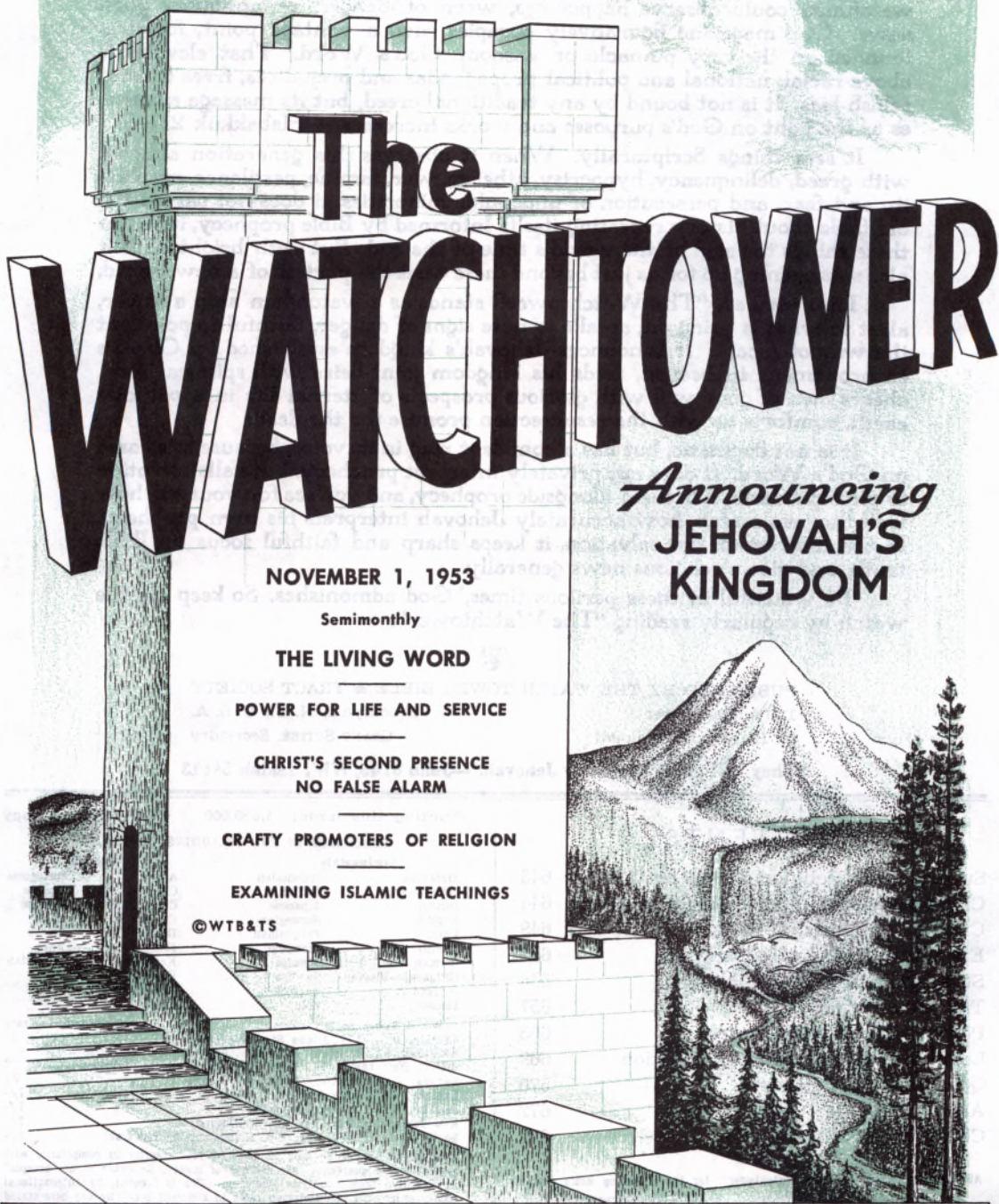




The WATCHTOWER

NOVEMBER 1, 1953

Semimonthly

THE LIVING WORD

POWER FOR LIFE AND SERVICE

CHRIST'S SECOND PRESENCE
NO FALSE ALARM

CRAFTY PROMOTERS OF RELIGION

EXAMINING ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

© WTB&TS

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Literal towers in Bible times were elevated vantage points from which watchmen could observe happenings, warn of danger, or announce good news. Our magazine figuratively occupies such a vantage point, for it is founded on the very pinnacle of wisdom, God's Word. That elevates it above racial, national and political propagandas and prejudices, frees it from selfish bias. It is not bound by any traditional creed, but its message advances as the light on God's purposes and works increases. — Habakkuk 2:1-8.

It sees things Scripturally. When it observes this generation afflicted with greed, delinquency, hypocrisy, atheism, war, famine, pestilence, perplexity and fear, and persecution of unpopular minorities, it does not parrot the old fable about history repeating itself. Informed by Bible prophecy, it sees in these things the sign of the world's time of the end. But with bright hope it also sees opening up for us just beyond these woes the portals of a new world.

Thus viewed, "The Watchtower" stands as a watchman atop a tower, alert to what is going on, awake to note signs of danger, faithful to point out the way of escape. It announces Jehovah's kingdom established by Christ's enthronement in heaven, feeds his kingdom joint-heirs with spiritual food, cheers men of good will with glorious prospects of eternal life in a paradise earth, comforts us with the resurrection promise for the dead.

It is not dogmatic, but has a confident ring in its voice, because it is based on God's Word. It does not privately interpret prophecy, but calls attention to physical facts, sets them alongside prophecy, and you see for yourself how well the two match, how accurately Jehovah interprets his own prophecy. In the interests of our salvation, it keeps sharp and faithful focus on Bible truth, and views religious news generally.

'Be watchful in these perilous times,' God admonishes. So keep on the watch by regularly reading "The Watchtower".



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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45, NW; Isaiah 54:13

CONTENTS

Supernatural Religion a Superstition?	643
Christ's Second Presence No False Alarm	644
Crafty Promoters of Religion	649
Examining Islamic Teachings	653
Sucklings Surpass the Preacher	656
The Living Word	657
Power for Life and Service	663
Loyalty to Theocratic Organization	669
Questions from Readers	670
Announcements	672
Check Your Memory	672

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AS — American Standard Version	LXX — The Septuagint Version
AT — An American Translation	Mo — James Moffatt's version
Da — J. N. Darby's version	NW — New World Translation
Dy — Catholic Douay version	Ro — J. B. Rotherham's version
ED — The Emphatic Diaglott	RS — Revised Standard Version
Le — Isaac Leeser's version	Yg — Robert Young's version

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SUPERNATURAL RELIGION A SUPERSTITION?

WHY is the world in such confusion? Why are forces of destruction seemingly at work? According to one of America's foremost clergymen, Dr. John Haynes Holmes, "At the moment, all is confusion; the forces about us seem to be forces of destruction. But this is because superstition, the old religion of the supernatural, is in the way and must be removed, as the mouldering walls of some old building must be removed and carted off, before the new structure, already conceived and chartered, can rise in the soaring structure of steel and stone."—*New Outlook*, May 1953.

What, actually, is Dr. Holmes here saying? Is it not that all supernatural religion, including therefore also the revealed supernatural religion of the Bible, is superstition; that natural religion is to take its place, and that it will be as superior to the supernatural religion as a modern structure of steel and stone is superior to old mouldering walls?

But what could be more conducive to confusion than "natural" religion, than religion without supernatural aid, where men develop their own rules of conduct and beliefs on the basis of their own research and experiences? Based as it is on different environment, differing experiences, associations, sources of information, mental capacities, not to say anything about degrees

of selfishness, what could natural religion result in but confusion?

Can a religion not supernatural explain the mystery of life, how it got its start and what keeps it going? how this wonderful natural world with all its variety in earth, sea and sky came into existence? why man seems to struggle so futilely against sin and imperfection? Can natural religion tell us if there is life after death? if there are invisible personalities, perhaps superior to man, and whether or not man could protect himself against them?

The supernatural religion of the Bible can answer these questions and therefore it is not a superstition but recommends itself to all sober-thinking men and women.

Natural religion in modern times is but the worship of science. Has science brought East and West together in peace, or merely made their differences more costly? Has it solved the problems of crime and corruption, or has it merely made these more widespread and dangerous? But the true supernatural religion does have the key: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength," and, "You must love your neighbor as yourself."—Mark 12:30, 31, NW.

The world is in confusion, not because the supernatural religion is in the way, but because men have discarded the true supernatural religion.

Christ's Second Presence No False Alarm



FOR Jehovah's witnesses to be sounding a warning of the end of the present wicked system of things in a fiery Armageddon seems farfetched and wholly inconceivable to this complacent generation. Mockingly they say to Jehovah's witnesses, 'We know all about it. Our grandfathers and our great-grandfathers preached the same thing. But, as you see, the world is very much the same. Things will always be this way.' But those who have lived in both generations, the present and the past, know that things are not the same, that changes have taken place, and that there is no basis for such fruitless reasoning.

True, many false alarms in the past have been sounded. But does that prove the present alarm sounded by Jehovah's witnesses to be false too? The Devil would like to have you believe nothing else. It would be folly for a fire department not to respond to an alarm just because the previous forty or fifty warnings were false alarms. This one might not be. Every alarm must be investigated to ensure security. Likewise, it would be folly for people of good will at the present time to ignore the intensified warning of Jehovah's witnesses, simply because some Bible believers of the past have sounded false alarms.

Jesus definitely did teach that he would return again. On one occasion his disciples asked him: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the consummation of the system of things?" Jesus did not tell them that he would be visibly present with them. Rather, his presence with them would be

noted solely by circumstantial evidence. That is why his disciples asked him for the "sign" of his presence. There would be no need for a sign were they to see him personally in the flesh. Jesus related a number of events that would occur on earth at the time of his enthronement in heaven. These events would spell out for mankind the presence of Christ and at the same time warn of the nearness of the battle of Armageddon. Jesus said that his invisible installation would be marked on earth by nation rising against nation in world war; that there would be pestilences, food shortages and earthquakes in many places; that his followers would be hated by all nations; that they would be persecuted and some even killed; that the faithful would be engaged in the preaching of the good news of his established kingdom as a witness to all the inhabited earth before the coming of Armageddon; that during these happenings there would be "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and its agitation, while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth"; that there would be a vain effort to establish peace through a makeshift political government, and that when ALL OF THESE THINGS were seen happening in one generation, that generation should flee for its life because Armageddon would be near at hand.—Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13; Luke 21.

