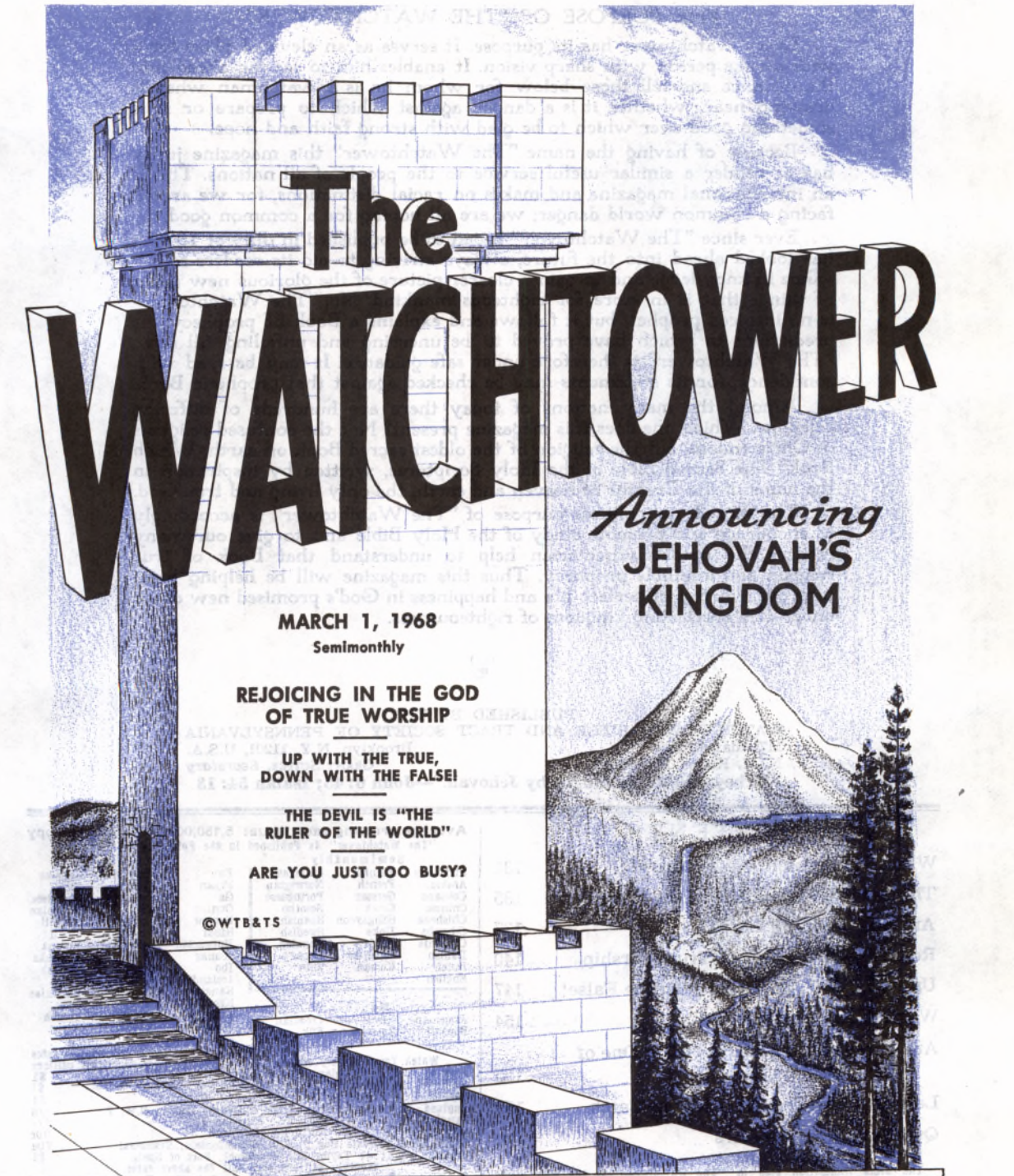




The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

MARCH 1, 1968

Semimonthly

**REJOICING IN THE GOD
OF TRUE WORSHIP**

**UP WITH THE TRUE,
DOWN WITH THE FALSE!**

**THE DEVIL IS "THE
RULER OF THE WORLD"**

ARE YOU JUST TOO BUSY?

©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

CONTENTS

Who Can Foretell the Future?	131
The Devil Is "the Ruler of the World"	135
Are You Just Too Busy?	137
Rejoicing in the God of True Worship	140
Up with the True, Down with the False!	147
Witness Impresses Priest	154
Are You Thinking of Becoming One of Jehovah's Witnesses?	155
Letting Down Our Nets for the Catch	159
Questions from Readers	160

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WHO

Can Foretell the

FUTURE?

Can man do so?

Is it possible to know
what lies ahead?

in the past year, even the
Harvard University Co-op
sells out whenever it stocks

IT IS natural to wonder what the future holds. Your particular concern may be the happenings of tomorrow, next week, or later in the year. Will lasting peace soon be established? Will the year ahead be economically prosperous? Will race relations be improved and better living conditions realized?

Who knows? Can anyone reliably foretell these things? Politicians, in campaign speeches, frequently make glowing promises about a brighter tomorrow. But how often these are simply empty words! The future they describe rarely materializes. So, in their quest to know the future, many persons turn elsewhere for information.

CAN ONE SAFELY LOOK TO SPIRITISTIC SOURCES?

Millions have sought out fortune-tellers, astrologers and other related sources. *Time* magazine of December 30, 1966, reported: "The sale of crystal balls, especially the large \$25 size, has risen roundly in Los Angeles. . . . Across the nation, the sale of Ouija boards has tripled

them. Zodiac sign guessing has become part of the social chitchat."

Hundreds of millions of dollars are paid annually to people who profess to have special ability to foretell the future. One popular astrologer observed that this is because, "in these times of uncertainty, people are groping for an answer." But can you really learn about the future from such sources? How reliable are they?

There can be no question that spiritistic sources at times do predict the future with regard to personal matters. This was so in the first century of our Common Era. For example, the Bible record tells about a "girl with a spirit, a demon of divination," who "used to furnish her masters with much gain by practicing the art of prediction." (Acts 16:16) To have been a source of profit to her masters, the girl must have had a reputation for some accuracy in foretelling the future. However, spiritistic sources also often prove to be wrong in their predictions.

In this connection, a feature article en-

titled "A Look at Tomorrow Today," appearing in *The Saturday Evening Post* of March 26, 1966, commented: "Time and again individual astrologers have been laughably wrong, as was Washington's Jeane Dixon when she predicted that Walter Reuther would be a candidate for the presidency in 1964. . . . On February 5, 1962, great crowds of Hindu holy men sat up all night waiting for the end of the world that Indian astrologers had predicted. . . . In 1939 the leading British astrologers predicted unanimously that there would be no war, and when war came, they predicted it would end the following year with the fall of Hitler."

No, astrologers, fortune-tellers and other such sources cannot be depended upon to foretell the future reliably. They are frequently mistaken.

However, not only are they unreliable, but looking to them for information will bring God's disfavor. For their prognosticating efforts are associated with demonism, as was the case with the girl in the first century. They actually receive information from wicked, invisible spirit creatures. Understandably, therefore, God's Word the Bible commands that no true worshiper should consult "a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead." Such sources are not the proper ones to whom to look for information about what lies ahead.—Deut. 18:10-12.

IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE FUTURE?

It is the popular belief in some places that there is no use in concerning oneself with the future, because one cannot change what is to happen anyway. For example, a Danish priest, Jakob Rod, explains in his book *Popular Religion and Church*: "The popular religion's belief in fate has its own special creed: 'It probably had to be that way,' or 'It had to

happen.' Without any doubt this is the creed which is most often expressed here in Denmark today."

However, such an attitude is not confined to Denmark. You will hear it expressed in many places. Yet, does not sound reasoning indicate that there is real value in knowing what lies ahead? For if one knows in advance what is to occur, he can take action that will benefit himself and his loved ones. For example, it is noted by volcano expert Haroun Tazieff that at volcanoes with well-equipped observatories 'scientists can forecast eruptions.' If you lived near such a volcano, would it not be of value to know the time of its next eruption? Most certainly! For then you could take action to avoid disaster.

In many actual cases, accurate knowledge concerning the future has proved beneficial. Although future events were not changed, adjustments were made by individuals to protect themselves. In September of 1965, for instance, weather forecasters warned that a powerful hurricane would sweep into Louisiana and Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico. Having this advance knowledge, hundreds of thousands of persons fled to higher ground, and avoided disaster.

Similarly, in the first century of our Common Era the warning was given by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded with encamped armies, then the inhabitants should, at the earliest opportunity, flee the city. (Luke 21:20-22) In 66 C.E. this circumstance occurred when the Roman armies encircled Jerusalem to lay siege to it. But then they withdrew. Those who then heeded the prophetic warning by fleeing Jerusalem avoided the terrible calamity when the Roman armies returned in 70 C.E. and devastated the city. Knowledge concerning the future can indeed prove beneficial.

WHAT MAKES FOREKNOWLEDGE POSSIBLE

What makes it possible to predict future events accurately? Important would be having a knowledge of all the factors that might affect the matter. Men possessing a sufficient body of facts have, at times, enjoyed a remarkably accurate view of the future. Yet humans are frequently subject to error, even being wrong in their weather forecasts at times. Men often misinterpret the available evidence, overlook factors that affect the matter, or simply are unacquainted with all the facts of the case.

Despite this, the possibility of possessing an accurate view of the future is recognized by learned men. In fact, they acknowledge that, with sufficient knowledge and wisdom, it is possible for one to predict *all events* that are yet to occur. Commenting on this, Professors Robert B. Lindsay and Henry Margenau wrote in their book *Foundations of Physics*: "An intelligence powerful enough to know all these differential equations together with the values of coordinates and derivatives at a given time, and able to solve them, would have a complete survey of all events, future and past."

SOURCE OF TRUE PROPHECY

Whereas humans are generally incapable of knowing all the necessary information, and of analyzing it properly, there does exist "One perfect in knowledge" and who is thus able accurately to foretell the future. (Job 37:16) That One is the Grand Creator of this marvelous universe and of its living creatures. Yes, he is the Most High God, Jehovah; the One who knows "from the beginning the finale, and from long ago the things that have not been done."—Isa. 46:10; Ps. 83:18.

Jehovah God is unlimited in his powers to foretell the future, because not only does he possess all the facts, but he can

control all the factors. He has a perfect record of accuracy in foretelling the future. Even events that all evidence available to men would indicate are very unlikely to occur, Jehovah God can foretell perfectly.

For example, would it be logical to expect that a famine-stricken city surrounded by enemy armies would have food in abundance the following day? Yet, this is what Jehovah inspired his prophet Elisha to foretell in the tenth century before our Common Era when Syrian armies were besieging Samaria. The Bible record says:

"Elisha now said: 'Listen, you men, to the word of Jehovah. This is what Jehovah has said, "Tomorrow about this time a seah measure of fine flour will be worth a shekel, and two seah measures of barley worth a shekel [a very cheap price] in the gateway of Samaria.'" At that the adjutant upon whose hand the king was supporting himself answered the man of the true God and said: 'If Jehovah were making floodgates in the heavens, could this thing take place?' To this he said: 'Here you are seeing it with your own eyes, but from it you will not eat.'"—2 Ki. 7:1, 2.

