



The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

MARCH 15, 1966

Semimonthly

**APPRECIATING THE BOOK
OF LIFE-GIVING WISDOM**

**"INCREASING IN
THE ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD"**

**MAN'S "WORLD OF TOMORROW"
OR CHRIST'S KINGDOM RULE, WHICH?**

THE MOST WIDELY PUBLISHED SONG

©WTB&TS

"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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Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
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IT IS not difficult to be grateful to a friend who shows you with gifts. Yet for the earth itself, for life, health and your powers of reason, how often do you express gratitude? Surely if gratitude is due from children to their earthly parents, how much more is the gratitude of the great family of mankind due to our Father in the heavens!

Gratitude is thankful appreciation. The 100th Psalm of the Bible is a melody of thanksgiving. It reminds us that God is good and that "his loving-kindness is to time indefinite." Since we enjoy the beauty of God's earth and live by its bounty, we should express gratitude. "It is good to give thanks to Jehovah," said the psalmist. "In connection with everything give thanks," wrote the Christian apostle Paul. (Ps. 92:1; 1 Thess. 5:18) The beauty of such gratitude is that it opens up fountains of joy in the grateful one.

Gratitude should also be felt and expressed for our fellowman and for privileges of service. The apostle Paul began many of his letters by thanking God for his fellow believers. "I am grateful to God," he says respecting Timothy, "that I never leave off remembering you in my supplications." (2 Tim. 1:3) Of his fellow believers in Rome, he said: "I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ con-

cerning all of you." (Rom. 1:8) Paul was "grateful to Christ Jesus" because he considered him faithful by assigning him "to a ministry." (1 Tim. 1:12) Do

we express grateful appreciation for similar associations and privileges? Such gratefulness is rewarding. It awakens the eyes to the goodness of God and deepens our appreciation of one another.

Being grateful can also help those to whom it is expressed. A husband who shows gratitude for his wife's work adds to the enjoyment of her work. A wife who never forgets the gifts of her husband does much to keep things running smoothly at home. A clerk at a ticket counter always remembered a customer's smile and friendly way. "It helps to keep me smiling," he said. Another worker, a secretary, stated that she owed her efficiency to her employer's gratefulness. No matter how small her service, he never failed to acknowledge it.

The beauty of gratitude is that it makes both the one who expresses it and the one to whom it is expressed happier. It makes routine relationships more human and renders monotonous jobs more agreeable. And, above all, it strengthens our love for one another and, most of all, for our Creator. Are not these reasons enough for being grateful?

The Beauty of Being *Grateful*

"THERE'S a great big beautiful tomorrow!"

Thousands of visitors at the New York World's Fair last year came out of one of its more popular exhibits singing that song, the exhibit's theme. It might also be called the theme of the men—rulers, statesmen, scientists, industrialists, social planners and others—who are mapping out the "world of tomorrow." Their plans

are received by many as thrilling, appealing. How well are you acquainted with their proposals? Have you ever thoughtfully weighed them as to their true worth and their implications? Are you willing to compare them with the promises made in a very ancient book, the Bible, and then honestly make a personal decision as to which side offers the better, more practical hope? We invite you to do so.

To begin with, let us assume that the things envisioned, seriously proposed and publicly prophesied by men of this world are feasible and attainable by them, even where their past performances give doubtful basis for warranting such confidence. Let us go much, much farther, and assume that their proposed goals could be achieved and realized during *your life-span*, thereby permitting you to experience the full effect of their benefits. What would the prospects then be?

**MAN'S
"WORLD OF
TOMORROW"**

OR

**CHRIST'S
KINGDOM RULE**

—WHICH?

How do man's promises for the future compare with the blessings of Christ's Kingdom rule?

GLOWING PROSPECTS PREDICTED

According to human forecasters of the future, man's "world of tomorrow" will enjoy unprecedented power as new energy sources are developed. Nuclear energy and solar-powered cells and batteries will revolutionize human living and eradicate poverty and hunger, they say. Whereas vast areas now lie barren due to having no easy access to coal, oil

or hydroelectric power, they hope to make these areas productive by means of the new sources of power, made available or easily transportable everywhere. They forecast the desalinization of seawater to irrigate arid regions, and intensive "farming" of the sea itself, thus solving much of mankind's food problem.

More leisure time for the workingman is promised by industrial scientists. They say that increased automation may reduce his workweek to as little as three or four days. Yet they prophesy that his earnings will be greater than at present and express hope that this increased prosperity will bring greater contentment and that the increased leisure time will be used for personal development in education and the arts, and in travel.

Rocketlike speed is also supposed to add new horizons for those living in the "world of tomorrow." The planners envision com-

muters in special trains being hurtled through giant tunnels at speeds of 500 miles per hour, while international travelers are rocketed through space at supersonic speeds to any point on the globe in one or two hours.

The gleaming cities of the future are predicted to be traffic-free in their central "cores," as underground conveyors bring in freight and produce, and people park their vehicles at the city's outer edge and travel in to business and commercial areas by monorail systems, or comfortably sit in a small waiting room, which room is itself then picked up by a helicopter and transported into the city's center. Moving sidewalks would take over from there.

Communications executives talk of the day when the woman shopper will, at any time, be able to take from her purse a small cordless telephone, speak into it, and cause her thermoelectric range at home to begin cooking the family dinner; or have her home telephone play back messages from other members of the family or outside callers.

A dust-free "Home of Tomorrow" is envisioned with complete air filtration and sootless, dustless heating or cooling from wall and ceiling panels. Ultrasonic energy is predicted to make washing of clothes and dishes amazingly easy.

Medical scientists speak of "break-throughs" in the discovery of ways to combat disease; of anticancer vaccines; of pills or injections to slow down the aging processes of the human body. They tell of bloodless, painless surgery by means of laser beams or an "ultrasonic wand" that anesthetizes and cauterizes as it cuts. They venture the possibility of replacing entire vital organs, such as the heart, liver or kidneys, with plastic devices or by successfully transplanting other human or even animal organs into the patient's body. Mental problems are to be cured by

drugs that quiet man's worries or stimulate his creative thinking.

Finally, as a result of all these promised benefits and by means of a world government, perhaps a "Federated States of the World," the "world of tomorrow" is prophesied to be a world of peace.

METHODS OF CONTROL

Obviously, these achievements could never be attained without tremendous organizational efficiency and cooperation or without global agreement and support. To ensure total support, new laws and controls are to empower the world government and each nation or "Federated State" under it, to control the major phases of the economic and community life of its citizens to ensure that all that is done is for the general good of the "Society of Tomorrow."

In this regard, it is suggested that there may be need to regulate even such intimate matters as human procreation. That is to say, the possibility is presented of determining beforehand the genetic combinations that social scientists believe would be most beneficial in the kind of human society they view as ideal. They believe they could thereby decide whether it would be advisable for a certain couple to have children or not, or whether the wife should have a "test-tube baby" produced with the sperm of someone other than her husband.

Religion, of necessity, would be affected by these plans. Yet, despite the fact that such plans frequently are in open violation of Bible standards of morality, some philosophers and even religious leaders express belief that today's religions will be able to "adjust" to the new situations. An article in *Life* magazine of October 1, 1965, however, went even farther. Discussing the possibility of scientifically controlling the mental and physical qualities

of future generations by manipulating their genetic structure before birth, the writer said: "No one would argue that man couldn't stand some improvement, but having the actual power to do so presents some sticky choices. Who is it that we will appoint to play God for us? Which scientist, which statesman, artist, judge, poet, theologian, philosopher, educator—of which nation, race or creed—will you trust to write the specifications, to decide which characteristics are desirable and which not?" This is one of the many questions that the men directing the predicted "world of tomorrow" would have to decide on behalf of all those living in such world.

BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM RULE

What, then, can God's kingdom by Christ Jesus offer to compare with this? What basis do we have for reliance on its promises? What hope can we have of actually enjoying its blessings?

Even if we were to view the matter solely from the standpoint of human benefits, it could be said that one of the major differences between what man's proposed "world of tomorrow" offers and what Christ's Kingdom rule offers is in the things *lacking* in what man offers. Christ's Kingdom rule goes so much beyond all that men envision and enters into fields that they hesitate to discuss or, at best, tend to gloss over. One of these is human relations.

According to the Bible, the Book that sets out the Kingdom government's program, Christ's government will make of planet Earth not only a literal paradise but also a spiritual paradise, one in which the fruits of righteousness will blossom with a beauty surpassing any product of human invention. What are such fruits? They include "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) They

are not produced by pills or drugs but result from a transformation of the person himself by his 'making his mind over and proving to himself the good and acceptable and perfect will of God' with the help of God's spirit and Word. (Rom. 12:2) Ask yourself: What would all the gleam and glitter, abundance and even opulence of a future era mean or matter if these lovely fruits of God's spirit were missing?—Compare Proverbs 15:17; 17:1; Psalm 133:1.

Christ's Kingdom rule promises an earth free from crime and from selfishness, which is crime's seed. It will therefore result in a world without jails, without police, without locks, without fear. (1 Tim. 1:9-11; Rom. 6:12-14) Then, as foretold, people "will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it."—Mic. 4:4.

Peace? Yes, unequalled peace will endure under that Kingdom rule but on an entirely different basis from that which men propose. It will come, not because of mutual fear of war and of the hideously destructive power of nuclear weapons that scientific minds have produced, nor simply by rigid control and enforcement of law, but because men have first found peace with God by loving him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength, and because they love their neighbors as themselves. (Matt. 22:37-39) Is that possible? Why, even now more than a million persons of all nations, races and colors, who are endeavoring to qualify as subjects of that Kingdom rule, fulfill the prophecy at Isaiah 2:4 and "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. . . . neither [do] they learn war any more." Really, what greater force for peace, what stronger basis for peace, could you offer than love?—See Romans 13: 8-10.

PERSONAL HAPPINESS ASSURED

The government of this earth by Christ's kingdom does not rule out the development of equipment and products to reduce man's labor or lighten the work of woman in the home. Used aright, such things can be a blessing to man and can, indeed, allow more time for increasing his knowledge, developing his talents and, better yet, doing more for those around him by contributing to their enjoyment of life. But under Christ's Kingdom rule the *motive* will be the determining factor that will ensure that such things do not lead to a life of indolence, where pleasure-madness eventually produces licentiousness or reverts to boredom. A premium will be placed on knowledge of God's will, and the carrying out of his purposes for earth and mankind will give true meaning to human living and make all work, study and other endeavors sources of joy.—Phil. 4:8, 9.