Paul's letter to Timothy vividly describes the delinquent conditions at the time of Christ's second presence. (2 Tim. 3:1-13) Peter prophesies that scoffers

would arise walking after their own lusts, sneering at the warning, and demanding: "Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning." (2 Pet. 3:3, 4, NW) James foretold that the ultrarich would horde wealth for the last days. John under inspiration spoke of unprecedented woe climaxing this period with the battle of Armageddon. ALL OF THESE EVENTS, not just one or two, but ALL OF THESE THINGS happening in the same generation would be the sign marking Christ's second presence. No false alarm this. That generation would see his presence and experience the fiery judgments of Armageddon.—Matt. 24:32-34; James 5; Revelation chapters 12 and 16.

FALSE ALARMS OF THE PAST

Some may sincerely inquire, Why were early Bible scholars misled into thinking Christ was to return in their day, especially so since the Bible is very specific as to the time and manner of his presence? The answer to the question is that those scholars erroneously concluded that Christ's second presence was to be visible, "or a silent, gradual penetration of all social forces by his spirit, to be either perpetual or continued until the consummation." And too, those scholars did not take under consideration that all the events prophesied by Jesus had to be fulfilled within the generation of his coming.

For example: The troublesome times of A.D. 66-70 were seized upon by some and interpreted as signs of the approaching end. After the destruction of Jerusalem Christ was sure to make his appearance. But the civil strife between the Jews and the Romans did not constitute the sign of Jesus' presence, nor did the famines and pestilences that followed. There were no world wars then, no unusual number of

earthquakes, nor was the good news of God's kingdom preached in all the inhabited earth. In fact, it had much to cover yet of the European continent.

The early expectations of Christ's return during the second, third and fourth centuries turned out to be false alarms. The so-called *Epistle of Barnabas*, according to the *Didaché* (a Christian manual of the second century), represents "the last day as at hand, when the present world along with the evil one shall be destroyed by the returning Lord. Almost 6,000 years are thought to have elapsed since creation. . . . The seventh day of 1,000 years is about to begin with the Second Advent." Irenaeus supports Barnabas, "placing the end of the world and the return of Christ 6,000 years after creation." Lactantius agrees with them and believes that "at most the present world cannot endure beyond another 200 years, and the end is to be expected daily." Tertullian predicted the decline of the Roman empire, the rise of the anti-christ, and felt himself living in the 'last time.' Hippolytus fixed the day for the return of Christ 500 years after Christ's birth. And there were a host of others, Commodian, Methodius of Olympus in Lycia, Victorinus of Pettau, and the Egyptian bishop Nepos, all of whom made wild predictions of Christ's return.

Their prognostications were totally unfounded in the light of the Scriptures; therefore, all without exception proved false. The physical facts were not present in their entirety to fulfill Jesus' prophecies concerning his second presence, nor were their chronological tables accurate. Some of their dates were off as much as a thousand years. Hippolytus' 500-year date was not based on the Scriptures, but was a guess that proved wrong.

As was to be expected after these false alarms, and no doubt as the Devil planned it, the teaching of Christ's return became

very unpopular. People viewed with cynicism and skepticism anyone who dared even to mention the doctrine. The book of Revelation was rejected and called the work of the heretic Cerinthus. New theories were introduced and popularized. Origen argued against a literalistic appearing of Christ. He taught that Christ's return takes place through the power of the gospel; that the world would not be destroyed but that it would be transformed by the preaching of Christianity.

Another theory that remained popular for a time was that set forth by Donatist Ticonius, who explains in his commentary on Revelation that Christ would not come until the Donatist Church established itself in the world, and was sufficiently strong to resist paganism and the false religion of Catholicism. Both of these theories are false for Scriptural reasons, namely: The purpose of Christianity is not to convert this present evil world, nor will gospel-preaching transform it. This evil world has been condemned by God to destruction, and no man or man-made organization will save it. (Dan. 2:44) God has purposed a new-world government for mankind wherein righteousness is to dwell. (2 Pet. 3:13) The gospel is preached for "a witness to all the nations," that people of good will may flee to the Kingdom before the day of Armageddon. (Matt. 24:14, NW) Ticonius' theory is also false, because the return of Christ is not dependent upon the achievements of men, nor upon the establishment of a church group or body, but rests solely upon the spirit and power of Almighty God Jehovah.—Ps. 110:1, 2.

Augustine of the Catholic Church dismissed the whole idea that Christ was yet to come by saying the Kingdom was established at Christ's first coming; that Christ at his first coming bound Satan the Devil and began ruling then and there. Augustine maintained that Christ's coming

occurs continually in his church, "that is, in His members, in which he comes little by little and piece by piece, since the whole Church is His body." Augustine further believed that the millennial reign of Christ would close about A.D. 1000, and that at that time the final coming of Christ to judge might be expected.

As A.D. 1000 approached, many religious folk began to think that the judgment and fiery end of the world would occur that year. Excitement became widespread throughout western Europe because it was feared that God's "day of wrath" was at hand. When the world did not burn up that year, the religionists felt it was proof that the thousand years of Revelation 20:2 were not literal but an indefinite period of time, and that the Catholic Church, being the so-called "Mother" church, was already reigning in it. That view obtains among the Roman Catholic Hierarchy to this day.

NO ALARM AS BAD AS FALSE ALARM

Despite Roman Catholic claims, the Scriptures do not support their view either. The apostles John and Paul plainly show that Christ did not reign from the first century onward. John wrote the Revelation toward the close of the first century and spoke of the reign of Christ as yet future, as one of the "things that must shortly take place." (Rev. 1:1, NW) John outlived Paul. About A.D. 61, while at Rome, Paul wrote his letter to the Hebrews and said: "But with reference to which one of the angels has he ever said: 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a stool for your feet?'" (Heb. 1:13, NW) Paul was quoting the words of David at Psalm 110:1, 2 (AS), wherein David had spoken of Christ as his Lord and said: "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jehovah will send forth the rod of

thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Jesus is here depicted as sitting at his Father's right hand upon his ascension into heaven and not reigning. Paul agrees with this prophecy, and he went on to say of Christ Jesus: "But this man offered one sacrifice for sins perpetually and sat down at the right hand of God, from then on awaiting until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet."—Heb. 10:12, 13, NW.

Paul vigorously denied that the Christians were reigning in his day. He said to the Corinthians who did assume to run ahead and reign as kings either politically or in a spiritual manner: "You men already have your fill, do you? You are rich already, are you? You have begun ruling as kings without us, have you? And I wish indeed that you had begun ruling as kings, that we also might rule with you as kings." (1 Cor. 4:8, NW) The Roman Catholic viewpoint is that Satan was abysed in the first century. Paul disagrees in his letter to the Romans, saying: "The God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. 16:20, NW) The apostle Peter agrees with Paul that Satan was not abysed in the first century, but was very much on the loose: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." (1 Pet. 5:8, NW) John projects the abysing of Satan into the distant future, thus remaining in harmony with the other apostles.—Revelation, chapters one and two.

OTHER PROGNOSTICATIONS

Following Augustine's time the aggressions of the Saracens, the Crusades, the rise of the monastic orders during the thirteenth century, also the topsy-turvy world of the fourteenth century, all were misinterpreted as "signs" foretelling the imminent return of Christ. Joachin of Floris

determined that the 1,260 days mentioned in Revelation 12:6 could turn out to be the year A.D. 1260 when Christ would return. Millitz of Kromeriz, a forerunner of John Huss, looked for the coming of Christ between the years 1365 and 1367. Wycliffe pointed to the power of the papacy and emphasized that the time of the return was at hand. John Napier predicted the coming end of evil and the return of Christ between the years 1688 and 1700. William Whiston first selected 1715, then 1734, and later 1866 as the date for the inauguration of the millennium.

In the early part of the nineteenth century Christoph Hoffman hurried from Germany to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple in preparation for Christ's early return. William Miller predicted that Christ would make his appearance during the year 1843, but later postponed the day to October 22, 1844. When these speculations did not materialize, religious sects became a laughing-stock, great divisions took place among them, the doctrine was scoffed at, the people who taught it were jeered, and as a whole the idea was pooh-poohed in religious and nonreligious circles alike. All, without exception, were false alarms.

With the coming of the twentieth century a new flurry of alarms was sounded. "Prepare to Die! Be Ready at All Hours! The End of the World Is at Hand!" read posters during an Adventist convention in Paris, August 20, 1927. The Adventists believed that the return of Christ would mean the consuming of the earth with fire. The righteous would be saved by being taken to heaven. Even before that, when World War I was reaching a climax a manifesto was issued by a number of England's most noted ministers. This manifesto said, among other things, "that the present crisis points towards the close of the times of the Gentiles. Second. That the revelation of the Lord may be expected at any mo-

ment, when he will be manifested as evidently as to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection. Third. That the completed church will be translated to be 'for ever with the Lord'." This manifesto was signed by leading Baptist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Methodist ministers.

They inaccurately calculated the times of the Gentiles, because these had their end in the fall of 1914. True to Jesus' prophecy, world war did break out. Famines, pestilences and earthquakes followed. Christians were persecuted and murdered. The news of the established kingdom of God began to be preached. Anxiety and fear have gripped the world. Lawlessness and delinquency are on the increase. Nations have banded together, first in the League of Nations and now in the United Nations. And this political makeshift government is being hailed, even as the League of Nations was hailed as the only hope for peace and as the "political expression of the kingdom of God." All of these events are precisely what Jesus foretold would mark his presence.

Why, then, did he not appear? He did appear, not as a man in the flesh, but by a manifestation of his presence through these events that occurred in the fulfillment of his prophecies. He never did promise that he would make his second appearance in the flesh, visible to the human eye. In fact, he told his disciples that "a little longer and the world will behold me no more." (John 14:19, NW) If he were to make his second appearance in the flesh, would there be any reason for him to go into great length describing the conditions on earth at the time of his appearance? Of course not. Why give them a composite sign, if they were to see him with their naked eye? Knowing that his return would be observed only through circumstantial

evidence, the disciples requested a sign. The sign Jesus gave was a long list of events that would occur on the earth at the time when he would come into his kingdom power in the heavens and would begin his reign.

These events began to occur on earth in the year 1914, and continue to assert themselves to the present day. Not just one or two of these momentous happenings have come upon this generation, but all of them. **NO FALSE ALARM THIS!**

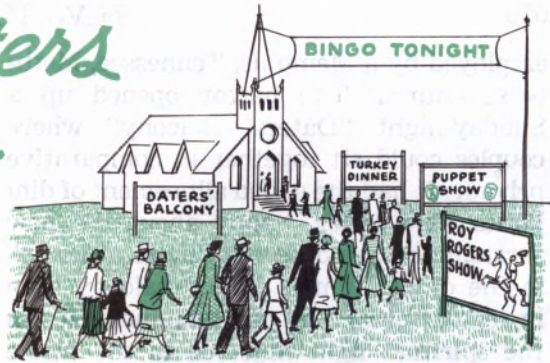
How have religious clergymen responded to the alarm? They have turned a deaf ear to it. Not being able to see Christ in the flesh they have become perplexed. *Radio Times* for December, 1950, stated that "many preachers have an uneasy feeling that they ought to speak about the Second Coming of Christ: but they are so perplexed about it that they tend to avoid the issue." "Rev." Dr. George Hedley of Mills College reflected the view held by many clergymen today. Said he: "When will the Christ come again? When the spirit of God enters human hearts. How shall we recognize his coming? By realizing the divine life within ourselves. Is the Christ coming again? He is, if we will let him come. He will come to us this morning if we but choose."