The king's adjutant, a high officer, could not believe it. The population was starving, with mothers even eating their own children. (2 Ki. 6:24-29) How possibly could such a prophecy come true? The One with unlimited knowledge knew.

During the night God caused the encamped Syrians to hear the sound of a great military force. They assumed that the Israelites had hired the help of the Hittites and the Egyptians. So, in great fear, they fled toward their own borders, leaving their possessions behind. The Bible explains what then occurred:

"The people proceeded to go out and plunder the camp of the Syrians; and so a seah measure of fine flour came to be worth a shekel, and two seah measures

of barley worth a shekel, according to the word of Jehovah. And the king himself had appointed the adjutant upon whose hand he was supporting himself to have charge of the gateway; and the people kept trampling him in the gateway, so that he died, just as the man of the true God had spoken."—2 Ki. 7:16, 17.

What a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy! Yet for Jehovah God it is nothing extraordinary. There are scores of similar prophecies recorded in the Bible that have undergone such amazing fulfillment. Why, when Babylon was a mighty, apparently invincible power, Jehovah foretold her downfall. (Jer. 51:53-58; Dan. 5:22-30) He even named the Persian conqueror, Cyrus—and that well over a hundred years before Cyrus was born! (Isa. 44:26-45:1) Jehovah also foretold the fall of Medo-Persia to Greece, and how the kingdom of the conquering ruler, Alexander the Great, would be divided into four kingdoms, as it, of course, was.—Dan. 8:3-8, 20-22.

After a consideration of the fulfillment of such astounding Bible prophecies, Thomas Newton wrote in his book *Dissertations on the Prophecies*: "What can be plainer? You see or may see with your own eyes the Scripture-prophecies accomplished: and if the Scripture-prophecies are accomplished, the Scripture must be the word of God." Yes, we can be absolutely confident that what the Bible foretells for the future will be fulfilled!

WHAT NOW LIES AHEAD

What, then, does the Bible foretell for our immediate future? Will lasting peace be established, race relations improved and better living conditions realized? Or, are we approaching a time when world conditions will grow even worse?

The greatest prophet of God to walk the earth, Jesus Christ, pointed forward to "the conclusion of the system of things," and foretold that there would be 'nation rising against nation, food shortages, pestilences, earthquakes, and increased lawlessness,' yes, the very conditions being experienced in unparalleled doses since 1914! So, according to God's Word, not only will the nations continue to experience a time of unprecedented distress that will yet grow worse, but in the very near future this entire system of things will suffer complete destruction.—Matt. 24:3-21; Luke 21:7-19.

Does this mean that life is hopeless? that there is no future for which to live? Not at all! For Jehovah God promises in his Word that all those who love and serve Him will be preserved alive through the end of this system of things into His righteous new system of things. (1 John 2:17; 2 Pet. 3:13) Yes, God's assurance is that at that time "he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more. The former things have passed away."—Rev. 21:3, 4.

What a grand future the Bible describes for mankind! What a precious, close relationship with Jehovah God! Will it really be fulfilled? Can we confidently trust in what God foretells? Check the record. Examine your own copy of the Bible, and see how accurate God has been in the past in describing events before they occur. You will find out that there is every reason to have confidence in the all-powerful One, who alone can accurately foretell the future.

THE DEVIL IS "THE RULER of the WORLD"

ARE you shocked at the statement that the Devil is "the ruler of the world," that he is the ruler of the nations of Christendom as well as of all other nations of the world? Perhaps you believe sincerely that man's Creator holds that position. It is true that all mankind are accountable to God, but the Devil is the one who is using the nations to do his bidding. Consider the facts.

The fruitage of the Creator's holy spirit is, according to his written Word, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) Is this the fruitage that the nations have been producing? Look at the sanguinary record they have established just since 1914—over 35 million persons killed in two world wars, not to mention the dead from many smaller wars. Consider the frightful brutality that man has shown to man in such places as Nazi and Communist concentration camps. Look at the vicious murders and other crimes reported daily in the newspapers, and consider the general collapse of good moral standards. Is this the fruitage of God's spirit, or is it instead the type of

fruitage to be expected from a world ruled by the Devil?

Of course, there are persons who refuse to believe that the Devil even exists. Their attitude might be compared with that of certain American public officials who, at one time, refused to believe in the existence of the notorious Mafia or Cosa Nostra. Their disbelief facilitated the operations of that crime syndicate. The same is true with Satan the Devil. One of his most effective weapons is to induce people to believe that he does not exist. Notwithstanding the disbelief of prominent men of the world, God's inspired Word testifies

that the Devil does exist and is, in fact, the ruler of this world. Jesus Christ himself spoke of the Devil as "the ruler of the world," as recorded at John 14:30, and said that this ruler had no hold on him. This in itself shows that "the ruler of the world" could not be Jesus' Father, man's Creator. Consider also the Scriptural account about the occasion when Satan the Devil offered Jesus Christ all the kingdoms of the world in return for worship. He could make such an offer because he was their ruler.—Matt. 4:8, 9.

Regarding this wicked spirit creature who made himself the chief slanderer of Jehovah God, the Bible states that he "was a manslayer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie." (John 8:44) Does not the world show the same traits? Murders in the cities, slayings on battlefields, lies at international peace tables all reflect his traits.

USES INNOCENT-APPEARING FRONTS

That the Devil would hide behind a front of respectability just as is done by

the leaders of the Cosa Nostra crime syndicate is to be logically expected. Those underworld bosses appear in the eyes of the public as respectable businessmen, operating legitimate businesses, but under their outward appearances they carry on their vile deeds and widespread illegal activities that are detrimental to the public. This practice of working behind a respectable front is pursued expertly by the Devil, who is the master of deception.

What better way can he deceive people and get them to serve him unwittingly than by using a respectable religious front that outwardly appears to be good and enlightening? According to this pattern of deception, he has used religions in Christendom that appear on the surface to be Christian but that are involved in many unscriptural practices and have made themselves a part of his worldwide system of things. This they have done contrary to the fact that Jesus Christ said that true Christians would keep separate from the world, even as he did.—John 17:16; Matt. 7:22, 23.

Supposedly Christian religions have been involved in fiendish inquisitions, ruthless massacres and savage wars. Whose influence is manifested by such actions—that of Jesus Christ, who commanded his followers to love one another, or that of the Devil? What about religious leaders who undermine faith in the written Word of Jehovah God by claiming that it is filled with myths? What about those who go so far as to say that God is dead? Is this not the sort of thing to be expected from “the ruler of the world,” who is a constant slanderer of man’s Creator?

That the Devil would, as the master of deception, mislead people by religions that outwardly claim to serve the true God was foretold in the Bible at 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, where it says: “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, trans-

forming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light. It is therefore nothing great if his ministers also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness.”

BLINDS MANKIND

The “ruler of the world,” who is also called “the god of this system of things,” is shown by the Bible to be the great blinder of men’s minds with respect to the King of God’s kingdom, Jesus Christ. That kingdom is mankind’s only certain hope for righteous rulers and permanent peace, but the Devil does not want people to trust in it. (Isa. 9:6, 7; Dan. 2:44) God’s Word states at 2 Corinthians 4:4: “The god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through.” Who else could this god be but the Devil?—Eph. 2:2; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10.

Do not reason that there are only a few misguided ones who are in the power of the Devil. As god and ruler of the world his influence affects the majority of mankind. The Bible testifies to this at 1 John 5:19 by saying that “the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.” And Revelation 12:9 says that he is “misleading the entire inhabited earth.” That the Devil’s influence is earth-wide is evident from the general thinking, actions and immoral traits of the world.

Are you so different from the majority of mankind that you can say that they are serving the Devil but that you are serving the true God? There is a people who are that different, and everyone knows they are different and no part of the world. They are Jehovah’s witnesses. They refuse to serve the god of this system of things and to come under his in-

fluence. They are, like the apostle Paul, going to the people of the world "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God." (Acts 26:18) They are happy to help people break free from the master

deceiver so as to serve the great Giver of life, Jehovah God. The conducting of free home Bible studies is one way they do this. When they call at your door, invite them in and ask them about God's marvelous purposes for mankind.

Are You Just **TOO BUSY?**

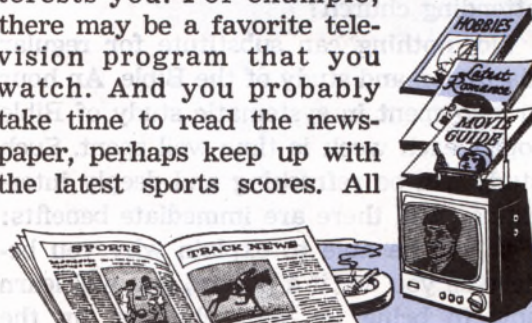
"TOO busy! Too busy! Too busy!" That was the response at door after door as a minister called to stir up interest in family Bible study. Some, on previous calls, had accepted Bible literature and even commended the minister on his good work, but they were too busy to stop and give further time to vital Bible discussion. The minister could not help thinking about an illustration given by Jesus Christ, telling about certain ones invited to a special banquet: "They all in common started to beg off." One had purchased a field; another, five yoke of cattle, and a third had acquired a wife. They were all too busy.—Luke 14:16-20.

There is no doubt about the identity of the host in Jesus' illustration. One of his listeners had just referred to 'eating bread in the kingdom of God,' and Jesus pursued the same topic. (Luke 14:15) Even though those activities of the invited guests were quite legitimate and, in their own way, important, how could they compare with a gracious invitation from the Sovereign Lord of the whole universe? None of us would wish to see ourselves among those of whom the Lord of the banquet said: "None of those men that were invited *shall* have a taste of my evening meal."—Luke 14:24.

But how do you stand? Are you too busy to do more than obtain now and then a helpful Biblical magazine and peruse its interesting articles? Are you too busy to make time for serious discussion and study of the Bible's message for our day? True, we live in times when it does seem to consume many hours to earn a living, to keep a home going, to raise a family. There is so little time for the things a person may want to do. But is investigation of what God has to say in his written Word one of the things you want to do? That is a question you do well to consider.

TOO BUSY TO CHOOSE LIFE?

As busy as many people are today, there are periods of relief from stress after the day's work. It is possible to make some time for something that really interests you. For example, there may be a favorite television program that you watch. And you probably take time to read the newspaper, perhaps keep up with the latest sports scores. All



of these can be a welcome change from your work, but they are merely pleasant diversions, having little to do with the future welfare of yourself and your family.

Just consider. A banquet of life-giving nourishment is what God has spread for worthy ones in our time. (Isa. 25:6-8) As Jesus expressed it: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Again, Jesus declared, while under temptation in the wilderness: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth." (Matt. 4:4) But are you too busy to take in that knowledge?

The lives of your loved ones and your own life are at stake! "Taking in knowledge" of God is the way to gain everlasting life. Can you afford to ignore that way? Surely the prize of life is precious enough to warrant your making time to take in this vital knowledge! Perhaps you feel that your attendance at a church service almost every Sunday discharges your religious duties adequately. But does a brief, formal church service really provide enough spiritual food for you to digest during a whole week? And especially in these days when so many clergymen are dispensing with large portions of God's Word, the Bible, and substituting their own philosophies, it is appropriate to ask: Are you really learning God's Word by attending church?