Yes, there will be pleasure in working, even should it be plowing a field of rich, brown earth warmed by the golden sunshine, where the gaze takes in the blue skies and fluffy clouds, or rests on green trees and gaily colored flowers, or watches a squirrel scamper across the field, or notes a robin singing a song of springtime. Craftsmanship, metalworking, the arts, all will reach new heights of expression, beauty and precision, because the motive of those who produce them will be the best: the desire to honor the God they love and to use his gifts to praise him and to bless and delight their companion subjects of his Kingdom rule.—Note the principles in 1 Corinthians 10:31; 13:4-7; 2 Corinthians 9:11-14.

Life forever in vibrant health is also promised for earth's inhabitants by God's government through his King Son, Christ Jesus. Not in patched-up bodies with plastic parts or plastic surgery, but in bodies

that have been regenerated and restored to perfect health so that a man's flesh 'becomes fresher than in youth and he returns to the days of his youthful vigor.' (Job 33:25) Medical scientists today admit that the greatest healing powers they know of are found, not in their "miracle drugs," but right within the human body itself. Thus, when divine power, exercised by Christ reverses the aging process and increased cell reproduction, or other healing process, revitalizes all human organs, then 'mourning, outcry, pain and tears will pass away.'—Rev. 21:3, 4.

The basis for this removal of imperfection will be the ransom sacrifice provided by the King, Christ Jesus himself. It will get at the very root of all man's ills and troubles by removing their source: sin, which is the failure to reach and comply with God's perfect standards and which is every man's inheritance. Thus, whereas today in some countries one-third of all hospital facilities are occupied by mental patients, those living under Kingdom rule will all be happy individuals, free from guilt and free from harmful thoughts, anxieties and selfish emotions that upset and block the proper functioning of the human organism.—Rom. 5:12, 21; 6:21-23; Prov. 14:30.

On that same basis of the ransom, Christ as King will do what no man or human government could dare to offer. He will restore to life earth's dead millions whose bodies have long since returned to the dusty elements. What prospect could be more thrilling or more heartwarming than that of seeing the fulfillment of the King's promise that "all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out"? (John 5:28, 29) What could be more interesting than meeting men and women of all ages, getting to know them, and aiding them to learn the principles of truth and righteousness, that they may

qualify for an eternity of life under that Kingdom rule?

YOUR HONEST CONCLUSION

For which, then, will you make your personal decision—for man's "world of tomorrow" or for Christ's Kingdom rule? Which really offers you the better, the more practical, hope? As an aid to a wise decision ask yourself the following questions:

Which gives you sound basis for believing that the world promised will be one in which hate will be replaced by love; where fear and suspicion will be replaced by confidence and trust; where cheating and deceit and corruption will give way to helpfulness and honesty and integrity?

Man's "world of tomorrow" proposes to solve the world's problems by great increases in power, speed, material prosperity and leisure time, principally by advances in technological science in collaboration with political science. Would you say that the increases in these very things in our own generation have truly brought a genuine improvement in human relations—internationally, nationally, in your own city or home? Or does the problem lie to a greater extent in the human heart?—See Matthew 15:18, 19; Proverbs 4:23.

What does your own experience in life tell you? Is there not a far greater need in our day for patience rather than speed? Would not mildness, kindness and self-control remedy far more of the world's ills than power? Have you personally found that by increasing a man's possessions you make him more considerate, more thoughtful of others, a better, more loving neighbor? And is it logical to trust that that which has helped make possible mass bloodshed is now to become the basis for a united world of peace, namely, technological science in the service of the political powers?

The Bible shows the true fomenters of

all human strife and discord to be Satan and his demons. (Jas. 3:13-16; Rev. 12:7-12) Men of this world scoff at that. Yet they seriously talk about the possibility, even the probability, of finding intelligent creatures on some planet of outer space. They have no real proof that such creatures exist, no conclusive sign of any influence by them upon man; yet all human experience in all ages of history clearly manifests the evidence of an invisible force operating on men's minds and stimulating them to acts of brutality and sadism such as are unknown even among the lower animals. The power needed, then, is such as will wipe out of existence those demonic forces. That power the King of God's government possesses; science does not.—Heb. 2:14, 15.

Read the writings of the prominent men of this world. Then compare their appeal and their lives to the words and the life of the one who said: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light." (Matt. 11:28-30) Which one would *you* prefer to have as ruler over you?

You may wisely decide against putting your trust in imperfect men and their fallible predictions and promises. Yet more than this is required. You need a knowledge of God's Word. Have you ever seriously investigated the Bible, not merely reading it but studying it? Do you not feel that you now owe it to yourself and to those whom you love to do so? Yes, why not accept the invitation of the Bible's Author, who says: "Come, now, you people, and let us set matters straight between us"? (Isa. 1:18) Jehovah's witnesses offer you their sincere help.

LIFE! Of all the possessions we may have, what could be more precious than life itself? Without it we could enjoy none of the other things we possess. Reasonably, then, it was asked by the greatest of men to live on the earth: "What benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul?" (Matt. 16: 26) The desire to live, the instinct for self-preservation, is one of the primary forces that drives man. Since ancient times imperfect, dying men have sought to unlock the secret of life and thus escape the inevitability of death. But neither the wisdom of the ancients nor the technical know-how of modern doctors and scientists has proved successful in this search. Despite all the sum of human wisdom, man still dies, and the goal of a perfect life continues to elude his grasp.

² But the truly wise person recognizes the essential truth that life is a provision of the great Creator of all things animate and inanimate. The book known as the Bible identifies this One as Jehovah, "the God that made the world and all the things in it . . . he himself gives to all persons life and breath and all things. For by him we have life and move and exist." (Acts 17:24, 25, 28; Gen. 2:4, 7) As Creator, the true God could be the only One to hold the key to everlasting

1. Of what value is life, and in what have men's efforts to prolong life resulted?

2. What does the truly wise person recognize about life, and what therefore becomes essential?

Appreciating THE BOOK OF LIFE-GIVING WISDOM



"I am bearing witness to everyone that hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone makes an addition to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this scroll; and if anyone takes anything away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take his portion away from the trees of life."—Rev. 22: 18, 19.

and fed you with the manna, . . . in order to make you know that not by bread alone does man live but by every expression of Jehovah's mouth does man live." The first one to receive life from the Creator was "the beginning of the creation by God," and he became Christ Jesus. When being tempted by the Devil in the wilderness, he quoted from those words of Moses, thus not only verifying the historicalness of the event but also underlining the essential

3. How was man's dependence on feeding on the words of God forcibly brought home to the Israelites?

life, and this He has promised as a gift to those who faithfully worship him. (Rom. 6: 23) If you are a person who professes Christianity, you will no doubt wholly agree with that statement. But consider for a moment just what that means. It means that each one of us is entirely in the Creator's hands as to gaining life. He grants life to us, not on our terms, but as it pleases him and according to whether we conform to his will. Hence, to come to an accurate knowledge of God's will is as essential to life as temporal food and drink, indeed, more so.

³ This principle for living was forcibly brought to the attention of an entire nation, the nation of Israel, and that by the Creator of life himself. To that nation, overly concerned as it was with its immediate physical need for food in the wilderness, Moses explained: "So [Jehovah] humbled you and let you go hungry

principle: To live man must feed upon the words of God.—Deut. 8:3; Rev. 3:14; Matt. 4:4.

⁴ It logically follows that, having made the feeding upon his words essential for life, God would make the 'expressions of his mouth' available to mankind through the ages. This he has done by having these expressions preserved in writing in what we today call the Bible. That book, then, may properly be called the Word of God.—Compare Mark 7:13.

⁵ It is in the Bible that Jehovah God reveals himself and his purposes to man. Hence, for one to be able to worship God he must come to know accurately what the Bible has to say about Him. It is in the Bible that man can learn of Jehovah's greatness, so that 'generation after generation may commend his works.' Its pages reveal the 'abundance of God's goodness' and show how "Jehovah is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and great in loving-kindness." It is only by appreciating these qualities of God as manifest in his dealings with mankind that the hearts of men are stirred to give to Jehovah the worship that is due to him and thus live in a way pleasing to him. Realizing the need for such knowledge, the apostle Paul wrote: "That is also why we . . . have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual discernment, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him as you go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God, being made powerful with all power to the extent of his glorious might so as to endure fully and be long-suffering with joy."—Ps. 145:4, 7, 8; Col. 1:9-11.

4. What provision would God logically make for man?
5. (a) Why is an accurate knowledge of the Bible essential to one's worship of God? (b) For what did Paul pray on behalf of his fellow Christians?

⁶ Yes, we have to become well acquainted with the Bible, "the word of righteousness," if we want to be counted among the true worshipers of God. Jesus Christ was well acquainted with his heavenly Father and with the expressions that came from him. This personal, intimate knowledge of God shaped his whole mental attitude. It led him to serve appreciatively as the foremost worshiper of the Creator, with the one desire to glorify him. (John 17:1) If it is your sincere desire to follow Jesus in the way of true worship, then, as you read the Bible, which contains "things that were written aforetime . . . for our instruction," you too may grow in like knowledge and appreciation, and indeed by this means Jehovah God may graciously grant you the privilege of having "the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had, that with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. 15:4-6.

⁷ Jesus was accurately acquainted with Jehovah's viewpoint on matters, of how He viewed what was right and what was wrong. Never was he in doubt as to what course he should follow to please his heavenly Father. Beneficially for us, Jehovah God has preserved in his Word the Bible his expressions as to what is good for man and what is bad for him. By having recorded the histories of men and nations as they relate to His purposes, Jehovah also instructs man by example as to what courses of action he approves or disapproves, and of the consequences thereof. Thus he trains us to distinguish clearly between right and wrong. Well did Paul express this under inspiration: "Every-one that partakes of milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is

6. What was it that shaped Jesus' mental attitude, and how can we be like him in this respect?

7. How does Jehovah provide training for our perceptive powers to distinguish right and wrong?

a babe. But solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong."—Heb. 5:13, 14.

⁸ If, then, it is your desire to be counted among those worshiping God "with spirit and truth," you will want to cultivate an appetite for his written Word, having a sincere longing to learn the life-giving wisdom this book contains. You will want to respond wholeheartedly to the inspired advice: "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; if, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, if you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God."—Prov. 2:1-5.