Much to the contrary, the coming of Christ is not dependent upon any individual. He is here, now, ruling as King from heaven in the midst of his enemies! (Ps. 110:1, 2) World events prove it. The alarm being sounded by Jehovah's witnesses is genuine, true. Do not let the negative, irresponsible and indifferent attitude of the world lull you to sleep. Respond to the alarm. Flee now to the mountains of Jehovah's system of things. Do not delay. You will find protection there from the fire of Armageddon. Armageddon survivors will testify to the fact that **THIS WAS NO FALSE ALARM!**

Crafty Promoters of Religion

TO PROMOTE better church attendance, Christendom's religions today are using everything from lollipops to cowboy movie stars. Becoming more popular day by day are "revival" meetings and "back-to-church" movements. Why must the clergy now resort to crafty promotional schemes, even eye-catching antics? The answer is made strikingly apparent in *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, the Who's Who of the Church of England. Each new edition by custom carries an anonymous preface. When a new edition came out in June, 1952, the preface admitted: "The Church is unable to attract people to listen to the gospel. . . . [Its preaching] is like a safety match, effective only on specially prepared surfaces." (*Time*, June 16, 1952) Such a candid statement had high clergymen smarting under their clerical collars. But the truth was out. Churches, including big denominations, are finding it difficult to attract worshipers by their preaching alone.

This inability to attract people by the message preached prompts the thought that there must be something wrong with the religious fodder dished out from the pulpit to Christendom's pew-sitters. If they are being served sound spiritual food, why should there be any lack of attraction, an apathetic flock? Could it be that there is a spiritual famine in the land called Christendom? But from the name Christendom assumes, one may imagine that it has an abundance of spiritual food. Yet when the clergy open their religious larders, the only abundance that presents itself is that of book reviews, tricks of magic, jazz bands,



bingo games, lotteries, masquerade parties, coffee-and-doughnut socials, gas-filled balloons, and the buffoonery of circus clowns. So one may rightly ask, Has the spiritual famine foretold by God's prophet blighted Christendom?—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah."—Amos 8:11, AS.

Why should Christendom's churches have to employ all manner of crafty schemes to lure worshipers to church if their larders were full of spiritual food? What more potent reason is there for apathy and empty pews than a spiritual famine? Several churches in the United States put out a call to their straying flock by advertising in newspapers: "SITTERS WANTED—Men, women and children wanted to sit in slightly used pews on Sunday morning." To fill its empty pews the Central Presbyterian Church of Haverstraw, New York, started a back-to-church crusade. Besides free coffee at the railroad station, the church offered a turkey dinner, a free movie, a masquerade ball and an art show. The newspapers, telling of the church's promotional drive, did not mention whether any spiritual food was available.

Free food serves as excellent bait, but perhaps few promotional lures have been as successful in alluring young people as that

employed by a Memphis, Tennessee, Methodist church. The pastor opened up a Sunday-night "Daters' Balcony" where couples could sit together in comparative privacy. It had the added allurements of dim lights. One sailor, happy about the new arrangement, said he felt "more at home" in the dimly lighted daters' balcony than in regular pews. One can imagine how dim the spiritual light must be in the whole church when it has to employ such methods to attract young people!

ECCLESIASTICAL SIDE SHOWS

Protestant churches have recently pulled from their bag of tricks so many lures that they are beginning to outdo the Catholic Church's bingo sessions in pure allurements value. Reporting on one lure campaign, the *Chicago Daily News*, February 6, 1953, said: "The churches—representing virtually every Protestant denomination—were entered in the fifth annual International Sunday School Attendance Contest." It described the booming success of the Trinity Methodist Church of Los Angeles, which had some 2,000 children storming its doors when movie cowboy Roy Rogers "enrolled" in its Sunday School and put his horse Trigger through the paces. Other churches found the best lure to be an avalanche of picnic plates. The Midwest Bible Church of Chicago, while using free pancakes and coffee, found excellent allurements came from releasing nearly 2,000 gas-filled balloons and by having a blimp hover 200 feet above the church with streamer promotions and searchlights to play on the blimp at night.

Determined to win a contest, a Baptist church in Pennsylvania lured children by offering every child bringing in a new member a ticket for free ice cream at local drugstores. Also offered were free horseback rides for regular attenders, and if the children needed further inducement there

was always the magic show put on by the pastor.

With Christendom's clergy having difficulty in attracting adult pew-sitters, it was rather ironical when a church in Pacific Beach, California, asked parents: "Are you having trouble getting your children interested in going to Sunday School regularly?" If they did, there was an ecclesiastical side show to enkindle interest. Called Operation 333, it was a puppet show. However, a traveling Baptist minister uses the side-show technique in order to appeal to young and old alike. In his revival meetings he uses four wooden dummies and his art of ventriloquism. Now he finds it easier to attract and hold an audience.

CLERGY ANTICS

Odd and ridiculous antics are often employed to lure worshipers. For instance, the superintendent of the First Baptist Church of Lakewood, California, climbed a eucalyptus tree in front of his church and announced that he would not come down until Sunday School attendance hit 1,000. To get the increase he had to stay up the tree for a good 20 hours! Tree-climbing religious promoters only spotlight the barrenness of Christendom's larder. And as Jesus said: "All the works they do they do to be viewed by men."—Matt. 23:5, NW.

A clever method to promote attendance was used by the Salem and Evangelical Reformed Church of Buffalo. Members of the church wandered about looking for autos parked overtime; then they tagged each with a summons to come to church. But the Brethren in Christ Church of Palmyra, Pennsylvania, used a more enticing method by putting on a "treasure hunt." Fifty English walnuts containing a slip of paper were hidden in the city. Those who found a nut had to go to church to redeem it for a prize. However, a religious organization in El Centro, California, no doubt attracted

more attention. A costumed red devil was sent out to parade through the streets. There were a few objections against using a devil to promote religion—only because it was Christmas time and a Santa Claus was thought more appropriate. But why should backsliding Christendom object to religion-promoting devils at all? Pope Pius XI in a press interview declared: "The head of the Catholic Church would consider it his duty to deal with the Devil himself . . . if reasonable grounds existed to support the hope that such dealings would protect or advance the interests of religion among mankind."—*Brooklyn Eagle*, February 21, 1943.

A close look at sermon subjects often reveals, not only a lure, but a remoteness from Scriptural truths. A pastor at Durham, Connecticut, found it easier to attract a flock by speaking on "Flying Saucers." Other pastors have taken to wooing their flocks with musical entertainment. The Deer Lodge United Church near Winnipeg, Manitoba, solved its church attendance problem by having entertainers entertain the church. The jazz band, together with well-known entertainers, was so successful that church officials said the scheme paid off handsomely in keeping a high level of interest among young people.

But no jazz band can conceal the spiritual famine that stalks Christendom. Many churches try to hide their bare cupboard by turning a church into a virtual motion picture theater. Recently, churches have begun to use the facilities of drive-in theaters. The picnic-bound motorist now passes signs saying: "Before your Sunday ride, drive in and worship God." In the evening "drive-in churches" are even more alluring. One in Phoenix, Arizona, opened with a movie and then closed with a half-hour sermon illustrated with color slides.

Few realize the cunning method the Catholic Church is using in France to woo

a straying flock back to church. To attempt to overcome the indifference of the working classes to Catholicism, ninety Roman Catholic priests have left their churches and have gone to work in factories. Reported the *New York Times*, March 12, 1953: "They [the factory-working priests] are engaged in experimental missionary work of the subtlest kind." The *Times* explained that most of the apathetic flock was still Catholic but in name only, adding, "Many working-class families still observe certain church forms for the baptism, first communion and marriage of their children. But, as the head of a large working-class parish remarked, these observances are almost empty of meaning for some workers, who cling to them because 'it is done' and also because they serve as good reasons for festive eating and drinking, activities that are in high favor on all social levels." The eating and drinking festivities—could that not be the reason why many, though lacking spiritual food, still retain membership in Christendom's churches?

Crafty though the worker-priest scheme may be, it is not expected to yield very concrete results before several generations have passed. The *Times* elucidated: "With a small number of worker-priests, the idea has gone a bit askew. Some of them have become so immersed in their surroundings and in the strong currents of discontent flowing about them that they have, knowingly or unknowingly, become adherents to and servants of all or part of the Communist party line." Apparently, Christendom's religious fodder is so lacking in spiritual nourishment that it cannot strengthen even the clergy themselves!

HONEST CONCERN

Occasionally, an individual church awakens to the fact that its problem of empty pews cannot be solved by crafty promotion-

al schemes—temporary boosters at best—but that there must be a turning to and a reliance upon the pure Word of God. An example of a church sincerely concerned about its spiritually famished condition is illustrated by a letter from a Baptist church in England, addressed to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. It reads:

"I have been reading a book entitled 'The Truth Shall Make You Free' published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

"As Secretary of the above Church I regret to inform you we are in a very bad way. Our church will hold 200 people, whereas we have to be content with a congregation numbering about 10 persons.

"I was just wondering if you could supply me with some tracts or other printed matter with the view of stirring some interest among the people of Witton Park.

"Any suggestions you can offer whereby it might bring the people to share and join us in Sunday evening worship will receive my very best attention.

"In the bonds of Christian Fellowship,"
[Signed]

So the famine for "hearing the words of Jehovah" is real. Lollipops, religious side shows and gas balloons can never satisfy the hunger for spiritual truth. People have tired of the hocus-pocus pulled from the clergy's moth-eaten bag of trickery. How can one receive inspiration listening to the clergy's preaching of pagan purgatories and heathen hells? And on being lured to church, how often the people find the shepherds more interested in fleecing the flock than feeding the flock! "Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (Ezek. 34:2) The husks of book reviews and the chaff of political palaver, together with the clergy's clownish antics, betray the fact that the shepherds are guilty of conducting

side shows and social clubs, at the expense of the people.

