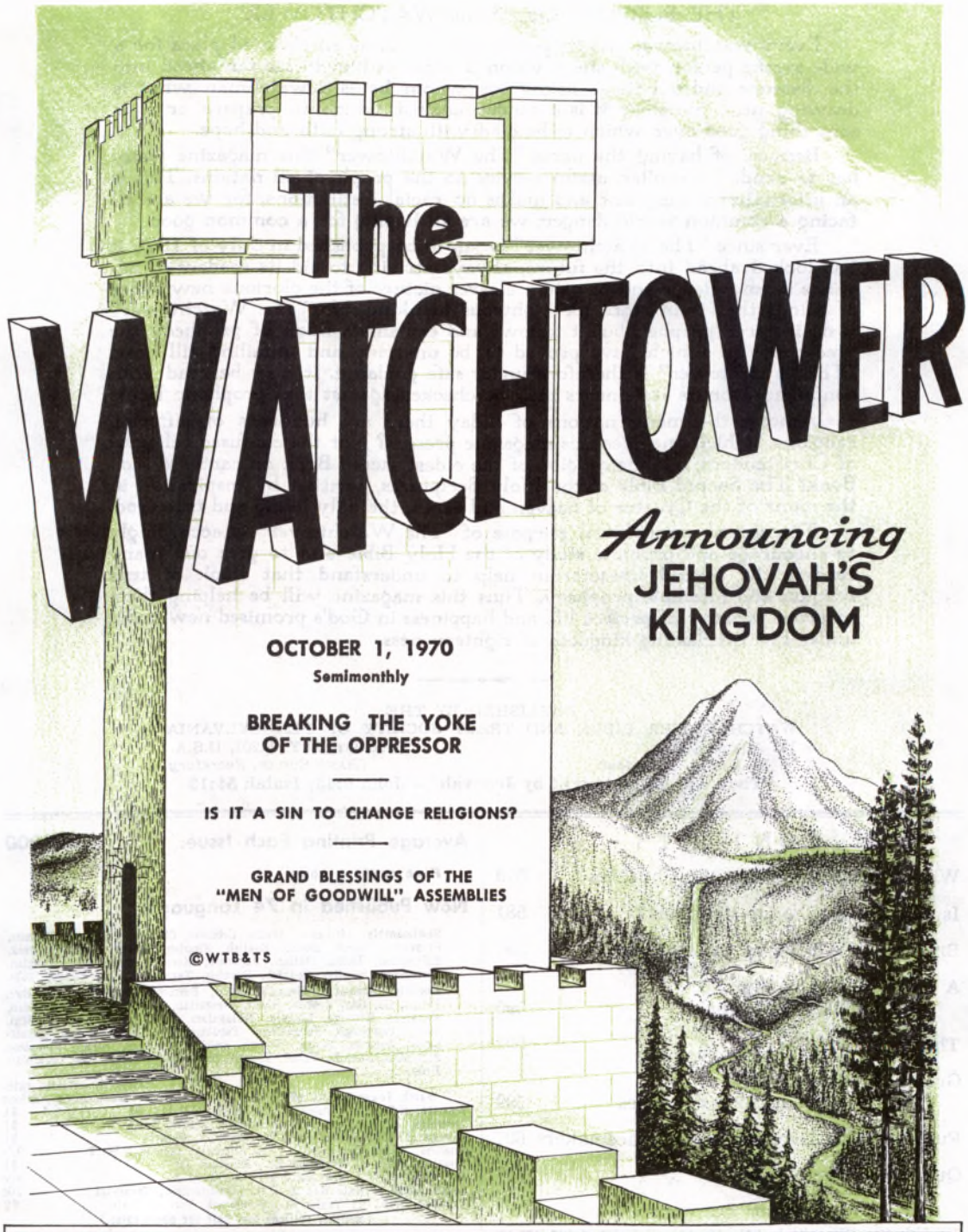

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

OCTOBER 1, 1970
Semimonthly

BREAKING THE YOKE OF THE OPPRESSOR

IS IT A SIN TO CHANGE RELIGIONS?

GRAND BLESSINGS OF THE "MEN OF GOODWILL" ASSEMBLIES

©WTB&TS

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

Why Are They Leaving the Churches? 579
Is It a Sin to Change Religions? 581
Breaking the Yoke of the Oppressor 584
A Yoke That Is Kindly and a Load That Is Light 590
The Man Who Forgot God 597
Grand Blessings of the "Men of Goodwill" Assemblies 599
Fulfilling Our Declaration as Peacemakers 607
Questions from Readers 607

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The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
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Why are they LEAVING THE CHURCHES?

DURING the almost 450 years since Ferdinand Magellan planted the first cross and attended the first mass on Cebu Island, the Philippines has frequently been hailed as "the only Christian country in the Far East." And apparently not without good reason, for 83 percent of Filipinos today are Catholics, while another 10 percent also claim to be of the Christian faith.

Being a very religious people, Filipinos flock to the churches by the millions on Sundays and holidays, giving the impression of a vigorous and flourishing Christianity. Unlike in England, where attending church is called in *Time* magazine "a vanishing way of life," Philippine churches are more often than not filled to overflowing.

But in spite of this seemingly robust condition of Philippine churches, there are signs that not all is well. Many are leaving the churches, looking for something more satisfying to their needs. For instance, just last year a sixty-eight-year-old woman in Tayabas, Quezon, who had spent most of her life as a Catholic lay leader left the church for another religion. A Caloocan City man, active in the church since he was a teen-age choirboy and who served as president of the Catholic Action in the Araneta University, also changed his religion in 1969. Another devotee, who used to walk on her knees from the church door to the altar twice a week and who for a time led a monastic life in a convent, left Catholicism last year.

Why would such devout persons leave the church? Is the church responsible in any way? That this may be the case is indicated by what Maximo Soliven said in his daily column "By the Way" in the *Manila Times* of March 27, 1970: "Christianity in the Philippines, alas, has become as comfortable and familiar as an old shoe." He added: "Once the Christian church has grown fat and complacent, and become part and parcel of the Establishment, it begins to wither and lose strength." Contrasting this attitude with that of Christ, he commented: "Jesus came down to earth to bring about a revolution in men's hearts; he was a manly and strong Christ, not an effeminate and lily-fingered ascetic. He asked his followers not just to pray but to ACT."

A similar lament was aired by a Prot-

estant leader, the Executive Secretary of National Fellowship for Philippines Evangelism, in the same newspaper two days later: "Although we profess to believe the resurrection and the rest of the Apostles' Creed, yet we failed to live up to what we believe. . . . The Christian Church of our times has failed in its mission to men and society. Yet I submit that the problem with Jesus' Way of Life is not that it has been tried and found wanting; rather it is that it has not been tried, not in a thorough and total manner."

That these comments about Christendom's churches are not exaggerated can be seen by the fact that the average Filipino Catholic knows little about the Bible. Few have one in their homes. One man in Santa Cruz, Manila, says: "I am now sixty years old. My parents and grandparents were all Catholics. Yet at this age I left the Catholic religion because I learned little, except how to use the prayer book and rosary, which were always used in the same manner without any change."

Many clergy and lay leaders are aware of the spiritual neglect of the Catholic layman. "For as long as we can remember," says lay leader Jeremias Montimayor, "the Bishops and priests were supposed to *speak* and the layman to *listen*. The Bishops and priests were supposed to *decide* and the laymen to *follow*." (Italics his.) To try to change this, the *cursillo* was introduced in 1964, a three-day course for laymen in Catholic doctrine. Recently, following a meeting of two hundred leaders of the *cursillo* movement in Manila, Priest Ben A. Carreon, O.M.I., commented: "Some of the leaders, including bishops and priests, have to admit the propensity of many cursillistas [graduates of the *cursillo*] to count gains in terms of the number of conversions, instead of a deepening of faith in an already-convinced Christian." Do you feel that your church is more interested in gaining members than in "a deepening of faith"?

In his 1970 "Easter" message, Rufino Cardinal Santos of the Archdiocese of Manila said that "although the Mother Church emphasizes the primacy of the spirit, she has nevertheless striven to foster man's earthly well-being and development." Could it be, though, that in striving to "foster man's earthly well-being," the church has abdicated its 'primary' responsibility to build faith and spirituality? A former Catholic Action leader, looking back on a lifetime as a Catholic, thinks so. He says: "My Catholic faith was utterly devoid of spirituality. We excelled in the enhancement of everybody's pleasure by way of picnics, programs and parties. My former church is more of a country club than a religious one." Do you find the same to be true in your church?

Other sincere Catholics are concerned that their church is becoming too involved in worldly pursuits. One wrote: "Personally I don't believe in priests getting involved directly in national issues, most especially in the current student activism." Do you think that Christ, who said, "My kingdom is no part of this world," would get involved in such things if he were on earth today?—John 18:36.