⁹ But, you may ask, can we be sure that, when we open the Bible and read it, we are reading a book truly inspired by God? Do we have sound reasons for believing that the Bible as we have it is indeed God's own revelation of himself and his purposes for mankind? May it not be that the Bible is but a collection of writings of merely human origin which, over the passage of time, has come to be accepted by tradition as of divine origin but without any real evidence of such?

¹⁰ It is true that the Bible is a collection of different documents composed and com-

piled in written form over a period of some sixteen centuries. Such a collection written by at least thirty-nine men from virtually all walks of life, if of merely human origin, would, without doubt, lack cohesion and unity and would, because of human imperfection, be full of contradiction and error. Here at the outset we are faced with one of the most remarkable qualities of the Bible. Despite its being written over such a long period of time and having many writers involved in its compilation, this book exhibits the kind of unity of composition and inner harmony of facts and teaching that one could expect only from a common author. And that is exactly what the Bible claims for itself: that, though different men were used in its writing, this book has but one author, Jehovah God, whose invisible power or spirit moved those who wrote it. And so it is written: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

ESTABLISHING THE BIBLE CANON

¹¹ The collection of inspired Scriptures is sometimes called the Bible *canon*. Originally this word *canon* referred to a reed used as a measuring rod. So, the books of inspired Scripture comprise a measuring rule or standard for determining right faith and doctrine and what is acceptable conduct with God. Additionally, the internal unity and harmony of the Bible has served as a straightedge or rule for determining the rightness of the claim of the individual books to a place in the collection of sixty-six books comprising the Divine Library.

8. What, then, must be cultivated, and to what advice will the sincere person wish to respond wholeheartedly?

9. What questions concerning the Bible might some wish to ask?

10. (a) If the Bible were of human origin, what would we expect to find? (b) But to what do the contents of the Bible testify?

11. In what ways is the term *canon* appropriate to the Bible?

¹² But how did this collection get its start? What determined which writings over the years should be included as part of the growing canon of sacred Scripture? Logically the Bible canon had its beginning with those writings that told of the very origins of mankind and of the Creator's earliest dealings with the human family. In contrast to the superstitious and illogical stories of man's origins found in pagan mythology, the first writings to be included in the Bible canon contain a logical and comprehensible explanation of the creation of the earth and man. In so doing its presentation of the order in which living things were created is wholly in harmony with what has been established by the modern science of palaeontology, the study of past geological periods and fossils. Those same writings tell in a simple, direct way of the fall of man from perfection, and thus lay the basis for understanding the reason why man has inherited sin, imperfection and death. This account was referred to by the greatest teacher who ever lived on earth as true and reliable, and upon it he and his followers based their teachings.—Matt. 19: 4, 5; 23:35; 24:37-39; Rom. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:45; and so forth.

¹³ Those first writings of the Bible came to be called the Pentateuch (Greek for "five rolls") and were penned by the one writer Moses. Originally comprising one book, the Pentateuch was later divided into five rolls or scrolls for easy handling, and these came to be named in modern English Bibles as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. From the beginning these writings were accepted by the nation of Israel as a *canon* or rule for right conduct and worship. Moses' successor, Joshua, said: "You must be very

courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses by never turning away from it to the right or to the left. And you must be on constant guard for your souls by loving Jehovah your God." (Josh. 23:6, 11) They were also accepted by the Jews as inspired and as wholly trustworthy documents. Thus the psalmist later recounts, in the first fifty-four verses of Psalm 78, many of the events recorded in the Pentateuch as undisputed historical facts.

¹⁴ "The book of the law of Moses," as Joshua called the Pentateuch, bears all the evidence of inspiration. In addition to what is discussed above in paragraph 12, many other proofs of inspiration could be presented. The writer Moses claims that he wrote under divine command and that what he wrote was from Jehovah. So the claim of inspiration was not something that grew up by tradition, but was claimed from the start. (Ex. 17:14; 24:4) Moreover, wherever it is possible to test Moses' writings as to their historicalness and geographical accuracy, they stand up to the closest scrutiny. For example, the Genesis account points to the plains of Shinar (now part of the modern country of Iraq) as the place where the human family settled after the Flood and where the languages of men were confused following their disastrous attempt to build the tower of Babel. On this point archaeologist Sir Henry Rawlinson remarked: "If we were to be guided by the mere intersection of linguistic paths, and independently of all reference to the Scriptural record, we should still be led to fix on the plains of Shinar, as the focus from which the various lines had radiated."*

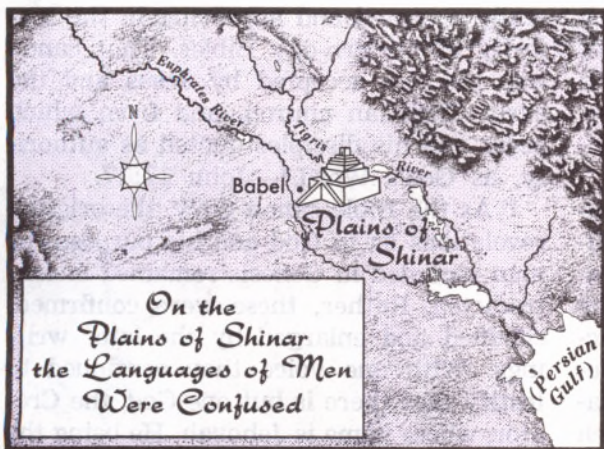
¹⁵ Likewise, modern geological investi-

12. What kind of start did the Bible canon have, and what testimony stamps this beginning as true and reliable?

13. (a) What is the Pentateuch? (b) How were these writings viewed by the nation of Israel?

* *The Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Scripture Records*, page 287.

14, 15. What other evidences can be presented to support the authenticity of the Pentateuch?



gation has given convincing support to the Bible account of the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose existence had long been questioned by critics of the Bible. (See the book *"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial,"* pages 331, 332.) It can therefore be stated about the Pentateuch, as it can be stated for the rest of the inspired Scriptures: "Whenever there is sufficient documentary evidence to make an investigation, the statements of the Bible in the original text have stood the test. . . . The chronological and geographical statements are more accurate and reliable than those afforded by any other ancient documents; the biographical and other historical narratives harmonize marvellously with the evidence afforded by extra-Biblical documents." So wrote Professor R. D. Wilson in his book *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, page 213.

¹⁶ But the Pentateuch is more than an accurate history of bygone events. While historical, geographical and geological accuracy strongly support the claim that Moses wrote under divine inspiration, there would have to be more evidence than that to put the question beyond all doubting.

16. (a) What proves that the Pentateuch is more than just accurate history? (b) To what, therefore, does it undeniably belong, as testified by whom?

And that evidence there is, in abundance. For example, mere humans could not have devised the wise and just laws recorded by Moses. The instructions regarding diet, diseases, treatment of dead bodies, quarantining of the sick, and so forth, found in the book of Leviticus, were of the highest practical value and anticipated literally thousands of years in advance the application of present medical knowledge. While not normally considered as prophetic books, those of the Pentateuch nevertheless contain prophecies that had accurate

fulfillments, as recorded history has shown.* But the highest authority for the authenticity of Moses' writings is the Bible itself. They so evidently belong to the one book of the one author Jehovah, because they are in complete harmony with it. Jesus, when on earth, clearly recognized this, for it is recorded about him: "And commencing at Moses and all the Prophets he interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures." (Luke 24:27) Time and again Jesus and the inspired Christian Bible writers quote from the writings of Moses as being of inspired origin.†

¹⁷ Thus with the writings of Moses so evidently compiled under inspiration of God a firm basis was established for the other inspired writings to follow. These would have to follow logically as to contents, both historically and in connection with doctrine, being in harmony with the fundamental principles of true worship established in the Pentateuch. And a close examination of the Bible books reveals this to be so. Not only does each successive book contain within itself (like the Pen-

* *"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial,"* pages 18, 26, 343 and 345.
† *Ibid.*, pages 346 and 347.

17. (a) What, then, was provided by the Pentateuch? (b) What evidences of canonicity does each succeeding book provide?

tateuch) evidences of inspiration, but each book gives evidence of being a product of the same divine authorship, its unity and harmony with what has gone before proving it belongs together in the one collection of divinely inspired writings.

¹⁸ While there were other writings contemporary with those included in the Bible canon, not all bore evidence of inspiration nor did they claim to be such for the most part, even though containing accounts historically true. Without doubt, Jehovah God, by his spirit, guided the collation of the inspired writings. Just as each individual book would give evidence of his inspiration, and hence his authorship, so the collection as a whole must give evidence of his inspired guidance and direction. And that it does. There would have to be nothing in any of the individual writings that would conflict with the internal harmony of the whole. In this respect the Bible as a collection of books by different writers stands unique, there is truly nothing else like it in existence. No other book can successfully maintain the claim to being the progressive revelation of God's will and purposes and of his dealings with mankind.

¹⁹ It was without doubt with these considerations in mind and under the direction of God's guiding invisible force that the scribe Ezra and those of the Great Synagogue after him drew up the catalogue of canonical books of the Hebrew Scriptures. It seems probable that, as the traditional Jewish view maintains, the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was fixed by the end of the fifth century B.C.E. This canon did not include apocryphal writings included in some Bible editions, but listed just the thirty-nine books gen-

erally accepted and appearing in the majority of modern-day Bibles. That canon was the one accepted by Jesus and the early Christian church, and from which Jesus and his disciples quoted as authority, as God's Word.*—John 17:17.

²⁰ As the Bible canon grew, the original revelations as to God and his purpose for man recorded in Genesis remained uncontradicted. Rather, these were confirmed, clarified and enlarged by the later writings. With one voice they continued to testify that there is but one God, the Creator, whose name is Jehovah. He being the God who cannot lie, his standards of true justice, first expressed in his judgment on Adam and Eve, are upheld. But the developing revelation reveals him as a God of undeserved kindness to others unfortunately born to imperfect human parents. Moreover, the prophetic utterances in the first book of the Bible prove to be basic foundation stones on which later revelations of the Divine will are firmly constructed. Thus the promise of the Seed at Genesis 3:15 commences a wonderful series of prophetic revelations that is strung throughout the Bible like a string of precious stones. At the same time it, along with other stirring Bible themes, draws the individual books of the Bible together as testimony to their one common authorship.

