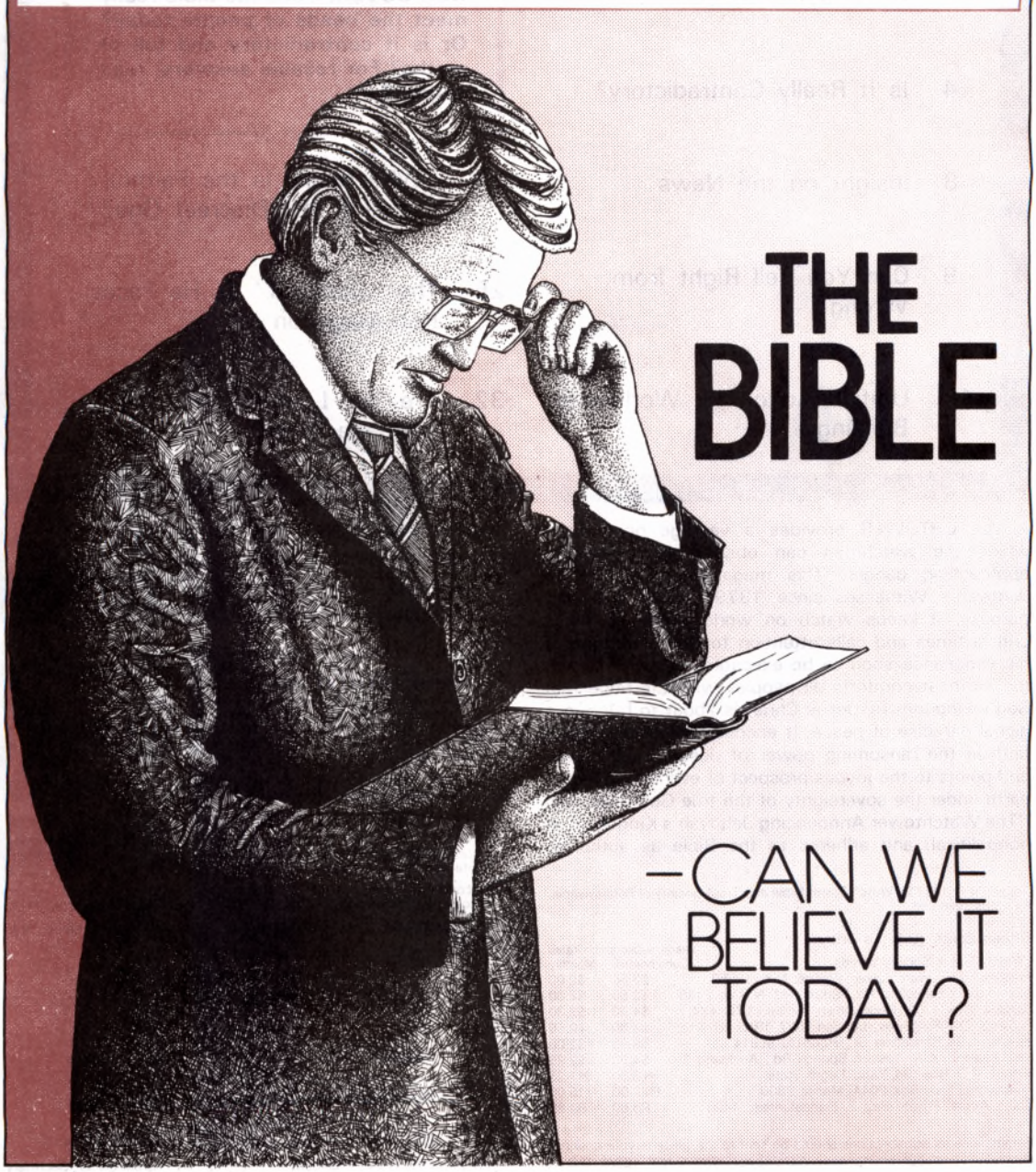
OCTOBER 1, 1981

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



THE BIBLE

—CAN WE BELIEVE IT TODAY?

THE WATCHTOWER®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

October 1, 1981
Vol. 102, No. 19

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OUR COVER: Does the Bible really meet the needs of people today? Or is it contradictory and full of myths? For reliable answers, read pages 3-7

A WATCHTOWER provides a vantage point from which the watchman can observe and warn of approaching danger. This magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, serves a similar purpose. It keeps watch on world events in these critical times and calls attention to God's warning of his vengeance soon to be executed on those ruining the earth. It comforts all peoples with the hope that God's kingdom by Jesus Christ is about to bring in a global paradise of peace. It encourages all to exercise faith in the ransoming power of Jesus' shed blood, and points to the joyous prospect of everlasting life on earth under the sovereignty of the true God, Jehovah. "The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom" is nonpolitical, and adheres to the Bible as authority.

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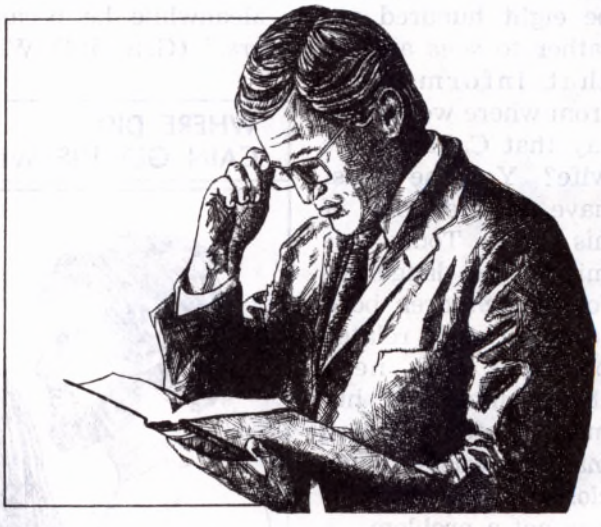
THE BIBLE —CAN WE BELIEVE IT TODAY?

"I SPEAK as a man of the world to men of the world; and I say to you, Search the Scriptures! The Bible is the book of all others, to be read at all ages." These words of American president John Quincy Adams illustrate the way people once viewed the Bible—with deep respect.

But times have changed. While the Bible is still the most widely circulated book, many have doubts about it. A survey in Canada revealed that the majority there fail to read the Bible because they feel that it is "irrelevant, unintelligible and uninteresting." Critics of the Bible say that it is contradictory, unscientific and full of myths. Even clergymen join in these attacks. An official report from a Protestant group in the Netherlands declared that "Bible writers made mistakes and that not all the biblical commands were intended to have lasting validity."

Many persons certainly seem to think the moral commands of the Bible were not "intended to have lasting validity." Fornication, adultery, homosexuality—all forbidden in the Bible—are widely practiced and are publicly endorsed by some clergymen. One Australian clergyman defended the prostitutes operating in his area, saying: "They fulfil a need in society."

Hence, it is not surprising that ordinary people wonder whether they can still believe the Bible. A housewife confessed: "We're supposed to believe the Bible, but nobody really *knows* if it's true. Besides, it contradicts itself."



What are the facts? Is the Bible *inconsistent* and contradictory? Is it full of myths? These are questions that should be resolved. Over the centuries, millions of people have believed the Bible and have tried to live up to its standards. Were they wasting their time? Or is the Bible really a book with a message for this 20th century?

Consider some of the objections that people raise as to belief in the Bible, and let us see how valid they are.

IS IT REALLY CONTRADICTORY?

"ADAM and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain killed Abel and then took a wife. Where did he get his wife?' Did you ever hear that question? It is possibly the one most commonly raised by people who claim that the Bible contradicts itself. Do you know the answer?

The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve had many children, not just two. "The days of Adam after his fathering Seth [another son] came to be eight hundred years. Meanwhile he became father to *sons* and *daughters.*" (Gen. 5:4) With that information, from where would you say that Cain got his wife? Yes, he must have married one of his sisters. Today this might be dangerous for any children born to such closely related parents. But near the beginning of human history, when mankind was so much closer to perfection, it was not a problem.

WHERE DID CAIN GET HIS WIFE?

This question illustrates one reason why some think that the Bible contradicts itself: they do not have all the facts. When they have the complete picture, such seeming contradictions disappear.

Other individuals point to different Bible accounts of the same event and say there are contradictions. For example, in Matthew 8:5, 6 we are told: "When [Jesus] entered into Capernaum, *an army officer* came to him, entreating him and saying: 'Sir, my manservant is laid up in the house with paralysis, being terribly tormented.' " Then he asked Jesus' help. However, the parallel account in Luke says: "He sent forth *older men of the Jews* to [Jesus] to ask him to come and bring his slave safely through." (Luke 7:3) One account says the officer himself asked, whereas the other says he was represented by elders of the Jews.

Does this seem contradictory? If so, then consider what is said at Acts 7:47. There we are told that King Solomon built a temple for Jehovah in Jerusalem. Now, did the writer mean that Solomon himself built the temple? Or was the actual work done by many workmen, while Solomon authorized and organized it? Of course, the latter is the case. Similarly, this military man spoke to Jesus, but he did it through Jewish intermediaries. There is no contradiction in the two accounts. They are merely giving different viewpoints of the same event.

There are many so-called contradictions of this kind. But they are really examples of reporting the same event from different viewpoints. If all Bible writers said *exactly* the same thing, it would strongly suggest that they had copied one another. The fact that they write from different viewpoints proves that there was no collusion, while the fact that they all tell basically the same story shows that they are telling the truth.

IS THE BIBLE SCIENTIFIC?

Sometimes the problem lies in what people *think* the Bible says. For example, in 1633 the Catholic Church condemned Galileo for saying that the earth revolved around the sun. According to *Newsweek* magazine, they now view this as an embarrassing mistake. Why did they make the mistake? One reason given in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* is that Galileo's new teaching contradicted the Bible. In other words, not only the Catholic Church but the Bible, too, was wrong. Is this correct?

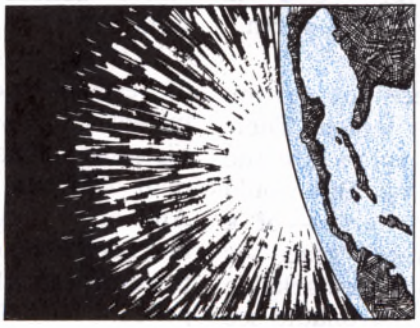
The answer is No. The Bible is not a science textbook. Its main purpose is to tell us about God, his purposes and his dealings with mankind. But it is not unscientific. It sometimes mentions things having to do with natural laws, and often what it says is similar to what scientists tell us today. Why, then, did the Catholic Church feel that Galileo's teaching contradicted the Bible?