No, nothing can substitute for regular discussion and study of the Bible. An hour or two spent in systematic study of Bible topics each week is time well spent. Such study can be refreshing and deeply interesting. And there are immediate benefits: You will be able to explain why you believe as you do; if a parent, you will learn how to bring up your children "in the

discipline and authoritative advice of Jehovah" (Eph. 6:4); and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are taking in the knowledge that leads to everlasting life.—2 Tim. 3:15.

PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST

As an artist finds it advantageous to step back and survey the overall effect of his artistic production, you too will gain by taking a good look at the overall picture of your way of life. Where does it lead? What impression do you get? Is it well planned? Are food and clothing and shelter your primary concerns? They are necessities, to be sure, but is it the course of wisdom to push aside that which is vital to your spiritual welfare just to intensify the search after those things?

In teaching his disciples Jesus knew they needed food and drink and clothing, yet he counseled them not to be anxious over them. Why? Said he: "For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matt. 6:31-33) God's kingdom is the instrument through which God purposes to bless humankind with a righteous new order, whereas this world and its desires and attitudes are due to pass away. (1 John 2:15-17) Knowledge of the Kingdom and its requirements, therefore, is part of the knowledge of God and Christ that we must take in if we would gain everlasting life.

Of course, it takes faith to put material wants in a secondary place in your life. But that is why the taking in of accurate knowledge is so important. And the Bible itself says: "Faith follows the thing heard. In turn the thing heard is through the word about Christ." (Rom. 10:17) The life-giving knowledge of God and Christ

builds up a strong faith in those who make time for regular study and research in the Bible. Note this fine word of assurance to those who really want the prize of life that God holds out to his creatures: "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. 2:4, 5.

WHEN HELP IS OFFERED

No, it is not enough just casually to read and enjoy Bible aids. You must search and study in order to attain to the kind of knowledge that leads to everlasting life. We are fortunate to be living in the time foretold by God's prophet when 'the true knowledge would become abundant.' (Dan. 12:4) This is now God's time for the secret things of God to be revealed to eager searchers. (Matt. 11:25) If you are aware of your dependence upon God for a happy future, you are in line to be blessed by his message. But how?

Consider the experience of a traveler on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. He made use of his travel time to read a portion of the Hebrew Scriptures, but he was puzzled as to the meaning and application. God then directed one of his witnesses to approach and offer help. "Do you actually know what you are reading?" he asked the traveler. "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?" was the reply.—Acts 8:26-33.

As in those days, so even now God has his witnesses on earth whom he has enlightened about his Book of truth and whom he has equipped to teach people of all kinds who are willing to learn. When they call at your door and undertake to aid you in your study of the knowledge of God and Christ, and that without obligation, why not accept the offered help?

Make time for a regular study of what the Bible describes as more valuable than rare metals.—Prov. 3:13-18.

TIME TO ACT

Back in Noah's days the earth's population was too busy with the ordinary pursuits of life, materialistic aims, "eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage," too busy to take note of God's warning message. What was the consequence? "The flood came and swept them all away." But what has that to do with the situation today? A great deal, for Jesus went on to say: "So the presence of the Son of man will be." (Matt. 24:38, 39) Is it not, then, time for men and women who have up till now been just too busy with the ordinary affairs of life, to act for their own protection and that of their loved ones? It surely is.

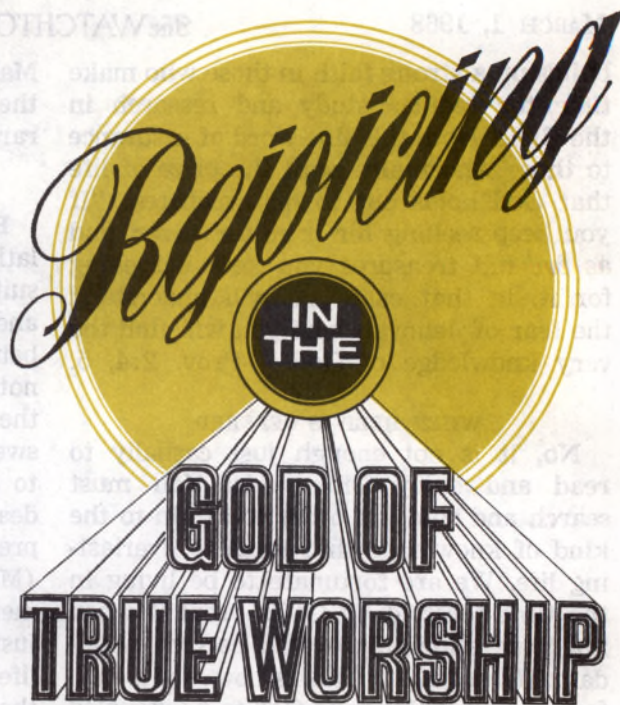
The warning message like that of Noah's day has now been announced by Jehovah's witnesses for almost fifty years. Numerous evidences have piled up in these "last days" showing fulfillment of Bible prophecies that mark this as the most crucial period of history. The Witnesses have been warning about the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," now at hand. (Rev. 16:14, 16) They have been inviting you to share in the study of spiritual things that mean everlasting life to those partaking. Surely it is time for you to act!

You have enjoyed the Bible helps that the Witnesses left with you. You may have expressed commendation for their constancy in the Bible education activity. Do not lose out. That feast to which you are invited is available to those who respond NOW! It is time to busy yourself about the vital matter of survival for yourself and those you love. Make God's favor and approval your foremost business.

LET us turn back the pages of history some 2,700 years. Nearly three millennia! someone exclaims. What in that day and age could interest us moderns of this smart twentieth century? There is really much to interest us. For the critical world situation of today, with its fearful possibilities, finds a striking parallel in the threat that the ancient Assyrian Empire posed to all other nations in that heyday of its power. Heated emotions of nationalism rose to the boiling point. And in this nuclear age, radical, dictatorial powers are again whipping the earth into a ferment of nationalistic disunity. Thus the same question now comes to the fore as in the day of the proud Assyrian: Who may successfully meet the challenge of nationalism, and survive?

²It was in the eighth century B.C.E. that the Assyrian World Empire reached a zenith of power. It was in that period, too, in the year 745, that Hezekiah, like David and Solomon before him, came to sit "upon Jehovah's throne as king" in Jerusalem. "And he continued to do what was right in Jehovah's eyes, according to all that David his forefather had done." (2 Ki. 18:3; 1 Chron. 29:23; 2 Chron. 29:2) He was wholehearted in his support of the true worship of Jehovah. He collected many of the psalms into book form for temple worship, including those composed by David. Hezekiah himself may have written Psalm 33 quoted above, as well as other

1. How does the world situation today parallel that of 2,700 years ago?
2, 3. (a) In what way was Hezekiah's reign noteworthy? (b) In the psalms collected by Hezekiah, who and what are exalted, and with what prophetic import?



"Happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people whom he has chosen as his inheritance. For in him our heart rejoices; for in his holy name we have put our trust."—Ps. 33:12, 21.

psalms that appear to extol Jehovah because of his triumph over the Assyrian.

³These psalms rise to sublime heights in praising Jehovah as the great Deliverer. They exalt true worship as the way to salvation and enduring happiness. Beyond compare is the eternal King, Jehovah, and how blessed the city of his true worship! "Jehovah is great and much to be praised in the city of our God, in his holy mountain. Pretty for loftiness, the exultation of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the remote sides of the north, the town of the grand King. In her dwelling towers God himself has become known as a secure height." Through the miraculous deliverance of his beloved nation in Hezekiah's day, Jehovah gives a prophetic forevision of how he will save true worshipers from na-

tionalistic oppressors of this modern age, to his name's praise.—Ps. 48:1-5, 10.

THE THREAT OF NATIONALISM

⁴Second in the line of world powers of Bible history, Assyria was cruel and aggressive. Jehovah's prophet, Nahum, called her capital, Nineveh, "the city of bloodshed," and likened her to a prostitute "ensnaring nations . . . by her sorceries." (3:1, 4) In Hezekiah's time, only Tirhakah, the Egypto-Ethiopian king to the south, presented any threat to Assyria's supremacy. Between Assyria and Egypt lay the nations of Syria, Israel (Samaria), Philistia, Moab, Ammon and others, none strong enough to resist, even with the help of their pagan gods. Sooner or later, one or the other of Assyria's succession of tyrannical rulers made them cold-war satellites, or else overran them in hot war and transplanted their people to other territories within the realm of Assyria.

⁵Look, now, at modern times. Do we find a counterpart to the aggressive Assyrian? Most certainly we do! Dictatorial nationalism has found a similar expression in the successive powers of the "king of the north," notably the German Kaiser, Nazi Hitler, and now the Communist dictators.* Moreover, nationalism is spreading like a poisonous vine into the Americas, the newborn African nations and throughout Asia. Never has the problem of displaced persons been so great in the earth. Aggressive and unreasoning, nationalism stirs up emotional fervors. As a result, earth's 3,300,000,000 inhabitants are being divided into segments according to the nation where they happened to be born. They are being enslaved to the state.

* See "Your Will Be Done on Earth," pages 220-323.

4, 5. (a) What threat confronted the nations in Hezekiah's time? (b) What counterpart does the aggressive Assyrian have today?

⁶Students of world affairs are awakening to the danger imposed by the cresting wave of nationalism. One of these is the British historian, Arnold Toynbee, who wrote an exclusive article for the Tokyo *Yomiuri Shimbun* of January 1, 1965. This appeared under a five-column heading, "Nationalism Threatens Survival of Human Race in the Atomic Age," and said in part:

"It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that nationalism is today 90 percent of the religion of 90 percent of mankind. Nationalism is the most potent of the three current ideologies. Communists and capitalists agree in being nationalists first and foremost. . . . This paramount devotion to nationalism is shared today not only by communists and capitalists but by Westerners and non-Westerners, 'developing' and 'developed' peoples, Buddhists, Shintoists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Parsees. It is ironical that we should be united in being devoted to an ideology that divides us. Besides being ironical, this is perilous; for, in the Atomic Age, mankind's hope of survival lies in managing to grow together into something like a single worldwide family. We are making efforts to move in this direction, but nationalism stands, like a roadblock, between us and our goal—the goal that we have to reach if we are to survive."

How can mankind get over this roadblock?

⁷It is important, first, that we identify the originator and chief sponsor of nationalism. In Assyria, nationalism was fostered by King Sennacherib. His name means "Sin (the moon-god) Has Increased His Brothers." He pictures Satan the Devil, who has drawn other heavenly angels into rebellion against Jehovah God, so that he has become "Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." (Matt. 12:24) These de-

6. According to one authority, how has nationalism become a roadblock?

7, 8. (a) Identify the originator and chief sponsor of nationalism. (b) What fate awaits him, and why?

mons he has set up as princes over the nationalistic divisions of mankind, two of them being "the prince of the royal realm of Persia" and "the prince of Greece." (Dan. 10:13, 20) Proudly, Satan boasts concerning this demonic rule over the nationalistic divisions of earth: "Are not my princes at the same time kings?" (Isa. 10:8) Indeed, "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one."—1 John 5:19.