Not a few Filipinos are openly wondering why, in a country reputed to be 93 percent Christian, crime and violence are on the increase, why prisons are as full as the churches, why more emphasis is put on material values than on spiritual ones. Many Catholics complain of hypocrisy in the church, and unknown thousands no longer go to church because of disillusionment. Yet they remain Catholics "in name," evidently thinking they would be disloyal to God, to the church and to their parents if they entered another religion. Is this true? Is it wrong to change one's religion?

Is it a *SIN* TO CHANGE RELIGIONS?

TO STICK to the true way of worship is a commendable thing. The apostle Paul counseled Timothy to "continue in the things that you learned . . . from infancy."—2 Tim. 3:14, 15.

But was Paul here telling Timothy to stick to his parents' religion regardless of what kind it was? That would not be reasonable, since Paul himself had changed his religion some years before when he found that the 'traditions of his forefathers' were not in harmony with the Scriptures. (Gal. 1:14-17) Paul knew Timothy's background and that he had been taught "the holy writings" from infancy. (2 Tim. 3:15; 1:5) He was in the way of truth, and so he should "continue" in it, not deviating.

No matter how sincerely you may feel that you too have the truth, have you compared the teachings of your church with the "holy writings," the Bible, to see if they agree with it? Is your religion the same as Timothy's, as Paul's, as that of Jesus? What if, after making an honest investigation, you found that your religion were no longer holding fast to the original Christianity taught by Jesus Christ? Would you not reasonably make a change? In fact, if, after learning for a certainty that your present religion did not please God, you did not make a change, would not this be a sin in itself? The holy writings tell us: "If one knows how to do what is right and yet does not do it, it is a sin for him."—Jas. 4:17.

Many sincere persons have made such an honest investigation and have taken the big step of changing their religion. As you compare their experiences with what you yourself have observed in your religion, it may help you make an honest appraisal of your way of worship. We sincerely hope it will.

NOT FIRM FOR RIGHT PRINCIPLES

An elderly man of sixty-three from Cavite City writes: "As a Catholic I felt free to do anything I pleased. Although my wife and I were living together without the benefit of marriage, no one ever inquired into this, nor did we hear any counsel to the effect that we should be legally married. In fact, I was given the privilege of serving as sacristan by our parish priest, a position I held for ten years. It was only when I studied the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses that I realized we were not clean in God's sight and that we needed to get married. I also discovered that my secular work was not in harmony with the Bible either. Only after getting married and adjusting my secular work was I accepted as one of Jehovah's witnesses, getting baptized as such in 1970." Do you 'feel free' to do what you like, or does your religion insist on strict compliance with Bible principles?—Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

A man in Caloocan City says: "My association with the 'Black Rosary' society, instead of building me up spiritually, led me to heavy drinking, smoking, gambling and dance halls. As a Catholic I had never even held a Bible in my hand, nor had I heard the name of God mentioned. When

my uncle, one of Jehovah's witnesses, studied the Bible with me, I realized what real Christianity meant and found peace of mind by getting rid of my bad habits." What kind of habits do your religious associates encourage?—Eph. 4:20-24.

TEACHINGS NOT BIBLE-BASED

A former member of the Philippine Independent Church in Negros Occidental says that, when a young man, he "used to watch candles and food being placed before our home altar during All Saints' Day. I was made to believe that the reason the food got cold later on was that the souls had passed over it and touched it. This bothered me for years, until Jehovah's witnesses showed me from the Bible at Genesis 2:7 and Numbers 23:10 that the soul is man himself and that the dead are unconscious and do not return to 'haunt' people."

A young lady in Davao City, educated in a Catholic school, found the Trinity doctrine difficult to accept. Having received unsatisfactory answers from her Catholic teachers, she was surprised at the simple, straightforward Bible answer she got from Jehovah's witnesses: The Trinity simply is not taught in the Bible. (Mark 12:29, 30; John 14:28) Being disillusioned, she said: "The church leaders should speak the truth and follow it. False teaching and hiding of the truth are what impelled me to study the Bible for myself." Have you studied the Bible for yourself to see if your church leaders teach what it contains?

MEMBERS NOT TREATED EQUALLY

A man brought up a Catholic observed that in the church "everything was artificial, with the rich being regarded highly and the poor being taken for granted." A young Catholic student in Baguio City says: "No love, peace, equality and unity were found among us. The priests are always revered and addressed as 'Father.'" A Quezon City member of the local religion *Iglesia ni Kristo* saw the same thing: "There is a big difference between members and ministers, between preachers and listeners."

Yet Jesus said: "Do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One." (Matt. 23:8, 9) Where can such equality and brotherhood be found? The above-mentioned persons found it among Jehovah's witnesses. "They treat each other equally," says one. "They are all Christian brothers and sisters, all over the inhabited earth," observes another. After attending their October 1969 international assembly in Manila and seeing true brotherhood in action, the young Baguio City student said: "Here at last is the love, peace, equality and unity I have been looking for."

GENUINE LOVE LACKING

Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) A Pasay City lady, sincerely wanting to serve God, looked for this mark of Christianity in her church. But she said: "My efforts were in vain, because there was no love among the members. There was much pushing and shoving when leaving church, leading to quarrels and hurt feelings." A Sunday-school teacher in the Foursquare Gospel Church quit because of the disunity and petty squabbles among the preachers. A young couple in Negros Occidental said of their fellow churchgoers: "They seem to be watching you to pick faults instead of helping you." Have you noticed these things in your church?

These and many others have noticed a different spirit among Jehovah's witness-

es. One Manila woman said: "Just imagine! Jehovah's witnesses visited me regularly for two years, while in all my years as a Catholic, the priest never once called at my home." After attending his first meeting with the Witnesses, another commented: "I was approached and greeted by so many people and was introduced to just about everyone there. What a contrast to the Catholic Church where you are just left to fend for yourself!" Another remarked: "On attending my first meeting I shook many hands and was greeted warmly. Later, when I got sick, the overseer visited me in the hospital and the brothers took care of my needs." A lady who attended their "Peace on Earth" assembly in October 1969 was amazed that, although it was really crowded, "there was no pushing, everyone gave way graciously and greeted one another happily." —1 John 4:7-11, 20.

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

Are these people sorry that they changed their religion? On the contrary! Listen to what just a few of them say:

"I used to be the head in our house and my husband took second place. After studying the Bible for a few weeks, my husband noticed a change in me. My way of handling things improved, and now real peace reigns in our home for the first time."—Eph. 5:22, 23, 33.

"My wife was hard to deal with and we had separated. I was planning to marry another woman when I met Jehovah's witnesses. After learning how God views the sacredness of marriage, I returned to my wife and now both of us are happy I learned to follow right principles."

"My close friend had killed himself because of problems, and I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown as a result. Repetitious prayers were to no avail. Only after studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses did I regain confidence in myself and in God. My nervousness gradually left me. For the first time in my life I felt I had a purpose in living."

Instead of feeling a burden of guilt because of changing their religion, these people have been freed from fear, depression and bad habits by the truth from God's Word at work in their lives!

NOT ISOLATED CASES

The individuals you have read about here are only a few of the 9,908 in the Philippines alone who have symbolized this change in their lives by water baptism during the past eighteen months, a rate of 550 a month! One thousand eight hundred and thirty-five of them were baptized on just one day, October 24, 1969, at Manila's "Peace on Earth" Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses! They are only a part of a great crowd who are leaving the churches world wide, not to become atheists, but to become real Christians. Throughout the world over 250,000 have made this change in the past two years.

These figures become even more impressive when we consider that before a person is accepted for baptism, he has carefully followed a prescribed course of study in the Bible, usually for at least six months, and has made definite changes in his life to conform to God's righteous laws.

This is not all, however. Each of these many thousands is endeavoring to show genuine love for parents, relatives and neighbors alike by offering to help them too to serve God acceptably. They may visit your home one day. Knowing how seriously they take their religion, would it not be wise for you to listen to them and study God's Word along with them? If you do, you will come to realize that true Christianity is very much alive and is flourishing, not only in the Philippines, but throughout all the inhabited earth!

BREAKING THE YOKE OF THE OPPRESSOR

"He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul, and their blood will be precious in his eyes."—Ps. 72:12-14.

FROM every corner of the earth today, the cry is for freedom. People everywhere want to be free. They want the freedom to choose their own government and their own way of life. They want the freedom to worship in the way they please, and if they please. They want to be free of the strict schedules of modern living, free of the enslaving demands of industry, free of the burdens of taxation and the high cost of living. They want to be free of military domination and dictation. They want to be free of science and technology that have dehumanized them into cards to punch through computers. They want to be free of religious superstitions and hierarchy control. People everywhere desperately want to be free of this system that has enslaved them, but they do not know what they must do to free themselves from their oppressors. What can they do?

