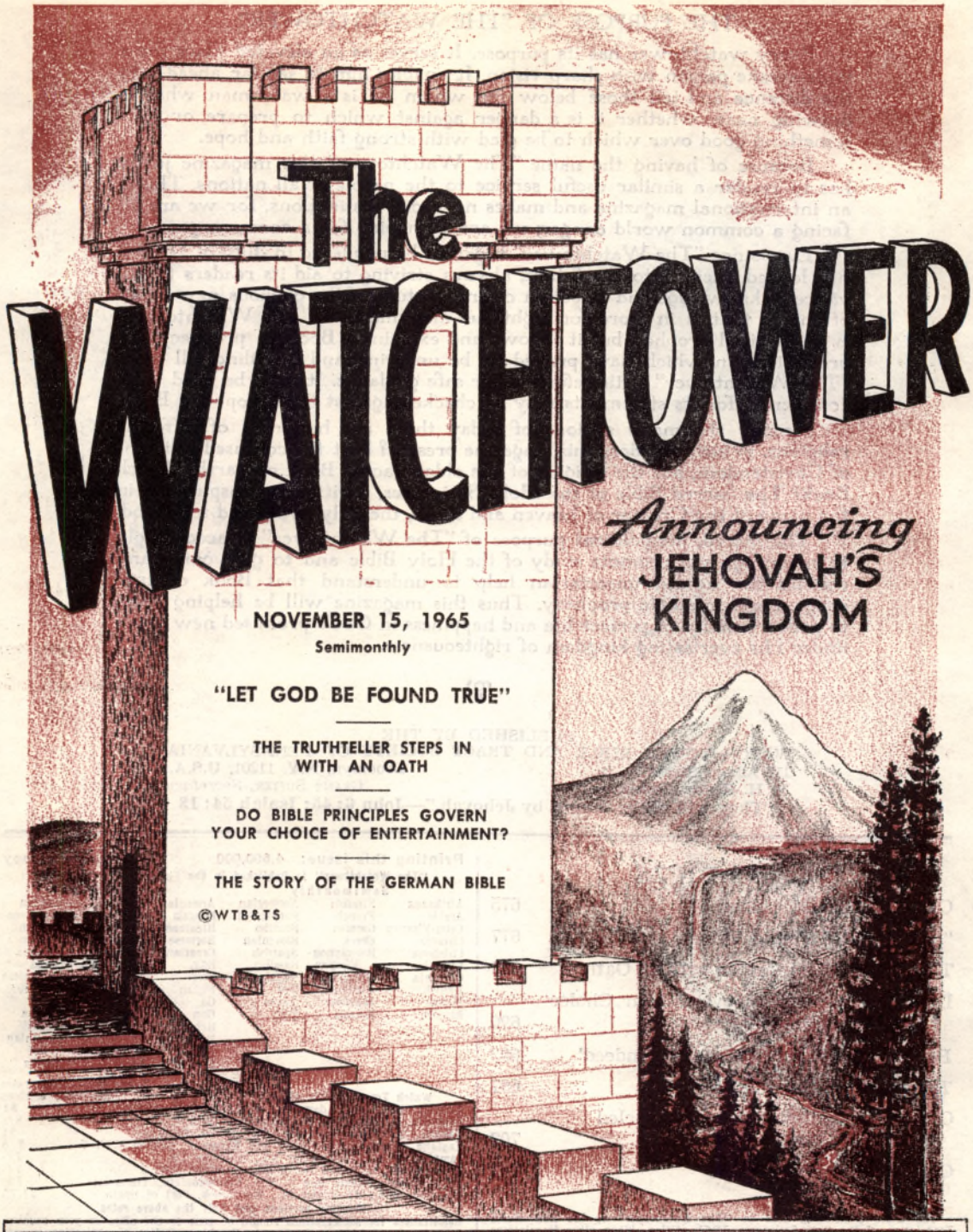

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

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

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AT – An American Translation
AV – Authorized Version (1611)
Dy – Catholic Douay version
JP – Jewish Publication Soc.
Le – Isaac Leeser's version
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CAN YOU SHOULDER Blame?

FAILURE to shoulder blame is a weakness that is as old as the human race. But prone as men are to shift the blame, one's trying to get out from under just blame has nothing to recommend it. It is neither honest nor loving; and neither is it wise, for, as with all courses based on shortsighted self-interest, its advantages are short-lived and outweighed by its disadvantages.

Take, as an example, the first man, Adam. When called to account by his Maker and Benefactor, the Supreme Judge of the universe, he bluntly blamed Eve: "She gave me fruit from the tree and so I ate it." (Gen. 3:12) How unloving to shift the blame on to his wife instead of simply admitting that he had eaten!

He even tried to shift the blame to God, saying: "The woman whom *you* gave to be with me, she gave me fruit." In other words, 'What can you expect? You gave me this woman; you are to blame, not I.' Forgotten now was the long time he had looked in vain among the lower animals for a mate; forgotten now also was the great joy when he was first introduced to Eve and he had exclaimed: "This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"! —Gen. 2:18–3:12.

Since Adam set such a poor example, it is not surprising that Eve failed to shoulder her blame but tried to shift it to the serpent that spoke to her. But did her failure and that of Adam to shoulder the blame absolve them from the consequences of their disobedience? Did it gain for them mercy? How could God show them mercy when they showed no sign of repentance, no sign of grief or sorrow for having violated God's law?—Gen. 3:13-19.

In view of the bad start made by our first parents in not being willing to shoulder blame, it is not at all surprising that their offspring have been prone to follow a like course. In fact, it is one of the characteristics of our time. Among the striking examples in our day of failure to shoulder blame is that in relation to juvenile delinquency. Parents are prone to blame the schools, the police, the times in which we are living; and true, all deserve a measure of the blame. But the lion's share of it rests upon the parents of the delinquent youths, for does not God's Word tell us: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it"?—Prov. 22:6.

Lending their voices in support of this Scriptural position were three Scandinavian police authorities: J. Westlin, assistant police commissioner in Sweden, Alsnaes

Anderson, assistant police commissioner in Denmark, and John Gjerde, chief of police in Norway. When these were asked who they thought were to blame for the criminal behavior of youth, they all answered without hesitation: *"The parents!"* According to them: "As the schools no longer have the legal right to maintain order [administer corporal punishment], the responsibility rests with the parents."

Obviously, since this is so, how can parents expect an improvement if they refuse to shoulder the blame and do something about it? If their children are prone to delinquency, they should do some soul-searching, and see where they have come short in giving the children of their time, of their love and of the needed discipline.

Not that delinquent youths themselves are without blame. By no means! Many of them know what is right and what is wrong. At least they know how they would like to be treated themselves, and simple logic indicates that they should treat others the same way. No, delinquent youths may not shift the whole blame onto their parents. They can set worthwhile goals for themselves, they can refuse to go along with a gang bent on mischief, they can keep from abusing the love of their parents by disciplining themselves and thus show they appreciate the debt of gratitude they owe their parents for bringing them into the world and providing them with things needful.

Another case in point is the race issue. There is much violent agitation today in many lands because of the injustices of discrimination. But does the blame rest wholly with the other fellow? Not according to Mr. F——, who, though reared in poverty, is said to have "reached a level of business success attained by very few men—white or Negro." He points out that those discriminated against also have responsibilities to do what they can to better their lot and may not follow the lines of least resistance.

The same principle applies to our everyday affairs. Have we acted unwisely, carelessly, selfishly, and so are called to account? Then let us shoulder the blame. We are far more likely to receive just and merciful treatment when we openly admit our fault and shoulder the blame than if we try to get out from under it. In fact, our frankness in admitting a fault creates respect for us. It testifies to our honesty and to our loving our neighbor as ourselves.

By being willing to shoulder the blame we show another fine quality, that of modesty. Who does not make mistakes? Who does not sin? The Bible answers, "No man." (1 Ki. 8:46) The truth is that shouldering blame is more likely to reveal the modesty of a person than does the way he receives praise. It is easy to appear modest when we are being praised, but when being censured we are most likely to betray whether we are truly modest. If we are modest we will not be anxious to justify ourselves but will be ready to admit wherein we have come short. More than that, for the sake of peace it may sometimes even be advisable for us to shoulder blame for something we did not do, so long as no great issue or principle is involved.

When we shoulder the blame for our mistakes, it has a wholesome effect upon us. It strengthens us for right and gives us self-respect. More than that, we may keep an innocent person from being blamed; we are given a lesson that may help us to avoid making the same mistake again, and, above all, we show that we are more concerned with what God thinks of us than what man thinks. Truly, willingness to shoulder blame has everything to recommend it!

"Let God Be Found TRUE"

"But let God be found true, though every man be found a liar."—Rom. 3:4.

THE greatest possessor of God's written Word, the Holy Bible, is Christendom. Does she accept it as "the word of truth"? That is, Does she believe it? By her works, which speak louder than words, she betrays unbelief in the Holy Bible, a nonadherence to the Bible, and a rejecting of it in favor of worldly science, philosophy and politics. What are the more than two thousand millions of persons who do not belong to Christendom to think of this or to conclude from this? Logically they would be inclined to ask this question: Since Christendom does not believe and obey its most sacred Book of religion, does this not prove that the Holy Bible does not contain the truth? Does this not prove that the God of the Bible does not exist, that he is not the true God, and that he is not true but is, in fact, a liar? Informed Bible students who are not part of Christendom will answer *No!*

[2] Let us call on a renowned Bible writer to argue the case. This is the apostle Paul of nineteen hundred years ago. A similar situation faced Bible readers in his day. This Paul was a circumcised Jew, who had to take issue with his own nation because it had caused a great misunderstanding to grow about the Hebrew Bible of that day. To those circumcised Jews there had been committed the exclusive care of the collection of sacred scriptures, holy writings from the days of the prophet Moses of the fifteenth century before our Common Era to the prophet Malachi of the fifth century before our Common Era. There were twenty-four books, as the Jews count them, or thirty-nine books, as Christendom counts them. Those holy writings, filled with prophecies in God's name, should have led those Jews to become followers of Jesus Christ, who came and spoke, lived, worked and died and was resurrected from the dead right in the Jews' own country.

[3] It did not matter that the Bible prophecies of God were fulfilled right among them in proof that Jesus the descendant of King David was the Christ. The vast majority of the Jews refused to accept him as such. They disbelieved and thus were disobedient to their God Jehovah. Now what should we conclude from all this?