Now a spiritual famine clings to Christendom. Does not death claim famished ones? It is not to be any different with those famished spiritually! This rule holds true today: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hos. 4:6) Because the land called Christendom has commercialized God's Word, Jehovah will pour out his wrath upon it: "I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, . . . And the slain of the LORD [Jehovah] shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth." (Jer. 25:29, 33) Christendom's name does not exempt her but only identifies her as the target of God's anger. Yet there is no need to go along with destruction-bound Christendom nor to endure its famine. There is in the midst of famine-stricken Christendom an organization of Christians bringing to famished people the truth from God's Word. It is the organization of Jehovah's witnesses, the only group bringing the people the good news of Jehovah's new world so near at hand. Needing no "revivals," Jehovah's witnesses energetically bring the people the news Jesus commanded: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for the purpose of a witness to all the nations, and then the accomplished end will come."—Matt. 24:14, NW.

The message they bring needs no crafty promotion, no help from devils, no enticements. For Jehovah's witnesses "are not those who commercialize or make gain [adulterators] of the word of God as many men are." (2 Cor. 2:17, footnote, NW) The knowledge of Jehovah, his Son, and his kingdom is available to you. Imbibe these truths; it means life and it is free. "Let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free."—Rev. 22:17, NW.

Examining Islamic Teachings

ISLAM is the name of the religion founded by Muhammad in the beginning of the seventh century after Christ, making it the youngest of the world's so-called "great" religions. The term Islam means "resignation" or "entire submission." The sacred book of Islam is the Quran. It consists of 114 suras or chapters that have verse divisions similar to the Bible, except that these verse divisions are not at all uniform, while some versions do not have any verse division.

In examining the Quran, which is about the size of the Christian Greek Scriptures, one is struck with the absence of miracles or proof that Muhammad was indeed a prophet sent of God. When Moses, the first Bible writer and first prophet to be sent to the descendants of Jacob, went to Israel he was well fortified with miracles to prove his divine mission. See Exodus, chapter 4. Likewise, when Christ Jesus came, he performed so many miracles that all those who had not let themselves be blinded with selfishness had to admit that he was sent of God.—John 7:31; 10:37, 38; 14:11.

Muhammad, however, came with no supernatural proofs of his divine commission. Time and again his critics complained of this and repeatedly he told them that his work was not that of producing signs but merely to preach, and that his lack of signs was for the purpose of testing their faith. But what is faith without proof? Anyone could claim to be sent of God. Moses and Christ proved it by the performance of many miracles, but where were Muhammad's miracles? He confessed in the Quran to having none.—See Suras 2:118; 10:38; 11:13; 6:109, *Ali*.

Yet many Moslems claim he did perform miracles. Repeatedly the claim is made by them that he split the moon, for which they cite as proof Sura 54:1. However, first of all note that this text does not state that Muhammad split the moon. And Muslim commentators on this verse, which speaks of the moon's having been cleft asunder, state that it may have appeared as such to Muhammad and his believers in the valley of Mecca; that it is to be taken allegorically or that it may still be fulfilled in the future. (See *Ali*.) The Bible's account of creation as well as of the Flood is amply attested in the record found in rocks, by the science of geology, but where is there any proof that the moon was ever split?

Others insist that Muhammad did perform many miracles and that these were recorded in the *Alhadith* or *Hadis*, the record of Muhammadan tradition, which was systematized in the third century of the Muhammadan era. Among the miracles that Muhammad was said to have performed, as handed down by tradition, are: "The trees and rocks and mountains used to greet him near Mecca. Once when the people were very thirsty Mohammed filled all their jugs by having water gush forth from between his fingers. A tree was called to testify to Mohammed's divine commission. The tree came, tearing the ground until it stood in his presence. Three times it testified to Mohammed's being the prophet of God." According to Sir William Muir,



some half million of such traditions have been handed down.

However, here we find the same difficulty in tradition contradicting the written record as we find in Judaism and in professed Christianity. The Quran simply does not allow for any miracles. Plainly it quotes God as saying, "We refrain from sending Signs, only because men of former years treated them as false." (Sura 17:59, *Ali*) That explicitly does not allow for any signs. If Muhammad had performed signs, why rebuke his hearers for asking for them; why should they complain because of their being none? Yet that is what the Quran does. The written word is ever more reliable than the tradition handed down orally, and we are further compelled to that conclusion by the very fantastic nature of these purported miracles.

ABROGATION AND CANCELLATION

The Quran has been termed the Bible's closest rival, it being the holy book for some 300 million Muslims who believe that it is uncreated and was sent down from the highest heavens and revealed to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel in sections or suras. In view of the fact that the charge is often made that the Bible contradicts itself, Bible lovers will not be hasty in concluding that the Quran is self-contradictory.

But in the Quran itself we find admission of such contradictions in that it claims for itself the right of "cancellation" or "abrogation." Muhammad's critics had complained that he sometimes contradicted himself, and so he taught that whenever a subsequent revelation contradicted a previous one, the second canceled or abrogated the first. Thus we read, "None of our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten but We substitute something better or the like. Knowest thou not that God

hath power for all things?"—Sura 2:106; 16:101, *Ali*.

Since both the former or the canceled verse and the one that came later and does the canceling or abrogating remain in the Quran it can easily be seen how there would be contradictions in the Quran. Especially is this possible in view of the fact that it is not at all certain when each sura was "revealed," and therefore it cannot always be determined which is the abrogating and which the abrogated text.

Some modern Muslims object to all this and claim that what Muhammad referred to as being canceled or abrogated was not anything that appeared in the Quran but only such things as may have been written in the *Tourat* or the Hebrew Scriptures or in the *Injil* or the Gospel. However, to make such a claim is to deny the testimony of history, which shows why Muhammad was accused of being a forger, as well as to ignore the context in the Quran. Such a claim is made only by some modern Muslims, for the testimony of the most noted Muslim scribes and *imams* of times past is to the effect that both the texts canceled and those doing the canceling are in the Quran. Says the noted Razi, on Sura 16:99, 100: "The Commentators without exception hold that cancelation has its place in the present law." And regarding Sura 4:14, which deals with the penalty to be inflicted upon unfaithful wives, Razi says: "The school of Aba Hanifa holds that the text [in the Quran] commanding imprisonment was canceled by the one commanding stripes." Commenting on Sura 2:102, Razi states that a passage may be canceled and yet remain in the Quran. Other authoritative Muslim commentators that have expressed like views are Beidhawi, Jelaleim and Abdulla.

The Bible presents no such difficulties. When properly understood, it is found to be harmonious from cover to cover. This is

what we should expect in view of its claim to be the Word of Jehovah God. Generally those who claim that the Bible contradicts itself do so only because they fail to distinguish between literal and symbolical language, or because they fail to take into consideration the context, or because they are lacking in objectivity.

ISLAM'S "JIHADS"

One of the more striking contradictions found in the Quran concerns itself with freedom of worship. On the one hand there are a number of expressions favoring religious liberty, such as, "Let there be no compulsion in religion." And on the other hand, time and again expressions appear that indicate the direct opposite: "When the sacred months are passed, kill those that join other gods to God wherever ye find them; and seize them, besiege them, lie in wait for them with every kind of ambush: but if they shall convert, and observe prayer, and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way for God is gracious." And again: "Fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you: Kill them wherever you find them. . . . Fight therefore until there be no more civil discord, and until the only worship be that of God," or "until the temptation stops."—Sura 2:186-190, 212, 213; 8:12; 9:5, 124, *Rodwell*.

Modern Muslims claim that the Quran teaches freedom of religion and advocates only defensive warfare, but can such expressions as "kill those that join other gods to God wherever you find them," "but if they convert . . . let them go their way," and "kill them . . . until the temptation stops" be construed as either defensive warfare or permitting freedom of religion? The very Arabic word *jihad* disproves such a contention, for it means, "A religious war against infidels or Mohammedan heretics." (*Webster*) Many, many Muslims were

slain by other Muslims because of religious differences. Certainly that does not spell out freedom of religion.

In the light of the record made by history, nothing could be more fantastic than to claim that Islam believes only in defensive warfare. The facts show that after Muhammad gained power in Medina he organized marauding bands to attack the caravans of rival cities and that the first three were wholly unsuccessful. After he became a power in Medina, to which city he had fled as a religious refugee from Mecca, he authorized the execution of his critics; most notorious example being his execution of the Jewish tribe of Koraiza, some 700 men being beheaded in the market place from morning until night. True, these Jews had disaffected, but the religious motive is seen in that they were offered full pardon if they would give up their Judaism for Islam. Not one of them accepted this offer, although their failing to do so meant not only death for themselves but the selling of their wives and little ones into slavery.

Muhammad organized an expedition against Mecca, which promptly surrendered. After Muhammad's death Islam was spread by the sword's going into Europe, it being stopped by the armies under Charles Martel, son of Pepin and grandfather of Charlemagne, in France in 732. The last signal defeat suffered by Islam's armies took place before the gates of Vienna in 1863. Vienna is a long way from Mecca! The destruction of many Armenians by the Turks in the twentieth century gives further proof that Islam did not limit its warfare to defensive wars. Truly it is fantastic in view of such a record to hold that Islam believes only in defensive war.

Endeavoring to justify Islam's *jihads* Muslim writers point to the wars waged by the Israelites at Jehovah's command. However, in no sense of the word can Isra-

el's wars be termed *jihads*. That they were engaged in at Jehovah's command is to be seen by the fact that time and again the victory was due to God's miraculous intervention. (Josh. 10:11; Judg. 5:20; 1 Sam. 17:47; 2 Chron. 20:15) Besides, their wars were not fought for the purpose of expanding the kingdom of Israel to a world power. Centuries before, Jehovah had promised this land to the descendants of Abraham, and, as the Sovereign ruler of the universe as well as the earth, he had the right to give the land to whomsoever he would. (Gen. 12:7) So we read that David extended the limits of Israel to its God-ordained limits and neither David nor Solomon launched any wars to exceed those limits.

Further, Jehovah God made it plain to the Israelites that they were serving as his executioners, and that they were to wipe out these nations because of their wickedness, that this was not being done because they were so righteous, and that if they would themselves become wicked then Jehovah's vengeance would be directed against them. While they were Jehovah's executioners, Jehovah applied his same laws to them, even as modern lands expect a policeman to obey the law. Jehovah wiped out a wicked world in the day of Noah with a flood; he wiped out wicked cities such as Sodom and Gomorrah by fire coming down from heaven; he destroyed Egypt's first-born by means of a

plague, and he could use the nation of Israel to destroy his enemies by means of human warfare if he so chose. God tolerates the wicked until his due time to destroy them.—Deut. 9:4-6; Rom. 9:22.

Further, Jehovah's actions against the enemies of his people back there were prophetic of his coming judgments. That is why his 'battle of the great day' is termed Armageddon. (Judg. 5:19; Ps. 83:1-18; Rev. 16:14, 16) When Christ Jesus came he definitely made an end of all use of carnal weapons by God's servants, saying plainly: "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matt. 26:52, NW) His followers engage in a spiritual war, using the sword of the spirit, God's Word, and not carnal weapons. (2 Cor. 10:3, 4; Eph. 6:12-17, NW) They patiently wait upon Jehovah, for him to execute vengeance.—Zeph. 3:8; Rom. 12:19.

