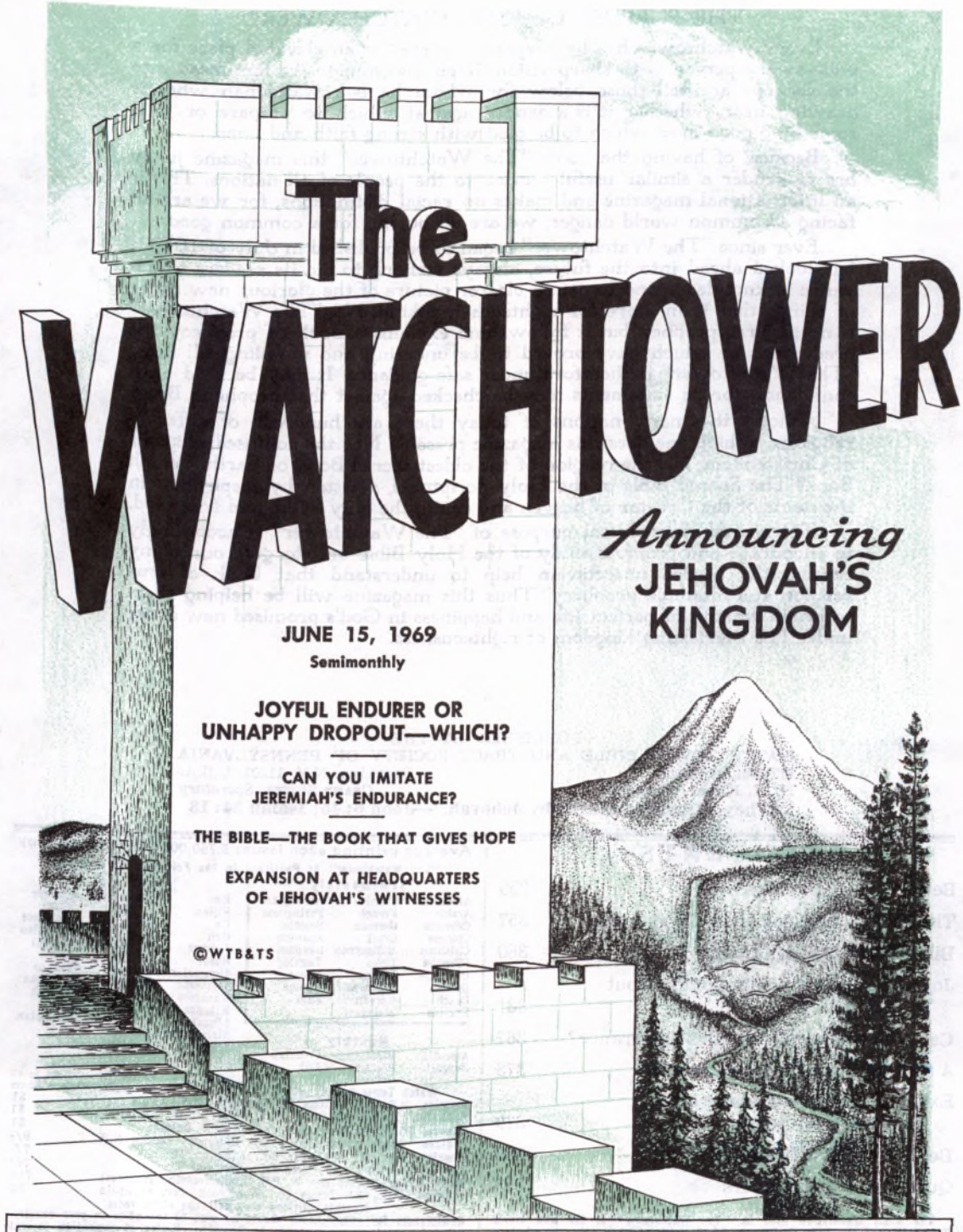

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

JUNE 15, 1969
Semimonthly

JOYFUL ENDURER OR UNHAPPY DROPOUT—WHICH?

CAN YOU IMITATE JEREMIAH'S ENDURANCE?

THE BIBLE—THE BOOK THAT GIVES HOPE

EXPANSION AT HEADQUARTERS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Beware of OVERCONFIDENCE!

WELL-PLACED confidence is a good and useful thing, but both secular and sacred history warn us against the snare of overconfidence. Ancient Babylon was overconfident, only to fall to the armies of Cyrus. And Victor Hugo, the noted French writer and historian of the last century, tells of the overconfidence that Napoleon displayed before the battle of Waterloo:

"The emperor had never been in such good humor as today. . . . The man who had been somber at Austerlitz [where years before Napoleon had won his most signal victory] was gay at Waterloo. At the moment when Wellington retrograded, Napoleon felt a thrill. There remained only the task of completing the retreat with destruction. Napoleon turning abruptly sent a dispatch to Paris to announce that the battle was gained."

But had the battle by then been gained? Was victory truly within his grasp? His overconfidence caused him to jump to that conclusion, but history was to record the opposite. So much so, in fact, that "Waterloo" has become proverbial for "a decisive or disastrous defeat or reversal."

There is good reason for concluding that Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo was at least in part caused by his overconfidence. Thus, in discussing it, one authority tells us that "the French emperor did not show his usual care and thoroughness in his orders, nor his usual broad judgment in execution." Confident as he was, still he should have remembered that there were many things, such as the weather, over which he might not be able to exercise control. And it was indeed these things that brought his downfall.

Sacred history, too, points to the pitfalls of overconfidence. The Bible tells that once the Syrian king Ben-hadad demanded of Israel's king, "Your silver and your gold . . . your wives and your sons, the best looking."

Israel's king considered it wise to yield and so he replied: "According to your word, my lord the king, yours I am with all that belongs to me." But not letting well enough alone, King Ben-hadad became overconfident and greatly increased his demands. Now he required that his servants be allowed carefully to search the houses of the king of Israel and those of his servants and take away "everything desirable to your eyes." But this was going altogether too far and so Israel's king

sent word, "This thing I am not able to do."

At that Ben-hadad bragged as to what he would do to Samaria. To that bragging, Israel's king replied: "Do not let one girding on [his armor] boast about himself like one unfastening" his armor after a victorious return from battle. When the two kings and their armies locked in battle, Jehovah God saw to it that Israel's king got the victory over superior odds. —1 Ki. 20:1-21.

The Christian apostle Peter also suffered difficulty due to overconfidence. Jesus had told his eleven faithful apostles on the night that he was to be betrayed: "All of you will be stumbled in connection with me on this night." But Peter overconfidently said: "Although all the others are stumbled in connection with you, never will I be stumbled! . . . Even if I should have to die with you, I will by no means disown you." Yet how Peter's overconfidence came to grief! Shortly he had denied his Master three times.—Matt. 26: 31-35, 69-75.

We cannot escape it, overconfidence is something to be guarded against. Not only because the future is always uncertain but also because our very overconfidence may cause us to act with poor judgment and thus bring us to grief. That is why the apostle Paul, after giving examples of the serious mistakes the ancient Israelites had made, goes on to note that these things "were written for a warning to us . . . Consequently let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." —1 Cor. 10:5-12.

Far from being overconfident regarding the future, wisdom dictates that we say: "If Jehovah wills, we shall live and also do this or that." At all times and in all our ways we need to take notice of Jehovah.—Jas. 4:15; Prov. 3:6.

Are you faced with a new task, job or assignment? Then guard against the tendency to be overconfident by taking the attitude, "This is easy!" or that you know so much better what should be done than those who have had much experience at it. It is indeed a true proverb: "Wisdom is with the modest ones." So be modest. —Prov. 11:2.

Youths especially need to be on guard against the snare of overconfidence. They may have acquired some knowledge, but are they able to apply it at all times? They are eager to drive autos, but how good is their judgment? Their eagerness to marry may, at least in part, be due to overconfidence. Many of them view the responsibilities and burdens that go with marriage lightly. And these increase when there is emotional immaturity. No wonder that one out of every two teen-age marriages ends in divorce!

In particular must overconfidence be guarded against in connection with preaching the Word of God from the public platform. Overconfidence causes one to fail to prepare properly. As a result the speaker may be guilty of glittering generalities and inaccuracies. Especially those having the "gift of gab" need to be on guard and bear in mind that they are speaking not merely to entertain but to build up their listeners spiritually. The apostle Paul set a good example in this regard, for he asked his Christian brothers to pray for him, that he might be able to speak the good news as he ought to, with all freeness of speech.—Eph. 6:18-20.

No question about it, overconfidence is always ill-advised. Caution and modesty and looking to Jehovah God for help are the course of wisdom. This is borne out, as we have seen, by both secular and sacred history.

The Bible —the book that gives hope

Hope is essential to our well-being. Is your hope well founded?

SHE had been a patient in an Indonesian sanatorium for years. With the death of her husband she lost all courage. She felt it hopeless to carry on and so began making plans to commit suicide. Upon learning of this, one of the nurses told a Christian witness of Jehovah, who was also a patient, about it. He called on this woman and tactfully tried to interest her in the Bible hope.

At first she was unwilling to listen, but with kind perseverance the Witness was able to interest her in studying the Bible. Within three months she had an entirely different outlook on life. She was now filled with hope and joy. She is still in the sanatorium, but today, instead of contemplating suicide, she is busy telling other patients about her Bible hope. In fact, she is conducting four Bible studies with other patients.

Just what is the nature of the Bible hope that made such a change in her life? We will see as we examine this matter, for there is no doubt that the Word of God, the Bible, when properly understood, is really the Book of hope. That is one of the main reasons why the Bible was written: "For all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures *we might have hope.*" Most fittingly the Author of the Bible is called "the God who gives hope."—Rom. 15:4, 13.

THE NEED OF HOPE

Time and again the Christian hope is referred to in that part of the Bible known as the "New Testament" or the Christian Greek Scriptures, some fifty times, in fact. How important that hope is to Christians is also indicated by the words of the apostle Paul as found at 1 Corinthians 13:13. There, in discussing the subject of love, he lists hope along with the all-important qualities of faith and love, saying: "Now, however, there remain faith, hope, love, these three." Yes, hope deserves to be placed with faith and love.

The worldly-wise Greeks of ancient times did not share the apostle Paul's appreciation of hope. They disparagingly referred to it as "the food of exiles," and as "man's curse." Apparently modern worldly-wise men likewise do not attach much importance to hope, for neither the *Encyclopedia Americana* nor the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in their extensive alphabetical indexes give any listings for "hope," although they do for "faith" and "love."

But without hope many despair. The very word "despair" comes from two Latin roots, *de,* meaning "lacking; without," and *sperare,* meaning "to hope." So people without hope despair. A desperado is a desperate criminal, one who is without hope.