⁹ In his own annals, Sennacherib glories in "the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship." Appropriate, then, is Jehovah's judgment pronounced on this braggart: "And it must occur that when Jehovah terminates all his work in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, I shall make an accounting for the fruitage of the insolence of the heart of the king of Assyria and for the self-importance of his loftiness of eyes." (Isa. 10:12) In the final fulfillment of this prophecy, we can know that the archenemy, Satan, will be brought down in destruction and that the spirit of nationalism that he fans into a flame throughout the earth will likewise be quenched into nothingness. But how?

WORLD RELIGION A BULWARK?

⁹ World religion—is not that the answer to the advancing hordes of nationalism? Cannot protection be found in a revival of religion—all kinds of religion? In crises such as the present one, there are some who start attending 'the church of



Sennacherib, nationalistic counterpart of the chief enemy of true worship

their choice,' or who return to the religion of their ancestors. They expect that in some way the world empire of religion can hold together and stem the threat to human survival. But can it? Is not nationalism itself a religion?

¹⁰ The fate of the religious nations that opposed the ancient Assyrian should warn of the fallacy of trusting in the many traditional religions today. The ten-tribe kingdom of Israel is an example. This nation had known Jehovah, the God of the Bible. And even after its people had turned aside into idolatry, Jehovah continued to favor them by sending them his prophets. However, they were

rebellious and self-satisfied, preferring "couches of ivory" and materialistic luxury to the worship of Jehovah. (Amos 3:15; 6:1-6) In their apostasy they chose a fusion religion, which combined the degraded religious practices of the nations around them with the blasphemous calf worship whereby their kings made a pretense of invoking Jehovah. The Bible describes the outcome:

¹¹ "And they kept leaving all the commandments of Jehovah their God and proceeded to make for themselves molten statues, two calves, and to make a sacred pole, and they began to bow down to all the army of the heavens and to serve Baal; and they continued to make their sons and their daughters pass through the fire and to practice divination and to look for omens, and they kept selling them-

9. Where do some look for the answer to nationalism, and what questions are raised thereby?

10-12. (a) What ancient examples should serve as a warning today? (b) Into what snare did Israel fall, and with what result?

selves to do what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah, to offend him; therefore Jehovah got very incensed against Israel, so that he removed them from his sight. He did not let any remain but the tribe of Judah alone."—2 Ki. 17:16-18.

¹² The religion of Israel's choice failed to save them. But what of Judah, and its religion?

¹³ Even while the Assyrian was overthrowing the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, Judah under King Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, was flirting with destruction. How? In this critical time, Ahaz declared himself "not interested" in Jehovah's counsel through his prophet, Isaiah. (7: 10-12) Instead, he turned to worldly diplomacy, compromised with Assyria and—worst of all—enforced loathsome, immoral religious practices in Judah, so that there was "an acting with great unfaithfulness toward Jehovah."—2 Chron. 28: 19.

¹⁴ Does this falling away have any parallel in later times? Why, surely it does! The Christian Greek Scriptures record a warning that the apostle Paul gave, about the year 56 C.E., to overseers of the youthful Christian congregation in its purity. He told them that "oppressive wolves" would enter in among them "and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:29, 30) True to warning, this apostasy appeared in the next century, when professed Christian leaders started to fall away from true doctrine and worship, and it became complete in 325 C.E., with Constantine's establishing Catholicism as the state religion of the Roman Empire and adopting the pagan "trinity" as "the central doctrine of the Christian religion."* How like

* Quoting *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, under "Trinity, The Blessed."

13. How did Ahaz flirt with destruction?

14, 15. (a) What warning was given about a falling away in later times? (b) What parallel to Ahaz's course do we find in the history of Catholicism?

Ahaz's replacing Jehovah's altar at the temple of Jerusalem—the focal point of true worship—with a pagan altar of idolatrous worship!—2 Ki. 16:10-18.

¹⁵ In the same way that Ahaz remodeled the temple and fostered Baal worship throughout the land, so apostate "wolves" proceeded to corrupt the structure of the Christian congregation. They made themselves into a clergy class to lord it over the laity in false worship. On the admission of one of its cardinals, the Catholic church brought in many of the "instruments and appendages of demon-worship," which it claims to have "sanctified by their adoption into the church."† In course of time, apostate Christianity adopted the Greek Plato's philosophy of an inherently immortal soul, and to this it added the "hellfire" and "purgatory" teachings.‡ Not content with myths of torture after death, the Catholic Inquisition of the thirteenth century introduced fiery tortures for "heretics" in this life. Catholic crusades sacrificed other innocent lives on the altar of carnal warfare.

¹⁶ Then, in the sixteenth century, the Reformation brought forth Protestantism. Although Protestantism at first challenged some of the abuses of Catholicism, it failed to shake itself free from most of the "appendages of demon-worship." Very soon it became involved in the wars and politics of Christendom. The divided sects

† Chapter 8, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1878, by Cardinal Newman.

‡ Writing of this pollution of true doctrine and worship, J. L. von Mosheim says in his *Ecclesiastical History*: "As no one in those times objected to Christians retaining the opinions of their pagan ancestors respecting the soul, heroes, demons, temples, and the like and their transferring them into their devotions: and as no one proposed utterly to abolish the ancient pagan institutions but only to alter them somewhat and purify them, it was unavoidable that the religion and the worship of Christians should in this way become corrupted. This also I will add, that the doctrine of the purification of souls after death by means of some sort of fire, which afterwards became so great a source of wealth to the clergy, acquired in this age a fuller development and greater influence."

16. In what has Protestantism failed?

of Protestantism have found no answer to the world problems of today.

¹⁷ In 745 B.C.E. King Ahaz died, and this marked the end of an era. Likewise, the year 1914 C.E. marked the end of the "appointed times of the nations," during which God had permitted nationalism and its gods to hold uninterrupted sway over the earth. Now, with World War I, the present-day "pangs of distress" began. (Luke 21:24; Matt. 24:8) In the frenzy of war, Christendom's religions chose nationalism ahead of Christian unity. The clergy urged on Catholic to kill Catholic, and Protestant to kill Protestant, and the apostate sects of so-called "Christianity" showed themselves to be as dead spiritually as King Ahaz is physically. They proved that they had lost their real identity as Christians in the same way that Israel lost any remaining identity as God's nation when it was overthrown by the Assyrian and its people were transplanted within his empire. And why? "Over the fact that they had not listened to the voice of Jehovah their God . . . They neither listened nor performed."—2 Ki. 18:12; Dan. 11:29.

TRUE WORSHIP TO THE FORE!

¹⁸ But Jehovah has a Champion of true worship! This One does not fail in the crucial hour. He is the Founder of the real Christianity, Jehovah's anointed King, Christ Jesus. The psalmist writes of him, prophetically: "You have loved righteousness and you hate wickedness. That is why God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of exultation more than your partners."—Ps. 45:7.

¹⁹ One of Jesus' "partners" in the Kingdom covenant, which Jehovah made with

David, was Ahaz's son, good King Hezekiah. His name means "Jehovah Has Strengthened." It appears that, even before Jehovah established Hezekiah as king in Judah, he may have served for a time as coregent with Ahaz. No doubt he then began to show strength in behalf of true worship. Today, also, Christ began to do a preparatory work among sincere Christians on earth prior to receiving his kingdom. It was in this connection that the *Watchtower* magazine began to be published in 1879, in strong support of the Christian doctrine of the ransom and other Bible truths.

²⁰ Then, in the epoch-marking year 1914, Jehovah installed Christ in Kingdom power in heaven, thus fulfilling toward him the prophecy: "The rod of your strength Jehovah will send out of Zion, saying: 'Go subduing in the midst of your enemies.'" (Ps. 110:2) Forthwith, God's Champion hurled the archenemy, Satan, out of heaven and down to the vicinity of the earth. This has meant "woe for the earth," as we see all around us today. (Rev. 12:7-9, 12) But God now cut short the tribulation on his enemies, so that the "chosen ones" might be saved. (Matt. 24:21, 22) How saved? By being gathered to true worship at Jehovah's spiritual temple. It is thrilling to examine how Hezekiah's bold action in Judah typifies Christ's restoring true worship among the "praisers" of Jehovah on earth in modern times.

²¹ Right early at the beginning of his reign, Hezekiah attended to something very close to his heart. He "opened the doors of the house of Jehovah and began to repair them." (2 Chron. 29:3) True worship must be restored! Likewise, with

17. (a) What did the death of Ahaz foreshadow? (b) What choice did Christendom's religions then make, with what outcome, and why?
18, 19. (a) Identify Jehovah's Champion of true worship. (b) How was this Champion and his work pictured by Hezekiah?

20. (a) What prophecies did Jehovah fulfill toward Christ in 1914 and thereafter? (b) How are the "chosen ones" saved?

21. What was foreshadowed by Hezekiah's prompt action in opening and repairing the temple doors?

Satan and his demons ousted from heaven, Jehovah and his kingly Son proceeded to fulfill Malachi's prophecy: "And suddenly there will come to His temple the true Lord [Jehovah], whom you people are seeking, and the messenger of the covenant [Christ] in whom you are delighting. Look! He will certainly come,' Jehovah of armies has said. . . . 'And he must sit as a refiner and cleanser of silver and must cleanse the sons of Levi; . . . and they will certainly become to Jehovah people presenting a gift offering in righteousness. And the gift offering of Judah and of Jerusalem will actually be gratifying to Jehovah, as in the days of long ago and as in the years of antiquity.'" (Mal. 3:1-4) Suddenly, in the year 1918, and while World War I was still raging at its height, this refining and cleansing of professed Christians commenced, with favor toward those who separated from the fallen religions of Christendom and came forward to serve Jehovah in righteousness.

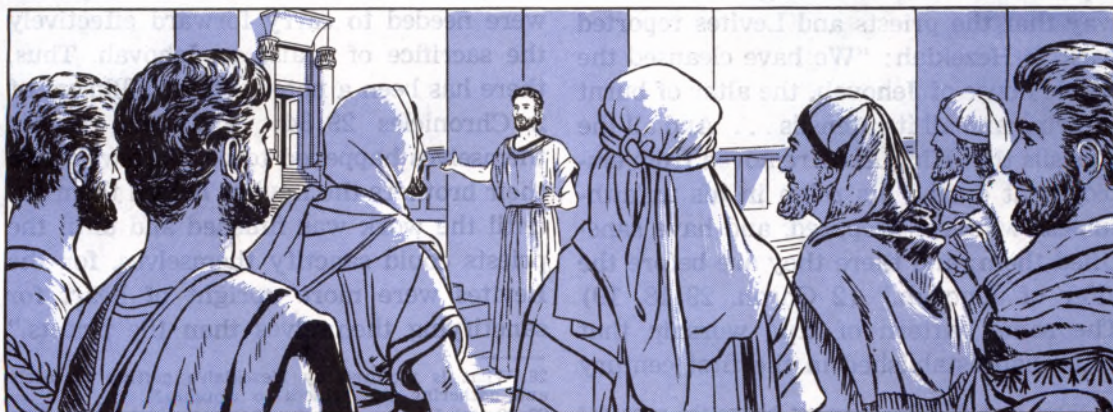
²² This was no time to cover up the filthy record that apostate Christendom had made during the "times of the nations," and even after that! So, Christ the

King echoed the command given by Hezekiah of old: "Bring the impure thing out from the holy place." (2 Chron. 29:5) Christendom, the instigator of war and bloodshed on a mass scale, must be exposed as judged and cast out by Jehovah. The release of Jehovah's Christian witnesses from Babylonish captivity in 1919 showed that Christendom's religion had then fallen, along with all the rest of the world empire of demon religion. Now, as "an object of astonishment and a cause for whistling," it awaits only the execution of God's righteous judgment. —2 Chron 29:8.