According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia,* one Scriptural account they pointed to was in the book of Joshua. There we read that on one occasion the Israelites were in battle and were defeating their foes, but the approach of night threatened to rob them of total victory. So Jehovah, by a great miracle, prolonged the day in order that they could complete their victory. The record says: "Accordingly the sun kept motionless, and the moon did stand still, until the nation could take vengeance on its enemies."—Josh. 10:13.

Does that scripture say that the earth does not revolve around the sun? Or were the inquisitors stretching its application too much? Surely, the Bible writer here did not intend to give a scientific statement about planetary motion. Rather, he tells us what the Israelites saw. They *saw* the sun stand still in the heavens—whether this was brought about by Jehovah's interrupting the rotation of the earth or in some other way.

Similarly today, we say that the sun *rises* in the morning and *sets* in the evening. Does that mean we do not believe in the revolving of the earth around the sun? Of course not. We are merely describing events as they appear to us.

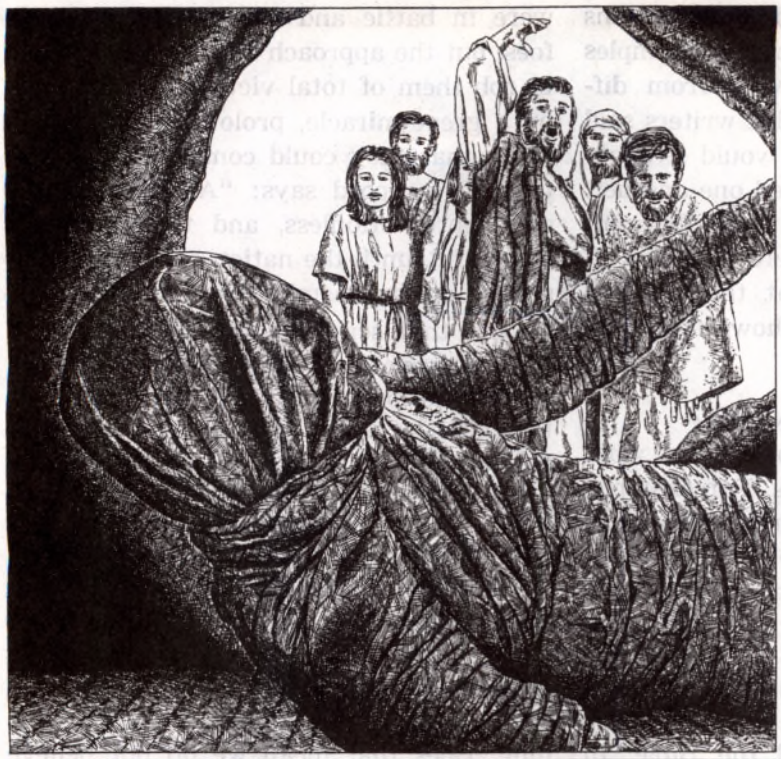
DOES THE BIBLE SAY THE SUN REVOLVES AROUND THE EARTH?



Hence, Galileo's problems were not caused by what the Bible said. Rather, they stemmed from what people *read into* the Bible.

Another misunderstanding appears in the book *World Without End,* by Roger Pilkington. The author says: "All the writers of the Old Testament regarded the Earth as a flat plate." Once again, the Bible is made to appear to contradict science. But does it?

Consider two scriptures that contain descriptions of the earth. One says: "[God] is stretching out the north over the empty



DID MIRACLES REALLY TAKE PLACE—OR WERE THEY ONLY MYTHS?

place, hanging the earth upon nothing." (Job 26:7) The other says: "[God] is dwelling above the circle of the earth." —Isa. 40:22.

Now these scriptures were not written in order to give a science lesson. Their purpose was to help us to appreciate the majesty of Jehovah's Godship. But would you say the picture that emerges—of a round earth hanging in empty space—is unscientific? Rather, it is a remarkable description of exactly what astronauts see when they travel in space. Mr. Pilkington simply was mistaken when he said: "All the writers of the Old Testament regarded the Earth as a flat plate."

WHAT ABOUT MYTHS?

Other people have problems because some Bible narratives seem strange in this scientific 20th century. Today, nobody walks on water, feeds multitudes with a few loaves and fishes, raises the dead or instantly heals the sick. Therefore, these people feel that the accounts of such things in the Bible must be myths.

However, the Bible does not say that miracles were an everyday event in those days. They were startling and unexpected, 'portents and signs' proving that God really was backing up his servant Jesus. (Acts 2:22) Many people then were well educated, and they reacted much as we would do when they saw a miracle performed by Jesus or one of his followers by the power of God's holy spirit. They were "struck with fear" or "filled with astonishment."—Matt. 9:8; Acts 3:10.

It is noteworthy that even the enemies of Jesus did not deny that he performed miracles. They challenged the source of his power. They excommunicated a blind man who had received sight from Jesus. And once they tried to kill a man who had been resurrected by him. But they had to admit that the miracles themselves happened.—Matt. 12:24; John 9:30-34; 11:43-53; 12:9, 10.

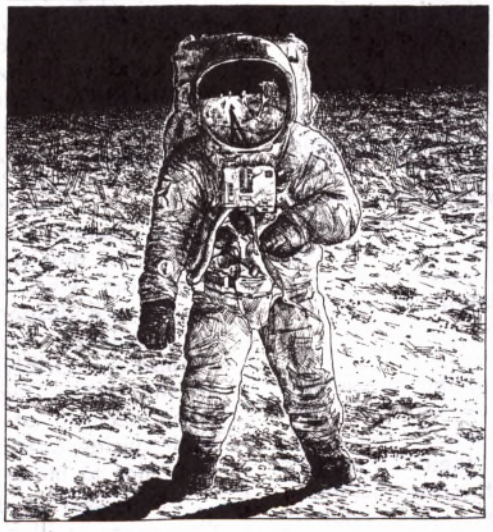
Furthermore, hundreds of people saw Jesus alive after he had been publicly killed by Rome's trained executioners. Some recorded their impressions in writings that we can read today. It affected many of them so much that their lives changed completely. They were now willing to die

for their faith. Would a myth, or a figment of the imagination, have had such an effect?

True, such things do not happen today. But imagine if you were able to speak to people who lived in Jesus' day, and you told them that you had seen a man walking on the moon, that you could speak with people living on the other side of the earth, that you or your friends had flown through the air, and that machines existed that could record things and perform complicated mathematical calculations. What would they say? That you were an imaginative storyteller! Such things did not happen in Jesus' day.

Yet modern technology makes such marvels possible. And surely, the existence of an Almighty God makes all the miracles recorded in the Bible equally possible.

MAN HAS DONE THIS. HOW MUCH MORE GOD CAN DO!



YOU CAN BELIEVE IT

A writer who examined many of the so-called contradictions and "problems" of the Bible came to this conclusion: "When we consider the real grandeur of the Bible and the power of its influence through the ages, the quibbling 'errors' which skeptics hope to prove in it pale into insignificance." (*Does Inspiration Demand Inerrancy?* by Stewart Custer) This is true. Moreover, when all the facts are available, the "errors" prove not to be errors after all.

An Australian scriptwriter confesses that he was a "rationalist bigot" when it came to the Bible. Then he said: "For the first time in my life I did what is normally a reporter's first duty: checked my facts. . . . And I was appalled, because what I was reading [in the Gospel accounts] was not legend and it was *not* naturalistic fiction. It was reporting. First and second-hand accounts of extraordinary events, and sometimes—in the case of Luke—the assembly of documentary evidence together with the results of interviewing eyewitnesses. Reporting has a taste, and that taste is in the Gospels."

We encourage you to follow this man's example and 'check the facts.' Read the Book and expose yourself to the "real grandeur of the Bible." You will find that the Bible is not 'irrelevant, unintelligible or uninteresting.' It is a fascinating account of God's dealings with mankind right from the beginning. It deals with today's most up-to-date problems and gives counsel that is helping many to make a success of their lives. Furthermore, it has a message for this 20th century that cannot be ignored by those who want valid hope and purpose in their lives.

If you find the Bible difficult to understand, Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to assist you in getting the information that it contains. Yes, the words of John Quincy Adams are still true: "The Bible is the book of all others, to be read at all ages." It is still *The* book to be believed and followed, and especially so in this skeptical 20th century.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

The Church and Morals

● The head office of the United Church of Canada sent a draft document to its member churches asking the congregations to discuss and study topics such as masturbation, adultery, divorce and sexual fantasies and to submit their comments for the purpose of establishing Church policy by 1985. Meanwhile, a conference of the Church held in Alberta asked the provincial government to protect the individual's rights in sexual orientation and to provide guidelines on ordination of homosexuals.

Commenting on the position of the Church, Fred Cline, chairman of its Calgary Presbytery, says that the time "is not right for us to force issues. . . . We have to tread carefully. There's too much heat and too much misunderstanding to think about finalizing policy at this time." But on the homosexual issue, another churchman observes that "the church leadership has shown the direction it favors and the rank-and-file is largely following that direction."

What a contrast all of this is to the firm stand taken by the first-century Christian congregation! Rather than looking to public opinion for guidance, or dodging the issue, the apostle Paul spoke out unequivocally on the subject: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, . . . will inherit God's kingdom."—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

Reality or Fantasy?

● Two television stations in the midwestern United States were swamped with over 800 protest phone calls when they interrupted their afternoon soap opera to cover the shooting of Pope John Paul II. Some callers threatened to come over and burn down the station or do physical violence to the people there if the regular program was not restored right away. Similarly, students in a number of schools spontaneously broke out in cheers and applause when they heard the news that President Reagan was hit by an assassin's bullet. Later, when a teacher told her class that the president was all right, the students snapped their fingers and shrugged in disgust.

Particularly disturbing to many is the fact that these were the reactions of apparently normal people who acted in real earnest. One soap-opera fan who called the station said: "I'm a religious person, but the pope is not an American." In the school incidents, a teacher reported: "It was like television to them. Someone shot J. R. [a TV villain], and they cheered. Someone shot Reagan, and they cheered. That's scary."

