building his spirit-begotten congregation, and in what condition was he at that time?

<sup>14</sup> That being so, then what? Well, Psalm 121:1-4 says: "My help is from Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth. He cannot possibly allow your foot to totter. The One guarding you cannot possibly be drowsy. Look! He will not be drowsy nor go to sleep, he that is guarding Israel." (Note also Jeremiah 1:12.) How, then, could the glorified Jesus Christ at God's right hand possibly go to sleep regularly with the setting of the sun in the Middle East like a man on earth? He no longer needs an earthly night's sleep in order to be fit for the work of the daylight hours. Why, what is 1,000 years for man is like a mere day for the Godlike Jesus Christ! (Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8) For this reason alone the man casting the seed upon the ground could not possibly picture the glorified, immortal Jesus Christ.\*

<sup>15</sup> Another point to note is that Jesus' illustration goes on to say: "And the seed sprouts and grows tall, just how he does not know. Of its own self the ground bears fruit gradually." (Mark 4:27, 28) If, now, the seed that sprouts and grows tall pictures the Christian congregation in its growth from a small membership to a large one, it means that the sower does not know how the congregation keeps growing to 144,000 strong. But the prehuman Jesus Christ was a coworker with Jehovah God on the third creative day, when "the earth began to put forth grass, vegetation bearing seed according to its kind and trees yielding fruit, the seed of which is in it according to its kind." (Gen. 1:12) Thus the prehuman Son of God displayed full knowledge of the growth of

\* See *All the Parables of the Bible* by Lockyer, page 252, paragraph 8; also, *The Pulpit Commentary* on Mark by Spence and Excell, Volume 1, pages 159 and 205.

14. As regards the mere matter of sleeping at night, why could the man casting the seed on the ground not picture the glorified Jesus Christ?

15. What shows whether the prehuman Son of God knew about the growth of seed and of how the ground bears fruit of its own self?

plants and of how the ground bears fruit of itself gradually.

<sup>16</sup> However, as to congregation growth, the Bible's last book, Revelation, written about 63 years after Jesus ascended to heaven on Thursday, Iyyar 25, 33 C.E. (May 12, 33 C.E.), pictures Jesus Christ as walking in among the seven lampstands that stand for seven congregations in Asia Minor. With his eyes like a "fiery flame," he should be wide awake as he inspects the spiritual state of these seven prominent congregations. So he is not pictured as being drowsy or asleep with regard to the growth of the congregations. He must have known how those congregations grew to the spiritual state in which he describes them to be.—Rev. 1:14; 2:18.

<sup>17</sup> With regard to Jesus' ascending and appearing in God's heavenly presence, he is pictured as a lamb just slaughtered, but again alive with "seven eyes, which eyes mean the seven spirits of God that have been sent forth into the whole earth." (Rev. 5:6) Far from suggesting drowsiness or sleepiness, such sevenfold vision of the Lamb of God would signify the state of being wide awake and all-discerning, constantly. Plainly, then, the glorified Jesus Christ could not be pictured by the man who casts the seed upon the ground and who sleeps at night and who does not know how the growth of what he planted comes about.

<sup>18</sup> Whom, then, does the man in the illustration picture? The Gospel writer Mark calls this individual farmer to our attention right after Jesus advises his intimate disciples to pay attention to what they are hearing. A certain measure of



**Each individual professing to be a disciple of Jesus Christ sows seeds of personal qualities, attitudes and capacities for service in connection with God's kingdom**

attention was to be recompensed with proportionate returns, even more being added to such. Reasonably, therefore, the man in the illustration pictures each individual who professes to be a disciple or learner of Jesus Christ, the foremost Preacher of the kingdom of God.

#### INDICATIVE FEATURES OF THE ILLUSTRATION

<sup>19</sup> Jesus opened up the illustration by saying: "In this way [or, Thus] the kingdom of God is just as when a man casts the seed upon the ground."—Mark 4:26, NW; *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

<sup>20</sup> We note two main things that embrace the whole illustration. First, there is a sowing of the seed in connection with God's kingdom, and, secondly, there is a harvesting, or reaping, of the crop that results from the seed sown. So the point is that, just as surely as there was a sow-

16. What vision in the last book of the Bible shows whether the glorified Jesus Christ is drowsy or asleep as to the growth of the Christian congregations?

17. What vision described in Revelation 5:6 shows whether the glorified Jesus Christ could be pictured by the man who casts the seed on the ground and sleeps at night?

18. Whom, then, does the man in the illustration logically picture?

19, 20. What two main things embrace the whole illustration, and so what is the point that is made by the illustration, and with what in view, quantity or quality?

ing, or a planting, of the seed, there must be expected a harvesting, or a reaping. The one thing inevitably follows the other. The solemn truth is that what a person sows with relation to God's kingdom leads on to what he will harvest, or reap. Rather than quantity, the quality of what he reaps is important!

<sup>21</sup> Jesus did not specify the kind of seed or the type of soil involved in the planting. He said: "But as soon as the fruit permits it, he thrusts in the sickle [a small hand instrument], because the harvesttime has come." (Mark 4:29) The Jews to whom Jesus gave the illustration had three harvests during the agricultural year. The first took place right after the spring Passover festival, a sheaf of the barley harvest being presented on Nisan 16 by the high priest at Jerusalem's temple. Fifty days from then, the high priest presented the firstfruits of the wheat harvest at the temple and after that this harvest went forward. The third harvest came at

21. Did Jesus specify the kind of seed or the type of soil on which it was cast, and yet what question arises as to the seed?

the end of the summer and was memorialized by the festival of ingathering, or of the booths (tabernacles), beginning on the 15th day of the seventh lunar month, Tishri. (Ex. 23:14-17) Which of these three harvesttimes was the one meant in the illustration is not stated. But, whatever seed it was that was sown, what does it picture?