²³ How different the condition today of the faithful spiritual Levites, the anointed remnant of real Christians! The Greater-than-Hezekiah, Christ Jesus, has concluded "a covenant with Jehovah the God of Israel" on their behalf. He has renewed toward them the "new covenant," with its provision for forgiveness of error, and has reactivated them for true worship. (Luke 22:20; Jer. 31:31-34) They are filled with the same spirit and resolve that Hezekiah stirred up in the priestly Levites: "Now, my sons, do not

22. How was "the impure thing" exposed from 1919 on?

23. How has the Greater-than-Hezekiah concluded "a covenant with Jehovah" on behalf of real Christians?



"Bring the impure thing out."

give yourselves up to rest, for you are the ones whom Jehovah has chosen to stand before him to minister to him and to continue as his ministers.”—2 Chron. 29:10, 11.

²⁴ Even as the doors of Jerusalem’s temple were opened and repaired, so now Christ offered the anointed remnant an open door of service, “which no one can shut.” (Rev. 3:8) Refreshed by Christian assemblies, notably those at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., in 1919, and again in 1922, they went forth witnessing boldly in answer to the call: “Advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom.”

²⁵ However, these praisers of the true God must free themselves completely from pagan doctrine and practice. For example, during the years from 1919 onward, sanctimonious dress, the viewing of the great pyramid of Egypt as “the Bible in Stone,” the observance of pagan feasts such as the so-called “Christmas,” the use of pagan symbols such as the cross, and other religious uncleanness, persisted for a time. Such must be gotten rid of! “Utensils” appropriate to Jehovah’s worship must be brought into service. As God’s will was revealed progressively to them, the anointed remnant were happy to purify their temple worship, so that they could report back to their King in the same way that the priests and Levites reported back to Hezekiah: “We have cleansed the whole house of Jehovah, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils . . . And all the utensils that King Ahaz removed from employment during his reign in his unfaithfulness we have prepared, and have sanctified them; and there they are before the altar of Jehovah.” (2 Chron. 29:18, 19) The same pattern of true worship that Jesus had established in the first century

was restored among true Christians on earth.

²⁶ “And Hezekiah the king proceeded to get up early and gather the princes of the city together and go up to the house of Jehovah.” (2 Chron. 29:20) True to type, it was early in the post-World War I era that the King, Jesus Christ, gathered the remaining members on earth of Jehovah’s royal house—those who are to ‘rule as priests and kings with him for the thousand years’ of his Kingdom reign over earth. (Rev. 20:6) Then the priests proceeded to offer sacrifices on behalf of all, “because it was for all Israel that the king said the burnt offering and the sin offering should be.” (2 Chron. 29:24) In the fulfillment, all the remaining ones of the spiritual Judeans—the 144,000—must now be brought forth and sanctified as the true people for Jehovah’s name. This was in fulfillment, too, of another of the psalms: “Gather to me my loyal ones, those concluding my covenant over sacrifice.” (Ps. 50:5) As in Hezekiah’s day, all of these gathered according to Jehovah’s new-covenant arrangement, based on Jesus’ perfect sacrifice, “began to offer praise even with rejoicing.”—2 Chron. 29:30.

²⁷ The gathering was not completed in 1919, or even in 1922. More workers were needed to carry forward effectively the sacrifice of praise to Jehovah. Thus, there has been a noteworthy fulfillment of 2 Chronicles 29:34: “Only the priests themselves happened to be too few . . . So their brothers the Levites helped them out until the work was finished and until the priests could sanctify themselves, for the Levites were more upright of heart for sanctifying themselves than the priests.”

24. What open door has been set before the remnant?
25. How has the antitypical house of Jehovah been cleansed, and its utensils restored?

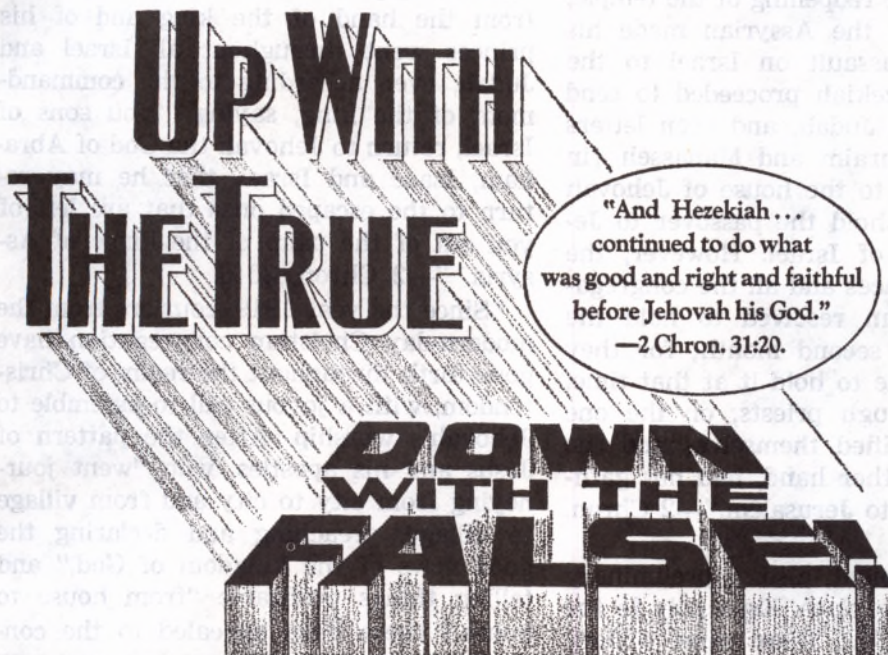
26. What is pictured by Hezekiah’s getting up early and gathering the princes to worship?

27, 28. (a) How was the gathering completed, and at what may God’s people now rejoice? (b) But what question remains to be answered?

As in the pattern, the remaining members of the anointed remnant of Christ's followers were gathered in, particularly until 1931-1935, and many of these showed themselves even more zealous for Jehovah's requirements and service than others who had been gathered earlier.

²⁸ In the same way that "Hezekiah and

all the people rejoiced" at the "sudden" restoration of true worship in that day, so the anointed remnant under Christ rejoiced that Jehovah has likewise "made preparation" for his people. (2 Chron. 29: 36) But how does this help to answer the modern-day threat of nationalism? We shall see.



"And Hezekiah... continued to do what was good and right and faithful before Jehovah his God."

—2 Chron. 31:20.

that they do so, for in this way natural Israel stayed in line to become the "congregation of the first-born . . . enrolled in the heavens," who keep God's great antitypical Passover by exercising faith in "the

THE year 1513 B.C.E. had signaled Israel's deliverance from nationalistic oppression by the first world power, Egypt. It also marked the first Passover. On this occasion the Israelites obeyed implicitly Jehovah's instructions given through Moses. "They did just so." The pattern of the Passover became a memorial to be observed in Israel from year to year. "With regard to Jehovah this night is one for observance on the part of all the sons of Israel throughout their generations." (Ex. 12:50, 42) It was important

Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."—Heb. 12:23; John 1:29.

² In the course of the centuries, Israel turned to doing bad, and became unthankful to its Deliverer, Jehovah God. Even in Judah and Jerusalem, where Jehovah's temple beckoned to true worship, the Judeans fell away to paganism. However, when Hezekiah ascended to Jehovah's throne in Jerusalem, in 745 B.C.E., he shone forth like a bright star in the line of Davidic kings. "And in every work that he started in the service of the house

1. (a) What did the year 1513 B.C.E. mark? (b) Why was it important for Israel to observe the pattern of the Passover?

2. How did Israel show itself unthankful, but what splendid example of true worship was seen from 745 B.C.E.?

of the true God and in the law and in the commandment to search for his God, it was with all his heart that he acted, and he proved successful." (2 Chron. 31:21) What a splendid example for all who worship Jehovah today!

³ Hezekiah gave due heed to Jehovah's command through Moses concerning the Passover. Its restoration was planned next in order after the reopening of the temple, and even before the Assyrian made his final, crushing assault on Israel to the north. "And Hezekiah proceeded to send to all Israel and Judah, and even letters he wrote to Ephraim and Manasseh [in Israel], to come to the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem to hold the passover to Jehovah the God of Israel. However, the king and his princes and all the congregation in Jerusalem resolved to hold the passover in the second month; for they had not been able to hold it at that time, because not enough priests, on the one hand, had sanctified themselves and the people, on the other hand, had not gathered themselves to Jerusalem."—2 Chron. 30:1-3.

⁴ In the fulfillment, also, a preliminary work had to take place. Especially in the spring of 1918 C.E., there came a fiery testing and purging of all of God's people on earth. The anointed priestly class were cleansed of a fearful heart. Repenting of the measure of compromise they had shown during World War I, they were again gathered to Jehovah's worship. Now, as expressed in the *Watchtower* articles entitled "Blessed Are the Fearless," published in 1919, they were "ready, willing and anxious at all times" to obey fearlessly the directions of their Lord, Jesus Christ. Conditions were right for renewing their sacrifice of praise to Jeho-

vah, on the basis of the sacrifice of "the Lamb of God."

THE CALL TO ASSEMBLE

⁵ The invitation to share in Jehovah's worship must be sounded abroad. Did Jehovah startle the earth by a miraculous proclamation through an angel from heaven? No. Jehovah used human couriers. "Accordingly the runners with the letters from the hand of the king and of his princes went throughout all Israel and Judah, even according to the commandment of the king, saying: 'You sons of Israel, return to Jehovah the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that he may return to the escaped ones that are left of you out of the palm of the kings of Assyria.'"—2 Chron. 30:6.

⁶ Since the year 1919, couriers from the modern-day Christian congregation have gone forth throughout the realm of Christendom, with a joyous call to assemble to Jehovah's worship. After the pattern of Jesus and his apostles, who "went journeying from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God," and telling things profitable "from house to house," these have appealed to the consciences of honesthearted persons still captive in Christendom's religious organizations, that they may "return to Jehovah," for salvation.—Luke 8:1; Acts 20:20.

⁷ Who will support Jehovah's true worship? Today, as in Hezekiah's day, that is the vital question. Let all who truly love righteousness turn from divisive nationalism, and from pagan religion and philosophy. Let them un-stiffen their necks, and honor Jehovah, their Creator. "Now do

3, 4. (a) What was next in line after the reopening of the temple? (b) However, what preliminary work was necessary, both in the type and in the fulfillment?