Clearly, the inability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, the insensibility to the evil of violence and the dismal disrespect for life and authority are all a part of the bad fruitage harvested in these "last days" by those who have become "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God."—Gal. 6:7, 8; 2 Tim. 3:1, 2, 4.

Suicide Kit and Guides

● Do-it-yourself suicide guides are being published by Exit, Britain's voluntary euthanasia society, and Hemlock, its American counterpart. The guides detail the effects of dozens of lethal drugs and poisons, dosages and where to get them. "There's a tremendous hunger for this book," says Derek Humphry, Hemlock's founder-director. He claims that among the estimated 60,000 Americans who commit suicide each year, "many are desperately ill people who do it in needlessly horrible ways. Others maim themselves terribly in the attempt." According to the police, two Exit members who have been accused of assisting seven persons in their suicide admitted merely to helping people "not to make a botch of suicide."

Is this sort of doing really 'helping' these "desperately ill people"? Far from it. Being destitute of hope, many view life as meaningless, worthless, to be put away dispassionately. But the Bible shows that God views life as precious. He holds out to mankind the hope for cure and recuperation. (Isa. 33:24) How much better if these depressed souls could be helped to learn of the time when "death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore"!—Rev. 21:4.

CAN YOU TELL RIGHT FROM WRONG?

DO YOU know the difference between right and wrong? 'Of course I do,' you might say. Yet today's rapidly deteriorating moral standards indicate it is not always so easy to do so.

Even the churches are no longer giving a clear lead. Highlighting the problems many have in this regard, Roman Catholic priest Kevin Madigan said: "Sins aren't that clear-cut any more. Things are changing so rapidly. What's on today's list of sins may not be on tomorrow's." Is there anywhere we can look for help to decide what is right and what is wrong?

One authoritative work that has satisfied the hunger of millions of people for reliable moral guidance is the Bible. This book has not changed its basic principles of morality for 2,000 years. It has stability, practicality and, most importantly for the 1980's, it works.

However, in spite of the fact that the Bible is the world's all-time best seller, and in some countries nearly every home has a copy, there is still widespread moral confusion. This indicates that merely possessing the Bible—and even reading it—does not guarantee that we have learned to tell right from wrong. Something more is needed.

OUR POWER OF PERCEPTION

The writer of the Bible book of Hebrews spoke about this problem. He said: "Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." (Heb. 5:14) Here he shows that those who can successfully tell right from wrong are mature people, not inexperienced or childish persons. They have powers of discernment, so that they can see through deceptive appearances or blandishments and can make right decisions. These powers of discernment have been sharpened by experience or "use." And they are constantly being reinforced by "solid food," or meaty spiritual information from the Bible.

But there are factors that may make it difficult for a Christian to attain to that kind of mature perception.

INHERITED IMPERFECTION

The writer of Hebrews says that our "perceptive powers" are employed in differentiating right from wrong. The Greek word translated "perceptive powers" literally refers to our "organs of perception," or "the perceptive faculties of the mind" (according to *Word Studies in the New Testament,* by Marvin R. Vincent). But our perception so often has a fatal flaw. What is it?

We are imperfect, prone to sin. (Gen. 8:21; Rom. 5:12) So our senses can be deceived into believing that something is good solely because it is something that we want, or it excites us, while, in fact, it may be lethal.

Hence, we need to train our senses not to be easily deceived, as a child would be. We have to learn to exercise moral discrimination as a discerning adult would.

Do you know how to judge values?

What is shiny or sugary sweet may appeal most to the young

For example, a very young child, upon being offered two coins, would naturally select the larger, shinier one over the smaller, duller coin, even if the smaller coin was more valuable. Why? Because he has not been trained to distinguish the value of money. To his untrained senses, the bigger and glossier coin is better.

When he gets older, he may understand better the value of money. But then he may have difficulties with food. He may prefer eating ice cream, candies, cookies and cakes instead of things like vegetables and other body-building foods. Why? Because the sweet things taste better to him.

Similarly in the matter of deciding right and wrong, we have to learn that what is pleasant to our senses is not always right. The *correct* thing may not always be the most exciting or the easiest thing, but it *will* always be morally right and the most beneficial for us. As the writer of the book of Hebrews indicated, it often takes maturity to discern what it is.

POPULARITY AND GLAMOR OF WRONGDOING

A second factor that makes it difficult to tell right from wrong is the fact that in this world wrong conduct is popularized and even glamorized. Scenes that appear today on television and in movies would have scandalized most decent people a few decades ago. Yet now they pass without censure. Why? Because lower moral standards have been introduced gradually, and people have been subtly trained to accept them. Often, morally bad things are portrayed in a situation that appears innocent or humorous, thus confusing a viewer's moral judgment.

As an example of this, notice the comments of one television critic about coming programs in the United States. Doubtless the same could be said for many other lands. She stated:

"We're headed for a sexsational fall season, so you'll have to be your own censor. Among the subjects to be pondered are:

"Should a young teenager sleep with her boyfriend in the same motel in which her mother is having an affair?—CBS 'Midland Heights.'

"Will two virile men masquerading as women score in sexual relations in an all-girls hotel?—ABC 'Bosom Buddies.'

"Those are only samples of what's ahead in September.

"Television will be operating on the theory that all America lives, breathes and thinks is nothing but sex. Not sex in the normal manner . . . but sex in the embarrassing, stupid, juvenile way designed to titillate viewers."

Advertising similarly tries to make wrong appear harmless. It is almost impossible to pick up a magazine, look at a billboard or watch a television commercial and not see an advertisement that panders to the baser instincts. Especially are youths a prime target. "There has been an explosion in sexually suggestive commercials using child models and aiming at the prepuberty set," reports the New York *Times*.

Additionally, well-known personalities in the sporting, social and political fields reveal secrets of their misconduct that would have shocked their followers years ago. But now such things merely excite their fans into imitating their life-styles.

All this propaganda can result in a dulling of our perception of what is right and wrong. To counteract it, we need to sharpen our perception through regular meditation on the benefits of applying a higher, divine moral standard.—Ps. 119:104.

PEER PRESSURE

Another factor is peer pressure. It is natural for us to want to be liked by others. But in this there is a danger. Workmates, schoolmates, neighbors, family members or anyone with whom we associate can exert a strong, persuasive influence on us to distort our discernment of right and wrong. One survey has revealed that only 10 percent of the adult population bases moral decisions upon their conscience guided by chosen ethical principles regardless of what others believe.

In Coming Issues

- **Pleasing Jehovah as a Family**
- **Sexual Morality—Is It Really Possible?**
- **The "End of the World"—Something to Hope For**

The Bible shows that we should resist peer pressure to do wrong, saying: "You went along with the crowd and were just like all the others, full of sin." (Eph. 2:2, *The Living Bible*) However, that desire to be liked by others can be harnessed for good, if we associate with those whose moral standards we can respect because they are noble and godly. So, "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.

Yes, Christians can sharpen their moral perceptiveness by regular association at Christian meetings where God's elevated moral principles are respected. This can be a wholesome type of "peer pressure."

COMPLEXITY OF MODERN LIVING

A fourth factor is the complexity of modern living. Jesus told us what kind of conduct is wrong, saying: "Out of the

heart come wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, fornications, thieveries, false testimonies, blasphemies." (Matt. 15:19) These words are not hard to understand.

But what about the so-called gray area where decisions about right and wrong may not be so clear-cut? In matters of recreation, business dealings, music and dancing, styles of dress, and so forth, it is often difficult to say just when a practice becomes a sin.

Suppose a married man happens to see a woman (not his wife) and takes note of the fact that she is good-looking and well-dressed. Is he breaking God's law? Probably not. But suppose this same man looks at the woman with interest, speculates as to whether she is "available," if she will pass that way the next day, and so forth. At what point does he pass the invisible line and commit immorality with her "in his heart"?—Matt. 5:28.

Similarly, a woman may relax by watching television or reading magazines. Suddenly, she realizes that she is fantasizing romantically with someone on the television screen or on the magazine page. When did *she* cross that invisible line?

What is the moral boundary between a good business deal and a shrewd, cunning one? Or when does a dance, or a dress, cease to be modest and become seductive or suggestive? When does a drinker of alcoholic beverages become a 'heavy drinker'? (Prov. 23:20) When does a Christian cease to ask spiritually healthy questions in faith and become a doubter or a skeptic?

In such matters, we need keen "perceptive powers" so as to be able to tell right from wrong. Particularly can youths and newly baptized Christians be deceived in these areas. Inexperienced young persons are not acquainted with the subtle ways of this corrupting world, and newly baptized persons are not always aware of just how Bible principles should be applied. Both need to have their "perceptive powers" further trained, and this can be done only by taking in more "solid food"—firm, reliable truths from God's Word, the Bible.—Heb. 5:13, 14.

All Christians need to be "stabilized in the faith." (Col. 2:6, 7) Then the changing winds of the moral philosophies of this world will not deceive or seduce us. Parents and Bible teachers do well to remember that serving Jehovah means more than knowing the doctrines of the Kingdom. It also means understanding and following God's righteousness.—Matt. 6:33.

As the 'anything goes' moral code becomes more entrenched in this world, let us now become more decisive in aligning our way of life with the sure standards of our heavenly Father. And as the world breaks all the rules of godly conduct—thus betraying an "unintelligent heart" and an 'emptyheadedness in their reasonings'—let us train our "perceptive powers" through regularity in reading the Bible and meditating on it. Let us associate with others of "like precious faith" who can exert a wholesome "peer pressure" on us and can strengthen us against corruption. In the same way, let us help others to "behave in a manner worthy of the good news."—Rom. 1:21, 28; Phil. 1:27; 2 Pet. 1:1, *Authorized Version.*

Though confusion rules this world's moral standards, Christians are trained to distinguish right from wrong. They follow the fine advice: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things." If you regularly do this, "the God of peace will be with you."—Phil. 4:8, 9.

UNIFIED ACTION FOR WORLDWIDE BUILDING

FROM Sweden to Korea, from Australia to the Ivory Coast, Jehovah's Witnesses are building. Projects under way in over a score of countries range from renovations to major new factory and office buildings. Why all this building activity?