Without hope man is prone to turn to loose conduct. History records that when

the German philosopher Nietzsche lost his faith and hope in God he not only sneered that "hope is the worst of evils," but turned to riotous, loose living. Even as God's Word notes, those without hope often say, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die."—1 Cor. 15:32.

Illustrating the difference that hope makes in one's life is the experience of a certain young man who was an inmate in a New York state mental hospital. He was under constant medication, denied any privileges or freedoms and given no education. He was little more than a vegetable, slumped over, with nothing to say and completely unconcerned with himself or his future.

Then one day his older brother, who had but recently come to understand and embrace the Bible hope, called on him and endeavored to share with him his newly found hope. Although this young man had no knowledge of the Bible, the truth from it at once appealed to him and had a remarkable effect on him. After only two months of discussions with his brother and other Witnesses who visited him, he was able to get along without any medication. Soon he was carrying himself erect, developing pride in his appearance and even began talking to other inmates about this Bible hope. His brother, who had brought him this hope, was able, after much effort, to effect his release from the mental institution. He is now learning to read so that, among other things, he can study the Bible on his own. Both brothers are now regularly attending meetings where the Bible hope is featured, and their progress is apparent to all.

Not without good reason does the Bible set so much store on hope. Hope is not a luxury. It is not something expendable, something we can just as well do without. It is a necessity. Hope is essential for the health of both mind and body.

GOOD FOR THE LITERAL HEART

That hope is as beneficial for the literal heart as for the figurative heart is reported on by Dr. Frances Dunbar, an authority on psychosomatic medicine. For patients suffering from angina pectoris, a heart affliction marked by sharp jabs of pain in the chest, "the reestablishment of a hopeful attitude is one of the chief therapeutic tasks." In fact, in no other group of patients is hope said to be so important as in these.

What hope, and in particular the Bible hope, is able to do for heart sufferers can be seen from the experience of a heart patient in Italy. She was bedridden, for her doctor had strictly forbidden her to exert herself in any way or even to get out of bed for any reason whatever. Then one day a Christian witness of Jehovah called on her and persuaded this heart patient to have a regular study.

As she made progress in understanding the Bible and its wonderful hope of everlasting life in a new system of things, her physical health also began to improve. Soon she was able to get out of bed and even do some of the housework. All this surprised her physician, who began to wonder whether she was taking some medicine unknown to him. When he learned the facts of the matter, that it was the Bible hope that was helping his patient in a physical way, he said: "Without a doubt the best medicine for the heart is the study of the Holy Bible." Today she is zealously preaching the good news of God's kingdom to her neighbors from house to house, her heart now being equal to such activity.

WHY THE BIBLE GIVES HOPE

Why does the Bible give such strong hope? Because it is the Word of the one true God Jehovah, who cannot lie. As the apostle Paul shows, Christians rest their

faith "upon the basis of a hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times long lasting."—Titus 1:2.

The Bible gives hope because everything that God has promised has come to pass, and that exactly on time. Thus, by his prophet Jeremiah God foretold that the land of Israel would lie desolate for seventy years while his people would serve the king of Babylon. And when those seventy years were fulfilled, those Israelites who were hoping in God were not disappointed. God had liberated them and, right on time, they had arrived back in their homeland.—Jer. 25:11; Dan. 9:2; Ezra 1:1-4.

God's promise also proved true as to the coming of the Messiah. At Daniel 9:24-27, God caused his prophet to record that "from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks," or sixty-nine weeks of years. And secular history verifies that from the command to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah (455 B.C.E.) until Jesus came as the Messiah (29 C.E.) exactly sixty-nine weeks of years, or 483 years, passed. Yes, Jesus the Messiah appeared exactly on time to fulfill the hopes of his people. —Luke 3:15.

The fact that these prophecies and others like them have been fulfilled gives strong assurance that the rest of the prophetic promises of God will be fulfilled. It is even as Joshua recorded regarding the experience of his people Israel: "Not a promise failed out of all the good promise that Jehovah had made to the house of Israel; it all came true." Because of this, Christians today can echo the sentiments of King Solomon at the time of the dedication of Jehovah's temple: "Blessed be Jehovah, who has given a resting place to his people Israel according to all that he has promised. There has not failed one word of all his good promise that he *has* promised by means of Moses his servant." —Josh. 21:45; 1 Ki. 8:56.

BIBLE HOPE NEARS FULFILLMENT

A careful study of God's Word reveals that it is having fulfillment also in our day, giving us hope of early deliverance from the terrible conditions of today. Jesus Christ foretold that the end of this system of things would be marked by international wars, widespread food shortages, earthquakes and increasing lawlessness. More than that, he said that the generation that saw all these things would also see an end to this wicked system. Can you appreciate what that means for you? —Matt. 24:3-34.

Do you grieve and fear because of the constant wars between nations, bringing untold hardship and loss of loved ones? Then do not despair, but be comforted with the hope that God will cause all wars to cease, even as he promised: "Come, you people, behold the activities of Jehovah, . . . He is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth." Of the Kingdom reign of his Son, Jesus Christ, the "Prince of Peace," we are assured that there will be an "abundance of peace until the moon is no more," and that of the abundance of its peace "there will be no end." Just think what that will mean! No more high taxes to pay for costly war budgets, no more wanton destruction of life and property!—Pss. 46:8, 9; 72:7; Isa. 9:6, 7.

Are you inclined to become discouraged because of bodily aches and pains? Then take hope, for these also will be done away with by Jehovah's Kingdom rule, even as he has promised: "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." What a prospect! No further need for doctors and nurses to treat ailments and undertakers to bury the dead! They will all have to find something else to do!—Rev. 21:4.

Have you lost a loved one in death? Then take hope in God's promise "that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." As Jesus himself promised: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." Then instead of people growing old and dying, people will be returning from the graves and be restored to the health and vigor of youth.—Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29.

What can all this mean for you? It will mean that if you survive the end of this old system of things that Jesus spoke about, you will never need to go down into death.—Isa. 25:8.

But what if you should die before God's kingdom brings in that new system of things? Then Jesus' comforting words to Martha at the time of her brother's death will apply to you: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life." —John 11:25, 26.

STRENGTHEN YOUR HOPE

While by means of his inspired Word Jehovah God has furnished ample reason and basis for hope, it is up to you to strengthen your own hope. How can you do so?

First of all by feeding regularly on the Book of hope, the Holy Bible. Read a portion of it every day. To get the most benefit from its pages, however, you will do well to take advantage of the aids God has provided to assist you to understand the Bible. These aids are published by the Watch Tower Society and are brought to you by the Christian witnesses of Jehovah. The magazine you are reading is one of these.

To strengthen your hope you should also want to associate with others who have this strong, sure hope, thereby heeding the apostolic command 'not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together.' This you can do at the Kingdom Halls and other meeting places of Jehovah's witnesses. Important also is bringing your personal life in line with the righteous principles set forth in the Bible, for you cannot have strong hope unless you are living in line with those principles. That means to heed the prophetic command: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth . . . Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Heb. 10:25; Zeph. 2:3.

God's Word, the Holy Bible, is indeed the Book of hope. The evidence leaves no doubt about it. God simply cannot lie. What he foretold would take place in the past always has come to pass. Therefore you can have strong hope that all his promises regarding the future of this earth and mankind he also will fulfill. He has both the desire, the ability and the means to do so. What a blessed assurance!

Bible Truth Makes Changes

● At the close of their second home Bible study with Jehovah's witnesses, a couple accepted the invitation to attend the Bible meetings of the Witnesses. They came to the Sunday meeting and have come for eight consecutive Sundays. The wife of the interested man took the Witness aside and said to her: "I cannot get over my husband. I could never get him to church before. He would always sleep in on Sunday mornings and now he is the first one ready to come to the Kingdom Hall."

JOYFUL ENDURER OR UNHAPPY DROPOUT —Which?

"Now we are not the sort that shrink back to destruction, but the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Heb. 10:39.

IN THESE fast-changing times it is hard for a person to endure in any chosen line of endeavor. He has to face much competition and opposition along with a great deal of hard work and many heartbreaks. Some do not have the strength to stay in the race or the source of strength on which to draw to keep up their courage. Others decide that the end or objective does not justify the effort and the endurance of hardship. These become dropouts.

[2] It is an inherent desire in man to accomplish something. There is nothing that can take the place of the exhilarating joy of accomplishment. And it is natural for one to want his life to be in some way a contribution to society. Those who endure, finally reaching their objective, are the happy ones. Dropouts may get some temporary relief by avoiding the responsibilities and pressures that the enduring ones face, yet they create an atmosphere of unhappiness for themselves by dropping out—loss of confidence, a conscience that torments them and lack of self-respect. This is especially true if the endeavor in which a person was engaged was a right and worthy cause and his life turns out to be a failure.

1. Why do so many persons fail to endure in a chosen line of endeavor?
2. Why are those who become "dropouts" unhappy?

[3] Anyone who wants to make his life one of accomplishment and does not want to be a dropout must plan ahead, considering four major things. First, he must determine whether the objective at which he is aiming is the right one, one that will bring him and those around him lasting happiness. Second, he must carefully examine and ascertain whether the means that he will use to obtain his *sought-for* objective is honest, just and righteous. Third, he must get the right view of endurance. Fourth, being sure of all these things, he must firmly make up his mind to go ahead.—Compare Luke 14:28-33.

[4] Having set his course, he has to realize that he will need to call on all available resources that are able to supply him the strength required to face obstacles successfully and to finish the course that he has chosen. (Phil. 3:12-16) He must continually check up on himself to be sure that he is pursuing the direct course toward his objective, watching closely that he does not drift to one side or the other. He will keep correcting his course from time to time, pulling himself back into line. As he goes straight ahead, on course, his endurance will be perfected.—2 Cor. 13:5.

3. In starting out on a chosen course, what things must one consider so that he may endure?
4. Having started toward his objective, what must he then do?

THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY

[5] There are many activities in which a person can engage that are beneficial in a lesser or greater degree to mankind and to one's own self. But the state of affairs that exists in the world makes these lead to disappointment and frustration. In fact, these efforts are at best only a temporary aid, for all mankind is dying. If there is a way by which one can gain everlasting life, not only for himself, but also for others, this would be the best course to take. It would be the only one worthy of devoting one's entire life to, because without life no other activities, beneficial or pleasurable, can be pursued. There is such a way, with the most worthwhile objective, in fact, the only fully worthwhile one in our time, and the only course in which a person can endure successfully. That way is the service of Jehovah God and his kingdom through Christ Jesus. As the Creator and the Maker of all good things for mankind, he promises through his kingdom to bring a righteous, lasting new order upon this earth in which man can have the fullest expression of the qualities that God implanted in him, under righteous conditions and with endless life.—Isa. 9:6, 7; 25:7, 8.