<sup>22</sup> Jesus' illustration says that the seed sown sprouted and grew tall and matured to having the full grain in the head. We have noted that the seed sown does not picture the members of the Christian congregation. As the next article will show, the seed scattered about upon the ground pictures the seeds of the sower's personal qualities, attitudes and capacities for service in connection with God's kingdom. He must seek nourishment for these as from the ground. The growth of these personal traits to maturity and ripeness for harvesting is gradual. This is a thing for us to watch, for it is not beyond control.

22. If not picturing members of the Christian congregation, what does the seed picture, and is the growth of such "seed" beyond control?

## ***Harvesting Fruit Suitable for God's Kingdom***

**I**n Jeremiah 4:3, 4, Jehovah says: "Plow for yourselves arable land, and do not keep sowing among thorns. Get yourselves circumcised to Jehovah, and take away the foreskins of your hearts,

1. In Jeremiah 4:3, 4, to what did Jehovah call attention?

you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; that my rage may not go forth just like a fire, and it certainly burn with no one to do the extinguishing, on account of the badness of your dealings." Jehovah called attention to the bad heart condition of his covenant people.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in a parable Jesus Christ illustrated the disappointing results from sowing among thorns. Both in Matthew 13:1-9 and Mark 4:1-9 he pictured how some of the seed cast out by the hand of the sower fell upon areas holding the seeds of thorns. From such areas he got no results, for the thorns came up and choked the cereal plants and no grain crop could be reaped. (Luke 8:4-8) This illustrates that we must be careful about the environment in which we do our spiritual sowing.

<sup>3</sup> In the parable of the sower and the seed, as related at Mark 4:26-29, the seed pictures qualities of personality. To the Jews who rejected the parable of the sower and other parables, Jesus said: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits." (Matt. 21:43, 45, 46) According to this, there are "fruits" of the kingdom of God. (Luke 3:8) Allied with those Kingdom fruits there is what is called "the fruitage of the spirit," namely, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) Back there in the first century, the Christians to whom the apostle Paul wrote had to sow "seed" in the way of Christian qualities that need nourishment, just as Christians today have to do in connection with the kingdom of God. These personal qualities must be developed to full maturity, completion.—Zech. 8:12; Jas. 3:18.

<sup>4</sup> At the time of their fully ripening would be the normal time to harvest them. But where should the Christian sower of such "seed" choose to sow it in hope of finally reaping the desired harvest? He wants ~~his crop to have~~ God's approval,

2. How does the illustration of the seed falling upon thorn-infested ground show we should be careful about the environment in which we do our spiritual sowing?

3. In the illustration at Mark 4:26-29, what does the seed picture, and what do Christians have to cultivate with regard to their personality today just as first-century Christians had to do?

4. What does the "seed" of personal Christian qualities need for nourishment?

that he may be counted worthy of acceptance in connection with God's kingdom. Just as natural seed needs ground, so the seed of personal Christian qualities, "the fruitage of the spirit," needs environment.—Prov. 18:1.

<sup>5</sup> Recall Jesus' parable with reference to the four kinds of soil upon which the seed of the sower fell. (Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:5-15) This parable illustrates how care and the right choice must be exercised as to the environment for the seed if the expected harvest is to be reaped. Just as Jesus explained concerning the thorn-infested environment for the seed: "As for that which fell among the thorns, these are the ones that have heard, but, by being carried away by anxieties and riches and pleasures of this life, they are completely choked and bring nothing to perfection."—Luke 8:14.

<sup>6</sup> In line with this, the apostle Paul made an observation in connection with the Christians in Galatia to whom he wrote about "the fruitage of the spirit," to warn them that they were being badly affected by the wrong environment. He said: "You were running well. Who hindered you from keeping on obeying the truth? This sort of persuasion is not from the One calling you. A little leaven ferments the whole lump." (Gal. 5:7-9; Matt. 13:33) Those Galatian Christians were being influenced by those Judaizers whose hearts were unreceptive to full Christianity, whose ears were unresponsive and whose eyes were pasted shut. (Matt. 13:14, 15; Gal. 5:10) Such hindering associations must be avoided, abandoned.

<sup>7</sup> The apostle Paul also feared that the Corinthian congregation might not be cultivating "the fruitage of the spirit," for

5. To reap the expected harvest, care with respect to what must be exercised, as emphasized in Luke 8:14?

6. In Galatians 5:7-9, how did Paul call attention to the effect of bad environment?

7. How did Paul express similar concern over the effect of bad environment for the Christians in Corinth?

he wrote them to say: "I am afraid that somehow, when I arrive, I may find you not as I could wish and I may prove to be to you not as you could wish, but, instead, there should somehow be strife, jealousy, cases of anger, contentions, backbitings, whisperings, cases of being puffed up, disorders." (2 Cor. 12:20) After quoting those who say, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die," Paul could, with good reason, issue the warning: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Cor. 15:32, 33.

<sup>8</sup> Like ground, into which the seed falls and which has the God-given power for nourishing either wheat or thorns, the environment in which a Christian chooses to cultivate qualities of personality will affect him for good or for bad. Even if he sleeps while embedding himself in such an environment, the law of environmental influence will relentlessly operate toward him until the outgrowth allows for the sickle to be thrust in because personal harvesttime has come. In this connection, Jesus said: "Of its own self the ground bears fruit gradually, first the grass-blade, then the stalk head, finally the full grain in the head." (Mark 4:28) To the sower the growth is almost imperceptible and it is by a power that he cannot comprehend. The growth in the one direction or the other will go on gradually, first like a grass-blade, then like a stalk head, finally like the full grain in the head.

<sup>9</sup> When the seed first sprouts and produces the grass-blade, the sower may not be exactly sure of what he will harvest, to judge from the appearance of things. At that early stage of growth he may not be positively certain of what is coming up; he merely remembers what kind of

seed he planted. To illustrate: In Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds, in Matthew 13:26-30, he said:

When the blade sprouted and produced fruit, then the weeds appeared also. So the slaves of the householder came up and said to him, "Master, did you not sow fine seed in your field? How, then, does it come to have weeds?" He said to them, "An enemy, a man, did this." They said to him, "Do you want us, then, to go out and collect them?" He said, "No; that by no chance, while collecting the weeds, you uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the harvest season I will tell the reapers, First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them up, then go to gathering the wheat into my storehouse."