[2] People desirous of freedom can begin by recognizing the cause of their enslavement. When they see the cause, the true remedy also will become obvious. They should also try to acquire God's view of this matter of oppression by searching through his Word the Bible and by ordering their lives in harmony with his will. (Prov. 3:5-7) Too, they should endeavor to see that there can be no true freedom apart from God, that any course contrary to God's law can lead only to oppression and enslavement. It is well that they observe also that doing anything and everything without restrictions or limitations does not result in freedom but chaos. For this is the lesson of history.

[3] In the garden of Eden man was first introduced to oppression and slavery by the one whom the Bible calls Satan the Devil. (Rev. 12:9) Rather than be yoked to God by remaining obedient to his laws and commandments, Adam and Eve chose to listen to the Devil and serve themselves, and thereby they became yoked to the Devil through disobedience. They became the slaves of selfishness, the servants of sin. (Rom. 6:16-18) Instead of continuing within the boundaries of the garden of Eden, they were turned loose into the broad, unlimited earth outside, with plenty of room to work their wills. But even though they were given the run of the earth, were they free? No; there is no freedom outside the household of God.

1. What are people seeking today, but what do they not know?
2. What are some things those desirous of freedom can do now?
3. (a) Where was oppression first introduced, by whom and how? (b) What was the result of mankind's dream of an unconfined earth?

The law of sin and death was now operating within their members. The works of the flesh became manifest in a hideous form when Cain murdered his brother Abel. Crime and violence soon filled the earth. (Gen. 4:8; 6:5; Gal. 5:19-21) Their youthful dream of a new, better and unconfined world apart from God did not materialize. In reality it became an oppressive world, a corrupt and dead world, a world doomed to destruction.—Gen. 6:7.

[4] Since the flood of Noah's day, which destroyed that world, men have endeavored through governments and by other means apart from Jehovah God to regain freedoms lost in Eden. (2 Pet. 2:5) They have prayed, warred and died to free themselves, but the facts of history bear witness that to date the human family has not escaped the bitter fruitage of Adam's rebellion against God's law, and that this world has not come out from under Satan's control. Jesus Christ called Satan "the ruler of this world." (John 12:31; 14:30) The apostle Paul referred to him as "the god of this system of things [who] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers." (2 Cor. 4:4) The apostle John warns: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) All nations are under Satan's control, which fact Jesus Christ did not deny when Satan offered him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if Jesus would do an act of worship to him. (Matt. 4:8-10) Therefore, no action on the part of nations can be viewed as abolishing oppression so long as they are under the influence of the god of oppression, Satan the Devil. Abolishing oppression means getting at the very root of the problem, namely, getting rid of Satan himself. It means the ransoming of mankind from the bondage of inherited sin, too. Since Satan is beyond the reach of men and nations, mankind must of necessity look elsewhere for help to break the yoke of their oppressor. And since all are descendants of the sinner Adam, all have inherited his disability of sin and its wage death. (Rom. 5:12; 6:23) Therefore, man must look elsewhere to save himself from the bondage of sin. (Job 14:4; Ps. 49:7) That is why nations have failed. They are unable to get at the root causes. Therefore, their efforts, for the most part, have never led to anything except the replacing of one oppressive system by another.

4. (a) What have men endeavored to do since the Flood, and why have they failed? (b) To abolish oppression what must be taken under consideration? What have human efforts accomplished?

OPPRESSIVE SYSTEMS OF THE PAST

[5] The first world power Egypt gravitated into an oppressive system. The children of Israel for generations served the ruthless pharaohs of that land. The Bible account faithfully describes their oppression in these words: "So they [the Egyptians] set over them [the Israelites] chiefs of forced labor for the purpose of oppressing them in their burden-bearing; and they went building cities as storage places for Pharaoh, namely, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they would oppress them, the more they would multiply and the more they kept spreading abroad, so that they felt a sickening dread as a result of the sons of Israel. Consequently the Egyptians made the sons of Israel slave under tyranny. And they kept making their life bitter with hard slavery at clay mortar and bricks and with every form of slavery in the field, yes, every form of slavery of theirs in which they used them as slaves under tyranny." (Ex. 1:11-14) The yoke of the Egyptian oppressors was broken not by Israelite ingenuity, but by God Almighty himself. He reminded them of this fact in these words: "I am Jehovah your

5. (a) What proves that Egypt was an oppressive system? (b) Who rescued the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage?

God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt from acting as slaves to them, and I proceeded to break the bars of your yoke and make you walk erect." (Lev. 26:13) It was Jehovah who shattered the yoke of their oppressor, which fact he wanted them to remember; a fact it is well for us not to forget either.

6 Obedience to God meant freedom. To disobey God meant to become enslaved in the yoke of bondage. Jehovah warned the Israelites: "If you will not listen to me nor do all these commandments, and if you will reject my statutes, and if your souls will abhor my judicial decisions so as not to do all my commandments, to the extent of your violating my covenant, then I, for my part, shall . . . indeed set my face against you." (Lev. 26:14-17) For failing to listen to their God, for deliberately walking in opposition to him, for refusing to let themselves be corrected by him, ultimately their disobedient course would lead to their annihilation. "You will have to serve your enemies . . . and he will certainly put an iron yoke upon your neck until he has annihilated you."—Deut. 28: 15, 48; Lev. 26:18-41.

7 The Jews knew very well of what Jehovah was speaking, because they were an agricultural people and therefore very familiar with yokes of all kinds. An iron yoke was the symbol of severe bondage. (Jer. 28:14) It was also a symbol of calamity or suffering. The humiliation and oppression of one nation by another the Jews referred to as the yoke of bondage. (Jer. 27:8; 28:4) Breaking out of slavery or subjugation was described as 'breaking the yoke.' (Isa. 9:4; 14:25; Jer. 28:2) So when Jehovah said that he would "certainly put an iron yoke" upon their neck if they refused to listen to him, they knew that that meant slavery and annihilation.

8 Ancient Israel as a nation was slow to learn, however. Time and again they refused to listen to the voice of Jehovah and were made to suffer the consequences. In the year 1117 B.C.E., the nation pleaded with the prophet Samuel to anoint for them a king. Samuel warned that an earthly king would mean adding to their burdens, for kings would be oppressive and demanding as rulers. "However, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel and said: 'No, but a king is what will come to be over us.'" (1 Sam. 8:18, 19) Saul was anointed king. And soon thereafter the nation began to suffer the consequence of having a human king over them. That burden increased in time.

9 One hundred and twenty years after Saul became king over Israel, oppression became a national issue. In the closing years of his life, King Solomon became a harsh ruler. When Rehoboam, his son, succeeded him to the throne, the people of Israel appealed to him to lighten their load, saying: "Your father, for his part, made our yoke hard, and, as for *you*, *now* make the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke that he put upon us lighter, and we shall serve you." King Rehoboam's reply was: "Now my father, for his part, loaded upon you a heavy yoke; but I, for my part, shall add to your yoke." (1 Ki. 12:1-11) This act led to rebellion and a split in the kingdom of Israel that lasted for some 390 years, until the kingdom of Judah was destroyed by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E. The Jews who remained alive were taken captive to Babylon to serve as slave labor. After sixty-eight years of such captivity, it was once again Jehovah God who came to their

6. What did freedom and enslavement mean to the Israelites?
7. What are the various meanings attached to the yoke as a symbol and figure of speech, and why can we say the Israelites understood what God meant when he said that he would put an iron yoke upon their neck?
8. When and how did Israel increase its burdens?
9. (a) When did oppression become a national issue, and with what result? (b) What fact is worth remembering?

rescue and shattered the yoke of their oppressor and two years later gave them freedom to return home. This, also, is worthy of remembering.—Ezra 1:1, 2.

10 There is no denying or escaping these facts by any member of the human family today, regardless of his nationality. The lesson is still the same. There is no freedom apart from God. There is none who can deliver mankind out from under Satanic control except God himself. Those denying what God's Word has to say about this are blinded by the god of this system of things. They soon find that their efforts at yoke breaking are extremely feeble, or are thwarted, or they boomerang. At best they manage merely to replace one oppressive system with another.

MODERN OPPRESSIVE SYSTEMS

11 For example, Karl Marx, German socialist, thought he was able to demonstrate scientifically that things were different in our day. He set about to develop a system of government that he thought would lead to true freedom, not to a new oppression. This was the beginning of communism, the most oppressive of all systems to date. The people's communes of Red China are proof enough of the severe yoke those people bear, for about 98 percent of China's peasantry have been herded into a system of forced collectivization. All their personal rights, freedoms and belongings have been surrendered to the State. This is the fruit of a system that Marx believed would do away with oppression and bring true freedom to all mankind. Was Marx not duped by Satan into believing that freedom lay in a godless, materialistic society? Most certainly he was! Hundreds of millions of people have followed Marx's teachings. They became godless and materialistic, but not free. (2 Cor. 11:14, 15) For there is no freedom apart from God.