5, 6. (a) What kind of couriers did Hezekiah send forth, and with what message? (b) What like pattern have Christian couriers followed today?

7. What invitation has been extended, then and now, and with what response?

not stiffen your neck as your forefathers did. Give place to Jehovah and come to his sanctuary that he has sanctified to time indefinite and serve Jehovah your God, that his burning anger may turn back from you. . . . for Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and he will not turn away the face from you if you return to him." (2 Chron. 30:8, 9) Ah, but who will humble themselves before Jehovah? The Jews of the ten-tribe kingdom clung to their Baal worship. And today, the invitation to the unified worship of Jehovah at his temple has met only with mocking contempt by the clergy of Christendom.

⁸ "So the runners continued on, passing along from city to city throughout the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, even to Zebulun; but they were continually speaking in mockery of them and deriding them." It was left for a small remnant, a few individuals only from the northern tribes, to heed Jehovah's call. "Only individuals from Asher and Manasseh and from Zebulun humbled themselves so that they came to Jerusalem." (2 Chron. 30:10, 11) So, since 1919, only a small number of those professing Christianity have come out for Jehovah's worship at his cleansed temple. The great religious systems of Christendom have proudly maintained their idolatrous stand as part of the world empire of false religion. But among the energetic praisers of Jehovah there has been "one heart to perform the commandment of the king and the princes in the matter of Jehovah."—2 Chron. 31:12.

⁹ More than two hundred years before Hezekiah's day, priests, Levites and others had abandoned the idolatrous northern kingdom at its founding, and had come up to worship Jehovah in Jerusalem.

(2 Chron. 11:13-16) And now, those who came up out of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun also placed themselves in the way of salvation. No doubt many of these continued their worship at the place he had chosen, his temple at Jerusalem, until Assyrian nationalism swallowed up Israel. Thus they found salvation with Jehovah's true worshipers when "Israel went off its own soil into exile in Assyria." (2 Ki. 17:23) In this day when nationalism is again on the rampage, may we also cling to true worship for salvation!

¹⁰ Purification from deep-seated practices of false worship is not accomplished in an instant. Thus, as those Judeans and Israelites celebrated the Passover and the seven-day feast of unleavened cakes that followed, they had to give attention also to cleaning out from Jerusalem the remnants of demon worship. "Then they rose up and removed the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the incense altars they removed and then threw them into the torrent valley of Kidron." (2 Chron. 30:14) Onto the rubbish dump with them! Only with this cleansing work accomplished were they in fit condition to celebrate the Passover. This brings clearly home to us today that Jehovah's true worshipers must free themselves of every last vestige of paganism. Images, religious emblems, altars, pictures depicting religious error—all of these must be gotten out of our affections, out of our homes, out of the New World society of Jehovah's Christian witnesses!

¹¹ And what is pictured by the seven-day feast of unleavened bread? In this we see the continual spiritual feast that God's worshipers enjoy as they 'listen and perform,' exercising faith in the sacrifice of

8. What has been required of those heeding the call, but what "one heart" have they shown?

9. How does the ancient record point to the only way of salvation?

10. What cleansing work still remained in Jerusalem, and what does this indicate today?

11, 12. (a) What did the seven-day feast picture? (b) How should Jehovah's witnesses regard the modern-day extension of the feast?

"the Lamb of God." Now in an approved relationship with Jehovah, they offer up spiritual sacrifices of praise, "the fruit of lips" devoted to him, witnessing to his name and kingdom.—Heb. 13:15.

¹² In the face of bodily persecutions by nationalistic governments, spurred on by derisive clergymen, Jehovah's witnesses continue to 'preach the good news of God's established kingdom in all the inhabited earth,' and the witness keeps gathering momentum, down into these 1960's. (Matt. 24:14) And what if the feast of service has been extended for a season, beyond the time we had expected? In Hezekiah's day "all the congregation decided to hold it for seven more days, and so they held it for seven days with rejoicing." (2 Chron. 30:23) Rejoice that you are privileged to praise Jehovah in all the earth, down to this year 1968!

¹³ Those who came from the northern tribes did not have time to cleanse themselves for Hezekiah's Passover. So the king prayed in their behalf: "'May the good Jehovah himself make allowance for every one that has prepared his heart to search for the true God, Jehovah, the God of his forefathers, though without the purification for what is holy.' Accordingly Jehovah listened to Hezekiah and healed the people." (2 Chron. 30:18-20) In modern fulfillment, many have come to Jehovah's organization with soils of pagan religion. It has taken time for them to make over their minds to pure doctrine and worship, but Jehovah has seen their heart condition and made merciful allowance, encouraging them to share in the feast of praise. With the progressive revelation of truth from Jehovah's temple, all have finally been "fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought," so as to work shoulder to shoulder in the

service of the grand King, Jehovah God.—1 Cor. 1:10.

¹⁴ There were others who joined the Israelites in their worship back there. These were aliens from inside and from outside Judah, who exercised faith in Judah's God, Jehovah. They would include the temple slaves, the *nethinim*. "And all the congregation of Judah and the priests and the Levites and all the congregation that came from Israel and the alien residents that came from the land of Israel and those dwelling in Judah continued rejoicing. And there came to be great rejoicing in Jerusalem . . . Finally the priests, the Levites, stood up and blessed the people; and a hearing was granted to their voice, so that their prayer came to his holy dwelling, the heavens."—2 Chron. 30:25-27.

¹⁵ All this reminds of another assembly for worship described at Revelation chapter 7. First, there come to view the 144,000 members of the spiritual Israel of God. Then, the vision describes "a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne [of Jehovah] and before the Lamb." And why are they before the throne of Jehovah? "They are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple." So today, and especially from the year 1935, a "great crowd" of "alien residents"—close associates of spiritual Israel—are being gathered to Jehovah's worship out of all nations on earth. Jehovah makes blessed provision for them, and the Lamb, Christ Jesus, guides them "to fountains of waters of life." And finally, "God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—Rev. 7:9, 10, 15, 17; 21:4.

¹⁶ Is it your expectation to be of this

13. What merciful provision has Jehovah made for those soiled with pagan religion, but with what final result?

14, 15. (a) Who shared in the joyful feast, and did Jehovah approve? (b) Of what modern-day assembly are we reminded?

16. How may the "great crowd" gain life?



Israelites destroying sacred pillars
of false worship

"great crowd" that survive the modern-day threat of nationalism to gain everlasting life in the paradise earth? Then hold fast to Jehovah in true worship!

DOWN WITH THE FALSE!

¹⁷ To what did the grand Passover celebration, the greatest since Solomon's day, stimulate the people? "And as soon as they finished all this, all the Israelites that were found there went out to the cities of Judah, and they proceeded to break up the sacred pillars and cut down the sacred poles and pull down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin and in Ephraim and Manasseh until they had finished; after which all the sons of Israel returned to their cities, each one to his own possession." (2 Chron. 31:1) It was a clean sweep of false religion in the kingdom of Judah.

¹⁸ This well fits the polemic aspect of the work that Jehovah's witnesses have carried on throughout the earth since 1919. There has been "toleration of no rivalry toward Jehovah"—no compromise with idolatry, whether Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or outright pagan. (2 Ki. 10:16) The plain truth from God's Word, the Bible, has been proclaimed throughout Christendom, and to the other nations, exposing the war-mongering, nationalistic,

idol-worshipping false religionists as rejected by Jehovah, the true God.

¹⁹ This campaign of declaring "the day of vengeance on the part of our God" has freed many from the shackles of demon religion, so as to gain "good will" from Jehovah. (Isa. 61:2) It has been "right in Jehovah's eyes," no matter what the apostate clergy may think or say. Jehovah approves, just as he approved Hezekiah's action: "He it was that removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars to pieces and cut down the sacred pole and crushed to pieces the copper serpent that Moses had made." (2 Ki. 18:4) For this serpent, pictorial of Christ and his sacrifice, had come to be idolized, in much the same manner as the "sacred cross" is worshiped by many today in Christendom. Idolatry has no place with God's true people, ancient or modern. —Ps. 106:35-40; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11, 14.

²⁰ Refusing to enslave himself to Assyrian nationalism, Hezekiah next took issue with Sennacherib himself. "And he proceeded to rebel against the king of Assyria and did not serve him." (2 Ki. 18:7) So, after gathering the anointed remnant

19. (a) In what has this polemic work resulted? (b) How was idolatry regarded by Hezekiah, and how should we regard it today?

20. What was foreshadowed by Hezekiah's rebelling against the king of Assyria?



Modern-day Witnesses use Bible to
expose idol worship

17, 18. (a) To what did the Passover stimulate the people? (b) In the fulfillment, how does this fit in with the work of Jehovah's witnesses today?

at the spiritual temple of worship, Christ led them out of slavery to nationalism and pagan religion, and on a campaign to proclaim the doom of Satan and all of his organization, with its unrighteous "heavens" and "earth." In the year 1922, and for seven successive years, assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses took up judgment messages that had first been proclaimed in Jehovah's "heavens," and sounded these forth throughout the earth. Notably, these proclamations, outlined in Revelation chapters 8 to 11, have pronounced Jehovah's righteous decrees against the mighty organization, demonic, religious and nationalistic, that Satan has built up over the millenniums.

²¹ In climax, and as a high point of the eight-day assembly held in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., July 30–August 6, 1928, twelve thousand persons enthusiastically adopted a "Declaration Against Satan and for Jehovah." This made known that "the great battle of Armageddon soon to begin will result in the full restraint of Satan and the complete overthrow of his evil organization, and that Jehovah will establish righteousness in the earth by and through Christ the new ruler and will emancipate mankind from evil."* Thus the harsh ruler of the nationalistic governments that have dominated earth through the ages was put on notice that his opposition to God's kingdom and its representatives on earth is doomed to certain failure.

WAR ON THE PHILISTINES

²² Hezekiah struck, too, at a traditional enemy that was entrenched in fortresses deep in the territory of Judah, to the southwest of Jerusalem. "It was he that

* See *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1928, page 278.

21. How was Satan put on notice at the Detroit assembly in 1928?

22, 23. (a) What action did Hezekiah take against the Philistines? (b) What characterized this traditional enemy?

struck down the Philistines clear to Gaza and also its territories, from the tower of the watchmen clear to the fortified city." (2 Ki. 18:8) Does this have a modern-day parallel?

²³ God's Word shows that the Philistines carried on constant warfare against Israel from the time of Israel's first entering the Promised Land. They were a proud people, and had utmost disrespect for the righteous laws that Jehovah made for Israel, such as the laws on blood. (Zech. 9:6, 7; Lev. 17:14) They were continually sending crusading armies or guerrilla bands against God's people. Amos 1:6-8 mentions their revolts against Israel, and their taking many into captivity and selling them to Edom. Their religion was cruel and pagan, and featured a fish-god, Dagon, images of which were topped by an upright fish head, resembling the mitres worn by patriarchs and bishops of Christendom's religious systems.

²⁴ The Philistines appear to foreshadow long-time enemies of true worship on earth. One such enemy is especially the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, whose religious system is saturated with pagan Babylonish doctrine and ceremony. Throughout its career, the Hierarchy has fought tooth and nail against all who have taken a courageous stand for true worship. It has bitterly opposed the preaching of "this good news of the kingdom" in all the earth since 1919.