²¹ As each book is written, God's thrilling purpose unfolds—not as a series of disjointed episodes or unrelated prophetic pictures, but, like a masterful tapestry, the Bible reveals the purposes of God as a composite picture, all its parts being related to one another, each incident or event of Bible history having some part to

* "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," pages 299 and 300.

18. Besides inspiring the writing of the individual books of the Bible, what other operation of holy spirit was required in producing the Bible canon?

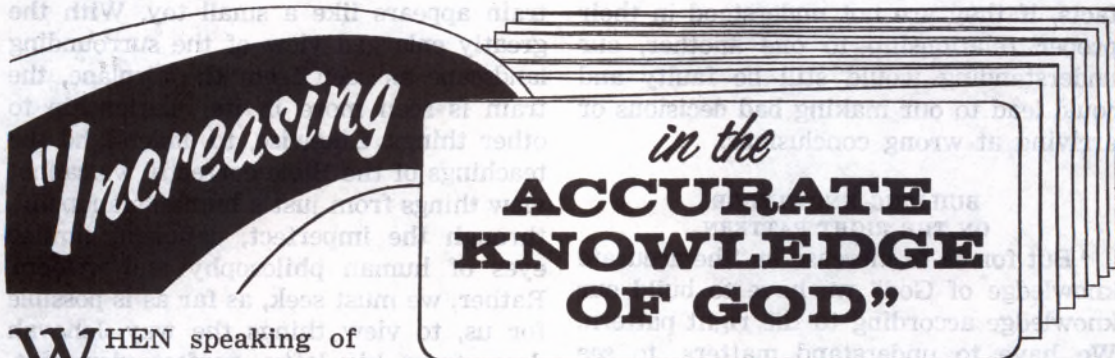
19. (a) What considerations would guide Ezra and the Great Synagogue in establishing the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures? (b) By when, probably, was this canon finished, and of what did it consist?

20. In what ways did the growing Bible canon manifest internal harmony and testify to its one authorship?

21. (a) Rather than as a series of disjointed events and unrelated pictures, how should we view the Bible? (b) To what does it lead man?

play in the understanding of the whole. Each thought, doctrine, event, revelation or prophecy fits into the picture in its proper place, never clashing or contradicting, but contributing to our comprehen-

sion of the one grand purpose of Jehovah God. Above all, this wonderful book, the Bible, helps us to come to know God, and that knowledge means our life.—John 17:3.



WHEN speaking of "the last days" when "critical times hard to deal with" would be here, the apostle Paul wrote of those who are "always learning and yet never able to come to an accurate knowledge of truth." Such learning is indeed futile, for it fails to be of any real benefit. That is why in his letter to the Colossians the same apostle prayed that his fellow Christians might "go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God."—2 Tim. 3:1, 7; Col. 1:10.

² How is it that some are "always learning and yet never able to come to an accurate knowledge of truth"? Of course, as the context of these words shows, persons who are not true lovers of God and who do not put him first in their lives could not come to an accurate knowledge of the truth. Their indulgence in sin and pandering to wrong desire prevent the needed flow of God's spirit, which is an essential to such understanding. (1 Cor. 2:10-14) But the manner in which we accumulate knowledge also determines the

extent of our understanding and comprehension.

³ For example, a man may consider building himself a house. He might collect all the needed materials and deposit them at the building site—piling up bricks, bags of cement, window and door frames, roofing tiles, and so forth. But, unless he starts putting all the materials together according to a definite plan or design, they will remain just a heap of unrelated items serving no useful purpose. And that is exactly how some people appear to accumulate knowledge, or at least items of information, including religious or Bible information, piling them up in their minds as an unrelated miscellany of ideas. It is only when the actual construction work begins on the building site that it is possible to determine whether the materials meet the required specifications and will fit properly into their place in the structure. Likewise with building up accurate knowledge in the mind. It is only when

1, 2. (a) What condition as to learning did Paul foretell for "the last days," and why so? (b) What other factor affects our growth in accurate knowledge?

3. How can we test the accuracy of our knowledge, and how might this be illustrated?

we relate what we know, putting our knowledge together in a composite pattern, that we can discern whether our knowledge is accurate, harmonious and understandable, or whether it consists of inaccuracies, contradictions and possibly even falsehoods. Even if we have the right facts, if they are not understood in their proper relationship to one another, our understanding would still be faulty and could lead to our making bad decisions or arriving at wrong conclusions.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE ON THE RIGHT PATTERN

⁴ But for us to increase in "the accurate knowledge of God" we have to build our knowledge according to the right pattern. We have to understand matters, to see things in their right relationship, according to the principles of truth established by the author of the Bible, Jehovah. As we study the Bible, we have to put our minds to work building a pattern of truth in our minds. Everything that Jehovah God has revealed through his Word is part of his one grand purpose. So each new thing we learn we need to see in its right place, in its right relationship to other things in God's Word. Only by discerning the setting of each incident, idea, prophecy or point of instruction or counsel, against the background of God's purpose as a whole can we have the fullest understanding of matters. Indeed, as our understanding of God's Word and purposes as a whole grows, this increases our accurate knowledge of each individual fact or idea in the Scriptures.

⁵ As we look at material things with the literal eye, we see that they have dimensions—height, depth, length and breadth. Each object in the scene before us is re-

lated to the scene as a whole. Then the position from which we view an object can affect the way it appears to be. To a man on the ground, a railway train passing a few yards away is a large, impressive piece of machinery. But, seen from an airplane flying high in the sky, the same train appears like a small toy. With the greatly enlarged view of the surrounding landscape as seen from the airplane, the train is seen more in its relationship to other things. Likewise, to understand the teachings of the Bible correctly we cannot view things from just a human standpoint, through the imperfect, deficient, limited eyes of human philosophy and wisdom. Rather, we must seek, as far as is possible for us, to view things the way Jehovah does, from his lofty, perfect viewpoint, thus seeing things as they really are, accurately. In this way we "may be thoroughly able to grasp mentally with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth" of spiritual things, and thus "be filled with all the fullness that God gives."—Eph. 3:18, 19.

⁶ When studying a portion of the Bible, here are some things to keep in mind, factors that will help you to increase your knowledge accurately, to discern the spiritual "dimensions" of things. Consider (1) the relationship of one Bible doctrine to other teachings of the Scriptures, (2) the immediate context and its bearing on the particular texts being considered, (3) the circumstances under which the original writings were penned, (4) the location of events in the stream of time and (5) how the material being considered fits into the larger picture of God's purpose, illuminating the basic themes of the Bible.

⁷ Failure to relate one doctrine to others results in confused thinking and the ac-

4. How can we be sure that we are building our knowledge according to the right pattern of truth?
5. What viewpoint must we endeavor to have in order to understand things accurately?

6. What factors will help us to increase knowledge accurately?

7. Failure to see the relationship between one teaching and others can lead to what? Illustrate.

cepting of error without recognizing it as such. We find such confused thinking in Christendom. For instance, many religious persons acknowledge the Bible teachings that "the wages sin pays is death," that Jesus died and "gave himself a corresponding ransom for all" and that there is to be a "resurrection of the dead." (Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Cor. 15:42) But at the same time they profess belief in the immortality of the soul. Not only is this idea out of harmony with what the Bible teaches about the human soul—that man is a soul, that the soul dies and that the dead know nothing (Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 18:4; Eccl. 9:5-10)—but the teaching that the human soul is immortal is in direct conflict with the Bible teachings mentioned above. If the soul were immortal and death were but a doorway to some other life, then death would be no penalty for sin. And for what purpose did Jesus die? From what does he ransom men, if not from sin and death? If man's soul were immortal and he did not cease living at death, we would really have no need for Jesus' sacrifice, would we? And what need would there be for a resurrection, if there were no dead to resurrect?

* On the other hand, the Bible teaching on the subject is logical and consistent. Man was created as a living soul. He sinned and was sentenced to death, to lose his life on earth, the only life he had. Unable to pass on life now to his offspring, he could only pass on to them sin and death, and, without the provision of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, death would have been the complete end for all of us. Now, on the basis of Jesus' sacrificial death, God can justly deliver man to everlasting life, and for the dead this can only be by a resurrection. How simple and logical! Accurate knowledge of this right pat-

tern of Bible teaching causes false doctrines like that of the immortality of the soul to be rejected from the mind.

CONSIDERING THE CONTEXT

⁹ To get the full force of any Bible expression it is necessary to see it against the immediate context and with the circumstances surrounding the original writing in mind. For example, consider 1 Corinthians 3:17: "If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you people are." At first sight one might conclude that this applies to those of this evil world who seek to break up the Christian congregation and its activity by persecution. It is true that such would be an attack upon God's templelike arrangement, against the congregation, and this would most certainly bring God's adverse judgment of destruction upon such evil-intentioned persons. But the context shows that Paul was talking about those *inside* the congregation who, by following men and setting up cliques, were causing divisions and so threatening to destroy the unity of the congregation. (1 Cor. 3:3, 4) And Paul was not just writing a detached essay on Christian unity. When we consider the larger context, the circumstances and background to the writing of the letter, we get the full force of Paul's argument and catch the feeling of urgency and concern that so obviously prompted him to write.

¹⁰ Paul had been instrumental in establishing the Christian congregation at Corinth when he visited that city about the year 50 C.E. and stayed there for some eighteen months. (Acts 18:1-11) He felt a very close relationship to the brothers

9. (a) What is necessary in order to get the full force of any Bible expression? (b) How can we apply this to 1 Corinthians 3:17?

10. How do the circumstances surrounding Paul's writing of the letter to the Corinthians help to enlarge our understanding?

8. What does accurate knowledge of Bible doctrine enable us to do?

there. (1 Cor. 4:14, 15) Now, some five years after he first went to Corinth, distressing news had reached Paul that there was grave dissension among the brothers. While the latter part of the letter (from chapter 7 on) indicates he had been considering writing on other matters, it was this news of dissension that spurred Paul to write while he was at Ephesus. He was naturally disturbed. He loved those brothers to whom he had first preached the good news. He had to do something to prevent that work from being undone, from seeing many of those loved brothers of his hurt and perhaps stumbled. So, after a brief but warm greeting and words of commendation, he quickly gets to the point: "The disclosure was made to me about you, my brothers, . . . that dissensions exist among you." (1 Cor. 1:11) They are following men, not Christ. They are reasoning on things in a fleshly way, not in harmony with God's principles. Working this way not only would prove to be unprofitable but would actually be working against the interests of the congregation. Those taking the lead in this

would be acting destructively toward the temple of God, which temple they, the congregation, were.