12 But what about the capitalistic world? Have the people fared any better? someone may ask. In many ways, yes. Nevertheless, the yokes of oppression can be seen almost everywhere in the capitalist realm as well. Huge industrial systems pin down hundreds of thousands of men to more or less servile jobs, govern their hours and, indirectly, their standard of living. For workers to press for better working conditions and a higher wage to meet the high cost of living often brings on more oppression. When employers are forced by strikes or by arbitration to pay higher wages, they frequently boost the price of their products to compensate for the additional overhead, prices are *raised* to absorb the higher costs, and the worker, who must buy the product, ends up paying for his own raise. Strikes and collective bargaining have not broken the yoke of the oppressor in the land of capitalism.

13 Oppression in the form of taxation has become especially severe in recent years. For defense outlays alone, the United States, from 1959 to 1969, spent more than $630,000,000,000. This gigantic sum of money represents thousands of dollars for every working taxpayer in the country! According to the annual report of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, a total of more than $1,000,000,000,000 was spent by all nations on military equipment during the past six years! What a burden to bear!

14 Have these great outlays of money lessened humanity's load any or at least brought a semblance of security in the world? Have these burdens caused men to turn to God and to seek his deliverance?

10. What do these facts of history teach?
11. What did Karl Marx endeavor to do? What proves his idea an abysmal failure?
12, 13. In what ways is oppression experienced under capitalism?
14. What questions might we ask ourselves?

Have modern systems at least given mankind a single cause for rejoicing? Consider briefly some of the awesome upheavals brought about by the systems of our time before proposing a solution.

FRUITS OF MODERN OPPRESSION

15 In the space of a few years men have seen the rise of wicked dictators, such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, who plunged the world into bloody chaos. They have witnessed the ruthless purges by Joseph Stalin and by the Red Guards of China. They have beheld the cold war of 1948, the Russian blockage of Berlin, the first takeover of Czechoslovakia and the construction of an Iron Curtain across Europe. In recent years they have witnessed almost constant fighting between Israel and the Arabs, Red China exploded its first hydrogen bomb, the Bolivians killed Che Guevara, the Nigerian civil war was fought, and they saw how blood flowed freely on an increasing scale in Vietnam and Cambodia. The world also watched rioters run wild in Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Newark, New York and elsewhere. It saw the British pound and French franc devalued and the gold crisis agitate the economic foundations of the world. It was introduced to its first human-heart transplant and it beheld men circling the moon in a satellite and landing on it.

16 The world also saw an unprecedented rise in crime and violence. It beheld faceless men seeking fame by the killing of some promising leader in the world. In April 1968 the murder of Martin Luther King ignited Negro riots in 125 cities in America that killed 46 people, injured 2,600, and required 55,000 National Guardsmen to restore order. In June 1968 came the second Kennedy assassination, a dramatic young leader cut down at the threshold of his powers. Assorted student protests have roiled over Belgium, Britain, Egypt, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Spain, West Germany and school campuses in the United States. True to the fulfillment of Bible prophecies, these are "critical times hard to deal with," when the hearts of men are becoming "faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." (2 Tim. 3:1; Luke 21:26) But these are the fruits of systems that men struggle to perpetuate, not knowing the way out of their dilemma.

15, 16. (a) What is the fruitage of these oppressive systems? (b) What prophecies do they fulfill?

CAUSE AND EFFECT OF WORLD CHAOS

17 The fearful rush and action of our times seem almost headlong and haphazard, yet there appears to be an objective behind it all. *Time* for August 30, 1968, stated: "Everywhere, a vast yearning for new freedoms and fulfillments is sweeping Communist, capitalist and ex-colonial nations alike." Millions want more. They become frustrated when affluence, equality and education are too slowly achieved, said *Time*. "The global result is growing impatience with old political processes; a desire for direct action is inflaming minds and causing *almost daily clashes that defy law and logic.*" The result has been a disrespect for all forms of authority. Youths have seen how multi-billion-dollar programs have failed to cure poverty; how civil-rights legislation has left Negroes more frustrated than ever; how higher learning and financial "success" do not bring true fulfillment; how many youths have turned away from the old standards of morality; how political promises have only resulted in more crises and convulsions to a point where many young

17. What has been the seeming reason behind the rush of events, and with what result?

people are ready to give up on life altogether.

18 It is no longer a pleasure to be young. Youth today faces a precarious, frustrating and chaotic world. Often they react to it violently, destructively and criminally. Gang rumbles, student riots and orgies of drinking and sexual promiscuity are manifestations of blind revolt against the world's inhumanities, its confusing moral values and its oppressive yoke. Many youths, trapped in this competitive, "intellectual rat race," reach for tranquilizers, pep pills and other drugs. A recent survey at the University of Toronto revealed that 37 percent of the men and 36 percent of the women used the drugs to help them meet their schedules. Some commit suicide. Thirty percent of the men and 17 percent of the women in the university admitted that they had thoughts of suicide. At Yale University suicide is second only to accidents as the cause of student deaths. In Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, police uncovered what they believed to be a suicide club among young people. Youths draw lots to decide who shall die next. This is the sad oppressive state to which this world has finally come. The inspired proverb says: "When anyone wicked bears rule, the people sigh." (Prov. 29:2) And the oppressed are 'sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the midst of them.' (Ezek. 9:4) But what can people do?

19 Consciously or unconsciously, most youths blame adults for the inhuman ordeals thrust upon them. In this such youths err. Today's adults are just as much victims of the same social and economic systems as are the youths of the world. They bear the same burdens and long for a change. The true cause of oppression, the Bible says, is Satan, who "is misleading the entire inhabited earth. . . . Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Rev. 12:9, 12) Since oppression has its roots in the spirit realm, in Satan, and in the systems that he has devised, it is beyond the reach of man to free himself. He needs God's help to do it. The oppressed ones are wise, therefore, to look to God to smash to pieces the yoke of the oppressor, which he has promised to do.—Ps. 37:34.

18. (a) What events of the day prove that youths find this world hopeless? (b) What are they doing, true to prophecy?

19. (a) Whom are youths prone to blame for the state of things, but who is responsible? (b) What proves this so? (c) What fact about the source of help does this highlight?

THE YOKE OF THE OPPRESSOR SHATTERED

20 In the Bible we have God's promise that the future, which now looms ominously over all people, will change. This beautiful planet earth will be reclaimed for righteous mankind. Order will replace chaos; peace will replace war, and all will enjoy security and abundance in freedom. (Ps. 46:8, 9; Rev. 21:1-4) How will God accomplish this? By wiping out Satan and his demon hordes in the invisible realm and annihilating every vestige of his visible organization as well. Viewing the perplexing problems of our day, *Time* said: "The only solution is to uproot society and start afresh." This is precisely what God purposes to do. Through his prophet Daniel, he declared: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these [op-

20. (a) Why can we entertain a bright hope for the future? (b) How will God accomplish the removal of oppression from the universe?

pressive] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Dan. 2:44.

21 That kingdom is already functioning in the heavens with Christ as its king. (Rev. 11:15) At Armageddon, "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," Jesus Christ, acting as God's executioner, will rid the earth of all God's enemies and establish righteousness. That is why we pray: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Rev. 16:14, 16; Matt. 6:10; 2 Pet. 3:13) Christ will also take care of Satan and his demons by crushing them to impotency. (Rom. 16:20) Under Kingdom rule, oppression will completely vanish from the earth. The reigning Christ will then apply the benefits of his ransom sacrifice in a most dynamic way and the effects of inherited sin will cease to exist. (Matt. 20:28; Rom. 5:17, 21) "Death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more." (Rev. 21:4) Mankind will grow to perfection, to God's glory.

21. When will oppression be removed, and how will man be made free?

22 Those who believe these promises of God now pray as did the psalmist: "Give the king thy justice, O God, and thy righteousness to the royal son! May he judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with justice! . . . May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor!" (Ps. 72:1-4, 11-14, *Revised Standard Version*) All oppressed ones of the earth in this hour of upheaval and crises, therefore, can hope in Jehovah. Will you trust in his deliverance and freedom? All who love righteousness will do so.—1 Ki. 8:56.

23 But even now before that grand consummation of God's deliverance from all oppressors, there is a release from subjugation to this present evil world that is possible for men to enjoy. The following article tells us how this refreshment is attainable in our time. So please read it, if you are weary and desire refreshment for your soul.

22, 23. (a) With a strong hope in God's promises, what prayer do servants of God pray? (b) What confidence can we rejoice in, and how will the righteous respond? (c) What about those seeking a release from subjugation to this world now, and what can they do?

A *YOKE* that is *KINDLY* and a *LOAD* that is *LIGHT*

"Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples."
—Matt. 11:28, 29.