While what has been said in the foregoing may offend some, let it be noted that we cannot expect to arrive at the truth when we let our feelings rather than our reason govern our beliefs. God's Word says, "Come now, and let us reason together." (Isa. 1:18) That means to make comparisons, calmly and objectively weighing the facts and the arguments presented, and then being willing to pay the cost, for the truth will cost something. That is why we are counseled: "Buy the truth, and sell it not."—Prov. 23:23.

Sucklings Surpass the Preacher

From "Strength for the Day," a column in the Dallas (Texas) *Times Herald*, March 21, 1953, comes this statement: "On a pleasant Sunday morning this past summer I attended a church service at a famous camp-meeting ground. This spot had been the scene of many inspiring religious convocations. On the morning I attended, there were about 200 people seated in an auditorium which could comfortably accommodate 1,500. Only two persons in the congregation appeared to be between the ages of 15 and 30. The minister preached a sermon on an academic theme and never came within a mile of the problems of all of us sinners who were seated in the pews. . . . Twelve children on the platform sang an anthem and did it so well that the heart of everyone was raised to heavenly heights. 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings'—but not out of the mouth of the preacher."



THE LIVING WORD

"For the word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and their marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

—Heb. 4:12, NW.

JEHOVAH'S Word: what is it? "The Bible," you correctly say. What is the Bible? It is a collection of books constituting the inspired recorded revelation of God. It is the great religious document. The mere possession of the Bible, written by hand and printed by machine, has given to its possessors degrees of satisfaction, for varying reasons. Does the total significance of the Word of God lie in its being just a book to be quoted to some extent by conflicting religions for its pithy sayings and well-turned phrases? No, thanks to its Author, there is more to it than that.

² Since men have been upon earth their minds have been constantly assaulted for capture. Now as in no previous era men's hearts and minds are flooded with propaganda, the purpose of which is to determine their course of action. What causes people to do what they do? Ideas. Ideas are in their minds, leading them on in one course or another. People are not automatons, nor do they operate solely by instinct. Men have minds and hearts in which are seated reason and motive. Therein ideas are plantable, and the objective of the old-world propaganda is to sweep through the minds of all persons, regimenting or lining them all up in opposition to the kingdom of Jehovah God by Christ Jesus.—Prov. 23:7.

³ The demonic source of unclean teachings is the Dragon Devil. Through his

beastly organization he operates upon the selfish minds and hearts of the falsely prophesying rulers and leaders of the people, and through them upon the minds of the people of the world in general. Prophetically, the Revelation states: "I saw three unclean inspired expressions that looked like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the wild beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are, in fact, expressions inspired by demons and perform signs, and they go forth to the kings of the entire inhabited earth, to gather them together to the war of the great day of God the Almighty." (Rev. 16:13, 14, NW) The appeal of such expression or word of the Dragon in its many forms is to selfishness, to the self-interest of men, inducing them to follow such seeming self-interest ahead of and in disregard of principles of righteousness.—John 3:20, NW.

⁴ Obviously, in all of this conflict for the minds of men, words are the chief tools for conveying ideas. Words are symbols of mental images and impressions, used to convey such ideas from intelligent person to intelligent person. Words have significance because of the association therewith of the ideas they represent. Without this association of ideas, accepted and understood by all concerned, a word is just an unintelligible sound or a meaningless written symbol. This is illustrated clearly in

1. What is the Bible?

2. What moves men to act?

3. Concerning the word of the Devil what may be said?

4. Describe and illustrate the relationship of words to ideas.

the fact that a word has significance to a person who understands the particular language of which it is a part, but has no meaning to another person entirely unfamiliar with that language. In our own language, whatever that may be, we, no doubt, frequently inquire as to the meaning of a word that is new to us. The explanation may be given to us in many other words with which we do associate the accepted meaning, and thus we come to an understanding of the meaning of the new word. The point is, words convey ideas. Ideas are what move men to act.

⁵ Words have their force in what they represent; ideas have their power in the result they accomplish in the minds and actions of men. To the extent that the many millions of books that men have written present truthful information that builds up the mind they are beneficial. To the extent to which man's writings influence the thinking and acts of man they are powerful. To the extent to which any written or spoken or otherwise symbolized idea conveys to the mind wickedness and ungodliness, leading to a course in transgression of God's righteous principles, such is devilish and works against the best interest of mankind and to the defamation of Jehovah's name.—John 8:42-47, NW.

⁶ Obviously, it is not primarily in relation to mere facts as such that an issue exists, but, rather, it is in regard to teachings that affect man's relationship to God that the vital controversy for the minds of men is found. In quantity the Word of God, the Bible, is in great contrast with the published word of man. Reportedly, in the Library of Congress alone there are seven million volumes, reminding us that "of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh."

5. Wherein is the force of words and of ideas?

6. In what regard does the controversy for the minds of men exist?

(Eccl. 12:12) In the "little" Bible there is an abundance of facts set out that are common knowledge, such as many references to the beauties of the natural creation.

⁷ Not only do these accepted facts appear in the Scriptures, but therein principles of conduct are found. Generally speaking, people will agree that those principles are good, and are content that many such principles have been incorporated into the laws of the nations. In point, the Bible condemns lying, stealing and murder. Recognizing good principle, the laws of the land also forbid these things and provide punishment for transgression under certain circumstances. However, the righteous principles of God's Word are more difficult for men than is the acceptance of Bible facts of common knowledge. Many people say with their lips and in their publications that Bible principles of conduct are good, and yet the actual, consistent and persistent practice of those very principles by such people is indeed a rarity. Unapplied, they are not living principles.

⁸ Common fact and good principles do not exhaust the Word of God. Prophecy also is there. Although it is one of the Bible's most amazing and powerful features, the interpretation and fulfillment of which are in the hands of Jehovah God, to the world in general Bible prophecy is absolutely dead; both the so-called Christian and the non-Christian world are dead, unresponsive to it. Generally speaking, Bible prophecy is not understood, not believed; it is given no credit, is ignored.

⁹ God's Word includes more than even these foregoing features. This is the most important element of the Bible: its revelation of the true God. It contains his many

7. How do men in general view Bible principles of conduct?

8. In addition to facts of common acceptance and principles of conduct, what powerful third feature is contained in the Bible?

9. The most important element of the Bible is what?

titles, and identifies him by his name JEHOVAH. Bible facts, principles and prophecies all find their real value in pointing to the living God.—Jer. 10:10, AS.

¹⁰ Because the Bible is the Word of the living God it is living and has power; standing in the world as a bulwark against the flood of hurtful propaganda, it alone offering a safeguard for the minds and hearts of men. It is a revelation of the mind of the Creator, Jehovah God, and is his instrument to convey to the minds of men ideas of his infinite mind. It is composed of words that are Jehovah God's words, available to us in whatever language is ours, translated for us from the original languages of the first Bible records. Those words stand for ideas that are God's thoughts. Just as certainly as the great Word Giver is the living God, so certain it is that his inspired word of truth is the living Word.

¹¹ Common is the saying to the effect that the pen is mightier than the sword. That is a recognition of the fact that ideas conveyed to the minds of men are more powerful than merely physical force. (Heb. 11:34, NW) Not only is God's Word more powerful than physical force and violence, but it is mightier than the penned or spoken words of all the propaganda agencies of this ungodly old world. It is alive. The old world is dying, and its words are death-dealing. Common also is the motto "Actions speak louder than words." Such motto recognizes the fact that it is possible to say one thing and do another. What a person eventually does reveals that which is in his heart, even though his speech may deceive.—Matt. 23:3, NW.

¹² "I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. It is time for Jehovah to work; for they

have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. Thy testimonies are wonderful; therefore doth my soul keep them." (Ps. 119:125-129, AS) The beautiful and wonderful expressions contained in this passage can be repeated without either the speaker's or the hearer's actually believing them. A person can say to God, 'I am thy servant,' and yet refrain from serving Jehovah. He can ask for understanding, but can avoid the study of God's Word, from which alone understanding can come. Profession can be made that a person loves God's commandments above gold and yet the one so professing can disregard God's commandments, reading them in the Bible and not following them, but instead turning his time and efforts to the acquiring of gold. If God's precepts concerning all things are actually esteemed to be right and held valuable and proper for keeping, then the servant of Jehovah, upon coming to an understanding concerning Jehovah's counsel upon any matter, will follow that counsel and will actually and literally avoid falsities because he hates them, delighting rather in his very being to keep the wonderful testimonies of God.

¹³ God's words are powerful, living and effective: first, because they are from the Creator of the universe, Jehovah God Almighty, and are backed up by his power and almightiness and they are right; second, if received into good and honest hearts and minds they guide the servant of God in a proper course of action, which will result in lasting life to him and to the exultation of the God whose commandments are obeyed and thereby justified. The fact cannot be overemphasized that words symbolize ideas. God's ideas must get into your

13. State the essentials that empower the Word of Jehovah.

10. The infinite mind of Jehovah God is revealed to man in what way?

11. Of the Word of God and the word and violence of men, which is more powerful?

12. Illustrate how beautiful expressions may be used but not be conformed to.

mind, and in order for them to be powerful they must have an effect upon your thinking and your course of life. Therein is their power; but simply having a book called the Bible in the possession of individuals or of nations without applying the things that God has caused to be set out in that book is of no benefit to the possessors. The result of following God's Word is the worship of Jehovah and hence life for his worshipers. Simple faith in the Scriptures, based on an understanding and appreciation of them and on love for God and uprightness, is the great requirement filled by the Word of God.

¹⁴ This is a contrast in two general courses of action and thought, set out in the very first Psalm in words as follows: "Blessed [happy] is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers." This means that regardless of the extent to which wicked advice, sinful practices and scorn of God and his Word come to the attention of the man blessed by Jehovah, he will put these things aside. "But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law doth he meditate day and night." In language symbolic, but which certainly conveys the proper thought, the end of such one is shown to be this: "And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Wicked counselors, including the religionists that persistently advise you to disregard the study of God's Word with Jehovah's witnesses, are not fruitful trees that prosper. No, "the wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For

Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish."—Ps. 1:1-6, AS.