Jehovah's Witnesses take seriously Jesus' command to "make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matt. 28:19) Have you ever thought about all the work that commission entails? During 1980 alone, zealous Witnesses the world over distributed more than 22 million bound books and Bibles as well as over 218 million magazines—all containing the life-saving message of God's kingdom. From where did those books, magazines and Bibles come? They were printed in factories built and operated by Jehovah's Witnesses. The workers operating those factories are housed as a large family in homes called Bethel, meaning "house of God."

The Witnesses who distribute this literature meet regularly in 43,181 congregations, which are located in practically every country on earth. Those congregations are looked after by local branch offices. As congregations grow (last year 581 new ones were formed), branch facilities become strained and must be enlarged or replaced. Who does the construction work? The local Witnesses whenever possible. The same zeal that fires Kingdom-preaching activity and literature placement comes to the construction site.

UNITY ON THE JOB SITE

"Why is it you do not have any quarrels among you?" asked a non-Witness carpenter in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. "On other sites it is very difficult to work." His comments have been echoed many times by other non-Witnesses helping in the construction of a modest-sized new Bethel home and branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Ivory Coast, where the number of congregations has quadrupled in 10 years.

Such unity should not be surprising among Christian witnesses of Jehovah in view of Jesus' prayer that his followers would be united. (John 17:23; compare Psalm 133.) As a Witness in Abidjan put it: "This is Jehovah's construction site."

On another continent, South America, a large Bethel home and factory complex is being completed. This huge new project in Brazil contains almost six times the floor space of the previous facility. The number of Witnesses in that land is the second largest for any country in the world and is growing rapidly, having increased 6 percent last year. A local newspaper called the construction site in Cesario Lange "a city within a city," adding: "There, there are no disorders or lack of cooperation as customarily found between workers on large constructions. . . . This Christian atmosphere makes it different here from that customarily seen in Brazilian civil construction." And what a construction job it has been—requiring 10,000 truckloads of concrete, stone and

sand, and enough concrete pilings to reach twice the height of Mt. Everest!

Another beehive of Witness construction is found in Australia, where the Campbelltown Ingleburn *News* commented, "Some would call work at the Jehovah's Witnesses new Australian complex at Ingleburn a builder's dream." Why? "There are no industrial disputes of any kind." Jehovah's Witnesses comprise the entire work force of 220 workers at the site. When completed in 1982, this complex will greatly assist the Kingdom-preaching activities of 31,686 Witnesses scattered across Australia's giant landmass.

Among the 175 volunteer workers on construction of the new Danish branch are 46 family groups. To volunteer, the Jensen family sold their home and business

ROLE OF GOD'S SPIRIT

These comments by newspaper writers and other observers are merely representative of what is being noted all over the world. As workers, Jehovah's Witnesses have a noteworthy spirit of unity and purpose. What is its source? God's holy spirit, or active force, which promotes unity and peace.—Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 4:3.

The motivating power of God's spirit is evident in the comments of those who have volunteered to work on various construction projects worldwide. In Denmark, for example, the present branch facilities were built in 1957 and have become quite cramped. The new 50-room Bethel home now under construction will allow for a larger staff, and this will make it possible to print the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines with the full 32 pages in the Danish language, instead of only 24 pages, as at present. The new facilities will also include a branch office and a large factory. "With the new branch buildings we will be able to improve our service to the brothers and to the territory in our care," reports the branch. Such territory includes the scattered places of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

In order to help out with this project, a Danish Witness who is a skilled plumber and a family man made this decision: "When the building work was due to start, I handed in my notice [to quit secular work] and we sold our furniture. We were confident that when we had finished the building work I would find both a job and a home again. We will think of that when the time comes. We have experienced how Jehovah provides when we put him to the test and seek his kingdom first." Truly a fine expression of faith in Jesus' advice at Matthew 6:25-33!

A similar spirit has been evident in Canada, where Witnesses from all over that large country have volunteered to help with the construction of a new branch office and factory near Toronto. The new factory building is half again as long as a football field and 240 feet (73 m) wide, and the new residence build-

ing will accommodate 250 Bethel family members. In Canada an all-time high of over 66,000 Kingdom publishers was reached in 1980.

One Canadian Witness closed down his business and moved 2,200 miles (3,540 km) to supervise the installation of the extensive roofing system at the new complex. Eventually his wife and two sons followed. The Witness reports: "Our spirituality has been lifted high by the experience. It has made our family pioneer-minded and we propose to pursue pioneering [full-time preaching activity] after leaving the project. It has given us a pioneer spirit that we never had before."

Very interesting is a comment from an Australian Witness. Married, with two children, he closed down his building contracting business, sold his home and moved his family 930 miles (1,500 km) to the construction site of the new Australian Bethel. "Until we made the decision to come we did not appreciate how deeply we were involved in our secular business activities and just how long it would take to break free from these worldly ties," he admits candidly. "We have come to be so much more satisfied with 'the things we really need' and are determined to maintain our freedom for a fuller share in 'sacred service.' "—Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:5.

MOTIVATED TO LEARN

Of course, not all the workers helping to build new Bethel homes and factories are experienced builders. Even as Jehovah's spirit has motivated master craftsmen to volunteer for Bethel construction, it has also moved young and inexperienced ones to come, and has helped them to master new trades.

In Sweden there are about 17,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses. Five thousand of these volunteered to help build the new Swedish Bethel! That is more than one out of every four Kingdom publishers in the country. The new facility contains over an acre (.4 ha) of floor space just for printing, allowing greatly improved service to the Swedish field. Although 85 percent of the volunteers were unskilled, they did good work. One sister, a hairdresser by profession, learned to survey so well that she was immediately hired by a building firm when she returned home from helping on the project.

In Brazil, when it proved impossible to buy good-quality aluminum windows, 20 Witnesses with no previous experience fabricated over 700 of them after brief training. And in Italy, where a new factory was recently completed, young Witnesses learned to operate cranes, use a Caterpillar tractor, make concrete, operate a plaster machine and lay bricks. The new factory is badly needed in Italy, where the 90,191 Italian Kingdom proclaimers were overjoyed to have a Memorial attendance this year of 187,165!

New Bethel home in Canada, from which the activity of over 66,000 Canadian Witnesses is directed

A young Witness in Australia was about to return to college when he heard some experiences that made him want to help with the building program in that country. "After a year I decided to go into the full-time preaching work rather than go back to the university," he says. "Looking back now, I can see how the project gave me experience spiritually and was a stepping-stone for me to break away from the university life that I enjoyed but that was leading me in the wrong way."

In Germany, hundreds of male and female volunteers assist on weekends in constructing Bethel home and printery at Selters

UNIFIED SUPPORT IN THE FIELD

Not all of Jehovah's Witnesses can work full time on branch construction crews, but all can support that work—and support it they do! In Spain, for example, where the number of Witnesses has grown from 10,000 to well over 47,000 in the last decade, there is urgent need for new branch facilities. An ideal site was found with a partially completed building of the right size already located on it. The problem was that the owner wanted payment in cash, a considerable sum!

There was little time to raise the money. Could the Spanish Witnesses help out? The answer was an immediate and wholehearted Yes! Some "came forward with their gold and silver rings, bracelets and necklaces," reports the branch. "Little children sent in their savings. Special pioneers asked that portions of their annual clothing and medical allowance be used for the Bethel project. Many brothers sacrificed their vacation plans. A congregation in Huelva regularly goes en masse to a brother's junkyard to sort scrap, and a group of youngsters in Barcelona stuff envelopes for a yogurt company. In each case, the proceeds from these activities add up to goodly sums sent in monthly for the Bethel project."

Is that not God's spirit in action? How it reminds us of the response of the Israelites when given opportunity to make contributions for the construction of the tabernacle!—Ex. 35:4-9, 21, 22; 36:7.

So it goes around the world. In the Netherlands, where 845 new Kingdom publishers were baptized in 1980, a new Bethel and printery is under way. In addition to 80 persons at a time helping on weekends, the local brothers have helped in other ways. Huge amounts of tools and work clothing have been donated, some in touching ways. "One sister," reports the branch, "very ill and knowing she had only a short time to live, undertook to knit a pair of woolen stockings for each of the workers for the winter period."

In South Africa, where *The Watchtower* is printed in 13 languages, additional space is needed for translators and printing equipment. So work has begun on a new complex. "Support from the brothers has truly been heartwarming," the branch

tells us. "One congregation arranged to pick oranges for a farmer who offered them two thirds of the proceeds for the building fund. Many sisters sold second-hand clothing . . . one elderly couple gave a silver tea set to be sold."

Young ones manifest the same spirit. In the Federal Republic of Germany, where books are printed for most European countries, the original branch in Wiesbaden has been enlarged five times, and possibilities for further expansion have been exhausted. So a completely new complex in Selters, some 25 miles (40 km) away, is now under construction to help meet the needs of the European field by supplying literature in 14 languages. The large new factory building will have more floor space than four soccer fields. It is a striking example of "organic" architecture, designed to function harmoniously with the needs of those using the complex, where there will be accommodations for 450 Witness volunteers to live and work. Little Matthias, only six years old, "slaughtered" his piggy bank to contribute to the construction effort, giving the equivalent of over 25 dollars!

To assist in building the new Australian printery, many Witnesses, like Peter and Raelynn Johnson, traveled thousands of miles

When the British Isles branch was dedicated in 1959 it was more than adequate, but now the story is different. The number of Kingdom proclaimers has more than doubled since then, so the Bethel home is being enlarged to accommodate more personnel. Also, a factory a few miles away has been purchased to house a new four-color offset press. As needs become known, Jehovah's spirit motivates the brothers to respond. A brother was asked to obtain a price on protective helmets for construction workers. Two days later he reported: "I haven't got the price. I've got the helmets instead."

WILLING "WEEKEND WORKERS"

In many countries "weekend workers" are making a large contribution to branch construction. In the Ivory Coast, four of the 16 Abidjan congregations are invited to assist in branch construction every Sunday, and so far well over 10,000 hours have been spent by the brothers in this work. In Italy, between 30 and 50 brothers help out on a weekly basis, supplementing the permanent work crew. They come from all over Italy as well as the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. "In this way," comments the branch, "all the Italian brothers are involved in this building work."