EVERYWHERE you go these days you see people who are tired. They not only come home from work tired and go to bed tired, but they get up in the morning tired and go to work tired. Their faces are lined with circles of exhaustion and their bodies are often bent to the shape of the heavy burdens they bear. Even little children, boys, girls and teen-agers complain about being tired. Why are people

1. What is the state of the world today, and what questions can be asked?

so tired these days? What can they do to find refreshment for their souls?

[2] The old and young are reacting to the intolerable pressures of our times. Just getting to work on time has become an exhausting feat in some locations. The early-morning traffic in cities is a hazard in itself. It is an hour when the courtesy of the road is all but a forgotten gesture. Usually the trains are packed and the buses and subways are jammed with unhappy faces. The production-conscious boss who is strong on efficiency and weak on empathy is hardly an inspiration to face. Then there is the whole unwholesome atmosphere of competition and rivalry on the job, or of speech habits that have become immoral and degrading, or the strain of association with those who lie, cheat and steal from one another without hesitation. Now couple this with the burdens of the high cost of living, increased taxes from year to year, the strains brought on one due to fear—the fear of being robbed, raped or harmed, the fear of losing one's job, one's property, or the fear of becoming sick with no one to care—and you begin to sense the tremendous pressures of our times, the load that is on mankind.

[3] But this is not all. Add to this the weight brought on by the immoral, degraded and corrupt practices of the political systems, the military and commercial systems, their wars, revolutions and injustices. Couple this with the heavy burdens of world religion, the cost of perpetuating worn-out, worthless, traditional systems, empty cathedrals and faithless ministers. Throw in the burdens brought on by wayward youth, the crime, violence and riots of our era, and one can begin to understand why people are tired. The Bible speaks of "all creation" as "groaning together and being in pain together," because "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (Rom. 8:22; 1 John 5:19) People are tired of the giant octopus-like system that has ensnared them and is slowly crushing them lifeless. (Rev. 13: 16-18) But what can they do about it? How can they come out from under the system and find refreshment for their souls?

2, 3. (a) Give a number of reasons why people are tired today. (b) How does the Bible describe "all creation," and why?

THE GRAND INVITATION

[4] When the Son of God, Jesus Christ, walked the face of the earth over nineteen hundred years ago, there were oppressed people on earth then as there are now. Jesus recognized their plight and proposed a solution. The solution that Jesus gave constitutes the grand invitation to come to him for refreshment for their souls. Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light." (Matt. 11:28-30) In these beautifully phrased words lies the solution. But to whom was this grand invitation given? And what do these words mean to us living in this twentieth century?

[5] The invitation is extended to all those who are toiling and loaded down. In Jesus' day the reference was made specifically to those who were under obligation to the Mosaic law. At Acts 15:10 the Christian apostle Peter, speaking to the older men of Jerusalem, said: "Why are you making a test of God by imposing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our forefathers nor we were capable of bearing?" Peter was referring to the Mosaic law as a yoke that obligated them to an

4. What solution did Jesus propose for those who are toiling and loaded down?
5. (a) To whom was the invitation of Jesus extended in his day? (b) Was the Mosaic law in itself a burden?

unbearable burden. Not because the law in itself was burdensome; it was not. The law was "holy and righteous and good." (Rom. 7:12) But imperfect man found it burdensome because he could not meet its perfect standard. Christ freed all those yoked in this manner from this obligation. —Gal. 3:13.

6 The grand invitation to "come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down," was also extended to those burdened down by the vain traditional systems of the day. Speaking of the scribes and Pharisees who fostered these traditions, Jesus said: "They bind up heavy loads and put them upon the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger." (Matt. 23:4; Mark 7:2-5) By being so particular about the minor details, the Pharisees completely overlooked the weightier matters of justice, mercy and faithfulness. Jesus freed people from such enslaving tradition, which was vain worship.—Matt. 15:1-9.

7 The invitation was also addressed to those who felt the crushing weight of Caesar's domination and taxation; and to those who felt themselves "skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matt. 9:36; 22:17-21) The application of Jesus' solution would bring refreshment for these too.

8 Jesus also addressed himself to those who felt the weight of their sins through an afflicted conscience. The practice of sin leads to degradation and corruption of the lowest kind, and turns men into the greatest poverty. (Matt. 6:23) These could be freed of their burden by responding to Jesus' invitation to "come to me."

THE KINDLY YOKE AND REFRESHMENT

9 How did Christ get people to respond to his invitation so that they could find refreshment for their souls? He did so by revealing to them that refreshment comes not by escaping life's burdens or work, as many modern-day hippies want to do, but by becoming yoked to Christ and becoming his disciples. He said: "Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples, . . . and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matt. 11:29) In the footnote of the 1950 edition of the *New World Translation,* this text reads: "Get under my yoke with me." People, therefore, are invited to divest themselves of their worldly yokes or ties and get under Christ's yoke with him in order to find refreshment for their souls. The new yoke would be for them to assume the responsibility that would make them disciples of Jesus Christ.

10 The ancient Israelites were an agricultural people familiar with yokes. They, therefore, knew what Jesus was talking about. We must remember, too, that as a carpenter Jesus no doubt made yokes for oxen and collars for people. Such collars were often tailor made to fit around people's necks and shoulders, with which they carried water and other supplies. The oxen's yoke, however, is involuntary, but the yoke that Jesus was proposing was voluntary. He invited people to take his yoke upon them and become his disciples. For the Jew this meant willingly coming out from under the Mosaic law to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, to be yoked with Christ in the service of God with all of one's heart, soul, mind and might, by reason of one's faith. (Matt. 22:36-40; Rom. 1:17) The advice is similar to that invitation in Psalm 55:22: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter." As firmly as

6-8. To whom else was Jesus' invitation extended? 9. How did Jesus get people to respond to his invitation so that they could find refreshment for their souls?

10. (a) Why can we say that Jesus' yoke is a kindly one, and in what way does it differ from an oxen's yoke? (b) Jesus' invitation is similar to what invitation in the Psalms? (c) How does being yoked to Jesus bring refreshment?

we can depend upon Jehovah for help, we can also trust the words of the One whom he sent to do his work on earth, namely, Jesus Christ. Jesus revealed that true refreshment comes by exercising faith in him as Jehovah's provision for salvation. For, "there is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved." (Acts 4:12) Such knowledge nourishes hope. It refreshes one with thoughts of life everlasting in a righteous new system of things. —2 Pet. 3:13; 1 John 1:9; 2:17.

11 The refreshment is primarily an inward experience, one of joy and knowledge that the disciple of Christ is a child in the family of God by reason of faith and not by works of the Mosaic law. The refreshment is a sharing in Jesus' own experience of perfect loving obedience to Jehovah by faith and receiving God's approval from such association. With each turning toward Christ, with each drawing close to him, the weary find refreshment, a cause for rejoicing. The refreshment received is the peace of mind that one enjoys, the deep calming of the heart, a contentment in life that passes all understanding. First-century Christians did experience this refreshment and wrote about it in the Holy Scriptures.—John 14:27; Phil. 4:7.

THE KINDLY YOKE TODAY

12 But what is Christ's yoke today? It is not a yoke of idleness, nor is it an exemption from work or from any honorable demand, but a way of life with everlasting rewards in view. It is a life that calls for sacrifice and example. (Matt. 16:24-26; 19:16-29) Therefore, it is not an unrestrained life, a life of irresponsibility, a life of "uncharted freedoms," which life soon chafes and tires, because of its lack of responsibility, accomplishment and attainment. The yoke today, therefore, is the same as it was in Jesus' day; it is a yoke of complete dedication to God as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is a way of life, which one lives by faith as a true servant of Jehovah with everlasting life in view. —Heb. 10:7-10; Ps. 40:6-8.

13 Such a yoke the Christian voluntarily takes on, because it refreshes. One experiences a godly freedom from it. For "if you remain in my word," said Jesus, "you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." "Therefore if the Son sets you free, you will be actually free." (John 8:31, 32, 36) To be free and experience refreshment one must, therefore, become a disciple of Jesus Christ. There is no other way to gain this experience. (Rom. 7:4; Gal. 5:1) People today who claim to be Christian and who do not experience freedom or refreshment have need to examine their relationship with God, for he is a God who fulfills his promise.—1 Ki. 8:56.

14 When Jesus invited the weary to become his disciples, he told them that 'his yoke is kindly and his load is light.' In what way is his yoke kindly? Some yokes today as in Jesus' day are lined with soft cloth so that the yoke does not chafe the necks of the oxen. They might be called "kindly yokes" because they show consideration and love. The Christian yoke is kindly because the yoke of dedication is voluntary and because it is lined with the love of God and Christ. Since everyone without exception, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the one with ability and the one without, the old and the young, the one with strength and the one without, can avail himself of this privilege of dedication, this proves that it

11. What is the refreshment received? And how do we know that the first-century Christians received it?
12. What is Christ's yoke today?
13. How can a Christian today find refreshment for his soul, and what must those do who have not experienced this refreshment?
14. In what way is Christ's yoke kindly?

is a kindly yoke. "God is not partial," said the apostle Peter, "but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35.