POWER

¹⁵ How powerful is the Word of God in our lives? As far as the individual is concerned, that depends measurably on whether or not he gets the sense of it. This is shown many times by Jesus, who, on one occasion, referred to "the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, the other thirty." (Matt. 13:23, NW) What does it mean to get the sense of the Word of God? Jesus in a corresponding account makes it plain: "These are the ones that, after hearing the word with a right and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance." (Luke 8:15, NW) To get the sense of God's Word means to hear it with real perception and appreciation, to appreciate its signification, the purport, drift, the meaning that is rational, intelligible and in accord with all the rest of God's Word and with Jehovah's righteousness. It takes a right and good heart to do that, and such heart will retain the word. The power of God's living Word is manifested as being in the heart of such a person by the fact that he bears fruit and has endurance through his service to Jehovah's praise. "On this account take up the complete suit of armor from God, that you may be able to resist in the wicked day and, after you have done all things thoroughly, to stand firm."—Eph. 6:13, NW.

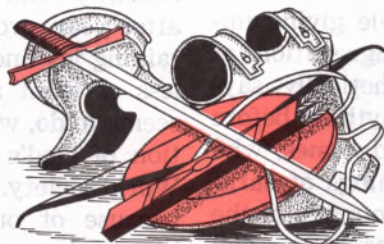
¹⁶ The sixth chapter of Ephesians, in which God's provision is symbolically referred to as a suit of armor, shows that God's Word has power both for protection and for offense in Christian warfare. (Eph.

14. In your own words state the contrasts set out in Psalm 1:1-6.

15. (a) How powerful is the Word of God in our lives? (b) Give the meaning of "getting the sense of it."

16. Show what tremendous power for protection and for offense is exerted by the living Word.

6:17, NW) The apostle Paul stated the same truth in this way: "The night is well along; the day has drawn near. Let us therefore put off the works belonging to darkness and let us put on the weapons of the light." (Rom. 13:12, NW) Undoubtedly it was from the Hebrew prophets of God that the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures drew for this representation of God's Word as vital fighting equipment, because in Isaiah they read: "And he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a mantle." (Isa. 59:17, AS)



The prophet also stated: "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me: and he hath made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he kept me close." (Isa. 49:2, AS) The mental and, therefore, vital protection of the truth is further shown in its renovating process as applied to the Christian's mental disposition: "And quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and complete will of God." (Rom. 12:2, NW) This is a tremendous power exerted by Jehovah's Word in the lives of his people.

¹⁷ To those among whom he had gone preaching the kingdom of God, Paul explained that he was leaving and that they would not see him again. He warned them against symbolic wolves who would come among the Christian flock and teach words contrary to the truth that the apostle Paul had brought to them and that had blessed them so richly. Paul said: "I know that

after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore keep awake, and bear in mind that for three years, night and day, I did not quit admonishing each one with tears. And now I commit you to God and to the word of his undeserved kindness, which word can build you up and give you the inheritance among all the sanctified ones." (Acts 20:29-32, NW) Paul here shows the power of God's Word to build up the Christian congregation. There is nothing else that can do so and bring them the in-

heritance that is gained through maturity and faithfulness.

¹⁸ Furthermore, the Word of God repeated and expressed by his servants has power to identify them as worshipers of Jehovah. Opposite identification is also contained in the words of those who speak contrary to the Scriptures. The great Teacher used a very obvious illustration to make this point, stating: "For there is not a fine tree producing rotten fruit; again there is not a rotten tree producing fine fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For example, people do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they cut grapes off a thorn-bush. A good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart, but a wicked man brings forth what is wicked out of his wicked treasure; for out of the heart's abundance his mouth speaks."—Luke 6:43-45, NW.

¹⁹ This living Word of God exerting power is said to be sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of the

17. As to the building up of Christians, what has the power?

18. In our lives, what has power of identification?

19. Explain what is another exclusive power of God's Word.

soul and spirit and being able to discern what is in the heart of man. (Heb. 4:12, NW) No other word in existence can do that. None but the living Word of God has the power thus to discern and judge. Jesus spoke the word of his heavenly Father and said: "He that disregards me and does not receive my sayings has one to judge him. The word which I have spoken is what will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48, NW) The apostle Paul looked forward to the great "last day" of judgment in which we are now living, and, while giving immediate counsel to the congregation at Corinth, he also spoke prophetically, saying: "Hence do not judge anything before the due time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring the secret things of darkness to light and make the counsels of the hearts manifest, and then each one will have his praise come to him from God." —1 Cor. 4:5, NW.

²⁰ In connection with this power of judgment of God's Word, we recall that it "pierces even to the dividing of the soul and spirit." (Heb. 4:12, NW) The soul and the spirit are not synonymous. The living creature is the soul, but his spirit is his motivating force. It moves him. A man may have a good spirit or a bad spirit. Sometimes we say: "I can't be there in person, but I'll be there in spirit," and that is a proper expression, justified by the Scriptures. For instance, Paul stated to the Colossians: "For though I am absent in the flesh, all the same I am with you in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding your good order and the firmness of your faith toward Christ." (Col. 2:5, NW) So searching and piercing is the Word of God in the lives of

his people that it distinguishes and even enables each one to distinguish between that which he actually does, which can be seen by other persons as well, and the spirit in which he does it, that is, his motive, his moving force. Self-examination in the light of God's Word enables us to determine whether we are doing what we do because of love for God.

²¹ So powerful is Jehovah's Word that it enables us to serve God persistently, consistently and faithfully, enduring year after year, progressing in the truth, maintaining joy and happiness, and this regardless of what any other creature does or seems to do, whether he is in the organization of God's people or outside the New World society. We must serve Jehovah God because of our personal relationship to him, and must live our own lives properly in harmony with God's Word and let other people live their lives, bearing before God their own responsibility for their course of action. (Gal. 6:5, NW) We can fool other men. Men can fool us. If we refuse to permit God's Word to penetrate us and search us out, discerning between our soul and spirit, we may accomplish self-deception, but we do not change God's Word and its judgment, nor Jehovah himself nor Christ Jesus, his appointed Judge. Because it declares Jehovah's judgments, which are sure, God's Word has the power to burn and to break, as he states: "Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29, AS) We must never draw back from his glorious service.

20. Comment on the "dividing of the soul and spirit."

21. Why and how must we serve Jehovah, and what enables us to do so?

Oh how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thy commandments make me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. . . . I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I might observe thy word.

—Ps. 119:97-101, AS.

Power for Life and Service



"With the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation."

—Rom. 10:10, NW.



"THE word of God is alive." (Heb. 4:12, NW) Those who conform to it follow a way that destines them for life if

it is continued in in faithfulness to the termination of their earthly Christian careers. Jesus stated this basic formula for longevity: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3, NW) Jesus spoke very forceful truths concerning the receiving of life through him, identifying himself as the bread from heaven, saying: "He that feeds on this bread will live forever." (John 6:58, NW) Not receiving these words into good and honest hearts, not getting the sense of them, "many of his disciples, when they heard this, said: 'This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?'" Jesus did not back down, but stated something even more impressive, saying, "Does this stumble you? What, therefore, if you behold the Son of man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that is life-giving; the flesh is of no use at all. The sayings that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you that do not believe." (John 6:60-64, NW) Many of the disciples turned from him then, leaving him, and Jesus asked his twelve close associates if they wanted to go also. Simon Peter made the proper reply, showing that he had received Jesus' words into a good and honest heart and that he had really gotten their

sense: "Master, Whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life."—John 6:68, NW.

² As certainly as the word of God enabled Christians to be brought forth as God's sons, just so certain is it that adherence thereto enables them to receive life as a gift through Christ Jesus from God, in whom they have abiding faith and whom they serve. "Because he willed it, he brought us forth by the word of truth, for us to be a certain firstfruits of his creatures." (Jas. 1:18, NW) "We are not the kind that shrink back to destruction, but the kind that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul." (Heb. 10:39, NW) Did not Jehovah's word preserve alive his servants through the Flood and Israel from Egypt, establishing prophetic shadows? —1 Pet. 3:20, 21; 1 Cor. 10:11, NW.

³ The present lives of all men are uncertain, and the present lives of Christians are subject to uncertainties too. As servants of God our daily existence is joyful, filled with happiness and with appreciation to Jehovah for his undeserved kindness. We must observe that the lasting life for all Christians is in the future and the lasting life for the majority is upon this earth after Armageddon. In the meantime we have hopes of being carried through Armageddon, and if that is not our lot, nevertheless, through our faithfulness and Jehovah's loving power, we have hopes of partic-

2. Cite operations of God's word toward the bringing of life to its adherents.

3. What living hope of life is in the living Word?

1. Apply to the Bible Jesus' formula for longevity.

ipating in the resurrection from the dead. These hopes are certain. They are born in our hearts and minds through the living Word of God and are real to us because we believe and rely upon Jehovah.

⁴ His book is a book of life in that it sets out the course that leads to life. It is a book of spiritual health. We are not in doubt concerning this. We are fully aware of the one in whom we believe and trust—the one whose words we have accepted and who has our unqualified confidence. We say: “For I know the one whom I have believed, and I am confident he is able to guard what I have laid up in trust with him until that day. Keep holding the pattern of healthful words which you heard from me with the faith and love that are in connection with Christ Jesus. This beautiful trust guard through the holy spirit which is dwelling in us.” (2 Tim. 1:12-14, NW) Healthful words? Paul was positive in his assurance to young Timothy that such was the case, even saying in his first epistle to his companion in service, “If any man teaches other doctrine and does not assent to healthful words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor to the teaching that accords with godly devotion, he is puffed up with pride, not understanding anything, but being mentally diseased over questionings and debates about words.”—1 Tim. 6:3, 4, NW.

SERVICE

⁵ There is something else that God's Word brings to us that is not merely future. It too is an essential part of our lives, and cannot be dispensed with. It constitutes a proof of our

acceptance of God's Word. Recall what Jesus said about those who receive the word in good hearts, get the sense of it and bring forth fruit in abundance. The bringing forth of fruit is an evidence of the living Word's acting on our hearts and minds and exerting its power in our lives. It is something that can be seen by both God and man. It is our service. In fact, the faithful service of Jehovah's witnesses is one of the most remarkable manifestations of the power of God's Word, as well as an evidence of his protecting active force operating in their behalf and through them. Obviously, it is more than just a matter of intentions when God's service is involved. In addition to intending to serve God, Christians do it.

⁶ A large share of our part in our Christian warfare is the preaching of the truth to others as ministers of the good news of God's kingdom. “For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things. For we are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are bringing every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:4, 5, NW) We previously observed Jesus' words, “A good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart, . . . for out of the heart's abundance his mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45, NW) Jesus continued, saying: “Why, then, do you call me ‘Master! Master!’ but do not do the things I say?”—Luke 6:46, NW.