<sup>10</sup> So, after we have sown the seeds of our traits of personality, what comes up like a grass-blade may at first not be distinguishable as to what the soil has yielded. Only later, when the growth matures and bears fruit, there will be no mistaking as to what the soil has yielded to the individual sowing there.

<sup>11</sup> The soil is an important factor toward what is finally yielded. Jesus said: "Of its own self the ground [not God] bears fruit gradually, first the grass-blade, then the stalk head, finally the full grain in the head." (Mark 4:28) In the parable of the four types of soil, Jesus described only the *physical* features of the soils. But the chemical properties of the soil are also important in determining the quality of what is yielded, as when soil is sour, acid, saline, or is treated with inorganic fertilizer or organic fertilizer.

<sup>12</sup> Inasmuch as the ground, or soil, plays such an important part in the matter of growth and its quality, it pictures the

8. Why will the growth of personality qualities go on in spite of a Christian's taking of sleep, and why cannot he be certain when judging according to the first outgrowth?

9. How does the parable of the wheat and the weeds illustrate the uncertainty regarding the final outcome from sowing in a certain environment?

10. When will we discern the unmistakable effect of sowing in any given environment?

11. Besides the physical features of soil, what else is important in determining the quality of the thing grown on such soil?

12. What, therefore, does the ground or soil picture?

social, moral and religious environment in the midst of which we nurture the seeds of our personal traits and, naturally, it involves people.\* This is something deserving selectivity.

#### THE ELEMENT IN WHICH WE CULTIVATE TRAITS

<sup>13</sup> Even in the Christian congregation there may be an environment or association that is spiritually not most helpful. Some who recently came out of the world and symbolized their dedication to God by water baptism may tend to bring into the congregation something that still clings to them—a measure of worldliness. Let us remember that it was to a Christian congregation that the apostle Paul wrote: "In my [previous] letter I wrote you to quit mixing in company with fornicators, . . . But now I am writing you to quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man."—1 Cor. 5:9-11.

<sup>14</sup> Also, to the congregations in the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor, the same apostle wrote: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit." (Gal. 6:7, 8) A professed Christian can be sowing to his fallen flesh by seeking to develop his per-

\* This resembles what Jesus said in his parable of the wheat and the weeds, that the "field" was the world of people. (Matt. 13:38) Only here, in Mark 4:26-28, the "ground" sown, instead of being world wide, goes only to the extent of the contact and association that the individual has with people. The "ground" does not represent the individual's "heart," as in Matthew 13:19 and Luke 8:12, 15.

13. Even in a Christian congregation, may there be an environment not conducive to proper Christian growth?

14. In Galatians 6:7, 8, how does Paul caution Christians against sowing in the wrong direction?



**Like ground into which the seed falls, the environment in which a Christian chooses to cultivate qualities of personality will affect him for good or for bad**

sonality qualities in a worldly environment that caters to his fallen flesh.

<sup>15</sup> Today, in the congregation, do we gravitate toward members who still smack of worldliness? They regularly indulge in it and want to have the company of other members so as to feel a measure of justification for their frequent indulgence. Do we let our social environment or association inside the congregation hinder us in running well in the race for everlasting life? Do we allow congregation members who still incline to worldliness to persuade us into taking the same direction that they are taking, because it is so pleasing to our fallen flesh?

<sup>16</sup> At first the effects of our indulgent course may not be distinguishable as to what kind of professed Christians we shall eventually turn out to be. This is so be-

15. What questions arise, therefore, with regard to seeking out our environment in the Christian congregation?

16. In order to meet the day of tests successfully, what do we have to consider about the environment in which we circulate?

cause the "ground" or environment in which we choose to circulate will bear fruit *gradually*. The "grass-blade" looks innocent to beholders, not dangerously hurtful. We sleep at night and rise up by day, and the growth of our personal traits moves forward relentlessly, just how we do not know. Our persistence in this free-and-easy, liberal course will lead to an inescapable result, namely, the fully matured growth of personal traits due to the environment that is like ground, in which we have allowed ourselves to be nurtured. Will what we harvest by thrusting in the sickle qualify us to meet the tests of the day of reckoning successfully?

<sup>17</sup> Let us not forget that, like "ground," or soil, environment in which the seeds of our personal traits are buried and nourished will affect our development. It can make us a poor variety of the real thing, the thing that was intended when we began to sow.

<sup>18</sup> A historical example of the effect of bad associations even among Jehovah's people was furnished in the wilderness of Sinai in Moses' day. We remember the "vast mixed company" that went along with the Israelites out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. (Ex. 12:38) Concerning this non-Israelite element, the prophet Moses tells us:

And the mixed crowd that was in the midst of them [the Israelites] expressed selfish longing, and the sons of Israel too began to weep again and say: "Who will give us meat to eat? How we remember the fish that we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers and the watermelons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic! But now our soul is dried away. Our eyes are on nothing at all except the manna." . . . The name of that place came to be called

17. What should we not forget with regard to environment in which we imbed the seeds of our personality traits?

18. What illustration of bad association is given to us in Numbers 11:4-34?

Kibroth-hattaavah [meaning Burial Places of the Selfish Longing].—Numbers 11:4-34; see also 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Thus that "vast mixed crowd" set things in motion among the Israelites. Unsatisfied with Jehovah's provision of bread from heaven, they turned back in their hearts to Egypt because of selfishly longing for things once enjoyed in that idolatrous land. (Ps. 105:40) They made their belly their god, because they brought along selfish longing for the material comforts of demon-controlled Egypt. (Phil. 3:19) So they infected the Israelites with such an appetite. For the time being they proved to be bad associates for Jehovah's chosen people Israel. This historical example serves as a good warning for us today. We cannot make God responsible for the bad effects that we reap from the bad environment that we select.