²⁵ Hezekiah's campaign against ancient Philistia reminds of a campaign that Christ's followers carried out in the earth, particularly in the 1930's. At that time the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, as the principal religion of Christendom, had long been entrenched in the domain of worship rightly belonging to "praisers" of

24. What long-time enemy especially do the Philistines appear to foreshadow?

25. What present-day campaign by Jehovah's witnesses parallels that by Hezekiah against the Philistines?

Jehovah. And just as the degraded Philistines of old dickered with the Assyrian World Power for political advantage, so the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of modern history had formed alliances with nationalistic dictators, such as that of the Lateran Treaty with Benito Mussolini in 1929 and the Concordat with Adolf Hitler in 1933. Not with carnal weapons, but with a power-packed Bible message, Jehovah's witnesses took action to expose this political philandering on the part of Christ's professed "church," with its goal of world domination.

²⁶ And the Roman Catholic Hierarchy fought back! As the "sword of the church," the Nazi *fuehrer* took the lead in a campaign to annihilate Jehovah's witnesses in Catholic-dominated lands. A Catholic priest of Berlin testified to this in an article in *The German Way* of May 29, 1938: "When Adolph Hitler had come to power and the German Episcopate repeated their request, Hitler said: 'These so-called "Earnest Bible Students" [Jehovah's witnesses] are trouble-makers. . . . I do not tolerate that the German Catholics be besmirched in such a manner. . . . I dissolve [Jehovah's witnesses] in Germany.'" To which the priest added, "Bravo!" But Jehovah's witnesses were not effectually dissolved in Germany or anywhere else. Hitler and his partner in signing the Concordat, Cardinal Pacelli (Pope Pius XII), are now dead, but the 8,000 Jehovah's witnesses that survived the Nazi-Catholic Action concentration camps have now increased to over 80,000 in Western Germany and Berlin, together with many more thousands in East Germany.

26. How did the modern Philistines fight back, but with what success?

²⁷ Catholic-controlled governments and priest-inspired mobocracy have continued the fight to silence Jehovah's witnesses. But by using publicity channels, the law courts and other legal means, Jehovah's witnesses have waged a persistent spiritual warfare against the Catholic Hierarchy's infringements on freedom of worship. This Christian warfare has been the means of opening the eyes of many honest Catholics and others, helping them to take their stand on the side of true worship. And what if some still have to endure persecutions at the hands of modern Philistines?

²⁸ Consider Malawi! On September 17, 1967, President Banda of Malawi said:

"The people in any area will have the right to say—'Jehovah's Witnesses, pack up.' And if the Jehovah's Witnesses do not pack up, well the Government

comes in, arrests them and takes them to prison." According to the *Malawi News*, printed in the Cinyanja language, of November 10, Mr. J. D. Gunda, a member of the Malawi Parliament, warned "people who belong to the Jehovah's Witness religion which was banned by the government, that if any of them continued to be a Christian of this religion he will be severely punished by the government." He explained "the government's aim to end this religion and went on to tell them that if they were really repentant they should buy Malawi (political) party cards." The Watch Tower Society's missionaries have been thrown out of the country and thousands of Jehovah's witnesses have now been arrested. In one area alone twenty-three houses of Jehovah's witnesses were burned.

27-30. How do Jehovah's witnesses continue to wage spiritual warfare against "the Philistines"?

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- True Worship Under Challenge.
- Sanctifying "the Holy One of Israel."
- What Kind of Future Can You Give Your Child?
- Easter—Relic of Ancient Sex Worship.

²⁹ Then, too, look at Egypt (U.A.R.) where Jehovah's witnesses were arrested at the time of the 1967 Memorial celebration. They were kept in prison for months because they were preaching the good news about God's kingdom. The Watch Tower missionaries were expelled from Egypt too, and many local Witnesses were subjected to extreme torture. The Society's printery in Greece has been closed by Government decree, the preaching of the kingdom of God has been hindered in a number of the Arab states, and all the Watch Tower missionaries were expelled from Burma.

³⁰ Will such action on the part of nationalistic governments stop Jehovah's Christian witnesses from preaching the good news? No! But they will be strengthened in the knowledge that Jehovah has passed final judgment and will shortly execute these, along with the rest of the world empire of paganistic religion. Jehovah's decree is, Up with true worship, down with the false!—Jer. 1:10; Ezek. 25:15-17.

³¹ Jehovah's witnesses have succeeded in their spiritual warfare, in the same way that Hezekiah was successful in putting down the troublesome Philistines. And

31, 32. (a) Why is Hezekiah a noble example for us? (b) How may we now follow in the footsteps of the Greater-than-Hezekiah?

how splendidly did the righteous stand of Hezekiah, on behalf of true worship, contrast with the apostasy of his predecessors and the paganism of his neighbors! "In Jehovah the God of Israel he trusted; and after him there proved to be no one like him among all the kings of Judah, even those who had happened to be prior to him. And he kept sticking to Jehovah. He did not turn aside from following him, but he continued keeping his commandments that Jehovah had commanded Moses. And Jehovah proved to be with him. Wherever he would go out, he would act prudently."—2 Ki. 18:5-7.

³² May we, too, continue to act prudently, as we follow in the footsteps of the Greater-than-Hezekiah, Christ Jesus. May we be fearless in the face of threats by false religion and nationalistic governments, unflinchingly declaring God's vengeance against this present Satanic system of things and comforting those who mourn at its unrighteousness. (Isa. 61: 1, 2) Yes, may we keep 'sticking to Jehovah,' confident that he will 'prove to be with us' in our zealous worship and as we share in the eternal vindication of His name. But more concerning true worship's triumph over nationalism in a future article.

Witness Impresses Priest

In the U.S. *Catholic* magazine of December 1966 a Catholic priest wrote what he thought of one of Jehovah's witnesses who called at his door. He said: "If only I and others in the Church had the missionary zeal of this Jehovah['s] Witness!

His courage and fervor were reminiscent of John the Baptist (Gospel). The witness, also named John . . . , is only eighteen years old. He finished high school and left home in another state to come here and do missionary work. He attends five meetings a week, gives one hundred hours a month to home visiting and he supports himself. For a living he scrubs floors for stores, taking this evening work so he can visit homes during the day. He is living a life of dedication and self-sacrifice."

Not only this young man but thousands like him, young and old, are living a life of dedication and sacrifice, doing this out of love for God and their neighbors. In view of the times, they are putting forth strenuous efforts to help men escape the impending destruction of this wicked system of things. Listen to the Bible message they bring to you.

IN IMITATION of the early Christian organization, Jehovah's witnesses go directly to the homes of interested persons and provide free Bible instruction. Last year they conducted an average of 867,009 home Bible studies, in most cases once each week. No doubt you are acquainted with this free home Bible study service. In fact, perhaps you are one of the many persons who are now studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses.

If so, it has undoubtedly brought you much comfort to gain a better understanding of God's purposes. In fact, you may have come to the conclusion that Jehovah's witnesses are teaching the truth of God's Word, and that they are God's true organization. Perhaps, therefore, you are thinking seriously about becoming one of Jehovah's witnesses. However, you may be wondering: Just what is involved? How does one go about becoming one of Jehovah's witnesses? Is it a matter of "joining" something?

EARLY CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATION

To help you to appreciate what is involved, you might consider: How did those persons to whom the early Christians gave home Bible instruction become Christians? Did they simply "join" the Christian organization? Did they ask that their names be put upon a membership roll, and thereby become Christians?

No, the Bible does not indicate that. Rather, as the one being instructed came to appreciate the wonderful truths he was being taught, he associated regularly with Christians in their congregation meetings. (1 Cor. 14:24-26; Heb. 10:24, 25) Moved by gratitude to God for His marvelous provisions, he willingly brought his life into conformity with the moral require-

ments of God's Word. (Ps. 15:1-4) He also responded to the invitation to share in the work of instructing others in the Word of God.—Matt. 4:19.

Jesus Christ had commissioned his followers to "make disciples of people of all the nations," and to serve as "witnesses . . . to the most distant part of the earth." (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8) To accomplish this tremendous work, pro-

visions were made by the Christian organization to train

Christians, and such training would include instruction in performing the ministerial work. The apostle Paul explained: "He [the resurrected Jesus] gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers, with a view to the training of the holy ones." (Eph. 4:11, 12) Early Christians thus received help from the organization to carry out their Scriptural obligation to preach. They also submitted to water baptism, which symbolized publicly that they had made an unreserved dedication to serve Jehovah God.

By following closely in the footsteps of

ARE YOU THINKING

OF

*Becoming
One of
Jehovah's
Witnesses?*

Jesus Christ, who is called in the Bible "the Faithful Witness," persons who became Christians also became witnesses of Jehovah God.—Rev. 1:5; 1 Pet. 2:21; John 17:6.

CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATION TODAY

It is similar today. An individual does not become a member of the Christian organization of Jehovah's witnesses simply by asking that his name be put on a membership roll. Rather, it is a matter of active participation. First, a person who appreciates that he is being taught the truth of God's Word in his home Bible studies spontaneously speaks to others about these good things. Perhaps you have already done this, talking to your neighbors and relatives about the wonderful Bible truths you have been learning.

The next important step is to begin associating with Jehovah's witnesses in their congregational meetings. There practical instruction and true-to-life demonstrations are provided to assist you to become an active Christian. Perhaps you have already begun regularly to attend these weekly meetings. If so, you can appreciate that here is an organization that is just like the early Christian one. It is made up of modern witnesses of Jehovah.—Isa. 43:10-12.

You can, therefore, see that Jehovah's witnesses are organized to accomplish a worldwide preaching work. Jesus Christ foretold this would be done in these critical days, saying: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:14) Will you share with Jehovah's witnesses in doing this preaching before the end comes? Will you grasp the grand opportunity to participate in giving this final witness? Do you qualify to call publicly at the homes of people as an associate of Je-

hovah's witnesses in preaching this Kingdom good news?

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

In order to qualify, it is necessary that you have faith that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and that what it says is invariably true and reliable. (John 17:17; Rom. 3:3, 4) It is also vital that you know what "this good news" is that Christians must preach. You need to understand that the Kingdom is a heavenly government of Jehovah God. You also need to know that God's kingdom is now established in heaven, that it will soon crush and put an end to all opposing earthly governments, and will usher in righteous conditions earth wide.—Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14.

Do you know and believe this? Are you convinced from your study of the Bible that the kingdom of God will soon rid the earth of wickedness, and under its rule the earth will be cultivated to paradisaic beauty? Do you confidently look forward to the fulfillment of Bible prophecies that promise the end of sickness, suffering and death? (Rev. 21:3, 4) You do? Well, surely, then, you can tell "this good news" to others! You will find real joy in sharing these grand truths with interested persons.

Of course, it is also necessary that you be able to answer basic Bible questions. And you need to give answers that are in harmony with God's Word, and not according to false religious teachings. For example, if discussing the subject of God, could you point out that God is not part of a "Trinity," but is the almighty, loving Creator whose name is Jehovah? Would you be able to explain to a questioner that Jesus was not simply "a good man," but was God's heavenly Son sent to earth as a human, and that he is now reigning in heaven as king of God's kingdom? And could you point out that the holy spirit is

not a person, but is God's invisible active force?