¹¹ So Paul reasons things out with the congregation in his letter, helping them to get things in the right perspective and not out of proportion. "What, then, is Apollos? Yes, what is Paul? Ministers through whom you became believers, even as the Lord granted each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it

grow; so that neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters, but God who makes it grow. Hence let no one be boasting in men." (1 Cor. 3:5-7, 21) So it is that, if we do not increase in the accurate knowledge of God and maintain proper discernment, we can find ourselves viewing things incorrectly, with possible disastrous consequences.

FIXING EVENTS IN TIME

¹² It is also most helpful to our understanding of the Word of God to be able to place Bible events accurately in the stream of time, and especially in relation to other events in the Bible. One event will often explain the cause of another, and conditions prevailing at a certain time are due, at least in part, to preceding happenings.

¹³ To fix an event in our minds as to its place in the stream of time it is good to try to tie it to some outstanding event that we can readily place. Perhaps you are reading about Hezekiah, one of the kings of Judah. For some of our readers his place in time may readily come to mind, but

for others this may be difficult. Well, let us see if we can tie him in with some outstanding events that we can readily place in time. Since he was king in Jerusalem, this means he ruled sometime before 607 B.C.E. when the independent kingdom of Judah came to an end, being overthrown by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. An event that readily comes

ASSOCIATING EVENTS OF HISTORY

B.C.E.

- 745—Hezekiah begins to rule
(Isaiah and Micah already serving as prophets)
- 740—Northern kingdom (Samaria) falls to Assyria
- 732—Assyrians under Sennacherib invade Judah
- 716—Hezekiah's rule ends
- 607—Kingdom of Judah (Jerusalem) overthrown

12. Why is being able to place events in relationship as to time helpful in understanding?

13, 14. (a) How might we fix in mind the time of Hezekiah's reign? (b) What other Bible personalities does this help us to place in the stream of time?

11. So what does Paul help the brothers at Corinth to do?

to mind in Hezekiah's reign is that of the attack on Judah by the Assyrians under Sennacherib, described in 2 Kings, chapter 18. It was during this invasion that the famous incident occurred in which Jehovah's angel destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. How did the Assyrians come to invade as far as Judah and threaten Jerusalem? Well, the preceding chapter, 17, of 2 Kings tells of the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, and we know that this occurred in 740 B.C.E. So Hezekiah must have been ruling for some time shortly after that event. In actual fact Hezekiah reigned from 745 to 716 B.C.E., but even though we might not remember these dates, having in mind the relationship of the above-mentioned events places him approximately for us in time. For actual details we can always check a reliable reference book such as *"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial."*—See pages 292-296 of that book.

¹⁴ Incidentally, if we recall that Isaiah was the prophet who was used by Jehovah to answer the taunts of the Assyrians, we readily place him in time also. (2 Ki. 19: 20-34) In fact, this was apparently right at the end of his long life as a prophet. Also, having this background fixed in mind, our thoughts focus better on the setting of Micah's prophesying as we read in the opening words of his book: "The word of Jehovah that occurred to Micah of Moresheth, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah." And so it logically occurs to us that Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hezekiah, around the time of the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel in 740 B.C.E.

¹⁵ Reading the Bible in this way, that is, relating ideas and events to one another, is how to increase *accurate* knowledge. It becomes increasingly enjoyable, because it is understandable. Indeed, it be-

comes an exciting adventure as we piece our growing wealth of information together according to the pattern of truth, and we grow in our comprehension of the marvelous and expansive revelation of God's grand purpose. Only by such meditation and reasoning can we come to appreciate the oneness and unity of the inspired Word of God.

THE "KINGDOM SEED" THEME IN THE BIBLE

¹⁶ Most important to our understanding this latter point is our clearly identifying and understanding the great themes that tie the Bible together. Foremost of these is the theme of the vindication of Jehovah's name by means of the Kingdom Seed. So many things in the Bible relate directly or indirectly to this theme that failure to appreciate it fully prevents one from grasping the significance of many of the prophecies and events recorded in the Bible. The theme of the Kingdom Seed is introduced very early in the Divine Record in cryptic phrase. (Gen. 3:15) To Abraham, God later revealed that the Seed would be born as a human on earth as a descendant of his, and to David it was stated that from his descendants would come the one with whom a permanent kingdom would be established. Many prophecies occur in the Hebrew Scriptures relative to this one who would be the "son of man," and to whom, as the one "who has the legal right," the Kingdom would be given. (Gen. 22:15-18; 2 Sam. 7:12, 13; Dan. 7:13, 14; Ezek. 21:25-27) The Christian Greek Scriptures identify Christ Jesus as the Seed of Abraham, and disclose that there would be others from among mankind to be counted in with Christ as associates of the Seed, to share with him in the final victory over "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan," in

16. (a) What is most important to our increase in accurate knowledge? (b) Describe briefly the development of the Bible theme of the Kingdom Seed.

15. To what does such kind of Bible study lead?

fulfillment of Genesis 3:15.—Gal. 3:16, 29; Rev. 12:7-12; Rom. 16:20.

¹⁷ Having this overall theme in mind heightens our appreciation of many Bible events. The Flood, while a timely execution of a wicked civilization, is also seen as a prophetic warning of how the promised Seed, the one called "the Son of man," would act toward the wicked at the complete end of this present system of things. The attack of the Assyrians on the land of Judah, discussed earlier, was really an attack on the house of David to try to thwart the fulfillment of God's promise to him of the coming Kingdom of the Seed, and the result well illustrates again what is to come on present-day opposers of God's kingdom.—Matt. 24:37-39; 2 Ki. 19:34-37.

¹⁸ Because of his understanding of the progressive revelation of this theme, Paul was able to write of "the comprehension I have in the sacred secret of the Christ. In other generations this secret was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by spirit, namely, that people of the nations should be joint heirs and fellow members of the body and partakers with us of the promise in union with Christ Jesus through the good news." Then he goes on to speak of God's helping men to understand "how the sacred secret is administered which has from the indefinite past [from the time of the first prophecy about the Seed at Genesis 3:15] been hidden in God . . . that . . . there might be made known through the congregation the greatly diversified wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose that he formed in connection with the Christ."—Eph. 3:4-6, 9-11.

17. Having this theme in mind plays what part in our study of Bible events?

18. What did Paul write about this Bible theme about the Seed in his letter to the Ephesians?

¹⁹ While it was yet a sacred secret the Hebrew Bible writers spoke on this theme, and, though not having the understanding of it at the time, what they wrote was wholly harmonious and consistent, so that when the time came for the understanding of this secret by the Christian congregation nothing of all the many statements and prophecies was found to be contradictory. This consistency in the progressive revelation of the theme of the Seed, running as it does throughout the Bible, is one of the most powerful proofs that the Bible is indeed the product of but one author, Jehovah God, and is a book truly inspired by the Creator of all things.

²⁰ To understand the Bible fully we need to keep in mind that, above all, it was written under inspiration so that we might come to know God, to understand his will and purpose, so that we might worship him. It is by going to his Word the Bible that we heed the command: "Search after Jehovah and his strength, seek his face constantly." So doing, we are able to "remember his wonderful acts that he has performed, his miracles and the judicial decisions of his mouth." We are able to appreciate his "dignity and splendor" and "the glory of his name," and from the heart we can respond to the exhortation: "Give thanks to Jehovah, you people, for he is good, for to time indefinite is his loving-kindness. And say, 'Save us, O God of our salvation, and collect us together and deliver us from the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, to speak exultingly in your praise.'"—1 Chron. 16:11, 12, 27, 29, 34, 35.

²¹ How true is the inspired proverb: "Men given to badness cannot understand

19. How are the expressions about the Kingdom Seed found in the Hebrew Scriptures a powerful proof of Jehovah's authorship of the Bible?

20. (a) What must we have in mind if we are to increase in understanding of the Bible? (b) How does Bible knowledge enable us to worship and praise God?

21. How, then, should we approach a study of the Bible?

judgment, but those who are seeking Jehovah can understand everything." (Prov. 28:5) So, by all means seek Jehovah with the desire to worship him with spirit and truth, approaching the Bible with wholesome respect in appreciation of the fact that it contains the expressions of Jeho-

vah's mouth so necessary for your life. Do so with confidence in Jehovah's promise that your learning from his Word will not be in vain but will lead to an understanding of the truth and to "increasing in the accurate knowledge of God."—Col. 1:10.

The Most Widely Published SONG

TO RECEIVE the widest publication, a song must have appeal. Its words must bring some kind of gladness or comfort or stir strong emotions. Songs sometimes help people to forget, momentarily, their everyday troubles. But most songs do not enjoy long-lived popularity. Like clothing styles, they become outdated, both the words and the music.

However, a few songs have lasting appeal, among these being anthems. National anthems are high on the list and have usually lasted as long as the nations themselves. Generally they have both a religious and a political flavor. The music is vigorous and the words cause emotions to well up in the singer so that in mass singing a tremendous wave of fervor seizes and sways the singing crowd.

Of all the songs ever sung, romantic, national, religious or otherwise, there is one that eclipses them all. Its words have universal appeal and are fraught with the deepest meaning. It appeals to both the reason and the emotions and brings more than transitory relief from troubles, yes,

it brings real, lasting comfort and gladness. The music is the music of the heavens—the stars and the spheres—and the song is appropriately sung now and will be appropriate and appealing in all the future, since its theme is as everlasting as the eternal heavenly bodies. The song is a sort of anthem, for it tells of the government of a heavenly source that will bring peace, righteousness, life and worldwide unity to this earth. Already it has received the widest publication of any song, being sung daily in more than 197 lands of the earth, moving more than a million persons to harmonious response and being heard by uncounted millions more.

This song was heard first in a visionary way by the apostle John, who had been exiled for his zealous preaching activity to the Roman penal island of Patmos, off the coast of Asia Minor. Toward the close of the first century C.E. he had one of the most striking visions ever opened to the view of man. He describes the awe-inspiring chorus:

"And I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound out of heaven as the sound of many waters and as the sound of loud thunder; and the sound that I heard was as of singers who accompany themselves on the harp playing on their harps. And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the older persons; and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth. These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones that keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. These were bought from among mankind as a first fruits to God and to the Lamb, and no falsehood was found in their mouths; they are without blemish."—Rev. 14:1-5.