[4] We do not overlook the fact that the far greater number of circumcised Jews of that day did not accept the testimony of their own holy writings of prophecy. But did this prove that those sacred pronouncements of God were false? Did it prove that God, the Inspirer of the Holy Bible, was

1. Who is the greatest possessor of the Bible, but what questions arise because of her attitude toward the Bible?

2, 3. How did the apostle Paul face a situation similar to that of ours today regarding God's written Word?
4. The course of action on the part of the Jews raises what questions regarding God and his written Word, but how did Paul answer those questions?

not true to his part of the covenant that he had made with the Jews through Moses? Was God found to be unreliable, unworthy of faith on our part? Should we therefore throw the Bible away as being found untrue or as being the work of just ordinary human writers who made mistakes and who lie? Should we follow the Jewish course of sticking to the traditions of men rather than to the Holy Scriptures? If we were to let the example of faithless, disobedient, self-righteous men influence us, we would answer Yes to each one of those questions. That is the way many of the 13,016,000 circumcised Jews answer today. But the Christian apostle Paul, who also was a Jew by birth and who was "circumcised the eighth day," says No! He was not influenced by those who claim to be Jews but who are not true Jews in fact.

5 Paul comes to the defense of God. He argues against our misjudging God from looking at his professed people and says: "He is not a Jew who is one on the outside, nor is circumcision that which is on the outside upon the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that of the heart by spirit, and not by a written code. The praise of that one comes, not from men, but from God. What, then, is the superiority of the Jew, or what is the benefit of the circumcision? A great deal in every way. First of all, because they were entrusted with the sacred pronouncements of God. What, then, is the case? If some did not express faith, will their lack of faith perhaps make the faithfulness of God without effect? Never may that happen! But let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, even as it is written [in Psalm 51:4]: 'That you [O God] might be proved righteous in your words and might win when you are being judged.' "—Rom. 2:28 to 3:4.

6 The same rule of judgment holds true with regard to Christendom of today, which has proved unfaithful to God's holy Word, the Bible, for the apostle Paul says: "If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. 2:13) In other words, God will carry out what he says in his written Word regardless of the fact that the hundreds of millions who claim to be Christian neither live up to the Bible nor uphold the God of the Bible. What men do can never make God false or prove God false.

7 In proving the faithfulness and truthfulness of God, the apostle Paul quoted the words of King David in Psalm 51:4. Why? Because David did not try to defend himself, excuse himself or declare himself righteous and thus discredit God. David admits his wrong and error and he acknowledges that God is true and righteous.

8 David says: "Show me favor, O God, according to your loving-kindness. According to the abundance of your mercies wipe out my transgressions. Thoroughly wash me from my error, and cleanse me even from my sin. For my transgressions I myself know, and my sin is in front of me constantly. Against you, you alone, I have sinned, and what is bad in your eyes I have done, *in order that you may prove to be righteous when you speak, that you may be in the clear when you judge.* Look! With error I was brought forth with birth pains, and in sin my mother conceived me. Look! You have taken delight in truthfulness itself in the inward parts; and in the secret self may you cause me to know sheer wisdom. May you purify me from sin with hyssop, that I may be clean. May

5. How does Paul, in Romans 2:28 to 3:4, argue against our misjudging God from looking at his professed people, the Jews?

6. By applying this same rule of judgment with regard to unfaithful Christendom of today, what decision do we make, like Paul's?

7, 8. In his argument in favor of letting God be found true, why did the apostle Paul quote David's words in Psalm 51:4?

you wash me, that I may become whiter even than snow."—Ps. 51:1-7; Rom. 3:4.

9 If people, especially those of Christendom and of Jewry, were like repentant King David of Jerusalem, they would confess that they are sinful from birth and were inclined to error from the very time of their conception in their mother's womb. Then they would take a humble attitude before God and not argue against God in favor of human science and man-made moral standards. They would argue that they are sinners, righteously condemned by God's law. They would admit that God is true in his speaking and judging, even though this was an admission that they themselves were liars. By doing this they would show true wisdom, and they would take the right viewpoint toward God's written Word and would accept it, believe it, understand it and live in harmony with it. This would then recommend the Bible to people to whom they offer it.

10 Men's going into error and unrighteousness does not hurt God himself. Rather, it causes God's truthfulness, holiness and righteousness to stand out in sharp contrast, all to God's glory. Well, then, it may be argued that, when men do wrong, they really do God a benefit, at least indirectly. If, then, God gets an indirect benefit from their course of unrighteousness, does God justly have a reason for adversely judging sinful men, condemning them? Does not God act unjustly in executing a condemnatory judgment upon them in the coming "war of the great day of God the Almighty"? (Rev. 16:14, 16) Are wickedness and improper ways to be condemned and punished if good results therefrom? Men, who are born in error and in sin, argue that way. They argue that God is acting unjustly, unrighteously, if he is faithful to his Word of truth and executes destructive judgment upon them for their unrighteousness.

11 By arguing in such a worldly-wise way men, who have proved to be liars, go only deeper into error. They say that sinners should never fear that God's condemnatory judgment will be executed upon them. They ignore the fact that sin, error, lawbreaking are wrong in themselves. A religious philosophy is wrong when it argues that, if a wrong or bad thing that we do hurts only ourselves, it is no sin. Or, if from the wrong that we do somebody else gets an unintended benefit or advantage, it is not sin and it does not deserve to be punished. Regardless of how a religious philosophy argues, a wrong is a wrong, and no one has a right to do wrong or harm even to himself. Why not? Because each one of us is a creation of God and we have no right to harm God's creation. Any wrong course of action is a sin, because it is a violation of God's law regarding the way that we creatures should live. God does not want us to sin just because it makes his righteousness show forth.

12 That is how the inspired apostle Paul reasons. After advising us to let God be found true though every man should thereby be found a liar, Paul goes on to say: "However, if our unrighteousness brings God's righteousness to the fore, what shall we say? God is not unjust when he vents his wrath, is he? (I am speaking as a man does.) Never may that happen! How, otherwise, will God judge the world? Yet if by reason of my lie the truth of God has been made more prominent to his

9. If people of Christendom and Jewry were like repentant David, what confession would they make and what attitude would they take toward God's written Word?

10. How, according to men's argument, does God get a benefit from their unrighteousness, and why, therefore, do they impute injustice to him in his treatment of them?

11. (a) According to what reasoning about sin do men argue that God's condemnatory judgment will not be executed toward them? (b) Why are they wrong in such reasoning?

12, 13. (a) Will God's judgment be just against those who argue that good comes from their doing bad things? (b) Why should we not fool ourselves in this matter?

glory, why am I also yet being judged as a sinner? And why not say, just as it is falsely charged to us and just as some men state that we say: 'Let us do the bad things that the good things may come'? The judgment against those men is in harmony with justice."—Rom. 3:5-8.

13 So let us today not fool ourselves. The end does not justify the means. If we do bad things just because we like bad things, and then if we try to excuse ourselves by saying that in the long run good will come from such bad things, we shall not escape. God's righteous judgment will be executed against us just the same.

HOW TO "LET GOD BE FOUND TRUE"

14 If we want to love, honor and respect God our Creator, what will we do? We will then desire to "let God be found true" in all cases where there is a dispute or controversy between God and men. We will do so by going to God's written Word the Bible. We will allow what it says to stand as the truth in regard to human history, in regard to true religious teachings and in regard to the decisions that we should make when worldly men and political institutions make extreme demands upon us. We will wholeheartedly take God's written Word, the Holy Scriptures, as being the criterion, the standard for determining truth and righteousness.

15 What if we claim to be Christians? Then our being true to our claim requires us to say the same thing that Jesus said in prayer to God: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) In Jesus' day all thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Scriptures had been written up and were on hand to be read. But those inspired Hebrew Scriptures were not the only things true. What Jesus taught during his ministry on earth was additional truth. This fact must be so from what he said in that same prayer to God: "I am speaking these things in the world in order that they may have my joy in themselves to the full. I have given your word to them." (John 17:13, 14) So what Jesus Christ had given to his disciples was really the word of God his Father, and not words of his own origination. It also was truth.

16 Jesus told his disciples that they would receive help to remember the truths that he had revealed to them. Before offering the aforementioned prayer to God, he said to his disciples: "I will request the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, the spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive, because it neither beholds it nor knows it. You know it, because it remains with you and is in you. . . . the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you." (John 14:16, 17, 26) As a result, after the festival day of Pentecost when the holy spirit was poured out upon them, the things that Jesus' faithful disciples wrote under inspiration of God's spirit were likewise part of God's Word and became part of the Holy Scriptures. These inspired writings in the form of the twenty-seven books written in common Greek were finished by the end of the first century of our Common Era. They were added to the in-

14. If we love God the Creator, whom will we let be found true, and how will we do this?

15. (a) If we claim to be Christians, what must we acknowledge God's Word to be? (b) In Jesus' day, what truth was there in addition to the Hebrew Scriptures?

16. Why could writings in Greek by Jesus' disciples be added to the Hebrew Scriptures, and how many books does God's written Word now contain?

spired Hebrew Scriptures, to form a Bible made up of sixty-six books. All this written word is God's truth.

17 Jehovah God is wholly committed to the truth and nothing but the truth. So is his faithful Son, Jesus Christ. It is a fact that when Jesus stood before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate he was not made to swear with a solemn oath that he would tell the truth and nothing but the truth, so help him God! Yet, although he was on trial for his life, Jesus did not deny who and what he was. (John 18:37) His willingness to die for the truth produces in us more confidence that what he taught, preached and commanded was the pure truth. Hence we should accept it as such.

18 When, shortly after being sentenced to death, Jesus was hanging on the execution stake, with the inscription posted above his head, "This is the king of the Jews," he quoted words from Psalm 31:5 as he was about to die and said: "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit." (Luke 23:38, 46) That psalm was written by King David, who foreshadowed Jesus Christ. So it assured Jesus that he could safely entrust his spirit to Jehovah God in full hope of being delivered from Sheol, the common grave of dead mankind. Jesus knew that the psalmist David appealed to God's truthfulness, saying: "You will bring me out of the net that they have hidden for me, for you are my fortress. Into your hand I entrust my spirit. You have redeemed me, O Jehovah the God of truth. I do hate those paying regard to worthless, vain idols; but as for me, in Jehovah I do trust. O Jehovah, may I not be ashamed, for I have called on you. May the wicked ones be ashamed; may they keep silent in Sheol." (Ps. 31:4-6, 17) When Jesus thus entrusted his spirit of life to Jehovah at his death, his spirit returned to the God of truth, who had given it to him.—Eccl. 12:7.

19 On the third day after that, Jehovah restored the spirit of life to his Son and thus resurrected him from the dead. He had safely kept in trust what his Son had committed to him. He did not let his Son "keep silent in Sheol," for his Son was not wicked. It had been just to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 53:9 that Jesus made "his burial place even with the wicked ones, and with the rich class in his death, despite the fact that he had done no violence and there was no deception in his mouth." Because Jehovah raised his Son to spiritual life in heaven on the third day, it proved that Jehovah was not one of those hated "worthless, vain idols" but was actually "the God of truth." As such, he was able to make good his word, make good his prophecies that were given over his own name.—1 Pet. 3:18, 19; Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:22-36.