CHRISTIAN ENDURANCE

[6] As to the proper view of endurance: In the world the word "endurance" has a distasteful sound. The world's view of endurance can well be illustrated by the experience of a man on a life raft. Such a man is thrown into the situation against his will. He is at the mercy of the elements. He may endure because of a stubborn desire to live. He may survive a long ordeal of scarcity of food and water and may be rescued from the raft in time, but he is so weak that he must be fed and taken care of by others, perhaps for some time. He himself can help no one else. It is a joyless experience, a mere undergoing of sufferings with determination, waiting for the end of the ordeal to come.

[7] One who is serving God as a Christian is different. True, he must endure. That endurance includes facing up to the things of everyday life as well as much opposition, suffering and persecution. Where, then, is a Christian's endurance different? Well, differently from the man on the raft, he starts on his course voluntarily, knowing where he is aiming and why he must endure. He also knows that he has Jehovah God at his side. He does not despair; he is not starved as he goes along, because he is spiritually fed. Instead of getting weaker like the man on the raft, he keeps getting stronger because he knows that he is pleasing God. He is helping others to endure. His interest in others occupies him so that he thinks little of any hardships he may undergo. He is spiritually built up. As he endures, he gets stronger instead of weaker. His destination is sure, not a matter of doubt, and he *is* happy. Knowing where he is going and why, he is able to endure with joy because it is evidence that

The world's view of endurance is that it is like the experience of a man on a life raft. A Christian's endurance is different; he starts on his course voluntarily and keeps getting stronger

5. What is the only worthwhile objective, and why?
6. Describe the world's view of endurance.
7. Contrast the Christian's view of endurance with that of the world.

he is on the right course and is a token of God's approval of him. The apostle Paul encouraged the Thessalonian Christians with this very truth:

[8] "We ourselves take pride in you among the congregations of God because of your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the tribulations that you are bearing. This is a proof of the righteous judgment of God, leading to your being counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are indeed suffering." (2 Thess. 1:4, 5) Such endurance works out benefits for the endurer and for those who observe his conduct. Having God's approval he cannot help but be happy. He sees matters working out just as he expected them to—just as God's Word foretold they would—so he has no cause nor inclination to complain. He will not have a sad countenance, as though his endurance is a burden.

[9] The Scriptures place a high value on endurance and show that it is one of the qualities that a Christian must have. As Jesus himself pointed out, by endurance on their part Christians would acquire their souls (lives). (Luke 21:19) The apostle Paul commended the Christians at Thessalonica for their endurance due to their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 1:3) Peter admonished Christians to add to the other Christian qualities the important one of endurance. (2 Pet. 1:6) Constant are the warnings in the Scriptures against falling away or forsaking the Christian course, dropping out of the race.—Heb. 10:38, 39; 2 Tim. 4:10; Matt. 24:13; Heb. 6:4-6; Rev. 2:10.

THE SITUATION TODAY

[10] What have we observed as to endurance among those who have professed to take up the course of being followers of Christ? In Christendom there are millions of dropouts, wholesale increase in disrespect of law and order, and the churches in Christendom have been most alarmed of all by the tremendously growing dropout rate among the clergy. Jesus foresaw this very thing, saying: "Because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matt. 24:12) These things, therefore, are no surprising facts to the student of the Bible, for God's Word tells us that Christendom is a part of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, which is against God, and therefore these clergymen are not men truly dedicated to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ. They do not have his spirit and his assistance, without which it is impossible to endure. No wonder they drop out.—Rev. 18:2, 21; Jer. 51:58; Isa. 40:30, 31.

NEGATIVE ATTITUDE WEAKENS ENDURANCE

[11] But what is the situation among those who have come to a knowledge of Jehovah and his purpose through his kingdom and who have made a true dedication to Jehovah through Jesus Christ? While by far the majority are enduring, some, sad to say, have to a greater or lesser extent lost their first love and joy in serving God and have begun to look upon the Kingdom service as a work that is burdensome. Although we might not have that attitude, our joy in endurance is weakening if, when we are in the field service, we are just waiting for the time to quit and go home. It is a sign that we need to think seriously about refreshing our endurance.

[12] Also, when someone speaks of taking up full-time pioneer service, another may say, "That's not for me. I'm just not made

8. Of what did Paul say endurance of persecutions and tribulations was a proof? Why would such an endurer not have a sad countenance?
9. What is the Scriptural evaluation of endurance?
10. What is the situation in Christendom as regards endurance?
11, 12. (a) What is the situation with most of Jehovah's witnesses? (b) What evidences would show that the endurance of some is weakening?

to keep up that kind of work day after day." Again, when someone expresses a desire to become a missionary or move to another land to serve in a wider field, have you heard others make remarks like these: "What do you want to do that for? You've got a good life here." "How are you going to support yourself?" "What if you get sick? You won't have the hospitals they have here." Such remarks are evidences that the endurance of these persons is weakening. Worse, such an attitude works toward breaking down the endurance of others.

13 Jehovah has given his people work to do, and he wants them to enjoy it. (Eccl. 3:12, 13) Jesus, even while undergoing heavy trials, was joyful. He knew when he entered his ministry at the age of thirty years that he would suffer much at the hands of the Jews and would finally be put to death. He told his disciples this in advance. But did he let this dampen his joy in serving God? No. The apostle Paul says: "For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2) He joyfully recommended his course to others and showed that they would not be alone in it when he extended the invitation: "Get under my yoke with me." (Matt. 11:29, ftn., *NW*, 1950 edition) Even on the last days of his life on earth, when he knew an ignominious death on the torture stake was imminent, he did not lose his joy and make those around him sad; rather, he strengthened his disciples, giving them courage to bear up. In fact, on the very night before his death he gave his warmest, most encouraging and heart-strengthening talk to his disciples.—John, chapters 14 to 17.

13. With what should our endurance be accompanied, and how did Jesus illustrate this?

14 Now Jesus Christ, glorified in heaven, is in command of the holy angels and in charge of the preaching work that must be done. He has assigned the angels under him to responsible duties, *overseeing the* proclamation of "this good news of the kingdom." (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 14:6, 7) They are "sent forth to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation." (Heb. 1:14) These angels are not sent to search out the faults of those in the preaching work and to condemn them, but to help them. They are concerned most deeply with the work that God's servants are doing, because they see clearly that it has to do with the vindication of Jehovah's name. They want to see integrity maintained and Satan proved by Jehovah's Christian witnesses to be a liar in his claim that man on earth will not keep integrity to God, but will, because of selfishness or fear, fail to endure under test. The angels observe the attitude and actions of Jehovah's servants, and they are happy when God's people carry on his work in peace, unity and endurance. (1 Cor. 4:9; 11:10) They are disappointed when some show a lack of obedience and a failure to endure. They stand fully equipped and ready to give all necessary help to Christians who call upon God for their services. With Jehovah's spirit upon his Christian witnesses and with angels backing them up, Christians have full assurance that they can endure.—Ps. 34:7; 2 Ki. 6:15-17.

JEREMIAH AN EXAMPLE OF ENDURANCE

15 The Bible tells us that "all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Rom.

14. What part do the angels play in the matter of our endurance?

15, 16. Whose life provides an example of endurance for us, and what was the situation when he started his course of endurance?

15:4) One of these whose recorded life course provides much to strengthen our endurance is Jeremiah. It will be profitable for us to give attention to him so that we may build up the quality of endurance in our lives.

16 The kingdom of Judah was in a bad condition in the time of Jeremiah's ministry. The ten-tribe kingdom of Israel had been taken away by the nation of Assyria nearly one hundred years before Jeremiah's prophesying began. The kingdom of Judah had followed the course of unfaithfulness that her sister, the ten-tribe kingdom, had pursued, eventually becoming even worse. Before Jeremiah came upon the scene King Manasseh had produced so much wickedness by promoting Baal worship that, even though he later repented, Judah continued saturated in such wickedness that Jehovah declared that he would in time wipe out Jerusalem and would let the inhabitants of Judah be carried away. —2 Chron. 33:18, 19; 2 Ki. 21:13, 14.

17 Amon the son of Manasseh was like his father. After a wicked reign of two years he was succeeded by Josiah, in 659 B.C.E. It was in the thirteenth year of Josiah that Jeremiah was called by Jehovah to prophesy to Judah, forty years before Jerusalem's destruction. King Josiah was doing what he could to restore true worship in Israel. He brought about great reforms, but still there was much wickedness in the land. When Jeremiah was called to the office of prophet he knew that it would be a test of endurance for him. Jehovah warned him that the Jews would fight against him and that there was a danger that he might be struck with terror because of them. Jehovah pointed out that there was no reason for fear because He would back Jeremiah up and would be with him to deliver him. Jeremiah, therefore, should speak everything that God told him to speak.—Jer. 1:7, 8, 17-19.

18 Jehovah told Jeremiah what the nature of his work would be, revealing that it was the delivering of a message that would bring great opposition. Jeremiah was required to tell Judah, particularly the priests, prophets and princes thereof, to their very faces, that they had turned away from Jehovah. There were blood marks of the souls of the innocent ones on Judah's skirts. (Jer. 2:26, 34) The nation of Judah was like a prostitute. (Jer. 3:1) She had broken the covenant she had made with Jehovah. (Jer. 11:3-8) And finally, Jeremiah had to tell the people that to save their lives they should submit to the king of Babylon—speech that to the Jewish leaders was treason and subversive action, worthy of death. (Jer. 27:12, 17) Furthermore, he informed the Jews that Babylon would conquer them, taking them into exile for seventy years—a strong message indeed.—Jer. 25:7-11; 32:24, 36.

SIMILARITY TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

19 A study of the actions of Jeremiah is appropriate for Jehovah's witnesses today, to which they should pay more than the usual attention. The similarity of Jeremiah's experience to that of Jehovah's witnesses can be readily noted: First, the commission, an urgent declaration of judgment from Jehovah; second, a spiritual rebuilding of those who could become zealous servants of Jehovah; third, the demonstration of the operation of God's spirit upon Jeremiah. God's word was as a fire in Jeremiah's bones that did not die out but grew in intensity as he endured. (Jer. 20:9) Fourth, the negative attitude of

17. How did Jeremiah know that his being a prophet would mean a test of endurance for him?

18. Why was Jeremiah's message one that would *require* endurance, for him to deliver it?

19. What are five outstanding similarities of Jeremiah's experience to that of Jehovah's witnesses today?

Jehovah's dedicated servants the Jews, which was like that of the religions of Christendom and like a few among God's people today. These Jews could have and should have supported Jeremiah in his work, but they had undermined one another's faith, losing joy in Jehovah, zeal and spirituality to a death-dealing degree. And, fifth, the need for endurance.