The angel who brought this vision to the apostle John explained that it was given by Jehovah God to his Son Jesus Christ, who sent it "to show [God's] slaves the things that must shortly take place." (Rev. 1:1) Now, 1,870 years later, with all the events as recorded in history as a backdrop, we can examine the vision to identify the singers and see just what makes the song appealing to so wide an audience.

WHEN AND WHERE THE LAMB "STANDS"

"And I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion." Immediately we are compelled to look back to the city of Jerusalem in Palestine. Who is the symbolic Lamb? He is none other than the resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ. He is identified at Revelation 5:5 as "the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David." When Jesus was on earth he was of the line of David and therefore had the legal right to the throne. Mount Zion was where the citadel of Jerusalem was situated when David was king of Israel. In the vision, however, Jesus does not come

to be sacrificed as the Lamb. Nineteen centuries ago he was resurrected from death to life "in the spirit" and was laid in heavenly Zion as a 'sure foundation,' as the symbolic Tried, Precious Cornerstone. (1 Pet. 3:18; 2:6) He is seen *standing* upon the Mount Zion. This means that he has begun to rule, the term being used in the Bible to mean that a king has taken power to reign. (Dan. 12:1) David, in the second Psalm, speaks about the opposition of nations to the rule of God's "anointed one" (Jesus Christ), and then portrays Jehovah in anger, saying: "I, even I, have installed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain."—Ps. 2:2-6; Acts 4:19-30.

How would this help us to understand the time of fulfillment of John's vision? Well, it was the kingdom of the line of David that was overturned in 607 B.C.E. God said there would be a period of seven times in which the nations would exercise rule, during which period Jerusalem would be trampled on by the Gentile nations. Jerusalem, being the location of "Jehovah's throne," upon which David sat, came to be a symbol of Jehovah's kingdom rulership in "the kingdom of the heavens." (Matt. 4:17) When the times of the Gentiles ended, which time came in 1914 C.E., literal Jerusalem on earth was not liberated, but what ancient Jerusalem symbolized was restored to the one "who has the legal right," namely, Jesus the Son of David, in the heavens.—Ezek. 21:27.

Something in modern times paralleling events of 1,900 years ago gives us additional help in locating the fulfillment of John's vision in the stream of time. On the Pentecost of 33 C.E., which was about three years eight months after being anointed with holy spirit, Jesus Christ began, in turn, to anoint with holy spirit men who were to be joint heirs with him, footstep followers of his who would, like

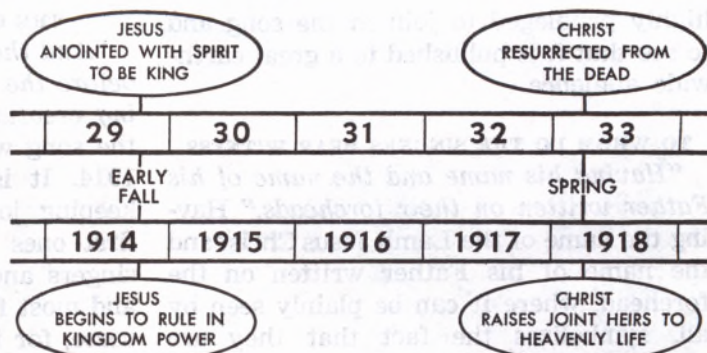
him, maintain a course of integrity down to a sacrificial death, with prospects of reigning with him in the heavens.

According to the time parallel, then, three and a half years from the early autumn of 1914, at which time the Gentile Times ended, would bring us to the spring of 1918, shortly after the day of the Jewish Passover. At that time the faithful followers on earth celebrated, not the Passover, but the anniversary of the Lord's Evening Meal, just as Jesus had instituted it back there at his last pass-over day. The same book that contains the vision of the singers helps us to see what was due to happen then, because this book says that after the installation of the king in power on heavenly Zion the time would arrive for the faithful footstep followers of Jesus to receive their reward. We read:

"The seventh angel blew his trumpet. And loud voices occurred in heaven, saying: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever.' And the twenty-four older persons who were seated before God upon their thrones fell upon their faces and worshiped God, saying: 'We thank you, Jehovah God, the Almighty, the one who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and begun ruling as king. But the nations became wrathful, and your own wrath came, and the appointed time for the dead to be judged, and to give their reward to your slaves the prophets and to the holy ones and to those fearing your name, the small and the great, and to bring to ruin those ruining the earth.'"—Rev. 11:15-18.

A CHORUS OF UNEQUALED SIZE

"And with him a hundred and forty-four thousand." This is the number of the associates with Christ in his heavenly rulership, once stated as a number as unknown



to man as the stars of heaven and the sands of the seashore, but here revealed. That it is a literal number is shown in Revelation chapter 7, where, after giving the definite number of 144,000, at verse 9 it speaks of another group, a "great crowd" whom no man was able to number. The number 144,000 could not be symbolic, for, if so, it would mean nothing. It might as well have no number at all, for there would be no contrast between it and the later-mentioned "great crowd," which is numberless.

How would the Christian "prophets" and "holy ones" who had died be rewarded and stand with him on the heavenly Mount Zion? By being resurrected just as he was, not in a fleshly body, for in flesh they could not stand with him in heaven in the presence of Jehovah God. The apostle Paul explains this fact to us in 1 Corinthians 15:35-50, where he tells us that "flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom," but that these dead ones, having gone down in death in a corruptible, physical body of weakness, would be raised up with a spiritual body, incorrupt, bearing the image of the heavenly One. Their resurrection, therefore, would be in a spiritual body and be invisible to human eyes. While the great majority of the 144,000 have lived and died, yet at present there remains a "remnant," who, while completing their faithful course on earth, are

highly privileged to join in the song and to see that it is published to a great earth-wide audience.

TO WHOM DO THE SINGERS BEAR WITNESS

"Having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads." Having the name of the Lamb Jesus Christ and the name of his Father written on the forehead, where it can be plainly seen by all, symbolizes the fact that they are slaves of Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. They do not have the name of Babylon on their foreheads as if they were slaves of Babylon and belonged to her. What the apostle John saw in the foreheads of the 144,000 was no doubt the sacred Hebrew tetragrammaton (יהוה), for the name of the Father (YHWH), or in Anglicized pronunciation, Jehovah. The 144,000 therefore must be Jehovah's witnesses during their earthly course and now continue to be his witnesses in heaven.

"And I heard a sound out of heaven as the sound of many waters and as the sound of loud thunder; and the sound that I heard was as of singers who accompany themselves on the harp playing on their harps." What a chorus! A hundred and forty-four thousand singers, not with earthly voices, but with heavenly voices, singing in perfect harmony, accompanied by the pure music of the harp. The extent to which the song would be heard is indicated by the fact that to John it had the mighty sound of many waters and the sound of loud thunders. Never in the history of the universe has there been such a song nor such an audience, millions of angels in heaven listening and the entire earth to hear its joyful, encouraging strains. We shall see how the singers accomplish this, by Jehovah's direction and power.

THE GRAND THEME OF THE SONG

"And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the older persons." So the song was not known and sung before 1914. It is new. The 144,000 integrity-keeping joint heirs with Christ are the first ones to vocalize it. Because of its singers and its content it is the greatest and most far-reaching anthem of the universe, for it is about the kingdom of God as the government that has been established since 1914. It has the loftiest theme, the greatest truth taught in the Bible: it is about Jesus Christ reigning in Kingdom power. Jesus Christ the King in Jehovah's kingdom is the great Truth in fulfillment of all the prophetic utterances of the Bible, and he is the one who himself gave a fine testimony before Pontius Pilate that he came to earth to bear witness to this great truth. It concerns first the most important One of the Kingdom organization, for the song itself contains words addressed to the Lamb of God: "You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slaughtered and with your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will rule as kings over the earth." (Rev. 5:9, 10) The 144,000 singers will have the abounding joy of reigning with Christ and sharing in his rule over the earth, bringing the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, which provided that all families of the earth were to bless themselves by means of the Seed, Jesus Christ. To these singers the commands of Psalms 96:1, 10; 98:1, 5; and 149:1, 2 would apply:

"Sing to Jehovah a new song. Sing to Jehovah, all you people of the earth. Say among the nations: 'Jehovah himself has become king. The productive land also becomes firmly established so that it cannot

be made to totter. He will plead the cause of the peoples in uprightness." "Sing to Jehovah a new song, for wonderful are the things that he has done. His right hand, even his holy arm, has gained salvation for him. Make melody to Jehovah with the harp, with the harp and the voice of melody." "Praise Jah, you people! Sing to Jehovah a new song, his praise in the congregation of loyal ones. Let Israel rejoice in its grand Maker, the sons of Zion—let them be joyful in their King."

"And no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth." No one else can master the song because these ones sing the song of their own personal experience, that no other creature but the Lamb and they themselves have had. Others can certainly hear the song and learn from these who have mastered the words of it. But to these is given the privilege of applying the song to themselves as those who will reign over the earth. Because they have been bought from the earth, they undergo, when resurrected to heaven, a change in nature, and are no longer a part of mankind. They are no longer human creatures of flesh and blood.

"These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins." Since these are to reign with Christ, also to be priests with him, and be his bride, the rule must be followed that was laid upon the high priest in Israel, namely, that he was allowed to take only a virgin for a wife. Therefore, the high priest of Jehovah, Jesus Christ, must have only a virgin for a heavenly bride. (2 Cor. 11:2) That is why the 144,000 must not defile themselves with women, but must keep their virginity. They do not commit spiritual harlotry or adultery through a

religious union or marriage with woman-like religious organizations of this world. This explains for us the fight that Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, has fought against these faithful footstep followers of Christ Jesus. For nineteen centuries, at the instigation of the Devil, she has used every means in an effort to cause them to become unclean prostitutes and therefore rejected by the heavenly Bridegroom. Ancient Babylon made a very accurate pattern of what her antitype, Babylon the Great, has done, namely, that virgins of ancient Babylon,

before they could legally marry, had to go to the temple of Venus (Ishtar) and prostitute themselves to her by yielding themselves to a paid-for violation of their

virginity by the highest bidder. These 144,000 footstep followers of Jesus have, like their Master, suffered the cruelest persecution, torture and death to maintain their virginity. Now they are rewarded. Certainly they have a reason to sing this song in fortissimo and with tones of greatest happiness.