There were 10,711 Witnesses in Japan in 1971, but by June 1981, the number was up to 62,381, or a 482-percent increase! No wonder the Bethel home and printing factory built in the early 1970's were quickly found to be too small! The new complex being built in Ebina is one of the largest construction projects ever

undertaken by Jehovah's Witnesses anywhere in the world. The main building covers about nine acres (3.6 ha) of ground and includes space for two large color offset presses. Work started on the new Bethel home and factory in 1978, and volunteer response has been overwhelming. The first and third Saturdays of each month are designated volunteer service days for branch construction in Japan, and persons from congregations near and far come by car, train or chartered bus to share in the work. More than 1,000 have appeared on one Saturday, bringing their lunches to make a day of it. With hundreds of willing hands, even nail pulling becomes enjoyable work.

In Australia, where the new Bethel home will accommodate 135, very good use has been made of temporary workers. In August of 1980 a special two-week program was instituted for workers who wanted to help but could not arrange to move their families for a long period. "Within the first six months, around 500 brothers have traveled in and stayed with us," reports the overseer of the program. "Most have had a round trip of at least 2,000 kilometers [1,240 mi.], while some have covered a return distance of 8,500 kilometers [5,270 mi.]."

These willing workers, 'aglow with God's spirit,' are happy to bear the expense of travel to the work site, as well as the loss of income for two weeks. (Rom. 12:11) "One group of brothers, nine all told, pay their own fares to travel by air from the Gold Coast to Sydney, a distance of approximately 1,000 kilometers [620 mi.], each time they are needed for a major concrete pour," says the branch, adding: "And each time they radiate a spirit of joy in being able to have a share in the work. The only compensation they ask is to be invited again."

Others in Australia are making a contribution too. They are doing so with their Christian hospitality. "As we usually try to organize coach travel for each interstate group, congregations en route supply meals and association at each rest point," explains the program overseer. "To see how each congregation has been willing to do that is wonderful! One small group of 30 publishers was prepared to pay the cost of a restaurant breakfast for the busload because at the time the bus was due to go through their town they would be away attending a circuit assembly in another area." Truly, these Australian Witnesses are doing a "faithful work," sending their brothers "on their way in a manner worthy of God."—3 John 5, 6.

"SACRIFICE OF PRAISE"

Yes, Jehovah's Witnesses are willingly giving of their time, energy and money in building projects all over the world. Printing equipment will be installed, or has been installed, in new buildings in Canada, Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden, the Federal Republic of Germany, England, Ghana, Zambia, South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil and Japan. And the list constantly grows longer.

The true sacrifice being made in all these lands is 'a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to Jehovah's name.' (Heb. 13:15) It is because of their zealous public declaration of Jehovah's name that his faithful witnesses need to build offices and factories, to oversee the preaching work and to print magazines and bind books. So it should be no surprise that God's unifying spirit is helping his people to work in love and unity on these building projects, for they are in harmony with his will that the "good news" be preached the world over in these "last days."—Matt. 24:14; Acts 2:17-21.

"WHO REALLY IS THE FAITHFUL STEWARD, THE DISCREET ONE?"

"Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants?"—Luke 12:42.

THE question is now more than 1,900 years old. Many hundreds of thousands today believe they have found the answer. Those not finding the answer are failing to get benefits that affect their eternal future. The question is this: "Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time?"—Luke 12:42.

[2] The question was first raised in the Middle Eastern land of Israel. The time was in the year 32 of our Common Era, between the Israelite celebration of tabernacles in the autumn and the festival of the dedication of their rebuilt temple at Jerusalem in the early winter. The man raising the question has become a controversial figure worldwide. His name is Jesus Christ. His question ought therefore to have special appeal to Christendom, as she speaks of him as "Lord" and claims to be full of his disciples.

[3] According to the Bible account, the *searching* question was raised in answer to another question and was directed to persons who were interested in the greatest government ever to be established over the earth, the kingdom of the Creator of heaven and earth, "the kingdom of God." That is why Jesus Christ said beforehand to his Israelite listeners: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom. Sell the things belonging to you and give gifts of mercy. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, a never-failing treasure in the heavens, where a thief does not get near nor moth consumes. For where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also.

[4] "Let your loins be girded and your lamps be burning, and you yourselves be like men waiting for their master when he returns from the marriage, so that at his arriving and knocking they may at once open to him. Happy are those slaves whom the master on arriving finds watching! Truly I say to you, He will gird himself and make them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them. And if he arrives in the second watch, even if in the third, and finds them thus, happy are they! But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have kept watching and not have let his house be broken into. You also, keep ready, because at an hour that you do not think likely the Son of man is coming."—Luke 12:32-40.

1. How old is the question that is before us, and what do those not finding the answer fail to get?
2. (a) When was the question first raised, and by whom? (b) To whom should the question appeal, and why?
3, 4. (a) Jesus' listeners were interested in what, and so over what did he tell them not to have fear? (b) What two illustrations did Jesus give respecting the need for them to keep on the watch?

[5] What the Lord Jesus Christ there said the apostle Peter called a "parable," for Luke's account goes on to say: "Peter said, 'Lord, are you telling this parable [*parabolé*] for us or for all?' " (Luke 12:41, *Revised Standard Version* and other translations) So, logically, what Jesus said in reply would be considered a parable, which would picture or illustrate certain realities to come in the future. That is, Jesus' reply in Luke 12:42-44 would form part of the parable of the "faithful and wise steward." (*RSV*) As we now examine the parable, we should keep in mind Peter's question, which carries over in its application to this follow-up parable, namely, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?" (Luke 12:41, *New International Version; The Living Bible*) We ask, therefore, Does this parable of the "steward" apply to a class, an "us" class, the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ, or to everyone then listening to Jesus and, today, to every individual reading Jesus' parable, regardless of his religious connections inside or outside Christendom? Is the parable a class affair or an individual one?

"HIS MASTER"

[6] Jesus did not directly answer Peter's question concerning the preceding "parable," but offered another parable in reply, saying: "Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time? Happy is that slave, if his master on arriving finds him doing so! I tell you truthfully, He will appoint him over all his belongings."—Luke 12:42-44, *New World Translation.*

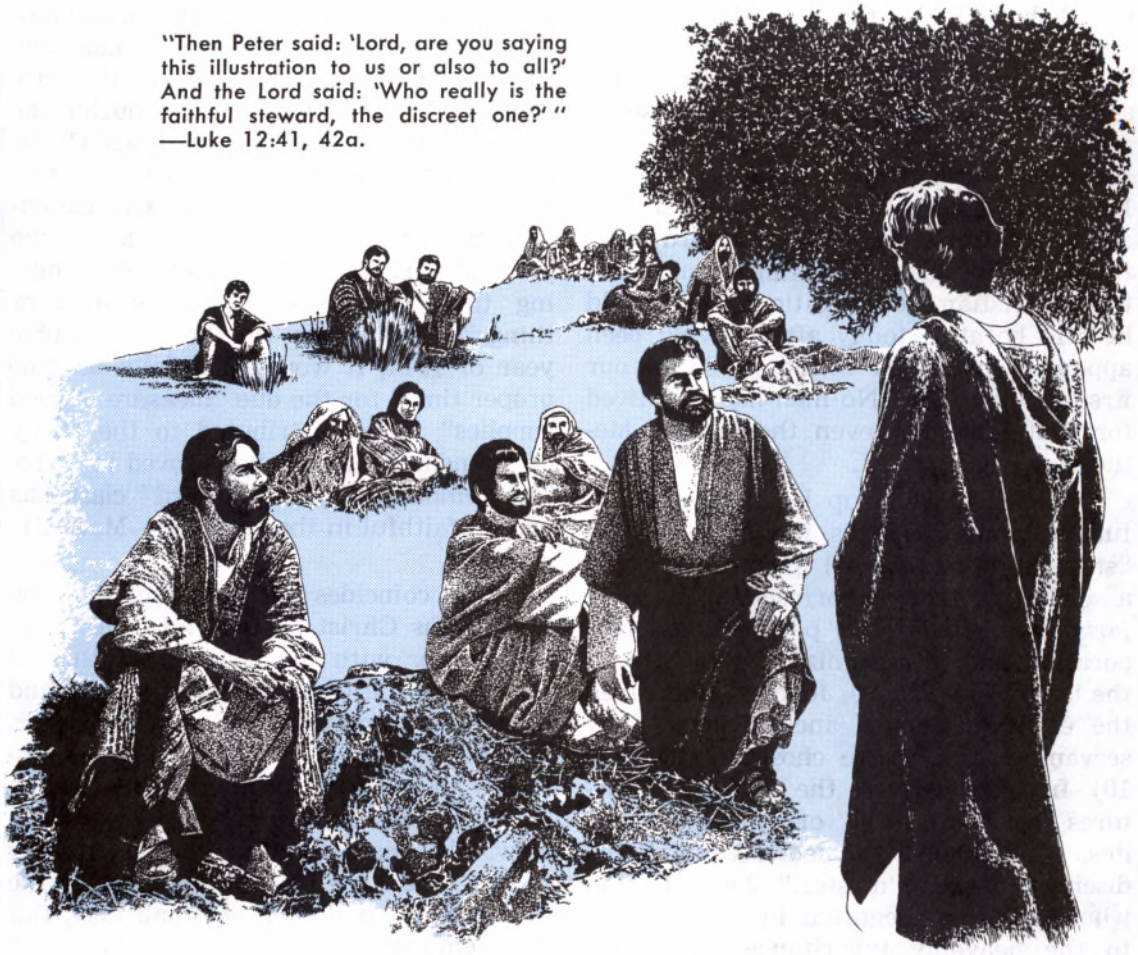
5. (a) What did Peter call Jesus' words of exhortation, and so how would Jesus' reply be classified? (b) Peter's question as to the application of Jesus' words raises what question as to how Jesus' words in reply apply?
6. With what parable did Jesus reply to Peter's question?

[7] No one will question that the "master" of the faithful steward pictures the teller of the parable himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the parable that raised Peter's question Jesus pictured himself as being a bridegroom, who, because of the marriage festivities, returns home at an uncertain hour of the night or early morning. (Luke 12:35-40) Certainly, then, those involved in the fulfillment of Jesus' parable should keep on the watch, especially during the "conclusion of the system of things."—Matt. 24:3.