15 The yoke is Christ's. "Take my yoke upon you," he says. We, therefore, are called upon to follow Christ's example. This is a pleasure, because he describes himself as "mild-tempered and lowly in heart." (Matt. 11:29; 1 Pet. 2:21) These qualities are set in contrast to the harsh, demanding spirit of worldly authorities. Because Christ is mild-tempered and lowly in heart we do enjoy working with him. His yoke is lined with true love. It does not gall or chafe us as worldly yokes do. Worldly yokes are harsh, cutting and demanding. They chafe and tire, not only because they are harsh, but because one feels no lasting benefit, no true attainment, no real satisfaction in working to satisfy the selfish cravings of wicked men on earth. But when yoked with Christ as one of his disciples, we each have the joy and contentment that comes with serving Jehovah, and this is what satisfies. This awareness of being God's servant is what brings true refreshment to the soul.—Prov. 10:22.

NEXT ISSUE

Saving the Human Race —in the Kingdom Way

THE LIGHT LOAD

16 Jesus assures today's burdened souls: "My load is light." (Matt. 11:30) What is this light load? It is the living up to God's requirements for life. The apostle John wrote: "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) "What is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?" (Mic. 6:8) Is God asking too much of us when he requests that we be just, loving, kind and modest when walking with him? Are not these the qualities that we enjoy in others? Christians are commanded to preach the good news of God's kingdom "in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations"; to "make disciples of people of all the nations"; to teach them to live in harmony with Bible principles. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Is this an exceptionally heavy load, too much to bear? Let us see.

17 Bear in mind that this load means we must speak to people about God's kingdom and teach people how to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Is this too much to ask of us? Almost everyone has the ability to speak in some language, and people generally enjoy speaking about the things that are close to them. In fact, such conversation is inspiring and energizing. Well, then, if the love of God is close to us, will we not want to speak about our God? If we appreciate what his Son Jesus Christ has done for us in supplying us with a perfect example and ransom, will we not want to talk about it? If we fully understand what the kingdom of God will do for all obedient mankind, transforming this earth into a paradise and uplifting humankind to perfection and life everlasting, will we not want others to hear about the good news of God's kingdom?

15. (a) How can we take Christ's yoke upon ourselves, and why is it a pleasant experience? (b) Why do not worldly yokes satisfy, while Christ's yoke does?

16. What is the 'light load' mentioned by Christ?

17. Why can we say this load is a light one?

Of course we will! Things dear to our hearts do not represent a burden, but a refreshment to the soul! And this is especially true with things having to do with God, Christ and his kingdom. In fact, "with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." —Rom. 10:10.

THE WORK THAT REFRESHES

18 However, some may disagree. They may contend that the disciple's load is not a light one, nor a refreshing one. How can it be proved to them that it is? The Christian can invite such skeptics or doubtful ones along with him into the service of God. Let these watch to see if he is truly refreshed in the ministry. These will see that, when a hearing ear is found and words about the Kingdom are shared, the minister of God is enlivened. His heart actually leaps for joy! How thrilled he is to find a listening ear at the door! How pleased he is when a single piece of literature that tells of God's kingdom is placed with an interested person! The minister in truth is revitalized. He gains new strength. He walks up and down stairs with renewed vigor. Old and young ministers are affected in the same way. Why are they so energized? Because sharing God's word of life brings refreshment, that is why.

19 The Christian is encouraged to attend a congregation Bible study each week. Is this too heavy a load? People come to these Bible studies tired after working all day at their secular jobs, but when they spend an hour studying God's Word at these meetings, their tired feeling generally leaves them. They feel refreshed, and they are not abashed to say so. How thrilled they are when they learn new truths! Their bodies become alive. Why do they feel this way? Because to share God's Word in such association is to refresh the soul, that is why!

20 God's Word encourages Christians to meet together regularly at the congregation. (Heb. 10:24, 25) This they do several times a week. Is this an overly burdensome load? People with bodies beat, battered and bruised from having borne the load of this world come to the Kingdom Hall faithfully week after week after week. Why do they do this? So that they can find refreshment for their souls in the company of their brothers, that is why! It is not an easy task for mothers and fathers with families to bring their young ones with them to the congregation meetings regularly, and still they do. It is not easy for them to travel to circuit, district and international assemblies, often at great expense to themselves, and still they do. Why do they do it? Because they find refreshment at these meetings for their souls, that is why! "Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! . . . For there Jehovah commanded the blessing to be, even life to time indefinite." (Ps. 133:1, 3) At these meetings they experience the blessings of Jehovah that make rich.

TIRED BUT SATISFIED

21 This does not mean that Christians do not get physically tired, because they do. Jesus told his apostles to "rest up a bit." (Mark 6:31) The spirit is willing, but it is the body that often gives out on us. (Matt. 26:41) But under those cir-

18. (a) What can those do who think the load of the Christian ministry is a heavy one? (b) What will they witness?

19. Is attending a congregation Bible study a heavy load? Why do you so answer?

20. What do we witness about those who regularly attend congregation meetings at the Kingdom Hall, circuit assemblies, district and international assemblies?

21. (a) Does this mean that Christians do not get tired? Why do you so reply? (b) What proves that modern-day Christians are receiving refreshment from God?

cumstances such tiredness leaves one with a sweet feeling of contentment for having done Jehovah's will. There is no willing giving up. (Gal. 6:9, 10) Ask the full-time ministers, those who work the longest and the hardest in the ministry, if this is not so. It is not possible to find a happier and more contented group of people on the face of the earth today than the pioneers, the missionaries, the Bethel servants—the full-time workers of God! Their happiness is evidence of the refreshment from God.

[22] One congregation overseer in Brooklyn, New York, talked to the pioneer ministers in his congregation to see how they felt about the full-time ministry. Their answers went something like this: "After a full day's work in service I have a feeling of joy and gladness for being able to direct attention to God's Word." "It is a wonderful experience and I have never felt sorry for taking up the pioneer service." "I feel that I could not do anything more rewarding than pioneering. I wish everyone felt the same as I do." And the message is the same from every part of the earth. It is obviously a rewarding and refreshing life. Have you given pioneering some thought?

MAKING WISE DECISIONS AND FIGHTING DISCOURAGEMENT

[23] Still we cannot ignore the fact that some do assert that the load of the Christian ministry is heavy, yes, even burdensome. Why do they think so? If this be your view, then we ask, "What is making you think this way? Is it the Christian ministry that is burdensome or the demands of your secular job? Could it be your attitude toward the ministry? Are your worldly obligations and ties tiring you out so that you cannot get the enjoyment out of the ministry that you should get?" Find the problem. Be honest in your search and then diligently set about to make the needed corrections. Invariably you will find that the problem rests somewhere in your way of life and not with the load of the Christian ministry. After all, Christ did say it was light.

[24] There are some things we can do that will make our personal loads in life lighter so that we can get greater enjoyment from the ministry. Martha evidently enjoyed entertaining elaborately. This may be your problem. Jesus discouraged this, because it can be time-consuming and exhausting. (Luke 10:38-42) Some are burdened with many possessions and do not know what to do with them. Jesus' advice was to sell these things, if you find them a burden. (Matt. 19:21) Others unwisely yield to the works of the flesh and are trapped into practicing sin. (Ps. 38:3-5) Such loads are unbearable on the mind. Stop! Repent and live a life in harmony with God's will or else you will not only lead a miserable life but lose out on everlasting life.

[25] Quickly resolve whatever be your problem. Do not allow the burdens you bear to dampen your zeal or discourage you from serving Jehovah. Be aware that these are difficult times for everyone. (Rev. 12:12) Be also aware that the happiest position in life in this hour of crisis is to be yoked to Christ. By taking on Christ's yoke and becoming his disciple, despite the many problems, we still can find refreshment for our souls. We will find refreshment in our association with Jehovah and Christ in prayer, by our association with clean brothers and sisters in the Christian congregation and by en-

22. (a) How have various full-time ministers expressed themselves regarding the ministry of Christ? (b) What recommendation is this?

23. (a) What can those do who insist that the Christian ministry is burdensome? (b) What will they find?

24. What are some things we can do to make the personal load in life lighter so that the ministry can be a greater joy to us?

25. (a) How can we fight discouragement? (b) Where will we find refreshment for our souls?

gaging in the Kingdom ministry. Outside the disciple-family of Christ, there is no rest and there can be no refreshment.

[26] Listen, therefore, to the King Jesus Christ, who beckons: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light." Believe this! Answer the invitation. Take on the yoke by becoming a true disciple of Christ. Carry his light load of the Christian ministry with appreciation that you may enjoy living now during this time of intense pressure as we draw close to the end of this dying system of things. For 'this tired old world is passing away and so is its desire, but they who do the will of God not only will enjoy refreshment now, but will remain to enjoy a refreshing life for all eternity.' (1 John 2:17) If you answer Christ's invitation to 'come to him,' that can be your happy lot!—Matt. 11: 28-30.