[20] James, the half brother of Jesus and one of his faithful disciples, said: "Look! We pronounce happy those who have endured." (Jas. 5:11) Jeremiah, after having endured, was happy. He endured through the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of its king of the line of David, as he had prophesied. He was taken down into Egypt by the few Jews who were left in the land by the Babylonians, to continue his work of prophesying—a total of more than forty years of endurance in Jehovah's service, in a territory assignment that grew progressively worse. He was not happy to see Jerusalem destroyed or its temple pillaged; in fact, he wrote the book of Lamentations, an expression of deep sorrow at the reproach it brought on Jehovah's name. But he was happy to see God's word carried out, vindicating him as Jehovah's true prophet. So powerful was his prophesying that a lamenting and denunciatory complaint is today called a "jeremiad." Furthermore, Jeremiah saw his preaching bear fruitage, other praisers of Jehovah who were also spared due to the upbuilding feature of his message. Notable among these were Baruch and Ebed-melech.

20. Why was Jeremiah happy, although he endured so much?

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Jehovah, the Great Overseer and Shepherd of His People.
- Jehovah Shepherds the Christian Congregation.
- Why Look into the Bible?
- Return to Jehovah While There Is Yet Time.

[21] Jeremiah had opportunity many times to drop out during his more than forty years of prophesying, but he was not of that sort. Rather, he was of the faithful, enduring sort of worshipers by whom God is not ashamed to be "called upon as their God, for he has made a city ready for them."—Heb. 11:16; 1 John 2:19.

[22] Jeremiah was a prophet called by Jehovah and inspired to declare his word. He was also a priest. (Jer. 1:1) Today Jehovah's Word is complete and he no longer inspires persons to prophesy for him, but he does have witnesses on the earth upon whom he has put his spirit and he has sent them in a priestly capacity, teaching God's laws, and has also commissioned them to preach. In a sense his faithful anointed ones are prophets, in that they declare the prophecies written, along with their application. (Acts 2:17) Their companions, the "great crowd" of "other sheep," have undertaken to assist them in the worldwide proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom and to declare the prophecies as announced by the faithful anointed remnant. Can they maintain the faith and endurance of Jeremiah? We will consider how this can be done in the following article.—Mark 13:10.

21. What sort of person was Jeremiah?
22. (a) Does Jehovah have inspired prophets today? (b) What kind of prophets does he have, if any?

Can You Imitate JEREMIAH'S ENDURANCE?

"Brothers, take as a pattern of the suffering of evil and the exercising of patience the prophets, who spoke in the name of Jehovah."– Jas. 5:10.

HOW do you want your life to turn out? Certainly you hope it will have a happy outcome. You want your conduct to merit commendation and to be such that it is of value and results in real benefit to others. But life has many facets and vicissitudes. How can one be sure that one's life will turn out right? Is there a formula for this that is sure and clear to follow?

[2] The unnamed writer of the letter to the Hebrews, generally understood to be the apostle Paul, gives advice in this respect, saying: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith."—Heb. 13:7.

[3] It is as simple as that. Paul speaks here primarily of the apostles, who were taking the lead among the Christians at that time. Today we have men of like faith who have taken the lead among God's *people.* So we can observe the faithful men today who take the lead among us, particularly those of the governing body of the "faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45-47) In chapter eleven of Hebrews Paul had described the faith of the servants of God in Hebrew times and earlier as examples. We have, additionally, a complete written record of the pattern made by the faithful men of olden times by which to direct our conduct. Therefore, if our conduct does not turn out well it is certainly our own fault. We can make it turn out well if we really want it to.

[4] Among those who have spoken the word of God to us is the prophet Jeremiah, not by direct speech, but as written in God's Word "that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. 15:4) We have quite a complete record of Jeremiah's life and conduct, which is one of outstanding endurance. If we take our course of conduct and check it against Jeremiah's under the various circumstances that he faced, we can imitate his faith and achieve the endurance of Jeremiah, which is so much needed in our day.

[5] We will clearly see, by considering the matter, that Jehovah is the One who gives the qualities and strength to endure. We cannot endure by the guidance of our own wisdom or in our own strength. Neither could Jeremiah. (Jer. 17:9; Prov. 3:5, 6) So to follow Jeremiah's pattern of faith-

1, 2. Is there a formula by which one can be sure his life will turn out well? Explain.
3. Whose conduct can we contemplate with benefit?
4. How can we imitate Jeremiah's faith?
5. Is following Jeremiah's pattern of endurance following a man? Explain.

ful endurance is not to follow a man, but is actually an imitation of the faithful pattern of Jeremiah's life that was produced by Jehovah's dealings with him. Therefore, we must follow the pattern Jehovah gives and the sources of help he provides in order to endure.

COURAGE

6 Do you have the courage to take up the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom to the people? Jeremiah's task was very similar. And he did it. How?

7 At the very start he got a clear grasp of his commission. He had to know just what he was to do. Jehovah told him at the start: "See, I have commissioned you this day to be over the nations and over the kingdoms, in order to uproot and to pull down and to destroy and to tear down, to build and to plant." Do all this! How? Not according to Jeremiah's own reasonings or words, nor by philosophy or psychology nor by being a social reformer. Neither did he get authorization from the prophets and priests. No, Jehovah said: "Here I have put my words in your mouth," and "everything that I shall command you, you should speak."—Jer. 1:7, 9, 10.

8 You may have said: "I like the message of Jehovah's witnesses, but me—a preacher—never!" Well, Jeremiah at first objected when Jehovah informed him that he was to be a prophet. (Jer. 1:5, 6) Appointed over the nations! What a commission! Jeremiah was a young man at that time, but he felt like a mere boy. He felt absolutely unqualified, and here God told him he must speak to everyone to whom God would send him and, from Jehovah's words, this evidently included kings. But now he knew he would be speaking God's own words, and God, who sits so high above the nations that the inhabitants are as grasshoppers, could certainly make Jeremiah's utterances come true. (Isa. 40:22) Jeremiah could be absolutely confident in everything that he said. What an incentive for endurance!

EXCUSES

9 Now, someone may say, "Jeremiah was different from me. He was a *prophet*, called by God himself." Is the commission of Jehovah's witnesses any less definite? God gave Jeremiah his commission, not directly, but through an angel. But to Christians God has spoken by One far greater than angels, giving them their clear-cut commission. Yes, it is "by means of a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things." "That is why it is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us." (Heb. 1:2; 2:1) It is none other than the Son of God, who has been given the rod of authority over the nations, to "dash them to pieces" like an earthenware vessel, who has said to us: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things," and "this good news of the kingdom will be preached." It is not our message, but God's.—Ps. 2:9; Matt. 28:19, 20; 24:14.

10 Again, one may reply, "But Jeremiah was inspired." True. Note, however, that the spirit of inspiration was not on Jeremiah at all times; it was only when Jehovah gave him specific messages to deliver. (Jer. 36:1, 2; 42:7) Nevertheless, he was

6, 7. What, first, did Jeremiah do, to have courage to endure?

8. What was Jeremiah's first reaction on being called as a prophet, but what gave him courage to go ahead?

9. Why can we not excuse ourselves from preaching by saying that Jeremiah was different in that he was called as a *prophet* by Jehovah?

10. Would it be easier for Jehovah's witnesses to endure if they were inspired, as Jeremiah was?

a full-time prophet, going among the people all the time. (Jer. 37:4; 18:11; 7:2; 2:2; 11:2, 6) And besides being a prophet, Jeremiah had another job. He was a priest. (Jer. 1:1) With Jeremiah, as with us, he did not always have a spectacular assignment to perform, but it was an everyday matter of serving God, continuing throughout the daily routine of life. He could have turned away from his commission, becoming a dropout because of the attraction of a life of comfort or materialistic things. It would have been easy for Jeremiah to become weary in well-doing. He had to get up in the morning and be busy about his prophetic duties. He had to perform his priestly services, when on duty at the temple, under an overseer, perhaps one who did not like him. He had to put up with the corruption of his associate priests, their perversion of judgment through bribe-taking, their immorality, and their hatred of Jeremiah for condemning their ways.—Jer. 6:13.

[11] Jeremiah's endurance was lifelong. We must remember that he started prophesying as a young man in the thirteenth year of King Josiah, who began to reign in 659 B.C.E. From 647 B.C.E., then, until the fall of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., he continued without letup. (Jer. 25:3; 39:1) How many of us have spent more than forty years in the ministry? Also he devoted considerable time and energy to writing. Besides his scrolls of Jeremiah and Lamentations, Jeremiah is credited with writing the books of First and Second Kings. This required painstaking research, but how valuable it is to us!

[12] How did Jeremiah maintain a strong heart to perform his work daily, doing it well and without growing weary? Jehovah's words and spirit sustained him, according to Jehovah's promise: "I have made you today a fortified city and an iron pillar and copper walls against all the land, toward the kings of Judah, toward her princes, toward her priests and toward the people of the land." That is why Jeremiah could "gird up [his] hips" and keep busy. Jeremiah knew that he was facing a life-or-death fight, but he also knew that he had the backing of the greatest power in the universe: "Do not be afraid because of their faces," encouraged Jehovah, "do not be struck with any terror . . . they will be certain to fight against you, but they will not prevail against you, for 'I am with you . . . to deliver you.'" —Jer. 1:8, 17-19.

11. How long did Jeremiah prophesy, and what other valuable contribution did he make?

12. What enabled Jeremiah to do his work wholeheartedly, and what empowered him to face his opponents without fear?

ATTITUDE TOWARD COMMISSION

[13] It was not altogether courage by which Jeremiah endured, nor was it sheer determination, "gritting his teeth," as it were. By a thorough understanding *of his* commission, he realized that his work was not solely destructive, declaring calamity to the nations. It was also to *plant* and to *build up*. That part was a joy and a pleasure to him. Determination by itself would not sustain him. He did his work with *love* and compassion for the people. Jeremiah knew that the people were like sheep with false shepherds. Prophets whom Jehovah had not sent nor spoken to claimed to represent Him and haughtily assumed authority over the people, causing them to misunderstand God and his ways and commands. On these prophets and on the priests a mountainous weight of blame rested, for Jehovah told Jeremiah: "If they had stood in my intimate group, then they would have made my people hear my own words, and they would have caused them to turn back from their bad way and from the badness of their

13. (a) Did sheer determination uphold Jeremiah's endurance, or what? (b) Why did Jeremiah have compassion for the people?

dealings." (Jer. 23:22) These men were actually the cause of all the trouble on the people. Instead of endurance in God's way they had instilled in the people an "enduring unfaithfulness." It became the "popular course." (Jer. 8:5, 6) Do you see a parallel today?

14 Jeremiah wanted the people to hear God's words and live, not die in Jerusalem's impending destruction. God had not given him superior understanding merely for his own salvation. It was in order that he could help other sincere ones. Jeremiah's attitude was reflected in his preaching. Likewise today, people sense our attitude, whether it is just to get the preaching done or is out of love and a desire to help. It is the sincere, loving attitude that draws the "sheep" and that is the real core of our endurance, for, love "endures all things," and "love never fails."—1 Cor. 13:7, 8; Matt. 9:36; John 10:2-5.