⁷ It is not enough that we hear the words of Jehovah God and Christ Jesus and hear only. It is not sufficient that we mere-



4. How is the book of life declared to be a book of health?

5. Name one of the most remarkable manifestations of the power of God's Word, and state if it is present or future.

6. In what capacity does our ministry serve in Christian warfare?
7. What is here shown to be insufficient, and why?

ly come to a personal understanding of doctrinal truths. We may learn facts regarding the so-called trinity and that Jehovah alone is God. We may understand the truth that there is no hell-fire torment, and rejoice in the Scriptural teaching that the soul is mortal and that the hope of the dead is through the resurrection. We may know that the established, proved facts of all science corroborate the fundamental truth of the creatorship of Jehovah and also corroborate the Bible account of creation and man's history upon the earth. We may be thrilled at the findings of archaeology confirming the words of God's prophets. But that is not enough. If we stop there we use the truth to serve ourselves alone.

⁸ If we obey the commandments of God and Christ Jesus, follow the example of Christ Jesus, the apostles and the early Christian congregation, we will tell others concerning the things from God's Word that have so enriched our lives. We will make the activities of the New World society our activities all we possibly can. We will bear fruit; we will speak out of the abundance of a heart filled to overflowing with the truths of God's Word and the love that his Word instills in us for the great Speaker and Author of the Bible. If we do this, with the approval of God as his Word discerns between our soul and spirit, we are Jehovah's witnesses. If we do not serve God, worshiping him in spirit and in truth, we are not Jehovah's witnesses.

⁹ Why do we serve God? Because we love him, and the power of Jehovah's Word is manifested through us thereby. It is folly for anyone to deceive himself with the idea that 'the Kingdom is now thirty-nine years old, I have served God long enough, the complete end may be another thirty-nine years away, and so I should settle back

now, take things easy, and prepare comforts and luxuries for myself.' Jesus, as long ago as when he was here on the earth, long before the Kingdom was born, said, "Everyone that comes to me and hears my words *and does them*, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug and went down deep and laid a foundation upon the rock-mass. Consequently, when a flood arose, the river dashed against that house, but was not strong enough to shake it, because of its being well built." (Luke 6:47, 48, NW) As long ago as the apostle Paul's day service was the worthy pursuit for Christians; and the more so now: "Do this, too, because you know the season, that it is already the hour for you to awake from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than at the time when we became believers. The night is well along; the day has drawn near. Let us therefore put off the works belonging to darkness and let us put on the weapons of the light. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not be planning ahead for the desires of the flesh."—Rom. 13:11, 12, 14, NW.

¹⁰ All the desires of our selfish natures and the appeal of all the propaganda of the old world are for us to refrain from putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, or, having him on, to put him off, and, instead, to lay plans ahead for fulfillment of personal wishes, disregarding the interest and needs of God's people, his organization and his work. We owe a debt of love to our brothers. We owe to them to chart a course of personal action that will be helpful spiritually to our associates of the New World society. We owe to our fellow man, and to our God primarily, our service of ministry of praise to Jehovah in behalf of all lovers of righteousness. Repeatedly in the Scriptures we find such expressions as the 'word of the Lord came' to God's serv-

8. We are Jehovah's witnesses if we do what?

9. State a folly to be avoided, showing the Scriptural viewpoint.

10. The discharge of what obligation shows the service power of the truth?

ants and they responded, preached and prophesied and otherwise ministered in obedience to the word they heard. Concerning the opening of the mouth in Christian liberty in ministering the apostle wrote to the Ephesians: "Finally, go on acquiring power in the Lord and in the mightiness of his strength. Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil; because we have a fight, . . . keep awake with all constancy and with supplication in behalf of all the holy ones, also for me, that ability to speak may be given me with the opening of my mouth, with all freeness of speech to make known the sacred secret of the good news, for which I am acting as an ambassador in chains, that I may speak in connection with it with boldness as I ought to speak." (Eph. 6:10-20, NW) How else can such service power come except from the truth of God's Word?

¹¹ No, the Word of God cannot be separated from our ministry. Ancient Israel stood as a people for Jehovah's name, and their service of praise to him was a witness to his Godship. However, something far more grand is the lot of Jehovah's worshipers in this day of his kingdom. In fact, that has been true since the beginning of the Christian congregation; but in the day of the birth of the Kingdom the statement to the Romans has added weight, wherein we read: "For Moses writes that the man that has done the righteousness of the Law will live by it. But the righteousness resulting from faith speaks in this manner: 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" that is, to bring Christ down; or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.' But what does [Christian faith now say? It says:] 'The word is near you, in your

mouth and in your heart'; that is, the 'word' of faith which we are preaching. For if you publicly declare that 'word in your mouth', that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." —Rom. 10:5-10, NW.

TO THE WORD OF GOD WE TURN

¹² Turning to the worship of Jehovah means turning to his Word; turning to his Word means worshiping him. Jehovah's witnesses admonish one another to turn to God's Word always. They counsel the people in general to turn to the Bible, inform themselves concerning its true contents and conform to its righteous teachings. The apostle Peter did the same thing, urging his associates to pay attention to the Bible, including its prophecies, stating: "Consequently, we have the prophetic word made more firm, and you are doing well in paying attention to it as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and a daystar rises, in your hearts. For you know this first, that no prophecy of Scripture springs from any private release. For prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." (2 Pet. 1:19-21, NW) Jehovah God himself backs up that principle of accepting the Word, stating prophetically through Deuteronomy 18:19: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (4S) The words of God spoken through this Greater Moses, Christ Jesus, are available to us, and we should accept them, as stated: "Also accept the helmet of salvation, and

11. Prove that in the light of God's Word our ministry cannot be ignored.

12. Who counsel to turn to God's Word?

the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word."
—Eph. 6:17, NW.

PRACTICAL AND PRACTICABLE

¹³ If God's Word is practicable it may be practiced or performed. It is capable of being put into practice. It is feasible and can be used. Its requirements for Jehovah's service upon earth are capable of being accomplished. It is not impracticable. If this living Word of God is practical it can actually be turned to account and is not merely theoretical, nor merely an impractical idea that sounds nice. It is utilitarian. If it is practical it is valuable in practice and is available, and those who utilize it are actually working with it, being given to action and not merely indulging in speculation. Such result must of necessity follow, in consideration of the facts already observed concerning God's living Word and its power in the lives of Jehovah's people. The shoddy contention of self-centered men that God's Word is neither practical nor practicable falls flat in the light of the internal and external evidence pertaining to the Bible. When men say, "It won't work," in referring to the Word of God, they identify themselves as men who have never tried it and never put it to practice, and they are not following its commandments and precepts. When men say, "It is only visionary with its principles of uprightness and its hope for a righteous new world," they are identifying themselves as men without vision, and persons remaining without vision of those things pertaining to the Creator and his purposes respecting man are going to die. "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." (Prov. 29:18) This is true because those without vision through God's law "cast off restraint"

(AS), the restraining guidance of the counsel of God's Word.

¹⁴ Is it not practical to stay awake in a time of crisis and keep our senses? Is it not practical to have our hearts and heads protected by faith and love and hope of lasting life? Of course it is. "So, then, let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses. For those who sleep are accustomed to sleep at night, and those who get drunk are usually drunk at night. But as for us who belong to the day, let us keep our senses and have on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation; because God assigned us, not to wrath, but to the acquiring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5:6-9, NW) The passing of time since the recording of God's Word until the day of decision in which we are privileged to live underscores the foregoing injunction from the fifth chapter of First Thessalonians and supports, in fullness of current application, the words of the same Bible writer in Romans 13:12 (NW), also previously referred to. "The night is well along; the day has drawn near. Let us therefore put off the works belonging to darkness and let us put on the weapons of the light. As in the daytime let us walk in good behavior."
—Rom. 13:12, 13, NW.

¹⁵ Alive, exerting power, and sharper than any two-edged sword, with practicability to uncover men's hearts, God's Word states: "And there is not a creation that is not manifest to his sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting." (Heb. 4:13, NW) Is it not the part of good judgment to endeavor to have the approval of the great God before whom the accounting is to be made? How else can we possi-

13. (a) How does the Bible fit the requirements for being practical and practicable? (b) When men deny the workableness of the Bible what are they demonstrating?

14. What is the practical course to take?

15. (a) As to judgment, what shows good judgment on our part? (b) How reliable is man?

bly win his approval except through the taking of the course outlined in his righteous Word? There is no other way under the sun. Would it be wise to rely on grass that grows in the meadow, to worship flowers that bloom in the fields? "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever." (Isa. 40:6-8, AS) There is nothing practical in following men who are going contrary to God's Word and who are as important and reliable as weeds.

¹⁶ The apostle Peter emphasized this point and in doing so quoted from the 40th chapter of Isaiah, saying: "Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth with unhypocritical brotherly love as the result, love one another intensely from the heart. For you have been given a new birth, not by corruptible, but by incorruptible reproductive seed, through the word of the living and enduring God. For 'all flesh is as vegetation, and all its glory is as a flower of the vegetation; the vegetation becomes withered, and the flower falls off, but the word spoken by Jehovah endures forever'. Well, this is the 'word spoken', this which has been declared to you as good news." (1 Pet. 1:22-25, NW) When the counsel of God's Word is disregarded by men, the men who go contrary to it get into trouble; so avoid difficulties brought

about by untheocratic conduct. As Peter insists, Jehovah's Word endures, and it is blameless in regard to the difficult conditions that have come about because of disobedience to that Word.

¹⁷ The old world, rotten to its heart, is doomed to destruction and will go down even while harping that the Bible won't work and its contents are outdated and useless. The New World society, however, is founded solidly on the unchanged and unchanging word of a God who is consistent, almighty and completely righteous. Its members recognize the most important thing, a true appreciation of their God and their relationship to him. They glory in this relationship as prospective members of God's great family. The Word of God is to us inexhaustible, its study always rewarding, adherence to it always beneficial. We thank God for everything in our lives that serves to keep our attention on his Word and increase our love for it and our appreciation of it. In it are found the organization instructions on which the New World society operates. Correct, truthful doctrine, righteous laws, highest and noblest principles, authority to preach, all are contained in the living Word, pointing to and applying in this great day of judgment and of division. Above all, his living Word identifies and exalts the true God, Jehovah, the Source of light. Truly as his spokesman Christ Jesus said: "The sayings that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." —John 6:63, NW.

16. Upon what does Peter insist?

17. Show the soundness of the New World society.

The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever: the ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: in keeping them there is great reward.

—Ps. 19:7-11, AS.

Loyalty to Theocratic Organization

LIFE is a gift of God. All sane persons desire life. However, to gain it everlastingly we must want it so much as to be willing to meet God's requirements for it. Among those requirements is loyalty to his theocratic organization.*

The word "theocratic" means that which is according to God's rule or law. "Loyalty" means faithfulness in love and duty, faithfulness to one's obligations. Loyalty to theocratic organization, therefore, means to be in heart harmony with God's arrangements.