20 The resurrecting of his Son Jesus Christ to renewed life in heaven, in immortality, was conceivably the hardest test of the trueness of Jehovah God. (Eph. 1:18-22) Since he met such an extraordinary test of his trueness, what else is there that he has promised that he cannot fulfill? Nothing!—1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:13, 14.

21 Such a God as this has inspired the writing of the Holy Scriptures. What confidence we should therefore have that these Scriptures are exclusively the truth, as distinct from all the other religious books that have been written, belonging to the religious systems of this world, ancient and modern! The very essence or substance of the written Word of God is

17. Why did Jesus, when before Pilate, not have to swear to tell the truth, and why should we accept his teachings?
18. Why did Jesus appropriately quote David's words in Psalm 31:5 when dying on the stake, and so to whom did Jesus' spirit return?
19. (a) Why was the Son of God not allowed to "keep silent in Sheol"? (b) How did Jehovah then prove to be not one of those "worthless, vain idols"?
20. What does God's resurrection of Jesus prove as to His ability to do things?
21. (a) Hence what confidence should the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures by such a God excite in us? (b) From what point forward is God's written Word the truth?

truth, his Word being in full harmony with the facts and never once departing from actualities or from the successful carrying out of God's glorious purpose. From its very beginning God's written Word is the truth, and such truth moves on through the sixty-six Bible books to a grand climax of truth concerning God's established kingdom for the eternal blessing of mankind.

22 Added together, the sixty-six books of the Bible sum up to be a full, complete statement and expression of truth. That is why truth seekers love the Bible. The psalmist nicely expressed the matter when, under inspiration, he wrote in appreciation of God: "O see that I have loved your own orders. O Jehovah, according to your loving-kindness preserve me alive. The substance [or, sum] of your word is truth, and every righteous judicial decision of yours is to time indefinite."—Ps. 119:159, 160; marginal reading, 1957 edition.

23 All of God's commandments, as recorded in his written Word, are for the carrying out of the truth. They are given for the purpose of keeping the obedient ones in accord with the truth. His commandments are issued in order to move persons and things on to the realization of God's prophecies, that thus these may come true. Sometimes persons who have got far away from God's law in loose conduct come near to us to do us harm; but God is also near us if we lovingly and loyally keep his commandments. As the psalmist gratefully expressed the matter: "You are near, O Jehovah, and all your commandments are truth. Long ago I have known some of your reminders, for to time indefinite you have founded them." (Ps. 119:150-152) Marvelously, those reminders and testimonies that God founded so long ago have continued till today, despite all efforts of the enemies of truth to overthrow and destroy them by destroying copies of the Bible and destroying believers in the Bible. But, says Psalm 117:2, "the trueness of Jehovah is to time indefinite."

24 To fight against the truth of the Bible means to fight against the "God of truth." We can never win out in such a fight, but are sure to go down in defeat and death as liars. God's truth has always prevailed and will always prevail. It is a wise reminder that the apostle Paul gives us, when he writes: "We can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth." (2 Cor. 13:8) For that reason we should not, by a course contrary to God's Word, cause the truth of God to show forth in triumph over us. To receive His blessing we should take a positive course in favor and support of God's truth and publish it abroad to His glory and praise.

22. How is it true that the substance or sum of God's Word is truth?

23. Why could the psalmist say that God's commandments are truth?

24. How is fighting against Bible truth sure to result, and what course toward it is the better one to take?

The Truthteller Steps In with an Oath

THE ninth commandment of the Ten Commandments that Jehovah God issued through his prophet Moses reads: "You must not testify falsely as a witness against your fellow man." (Ex. 20:16) By this law against lying, the great Lawmaker lines himself up against liars. Hence he

1, 2. (a) Why could the Giver of the Ten Commandments not lie? (b) By making what additions have men proved themselves liars, as, for instance, with regard to the use of images?

could not himself tell a lie and at the same time be in harmony with his own law. (Rom. 1:21-25) He hates lying, and has never been the Father of a lie. His word is like pure gold, refined and thus cleansed of all dross. As the wisest man of ancient times before our Common Era said: "Every saying of God is refined. He is a shield to those taking refuge in him. Add nothing to his words, that he may not reprove you, and that you may not have to be proved a liar."—Prov. 30:5, 6.

[2] By adding man-made traditions and commandments to God's pure Word, many religious leaders contradicted the teachings and commandments of God's written Word and have proved to be liars. (Matt. 15:1-9) By adding to God's written Word the religious teaching that God may be worshiped in a relative way through images, the compromising religious leaders have paved the way for their religious flocks to become idolaters. All persons who thus use man-made images as aids to worship put themselves in the class described in Romans 1:25: "Even those who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and venerated and rendered sacred service to the creation rather than the One who created, who is blessed forever." Such creations or man-made religious images are lies. They testify falsely as witnesses against God the Creator. So he could never approve of them.

[3] God's pure Word is truth in itself. It could not be a lie, because, as 1 John 2:21 says, "no lie originates with the truth." God's Word is not a lie either in what it says or in any failure of it to come true. God's promises and prophecies are fulfilled without fail. Hence God's Word, just by itself, can be relied upon as being the truth and it never loses any of its value as truth. However, at times Jehovah God has seen good to add something to his own bare word of promise or of prophecy. It is not a contradictory addition, but is a strengthening addition. What is that? It is God's oath, his sworn statement. He swears to his word.

[4] In the Holy Bible the first person who is reported as swearing is God's own friend, Abraham. (Jas. 2:23; Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7) This was in the twentieth century before our Common Era. The patriarch Abraham had put to rout the four marauder kings and had recovered his nephew Lot and his family and also the goods that had been taken from the city of Sodom near which Lot had been living. When Abraham offered to restore all the king's goods to him, the king of Sodom said: "Give me the souls, but take the goods for yourself." But Abraham answered: "I do lift up my hand in an oath to Jehovah the Most High God, Producer of heaven and earth, that, from a thread to a sandal lace, no, I shall take nothing from anything that is yours, in order that you may not say, 'It was I who made Abram rich.' Nothing for me!" (Gen. 14:11-24) Abraham thus swore by the highest Personage alive. He could swear by no higher.

[5] Abraham's swearing or taking an oath was indicated by his raising his hand when he made the statement in reply to the offer of the king of Sodom, lifting it toward "Jehovah the Most High God, Producer of heaven and earth." This illustrates what an oath is. Says one exhaustive Bible Cyclopædia concerning *Oath:*

> (Jewish), an appeal to God, or to authorities recognized by the respective adjurers, or to anything esteemed sacred, in attestation of an assertion or in confirmation of a given promise or a duty undertaken. . . . "Oath" is the rendering of the Authorized

3. (a) How is God's Word truth in itself and no lie? (b) Despite this, what has God at times seen good to add to his word?

4. In Scripture, who is the first person reported as swearing, and what were the circumstances?

5. (a) By what gesture was Abraham's swearing to the king of Sodom indicated? (b) What two kinds of oaths were there, as indicated by the two different Hebrew words used?

Version of two Hebrew words, *alah'*, אלה and *shabuah'*, שבועה, each of which is used in three significations: . . .

1. *An oath* as in appeal to God in attestation of the truth of a statement (Nehemiah 10:30; Exodus 22:10);

2. *A sworn statement* (Genesis 26:28; 2 Samuel 21:7);

3. *A curse or imprecation* (Numbers 5:21; Daniel 9:11). . . .

The two words *alah'* and *shabuah'*, however, are by no means synonymous. They denote two different modes of swearing, or rather two classes of oaths. Thus *alah'* (from *alal', to lament, to wail, to express woe, . . .*) properly means *the invocation of woe upon oneself,* and shows that the mode of swearing which it describes was connected with an invocation of divine vengeance on the party, if the asseveration made was not true; whereas *shabuah'* (from *she'ba', seven*) literally signifies *to seven one's self, to produce seven,* that is, to make a declaration confirmed by seven victims, or before seven witnesses, because . . . seven animals were used in ancient times when mutual promises were given and when alliances were effected (Genesis 21:28-30). . . . The primary distinction, therefore, between the two oaths is, that in the case of the former [*alah'*] an imprecation was used, while in the latter [*shabuah'*] no imprecation was employed.*

6 Do you know that, in the Holy Bible, God is reported as swearing more than anyone else? Do you know that in the inspired Hebrew Scriptures there are seventy or more references to where Jehovah God swears? And yet *never* in connection with Him is the Hebrew word *alah'* used, namely, the word that indicates that the swearer calls down evil upon himself to give assurance against lying or failure to perform. When Jehovah God swears, he never needs to call for some evil to come upon himself in case the statement that he makes is not true or in case he fails to carry out his promise or his prophecy or fails to fulfill the duty that he undertakes.

7 There is never any possibility of such a thing. So there is no need for Jehovah God to ask for something terrible to happen to him if his word should prove to be a lie or should he not carry out his word or live up to it. Such a thing he could not even suggest with regard to himself. Hence in all cases in the Hebrew text where God is reported swearing, the Hebrew word *shaba'* is used in the reflexive form, for it means "to seven one's self." That means for one to go to the point of perfection, for in the Bible the number seven is used to stand for perfection of degree.

8 In that first oath reported in the Bible, God's friend Abraham swore by His name. In turn, in the first case reported of where the Most High God swears, he swears in connection with his friend, Abraham. Since the Most High God, who is "the God of truth," felt moved to swear, the circumstances must have been unusual, extraordinary. They really were. Moreover, the statement to Abraham to which God swore was of importance to all mankind from the founding of the world down till now, yes, down till the last human baby is born. God's statement was of particular importance to 144,000 members of the human family who were to begin appearing on earth nineteen centuries afterward. What, then, was the statement? How did it come about?

9 The sworn statement was made in the nineteenth century before our Common Era and at Mount Moriah. Away back in that time the walls of the city of Salem (later Jerusalem) did not enclose the top of Mount Moriah. An altar was there, but it was not the altar of the temple of King Solomon of Jerusalem, as that temple was built on Mount Moriah first in the eleventh century before our Common Era. It

* M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopœdia,* edition of 1891, Volume 7, page 256, under "Oath."

6, 7. (a) Whom does the Bible report as swearing more than anybody else? (b) Why, when swearing, does Jehovah not need to call down evil upon himself?

8. (a) When, in Scripture, did God first swear? (b) Of what importance was the statement sworn to?

9. When and where was the sworn statement made, and what was Abraham stopped from doing?

was an altar of unhewn stones that Abraham had built on which to offer up his son Isaac as a human sacrifice to Jehovah God. In obedience to God's command Abraham had proceeded to sacrifice Isaac, his only son by his wife Sarah. But just as Abraham was about to kill Isaac, who was lying bound on the wood on top of the altar, God's angel called out Abraham's name and said: "Do not put out your hand against the boy and do not do anything at all to him, for now I do know that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me."