26. (a) What should we do now if we desire refreshment for our souls? (b) With what prospect in view?

THE MAN Who Forgot God

An article specially designed for parents to read with their children

DO YOU know anyone who has things that you would like to have? I am sure you do. It is common to want things that other persons have.

But some people try to take things away from others. Do you know boys or girls who do this? Do you think they are good playmates? Or would you rather play with other children?

I would like to tell you about a man who tried to get things away from someone else. He came to talk to Jesus one day. He wanted Jesus to help him to get some of the things that his brother had. The man thought that he had a right to them.

But what do you think? Was it loving for that man to try to get the things his brother had? Or should he just have been glad that he had a brother? Some persons don't even have a brother.

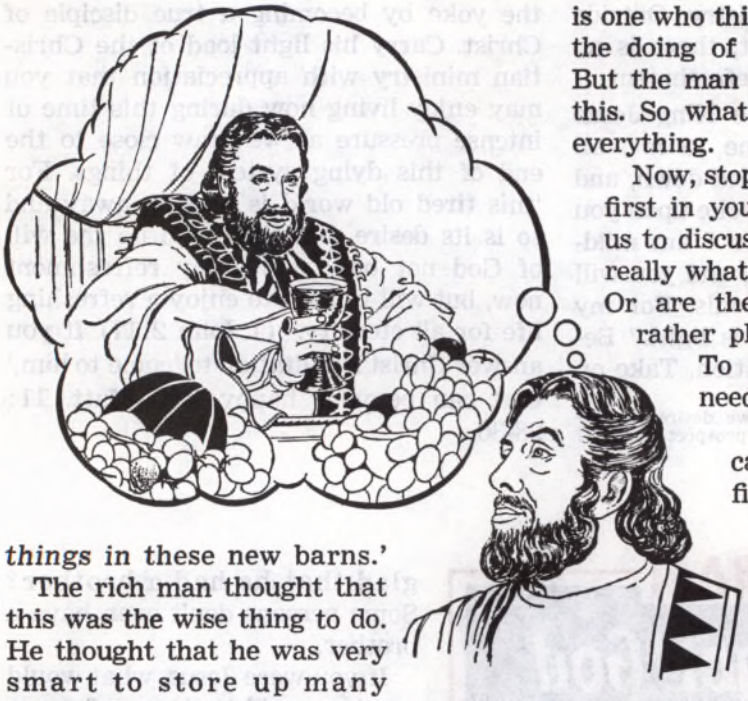
If you were Jesus, what would you have said to the man? Jesus told him to watch out. Jesus knew that there was something wrong with his thinking. Do you know what it was?

Well, think about it. What are the most important things in life? Are they nice toys or new clothes? No; they are not. The things that a person can buy with money cannot give him life, can they? There is something that is much more important. And this is the lesson that Jesus wanted to teach.

So Jesus told a story. It is about a man who forgot God. Would you like to hear it?

The man was very rich. He owned lands and barns. The crops that he planted grew very well. He did not have room in his barns to store all the crops. What was he going to do?

The rich man said to himself: 'I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I will store my crops and all my good



things in these new barns.'

The rich man thought that this was the wise thing to do. He thought that he was very smart to store up many things. He said to himself: 'I have many good things stored up. They will last me for many years. So now I can take it easy. I will eat, drink and enjoy myself.'

But there was something wrong with the rich man's thinking. What was it? He was thinking only about himself and his own pleasure. But he forgot God.

So God spoke to the rich man. He told him: 'You foolish man. You are going to die tonight. Then who will have the things that you stored up?'

Could that rich man use those things after he died? No; someone else would get them. Jesus said: "So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God."—Luke 12:13-21.

You do not want to be like that rich man, do you? His mistake was that he made the gathering of material things the main purpose of his life. He always wanted more. But he was not "rich toward God."

What does it mean to be "rich toward God"? A person who is "rich toward God" is one who thinks first about God. He puts the doing of God's will first in his life. But the man who forgot God did not do this. So what happened to him? He lost everything.

Now, stop and think. What do you put first in your life? When it is time for us to discuss the Bible together, is that really what you want to do most of all? Or are there times when you would rather play with your toys instead? To be "rich toward God" we need to put God first.

There is something else that can help us to see what we put first. For example, when your father comes home, what is the first thing you think of? Do you think first how good it is to see him? Or do you think about material things? Do you wonder, 'What has he brought me'?

Some children always want their father to buy things for them. But would it not be better to be thankful that they have a father? There are children who do not even have a father or mother who lives with them.

You may have a friend that has a car, a doll or other nice toys. Would it be right to think that you should have their toys? Jesus said to watch out that we do not covet or desire to have what others have.

A person that covets wants very much to have what someone else has. He desires with all his heart to have these things. He thinks about them much of the time. He may even try to figure out ways to get these things away from the other person. But is he remembering God? What do you think? Really, he has forgotten God, because God does not want us to covet. He says that we should love our neighbor, not take things away from him.

A toy may be nice to have. But, really, how important is it? What happens to it after a while? It gets old. It may fall apart, and then we do not even want it anymore.

So what is better? Is it better to be "rich toward God"? Or is it better to own many things that money can buy? Will you die if you don't have a certain toy? No; a toy cannot keep you alive for even one day. But if you trust in God he can give you eternal life. So it is important not to forget God as the rich man did.

Jesus Christ never forgot his Father in heaven. He always put the doing of God's will first. He did not try to make a lot of money. He did not own many material things.

But Jesus was happy. He was "rich toward God." So Jehovah took care of Jesus. God gave him the reward of living forever. Do you want to be like Jesus?

Jehovah God will love you if you are, and so will I. So be like Jesus, and never become like that rich man who forgot God.

Grand Blessings OF THE "MEN OF GOODWILL" ASSEMBLIES

"LOOK! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" This truth, recorded over 3,000 years ago by the Bible psalmist, was appreciated to the full by delegates to the "Men of Goodwill" District Assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses.—Ps. 133:1.

In just the United States over half a million persons attended these assemblies this summer! They gathered in many of the country's largest and most beautiful baseball stadiums. To mention a few: The spacious Anaheim, California, stadium, the new Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, the triple-deck Busch Memorial Stadium in St. Louis, Tiger Stadium in Detroit, and Boston's Fenway Park.

Huge, modern auditoriums and other facilities, such as Florida's lovely Gulfstream Race Park, were also used for the nearly three dozen assemblies. But what a contrast there was to the sights, sounds and conditions usually experienced in these places!

A WELCOMED DIFFERENCE

Many observers said the change was a true blessing. Reported the Macon *Telegraph,* July 10, 1970: "These are happy, courteous people who take their religion seriously, hold convictions firmly and work unceasingly to spread the message.

"After the pop festival, it's a blessed relief to have in our midst guests who will conduct themselves properly. Yes, this year Jehovah's Witnesses are doubly welcome."

The Charlotte *Observer,* July 8, 1970, reported: "The 'Men of Goodwill' assembly may be the best thing that has hap-

pened to the Charlotte Coliseum in a bushel of days.

"Unpaid volunteers of Jehovah's Witnesses . . . are scrubbing and cleaning the big, domed center from one end to the other."

The front page of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* July 31, 1970, carried this interesting report: "Religion came to Busch Stadium last night, and brought back the 20-cent hot dog, the quarter hamburger and the dime Coke. . . .

"Witnesses brought back also the knee-length skirt, the narrow tie, the well-behaved child and a cleanliness rare for today's American crowd.

"Thirty minutes after 23,000 persons had eaten their evening meal, hardly a shred of litter was to be seen anywhere. No one smoked, and, for a crowd which included all ages, noise was at a minimum."

In Boston this difference triggered an interesting news story. When George M. Collins, religion editor of the Boston *Globe,* learned that only one policeman was assigned to daytime duty at Fenway Park, he personally located the officer and wrote up a story. It appeared in the *Globe* of July 13 under the title "One patrolman has easy time with 20,000 'witnesses.'"

It began: "When Boston patrolman Tim Corcoran found out he was to be the only uniformed officer in attendance at Fenway Park with more than 20,000 members of Jehovah's Witnesses attending a district assembly, he thought that perhaps his boss, Capt. Paul J. Russell, had flipped.

"But ask Tim Corcoran where he would like to be assigned for a crowd job now, and he'll put in a claim for another Witnesses' convention."

Corcoran could not get over it. "I've never seen such orderliness," he said. "I haven't heard *one* argument or hard word. After a ball game it's like a stampede of cattle. . . . But you people take it nice and slow—even to the little kids who I'd say are too young to know better. If everyone was like you people, I'd be out of a job."