[8] In the case of the parable of the steward, the master has a "body of attendants," of which the steward himself is one. This matches the fact that the teller of the parable, the Lord Jesus Christ, has a household in a spiritual sense. To that effect it is written, in Hebrews 3:4-6: "He that constructed all things is God. And Moses as an attendant was faithful in all the house of that One as a testimony of the things that were to be spoken afterwards, but Christ was faithful as a Son *over* the house of that One." The prophet Moses was over the house of the 12 tribes of Israel at the start of that nation. Jesus Christ, as the Greater Moses, has been over the house of spiritual Israel from the day of Pentecost of 33 C.E. down till now. Revelation 7:1-8 reveals that the "house" is made up of 144,000 spiritual Israelites, divided into 12 tribes of 12,000 each. This is a "house" made up of spiritual sons of God, like their Head Jesus Christ himself. These collectively compose the "little flock," to whom, as Jesus said, Jehovah God the heavenly Father has approved of giving the celestial kingdom.—Deut. 18:15-18; Luke 12:32; Acts 3:19-23.

7. Whom does the steward's "master" picture, and so what attitude should those involved with that "master" maintain during "the conclusion of the system of things"?
8. Since when has Jesus Christ been "master" over a "body of attendants," and how does Revelation 7:1-8 describe them?

"Then Peter said: 'Lord, are you saying this illustration to us or also to all?' And the Lord said: 'Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one?' " —Luke 12:41, 42a.



[9] So the 144,000 spiritual sons of God make up the "body of attendants" over which the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, appoints the "steward" of the parable. The identity of that parabolic "steward" (*oikonómos,* Greek; *so·khen',* Hebrew—Delitsch translation) is still a matter of controversy among many professed Christians. If we say that the "steward" pictures an individual Christian man, we run into insurmountable difficulties. For example, the parable indicates that the steward's master goes away on some journey and, after an indefinite absence, comes back home at an unspecified hour. In the first century C.E. a definite hour could not be fixed, for then mankind did not have modern conveniences such as telephones, radio communication and the means of speedy travel with fixed time schedules.

[10] According to Jesus' words, the "steward" was appointed over the "body of attendants" before his master left on his journey. Accordingly, since the steward's master pictured the Lord Jesus Christ, his "steward" was appointed before his departure by his ascension back to heav-

9. If it is argued that the "steward" pictures an individual Christian man, one appointed in the first century C.E., what difficulty is encountered as to fixing a definite time of the master's arrival?

10. What difficulty arises as to the age length of any individual Christian man at the time of the 'master's' arrival?

en 10 days before the Jewish festival of Pentecost, 33 C.E. The "steward" was to be alive and faithful at his appointed responsibility at the time of his master's return. It has now been 19 centuries since the Lord Jesus Christ departed for his heavenly Father's home. Hence, if anyone argues that the parabolic "steward" pictures an individual Christian man in the true Christian congregation, how could he still be alive today after having been appointed by Jesus Christ in 33 of our first century C.E.? No man has ever lived for that long, not even the famous Methuselah.—Gen. 5:27.

[11] Reason, backed up by similar Scriptural examples, makes it clear that the "steward" (*oikonómos*) pictures a class, a collective body, corresponding to a *juristic person,* a legal person like a corporation that is recognized by the law of the land. For instance, Jehovah God called the entire nation of ancient Israel "my servant whom I have chosen." (Isa. 43:10) In like manner, the "steward" pictures the "little flock" of spiritual Israelites, the full body of dedicated, baptized disciples of the "master," Jesus Christ, who have been begotten by God's spirit to the heavenly inheritance with their "master," the glorified Jesus. This composite "steward" was alive and available for being appointed by the departing Master, and a remnant of that "steward" class is on earth today and proving faithful to the Master Jesus Christ. Since each member is faithful and discreet, the whole class is also.

[12] In the parable the "steward" was appointed over his master's "body of attendants" in order "to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time." (Luke 12:42) Through the composite "steward" class this purpose has been fulfilled down till now. During the first century C.E. that was the case, during the days of the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ down to the death of the last surviving apostle, John, who made his final contributions to the Holy Scriptures about the year 98 C.E. (John 21:20-23) Now, during this "conclusion of the system of things" that began in the catastrophic year of 1914, it would especially be "the proper time" for the due "measure of food supplies" to be distributed to the "body of attendants," and it has proved to be so. The remnant of the "steward" class has proved faithful in that respect.—Matt. 24:3-14.

[13] This coincides with the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ entered into the Kingdom power with his heavenly Father at the end of the Gentile Times in 1914 and thus finally got what he went away for. (Luke 19:12) He could thus return invisibly in spiritual form, with the holding of an accounting with his "steward" in view. Till this accounting the distributing of the "measure of food supplies at the proper time" had been no small task. But the members of the "steward" class have worked together in distributing the spiritual "food supplies" to one another progressively as Jehovah God called others to become heirs of the Kingdom, members of the "little flock."

APPOINTED "OVER ALL HIS BELONGINGS"

[14] In his parable of the faithful and discreet "steward," the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, spoke of him as a "slave" and said: "Happy is that slave, if his master on arriving finds him doing so!" Why? Says Jesus: "I tell you truthfully,

11. So, instead of an individual Christian man, the "steward" pictures what, and what Scriptural support is there for this view?

12. What was the purpose in appointing the "steward" over the "body of attendants," and do the facts show whether this purpose has been carried out by the "steward" class?

13. The Lord Jesus Christ returned with what in view respecting the "steward" class, and what had this class been doing till then?

14. Why was it to be a happy time for the "steward" when his master returned and found him doing his duty as a slave?

He will appoint him over all his belongings."—Luke 12:43, 44.

15 This means that, as a reward for showing himself faithful and discreet and keeping constantly awake in expectation of his master's return, the "slave" is given greater responsibility as a "steward." This was possible. Why so? Because the master had successfully gained something by his journey and came back with more than what he had when he departed. His "belongings" had been enhanced, and thus there was more over which to appoint his faithful "steward." His being continued in the office of "steward" would signify serving in a larger capacity. His master himself had returned in a larger capacity than that in which he had found himself when he went away on his certain mission. In this modern-day fulfillment of the parable this has been true with respect to the remnant of the "steward" class and his Master, the glorified Jesus Christ.

16 How, though, can we confirm that this has been the proper time for the remnant of the "steward" class to be appointed over the enlarged "belongings," or interests, of the Master? Well, several verses after the parable, Jesus said: "I came to start a fire on the earth, and what more is there for me to wish if it has already been lighted?" (Luke 12:49) This figurative language was in line with what John the Baptizer had foretold concerning Jesus just a few months beforehand. Among other things, John said: "That one will baptize you people with holy spirit and with fire. His winnowing shovel [for separating the grain from the chaff] is in his hand, and he will completely clean up his threshing floor, and will gather his wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn up with fire that cannot be put out."—Matt. 3:11, 12.

17 Those prophetic words indicate that the fiery end of the Jewish system of things was due. Like chaff, the non-Christianized Jews would go through a fiery experience. This would end up with the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews from Palestine worldwide. The Roman legions saw to this in 70 C.E.

18 Thirty-seven years before burning up the symbolic "chaff" with unquenchable "fire" in 70 C.E., Jesus Christ gave his prophecy setting out the "sign" of the fiery "conclusion of the system of things" worldwide as well as the sign of his invisible "presence" in the spirit. Well along in the body of that prophecy he referred to a "faithful and discreet slave" who would be at work on the earth when the world system of things neared its end. Jesus' remarks concerning this "slave" are very much like those concerning the "faithful steward, the discreet one." Plainly they apply to the same class, but the term "steward" is specific as to the type of work that the "slave" does.

19 Note Jesus' description: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings." (Matt. 24:45-47) Members of the "faithful and discreet slave" class, the "steward" class, served diligently up to the end of the Jewish system of things in 70 C.E. The remaining mem-

15. Why would the 'steward's' being appointed over all his master's "belongings" be a happifying experience for him?

16. What words of Jesus, spoken shortly after the parable, indicate that he was giving the parable of the "steward" in a fiery time?

17. Who of Jesus' day were to go through a fiery experience, with what catastrophe as a climax?

18, 19. (a) In Jesus' prophecy on the "sign" of the "conclusion of the system of things," what illustration did he give that corresponds with the parable of the "steward"? (b) Did the members of that class prove faithful and discreet during the conclusion of the Jewish system in Palestine, and how has the remnant of that class been doing during this "conclusion of the system of things"?

bers of the "slave" class, the "steward" class, have been proving themselves faithful and discreet during the modern-day "conclusion of the system of things" since the year 1914 C.E.

[20] The remnant of the "steward" class is easily identifiable today, for they line up with what Jesus, the Master, said to those who would form the original part of the "steward" class. Just before ascending from the Mount of Olives back to heaven, Jesus said to them: "You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) In being witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ those Jewish disciples had to be at the same time witnesses of his God and Father, Jehovah. They never ceased to be Jehovah's witnesses!

[21] Those Jewish disciples had to be witnesses of Jehovah, for by birth they belonged to the nation to whose forefathers God had said: " 'You are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'even my servant whom I have chosen, . . . So you are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I am God.' " (Isa. 43:10-12) Thus those Jewish witnesses of Jehovah were now to become witnesses also of his Son Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost, 10 days after his ascension back to heaven, they were baptized with the holy spirit and were in this way appointed by their glorified Master Jesus Christ to be over his "body of attendants," to give them spiritual food. That is how they became the first or original members of the composite "steward." They gave a fine start to this class.

[22] This "steward" class is a people for Jehovah's name. This fact was emphasized some time after the year 36 C.E., at a special meeting of the apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem congregation. There James, the half brother of Jesus Christ, said: "Symeon [that is, the apostle Simon Peter] has related thoroughly how God for the first time turned his attention to the nations [the uncircumcised Gentiles] to take out of them a people for his name."—Acts 15:1-14.

[23] Such non-Jews became part of the first-century "steward" class. As a result, this class was the anointed people for God's name, which name is Jehovah. God's name, Jehovah, was called upon them. They could not dodge being his witnesses. This also must be true of the anointed remnant of the "steward" class today, when the "sign" visible since 1914 indicates that the returned master of the "steward" class is present and that "the conclusion of the system of things" is about to reach its climax at Har–Magedon. —Matt. 24:3.