15 Is your love as strong as Jeremiah's? His concern for the people was so great that he actually wept over the calamity that was to come upon them. (Jer. 8:21 to 9:1; Luke 19:41-44) He did not let opposition embitter him. Even toward corrupt, cowardly King Zedekiah he was kind as well as respectful. In fact, after Zedekiah had treacherously turned him over to the princes who intended to put him to death, Jeremiah showed real concern for Zedekiah's welfare, pleading with him to obey the voice of Jehovah in order to continue living.—Jer. 38:4, 5, 19-23.

THE ISSUE

16 Does your endurance weaken a little when sometimes you call on those who do not want to hear, house after house? Then think, please, of Jeremiah standing, perhaps, on the Mount of Olives, looking across the Kidron Valley over Jerusalem, contemplating its high walls and the still higher situation of the magnificent temple, knowing that he, a puny man, had to cross the valley into the city. Then he had to call the priests and influential men of the city together at the gateway to the Valley of Hinnom and break an earthenware flask, telling them to their faces that that was the way Jehovah would smash Jerusalem, including their beautiful, imposing temple! Moreover, if Jehovah spared him to escape their wrath there, he was to go on up into the courtyard of the temple itself and declare the coming calamity to the priests, prophets and people.—Jer. 19:1, 2, 10, 11, 14, 15.

17 The common people might listen to Jeremiah. But those priests and leaders—little doubt but that they would only oppose his work more fiercely. What emboldened him to speak to those haughty men? Jeremiah saw the issue. He never lost sight of the fact that more was involved than his personal safety, even more than the lives of the people and the city of Jerusalem. He knew that the name of Jehovah was involved. The judgment against the nation was grievous. He felt sorrow over the degradation to which the Israelites had gone in false worship. Jerusalem was the city of the great King Jehovah God, and the kings of the line of David sat on "Jehovah's throne" there. (Matt. 5:35; 1 Chron. 29:23) The people had gone so far from the true God that they had set up carved images to insult Him by burning their sons and daughters in sacrifice.—Jer. 7:31.

18 Jeremiah could see, as he looked down

14. What was it about Jeremiah's preaching that appealed to sincere ones, and what was the core of Jeremiah's endurance?

15. Describe Jeremiah's concern for the welfare of those to whom he preached.

16, 17. (a) If we weaken from meeting indifference, what can we consider to encourage us? (b) What emboldened Jeremiah to speak freely to the priests and leaders of the people who he knew would very likely oppose him all the more?

18. As Jeremiah looked down on the city of Jerusalem, what deplorable sight did he behold, and did he adopt a superior or self-righteous attitude because of this?

on the rooftops of the city, columns of sacrificial smoke going up and the people, particularly the women, offering up sacrificial cakes and drink offerings to the "queen of the heavens." This was the detestable sight that Jehovah had to look upon every day. The city that stood for His name, insulting him to the limit! Jeremiah marveled at Jehovah's long-suffering. He was forced to say, "Surely they are of low class." (Jer. 5:4; 19:13; 44:15-19; 18:13) Even then, Jeremiah took on himself a share of the displeasure of Jehovah on the nation, saying: "We do acknowledge, O Jehovah, our wickedness, the error of our forefathers, for we have sinned against you. Do not disrespect us for the sake of your name; do not despise your glorious throne." (Jer. 14:20, 21) He did not have a "holier-than-thou" attitude, but was grateful for Jehovah's undeserved kindness in using him to help others.

[19] The understanding of the issue should be a powerful motivating force to Christians today, at a time when clergymen are saying "God is dead," and turning the people to the idol gods of evolution, nationalism, science and philosophy. For just such a reason Jeremiah wrote, and it strengthens our endurance today:

[20] "In no way is there anyone like you, O Jehovah. You are great, and your name is great in mightiness. Who should not fear you, O King of the nations, for to you it is fitting; because among all the wise ones of the nations and among all their kingships there is in no way anyone like you. And at one and the same time they prove to be unreasoning and stupid. . . . But Jehovah is in truth God. He is the living God and the King to time indefinite. Because of his indignation the earth will rock, and no nations will hold up under his denunciation. This is what you men will say to them: 'The gods that did not make the very heavens and the earth are the ones who will perish from the earth and from under these heavens.' He is the Maker of the earth by his power, the One firmly establishing the productive land by his wisdom, and the One who by his understanding stretched out the heavens."—Jer. 10:6-8, 10-13.

19, 20. How is an understanding of the issue of the sanctification of Jehovah's name important for us today, and what did Jeremiah say on the subject that encourages us?

ENCOURAGEMENT

[21] Do you at times become discouraged over many rebuffs? Follow Jeremiah's example for comfort and encouragement. Keep in mind the words of Jesus' half brother James: "Elijah [the prophet, like Jeremiah] was a man with feelings like ours." (Jas. 5:17) So just as we are today, Jeremiah was an imperfect man, living among imperfect people, most of whom opposed the truth. Right after the flask-breaking incident Jeremiah suffered the greatest indignities. Not only was his message as delivered in the name of Jehovah ignored, but, symbolic of the greatest disrespect, he was struck by the temple commissioner! This striking may have been a beating with rods, administered at the temple commissioner's orders. With such a high official taking the lead, the people no doubt felt free to heap jeers, ridicule and abuse on him to their satisfaction. They too may have struck him and spit on him, egged on by the prophets and priests who hated Jeremiah. Then, as if he, Jehovah's representative, were a criminal, he was put into the stocks. (Jer. 20:1-3) These were probably inside a room or cell at the gate.—Compare 2 Chronicles 16:10; Acts 16:24.

21, 22. (a) Was Jeremiah a "superman," so that ridicule and persecution did not disturb him? (b) What happened to him after he had carried out his mission to break the flask before the priests and older men? (c) What was Jeremiah's reaction after this, but what did he then do, and what impelled him to continue preaching?

Jeremiah suffered the greatest indignities, including being kept overnight in stocks as if he were a criminal. Yet he endured all the reproach

[22] The Hebrew word for "stocks" means "twisted, distorted." They forced a person into a cramped, unnatural posture. After such a night Jeremiah would be bruised and terribly cramped and exhausted, and his spirits were low. He even went so far as to say: "I am not going to make mention of him, and I shall speak no more in his name." But he did not forsake calling to God for help. In prayer to Jehovah he recounted that he knew *that* he had been a cause for reproach and jeering because of Jehovah's name and word and that everywhere there were people talking bad about him, looking for him to make a mistake so that they could get rid of him. In fact, he might easily have died at the people's hands on that very day. But he saw how Jehovah had been with him as a righteous Judge and Deliverer, and with contentment he rested his case in Jehovah's hands. And he found it much easier to endure the reproach and suffering than to endure the pressure of Jehovah's word within him, which impelled him to speak: "In my heart it proved to be like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I got tired of holding in, and I was unable to endure it." Has not Jehovah likewise delivered his people in modern times and infused them with zeal by means of his Word and spirit? The history of Jehovah's witnesses as well as our own personal experiences so testify. (Jer. 20:9-12) Is one not happier enduring reproach than suffering the chastisement of a good conscience trained in Jehovah's Word?

[23] At one time Jeremiah asked: "Why is it that the way of wicked ones is what has succeeded, that all those who are committing treachery are the unworried ones? . . . They keep going ahead; they have also produced fruit. You are near in their mouth, but far away from their kidneys [seat of emotion or feeling]." Jeremiah got his answer. Jehovah revealed that he was not with such ones and that he would uproot them from off their ground. Likewise, our endurance rests on the appreciation that Jehovah is also enduring and long-suffering, but that he is watching and he will execute his judgments against those who continue a bad course. Consequently, we should not lose our equilibrium because of others who seem to prosper in a wicked way of life, even if they should make showy claims

23. (a) When Jeremiah asked why the wicked prosper, what answer did he get? (b) What lesson should we learn from this, and what truth about God should we keep in mind?

of serving God. One who wants to please God must realize that God not only is, but that "he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." Endure, and you will be *rewarded*.—Jer. 12:1, 2, 12-14; Ps. 37:7-9; Heb. 11:6; Gal. 6:9.

[24] We should keep in mind the long time period during which Jeremiah served. Then we can understand why he made later statements, such as, "Cursed be the day on which I was born!" If one of us was arrested, beaten, thrown into stocks, arrested again and again, spent several terms in prison, heard ridicule and threats continually, well, we might, over a period of years, utter some fairly bitter complaints. But Jeremiah never charged God with wrongdoing. He realized his insignificance and knew that Jehovah understood his heart in union with Him and had empathy for him. (Jer. 20:14-18; 12:3) It should strengthen us when really discouraging circumstances seem to engulf us. For it was not Jeremiah, but Jehovah who was using Jeremiah, who held him up and invigorated him. It shows that if Jehovah chooses to let us come into adversity he has a purpose in it and, while we may suffer some and wonder why, Jehovah takes the responsibility to give us the added strength to come through with greater happiness afterward.

[25] At times our willing, quick obedience may be tested. Are we willing to take the time and expend the energy to do something that seems to be a relatively insignificant thing? Perhaps it is calling on scattered addresses of persons who were not home on previous calls. Or it may be making a return visit on those who merely took a magazine. It may be a matter of exerting ourselves regularly to hold a Bible study, or to call on persons needing help. Jeremiah might have complained at the long trip and the seeming insignificance of the matter when he was commanded to take a linen belt to the Euphrates River, a trip of about 300 miles one way, and to hide the belt in the cleft of a crag. Then, after some time he was directed to go back and get it. It was, of course, ruined. 'Why all this for a mere belt?' he might have asked. But, instead, he obeyed, and it provided strong testimony and a living picture of Jehovah's long-suffering with Israel and Judah. It impressed the observers with Jehovah's determination at last to bring to ruin his nation that he had worn about his hips like a belt for a praise and something beautiful to him, but which had become stubborn and idolatrous.—Jer. 13:1-11.

24. (a) What should we take into consideration when we read some of the things Jeremiah said when temporarily discouraged? (b) What should we realize when we come into adversity?

25. How does Jeremiah's example help us to see the need of obedience in seemingly insignificant things?

MARRIAGE

[26] Some dedicated witnesses of Jehovah have sought close companionship with those not dedicated and have even become married to unbelievers. The usual excuse for thus ignoring Jehovah's Word on the matter has been, 'There's nobody of my age in the congregation who is eligible.' Knowing as we do the danger of this course, we recognize in such reasoning a weakening of endurance. Jeremiah's example helps us also in this respect. In ancient Israel the motivation to marry was in some respects stronger than it is in our present time. Not only was there the same natural desire, but land inheritance and family name were very highly regarded, and the failure to bring forth heirs was considered a calamity. (Deut. 25:5, 6; 1 Sam. 1:5-11) Nevertheless, Jeremiah was given the following command by Jehovah: "You must not take for yourself

26, 27. (a) How do some display a *weakening of endurance*? (b) How does Jeremiah set a pattern for us on this important matter, and how should we view it?

a wife, and you must not come to have sons and daughters in this place." Not only, 'Do not marry an unbeliever,' but, 'Do not marry at all!'—Jer. 16:1, 2.