<sup>20</sup> If we cannot put God into the picture in the case of the parables of the four kinds of soil and of the wheat and the weeds, is it logical, consistent, to put God personally into the fulfillment of Mark 4:26-29? In a general way, "the earth itself brings forth its sprout" and "the garden itself makes the things that are sown in it sprout." (Isa. 61:11) So, then, marijuana ("grass"), hashish, tobacco, and poppies grown for the purpose of making opium, will grow from the cultivated ground just the same as cereals. Plainly, then, the crop that is reaped depends upon what the sower plants and on what kind of soil he casts the seed.

<sup>21</sup> The environment in which the seed finds itself affects matters. Let us not forget that soils do not all have the same chemical properties. One is sour or acid,

19. How does that experience of the Israelites with the "vast mixed crowd" in the wilderness show that we cannot hold God responsible for bad effects from our chosen environment?

20. What rather than God is responsible for what results to us from the course we select?

21. What illustration from Holland shows that the environment in which the seed finds itself affects matters?



**"Of its own self the ground bears fruit gradually. . . . But as soon as the fruit permits it, he thrusts in the sickle, because the harvest-time has come."—Mark 4:28, 29.**

another is salty, and so forth. Thus when the Dutch wanted to reclaim land from the Zuider Zee, they built dikes and impounded the brackish waters in polders. Then they pumped out the seawater, leaving a low-lying land area. But such reclaimed land was impregnated with sea salt. It was not at once fit to grow grains for food. So first they had to accommodate the soil by planting reedy grasses that grew well in salty soil. This worked for purifying the soil. Then they could grow grains with good harvests.

<sup>22</sup> So with the seeds of our personality traits: we are bound to sow them some-

22. Where are we generally bound to sow the seed of our personality qualities, and what is certain as to the outcome of this?

where, generally in the environment of our choice. We are bound to meet up with a harvesting, or a reaping. Will what we harvest be suitable for an approved relationship with God's kingdom? The environment or the association that we regularly seek out will have much to do with that. Even inside the Christian congregation we can seek out social companionship with baptized persons who still cling to worldly things, but who feel no qualms of conscience about sneaking these into the congregation. Our Christian personality and conduct are sure to be affected by such infectious things.

<sup>23</sup> Growth of an infected Christian in a

23. Instead of the appearance of things at the beginning, what will determine our ultimate happiness?

worldly direction will be gradual, the angle of divergence from the Christian way being at first so slight as not to be discernible. It is like the emergence of the "grass-blade" from the seed. But harvesttime will at last show unmistakably into what we have developed, for there will be the consequences to pay. When at last only true Christianity will be able to meet the test, each individual will have to thrust in his sickle and gather what he has grown to be. Will what he harvests leave him disillusioned, exposed as false to his Christian claims? Happy is the Christian that has Scriptural reasons for being satisfied with what his sickle harvests.—Compare Psalm 126:5, 6.

<sup>24</sup> We are steadily growing in one way or the other, in a worldly way or a spiritual way. Woe to us if we mislead ourselves or let others mislead us into thinking that we can entertain bad associations without having our useful Christian habits spoiled. (1 Cor. 15:33) We cannot mock God by trying to nullify his unchangeable law that, as there is a sowing, so there must also be a reaping and that where we sow will affect what we reap. He warns us that our personal holiness will not automatically rub off and make others holy. Rather, our unguarded contact constantly with unclean worldly persons will result in our becoming unclean also.—Hag. 2:10-14.

<sup>25</sup> By Scriptural forethought we can determine the outcome of our course. Are we aiming at continued peaceful relationship with God's kingdom? The "works of the flesh" will never get us there! On the other hand, there is "the fruitage of the spirit," and by cultivating it we shall not yield to the passions and the works of the flesh. Our pursuing this careful course will

gratifyingly result in our harvesting fruit suitable for God's kingdom by Christ.—Gal. 5:19-24.

<sup>26</sup> God's kingdom, long prayed for by Christ's disciples, is now about to come against all enemy governments for the vindicating of His universal sovereignty. Along with that a personal harvesttime is ahead of each one of us in connection with that kingdom. The greatest care needs to be exercised with respect to the environmental "ground" in which we are imbedding the seeds of our personality traits. Our social, recreational, moral and religious association should be with those who are in favor of God's kingdom by Christ first, last and all the time. Our giving serious forethought to what we are sowing, and where, and with God's kingdom always in view will be rewarded with an abundant harvesting of the fruit of a matured and active Christlike personality. How greatly Jehovah God will be pleased with this! He will favor us with the expression of his unqualified approval and with all the blessings to which his approval leads.

<sup>27</sup> So, under the growing urgency of the times, we do well to heed the timely exhortation: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." (Heb. 10:24, 25) This will result for us in a favorable fulfillment of the short but powerful parable of the sower and the seed, at Mark 4:26-29. We shall experience then "the rejoicing in the harvesttime." With a great thrill we shall fully appreciate that "he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit."—Gal. 6:8; Isa. 9:3.

24. Will our personal holiness counteract the effect of the environment that we put ourselves in contact with constantly?

25. According to Galatians 5:19-24, what will keep us in suitable relationship with God's kingdom?

26. For what course will we be rewarded with a harvesting of approved personality qualities?

27. What will result in a favorable fulfillment for us of the illustration at Mark 4:26-29?

# INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● Recently a disillusioned reader wrote to the conservative American Protestant journal "Christian Century" about

## Film Foolishness

its reviews of some current motion pictures. He noted that the magazine's editor, James M. Wall, "wrote a piece praising 'Luna' as a major work of cinematic art and insisted that it should be seen twice!" The film featured an incestuous relationship between mother and son, causing the disillusioned reader to ask: "But what about the full-page ads for the film promising 'the most provocative scene of our time'?"

He then commented on another "Christian Century" article titled "Movies for Middle-aged Men," wherein two films rated "R" by film officials were reviewed. The "R" rating means that they contain scenes so sexual or violent that youths under 17 are denied admittance unless accompanied by their parents. Yet "Gerald Forshey's review suggests that every man of middle age or older ought to make a point of seeing these films and others like them," writes the reader. "I myself doubt both the wisdom and the righteousness of this counsel."