"These are the ones that keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes." On earth they dedicated themselves to Jehovah God and were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the holy spirit, and they have followed the Son, turning down any opportunities for honor and acclaim and for political rulership. They have resisted all efforts of Babylon the Great to draw them into a compromise of interfaith or of meddling in the affairs of the nations of this world. Because of Jesus' great love for the members of his bride class and according to his promise to those who would be faithful to him to the end, he has returned to take them to

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Completing the Work of Making Disciples.
- Finding Happiness in Making Disciples.
- Proving Yourself a Loyal Subject of Christ the King.

himself. Now they are able to follow him into the heavens as he administers his Kingdom rule, even when he goes up against Babylon the Great and finally removes the political organizations and Satan himself to make way for the blessing of all families of the earth.—John 14:3; Rev. 2:10.

THE SONG TO BE YET MORE WIDELY HEARD

"These were bought from among mankind as a first fruits to God and to the Lamb, and no falsehood was found in their mouths; they are without blemish." They are like the firstfruits that the Jewish high priest took from the wheat harvest and offered to Jehovah God on the day of Pentecost at the temple in Jerusalem. Since they are like the firstfruits, all the rest of the wheat harvest must picture the rest of men of flesh and blood. The "first fruits" are taken from among men and women, but they are, as a body, spoken of as engaged to marry the heavenly bridegroom and be his bride.—Lev. 23:15-20; 2 Cor. 11:2.

They do not hold onto the false teachings of Babylon or propagate her lies and false religion. They have stuck to the truth of God's Word when on earth and qualify to sing the heavenly song. They are presented to their Bridegroom chaste and without blemish. (Eph. 1:4; 5:27) Therefore, we can rely on them as the members of the heavenly government that will rule the universe and bring order and sanity into the affairs of men so as always to hold on to righteousness. The kingdom of God and its new order will never fade

or deteriorate or relax its high principles in exercising its authority throughout the earth. The small and diminishing remnant of this 144,000 class are, for the present, gathered in a spiritual sense to the heavenly Mount Zion on which the Lamb stands, singing in harmony with the heavens and teaching and training the "great crowd" of earthly "other sheep" in every nation to call the attention of all people to the song and its meaning.—Heb. 12:22; Rev. 7:9; John 10:16.

Nevertheless, the song is not sung without opposition. Just as at Babylon's very inception she was the enemy of God's people and fought against earthly Zion, so Babylon the Great has not given up the fight. Though she has heretofore suffered complete defeat in trying to corrupt and cause blemishes in the 144,000 members of the bride, still she tries in every way to stop the song's publication. Encouragingly, in the book of Revelation, or Apocalypse, the long-drawn-out enmity of Babylon the Great is pictured as coming to an end in her everlasting destruction and the glorious triumph of the much-persecuted Zion. In succeeding articles we shall consider how the climax of this hostility is reached. Meanwhile, we shall give close attention to the universal song being sung and will do all we can to aid honest-hearted persons to learn its tremendous import and to feel the intellectual and emotional impact of this song so that they will be moved to respond with the earth-wide cry: "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb."—Rev. 7:10.



Grateful for Watch Tower Publications

AN ACCOMPLISHED musician appreciates the value of a fine musical instrument. A dutiful carpenter knows the worth of proper tools with which to work. And an earnest Bible student is grateful for the faith-building Watch Tower publications. They are of tremendous help in Bible study.

A letter voicing appreciation for their value was received from a Bible student in Oklahoma. It stated in part: "Although I'm not very good at expressing myself, I want you to know how much I enjoy *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* It seems like every time I want to know about something it appears in the next issue of these magazines. I also enjoy all your other Bible aids. I have been studying with Jehovah's witnesses for about four months and it's just wonderful having knowledge of the truth, although I still have a lot of studying and learning to do."

A BENEFICIAL EXPERIENCE

In a letter from Salem, Oregon, a mother expresses gratefulness for an experience she read in *The Watchtower*, saying: "I learned a lesson I should have known. The experience of the young mother reading from the Bible to her three boys caused me to realize that I should be doing the same with my children. My two youngsters are seven and ten, and I expected protest when I announced they would have to give up some TV time in the afternoon for Bible reading and was surprised when they protested very little."

"We have been reading regularly at four o'clock every afternoon now for two weeks. Yesterday I went to town and was about five minutes late getting home, so the children were there before me. I expected the TV to be on full blast. You can imagine how pleased I was to open the door and find them at the table with open Bibles. David, my ten-year-old, had said the prayer to start the reading. Difficult names don't discourage them from wanting to read Jehovah's Word. We are becoming better Christians because of it. May Jehovah's spirit be with you all always."

VALUE OF 'ALL SCRIPTURE INSPIRED' BOOK

A Kingdom publisher from Vancouver, Washington, writes regarding the value of the textbook "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*," saying: "The young man

agreed to let us show him what the Bible had to offer. We started with the chapter in the '*Inspired*' book, *Archaeology Supports the Inspired Record*. He was amazed that there is such a wealth of proof that the Bible is inspired and true. He had never heard such convincing arguments on the Bible's authenticity. When we got to the end of the chapter he was convinced that the Bible really had something to offer and was willing to get into a study of it. I can definitely say that the '*Inspired*' book was the instrument that Jehovah used to open his eyes to the fact that the Bible is inspired and true."

ARTICLES BRING JOY AND COMFORT

Another letter of appreciation, from Lakeview, Ohio, stated: "I feel that one of the ways in which I might express thanks and praise to Jehovah must include an expression of keen appreciation for the wonderful series of *Watchtower* articles treating the matter of resurrection. . . . I want you to know that these articles have added a deepened joy to my weekly privilege of conducting the local *Watchtower* study."

And from Florence, Italy, this expression was received: "I was studying and concentrating on *The Watchtower*—Italian—of the 15th of March (the one explaining the creation), when little by little I felt my eyes get wet with tears; my heart grew full of thankfulness. But I wish also to thank you directly for the pure joy that such a publication like this can give."

A grateful Bible student from California wrote upon reading one *Awake!* magazine: "The cares of this old world sometimes crowd in upon you and then one of the latest magazines comes in the mail. I am referring to the article in the May 8 *Awake!*, 'A Perfect World—Worth Working For?' It put into words what we as Jehovah's people feel in our hearts. Jehovah has blessed you to write such inspiring words to build us all up with the magnificent hope of God's new order. I just had to take time to let you know that we appreciate the fine magazines."

Persons who appreciate the clear ring of truth are grateful for publications that faithfully adhere to and magnify the teachings of God's Word. And this the Watch Tower publications do.

THE earliest Christians made every effort to stay free from pagan practices. "Certainly," you might say, "my church does too."

But does it?

You may be surprised to know how many religious celebrations come, not from true Christianity, but from pagan customs. In this regard, it is enlightening to note what Louis Réau, a member of the famed French Institute who occupied the chair of Middle-Age art at the Sorbonne, France's leading university, wrote a few years ago:

"Despite the theologians' aversion to admitting the pagan origin of Christian ceremonies, most of them recognize however that one must look to the agrarian and funeral rites of the [pagan] Romans to find the origin and explanation of numerous Christian celebrations."*

But why did Christendom put the pagan holidays on her calendar in the first place? "To keep from colliding with and diverting popular beliefs," Réau says, Christendom's leaders "maintained the date of the [pagan] religious feasts." He points out that the adoption of heathen holidays and the continuing of them under another name "considerably facilitated the rapid Christianization of the pagan world."*

Thoughtful persons, however, might wonder if it did not also lead to a paganizing of Christianity. Consider, for example, some of the common holidays on Christendom's calendar, comparing your own beliefs and customs with those of the early Christians.

DAYS FOR THE DEAD, EASTER, CHRISTMAS

Due to the widespread belief in the inherent immortality of the human soul, var-

* *Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien (Iconography of Christian Art)* (Paris; 1955), by Louis Réau, Vol. I, pp. 50-52.

PAGAN HOLIDAYS ON CHRISTENDOM'S CALENDAR

ious days for the dead were adopted by Christendom. Réau, for instance, says: "All Saints' Day, celebrated at the beginning of November, is the Christianization by the Church of a pagan festival of the Dead."*

What now of All Souls' Day, November 2, the purpose of which is, by prayers and almsgiving, to assist souls in purgatory? Again it is the adoption of a pagan practice. Says a standard reference work: "Essentially, All Souls [Day] is the adaptation of an almost worldwide custom of setting aside a part of the year (usually the last part) for the dead. The Babylonians observed a monthly Feast of All Souls in which sacrifices were made by priests."† Both the Greeks and Romans also celebrated feasts for the dead, based on Babylonish paganism.

And what about the period of fasting observed by members of the Anglican, Greek, and Roman Catholic Churches in preparation for Easter? A reference work on pagan worship tells us: "The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess."‡

It should not surprise us, then, that Easter also found its way onto Christendom's calendar, not by any command of Jesus Christ or his apostles, but through

† *Funk & Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (New York; 1949), Vol. 1, p. 38.

‡ *The Two Babylons* (London; 1957), by Alexander Hislop, p. 104.

pagan practices. Clergyman Alexander Hislop wrote:

"What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte . . . the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country [England]. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar. The worship of Bel and Astarte was very early introduced into Britain. . . . Such is the history of Easter. The popular observances that still attend the period of its celebration amply confirm the testimony of history as to its Babylonian character. The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pasch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean rites just as they do now."*

With Easter's having such pagan origin, you may rightly wonder about another of Christendom's major festivals—Christmas. By checking various standard reference works, you will find that it was unknown among the earliest Christians, but in the fifth century C.E. the Roman Catholic Church ordered a feast celebrated in memory of Jesus' birth on the day of the Mithraic rites of the birth of the sun and at the close of the Saturnalia, a Roman festival honoring the god Saturn. That pagan time of merrymaking, with exchanging of presents, furnished the model for many of the customs of Christmas.† Thus for a time after the Reformation, Protestants rejected both Christmas and Easter as pagan,‡ but gradually they began to join in the pagan revelry.

Reluctant though church leaders may be to admit the pagan origin of the many holi-

days on Christendom's calendar, the facts are that they originate in paganism, and the proof can be found in encyclopedias and other reference books in almost any public library. Christendom has not followed the example of the faithful Christians of the first two centuries C.E.