27 Jehovah had his reasons for the command, and he explained them to Jeremiah. Those who would be born at that critical time in Jerusalem's history would be brought forth only for calamity. Soon Jerusalem would be destroyed and their children would die. Jeremiah obeyed, counting Jehovah's service and his word of greater importance than even the matter of marriage. He *believed* Jehovah. In turn, Jehovah strengthened him to endure with a happy outcome. (Jer. 16:3, 4) Living in a much more urgent time than Jeremiah's, should we not show endurance by obeying Jehovah's Word, if marrying, to marry "only in the Lord"? Is it not better to wait, if necessary, for Jehovah to provide the things that he knows we individually need for endurance rather than displease him? Consider what Jehovah said to David at 2 Samuel 12:7-9.

ASSOCIATIONS

28 In the matter of associations, Jeremiah watched himself. Primarily, he valued Jehovah's word. It was his delight and exultation, and it kept him in close association with Jehovah. (Jer. 15:16) To maintain that close relationship with God he avoided association with those who had no interest in Jehovah's worship and who did not listen to his word so as to appreciate the seriousness of the time in which they were living. (Jer. 15:17) Nevertheless, in spite of the many haters of Jehovah, Jeremiah found good human associates. He had his faithful secretary Baruch. He had some who listened to him, including Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, who saved Jeremiah from the miry cistern. For this Jeremiah had the happy privilege of giving Ebed-melech Jehovah's promise of safety through Jerusalem's destruction. Jeremiah found the Rechabites faithful under test, putting to shame the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Jer. 35:1-19) So while Jeremiah did not have what the Israelites living a "normal life" would consider pleasure, yet he had that most valuable and pleasurable thing, insight and the knowledge of Jehovah, which is actually the greatest joy possible. (Jer. 9:23, 24; 1 Cor. 1:31) And for his faithfulness Jehovah associates him with that great "cloud of witnesses" for whom He has prepared a "city," his Kingdom government. Jehovah places him among those whose faith we can imitate.—Jer. 36:4-8; 38: 7-13; 39:15-18; Heb. 12:1; 11:16.

28. (a) What associations did Jeremiah value and find? (b) What association was most pleasurable of all, and with what fine company does Jehovah associate Jeremiah?

PHYSICAL SUFFERING

29 Not all of Jehovah's witnesses have undergone physical suffering for the truth, but many have, some going as far as death. Jeremiah was one that James referred to when he said: "Take as a pattern of the suffering of evil and the exercising of patience the prophets, who spoke in the name of Jehovah." (Jas. 5: 10) Jeremiah was threatened with death by the men in his hometown Anathoth (Jer. 11:21), struck and put in stocks overnight by Pashhur the temple commissioner (Jer. 20:2, 3), seized by the mob of priests, false prophets and the people in the temple and threatened with death. (Jer. 26:8-11) He was held in restraint in the Courtyard of the Guard (Jer. 32:2; 33:1), arrested on the charge of falling away to the Chaldeans when he left Jerusalem to go to his home in the territory of Benjamin; on this occasion the princes struck him and put him into the house of

29. What things did Jeremiah experience that make him a "pattern of the suffering of evil"?

fetters for many days; he had to appeal to the king to avoid dying there; even then he was put in custody in the Courtyard of the Guard. (Jer. 37:11-16, 20, 21) Later he was turned over by King Zedekiah to the princes, who sought to put Jeremiah to death by lowering him into a miry cistern.—Jer. 38:4-13.

30 Besides all this, Jeremiah endured the hardships of the Babylonian siege as did the other inhabitants of Jerusalem, good and bad. Finally he was released and his handcuffs removed by the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguard at the order of the high Babylonian officials now in charge of the city. Jeremiah loved those people who were now being so miserably mistreated and, more than that, he was so ashamed at the reproach on Jehovah's name. To think that God's own house, the temple, and God's own throne and his name people were besmirched and trampled under the unclean feet of God's ancient enemy Babylon and the worshipers of the demon god Merodach! He seemed to feel that he ought to go on into exile and suffer with the whole nation, so great was the reproach and disgrace.—Jer. 40:1-5.

31 Where did Jeremiah get such love? From Jehovah his God. For Jehovah was full of undeserved kindness in not turning completely away from his people, revealing through Jeremiah that he had not forgotten his covenant nor diminished in his love for his faithful servants Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. In this dark day of Israel's history Jeremiah had a happy hope, for God had inspired him to prophesy a restoration of Israel to Jehovah's favor after seventy years and, farther into the future than he may have realized, to foretell the making of a new covenant with spiritual Israel.—Jer. 31:31-34.

30. How did Jeremiah feel at the time when Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguard led the captives out of Jerusalem?

31. (a) How did Jehovah show his love even when giving Israel into exile? (b) What happy hope did Jeremiah have at this time?

PROTECTION

32 Consider now Jehovah's marvelous maneuverings in protecting Jeremiah. The odds were great against him, especially so as Jerusalem got sicker and sicker until finally the city was desperate due to the siege conditions brought by Nebuchadnezzar. The priests and prophets were Jeremiah's deadly enemies. The princes, nationalistic in spirit, for the most part hated him, looking on him as unpatriotic and seditious. And one of the most dangerous things that Jeremiah did was to affect the riches of the wealthy and influential ones when he told them to let their Hebrew servants go free, according to God's law. They at first obeyed, even concluding a covenant in the temple of Jehovah, hypocritically, of course, for when the danger to their city seemed past and they did not think they needed to appeal to Jehovah for help, they broke their covenant and took their Hebrew brothers back into bondage. For this Jeremiah told them that they would be given liberty to the sword, the pestilence and the famine.—Jer. 34:8-22.

33 Now, as you consider each of Jeremiah's deliverances, remember that Jehovah is the living God with the same power and care over his people today. In Jeremiah's trials Jehovah was so close to him that when Jeremiah held to his integrity, Jehovah did not forsake him. Never did he abandon Jeremiah to suffer trials or temptations by himself so that he was not able to bear them. (1 Cor. 10:13) Never did Jeremiah have cause to feel aloneness. Just at the time when Jeremiah needed

32. For what reasons was Jeremiah more and more in need of protection as Jerusalem approached her end?

33. Why did Jeremiah never feel aloneness, and how did Jehovah show himself close to Jeremiah in everything?

it most, Jehovah put some fear into Jeremiah's enemies, some qualm of conscience in those who still had respect for God's law, or brought forth some right-minded individual, besides using direct angelic protection, as during Jerusalem's destruction. And now, note in the following enumerated instances, that the margin often seemed to be very narrow, testing Jeremiah's endurance severely, but the full security of Jehovah was there, nonetheless.

34 (1) The soulful desire of Jeremiah's priestly enemies was to kill him, to get him out of the way. But they knew that he spoke Jehovah's word (in itself a great protection), so they said "Peace!" to him but were watching for him to make the least slip so that they would have a way that they could take revenge on him, still making it look legal. But Jehovah guided him carefully and skillfully, like a "terrible mighty one." (Jer. 20:10, 11) It makes us think of Jehovah's guidance of his people by means of his "faithful and discreet slave" in our time. Jehovah's witnesses' speaking the truth at all times has disarmed their enemies, keeping them at their wits' end to find some way to stop the work without violating the laws they use to hold their own society together.

35 (2) Early in King Jehoiakim's reign Jeremiah was about to be killed by the priests and prophets and their followers, but Jehovah turned the fearful situation into an opportunity for Jeremiah to defend and legally establish his preaching. On this occasion it was the mature reasoning of certain older men of Judah that Jehovah provided to come to his defense. They cited past examples of Jehovah's dealings, with the result that powerful prince Ahikam stepped in to shield Jeremiah.—Jer. 26:7-24.

36 (3) Jeremiah was imprisoned many days in the house of fetters and would not have lived much longer, but he appealed to King Zedekiah, who, contrary to his unscrupulous, cowardly personality, commanded that Jeremiah be brought into the Courtyard of the Guard, where bread was given him daily. Why would Zedekiah do this? Jehovah's care for Jeremiah is the only answer.—Jer. 37:18-21.

37 (4) When Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch were in danger of death from King Jehoiakim after the king had burned Jeremiah's scroll, Jehoiakim's men searched for them fruitlessly. The princes had warned them to hide before the scroll was read. But whether the friendly princes continued to help them to hide or not, it was actually Jehovah's protection, for the record reads: "Jehovah kept them concealed."—Jer. 36:19-26.

38 (5) It was Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a man of right heart, whom Jehovah prompted to action to deliver Jeremiah from death in the miry cistern. Ebed-melech took thirty men with him because it was a dangerous thing to come to Jeremiah's assistance. Ebed-melech needed them to block Jeremiah's enemies from preventing his rescue. And it was none other than Zedekiah who authorized it. Again, was it through Zedekiah's love for Jeremiah? We can confidently answer, No. —Jer. 38:7-13.

39 (6) Nebuchadnezzar, world ruler, worshiper of the god Merodach, king of Babylon the longtime enemy of Jerusalem, was moved to command Nebuzar-adan,

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34. What did Jeremiah's enemies know that held them back, and how have Jehovah's witnesses been similarly protected?
35. What instrument did Jehovah use to protect Jeremiah when he was about to be killed in the temple by the priests and people?
36. How did Jehovah rescue him from death in the house of fetters?
37. Who became his protection when King Jehoiakim sought to kill him?
38. What means did Jehovah employ when Jeremiah would have died in the cistern?
39. How was Jehovah's hand clearly evident in Jeremiah's release by the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard?

the captain of his guard, to see that no harm came to Jeremiah! Why? Because Jeremiah had been true in speaking Jehovah's word, and Jehovah, who can maneuver kings and who does "according to his own will among the army of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth," was by his side.—Jer. 39:11-14; 40:1-5; Dan. 4:35.

40 (7) Through the terrible destruction of Jerusalem, with no food left in the city, some reduced to the piteous state of eating their own children, the walls finally breached, Jerusalem's inhabitants slaughtered, King Zedekiah's own sons killed before his eyes, which were then put out, and the captives led out in chains, Jeremiah survived. (Jer. 19:9; 39:6-9; 52:10, 11) Jehovah's angels had protected him. Outside the burning city, with the screams of those whom the Babylonians had impaled ringing in his ears, Jeremiah could thank Jehovah for doing what would have been impossible for men to do. He was alive; Baruch had been spared; Ebed-melech was a survivor; honest-hearted Rechabites too were among the living captives. (Jer. 39:16-18; 35:17-19; 45:2, 5) God remembered his covenants with Abraham and David, so that he allowed Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim (taken to Babylon ten years earlier) to live and become an ancestor of the foster father of Jesus Christ, thereby providing him with the legal inheritance of the throne of David, and he preserved Jehozadak of the high-priestly line of Eleazar and *Phinehas*. —Jer. 52:31-34; Matt. 1:11, 16; 1 Chron. 6:1-15.