[10] Abraham's notice was called now to a ram entangled nearby in a thicket. Accepting this animal as God's provision, Abraham offered it up as a sacrifice instead of Isaac. "And Jehovah's angel proceeded to call to Abraham the second time out of the heavens and to say: ' "By myself I do swear [*shaba"*]," is the utterance of Jehovah, "that by reason of the fact that you have done this thing and you have not withheld your son, your only one, I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." ' " —Gen. 22:1-18.

[11] What do you think? Was the "utterance of Jehovah" on that occasion one of world importance? Yes, because it takes in "all nations of the earth," including those of today. Fulfillment of it means blessing for us no matter of what nation we are part. Without exception we ought all to be interested in it to the point of doing what we can to bless ourselves by means of Abraham's promised seed. Ah!

10. What was the statement to which Jehovah swore?
11. Why was that sworn statement of world importance, but what may some objector say as to its fulfillment?

God makes an oath to Abraham

but someone may say that Jehovah's utterance was made almost thirty-nine centuries ago, and all the families of the earth have not yet blessed themselves by means of Abraham's seed through Isaac, for look, please, at the terrible international conditions today. Look, too, at the condition of the natural circumcised Jews who claim to be the seed of Abraham by birth.

[12] However, the objector is overlooking something, is he not? He overlooks the fact that all the nations of the earth began blessing themselves in the promised seed of Abraham nineteen centuries ago, and this even though the nation of natural circumcised Israelites were cast off by Jehovah God. And *today* more than a million persons of about two hundred known nations are blessing themselves by means of Abraham's true seed. How could that be possible? It is possible according to the explanation of one of the inspired Bible writers, the apostle Paul. He wrote at about the middle of the first century of our Common Era.

12. What does the objector overlook as regards the nations blessing themselves?

[13] At that time the apostle Paul was writing to congregations of fellow Christians in the Roman province of Galatia, in Asia Minor. A number of these believers who were not Israelites had been wrongly persuaded to think that they had to make Jews of themselves and get circumcised and subject themselves to the ancient law that God gave through his prophet Moses. The apostle Paul wrote his letter in order to straighten them out. He reminded them that primarily Jesus Christ was the promised Seed of Abraham. This Jesus was actually the only-begotten Son of God and, like the patriarch Abraham, Jehovah God had offered his only-begotten Son as a human sacrifice outside the northern wall of Jerusalem, or near Mount Moriah where Abraham had presented Isaac for sacrifice. However, Jehovah God had said that Abraham's true seed would be, not one person, but many, the number of whom was then unknown just like the number of the stars or of sand grains on the seashore.

[14] True, Jesus Christ the Son of God was born and circumcised as a Jew and thus he was a natural descendant of the patriarch Abraham. So through him the blessing of the nations of the earth could be literally fulfilled, exactly as it had to be. The rest of the seed of Abraham did not need to be natural Jews in the flesh. Why not? Because the rest of the seed of Abraham needed, all of them, to become sons of Abraham *by means of faith*. Abraham was a man of faith in Jehovah God. Because of his faith he was justified or declared righteous in God's sight, even before Abraham got circumcised in his ninety-ninth year of age. (Rom. 4:9-22) True sons of Abraham, who are counted as part of the promised seed, must have faith in Jehovah, that they may be justified by faith as Abraham was. Then, after their justification or being declared righteous, God begets them by his holy spirit and they become sons of Jehovah God, who was prefigured by his friend Abraham.

[15] They thus become spiritual sons of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God, and are counted in as part of the promised seed of Abraham. Even Jesus Christ himself, though a natural son of his earthly forefather Abraham, was begotten by God's spirit and in this way became a spiritual son of the Greater Abraham. His begetting took place at the time that he came up out of the waters of baptism and God's spirit descended upon him and God announced him to be a spiritual Son, saying: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." (Matt. 3:13-17) Eventually the seed of Abraham for blessing all the nations of the earth will be all a spiritual class.

[16] It is an unspeakable blessing for anyone to be begotten by God's spirit and to be made a part of the promised seed of Abraham along with Jesus Christ. This blessing comes from the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God the Father, and through his only-begotten Son Jesus, the Greater Isaac. The first ones to receive this blessing of becoming members of the seed of Abraham for the blessing of still others were natural Jews, a hundred and twenty of them, to begin with, on the festival day of Pentecost of the year 33 of our Common Era. Later Jewish proselytes and Samaritans were added to these. However, the blessing of Abraham was declared to be, not for Jews only, but for all nations, even though not circumcised.

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13. (a) Who did the apostle Paul remind the Galatians that the seed of Abraham principally was? (b) But how numerous was the seed of Abraham to be?

14. (a) Was it necessary for the promise to be fulfilled literally by natural descendants of Abraham? (b) To be true sons of Abraham, what must those participating in the promised seed be and what must they undergo?

15. What did Jesus, though a natural descendant of Abraham, have to become in harmony with all the rest of the seed?

16. Was it a blessing for any to be made part of Abraham's seed? And through whom did such membership come, and to whom first?

17 In harmony with this, three and a half years from that Pentecost of 33 C.E., the blessing was extended to uncircumcised Gentiles, Italians in Caesarea of Judea being the first ones to receive the blessing of Abraham. This opened the way for the blessing to go to people of all the nations, without distinction, those thus blessing themselves by means of the Seed of Abraham being begotten by the holy spirit of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God, to become part of the Seed of Abraham, even down till now. So God has not failed in fulfilling his sworn promise to Abraham.

18 Note, now, how Paul explains the matter, when writing to fellow members of that Seed in Galatia. He refers to himself as "He, therefore, who supplies you the spirit and performs powerful works among you," and after that he asks:

19 "Does he do it owing to works of law or owing to a hearing by faith? Just as Abraham 'put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness.' Surely you know that those who adhere to faith are the ones who are sons of Abraham. Now the Scripture, seeing in advance that God would declare people of the nations righteous due to faith, declared the good news beforehand to Abraham, namely: 'By means of you all the nations will be blessed.' Consequently those who adhere to faith are being blessed together with faithful Abraham. For all those who depend upon works of law are under a curse; for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone that does not continue in all the things written in the scroll of the Law in order to do them.' The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham might come to be by means of Jesus Christ for the nations, that we might receive the promised spirit through our faith.

20 "Brothers, I speak with a human illustration: A validated covenant, though it is a man's, no one sets aside or attaches additions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It says, not: 'And to seeds,' as in the case of many such, but as in the case of one: 'And to your seed,' who is Christ.

21 "You are all, in fact, sons of God through your faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one person in union with Christ Jesus. Moreover, if you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham's seed, heirs with reference to a promise.

22 "Now we, brothers, are children belonging to the promise the same as Isaac was."—Gal. 3:5-10, 14-16, 26-29; 4:28.

23 By now, in this year 1965, how many of this seed of Abraham must there be, that is, counting in those from the first century onward? The Scriptural answer is, Not more than 144,000 of these spiritual sons of Abraham. This definite number is given in the very last book of the Holy Bible. This number, 144,000, in no way compares with the number of the stars that science has been able to count thus far. But the actual number remained unknown to Christians for forty or more years after the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Christian congregations in Galatia, just as the number of the stars that Abraham saw with his natural eyes.

24 Then, about the year 96 of our Common Era, in two of the visions that the

17. To whom did this special blessing go in God's due time, and what did those thus blessing themselves become?
18, 19. (a) Does the blessing of Abraham come upon those depending on the works of the Law? (b) By imitating Abraham, in what respect do persons become members of his seed?
20. Is a validated covenant alterable, and in the case of how many seeds was the promise made to Abraham?
21. How can there be just the one seed although there are many members?
22. How are the apostle Paul's brothers "children" such as Isaac was?
23, 24. (a) By now how many must there be of the seed of Abraham? (b) How do we know the maximum number of the seed, and why must they all be faithful to the death?

apostle John recorded in the book Revelation the exact number of the spiritual seed of Abraham who are joined to the Principal Seed was revealed, namely, the perfectly balanced number of 144,000. (Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-3) These spirit-begotten 144,000 followers of the Principal Seed Jesus Christ must all be sacrificed with him on earth. Proving faithful to the death of their flesh, they will become joint heirs with him in the heavenly kingdom by resurrection from the dead.—1 Cor. 15:29-57; 2 Cor. 5:1-9.

25 So it is that, at the celebration of the Lord's evening meal on Nisan 14 of this year 1965, there were about 11,500 who partook of the emblematic bread and wine to indicate that they were members of the spiritual seed of Abraham, heirs of the heavenly inheritance with the Principal Seed Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:14-30; 1 Cor. 11:20-32) To this tiny remnant of the 144,000 the sworn oath that Jehovah God added to his promise to Abraham on Mount Moriah ought to be of special comfort and encouragement to keep faithful. Why?

THE PURPOSE OF THE SWORN OATH

26 Well, what is the purpose of a sworn oath? An inspired explanation of it is given to us in Hebrews 6:16, in these words: "Men swear by the one greater, and their oath is the end of every dispute, as it is a legal guarantee to them."

27 So when Jehovah God swore, saying: " 'By myself I do swear,' is the utterance of Jehovah," it provided a special legal guarantee on the part of the Supreme Judge of the universe. It should have ended any dispute on the part of all mankind, including us today, as to whether a blessing should come to all the nations of the earth, not only to Abraham's natural descendants, but also to all the other families of the ground.—Gen. 12:1-3; 22:16-18.

28 Why should any of us dispute about it today? Why should any of us entertain any doubts about it today? Let us, rather, draw added assurance from God's own voluntary oath. He was not obliged to swear to the truthfulness of his promise to Abraham about the seed of blessing. Abraham had no right to demand that God swear to his promise. Of his own accord God chose to swear by himself, and he had a loving reason for doing so. Paul explains it this way:

29 "You may not become sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made his promise to Abraham, since he could not swear by anyone greater, he swore by himself, saying: 'Assuredly in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.' And thus after Abraham had shown patience, he obtained this promise. For men swear by the one greater, and their oath is the end of every dispute, as it is a legal guarantee to them. In this manner God, when he purposed to demonstrate more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his counsel, stepped in with an oath, in order that, through two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to the refuge may have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm, and it enters in within the curtain [to the Most Holy], where a forerunner has entered in our behalf, Jesus, who has become a high priest according to the manner of Melchizedek forever."—Heb. 6:12-20.

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25. What did the 11,500 indicate by partaking of the bread and wine at the Lord's evening meal in 1965, and how should God's oath to Abraham affect them?
26. What is the purpose of a sworn oath, as stated in Hebrews 6:16?
27. So Jehovah's sworn oath to Abraham should have ended what dispute?
28. What fact about God's oath should give us added assurance?
29. What was God's purpose in stepping in with an oath when making his promise to Abraham, and so, rather than be sluggish, what should we be?

30 As a consequence the remnant yet on earth of the 144,000 lesser members of the promised seed of Abraham draw strong encouragement from the sworn oath of the Most High God, who never perjures or forswears himself, because he is "the God of truth." The remnant's hope, which is anchored within the Most Holy or heavenly sanctuary of Jehovah God, should ever remain firm and sure, so that they continue to exercise patience and endurance just as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did in their days.