These are not difficult Bible questions, are they? Yet they are common ones encountered in the ministry. You probably would have little trouble in providing satisfactory answers to them. But there are other basic questions you should also be able to answer if you are to share with Jehovah's witnesses in the ministry.

For instance, when discussing what happens to a person when he dies, could you explain that the soul is the person himself, and that it is not an immortal part that separates from the body at death? Could you point out that the dead are unconscious, and are not being tormented in a fiery hell? Also, could you explain that the earth will not be eternally destroyed by fire, but will serve as the everlasting home of obedient mankind? And could you point out that not all righteous persons go to heaven, but that only the 144,000 who are specially selected to rule with Christ go there?

If someone asked you these Bible questions, could you answer them? If so, you have sufficient knowledge to serve as a Christian witness for Jehovah. But you might object: "What if someone asks a more difficult question?" Do not let this prospect discourage you. No human knows all the answers. You can tell the person that you will be happy to do research and bring him back information on the subject. If he is truly sincere he will be glad to have you do this.

Just remember: You have sufficient knowledge to be convinced of the Bible truths that give you the marvelous hope of eternal life in God's new system of things. If you can convey this information to another person who has an open and honest heart, he, too, can become convinced and enjoy this same wonderful

hope. What a thrill to impart this precious hope of everlasting life!

PROPER CONDUCT REQUIRED

However, faith and knowledge alone are not sufficient to qualify you to associate with Jehovah's witnesses in the ministry. Proper conduct in harmony with Bible principles, too, is required. Therefore, if your course of life is not in keeping with how the Bible says a Christian should live, you do not qualify to share with Jehovah's witnesses in the ministry.

God's Word is very explicit as to what is proper and what is improper conduct. For example, it says: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean, but you have been sanctified, but you have been declared righteous in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God." —1 Cor. 6:9-11.

Jehovah God is not praised, but is dishonored, when those who claim to represent Him are immoral, lawless persons. As the Bible writer explained regarding professed servants of God who practiced immorality: "The name of God is being blasphemed on account of you people among the nations." (Rom. 2:24) Therefore, the Christian organization of Jehovah's witnesses does not permit thieves, fornicators, adulterers or any person willfully practicing what the Bible condemns to share in the ministry as an associate of Jehovah's witnesses.

These high moral requirements perhaps make one feel unworthy to serve as a minister of God because of the bad deeds one may have practiced in the past. But

if one has repented and quit doing those things, and asked forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ, such a life seeker can be assured that Jehovah God has forgiven him. (Isa. 55:7) Living in harmony with His laws *now* is what matters. Remember that even some of the Corinthian Christians were formerly thieves, adulterers, drunkards, and so forth, but they left those practices completely and they were accepted by Jehovah as his Christian witnesses. Jehovah will also accept and bless your efforts to serve Him. So do not hold back.

SEPARATENESS FROM THE WORLD

Yet there are still other requirements to be met in order to qualify as a witness for Jehovah. One of them involves keeping separate from false religious organizations of the world, as the apostle Paul indicated by his questions: "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?" Then, drawing attention to the prophecy of Isaiah, where the Israelites were warned to avoid contamination with religiously corrupt Babylon, the apostle wrote: "Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves," says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing.'"—2 Cor. 6:14-17.

For a person today who desires to represent Jehovah as one of his witnesses, this means that it is necessary to break off membership in all false religious organizations with which one may have been affiliated. When a person who wants to worship God with "spirit and truth" realizes that organizations with which he formerly associated do not stick to the truth of God's Word, he is going to cease attending their meetings and sharing in their activities. (John 4:23) The Bible

identifies the empire of false religion as modern "Babylon the Great," and urges: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins." It is vital to heed this command.—Rev. 17:5; 18:4.

Another requirement that must be met in order to qualify to share in the ministry with Jehovah's witnesses is that one conform to what Jesus said about his followers, namely: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) This includes being free from any involvement in the political affairs of the world. As God's Word makes so clear, such matters are not the business of a true Christian. Jesus Christ did not try to tell political rulers how to run their affairs, nor did he become involved in them. In fact, he rejected attempts of others to make him a worldly ruler. (John 6:15; Luke 4:5-8) And when it comes to the matter of conflicts between worldly nations, one who serves Jehovah certainly must believe and conduct himself in harmony with what the Bible says at Isaiah 2:4.

TRAINING THAT IS PROVIDED

However, you may feel that you could never go from house to house and preach publicly as did the early Christians. (Acts 5:42; 20:20) "How would I approach the people? What would I say?" you may ask. "I am not qualified to do the preaching work. I don't have the ability to be a minister of God," you may conclude.

It is not surprising that you may feel this way. Most of God's servants have at one time or another had similar thoughts, and may have expressed them. Yet, they have learned to trust in God for help, and He has never let them down. By his spirit God has qualified and assisted his servants to perform the ministry. It cer-

tainly is not accomplished by one's own strength or personal aptitude. As the apostle Paul said: "Our being adequately qualified issues from God, who has indeed adequately qualified us to be ministers." —2 Cor. 3:5, 6.

In the first century, you will recall, God provided his people training in the ministerial work. (Eph. 4:11, 12) New ones were assisted by mature members of the Christian organization to perform the house-to-house ministry and other features of Kingdom service. Today God's Christian organization provides a similar program of instruction. So do not be anxious; you will be given loving encouragement and help. An experienced minister will be happy to accompany you and demonstrate how the ministry can be carried on effectively.

Perhaps you already have been invited to go along in the house-to-house ministry. If you have not yet accepted such an invitation, do so now. You will be so happy that you started in this most rewarding

work. If you have not been invited and would like to share in the ministry, make this known to the person who is studying the Bible with you. Not only will he gladly arrange to take you with him in the ministry, but he will help you to get ready a short presentation and practice it with you so that you will be prepared to give a witness at the doors, if you desire to do so.

During the month of April, Jehovah's witnesses make a special effort to assist new ones to get started in the ministry. So accept the invitation extended to you to share. It is the work that Jesus Christ and the early Christians performed. And Jesus prophesied that the Kingdom preaching would be done on a worldwide scale before the end of this system of things. (Matt. 24:14) What a privilege, therefore, to have a part in this work! Do not hold back. Do not put it off. Begin now to share in the work that will win the approval of your heavenly Father, to your everlasting blessing.

Letting Down Our Nets for the Catch

CHRISTIANS are to be "fishers of men," even as Jesus told Peter and Andrew when he invited them to follow him. That a great 'fishing' work would be done Jesus indicated in his parable of the dragnet. Jesus' instruction to his early disciples may therefore well be applied to his followers today, namely, "You men, let down your nets for a catch."—Matt. 4:18-22; 13:47-50; Luke 5:4.*

How is this 'fishing' work done? By disciplining people of all nations in obedience to Jesus' instructions found at Matthew 28:19, 20.

In view of the nearness of the end of this system of things it is more urgent than ever before to do all the disciplining that can possibly be done. True, some Christian "fishers of men" find that it takes more work to catch 'fish' due to their having long 'fished' in the same waters. Because of this not a

few, such as missionaries, pioneer ministers and even entire families, have moved to places where the need is greater.

Christian 'fishermen' unable to transfer to more productive waters will do well to remember that, while they need to keep 'fishing' in the same waters, they need not keep fishing in the same manner. They can seek ways of improving their effectiveness by making their presentations more interesting, more appealing. Important also is showing a fine spirit of friendliness, making householders feel at ease. Perseverance is also required, if one would have success.

So, those who share in this fishing work and who are able to move to more fruitful waters are urged to do so. If not, then they can persevere with friendliness, tact and resourcefulness, letting down their nets for the catch right where they are!

* For details see *The Watchtower*, November 15, 1967.



• Can John 17:17 be used to prove that Jesus considered the Hebrew Scriptures to be inspired? Was he not referring to God's word that he personally gave to the twelve apostles? —H. J., Denmark.

In prayer to his Father, Jesus said concerning his disciples: "I have given your word to them." Then later in the same prayer he added: "Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth."—John 17:14, 17.

The oral teachings that Jesus gave to his followers were not his own thoughts, but were from his God and Father. He publicly admitted this, saying: "I have not spoken out of my own impulse, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to tell and what to speak." (John 12:49; compare John 3:34; 7:16; 8:28; 14:10.) Hence, the words he personally gave to his followers can correctly be viewed as God's word and truth, but this did not exclude, but included the Hebrew Scriptures.

Throughout his ministry he quoted from the written Hebrew Scriptures, from Genesis through Malachi. (Matt. 19:5; 11:10) Why, in just what is now Matthew, chapter twenty-two, Jesus quoted from four different places in the Hebrew Scriptures. (Matt. 22:32, 37, 39, 44) We cannot avoid the fact that Jesus considered the Hebrew Scriptures to be inspired.

What is recorded in the books of the Hebrew Scriptures can be seen to be God's inspired Word for a number of reasons. One reason is that, contrary to human nature, the material is credited, not to the prophet or writer, but to God. In reference to Jehovah's promise to Abraham concerning his seed, we read: "The word of Jehovah came to Abram." (Gen. 15:1) We repeatedly read of the messages as being the word of Jehovah. (2 Sam. 24:11; Ezek. 1:3) The opening verse in Malachi's prophecy, from which Jesus quoted, reads: "A pronouncement: The word of Jehovah concerning Israel by means of Malachi."—Mal. 1:1.

Because those parts of the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus quoted were the infallible truth of God's word, then the whole bulk of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures must likewise be, as Jesus said in John 17:17, "the truth." So, while Jesus included his oral teachings that are now recorded in the Greek Scriptures when he said, "Your word is truth," he inescapably embraced the Hebrew Scriptures as God's Word, by which his disciples must be sanctified.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

As "fishers of men," Jehovah's witnesses obey the Lord Jesus Christ, so during March they will continue to 'let down their nets for a catch' by sharing in the ministry. (Matt. 4:19; Luke 5:4) As they do so, they will offer to all persons a year's subscription for *The Watchtower*, along with three booklets, for \$1; or a year's subscription for both *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, along with six booklets, for \$2.

CHRISTIANS are to be "fishers of men." even as Jesus told Peter and Andrew when he invited them to follow him. That a great 'fishing' work would be done Jesus indicated in his parable of the 'great' 'net' 'drawn' in the 'sea' of 'Gentiles' 'from' 'all' 'quarters' 'and' 'drawn' 'up' 'to' 'them' 'that' 'they' 'might' 'be' 'gathered' 'into' 'the' 'kingdom' 'of' 'God' 'the' 'Father' 'in' 'heaven' '—'Matt. 13:47-50; Luke 9:1-5.

How is this 'fishing' work done? By 'drawing' people of all nations in obedience to 'divine' 'instructions' found at Matthew 28:19, 20, in view of the 'nearness' of the end of this 'system' of things it is more urgent than ever.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 31: Rejoicing in the God of True Worship. Page 140. Songs to Be Used: 102, 32.
April 7: Up with the True, Down with the False! Page 147. Songs to Be Used: 111, 95.