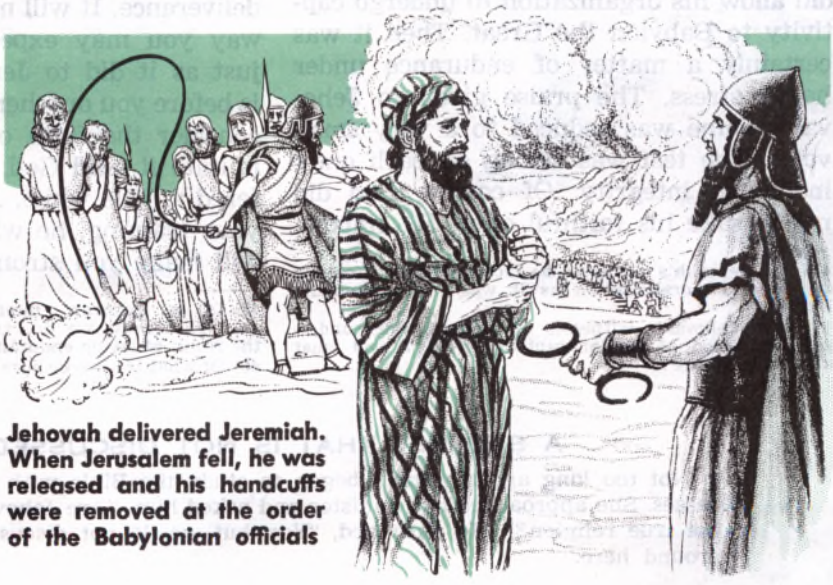
41 Furthermore, after all this, Jeremiah's prophecies were still not heeded by the few Israelites left in the land by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah was forcibly taken to Egypt. Here he continued to endure, not giving up his prophesying. It still took courage, because he had to declare that they would suffer calamity for trusting in the king of Egypt rather than Jehovah.—Jer. 43: 8-10; 44:1, 28, 29.

42 A thing outstanding about Jeremiah's endurance was that he experienced Jehovah's displeasure on Jehovah's earthly organization. That organization was taken away into exile, its members to become slaves. No longer did Jehovah have a free, independent earthly organization representing him. The city and kingdom that had long been a praise to his name were

40. (a) By what means did Jeremiah escape with his life through the siege, fall and destruction of Jerusalem? (b) How did Jehovah show then that he remembered his covenants?

41. After the fall of Jerusalem, why did Jeremiah still need the quality of endurance?

42. What was one of the very hardest of all the things Jeremiah endured?



Jehovah delivered Jeremiah. When Jerusalem fell, he was released and his handcuffs were removed at the order of the Babylonian officials

no more. The kings of the line of David were deposed. (Ezek. 21:25-27) No longer was Mount Zion "the exultation of the whole earth" and a praise to Jehovah's name, but it was now actually a reproach. (Ps. 48:2; Lam. 1:1, 8) Jeremiah knew that restoration was seventy years away, and that would be long past his life-span. Even this did not ruin Jeremiah's endurance.—Jer. 25:11, 12.

43 Today we do not have to endure such a crushing thing. Jehovah's organization of his people is unified, enjoying Jehovah's favor and expressions of his pleasure, and never will it be defeated, nor cast off as displeasing to God. (Isa. 54:7-15) No matter whether we are able to associate regularly with members of the organization and have direct contact with headquarters, or are completely isolated geographically or by reason of persecution, yes, even imprisoned in solitary confinement, we know that God's organization is still functioning, still praising his name. This makes it much easier to endure.

44 Some of the brothers living today did indeed pass through a time, during 1914-1918, when Jehovah was displeased and did allow his organization to undergo captivity to Babylon the Great. Then it was certainly a matter of endurance under heavy stress. The praise given to Jehovah's name was reduced to a very small voice. The test was strong on each one's individual integrity. Of course, God did not forsake his faithful ones. He empowered them to endure, and they came out stronger. He restored them in his love and since that time nothing, not even World War II, national revolutions, dictatorships, official bans, mobbing, imprisonings and death to some of its members has slowed down the growth of God's organization either in quantity or quality. It is this that we have to back up our endurance.

45 So, brothers, it is Jehovah who wants us to endure, and he is so concerned that he speaks to us through his Son. (Heb. 1:2) The throne of Jehovah is in the hands of a righteous King forever, and the King Jesus Christ is ruling actively to see that justice is done. All that we have to do is carry out the commission given to us, just as Jeremiah did, and leave the rest to the King. This does not make it a life of ease. Each one has to prove his integrity. It takes dedication and endurance. But happiness will not come by dropping out.

46 If you endure, you will be happy while doing so, and O how joyful when you reach your ultimate goal! In times of temptation or trial, pray and look for Jehovah's deliverance. It will not always come in the way you may expect, but it will come, just as it did to Jeremiah. When a task is before you or when you feel discouraged, consider the faith of men like Jeremiah, imitate it, and God, "after you have suffered a little while, . . . will himself finish your training, he will make you firm, he will make you strong."—1 Pet. 5:10.

43. Will Jehovah's witnesses be faced with the breaking up of God's organization as it was with Jeremiah? Explain.
44. Have Jehovah's witnesses of modern times undergone a period of similar captivity? Why? And what about the future?
45. (a) Is Jehovah interested in our endurance? (b) What must we do, and what must we realize is the result of losing endurance?
46. Of what can we be sure if we endure?

A SUBJECT THAT IS NOT DISCUSSED

● Not too long ago a woman began to study the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. She approached her minister and asked him, "Are Jehovah's witnesses the true religion?" He answered, "Yes, but we do not discuss those things around here."

EXPANSION AT HEADQUARTERS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

THE preaching of the Kingdom message by Jehovah's witnesses is expanding in all the earth, in 200 lands. In 1968 there were 1,155,826 active Witnesses, or more than five times the number there were just twenty years before!

To keep pace with this expansion, the international headquarters from which this gigantic preaching work is directed is also rapidly growing. May 2, 1969, saw the dedication of yet another addition to its complex of buildings in Brooklyn, New York. This seven-story home will be used to accommodate a portion of the growing headquarters staff of Jehovah's witnesses.

FIRST OF ITS KIND

The new structure has the distinction of being the first one built in the United States in an officially designated historic landmarks district. In 1965 the area known as Brooklyn Heights was named as New York City's first "Historic District." This gave the Landmarks Preservation Commission powers to block demolition of old buildings and to regulate the type of new construction.

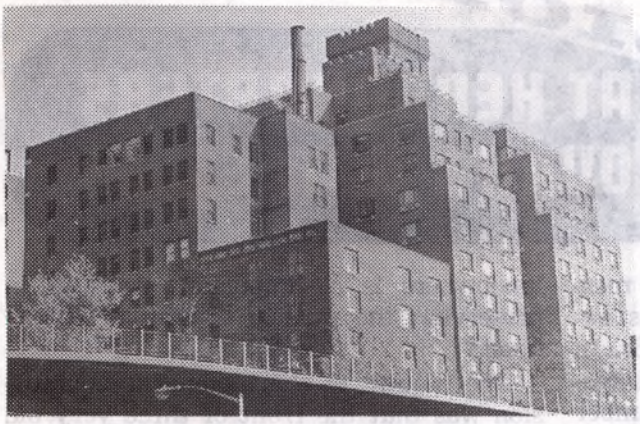
Thus, the plans of Jehovah's witnesses to build a twelve-story home were altered *to fit the* requirements of the landmarks commission. Regarding this the New York *Times* of October 4, 1967, commented editorially: "The [Watchtower] society has made extensive changes in the building as originally planned to insure that it will conform to the character of the area. This kind of cooperative concern on the part of landowners is as important as laws in preserving the quality of any neighborhood."

One request of the landmarks commission was that the front of three very old buildings be preserved. Therefore, the new home, located on the corner of Columbia Heights and Pineapple Streets, was designed to wrap around behind these three buildings. The rear of these buildings was torn down and the new structure is tied right into the front of them. Also, the large apartment building next to the new home, at 129 Columbia Heights, is owned by Jehovah's witnesses. Already over 100 members of the headquarters family live there and, in time, this building will be linked with the new structure.

SPECIAL TOUR

After a special dedication program, the 1,042 regular members of the headquarters family and more than sixty recently graduated missionary students enjoyed the first official tour of the new premises. How pleased they were!

Traveling through the long underground connecting tunnel, they came into the basement of the new building where the laundry will be located. Up on the first floor they saw where the garage, lobby, library and living quarters will be. The second floor has additional living quarters, two classrooms, and a four-foot-deep, sixteen-by-twenty-eight-foot pool for baptisms. The remaining four floors are exclusively for living quarters.



Headquarters facilities of Watchtower Society, including enlargements in 1911, 1927 and 1949

All together, there are rooming accommodations in the new structure for 104 persons. However, the adjoining apartment building eventually will provide living quarters for an additional 250 or so members of the headquarters family.

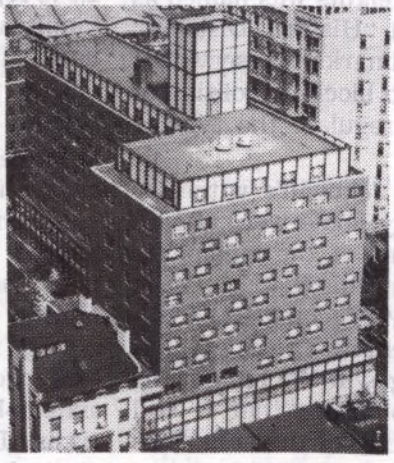
EXPANSION OF THE HOME

During the dedication program the president of the Watchtower Society, Nathan H. Knorr, described the expansion of the headquarters of Jehovah's witnesses since its move to Brooklyn in 1909. In 1908 the old four-story brownstone parsonage of Henry Ward Beecher at 124 Columbia Heights and a similar building adjoining it had been purchased. These were converted into a home for the Society's headquarters staff of thirty persons.

But due to rapid expansion, in 1911 spacious new housing accommodations adjoining the rear of the home on Columbia Heights were completed. Then in 1927, N. H. Knorr explained, further expansion at headquarters necessitated tearing down the buildings on Columbia Heights and putting up a new nine-story structure there, providing, in all, approximately 120 rooms. At that time there were about 180 members of the headquarters family.

By 1949 this number had increased to 284. Also, New York city planned a superhighway and for this purpose condemned a fifty-foot-wide portion of the Furman Street building. Thus, in 1949, a new twelve-story home was constructed on Columbia Heights and it was tied in to the 1927 structure. This made room for 450 persons.