20. Those making up the remnant of the "steward" class today are identifiable because of lining up with what words of Jesus before he ascended from the Mount of Olives back to heaven?
21. By natural birth those Jewish disciples were whose witnesses, and when did they become the original members of the composite "steward"?
22. The "steward" class is specially a people for whose name, and how was this fact emphasized at a special meeting in Jerusalem sometime after 36 C.E.?
23. In this "conclusion of the system of things" the remnant of the "steward" class cannot dodge being witnesses of whom and having called upon them whose name?

In reviewing this article on "The Faithful Steward," how would you answer these questions?—

- Who is the "master" of Jesus' parable of the "faithful steward"?
- Who is the "faithful steward"?
- Who is the "body of attendants"?
- At Hebrews 3:6, what is the "house" over which Christ is put?
- Why cannot the "faithful steward" be an individual person?
- Is the "faithful steward" the same as "the faithful and discreet slave"?
- What activity is the "faithful steward" class spearheading that makes it possible to identify this class today?

THE "STEWARD" AS HE FACES HAR-MAGEDON

HAR-MAGEDON is the Hebrew name of the place where the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" will shortly be fought. The remnant of the "steward" class now faces that "war" with which this worldly system of things will end forever. So the "steward" class keeps spiritually awake to see how the returned master, the glorified Jesus Christ, will destroy the visible enemies of the Kingdom for which they pray to Jehovah God: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:9, 10; Rev. 16:14-16) This worldwide state of affairs was illustrated or foretold by what took place during the stewardship of the Israelite whom King Hezekiah of Jerusalem made his royal steward during a most critical time.

[2] The "steward" was the Jew named Eliakim the son of Hilkiah. Three times he is mentioned as the man who was "over the household" of King Hezekiah. (Isa. 36:3, 22; 37:2) He had replaced the man named Shebna in this royal position. God's decree with respect to Eliakim and Shebna is recorded in Isaiah 22:15-25. There we read:

"This is what the Sovereign Lord, Jehovah of armies, has said: 'Go, enter in to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the house, "What is there of interest to you here, and who is there of interest to you here, that you have hewed out for yourself here a burial place?" On a height he is hewing out his burial place; in a crag he is cutting out a residence for himself. "Look! Jehovah is hurling you down with violent hurling, O able-bodied man, and grasping you forcibly. Without fail he will wrap you up tightly, like a ball for a wide land. There you will die, and there the chariots of your glory will be the dishonor of the house of your master. And I will push you away from your position; *and* from your official standing one will tear you down.*

" ' "And it must occur in that day that I will call my servant, namely, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah. And I will clothe him with your robe, and your sash I shall firmly bind about him, and your dominion I shall give into his hand; and he must become a father to the inhabitant of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will put the key of the house of David upon his shoulder, and he must open without anyone's shutting, and he must shut without anyone's opening. And I will drive him in as a peg in a lasting place, and he must become as a throne of glory to the house of his father. And they must hang upon him all the glory of the house of his father, the descendants and the offshoots, all the vessels of the small sort, the vessels of the bowl sort as well as all the vessels of the large jars.

" ' "In that day," is the utterance of Jehovah of armies, "the peg that is driven in a lasting place will be removed, and it must be hewn down and fall, and the load that is upon it must be cut off, for Jehovah himself has spoken it." ' "

[3] True to the meaning of his name, "God raises up," Jehovah elevated Elia-

1. What is to take place at Har-Magedon that the "steward" class faces, and by whom was this "steward" foreshadowed in the day of King Hezekiah of Jerusalem?

2. Who was that Jew, and whom had he replaced in the royal stewardship, according to Isaiah 22:15-25?

* In the Greek Septuagint Version of the Hebrew Scriptures Isaiah 22:19 reads: "And thou shalt be removed from thy stewardship [*oi·ko·no·mi'a*], and from thy place."—The *Septuagint Version*, Greek and English, by Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited, London, England.

3. (a) What does the name Eliakim mean, and how was its meaning realized in the case of the bearer of the name? (b) Who were the ones sent to listen to the blasphemous tirade before the walls of Jerusalem, and to whom was an appeal for help finally referred?

kim to the stewardship of King Hezekiah's palace. This took place before the Assyrian emperor, Sennacherib, invaded the land of Judah in 732 B.C.E. Sennacherib encamped his army some distance away from Jerusalem and then sent his spokesman, Rabshakeh, along with a bodyguard, to stand before Jerusalem and demand its surrender. While doing so, Rabshakeh belittled Jehovah as God and magnified Assyria and its emperor. Jerusalem's king, Hezekiah, sent his representatives to listen to this God-defying tirade, including Eliakim, now steward, and also Shebna, who had been demoted to being a secretary, and Joah, the recorder. Deeply grieved at what they had heard, they reported back to King Hezekiah. Feeling utterly helpless, the king appealed to the prophet Isaiah, the representative of Jehovah.—Isa. 36:1–37:7.

[4] There we see the same typical features that enter into the critical situation of today. Correspondingly Sennacherib the king of Assyria typifies the foe of God's kingdom, namely, Satan the Devil,* who demands the surrender of Jehovah's organized people under pain of enslavement or destruction. The anointed king Hezekiah, whose name means "Jah has strengthened," typifies the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, who feels very keenly the distress of his loyal disciples on earth as these suffer reproaches and face the threat of destruction at the hand of the Devil's organization. Eliakim, the "steward" over the household of King Hezekiah, typifies the remnant of the "steward" class yet on earth during this "conclusion of the system of things" since 1914 C.E. Just as the typical steward Eliakim was a Jew or an Israelite, today's remnant is made up of spiritual Israelites under the reigning King Jesus Christ.

[5] At this late date the dwindling members of the anointed remnant still circulate worldwide, and in many languages, the magazine *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. This special identifying of themselves with Jehovah God is the logical outcome of the 20th-century march of theocratic events. Yes, for in the memorable year of 1931 many thousands of the anointed remnant met in general assembly at Columbus, Ohio, and there, on July 26, they unanimously adopted a resolution by which they took upon themselves the Biblically authorized name "Jehovah's witnesses." Thus they disclaimed all the reproachful names by which the religious systems of Christendom had dubbed these internationally associated students of the Bible. In short order all the congregations of spiritual Israelites around the globe harmoniously adopted the name.

[6] Thus they undertook the responsibilities conveyed in the words addressed to the Israelites of the prophet Isaiah's day:

" 'You are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'even my servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and have faith in me, and that you may understand that I am the same One. . . . So you are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I am God.' "—Isa. 43:10-12.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF STEWARDSHIP

[7] Like Shebna in King Hezekiah's government during Isaiah's time, there are religious clergymen of Christendom who claim to have the exclusive right to the earthly stewardship under the Greater

* See the *Watchtower* issue of April 1, 1945, page 102, paragraph 1; also, December 1, 1951, page 719, paragraph 10.

4. In the present fulfillment of that ancient drama, whom does Sennacherib picture, whom does Hezekiah typify, and whom Eliakim?

5. By still circulating the *Watchtower* magazine worldwide, with whom did those of the anointed remnant associate themselves, and when did they disclaim all the reproachful names hurled at them?

6. By thus taking God's name upon them, what did they willingly assume?

7. (a) How did religious claimers of stewardship before the close of World War I in 1918 belie their claim? (b) How did the clergy of Christendom prove to be like Shebna?

Hezekiah, Jesus Christ. But unlike the clergy, the faithful members of the anointed remnant of Jehovah's Witnesses have striven earnestly to carry out in actuality the Kingdom stewardship. This has been outstandingly true since the close of the first world war that started in Christendom. By that time the warmongering clergymen of Christendom had inerasably made their record as regards the stewardship that they claim to have received from the King, Jesus Christ. Even by then the evidence had piled up that "the times of the Gentiles" or "the appointed times of the nations" had ended in the autumn of 1914. Yes, also, that then the glorified Jesus Christ had begun to reign in the heavens as the Greater Hezekiah. (Ezek. 21:25-27; Luke 21:24, *Authorized Version; New World Translation*) But did the clergymen of Christendom come out in support of Jehovah's established kingdom by Christ? No!

[8] In 1919 the clergy of Christendom offered to serve as stewards of the proposed League of Nations. But that League failed completely in 1939. It has now been succeeded by the revised peace-keeping agency, the United Nations. In stark contrast with those clergymen, the remnant of spiritual Israelites continue to support the established kingdom of God by Christ.

[9] So, since the beginning of divine judgment in 1918, who has been honored with the stewardship or has been confirmed in it? The historical facts since 1918, which speak for themselves, answer: The anointed remnant of spiritual Israelites. They as a class are the answer to Jesus' own question, "Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time?" (Luke 12:42) They make up the Greater Eliakim of today. That is, they are the "steward" class typified by the faithful and discreet Eliakim during King Hezekiah's reign (745-716 B.C.E.), at the time of the Assyrian invasion into the land of Judah.

[10] In spite of the woes upon Christendom and the rest of the world of mankind, the remnant of the faithful "steward" class is, indeed, "happy," just as Jesus himself foretold, saying: "Happy is that slave, if his master on arriving finds him doing so!" Why? Due to the fact that, just as Jesus continued on to say, "I tell you truthfully, He will appoint him over all his belongings."—Luke 12:43, 44.

[11] In a spiritual way it has happened to the faithful remnant of spiritual Israelites just as it happened to Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who replaced self-glorifying Shebna as "steward" over King Hezekiah's household. As Jehovah said to his prophet Isaiah: "And it must occur in that day [of Jehovah's pushing Shebna away from his position] that I will call my servant, namely, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah. And I will clothe him with your [Shebna's] robe, and your sash I shall firmly bind about him, and your dominion I shall give into his hand; and he must become a father to the inhabitant of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah."—Isa. 22:20, 21.