31 However, the remnant yet in the flesh of the 144,000 are today not the only ones entitled to draw strong encouragement from the oath that binds God's promise. Today a great crowd of other believers in God and in Jesus Christ his Lamb are entitled to do so. Why so? Well, after numbering, for the first time in Bible history, the exact membership of the spiritual seed of Abraham, Revelation chapter seven goes on to say: "After these things I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.' " (Rev. 7:9, 10) Ah, yes, God's oathbound promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled to more than just those who would become spiritual sons of Abraham, 144,000 in number. It was also to be fulfilled to the earthly nations and families outside this promised seed composed of Jesus Christ and his 144,000 joint heirs. This includes dead humans as well as those now living.

30. Why should the remnant's hope remain firm and sure, and to what end?
31. Who else today are entitled to draw strong encouragement from God's oath to his promise, and according to what vision to John?

32 Already this "great crowd" of believers from all nations, tribes, peoples and languages have begun to enter into the blessing by means of the seed of Abraham. They know that already, before the remnant are transferred to the heavenly kingdom, they are experiencing precious blessings through the promised seed of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God. Consequently this interracial, international, intertribal, interlingual "great crowd" are giving the credit for their salvation to Jehovah God on his heavenly throne and to his Lamb Jesus Christ, the Principal Seed of Abraham.

33 Destruction of Babylon the Great, and the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" and the binding and imprisoning of Satan the Devil and his demons have not yet taken place to remove all the enemies and persecutors, visible and invisible. Hence this "great crowd" with hopes of an earthly Paradise under God's kingdom needs to be encouraged to avoid sluggishness and to be faithful and to endure, just as the spiritual remnant do. For this reason the "great crowd" needs to keep in mind God's swearing by his own Self to confirm his unbreakable promise for their eternal blessing.

34 God's word is unchangeable. God's oath is unchangeable. Since these two things, His word and His oath, were given in connection with his counsel that he has seen good to reveal to us, this makes his counsel also unchangeable. Even now by what the Most High God Jehovah has already done with regard to his revealed counsel He stands vindicated, justified, be-

32. What is evident from the fact that the "great crowd" are now seen giving the credit for their salvation to God and his Lamb?
33. Why does also this "great crowd" need to be encouraged, and so what must they too keep in mind?
34. (a) By what two things has Jehovah's counsel been rendered unchangeable? (b) As what kind of God has Jehovah already vindicated himself, and, with Paul, what do we declare our position to be toward God?

fore all heaven and earth. Let the devils deny, let all men under control of the devils deny and disbelieve it, yet Jehovah the Most High God stands revealed and proved as "the God of truth." What do we care whether the overwhelming majority of this world are unbelievers. We believe and accept God's Word for its own truthfulness. We also respect the unbreakable binding power of God's oath that he swore by the greatest and highest one in all existence. Therefore we declare unequivocally that our position is the same as that taken by the Christian apostle Paul when he wrote: "Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar."—Rom. 3:4.

Do Bible Principles GOVERN YOUR CHOICE OF *Entertainment?*

EXCITEMENT, conflict, violence, passion and beauty are prominent in the entertainment of modern times. They can grip your attention, fire your imagination, stir you emotionally and make you forget for a time your personal cares of life, but such should not be the sole factors in choosing a type of entertainment. The good principles that govern a Christian's daily living should be taken into consideration.

In the first century of this Common Era, for example, forms of entertainment that were popular with the Romans conflicted with Bible principles. For that reason Christians did not join the thousands of people that crowded into the amphitheaters. That the entertainment there was bad is revealed by the following description of it in *The Historian's History of the World* by Henry Williams:

"The amphitheatre brought the greatest possible number of spectators within easy distance of the dead and dying, and fostered the passion for the sight of blood, which continued for centuries to vie in interest with the harmless excitement of the race. . . . It was when man strove with man . . . that the transport of their sanguinary enthusiasm was at its height. . . . The audience became frantic with excitement; they rose from their seats; they yelled; they shouted their applause, as one blow more ghastly than another was dealt by lance, or sword, or dagger, and the life-blood spouted forth. 'Hoc habet'—'he *has* it, he has it!'—was the cry which burst from ten thousand throats, and was re-echoed, not only by a debased and brutalised populace, but by the lips of royalty, by purple-clad senators and knights, by noble matrons, and even by those consecrated maids whose presence elsewhere saved the criminal from his fate, but whose function here it was to consign the suppliant to his doom by reversing the thumb

upon his appeal for mercy. . . . And we must remember that these things were not done casually, or under the influence of some strange fit of popular frenzy. They were done purposely, systematically, and calmly; they formed the staple amusement."

The effect of this frightful entertainment upon the people was morally degrading. It stamped out the noble qualities of human compassion, mercy, kindness and fellow feeling. It destroyed the sympathy for suffering that contributes toward making man superior to brute beasts. How, then, could a person that had embraced the good, uplifting and humane principles of Christianity choose such violent exhibitions for pleasurable entertainment?

THE CHRISTIAN POSITION

Would not a Christian be out of place among the multitudes in a Roman amphitheater? How could he shout along with the others when a gladiator 'had it'? How could he find murder entertaining when God's law forbade him to murder? How could he find amusement in human suffering when Christian principles moved him to show love for others? How could he find pleasure in the sight of bloody violence when God's Word had taught him to be gentle, kind and peaceful? Guided by Bible principles, he would have had to eliminate the Roman arena as one of his sources of entertainment.

Even Roman stage productions were unattractive to Christians because such entertainment violated Bible principles. The shows put on for the amusement of the public dredged up the corruption in the moral sewer of Roman life and displayed it for public amusement. Since Scriptural principles require Christians to live morally clean lives, how could they view those degrading shows as entertaining, as something enjoyable that was worth their time and attention? How could they find pleasure in seeing and hearing what was evil?

Pointing out the Christian's position toward Roman entertainment, the Christian writer Tertullian of the second century of the Common Era wrote: "Are we not, in like manner, enjoined to put away from us all immodesty? On this ground, again, we are excluded from the theater, which is immodesty's own peculiar abode, where nothing is in repute but what elsewhere is disreputable. . . . The very harlots, too, victims of the public lust, are brought upon the stage. . . . They are paraded publicly before every age and every rank—their abode, their gains, their praises, are set forth, and that even in the hearing of those who should not hear such things. . . .

"For all licentiousness of speech, nay, every idle word, is condemned by God. Why, in the same way, is it right to look on what it is disgraceful to do? How is it that the things which defile a man in going out of his mouth, are not regarded as doing so when they go in at his eyes and ears—when eyes and ears are the immediate attendants of the spirit—and that can never be pure whose servants-in-waiting are impure? . . . If tragedies and comedies are the bloody and wanton, the impious and licentious inventors of crimes and lusts, it is not good even that there should be any calling to remembrance the atrocious or the vile. What you reject in deed, you are not to bid welcome to in word."

Why would a person that had escaped from the immoral cesspool of the world and transformed his life by the application of Scriptural principles choose as entertainment that which dramatized the worst aspects of the world—the very things he had rejected on becoming a Christian? Filling one's mind with such corrupting thoughts would indicate that one did not

fully appreciate the importance of being made new in the force actuating the mind in order to put on the new personality that conforms to God's righteous will. (Eph. 4:22-24) It would not be consistent for a Christian to amuse himself by watching plays that portrayed before his eyes conduct in which Bible principles did not permit him to engage.—1 Pet. 2:1; 4:3, 4.

In the Bible at Psalm 97:10 the command is given: "You lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad." If a Christian hated what is bad, he would not want to watch it as entertainment, would he? If he wholeheartedly turned his back on the moral badness of the world when he became a Christian, he would not crave entertainment that paraded that badness, unveiling it in revolting detail, would he? At Ephesians 5:3 we are told: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every kind or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people." If such things were not even to be mentioned as a topic of conversation, how could they be taken in through the ear and the eye as entertainment?

CHRISTIANS TODAY

The principles that guided Christians in the first century of the Common Era are the same principles that should guide Christians today. Although entertainment today does not include the amphitheater where real life-and-death battles are fought, it does include "sports" in which men brutally beat each other and dramas that depict bloodshed in a very realistic way. There are also dramas that highlight the depravity in twentieth-century life. So a Christian today, because of Bible principles, has to be just as selective about his entertainment as were the early Christians.

Programs presented on TV, for example, have frequently been condemned for their excessive brutality and violence. In the United States the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency stated: "The extent to which violence and crime are currently portrayed on the nation's television screens is clearly excessive." On TV and in motion-picture houses viewers get a far closer view of violence than the Romans ever had from their amphitheater seats.

The sordid movies that the motion-picture industry turns out in many countries often center on sexual depravity, which can hardly be regarded as wholesome entertainment as far as a Christian is concerned. In view of Bible principles, what enjoyment can he get from seeing adultery, rape, homosexuality and other immoral themes paraded before his eyes? What pleasure can he find in seeing the brutality of the criminal underworld and the vivid details of how crimes are executed?

When a Christian turns from movies and TV to the field of literature, how can his good principles permit him to find entertainment in stories that drag a reader's mind into the moral cesspool of the world and make heroes of persons who are immoral, cruel, sadistic and violent? Will he, as if he had no moral standards at all, allow the author for hours at a time to pour corruption into his mind? Not if Bible principles guide him.

Some movies, TV programs, books and magazines are informative and refreshing, but you need to be selective. It is true that, on occasion, you may not be the one who chooses the entertainment; someone else may invite you to go along. But before you accept the invitation, you can always inquire what is planned. You do not have to ignore Bible principles simply because others do.

The types of entertainment available are many. There is much that is wholesome. There are outdoor and indoor games in

which the entire family can share. What about playing Bible games with your family, or sharing a song fest together? Or you might enjoy making a trip into the woods or hills together to enjoy the marvels of creation. These are activities that refresh while at the same time drawing you closer to the ones you love.

Wherever you are, whatever you do, if you use Bible principles to govern your course you will be blessed as a result. Though the world around us is filled with influences to corrupt our minds, pay heed to the excellent counsel at Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things."

PAVING THE WAY FOR 'Freedom Indeed'

"IF THE Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." An electrifying statement to a people who considered themselves to be the freest people on earth, and true worshipers of the Almighty God. They had been set free from Babylon five centuries beforehand by God's own power. True, they chafed somewhat under Roman rule, for they wanted political autonomy, but they never thought of themselves as slaves. As to worship and as to righteousness, they considered themselves free. They looked for the Messiah to throw off the Roman political yoke, but made the mistake of thinking their righteousness was such as to be received by him with special favor. They saw no need for religious reformation. The speaker of the statement that shook them so greatly was Jehovah's greatest Prophet, Jesus Christ. On what basis could he say this?—John 8:36, *AV*.