This reader's observations are in agreement with the Scriptural advice: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy [clean] people; neither shameful conduct nor foolish talking nor obscene jesting," most of which are featured in such films. Evidently viewing these things is considered sophisticated by some of today's foremost religious leaders.—Eph. 5:3, 4.

● At a recent conference, two professors of legal medicine from Boston University School of Medicine posed the case of Jehovah's Witnesses to illustrate one of their points. They asserted that courts have ordered blood transfusions for adult Witnesses only when the patient or family members indicated that the patient would not resist the court order—in effect, leaving the responsibility in the hands of the court. Then the professors cited a case where the patient said

## Whose Decision Is It?

that he would resist any court-ordered transfusion. The judge did not issue the order.

Strong resistance where violation of God's laws may be involved shows that one has taken the apostolic stand: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." Especially is this true since the Bible links abstinence from blood with such things as abstinence from fornication. Hence, since Christians would resist rape—a defiling sexual assault—so they would resist court-ordered blood transfusions—also a form of assault on the body.—Acts 5:29; 15:20, 29.

Rather than allowing the courts to assume responsibility in this matter, "Jehovah's Witnesses are not looking for anyone else, whether a doctor, a hospital administrator or a judge, to make these moral decisions for them. They do not want someone else to try to shoulder their responsibility to God, for in reality no other person can do that."—"Jehovah's Witnesses and the Question of Blood."

● What should be the most important factor in educating today's youth? Noted anthropologist Ashley Montagu recently wrote in the American teachers' magazine, "Today's Education," that learning to love "is what we should be teaching in our schools."

## Most Important Education

Based on his studies, he stated: "We understand for the first time in the history of our species that the most important of all human basic psychological needs is the need for love. It stands at the center of all human needs just as our sun stands at the center of our solar system."

Montagu also observed: "The child who has not been loved is biochemically, physiologically, and psychologically very different from the one who has been loved. The former even grows differently from the latter. What we now know is that the human being is born to live as if to live and love were one. This is not, of course, new. This is a validation of the Sermon on the Mount."

Are these the observations of a sentimental religionist? The scientist answers: "I who am not a Christian and who am not a member of any religious affiliation say this." Hence, an objective study verifies what the Creator of man has revealed.—1 Cor. 13:13.

# **“Stick to the Work Till It Is Finished”**

*As told by Lois Dyer*



**This was my resolve when starting in the full-time service 49 years ago. Assignments have taken me from Perth to Tokyo, with many rewarding experiences along the way.**

**I** was born in 1910 in the country town of Northam, Western Australia. Among my earliest memories are some large books on the lowest shelf of our bookcase. They were bound volumes of the *Watch Tower* magazine, dating from the year 1904.

There was no congregation of Jehovah's people in the town at that time, but occasionally colporteurs called on us. My father believed what he read in the *Watch Tower* publications, and, even after becoming ill, he spoke to others about Bible

truths. Brother Robert Lazenby came from Perth to give my father's funeral talk in 1929. Upon hearing this discourse, I immediately recognized the truth, and from then on read all the available publications of the Society.

Having an urgent desire to serve Jehovah, in July 1931 I wrote to the Watch Tower Society, expressing my wish to take part in the door-to-door witnessing. By way of reply, they sent several cartons of books and an application for auxiliary pioneer service. Yes, the name of this special service was the same as it is now, and so was the requirement of devoting 60 hours each month to declaring the "good news." I accepted this privilege, even though not yet baptized.

My first letter from the Society after this contained a copy of the 1931 Columbus, Ohio, convention resolution adopting the name "Jehovah's Witnesses." (Isa. 43: 10-12) My mother and I gladly signed this. We were still isolated, but I set out to witness in my hometown. Having taught as a student teacher for two years in the local primary school, I was well known in the community. It was not easy to start out alone in the door-to-door witnessing work, especially when lacking direct contact with a congregation. Many were the arguments with religious opposers. One Anglican minister scornfully said: "Surely you don't believe the Adam and Eve story!" Other individuals listened and took literature, but I did not know how to fol-

low up the interest. My sister and her husband were reading *The Watch Tower*, although we had no organized study, and I keenly felt the need to associate with a congregation.

On January 1, 1932, my mother and I moved to Perth. What a joy it was to associate with a Christian congregation for the first time! A few days later, on January 4, 1932, we were both baptized in the Subiaco Kingdom Hall. The very next day, I started out as a regular pioneer, working with a group of zealous pioneers, certainly being very happy to have the help of experienced Kingdom proclaimers. They all encouraged me to "stick to the work till it is finished."

A few weeks later, four of us set out by car to cover some rural territory in the southwestern part of Western Australia. This region had been opened up for English settlers, who had cleared the forest and had set up dairy farming in groups. Each group was numbered, and the settlers were called "groupies." Since they had little money, we often traded books for milk, eggs and vegetables. Once we traded a few books for a case of tomatoes that lasted us a whole week. We moved from group to group, and slept in tents wherever we finished the day's work.

That year, 1932, we celebrated the Memorial of Christ's death in the small town of Donnybrook, at the home of Arthur Williams, Sr., one of the first persons in Western Australia to have embraced Bible truth. His sister, Vi Williams, was a faithful pioneer for many years and helped me a great deal with good advice. Now the Williams family are well known as Jehovah's Witnesses all through that area.

#### WITNESSING UNDER BAN

Long ago, I learned to apply these words of Psalm 55:22: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous

one to totter." This especially proved true when the government banned Jehovah's Witnesses from January 1941 to June 1943.

During that time, we continued to preach underground, and it was necessary to conserve the Bible publications that we had. My literature was stored in a metal trunk buried in the garden at the home of my sister and her husband. We witnessed with the Bible, and when we met a truly interested person, there would be stealthy digging in the garden at night! The witnessing work prospered and the number of Kingdom publishers in Australia doubled during that time. Jehovah truly upheld his servants who stuck to the work.