In the days of Israel's kings, loyalty to theocratic organization meant going up to Jerusalem for worship and sacrifice. (Deut. 12:5, 11) King Jeroboam lost Jehovah's favor because, fearful for his ten-tribe kingdom if his people went to Jerusalem to worship, he set up a rival worship at Dan and Bethel.—1 Ki. 12:26-30.

Jehovah does not change. (Mal. 3:6, AS) Today he also has a theocratic organization, known as "the Society," upon which he has placed his spirit and which has his blessing, as so strikingly shown at the recent New World Society Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Some, with a high opinion of themselves, have complained against that theocratic organization, saying, 'Jehovah is also dealing with us.' But the fruits they bear prove them wrong, even as Aaron and Miriam were proved wrong when they presumptuously exalted themselves against Jehovah's chosen servant Moses.—Num. 12:1-15.

Our loyalty to the theocratic organization is tested by temptation or adversity. Temptation to disloyalty may come when we see that another, who seemingly has less natural ability than ourselves, is placed

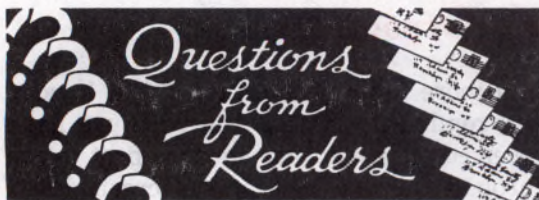
in a more prominent position. But loyalty will remind us that all the truth we have received came to us in the first place through the "faithful and discreet slave" organization, and that, even as God has given us the truth, he can take it away from us. (Matt. 24:45-47; 1 Cor. 4:6, 7) We will therefore from the heart co-operate and help such a one.

Then again our loyalty may be tested because of unjust treatment, within the organization or from our families. At such times we must bear in mind that Jesus promised such things would come and that if God permits it we can, with his help, endure it and thus make manifest our loyalty.—Matt. 10:36; 18:7; Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 10:13.

Or, because Armageddon has not come as soon as we once expected we may grow impatient and doubt that God is using the theocratic organization to feed his people with spiritual truths. To fail under such a test of loyalty would be disastrous, even as it was for the Israelites encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai when they grew impatient waiting for Moses to return. (Exodus, chapter 32) To meet all such tests of loyalty requires love, for Jehovah and our neighbor.—Mark 12:29-31, NW.

The four Hebrew youths taken to Babylon set a good example. Being loyal in a seemingly minor matter, that of food, they were able to stand when severer test came. (Daniel, chapters 1, 3 and 6) So we today, if we are loyal to the theocratic organization in that which is less or least, then, when faced with emergencies or severe tests, we shall be able to keep loyal to the theocratic organization and thus keep a good conscience, gain Jehovah's approval and win everlasting life.

* For details see *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1952.



● How can we harmonize Ezekiel 18:20, which says the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, with Exodus 20:5, which says God will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations?—M. L., Germany.

Ezekiel 18:20 shows that each individual, after reaching an age of responsibility, is judged on the basis of his own attitude and conduct. Early training and family environment can be a big help or hindrance to the offspring, and as a general rule children continue in the behavior patterns established during their formative years. (Prov. 22:6) Yet it is not always or invariably so, and upon reaching an age of responsibility the offspring acts on his own choices, regardless of how little or how much such decisions may be influenced by early training and environment. He adopts a certain course in life, and he is judged according to his own deeds. "God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." "He will render to each one according to his works." Jesus showed that families would be divided over him, some choosing to follow him in Jehovah's service and others of the family opposing: "I came to cause division, with a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother." The Christian son of an opposing father would not bear the iniquity of his father, but would be favorably judged on the basis of his own Christian works.—Gal. 6:7; Rom. 2:6; Matt. 10:35, NW.

Ezekiel 18:20 involves the extreme penalty of death: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." If the wicked turned to righteousness, "he shall surely live, he shall not die." If the righteous turned to wickedness, "in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." Hence Jehovah's climactic cry: "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? . . . turn yourselves, and live ye." (Ezek. 18:21, 24, 31, 32) Thus Ezekiel 18:20 corresponds with Deuteronomy 24:16 regarding who suffers the death penalty: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children,

neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

The case of Exodus 20:5 is different. Through Moses Jehovah said to Israel: "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me. And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The older men, representing the nation, gave to Moses the nation's answer to God: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." The covenant was being made with the nation, not individuals. The opening words of this covenant were to the effect that Jehovah was their God, that they were to have no others in defiance of him, and that they were never to make images for worship. Then, in connection with this prohibition of idolatry, God gave his reason for this command: "Because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion, bringing punishment for the iniquity of fathers upon sons down to the great-grandsons and great-great-grandsons in the case of those who hate me, but exercising loving-kindness toward thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."—Ex. 19:3-8; 20:1-6, NW.

This states the principle of how God recompenses faithfulness and unfaithfulness, and this principle can be applied against individuals as well as a nation for idolatry or other sin. The national history of Israel that later unfolded was in keeping with Jehovah's warning. When the nation turned to idolatry it suffered the evil consequences for generations afterward. There were always some who maintained integrity, and at times those who loved God and kept his commands numbered into the thousands, despite the nation's idolatrous course. (1 Ki. 19:14, 18) Faithful ones were not punished for the nation's sins, but, although they suffered the effects of it, they benefited from God's loving-kindness. Though individuals could and did shun the nation-wide idolatries, it was difficult for them to swim against the national tide of religious delinquency.

When the national leaders fell away to idolatry the people in general fell with them and the national environment became spiritually unhealthful. In this bad environment the new generation grew up and the strong tendency was for them to drift along in the idolatrous religions of their fathers. Sometimes it was

generations later before accumulating woes from their idolatry precipitated a national crisis, which usually resulted in a partial if not complete recovery from impure worship.

At any rate, the nation suffered for generations after its fall, if there was no repentance on the part of those later generations with respect to the covenant of Jehovah God. The book of Judges is filled with accounts of national relapse and the disastrous consequences. (Judg. 2:11-19) The same situation is found during the period that kings reigned. For instance, Jehovah determined to punish the nation for its idolatry during the reign of Manasseh, and even a subsequent good reign by Josiah did not turn God from that purpose. (2 Ki. 22:13-20; 23:25-27) Despite a temporary recovery during Josiah's reign, the nation went from bad to worse until it was taken captive to Babylon and remained there seventy years. There was a case where the nation was punished for the misdeeds of parents for a period of three or four or even more generations. In Jesus' day the nation's leaders influenced the people to cry for Jesus' death, and when Pilate declared he was innocent of shedding the blood of Jesus the people answered: "His blood come upon us and upon our children." (Matt. 27:25, NW) The Jewish nation rejected Messiah and turned to the idolatrous Roman empire, and primarily it was the children of these Jewish adults that made up the nation when it did suffer for these parental sins, when the Romans came A.D. 70.

Visiting iniquity upon descendants does not necessarily mean the death penalty, for if death was meant, how would the offending fathers have great-great-grandchildren? Instances of where Jehovah applied the principle against individuals are Eli, who for his neglect was to have the high priesthood cut off from his family, this occurring with Abiathar, the great-great-grandson of Eli. (1 Sam. 2:27-36; 3:11-14; 14:3; 22:20; 1 Ki. 2:26, 27); and Gehazi, who was smitten with leprosy for running after rewards from the cured Syrian general Naaman contrary to Elisha's wishes and to whom Elisha then said: "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever." (2 Ki. 5:1-27) This did not sentence their children or descendants to the extreme penalty of death but did consign them to feel disadvantageous effects of their forefathers' iniquity. Individuals among these descendants might turn to Jehovah and receive some measure of relief and favor.

● What does Hebrews 4:12 mean, particularly the distinction between soul and spirit?—E. S., Ohio.

Hebrews 4:12 (NW) reads: "For the word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and their marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart." God's Word is alive to alter our ways of thinking and living, and to have its truths in our heads and hearts is to have a powerful influence at work within us. It is no dead Word that has lost its interest or truthfulness, its practicalness or right interpretation of present events, and its protective power against the degradation of these immoral times. It has vitality and carries conviction and can show what is in us with a penetration and discernment far sharper than that of any worldly psychologist. It is no dead letter, its principles will stand, its judgments will be executed.

God's Word does not stop at just a surface view of human actions but it penetrates beneath the surface to discern motives and attitudes, to divide between fleshly desires and mental dispositions. That these two forces exist within an individual Paul shows: "With my mind I myself am a slave to God's law, but with my flesh to sin's law." (Rom. 7:25, NW) With his mind Paul served God's law, but with his flesh he served the law of sin. So the life one lives as a human soul of flesh and blood may be different from what is one's mental attitude or spirit. Hebrews 4:12 is differentiating between the life of an individual, or his soul, and his mental and heart attitude and inclination of mind. In the text "soul" means the life of the fleshly organism and "spirit" means the mental disposition or heart attitude of the individual. Christians should always examine their conduct in the light of their inward motives and be sure that any falling short is due to weak flesh and not deliberately done out of wrong heart condition. God's Word will help us be discerning in examining ourselves and penetrate to the attitudes and heart intentions behind our conduct, to be sure that they are pure even when our lives may fall short of perfection. Jehovah takes all these things into consideration and sees us inside and out, for "all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting."—Heb. 4:13, NW.

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"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES

Week of December 6: The Living Word.

Week of December 13: Power for Life and Service.

✓✓ CHECK YOUR MEMORY ✓✓

After reading this issue of "The Watchtower", do you remember—

- ✓ What reason Dr. John Haynes Holmes gave for the world's confusion? P. 643, ¶1.
- ✓ What questions a "natural" religion fails to answer? P. 643, ¶4.
- ✓ How the Catholic Church tries to cover up Augustine's erroneous belief concerning Christ's reign? P. 646, ¶3.
- ✓ Why the preaching of Christ's presence now is no false alarm? P. 648, ¶1.
- ✓ How Christ appeared in 1914? P. 648, ¶2.
- ✓ What betrays Christendom's churches to be famine-stricken? P. 649, ¶2.
- ✓ To what must there be a turning if spiritual famine is to be avoided? P. 651, ¶5.
- ✓ What one outstanding factor discounts Muhammad as a prophet of God? P. 653, ¶2.
- ✓ How the Quran admits it contradicts itself? P. 654, ¶3.
- ✓ What is the ultimate purpose of old-world propaganda? P. 657, ¶2.
- ✓ What is the most important feature of the Bible? P. 658, ¶9.
- ✓ Why God's words are living, powerful, effective? P. 659, ¶13.
- ✓ What determines whether we are Jehovah's witnesses? P. 665, ¶8.
- ✓ When men get into trouble? P. 668, ¶16.
- ✓ Why loyalty in little things is important? P. 669, ¶9.
- ✓ What Jehovah's Word means when it says it "pierces even to the dividing of the soul and spirit"? P. 671, ¶5.