Following their release from Babylon in 537 B.C.E., a remnant of faithful Jews had returned to the desolate site of Jerusalem. They had repented and cleaned up from the idol worship that had brought God's disfavor and disciplinary action. They rebuilt the city and its temple and settled again as a religiously free people in their own God-given homeland. They had their vicissitudes after this, for while true worship was restored at that time, the kingship of David's line was not. Successive pagan world powers dominated them, just as had been foretold by Daniel and his fellow prophet, Ezekiel. (Ezek. 21:27; Dan. 4:25) But never had they again been carried completely off their land as slaves, leaving it entirely desolate, as had been done by Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar. Nevertheless, by the end of the first century B.C.E. they had come to be under a far more restrictive and enslaving bond-

age, a spiritual one. It was the more powerful in its hold on them because they were blind to their condition.—John 8:33.

RELEASE FROM SPIRITUAL BONDAGE NEEDED

This new form of bondage was brought about by their religious leaders. (Mal. 2:7, 8) God's prophet Malachi, the last writer of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures, had foretold this condition. He warned that in order to avoid adverse judgments of God, the people would have to be turned back from their course of violating the law covenant that God had made with them through Moses. They must acknowledge their spiritually alienated position, turn around and exercise obedience to Jehovah and return to true service and worship of him, the true God. They would have to become like their faithful fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and like obedient sons toward God. Malachi said: "Look! I am sending to you people Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. And he must turn the heart of fathers back toward sons, and the heart of sons back toward fathers; in order that I may not come and actually strike the earth with a devoting of it to destruction."—Mal. 4:5, 6.

By adding many traditions to the Word of God the Jewish religious leaders circumvented many of the weightier matters of the Law. (Matt. 23:23) Their worship had deteriorated to a mere formalism. They hypocritically gave mere lip service to God, while their hearts were far removed from him. (Matt. 15:3-9) But they were self-righteous and sought the praise and honor of men. (Matt. 6:1, 2, 5) By their many traditions and precepts they had misled the people and had caused them to violate God's law, bringing them into servitude to man. How these leaders despised and oppressed the people as they exploited them! (John 7:47-49) The nation was, therefore, in bondage to Judaism, a Babylonish religious captivity, and like all other men, they were at the same time in bondage to sin and death, from which the sacrifices they offered under the Law could not save them. (Gal. 1:13, 14; Heb. 10:4) They needed the true freedom-giving provision of God, the Messiah. According to Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks the time had drawn near for the Messiah's appearance and in 29 C.E. many were in expectation of him. (Luke 3:15) Therefore, a work must be done to pave the way for this One who would set them free, not only from Judaistic bondage, but also from sin and death, a freedom indeed!

JOHN'S PREPARATORY WORK

The prophecy of Malachi had to be fulfilled, and it was. A man born about six months earlier than Jesus, the son of the priest Zechariah, John the Baptist, proved to be the one who would pave the way for the coming of Messiah the Leader, the Liberator, the one who would bring freedom indeed. How badly the Jews needed John's preparatory work is seen from what he felt constrained to say to Pharisees and Sadducees who came to him for baptism: "You offspring of vipers, who has shown you how to flee from the coming wrath? . . . I, for my part, baptize you with water because of your repentance; but the one coming after me is stronger than I am, whose sandals I am not fit to take off. That one will baptize you people with holy spirit and with fire. His winnowing *shovel* is in his hand, and he will completely clean up his threshing floor, and will gather his wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn up with fire [in a baptism of fire] that cannot be put out." (Matt. 3:7-12; Luke 3:7-17) How enslaved they had become!

John baptized Jesus and directed the people to him. He did not try to hold his disciples back from following Jesus. (John

3:28-30) Some days after baptizing Jesus he said to some of his disciples: " 'This is the one about whom I said, Behind me there comes a man who has advanced in front of me, because he existed before me. Even I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing in water was that he might be made manifest to Israel.' John also bore witness, saying: 'I viewed the spirit coming down as a dove out of heaven, and it remained upon him. Even I did not know him, but the very One who sent me to baptize in water said to me, "Whoever it is upon whom you see the spirit coming down and remaining, this is the one that baptizes in holy spirit." And I have seen it, and I have borne witness that this one is the Son of God.' " (John 1: 30-34) John was telling the truth, for Jesus had dwelt with his Father in the heavens untold centuries before John came into existence.

Matthew records that which was referred to by John, writing: "Then Jesus came from Galilee [in which Nazareth was located] to the Jordan [River] to John, in order to be baptized by him. But the latter tried to prevent him, saying: 'I am the one needing to be baptized by you, and are you coming to me?' In reply Jesus said to him: 'Let it be, this time, for in that way it is suitable for us to carry out all that is righteous.' Then he quit preventing him. After being baptized Jesus immediately came up from the water; and, look! the heavens were opened up, and he saw descending like a dove God's spirit coming upon him. Look! Also, there was a voice from the heavens that said: 'This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.' "—Matt. 3:13-17; 2:22, 23; see also Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23.

A BABYLONISH RELIGIOUS CAPTIVITY

That John truly came to a people in a Babylonish religious captivity similar to their previous exile in ancient Babylon is clear from the Bible's application of prophecies that had a relationship to the return of the faithful remnant of Jews from Babylon in 537 B.C.E. John, therefore, came to carry forward an extension of the return of the Israelites from exile. The prophecy of Isaiah, which had a Babylonian background, is applied to John's work. Chapter 39 of Isaiah tells how the things that King Hezekiah had stored up in his palace in Jerusalem would be carried to Babylon and that some of Hezekiah's descendants would be made court officials in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then Isaiah goes on to say, at chapter 40, verses 1-5: " 'Comfort, comfort my people,' says the God of you men. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her that her military service has been fulfilled, that her error has been paid off. For from the hand of Jehovah she has received a full amount for all her sins.' Listen! Someone is calling out in the wilderness: 'Clear up the way of Jehovah, you people! Make the highway for our God through the desert plain straight. Let every valley be raised up, and every mountain and hill be made low. And the knobby ground must become level land, and the rugged ground a valley plain. And the glory of Jehovah will certainly be revealed, and all flesh must see it together, for the very mouth of Jehovah has spoken it.' "

In ancient times the prophecy foretold that, through King Cyrus of Persia, the way would be smoothed out for the Jews to leave their long exile in Babylon and return to their homeland. This brought comfort to Jerusalem and glory to Jehovah God. The glory of Jehovah was thus revealed for all flesh to see. Isaiah prophesied that Jehovah would be going before the returning exiles and that he would be their rear guard. Therefore the preparing of the way could be spoken of as clearing

up the way of Jehovah and making the highway of their God straight. (Isa. 52:12) Jehovah did not go visibly before them. Rather, it was Zerubbabel, Jehovah's representative, who led them out of Babylon in 537 B.C.E.

John did, in a religious way, clear up the way for Jehovah and straighten out the highway through the desert plain for God. Not, of course, for Jehovah to travel over literally, but paving the way for the coming of Jehovah's Messiah or Christ by preparing a people to recognize and accept his leadership to freedom. In fact, John the Baptist under inspiration applied the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3 to himself when questioned by the Jews, as we read at John 1:19-24: "Now this is the witness of John when the Jews sent forth priests and Levites from Jerusalem to him to ask him: 'Who are you?' And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed: 'I am not the Christ.' And they asked him: 'What, then? Are you Elijah?' And he said: 'I am not.' 'Are you The Prophet?' And he answered: 'No!' Therefore they said to him: 'Who are you? that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said: 'I am a voice of someone crying out in the wilderness, "Make the way of Jehovah straight," just as Isaiah the prophet said.' Now those sent forth were from the Pharisees." This understanding of the application of the prophecy is supported also by the apostle Matthew as well as the Bible writers Mark and Luke. Matthew tells us: "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying: 'Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.' This, in fact, is the one spoken of through Isaiah the prophet in these words: 'Listen! Someone is crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of Jehovah, you people! Make his roads straight."'" (Matt. 3:1-3; Mark 1:1-4; Luke 3:1-6) When John baptized Jesus he had proof that Jesus was the *Son* of God, not Jehovah himself that he was baptizing. He had the powerful testimony of God's own voice to that fact. —Matt. 3:13-17.

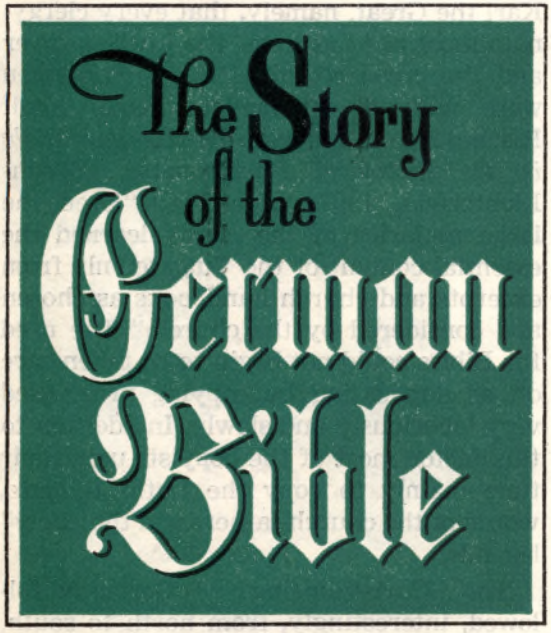
As prophesied, John had the spirit and power of Elijah, that is, the drive and the powerful message that brought about a reformation or turning around of many honest Jews. He pointed them to the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." He introduced Jesus' first disciples to him. He was like "the friend of the bridegroom" that is happy to present the bride to her beloved.—John 3:28-30; compare 2 Corinthians 11:2.

WAY OF FREEDOM OPEN NOW

From all of this we can see that to be in bondage one does not have to be inside a prison wall or be a captive of war in another nation, as the Jews were when they were taken to Babylon. No, all mankind are captive to sin and death and there is added to this a religious captivity in which the great majority of mankind are being held today by Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. Religions of both pagandom and Christendom teach Babylonish doctrines and practices and blind their adherents to the discernment of what will actually bring them real freedom. Nevertheless, the way of freedom is being set before mankind and many are availing themselves of it. How?

Well, during the forty years prior to 1914 C.E., many important truths were cleared up, such as Jesus' coming to earth as a man to give his human life as a ransom, that he was resurrected as a spirit, in a spiritual body, to appear before his Father Jehovah in heaven to repurchase the human race and then to return invisibly in Kingdom power. (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:44) Especially since 1919 the presence of Jehovah's appointed Liberator in Kingdom

power has been announced. Yes, the fact of the establishment in 1914 of the kingdom of the Son of God, the Messiah, has been published world wide by Jehovah's witnesses. The way has been paved for freedom. Now religious freedom is being enjoyed by those who hear the proclamation and follow the Messiah the Leader Jesus Christ and who put themselves in subservience to his kingdom. Soon, with the complete destruction of Babylon the Great and her supporters, the age-old rival to true worship will be gone. No longer will she be a threat to mankind's spiritual freedom. Then with the annihilation of the rest of this wicked, satanic system of things by Christ Jesus the King, full and complete freedom will come to humankind during his thousand-year reign when he will remove man's greatest enemy, death, with all of its concomitant sorrows.—Rom. 8:21; Rev. 21:1-4.