#### SPECIAL PIONEER SERVICE

In 1942, I returned to my hometown of Northam as a special pioneer. By then my brother Dan had taken his stand for the truth, together with his wife and children. This was a great joy to me. Another pioneer, Mary Ham (now Willis), and I sometimes used a horse and sulky instead of our bicycles. The horse was very old and we had great trouble getting him to start off in the morning. My brother's children helped out by walking ahead with a bunch of grass or a piece of apple to encourage him to get moving.

My next assignment was quite different. It was the business territory in the city of Perth. At first the thought of witnessing in banks and offices frightened me, but I thought: "People are the same whether in a house or in an office building. So why should I be fearful of such surroundings?" Relying on Jehovah, I went ahead. Though it was hard to get personal Bible studies started, a good magazine route was developed, and before leaving this territory, I had obtained 50 subscriptions for our magazines.

In 1947, I was assigned to work alone in the small town of Katanning, then having a population of about 3,000. This town

is a center of sheep raising and wheat farming. Using a bicycle, I would ride about 20 or 30 miles (30 or 50 km) daily to reach the surrounding farms. The people were very hospitable and often invited me in to share a meal. During the spring, when the wild flowers made a rich carpet of color on both sides of the country roads, I often got off my bicycle and paused a while to take in the beautiful scene.

#### INVITATION TO MISSIONARY SERVICE

After spending only six months in Kattanning, a wonderful new privilege of service opened up for me. I was accepted for the 11th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, and became one of a group of 19 from Australia and New Zealand. In this group was Molly Heron, who has been my partner ever since. Molly had also started pioneering in 1932, at Brisbane. As we both had been in full-time work for the same number of years, we had much in common. But whereas I am inclined to make quick decisions, Molly acts with more caution. So we have proved to be a good combination and have enjoyed a very happy partnership for some 31 years.

After five very busy and happy months in Gilead at South Lansing, New York, we received our assignment. Our group of five sisters was to go to New Caledonia. However, Brother N. H. Knorr later said that he had heard there still were headhunters on that island! So our assignment was changed to Fiji. While awaiting our visas to enter Fiji, we spent 16 months in San Francisco, California, where we worked with the Daly City Congregation and made many good friends.

In October 1949, we saw a group of our companions from the 11th class leave San Francisco by ship for their assignment in Japan. They were Lloyd and Melba Barry, Percy and Ilma Iszlaub, and Adrian Thompson. "See you after Armageddon,"

we called out as the ship slid away from the wharf. (Rev. 16:14, 16, *Authorized Version*) But the authorities refused to grant us visas for Fiji. So January 1950 saw us following our friends to Japan, where we joined them in the missionary home at Tarumi, Kobe.

#### MISSIONARY WORK IN JAPAN

Thus began the most enjoyable part of my 49 years of full-time service. At first, our lack of knowledge of the language and customs of the Japanese people led us into many mistakes. For instance, I once informed the people that I was *coughing* (instead of *calling*) from door to door. But I always remembered Brother Knorr's advice: "Do the best you can, and, even though you make mistakes, DO SOMETHING!" So we went ahead, doing the best we could, and with Jehovah's help we gradually improved.

One new experience was coping with the fury of Typhoon Jane. We were out in the field service when the wind started, and the publishers urged us to go home. Not realizing the danger, Molly and I kept on witnessing as long as possible. But this was one time we had to quit. As electric wires whipped and snapped in the gale-force winds, we fled to the missionary home just in time to escape possible injury from roof tiles and tree branches flying through the air.

One missionary was missing! However, she arrived home safe and sound at midnight, after spending the whole day marooned in a railway car. When the storm abated, we found that the missionary home had suffered only a few broken windows and some water damage. In other places there was loss of life, and in the harbor 500 boats were sunk.

In those earlier years, we also had our first experience with earthquakes, which are rather common in Japan. One of these toppled the large stone lantern in the gar-

den of the missionary home. Fortunately, no one was near it at the time.

There were many pleasant experiences, too. During our four years in Kobe, we had the privilege of helping with the formation of the Tarumi and Akashi Congregations. Some of those with whom we then studied the Bible are now serving as pioneers and appointed elders in the congregations.

Our next assignment was Kyoto, a city of thousands of shrines and temples. Though most of the people were mainly concerned with their colorful religious festivals, we found that many individuals were willing to study the Bible with us. One of these was Shozo Mima, a sincere Buddhist. In his heart he believed there must be a Creator and said: "I want to know about the true God." As he had many questions and was always willing to accept Bible answers, I really enjoyed studying with him. He soon became a zealous pioneer Witness and was appointed to care for the congregation after the missionaries left Kyoto. Only 36 Kingdom publishers were there at that time, but now there are 11 congregations and six Kingdom Halls in that city.

Molly and I were transferred to Kumamoto, on the island of Kyushu. We found this to be a strong feudalistic city, and at first it was hard to make headway in declaring the "good news" there. We were joined by Hana Mihara and Margaret Waterer (now Pastor), and we four sisters struggled with the 'ups and downs' of a new congregation. It was a real challenge. But after six years of hard work, we were able to leave a congregation of 31 zealous publishers, some of whom have been in the pioneer service now for many years. Today, there are three congregations in Kumamoto.

Our next move was to Tokyo, where we have served with the Tamagawa and Setagaya Congregations for the past 15 years.