EARLY CHRISTIANS REJECTED PAGAN CELEBRATIONS

It is true that during the second through the fourth centuries C.E., especially after the time of Constantine, more and more professed Christians began to celebrate heathen festivals. But those Christians who adhered to the true faith as taught by Jesus Christ did not adopt any heathen holidays. A brief review of the facts shows that they did not.

They held no celebrations for the "souls" of the dead, because the early Christians did not teach the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the human soul; rather, they knew that the Bible makes clear that "the soul that is sinning—it itself will die." —Ezek. 18:4.

And having learned that Lent is of pagan origin, you will not be surprised that Cassianus, a monk of Marseilles, writing in the fifth century C.E., contrasted the first-century Christians with the church of his day, saying: "It ought to be known that the observance of the forty days had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive church remained inviolate."*

As to Easter: "There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the minds of the first Christians. . . . The ecclesiastical historian Socrates [not the Greek philosopher] states, with perfect truth, that neither the Lord nor his apostles enjoined the keeping of this or any other

* *The Two Babylons*, pp. 103, 107, 108.

† See, for example, *The Encyclopedia Americana* (New York; 1956), Vol. VI, p. 622.

‡ *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1959 edition, Vol. 11, p. 107.

* As quoted in *The Two Babylons*, p. 104.

festival. He says: "The apostles had no thought of appointing festival days, but of promoting a life of blamelessness and piety." . . . This is doubtless the true statement of the case."*

Moreover, the birth of Jesus was not celebrated by the early Christians, for Jesus Christ commanded his followers to commemorate his death, not his birth. (1 Cor. 11:24-26) Understandably, *The Encyclopedia Americana* tells us: "The celebration [of Christmas] was not observed in the first centuries of the Christian church."—Vol. VI, p. 622, 1956 edition.

So the many celebrations that were added to Christendom's calendar over the years were not what Jesus Christ or his apostles commanded but the product of Christian apostasy.

INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE WORD OF GOD

Upon what basis, then, did those early Christians reject pagan feasts? On the basis of the Word of God. Many first-century Christians had come out from under the Jewish or Mosaic law, with its feasts and celebrations. They were not about to replace that God-established arrangement, which had served its purpose and then was abolished by God through Jesus Christ, with debased pagan celebrations and festivals, based on the worship of false gods. And even to Hebrew Christians who held to the Jewish festivals, once required by God as a religious obligation, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote:

"You are scrupulously observing days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that somehow I have toiled to no purpose respecting you."—Gal. 4:10, 11.

* *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (New York; 1910), Vol. VIII, p. 828.

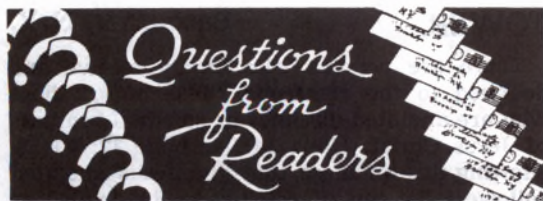
Certainly it is impossible to imagine the apostle Paul's giving Christian names to celebrations that honored pagan gods. Rather, Paul vigorously urged worshippers of Zeus and Hermes "to turn from these vain things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them."—Acts 14:12-15.

So the apostle Paul would not adopt any of those "vain things," such as pagan holidays, just to get more pagans to become Christians. No, but the Christians of the first century adhered to God's Word and the divine command:

"What sharing do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does God's temple have with idols? For we are a temple of a living God; just as God said: 'I shall reside among them . . . ' " "Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves," says Jehovah, "and quit touching the unclean thing,"; "and I will take you in." "—2 Cor. 6:14-17.

There is overwhelming evidence, then, as to the pagan origin of Christendom's holidays. There is, in addition, clear-cut evidence that the early Christians shunned such pagan practices, and that the Bible warns against Christians' taking up these customs. So, in honesty now, ask yourself: What stand do you take on these pagan celebrations? How does your church view them? Are you and your church like the early Christians? Even if your religious organization does not reject such practices, can *you*, knowing these things, fail to do so?





● Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has put "time indefinite" in the heart of mankind. What does this mean?—M. O., U.S.A.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 reads: "Everything he [Jehovah] has made pretty in its time. Even time indefinite he has put in their heart, that mankind may never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish." The Hebrew word rendered "time indefinite" here and elsewhere in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is 'olam'. It relates to time, carries the basic thought of "hidden" or "concealed," and has been defined as meaning "hidden time, i.e. obscure and long, of which the beginning or end is uncertain or indefinite." (*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, William Gesenius, 1836, page 746) Some translations of Ecclesiastes 3:11 say God has put "eternity" in the heart of mankind. (*Le, RS, AS*) The context shows that time is under consideration. (Eccl. 3:1-8, 17) Because of this and the basic meaning of 'olam', the terms "eternity" or "time indefinite" are most appropriately used in Ecclesiastes 3:11.

Jehovah has an appointed time for all things. (Dan. 2:21, 22; Acts 17:26, 31) He has also made everything pretty or well-arranged in its time. The orderliness and splendor of creation, such as the procession of the seasons, illustrates this. Of course, Ecclesiastes 3:11 does not mean that God literally puts a time mechanism in one's heart. It evidently refers to the way in which man's appreciation of various matters would be affected by the passing of time. This text helps us to realize that God can never be completely searched out by man. Jehovah's works are perfect, but even perfect man in God's promised new order will be unable to fathom the depths of God's wisdom. (Deut. 32:4; Isa. 40:28; 55:8, 9; Rom. 11:33-36) In the words of Ecclesiastes 3:11, mankind will "never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish." There will always be something to learn about Jehovah's works. Hence, man will never lose interest in learning about God or in searching out the marvels of his creation. Though the inhabitants of God's

new order will never fully "find out the work that the true God has made," they will, with each passing year, more and more learn about and appreciate the greatly diversified wisdom of God.

● What is the meaning of Matthew 10:41? Is there any difference in the rewards mentioned there?—R. D., U.S.A.

Jesus Christ stated, as recorded at Matthew 10:40-42: "He that receives you receives me also, and he that receives me receives him also that sent me forth. He that receives a prophet because he is a prophet will get a prophet's reward, and he that receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will get a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, I tell you truly, he will by no means lose his reward."

Jesus was sent by his Father, Jehovah God. Hence, a person who favorably received Christ's disciples would be receiving Christ and also God, who sent Christ. Surely that person would be blessed; he would not go unrewarded.

Similarly, an individual favorably receiving a prophet of God because he was a prophet would be rewarded. He would receive "a prophet's reward." How so? Well, consider the reward realized by the hospitable widow who gave Elijah food and water. For 'receiving a prophet,' she was greatly blessed. Her supply of flour and oil was miraculously multiplied by this prophet who acted under God's spirit. Why, even her son was miraculously restored to her after he had experienced an untimely death! (1 Kings, chapter 17) These miracles were wrought by Jehovah through his prophet Elijah. Evidently the widow received Elijah 'because he was a prophet.' Consequently, she received "a prophet's reward."

Not to be overlooked is the fact that Jesus Christ, who uttered the words recorded at Matthew 10:40-42, was the greatest of all the prophets. (Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 3:19-23) Those who received him because he was a prophet were spiritually blessed by what he said to them. Some of them also received miraculous cures and even resurrections. (Matt. 4:23; Luke 8:40-42, 49-56; John 11:38-44) Thereafter, as gifts to the Christian congregation, Jesus Christ gave "some as prophets." Among them was Agabus. Spiritual benefits were surely enjoyed by persons who received them favorably and who associated with them in the Christian con-

gregation. These men were used to utter new prophecies. (Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 11:27, 28; 21:10, 11) However, in fulfillment of the words of Joel 2:28, 29, even today dedicated servants of Jehovah, though not inspired, are aided by God's spirit or active force to explain Scriptural prophecies to those receiving them in a favorable and appreciative way. Such persons are thus rewarded spiritually.—1 Cor. 2:10.

Jesus Christ also mentioned receiving a righteous man and getting "a righteous man's reward." For hospitably receiving a righteous man one could expect to be treated kindly in return, not in an unrighteous way, but in harmony with God's righteousness. The kind of righteous man to whom Jesus referred was not a person who simply set up his own standards and led what might merely be viewed as a "good life." He was speaking of a man who adhered to Jehovah's righteous expressions and commandments. (Matt. 4:4; Eccl. 12:13, 14) Those who truly met God's requirements in Jesus' day became his followers. If some individual was privileged to entertain such a believer in his home, he was in position to receive spiritual benefits, "a righteous man's reward." The visitor would no doubt share faith-building truths from God's Word with his host, even as Jesus did. (Luke 10:5-7; 19:1-10) The same thing is true in our day.

There are persons who kindly receive and do good to the righteous "little ones," those who are anointed disciples or spiritual brothers of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 14:1-4; Luke 12:32) By showing this kindness, they give Jesus' anointed followers "a cup of cold water to drink," as it were. They do good things for Christ's spiritual brothers, not simply because they show humanitarian kindness to all men, but because such ones are Christ's disciples. Therefore, these doers of good are rewarded; they 'by no means lose their reward.' Though they do not immediately receive some miraculous benefit, they have the privilege of hearing the anointed disciples of Jesus Christ explain the Scriptures. Consequently, such hearers stand to benefit measurably in a spiritual way. Those among them who manifest a love for righteousness and who do good things for Christ's brothers out of respect for the fact that they are his spiritual brothers or anointed disciples, are really showing a favorable disposition toward and support of the King Jesus Christ himself. (Matt. 25:34-40) If these persons continue to pursue such a course of action, they will receive lasting benefits, for theirs is the prospect of life everlasting in Jehovah's promised new order of things.—2 Pet. 3:13; Zeph. 2:2, 3.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

As willing and devoted slaves of Christ who appreciate that they were "bought with a price," Jehovah's witnesses will hold fast to the service of their heavenly Master during March by sharing in the ministry. (1 Cor. 7:23) As they do so they will offer to all persons a year's subscription for *The Watchtower*, along with three booklets, for \$1.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that Jesus Christ, who was the first to be baptized, gave "some as brothers." Among them were spiritual brothers who were surely enjoyed by persons who received them favorably, and who associated with them in the Christian con-

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

April 17: Appreciating the Book of Life-giving Wisdom. Page 169.

April 24: "Increasing in the Accurate Knowledge of God." Page 175.