THE confusion of languages at the tower of Babel brought about tremendous changes in the field of language, which have not ceased down to our day. All languages that are used live; new words are continually being formed. We need to think only of the many new expressions that have been introduced in the field of technology. Some words also undergo a change in meaning or drop completely out of usage with time.

These developments and changes in the language field are great hindrances in the way of a worldwide distribution of any book, since it is necessary not only to translate this book into all languages but, after one's translating it, to keep its language alive.

It was necessary for those loving God's Word and thus interested in distributing it among all peoples to fight continually against this apparently insurmountable hindrance. Their efforts were not fruitless. In the field of Bible translation there has truly been a phenomenal accomplishment, when it is considered that up to the present day the Bible has been translated in its entirety or in part in more than 1,200 languages or dialects.

THE FIRST GERMAN BIBLE

The German literary language, which is presently spoken not only in Germany but also in Austria and Luxembourg and in parts of France and Switzerland, has grown out of the languages spoken by different Germanic tribes living in sections of the later German empire. The first known translation in a German tongue is the Gothic Bible of Wulfila, which is often referred to as the first *German* Bible translation. It is probably more correct to speak of it as the first *Germanic* Bible transla-

tion, since not the Goths, but, rather, the West Germanic peoples must be considered to be the ancestors of the present German-speaking populace.

Wulfila, the translator of the Gothic Bible, was himself not a Teuton. His grandparents came from Asia Minor, where Gothic warriors forced them as slaves from their home country. According to tradition, Wulfila (in German, "Little Wolf") was consecrated as bishop of Donaugoten when only twenty-nine years of age. When Wulfila began his work of translating in 350 C.E. he was faced with great problems, as the common Gothic, the language of the Gothic warriors, had a comparatively small vocabulary. It was a language that did not appear suitable to express the exceedingly colorful contents of the Holy Scriptures. But Wulfila proved to be a genius in creating language, and he succeeded in translating the Bible in such a manner that his fellow countrymen could understand it. Besides this, Wulfila had to invent his own letters before he could start the work. The Greek alphabet served as a pattern for him; however, he changed it by adding certain runes (Germanic characters).

The best-known and most valuable copy of Wulfila's Gothic Bible is the *Codex Argenteus* found in the university library in Upsala, Sweden, which is written in silver and gold letters on purple-colored material. Of the 330 pages found around the year 1550, there are only 187 still remaining.

THE GERMAN BIBLE DURING THE DARK AGES

The "Christianizing" of Europe following the council of Nicaea did not ensue by individual conversions, but, rather, by mass conversions based on the decision of an entire tribe or the will of a ruler. "Christianity" had become the state religion in the expansive Roman Empire, reaching far into northern regions. This circumstance meant that the newly won "Christians" were not instructed extensively enough in the Holy Scriptures.

The instruction of the people in reading and writing was severely neglected by the responsible persons. For that reason it does not surprise us that even among the clergy a great ignorance and lack of knowledge about Bible truths prevailed. Dr. Oscar Paret wrote in his book *The Bible, Its Tradition in Print and Writing* (Stuttgart, 1949; page 25): "At what low level education generally stood in the early middle ages (800) can be seen from the decree of Karl the Great, namely, that every clergyman must at least know the Lord's prayer and the creed of faith." Most clergymen were without a complete Bible. Adolf Risch wrote in his book *The German Bible in Its Historical Development* (Berlin-Lichterfeld, 1907; page 10): "Even the large majority of the clergy learned the essential content of the Vulgate only from excerpts and church handbooks as chosen and considered by the church." The need for Bibles could not begin to be taken care of, as duplicating by copying progressed very laboriously and slowly. In addition to this factor most of the copyists used their time mainly to copy the Latin *Vulgate,* works of the church fathers and the "holy" legends.

The "Christianizing" of Germany followed, interestingly, from north to south, and that by Iro-Scottish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries. There is probably only one copy of the texts left that they used, and that is the *Codex Fuldensis* written in Latin, which was often copied in the Middle Ages and frequently used for later translations in the German language. This codex is not the pure Bible text that we are acquainted with from modern-day Bibles, but, rather, a so-called harmony of Gospels, a progressive story of Jesus' life that was composed of the four Gospels.

THE FIRST GERMAN BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Most of the first truly German translations of Biblical material come out of the period when the *Heiland* was written (825-835). Latin texts with German annotations (comments on the text) are known out of still earlier periods. These annotations that are supposed to be of help to the clergy when expounding on the text cannot be considered texts of high quality, as they are often not just reproductions of the text but, rather, explanations of it. Furthermore, approximately eight hundred interlinear translations from this time are extant. Each time the corresponding German word is written above the Latin word. These texts were likely in use in the monasteries.

Around the year 1000 C.E. a free translation of the Psalms was made by Notker Labeo, the head of the famous school of the monastery in St. Gallen, Switzerland. His translation was used for hundreds of years as the original for further translations of the Psalms into German. To be mentioned among translations dating back to this time is that of the Song of Solomon by Walliram, who came from Worms. His text with three columns contains the *Vulgate* text in the center column, a Latin recast in a special verse form in the left column, and to the right a free German translation, which, according to language experts, is among the best that have been preserved from that time.

The oldest known German transcription of Biblical literature is a translation of the Gospel of Matthew from the eighth or ninth century, the so-called *Mondseer Matthew*. It was discovered by accident in 1830 that the wooden covers and backs of some books that came from the Mondsee, Austria, monastery were covered with pieces of material that were taken from a book. With much hard work the strips were successfully removed and pieced together. Twenty-three pages of the *Mondseer Matthew* were restored in this manner. On the left-hand side of its pages this handwritten copy has the Latin *Vulgate,* and on the right-hand side the German text in a Frankish-Bavarian dialect.

Long before Luther, the German reformationist and Bible translator, and long before Gutenberg, inventor of movable-type printing, many parts of the Bible, yes, even the entire Bible, were translated into German. The oldest of the approximately fifty preserved handwritten Bibles in German is the *Augsburger Pergament* manuscript of the Christian Greek Scriptures from the year 1350.

Accordingly, Luther was far from being the first to translate the Bible into German, as is often wrongly supposed. Dr. Oscar Paret wrote on page 23 of his aforementioned book: "The . . . German Bible archives in Hamburg have by means of the manuscripts, of which only fragments are preserved, and with consideration being given to the earliest printing, for example of Psalm 6, still found 97 various German translations out of the pre-Luther times and 60 various transcriptions of 1 Corinthians." He does, however, mention that different translations reveal a great lack of knowledge of the old languages and of the German language.

None of these translations experienced a wide distribution. On the one hand, they could not be produced in sufficient numbers and, on the other, they were so high priced that a private individual could hardly obtain one. Especially luxuriously made copies could be paid for only by princes and kings. Here and there references to the price of such Bibles have been found. In the year 1388, for example, Johannesberg in Rheingau, Germany, purchased a Bible for seventy Florentine gold gulden. For from one to two gold gulden a person could buy a fat steer at that time. A Bible,

therefore, represented a good-sized herd of cattle.

THE FIRST PRINTED GERMAN BIBLES

Even when the Bible could be printed it was at first still very high priced. The Strassburger printer, Mentelin, published his first printed German Bible in 1466, and that only ten years after the Gutenberg Bible (*Vulgate* text), which is generally recognized as the first book printed from movable type. The Mentelin Bible cost between 2,000 and 2,500 German marks at that time. In an extant copy there is the exact entry: "1466 27 June this book was bought, not bound, for 12 gulden." How high priced this was in reality can be seen by the following quotation: "The amount of 50 gulden at this time corresponds to a year's income in a middle wage bracket income. That is the wage received by the Leipziger warden, the professional counselor for the city council's building director." (Doctor Friedrich Schulze, *German Bibles,* Leipzig, 1934; pages 8, 9) The text manuscripts for the Mentelin Bible were manuscripts from the Middle Ages that are still extant.

Already in 1470 the second printed edition of the German Bible was published in Strassburg, which was, however, primarily a reprint of the Mentelin Bible. In rapid order further printed editions were published in German cities: in Nuremberg and Augsburg, high-German Bibles, and in Luebeck and Cologne, low-German Bibles. In 1522 the Halberstaedter Bible was published in low German as the last Bible from the pre-Luther period.

REACTION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the pre-Luther period Bible distribution experienced an impetus. This, of course, did not occur without the opposition of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, which repeatedly pronounced prohibitions of Bible reading and further Bible translation work. (Edict of Archbishop Berthold of Mainz against all translations of the Bible and any other books from Greek, Latin or another language on March 22, 1485.) Laymen who desired to read the Bible in their mother tongue were threatened with excommunication and high fines. The Catholic Bible authority, Dr. Hans Rost, writes in his book *The Bible in the Middle Ages* (Augsburg, 1939; page 76): "Since the danger continually existed that through Bibles and books in the mother tongue secret religious services and lay sermons could be held with a desired deviation from the official teaching and Bible conception, the church reacted with prohibitions from time to time." The conduct of the Catholic church is understandable when we read the following in the marginal reading to Matthew 16:18 of the Luebecker Bible of 1914: "You are Peter, a professor of the true rock Christ, and on this rock, that you professed, on Christ, I will build my church." According to this marginal note every reader could understand that Christ, and not Peter, is the rock upon which the church was built. Professor D. Dr. von Dobschuetz writes in his book *The Bible in the Life of Nations* (page 127): "Where the Bible was published in the common language the church rejected this and tried to suppress it." The distribution of the Bible in the language of the people could not be stopped, however. The accumulation of prohibitions by the hierarchy on Bible reading prove how ineffective these really were. The Koberger Bible was published in 1483 and was the most widely distributed in the period before Luther. The Nuremberg printing shop in which it was printed was the first big printing establishment. Koberger ran twenty-four presses and employed one hundred printers.

LUTHER'S TRANSLATION

With Luther's Bible translation a triumphal procession for the German Bible was begun that could not be restrained. Luther brilliantly mastered the job of finding language that everyone understood. He himself wrote in his work entitled "Letter About Translation" (1530): "We should question the mother in her home, the children on the street and the common man at the market, and then watch their mouths to see how they talk and then translate accordingly." His translation was accepted with enthusiasm. By the time of his death in 1546 he had seen thirteen editions of the entire Bible and twenty-one editions of the so-called New Testament. In each new edition he made improvements. The demand for the Bible was so great, however, that the printers working for Luther could not keep up. His translation was reprinted throughout Germany, but not always with the necessary care.

It has been established that there were 253 reprints during Luther's lifetime within a period of twenty-four years. The Bible was, however, still comparatively high priced. Church historian Walter Koehler writes that the New Testament "cost as much as a horse."