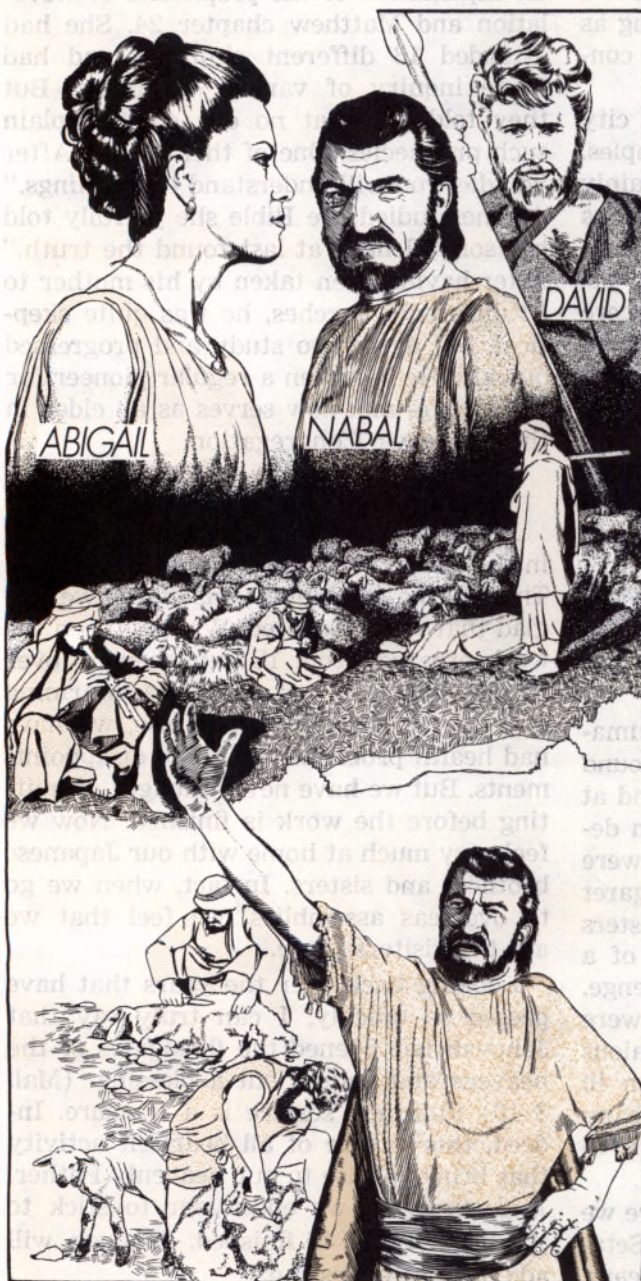
Most of the people with whom we study are from Buddhist families, although some have had contact with the churches of Christendom. When we were first assigned to Setagaya, I met Toshiko Nakamura, who for 20 years had been searching for an explanation of the prophecies of Revelation and Matthew chapter 24. She had attended 13 different churches and had made inquiry of various ministers. But they told her that no one could explain such prophecies. One of them said, "After you die, you will understand these things." As she studied the Bible she joyfully told her son: "I have at last found the truth." After having been taken by his mother to 13 different churches, he was quite skeptical, but agreed to study and progressed quickly. He has been a regular pioneer for eight years and now serves as an elder in the Setagaya Congregation.

#### JEHOVAH POURS OUT BLESSINGS

It has been a great joy to have a share in the disciple-making work here in Japan. Though the beginning was hard, we are glad that we persevered. We have seen the work progress from 12 publishers to over 52,000, and have had many heartwarming experiences. Like everyone else, we have had health problems and some disappointments. But we have never thought of quitting before the work is finished. Now we feel very much at home with our Japanese brothers and sisters. In fact, when we go to overseas assemblies, we feel that we are the visitors there.

Looking back over the years that have passed so quickly, I can truly say that Jehovah has opened the floodgates of the heavens and poured out a blessing. (Mal. 3:10) Full-time service is a treasure. Indeed, this is true of all heartfelt activity that brings praise to our heavenly Father. And surely, if we endeavour to stick to the work till it is finished, Jehovah will add his rich blessing.

# ABIGAIL AN OUTSTANDINGLY DISCREET WOMAN



IN THE person of Abigail, physical beauty and discernment were nicely balanced. This discreet woman of Carmel became the wife of a wealthy man from neighboring Maon. Her husband was a harsh, unreasonable person who lived up to the name "Nabal," meaning "fool," or "senseless one."—1 Sam. 25:2, 3.

The wisdom of Abigail is revealed in her decisive action in a situation involving David. The circumstance was so serious that it could have made David bloodguilty before God and could have brought death to every male in Nabal's household.

During the period of his being declared an outlaw by King Saul, David continued looking out for the interests of his fellow Israelites. For example, he and his men protected Nabal's shepherds and flocks from marauder bands. In view of this, David felt that it was only right for Nabal to be given an opportunity to express appreciation for the services that contributed toward his prosperity. Sheep-shearing time would have been the ideal occasion for Nabal to show such gratitude. That event was treated much like a harvest, being accompanied by feasting.—1 Sam. 25:4-8.

So, from the wilderness of Judah, David sent a delegation of 10 men to Carmel, on the edge of the wilderness. It was there that Nabal engaged in shearing his sheep. Instead of receiving the men kindly, he screamed rebukes at them. On learning about the hostile

reception, David, with about 400 of his sword-bearing men, determined to kill Nabal and all the males of his household.—1 Sam. 25:9-13.

The shepherds of Nabal recognized that their master's hateful response to David's men could bring only trouble on them. That is why one of the servants disclosed to Abigail just what had happened. Immediately she discerned the peril in which Nabal's course had placed the household. Knowing that it was hopeless to get her husband to reason, Abigail took the initiative to handle matters properly. To her, adherence to right principle was more important than the pleasing of a man who had disregarded divine law by repaying good with evil. From the abundant provisions for her husband's feast, she took 200 loaves of bread, two large jars of wine, five prepared sheep, about a bushel of roasted grain, 100 cakes of raisins and 200 cakes of pressed figs. Loaded on donkeys, these provisions were brought to David by the hand of servants. Abigail herself followed.—1 Sam. 25:14-19.

On meeting David, she bowed before him and pleaded with him not to take vengeance. Her plea included the following basic points: Nabal was a fool, a "good-for-nothing man." This implied that he was under divine condemnation and that Jehovah would act against him. In having the facts set before him, David was being held back by Jehovah "from entering into blood-guilt." Then there was the appeal to accept the provisions for his men.—1 Sam. 25:23-27.