[12] This corresponds with Jesus' appointing the faithful, discreet "steward" class over all his Kingdom belongings. Particularly since the spring of the postwar year 1919 a new chapter opened up in religious history. Then, like Eliakim, the remnant of the faithful, discreet "steward" class

8. After the League failed, what action did Christendom's clergy take in contrast with that of the remnant of spiritual Israelites?
9. According to the historical facts, what is the modern answer to Jesus' question at Luke 12:42?
10. According to Jesus' prophecy of Luke 12:43, 44, how was the slave "steward," as represented by the remnant of spiritual Israelites, to be made "happy"?
11. According to Isaiah 22:20, 21, how did Jehovah say he would replace Shebna?
12. With what action by Jesus Christ since the spring of 1919 did that correspond?

was robed with the dignity of being ambassadors of the *established* kingdom of Jehovah God by Christ. (2 Cor. 5:20) In this capacity they have advertised the established kingdom "in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations." (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10) Pictorially speaking, the Almighty God has girded up their loins for the discharge of this weighty ministry by binding about their hips the "sash" of a steward or majordomo (*so·khen'*, Hebrew; *oikonómos*, Greek *Septuagint*).—Compare Zechariah 3:1-7.

[13] Notably since spring of 1919, Jehovah God has issued his call for all his dedicated people to get out of "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion. (Rev. 18:2, 4) Those making up the "steward" class obediently did get out, and their heavenly Master, the invisibly present Lord Jesus Christ, has used them as a class to give all those in line for the heavenly kingdom "their measure of food supplies at the proper time." In this respect the Eliakim class has become like a "father" who provides for all those pictured by "the inhabitant of Jerusalem and . . . the house of Judah." Such a "dominion" as this Jehovah by Christ has given into the hand of the "steward" class, and this composite "steward" has faithfully and discreetly exercised this "dominion" till now. Especially since 1935 have the "great crowd" of Christ's "other sheep" benefited from such fatherly care, just like the "alien resident who [was] inside" the gates of ancient Jerusalem. —Ex. 20:10; John 10:16; Rev. 7:9-17.

[14] Heavy responsibility has been laid upon the Eliakim class of today similar to that described in Jehovah's words regarding the Eliakim of King Hezekiah's day: "And I will put the key of the house of David upon his shoulder, and he must open without anyone's shutting, and he must shut without anyone's opening." (Isa. 22:22) The composite "steward" class has shown itself worthy of shouldering the royal "key of the house of David." It has kept alert to safeguard the earthly interests of God's Messianic kingdom as pictured by the "house of David." It welcomed in those whom the Master chose to make up the final members of the remnant of Kingdom heirs. In 1935 it began to welcome in the "other sheep" whom the Fine Shepherd was pleased to bring together to form "one flock" with the anointed remnant. It shut the door on all the expelled apostates and those who tried to sneak in to corrupt Jehovah's Witnesses.—Compare Revelation 3:7.

[15] Further prophesying regarding the modern Eliakim class, Jehovah said: "And I will drive him in as a peg in a lasting place, and he must become as a throne of glory to the house of his father. And they must hang upon him [like upon a peg] all the glory of the house of his father, the descendants and the offshoots, all the vessels of the small sort, the vessels of the bowl sort as well as all the vessels of the large jars."—Isa. 22:23, 24.

[16] The permanently placed "peg" from which those household utensils were to hang pictured Eliakim, the new steward who replaced Shebna. Accordingly he was put in charge of serving food and drink to the members of the king's household. The appointing of Eliakim to serve in that capacity typified that the Greater Hezekiah, Jesus Christ, at his coming in glory, approved of the "faithful steward" class to be over the remnant of his joint heirs yet on earth to issue to this "body of at-

13. When did those making up the composite "steward" class get out of Babylon the Great, and over whom has the "dominion" of this "steward" been extended?

14. How did the "steward" discharge his responsibility as pictured by Eliakim's shouldering "the key of the house of David"?

15. Jehovah purposed to drive Eliakim like what into a lasting place, and what things were to be suspended from him?

16. Whom did Eliakim replace, and to what service was the antitypical Eliakim appointed in behalf of the "body of attendants"?

The anointed remnant and companion workers circulate THE WATCHTOWER worldwide in many languages

tendants" the needed "measure of food supplies at the proper time," whether in large measure or in small measure. This depended upon the type of solid food or of drink. Of course, such "food supplies" would be from God's Word. However, from another Bible standpoint, those "vessels" picture the servants of God themselves, having varying capacities for service.—2 Tim. 2:20-22.

[17] Eliakim was to become a "throne of glory" to the house of his own father, Hilkiah. This meant that he would not disgrace his father's house or its reputation in contrast with the former steward Shebna. He was to be elevated higher in the royal service of King Hezekiah. His becoming like a "throne of glory" symbolized all of this. He would not seat himself as a king to be served, but, as the king's servant, he would have authority and "dominion" in his newly assigned realm. To a certain extent he would represent and speak for the king of Jerusalem. No discredit would result to "the house of his father," but, rather, "glory" would result to his father's house and it would be sustained as though on an irremovable peg. The "descendants and the offshoots" of his father's house would suffer no discredit because of depending upon Eliakim for a recommendation. All such relatives of Eliakim could count on him to represent them honorably, creditably. All his relatives could depend on him to represent them nobly in his higher station. Thus such dependent relatives would be encouraged to serve as "vessels" in royal service because of having strong backing.

[18] Likewise, today, a heavy weight of responsibility has been suspended from the "faithful steward" class. It is a royal responsibility, a glorifying one, because it is borne in the service of Jehovah's now installed King, Jesus Christ. It is a spiritual responsibility toward all those related to the Eliakim class in the Kingdom hope, like "the descendants and the offshoots" of their spiritual Father. They depend on or hang from the peglike "steward" class and are themselves like intelligent, living "vessels" to bear food supplies in varying quantities to other members of their spiritual relationship. —2 Tim. 2:20, 21; 1 Cor. 4:7.

[19] In ancient times, in the eighth century before our Common Era, Eliakim was promoted to royal stewardship at a critical time period of Jehovah's typical kingdom at Jerusalem. He heard directly the terrifying threats that were yelled out by the envoy of the invading Assyrian king, Sennacherib. Eliakim repeated these to his master, King Hezekiah. In turn, King Hezekiah sought not military aid from Egypt but his God, Jehovah. In response, Jehovah gave a most strengthening reply through his prophet Isaiah. Then what happened in fulfillment of Jehovah's defiant message? We read:

[20] "And the angel of Jehovah proceeded to go forth and strike down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When people rose up early in the morning, why, there all of them were dead carcasses. Hence Sennacherib the king of Assyria pulled away and went and returned and took up dwelling in Nineveh. And it came about that as he was bowing down at the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his own sons, struck him down with the sword."—Isa. 37:36-38; 2 Ki. 19:35-37.

[21] Back there the battle action on Jehovah's part in behalf of his kingdom at Jerusalem prefigured his still greater act during "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon. There his angel of destruction will be an archangel, the installed King, Jesus Christ, in

17. In what way would Eliakim be a "throne of glory" to the house of his father, and how would the "descendants and the offshoots" of his father benefit from this?

18. (a) From whom today has special responsibility been suspended, and how is it a royal responsibility? (b) Who today are "the descendants and the offshoots," and to what utensils are they likened?

19. (a) At what critical time was Eliakim promoted to royal stewardship? (b) In what direction did the king of Judah turn for aid under the threatening circumstances?

20. What did Jehovah then do in fulfillment of His defiant message through the prophet Isaiah?

21. (a) What did Jehovah's battle action there prefigure? (b) What does the "steward" class of today now face, and since when and to whom has this class sounded out the warning?

command of all the heavenly angels. (Rev. 16:14-16; 19:11-21) The remnant of the "steward" class faces this war of all wars, never to be repeated. The "steward" class, in charge of the "food supplies" from God's Word, has been used, particularly since 1919, to sound out the warning of this coming "war" at what is called Har–Magedon. As in the case of Eliakim during the days of King Hezekiah, they face the approaching attack of the Greater "Assyrian," Satan the Devil, and his hordes. (Mic. 5:5, 6) They persist in warning all the members of their heavenly Master's household and all mankind.

[22] An international "great crowd" has responded to the warning and has sounded it out to still others. (Rev. 7:9-17) They are encouraged by what happened to Eliakim, the steward of King Hezekiah, and the other inhabitants of Jerusalem, for these escaped being war casualties by the wholesale destruction of the Assyrian invaders. Likewise the "steward" class in this "time of the end," along with the "great crowd" of Christ's "other sheep," will be spared from being destroyed with the worldly system of things in "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon. (Dan. 12:4) After Jehovah's victory there, the Greater Sennacherib, Satan the Devil, and all his demon angels will be abyssed for the 1,000 years of the reign of the Greater Hezekiah, Jesus Christ.

[23] For as long as their reigning Master, Jesus Christ, is pleased to use them further on earth, the remnant of "the faithful steward" class will dispense the due "measure of food supplies" to their fellow survivors, the "great crowd" of their Master's "other sheep." Toward their realizing that thrilling prospect, let all sheeplike persons keep guarding against being "cut off" at Har–Magedon as those hanging dependently from that disqualified "peg," the Shebna class in Christendom. (Isa. 22:17-19, 25) Happy, indeed, are all those who have ascertained and adhere to the right answer to Jesus' question: "Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one?" In loyalty to his stewardship, let them continue to accept at this proper time the needed "measure of food supplies" at the hands of the "faithful steward," the Greater Eliakim. That symbolic "peg" is, according to God's foreknowledge, driven into a "lasting place" to stay, with God's help. So hang onto it confidently, in all loyalty.

22. Who have responded to that warning, and why are they encouraged by what happened to Eliakim and the other inhabitants of Jerusalem and the significance of this?

23. When will there be no doubt as to the right answer to the question raised by Jesus at Luke 12:42?

Can you answer these questions in review?

- Who were Eliakim and Shebna?
- In our day, whom do Eliakim and Shebna represent?
- Whom do King Sennacherib and King Hezekiah typify today?
- To what is the Eliakim class giving its support, in contrast with what the Shebna class has been supporting?
- Who is pictured by the "inhabitant of Jerusalem and . . . the house of Judah"?
- Who else besides the modern 'inhabitant of Jerusalem and Judah' receive the fatherly care of the Eliakim class?
- What is represented by the "house of David"?
- Who is the "peg" of Isaiah's prophecy, and whom does he represent?
- What is symbolized by the fact that this "peg" becomes a "throne of glory"?

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 8: "Who Really Is the Faithful Steward, the Discreet One?" Page 19. Songs to Be Used: 61, 24.

November 15: The "Steward" as He Faces Har–Magedon. Page 25. Songs to Be Used: 117, 83.