Luther's translation naturally brought forth many opposers. One of them, Duke Georg of Saxony, authorized Hieronymus Emser to make a new German translation, which was to replace Luther's Bible translation. Luther's "presumptuous translation" was not, however, edged out by Emser's translation, which was "authorized by the Christian church." Up to the present day Luther's translation, which has had to be revised several times (last revision 1964), remains the most widely distributed German Bible translation, although since that time many German Bible translations have been published.

MORE MODERN GERMAN TRANSLATIONS

In the field of language study there has been enormous progress made since Luther's time, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many manuscript finds have also been made, which allow for an increasingly precise translation of the Bible. Many mistakes that crept into the original texts due to shortcomings in their transcription could be done away with in new translations, because of the many ancient manuscript finds and the increased knowledge of the old languages.

In this manner good and dependable German Bible translations developed, which, in many respects, excel Luther's translation. Especially the *Elberfelder* and *Zuercher* Bibles excel in their modern style with regard to the exactness of translation. From Catholic and Protestant sides there have of late been a number of completely new translations published. The *Kautzsch, Menge* and *Schlachter* translations alongside the *Luther* Bible are among the best-known Protestant Bibles. The *Allioli, Arndt, Riessler-Storr* and *Hamp-Stenzel-Kuerzinger* Bibles are the best-known Catholic translations. The Jewish translators Zunz and Buber are also to be mentioned for their recently published translation of the Hebrew Scriptures in German. Those acquainted with Hebraisms will learn many interesting thoughts in the Buber translation.

When several Bible societies were founded in the German-speaking region at the beginning of the past century, Bible distribution took on proportions not heretofore realized. The price was greatly reduced by mass production. The Book of Books became a book for the home of many German families, most of which were Protestant. It is regrettable, however, that in Germany Bible reading is being neglected more and more in recent decades. The

younger generation is so engrossed in other activities that it feels there is no time for searching in God's Word. Few of them realize what precious treasure they thrust aside through their indifference.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BIBLE

Jehovah's witnesses have always been very interested in the distribution of the Bible among all peoples of the earth, and everywhere they have worked with what means they had to accomplish this. They thereby made use of the various translations. Even in the field of Bible translation they have worked productively. In 1961 the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was published in English in one volume, after various single volumes had been published in the preceding eleven years.

Plans were made to publish this distinguished translation in German, French, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish versions. Without delay the translators went to work, and already in 1963 the Christian Greek Scriptures could be published in these languages. There have already been 445,000 copies printed in German.

After you have read this article you will undoubtedly realize how much effort and work has been put forth over the centuries to acquaint people with the Book of Books, the Word of Jehovah. Innumerable people have devoted their entire lives to spreading God's Word; many have sacrificed their lives for it. The Bible can also become a valuable treasure for you if you daily read it and search for its truths in fellowship with other faithful Christians.

GRADUATING MISSIONARIES COUNSELED TO SHOW LOVE

THE graduation of the fortieth class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead took place September 13, 1965. The class consisted of 108 students who had come from 31 countries and who were now being sent to 43 different lands. The program, which began at 3 p.m. with song and prayer, was presided over by N. H. Knorr, president of the Watchtower Society and the Gilead School.

Brother Knorr also gave the main talk on the subject of Christian love, after a number of others had spoken. He asked the students: "How far must your love reach? Even to your enemies, Jesus said. Now, just because you go peaceably from house to house, talking the Bible to people, some are going to be disturbed and will persecute you. Are you going to hate them for it? No, for Jesus said we must love our enemies. So at every opportunity you have you will talk to them about the hope of everlasting life. You don't want them destroyed, even if they are your enemies. If you can straighten out their minds regarding Jehovah's purposes, you will be glad to do that."—Luke 6:27.

Developing the theme of love further, he quoted and applied Luke 6:31, about 'doing to others as we would have them do to us.' "As you go to a foreign assignment you will meet people that may seem peculiar to you, people whose standard of living may be far below that to which you are accustomed. Will you look down upon them for that? No, love will cause you to look upon them as God's creatures, as fellow humans that have been hurt and oppressed; as people who really need your words of comfort."

Then Brother Knorr read Philippians 1:9-11, where the apostle Paul prayed for his brothers, that "your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and *full discernment*." "Yes," he told the students, "you've worked with people, you've had experience with people. You should be able to show more love than the people whom you meet because of your having taken in this added knowledge.

"There is no law against love, which is one of the fruits of the spirit. A red traffic light tells you to stop your car, and a sign may limit your speed to fifty miles an hour; but there is no law limiting your love. You will never be taken to court because of love."—Gal. 5:22, 23.

"This love must also include our Christian neighbors," Brother Knorr went on to say. "No question about it, our personalities may clash, we may misunderstand, but if we have love we will not hold something against our brother and ignore him, but we will go out of our way to straighten out matters." In conclusion he noted: "Time will tell how far-reaching your love is, and we hope that that time reaches off indefinitely."

Before this main talk by Brother Knorr, there were brief remarks by six speakers who had a large share in training the missionary students. W. Wilkinson counseled: 'When you get to your missionary assignment, stay there; use your marvelous Gilead training and all your bodies to praise God.' F. Rusk stressed the importance of discernment in being effective missionaries. U. Glass underscored the need of good methods and strong motivation if people are to learn the "pure language" of Jehovah's worship. E. Dunlap pointed out that it takes not only determination but brotherly love to be able to stay in the missionary service. M. Larson noted that strong, right principles will serve them as good protection when far away in the missionary field. And G. Couch urged their keeping open the circuit of truth from ears to heart and then to the lips.

The foregoing remarks were appreciated by all in attendance, even as were those of the Society's vice-president, F. W. Franz, as he, for upward of half an hour, drew on three current news items—about the wretched conditions in the world's institutions of higher learning, about the American rabbi who did not believe in God, and about the late Schweitzer's denial of the Biblical Jesus—to show the marked contrast between all such and those graduating from the Bible School of Gilead and to urge them to strong faith and right conduct.

Then after Brother Knorr's talks the missionaries received their assignments and diplomas, and a student read a resolution on behalf of the class, expressing its appreciation to Jehovah and all whom He used to train them. This program closed with song and prayer at 6 p.m. Then followed a fine farewell dinner, after which the program resumed with a condensed study of the weekly *Watchtower* lesson, followed by entertainment by the students, including many beautiful musical selections and heartwarming expressions of appreciation. At 10 p.m. the program closed with song and prayer. It had truly been spiritually upbuilding to all in attendance, direct and by closed television.

● In view of what is stated in the new book *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie,"* is it to be understood that there definitely are living creatures on other planets? —R.B., U.S.A.

No, that is not what the book says. Paragraph 24, on pages 384 and 385 of that publication, reads: "To all eternity our earth will bear a distinction such as no other planet throughout endless space will enjoy. To all eternity, throughout all creation, it will be a glorious showpiece to Jehovah's praise. Not that it will be the only planet that will ever be inhabited, but that it will be the only planet to which the Creator of all good things sent his only-begotten Son to become a man and die sacrificially to recover the planet's inhabitants from sin and its penalty death. It will be the only planet on which Jehovah, by means of his Son Jesus Christ, will have fought the 'war of the great day of God the Almighty' to show his power over all his enemies in heaven and on earth and to vindicate himself as the Universal Sovereign.—Jeremiah 50:25; Psalm 140:7; Acts 4:24."

The point being emphasized is this: Never again will it be necessary for God's Son to die sacrificially to recover living creatures from sin and death. Never again will it be necessary for Jehovah God to vindicate himself as Universal Sovereign. These things will have been accomplished once and for all time at the earth. Even if the Creator should at some future time populate other planets—which is something that we do not know—there still would be no need for repetition of Jesus' sacrifice and the vindication of Jeho-

vah's sovereignty. The issues involved will already have been settled forever.—Heb. 9:28; 10:12.

There has been much speculation by worldly scientists and others as to whether there is life on other planets at the present time. Little is known for sure. The Bible is definite in showing that there are vast numbers of spirit creatures in existence, but it does not reveal whether there are physical creatures on other planets.—Rev. 5:11; Matt. 26:53.

Christians, though, have no need to be disturbed over the speculations about present or future life on other planets. Man was placed on the earth, and we are told in the Bible that righteous men will continue to live here throughout eternity. (Ps. 37:29; 115:16; Eccl. 1:4) We can rest assured of that fact, no matter what God may reveal in the future about life on other planets. —See *The Photo-Drama of Creation*, page 96, paragraph 3, as published in 1914.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Slaves of Men or Slaves of Your Repurchaser—Which?
- The Liberator Comes to Zion.
- Is Your Life Affected by Angels?

● According to Leviticus 25:11, 12, the Israelites were not to "sow seed nor reap the land's growth from spilled kernels" during the Jubilee year, yet they could "eat what the land produces." How is this seeming inconsistency resolved?—A.K., U.S.A.

The statutes for the Jubilee were very similar to those for the regular seventh-year sabbath. Jehovah promised to bless the harvest on the sixth year so the Israelites would have sufficient food stored to last until the harvest of crops sowed in the eighth year. (Lev. 25: 20-22) When the land was left uncultivated it would produce some grain from kernels spilled at the previous harvest. During the sabbath and Jubilee years the farmers were to eat from what they had stored, and not to reap and collect into their storehouses what grew from spilled kernels. It was to be left in the field.

However, a loving provision had been made in the Law allowing the afflicted of the land to glean what remained in the fields after a normal harvest. (Lev. 19:9, 10; Ruth 2:2, 3) But what were the poor and the alien residents to do during the seventh-year sabbath and the Jubilee? Then they could glean in the fields what grew from grain spilled during the last harvest. (Lev. 25:12; Ex. 23:11) So, while there would be no harvesting during the Jubilee, Jehovah's law made provisions for both the farmer with stored food and the poor who would live directly off the land.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

Long in advance, Jehovah God, in his Word the Bible, described the present world situation, pointing out its cause and the cure. It is concerning this God of true prophecy and his purposes that Jehovah's witnesses speak. During November they will continue to do so, offering to all persons the faith-inspiring new book *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie,"* with a booklet, for 50c.

1966 YEARBOOK AND CALENDAR

The 1966 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* will be available after November 23, 1965. Each year this annual report of the Watchtower Society's president is eagerly awaited by Jehovah's witnesses. It contains information about the progress of the preaching work of Jehovah's witnesses world wide, with a statistical report of this activity tabulated by countries. The field experiences of these preachers of the good news are stimulating and enlightening. Send for your copy of the *Yearbook*. It is 50c. Send also for the 1966 calendar. It is 25c.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

December 12: "Let God Be Found True," ¶1-24, and The Truthteller Steps In with an Oath, ¶1-3. Page 677.

December 19: The Truthteller Steps In with an Oath, ¶4-34. Page 683.