Next, with full faith in Jehovah's use of David, Abigail continued: "Jehovah will without fail make for my lord a lasting house, because the wars of Jehovah are what my lord is fighting; and as for badness, it will not be



found in you throughout your days. When man rises up to pursue you and look for your soul, the soul of my lord will certainly prove to be wrapped up in the bag of life with Jehovah your God; but, as for the soul of your enemies, he will sling it forth as from inside the hollow of the sling. And it must occur that, because Jehovah will do to my lord the good toward you according to all that he has spoken, he certainly will commission you as leader over Israel. And let this not become to you a cause for staggering or a stumbling block to the heart of my lord, both by the shedding of blood without cause and by having the hand of my lord itself come to his salvation. And Jehovah will certainly do good to my lord, and you must remember your slave girl."—1 Sam. 25:28-31.

Thus, based on the record that David had made as a valiant warrior, Abigail recognized that he was the anointed of Jehovah. Her words took on a prophetic tone, pointing to the time when there would be a royal house in the line of David. Abigail was confident that Jehovah would protect him, safeguarding his life, or soul, as in a "bag" in which a person might wrap up something valuable. However, this would only be the case if David did not seek to bring salvation or deliverance by his own hand, apart from divine help. He responded favorably.—1 Sam. 25:32-35.

When Abigail returned home, she found Nabal drunk. The next morning, after he was sober, Abigail told her husband everything that had happened. "His heart came to be dead inside him," the import of the whole situation evidently resulting in a stroke. About 10 days later, Nabal appears to have experienced a second stroke, which proved fatal.—1 Sam. 25:36-38.

After this, David proposed marriage to Abigail. In accepting the proposal, Abigail said in all humility: "Here is your slave girl as a maidservant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." Thus she declared her willingness to perform the most menial service. With five maids, she began sharing in the unsettled life of a man who had to continue living as an outlaw because of King Saul. For a time she lived in the Philistine city of Gath and later in Ziklag. Among the hardships that she endured was being taken captive by Amalekite raiders. Happily, however, she was rescued unharmed.—1 Sam. 25:39-42; 30:1-19.

The life of Abigail demonstrates clearly what makes a person discreet from God's viewpoint. She was humble and put loyalty to God above loyalty to a man. It was her recognition of divine direction that made her wise.



# QUESTIONS from READERS

● The Bible records three serious mistakes that David made during his kingship. What shows that God had not failed to do his part to keep David from stumbling, as he did in using Abigail?—1 Sam. 25:32-34.

These mistakes involved (1) David's having the Ark transported on a wagon instead of having it carried on the shoulders of priests, resulting in the death of Uzzah; (2) his sin with Bath-sheba, resulting in the death of both Uriah and the child born of their adultery; and (3) his numbering the armed might of Israel, with the result that 70,000 perished.

With regard to the death of Uzzah: God's law required that David as king make a copy of the Law and read in it every day. (Deut. 17:18) His failure to observe what the Law said regarding the right way to transport the Ark resulted in Uzzah's death. (Num. 4:15; 7:6-9) It is to be noted that David humbly took the blame for what had happened at this attempt to bring up the Ark.—2 Sam. 6:2-10; 1 Chron. 15:12, 13.

As for his affair with Bath-sheba, David had God's explicit law governing the matter of adultery, but chose to disregard it.—Ex. 20:14.

As for his mistake in numbering Israel's armed might: There certainly was willfulness connected with this. Jehovah used Joab to dissuade David, that he might be kept from stumbling, but David insisted on having his own way.—2 Sam. 24:1-17.

In each of the foregoing cases, therefore, Jehovah could not be accused of failure to keep David from stumbling.

● At Habakkuk 2:5, who is the one that "has made his soul spacious just like Sheol," and what does this mean?

The text reads: "And, indeed, because the wine is dealing treacherously, an able-bodied man is self-assuming; and he will not reach his goal, he who has made his soul spacious just like Sheol, and who is like death and

cannot be satisfied. And he keeps gathering to himself all the nations and collecting together to himself all the peoples."

The one who makes "his soul spacious" is one who through military conquests 'gathers to himself all the nations.' Habakkuk chapter 1 shows that this is not an individual but a composite man, the Babylonians or Chaldeans collectively. With his war machine, the Chaldean 'killed nations constantly.' (Vs. 17) His "soul," or the life pattern that pursued conquest, could not be satisfied. As unrestrained drinking of wine may deceptively throw the drinker off balance and make a man act in a "self-assuming" or arrogant manner, so it was with the Chaldean whose military successes had gone to his head. Like Sheol and like death that are always ready to claim more victims, he was ever eager to take over one nation after another. (Compare Proverbs 30:15, 16.) Nevertheless, the Chaldean would not succeed in attaining his goal, indicating that he and his wars of conquest would come to their end.

In fulfillment of Bible prophecy, Babylon fell in one night in the year 539 B.C.E. The vast Chaldean empire then came under the control of Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede.—Dan. 5:28.

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## "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

July 20: Sowing with God's Kingdom in View.  
Page 11. Songs to Be Used: 68, 45.

July 27: Harvesting Fruit Suitable for God's Kingdom. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 94, 92.

# Her Effort Was Blessed



**J**ehovah God blesses those who expend themselves in his service despite such problems as ill health. A certain Christian woman in Barbados writes:

"One Sunday morning when I was feeling very low in spirit and a bit depressed, I still put forth the effort to share in the house-to-house service. Most of the persons I called on that morning manifested [a lack of interest]. That made me feel more depressed. I decided, however, that I would make one more call before quitting. That final call turned out to be better than I had expected, for I later found out that the woman on whom I called was feeling much the same way I felt. She had just come out of the hospital and said she was doing her home chores but 'crying and praying that God would send someone to comfort her.'"

The Witness was able to give the woman the comforting message of God's promised new system of things free from sickness, crying and even death. (Rev. 21:4) This led to a regular Bible study. In just three weeks, the woman was attending Christian meetings. Soon she began sharing the "good news" with others.

"I am happy to report that this woman is now my spiritual sister," writes the Witness. "She was baptized at the 'Living Hope' District Convention. I am so thankful to Jehovah that his spirit, and possibly the angels, enabled me to persevere that Sunday morning despite my physical feelings, for not only did this interested person benefit but this experience has been a source of confirmation to me of the apostle Paul's words, 'when I am weak, then I am powerful.'"—2 Cor. 12:10.