However, in just ten years, the headquarters family had nearly doubled in number, and so construction was begun on another building directly across the street on Columbia Heights. In 1960 this huge structure, containing some 12,658 tons of concrete, 472 tons of steel and 230,000 bricks, was completed. This structure has a large auditorium, lecture hall, four classrooms and spacious office, and it more than doubled the living quarters of the home to about 950 persons.



Addition to Bethel Home completed in 1960

Thus the brand-new 1969 seven-story building is only the latest expansion of the headquarters facilities of Jehovah's witnesses. By means of underground tunnels these buildings, erected over the years, are joined together.

EXPANSION OF PRINTING FACILITIES

It is the demand world wide for

Bibles and Bible literature that necessitates this headquarters expansion. Back in 1919 Jehovah's witnesses secured factory space at nearby 35 Myrtle Avenue and began in 1920 its printing of the *Watchtower* magazine and other Bible literature.

Newest addition to Bethel Home in foreground. Alongside it, apartment building houses some members of growing headquarters staff

Soon this place was too small, and in 1922 the move was made into a six-story building at 18 Concord Street just a few blocks away. Practically overnight there was need for further expansion! So in 1927 a new eight-story factory was erected at 117 Adams Street, only about a ten-minute walk from the home on Columbia Heights.

Then, in 1949, factory space was almost doubled when a new nine-story addition was tied in to the Adams Street factory. This filled out the entire present city block! But demand for Bible literature did not let up, and just seven years later, in 1956, another block-large, thirteen-story factory was completed. Then in 1958 the nine-story factory on an adjoining city block was purchased and has been used almost exclusively for paper storage.

This provided a total of 436,000 square feet of factory floor space. But from 1957 to 1964 the number of Kingdom publishers placing Bible literature leaped from about 650,000 to over a million, and factory space was again cramped. Thus, in 1966, on an adjoining city block, construction was begun on the largest and newest factory of Jehovah's witnesses. It is an eleven-story building with 226,000 square feet of floor space. Even though occupied less than two years, this factory, too, is rapidly being filled to capacity!

Since the fall of 1967 a total of seventy-one large, brand-new motor-operated machines for printing and binding books and Bibles have been installed here, and twenty-seven more of such machines are due for delivery soon. Four of the installed machines are mammoth forty-ton printing presses, raising the total of these in the factories to twenty-two. And seven more will be added by the end of next year! Also, three complete new lines for binding books and Bibles have been installed and two more will be installed this year.

KINGDOM MESSAGE SPREADING WORLD WIDE

This expansion at the headquarters of Jehovah's witnesses is an indication of the spread of the Kingdom message world wide. For just the first eight months of this production year—September through April—17,718,518 books and Bibles were bound to meet the demand world wide,

Watchtower factories cover four city blocks. From those in the foreground, over 16 million Bible magazines are sent out each month

compared to 6,548,791 for the same time the previous year. So great has been the demand for Bible literature in all languages that it was necessary, not only to purchase more printing presses and bookbinding equipment, but also to arrange for a second shift of workers. Also, more than 132 million *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines were printed during these months, which is about 21 million over last year's record production for the same period. The magazines printed in the Society's plant at Brooklyn alone are in thirty-one languages; sixty-nine different magazines being produced here every month. In such quantity are they sent out that several trailer truckloads of magazines move out of the factory every day.

Newest and largest factory of Jehovah's witnesses, in foreground. 17,718,518 books bound here in past eight months

However, it is not only in Brooklyn that factories of Jehovah's witnesses are expanding because of the demand for Bible literature. In Wiesbaden, Germany, for instance, the production of books leaped from 469,719 for the first seven months of last year to 1,911,981 during the same period this year! Also, the production of magazines went up from less than 17.5 million to over 24.5 million during the same period.

Truly it is thrilling to see such wonderful evidence of the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy regarding the worldwide spread of the Kingdom message! It is additional proof that we are living in the last days of this system of things.—Matt. 24:3, 14.

Be There Right from the Start

THE start of what? The start of the 1969 "Peace on Earth" International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses! Why? Because its program, from beginning to end, will be the finest yet. It is filled with vital information that everyone needs to prepare for what lies ahead in the final years of this old system.

All who are keenly interested in what God is doing now and will do in the future will want to be present right from the first day of the program. Doing so will bring rich rewards. To appreciate why, let us consider the early part of the program.

The keynote address on the opening day is "Acquaint Yourself with God and Keep Peace." How well do you really know God? You may well find that new avenues of thought are opened up to you if you are present to hear this keynote speech.

Also, a full afternoon early in the assembly will be devoted to a discussion of the evidence that the Bible really is the *Word of God*. In these "last days" the Bible is being subjected to increasing attack. But when you hear people say that parts of the Bible are "myth," or that it is unscientific and unhistoric, can you produce facts to prove that they are wrong? How many solid arguments do you know that prove the Bible is not merely the writings of men, but that it really is the Word of God? An entire session will be devoted to this vital subject! It will surely fortify your faith.

Among the many other fine features of the assembly are the much-appreciated Bible dra-

mas. Almost every day will include one of these. Some will have modern-day settings; others will be put on in the dress of Bible times. One drama will feature King Saul and his son Jonathan, David the son of Jesse, and lovely Abigail. As you watch, you will come to appreciate more fully its meaning for us today.

An audio presentation will let us relive the unusual experiences of the prophet Jonah. Another will take us to the court of King Belshazzar just before the collapse of the ancient Babylonian Empire. Here we will be able to review the experiences of the prophet Daniel, who was God's spokesman at that significant time in history, and see how they should affect us.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

In connection with parents and children, many families today have problems that cry out for solutions. A series of discussions will be presented to help families overcome difficulties. Practical suggestions and demonstrations will rivet your attention to the platform. And these suggestions really work, for thousands of families throughout the world are enjoying the benefits of them right now, building a happy family life.

Too, an entire day of the assembly has been set aside for young people. It is a day filled with frank talks, dramas and engrossing discussions and demonstrations on how to deal with the many problems that youths have to face these days.

LEARNING ABOUT THE FUTURE

What about the future? The Bible book of Revelation is a prophetic book that tells us about the future. But so many people have difficulty understanding it. This assembly can help you to appreciate the meaning of this wonderful prophetic book.

There is also a session designed to help God's people to stand firm against all types of persecution. Servants of God expect Satan's final all-out assault soon. Now is the time to prepare for it. How can we do so? The assembly will help us to answer that question.

The public talk on the final day also concerns the future. It is entitled: "The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years." Every person who longs for peace to come to this earth will want to hear it. It will bring comfort, encouragement and great hope in these critical times.

BE THERE FROM THE START!

How can you enjoy and benefit from all these outstanding features of this international assembly? By being there right from the start! And speaking of being there from the start, make it a point to be in your seat from the start of each session. At the opening of almost all sessions there will be enlightening and encouraging reports from branch servants and missionaries who are serving in all parts of the world. You will not want to miss them.

You are invited, yes, urged to come to this great gathering from start to finish. How important is it? It is Jehovah God who had this command recorded in his Word: "Congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones . . . in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your God."—Deut. 31:12; Heb. 10:24, 25.

● Did Jesus tell the apostle Peter to forgive seventy-seven (77) times, or seventy times seven (490)?—A. L., U.S.A.

This question is based on Matthew 18:21, 22. In the *New World Translation* those verses read: "Peter came up and said to [Jesus]: 'Lord, how many times is my brother to sin against me and am I to forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him: 'I say to you, not, Up to seven times, but, Up to seventy-seven times.' "

As can be seen, in this modern and careful translation, Jesus tells Peter to forgive seventy-seven (77) times. And there are good reasons for this rendering. However, there is no need to be dogmatic as to Jesus' answer. A noted professor of Greek, A. T. Robertson, observed: "It is not clear whether this idiom means seventy-seven or as the Revised Version has it (490 times)."

By taking note of Jesus' answer as found in Greek manuscripts we can appreciate the prob-

lem. Christ's reply was *hebdomekontakis hepta*, which is literally translated "seventy times seven." The difficulty arises with the suffix *kis* added to the word for seventy, *hebdomekonta*. In Greek this suffix is used in two ways. It can be used as a multiple meaning 'times.' So 'seven times seven' (7 x 7) would be *heptakis hepta*. But *kis* can also be added as a suffix to indicate 'times' in the sense of occurrences or instances. For example, 'How many times did the boy fall?' 'He fell seven times (*heptakis*).' Hence, the problem is whether Jesus' answer, "seventy times seven," should be understood as 'seventy times (multiplied by) seven' or 'seventy and seven times (occurrences).'

One reason for preferring the latter, and rendering it as in the *New World Translation*, is the form of Peter's question. He did not use *posas*, meaning 'how many?' Rather, he asked *posakis*—'how many *times?*' Then he continued, 'Up to *heptakis?*' that is, 'Up to seven *times?*' Logically Jesus would respond in accord with Peter's phraseology. He would answer, 'Up to seventy-seven *times.*'

Lending additional weight to the rendering "seventy-seven times" is the account in Genesis 4:24. Jehovah had stated that he would avenge seven times any who harmed Cain. (Gen. 4:15) Later Cain's descendant Lamech boastfully said: "If seven times Cain is to be avenged, then Lamech seventy times *and* seven." (Gen. 4:24) The Hebrew text is exact in showing this as 70 times *and* 7, or 77 times. But what is an equivalent in Greek? The Greek *Septuagint* uses *hebdomekontakis hepta*. Since this is the precise expression found in Matthew 18:22, it suggests that "seventy-seven times" is the way Jesus' reply to Peter should be rendered.

It might be added that it is quite possible that Christ had Lamech's threat in mind. What a fine contrast Jesus' words would be! Instead of being a braggart threatening vengeance seventy-seven times, a Christian should be the opposite, forgiving seventy-seven times. Jesus emphasized that we should not be hesitant to forgive, but liberal and ready to forgive. He said earlier: "Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy."—Matt. 5:7.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

Farmers know that to get a bumper crop of good grain it is necessary to sow good seed. This is true in everything we do, is it not? We reap what we sow. The Bible says: "He who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh." The converse is also true: "He who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit." (Gal. 6:8) To know how to sow with a view to the spirit and to reap spiritually, it is necessary to know what God's Word says and to apply its principles. Jehovah's witnesses are interested in providing people with a Bible, as well as an understanding of it. Hence in their house-to-house ministry in June, they will be offering a copy of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, for $1; or they may combine the Bible and a copy of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, for $1.25.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

June 29: Joyful Endurer or Unhappy Dropout —Which? Page 361. Songs to Be Used: 39, 23.

July 6: Can You Imitate Jeremiah's Endurance? ¶1-23. Page 367. Songs to Be Used: 29, 58.

July 13: Can You Imitate Jeremiah's Endurance? ¶24-46. Page 373. Songs to Be Used: 14, 44.