What particularly amazed religion editor Collins was the contrast between this and the meeting of the World Council of Churches that he attended two summers ago in Uppsala, Sweden. There, he said, 401 delegates and 403 reporters and television men were present; but also 864 policemen were on hand! And yet at some of the "Men of Goodwill" Assemblies, such as the one in Bloomington, Minnesota, not even one policeman was assigned!

The crowd of 22,623 at Fenway Park. This was only one of 33 assemblies held in the United States

WHY THE DIFFERENCE?

What is responsible for such a different spirit at Witness assemblies? The Miami *News,* July 11, 1970, pointed to the answer when it reported: "Unlike most Christian denominational meetings recently, the convention of South Florida Jehovah's Witnesses at Gulfstream Race Track has had no dissension to disrupt it. . . .

Anaheim Stadium with a crowd of 49,091. Throughout the United States 523,799 persons assembled to hear the public talk

"While most Protestants argue about the war, civil rights and college protests, the Witnesses have been unique in their uniformity of belief, familial leanings and strict adherence to the Bible."

Yes, it is strict adherence to the Bible that makes possible such peaceful conditions among Jehovah's witnesses, particularly their adherence to the Bible's command to love one another. (John 13:34) It is amazing what this love can accomplish.

Writing in the Charlotte *News*, food editor Dora Gummerson observed: "The whole operation is a masterpiece of planning and organization. All help, for everything to do with the convention is volunteer. But the dedication of the workers makes the whole thing run like clockwork. There are 800 to 1,000 volunteers working for the food service."—July 10, 1970.

What impressed a security guard at Sicks' Stadium in Seattle is that there never was an argument over who was going to do the "dirty" work—all pitched in and helped. The spirit of willingness and desire to help was well exemplified by a paralyzed Witness at the Hallandale, Florida, assembly. He was wheeled up to the volunteer service desk, picked up a pencil in his mouth, and filled out his volunteer application form! He was assigned to care for a contribution box.

This spirit is catching. At the Amarillo assembly Gary Walsh, of Walsh Food Service, said: "After being here and seeing you people all working so hard, it made me want to volunteer." And in St. Louis a policeman was so moved by what he saw and heard that he asked: "How can I become one of Jehovah's witnesses?"

Surely the spirit of love is apparent at assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses! As a motel manager in Salt Lake City acknowledged: "It's quite noticeable to us that the Witnesses have real love for one another." But this love does not just happen. It must be cultivated. And spiritual food is vital for this.

A PROGRAM RICH WITH BLESSINGS

The program at the "Men of Goodwill" assemblies was a rich blessing because it offered in abundance this valuable spiritual food. Delegates were all encouraged by the convention chairman's opening address, "One Hundred Years of Divine Direction." What a pleasure it was to review highlights of the modern-day history of Jehovah's witnesses, and see the sure evidences of God's direction over these past one hundred years!

Especially rewarding spiritually were the feature discourses of the assembly, the principal one of which was the public talk "Saving the Human Race—in the King-

dom Way." How good it was finally to see a combined total of 523,799 present at thirty-three assemblies in the United States!

The assembly keynote address, "Taking Final Advantage of the 'Year of Goodwill,'" also attracted attention. It emphasized that we are now living in the prophetic "year of good will." (Isa. 61:2) But the speaker showed that this "year" will soon end with God's destruction of this wicked system of things. So then, he urged, now is the time to take final advantage of God's goodwill!

How can this be done? By repenting, turning away from the sins repented of, and pursuing a course of life in harmony with Jehovah's requirements. Have we each done this, and are we doing it? The speaker encouraged all to do so.

Watch Tower Society's president giving keynote address in St. Louis

Choice morsels of spiritual food were also enjoyed in the keenly anticipated discourse "The Desolating of Christendom by the 'Disgusting Thing.'" What is that "disgusting thing" about which Bible prophecies speak? many wondered.

The speaker made clear that in the first century the Roman "encamped armies" proved to be the "disgusting thing that causes desolation." (Luke 21:20; Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27) Thus, the "disgusting thing" was not the alliance that the religious rulers of Jerusalem made with the Roman Empire in order to procure the death of Jesus Christ.

But what is the "disgusting thing" in this twentieth century? It is the international organization for world peace and security, now known as the United Nations organization, the speaker explained.

Reaching a climax, he added: "The membership of the United Nations will shortly lay desolate the religious organizations of Christendom." "Excitedly," he said, "we wait to see how members of the world organization will act together as the 'disgusting thing that causes desolation.'"

Another feature discourse entitled "We Worship What We Know" emphasized the fact that Christians know the One whom they worship. It drew upon Jesus' words at John 4:22-24, making plain that to mature Christians God is real; he is no figment of the imagination. Thus the speaker said of true Christians: "They persist in worshiping the Bible God Jehovah whom they know." At the conclusion of this talk the speaker released the 1970 revised deluxe edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. There were 120,000 of these beautiful new Bibles sent to the various assemblies in the United States for distribution.

ACTING FROM THE HEART WITH LOVE

The requirement truly to love fellow Christians from the heart was highlighted in a wonderful way by the Bible drama entitled "Love Is a Perfect Bond of Union." At the outset a modern-day scene showed a young Christian girl who had allowed hate to grow in her heart for another girl in the congregation. To help this girl appreciate the necessity to replace this hate with love, her father decided to tell the family the events recorded in the Bible book of Esther. These events were then dramatized by a costumed cast.

The audience was enthralled as the terrible scheme of the Amalekite Haman to

exterminate the Jews unfolded. The lives of all servants of the true God Jehovah in the Persian Empire were in danger! But Queen Esther, herself a Jewess, motivated by love for her family and friends, risked her life to seek a reprieve. Living in equally dangerous times today, the audience felt the need truly to love one another, yes, to be willing to sacrifice their lives for one another if the need should arise.

At the assembly in Monroe, Louisiana, the senior deacon of one of the city's largest Negro churches attended this drama on Friday night. He exclaimed: "That was the best program I've ever heard." He said that he was going to bring his whole family Saturday, and added: "Our entire congregation is going to come Sunday, about 300 of us. We've already talked about it and the congregation decided they wanted to come."

Also focusing attention on the heart was the edifying talk "Serving Jehovah with a Complete Heart." When the Bible refers to the heart, it was explained, the literal heart and not the mind or a figurative heart is meant. So, as the Bible says, the heart, yes, one's literal heart, can *impel* and *incite*. (Ex. 35:21, 26, 29) How vital it is, therefore, that we guard the heart by always filling it with good impressions!

Since it is our heart that motivates us, it is vital that we be wholehearted in support of Jehovah's interests. A speaker delivering the talk " 'Exert Yourselves Vigorously'—Do Not 'Beg Off' " in Jersey City noted: "Suppose your doctor said, 'Half of your heart will have to come out!' You would reply, 'But, Doc, that'll kill me!' Well, being halfhearted in Jehovah's service will kill you too!"

NEW WITNESSES NEED HELP

A real high point of each assembly was the baptism. And what a blessing it proved to be! A grand total of 10,527 symbolized, by being immersed in water, that they had given themselves to Jehovah God in full dedication. These many thousands have come from all walks and stations in life.

At the Butte, Montana, assembly an eighty-eight-year-old man was baptized! Also, a principal of an elementary school in Washington, D.C., was immersed at the Laurel, Maryland, assembly. She said that she was deeply impressed by the good conduct of the some fifty Witness youths in her school. In El Paso the public press took note that one of those being baptized had given up a promising professional football career to serve Jehovah. He explained: "I love to play ball, but I realized that I couldn't do both."

The speaker handling the hour presentation "Help Them to 'Press On to Maturity' " noted that in just the past two years each congregation of Jehovah's witnesses has added an average of eight to ten newly baptized ones. That is a total of more than a quarter of a million! He asked: "What is being done to help them?"

It was then shown by means of demonstrations how they can be assisted to comment at the *Watchtower* study, to give

A scene from the Bible drama put on at Anaheim portraying King Ahasuerus and Haman at banquet prepared for them by Queen Esther

Included on the assembly program was a mother giving counsel to her daughter on the danger to unmarried persons of necking and petting

talks in the Theocratic Ministry School, to give effective sermons at the homes of people, make back-calls, conduct Bible studies, and, in the case of dedicated males, to prepare to take on servant responsibilities in the congregation. As these matters were discussed, those in the audience were moved to examine whether they themselves were doing these things.

In his closing remarks at an assembly in Jersey City the Watch Tower Society's president, N. H. Knorr, also stressed the importance of helping new ones. He said that these persons are "babies" in God's truth, and added: "That places upon every one of us a great responsibility to help them—HELP is what they need."

The Society's president went on to offer these suggestions: "How fine it would be for you to find out who these new ones are in your congregation, and get acquainted with them! Then some evening when you have nothing particular to do, maybe on a Saturday night, ask them over to your home just for a visit. But before they come, your family is going to do something to help them, not that you have anything in mind *about* them.

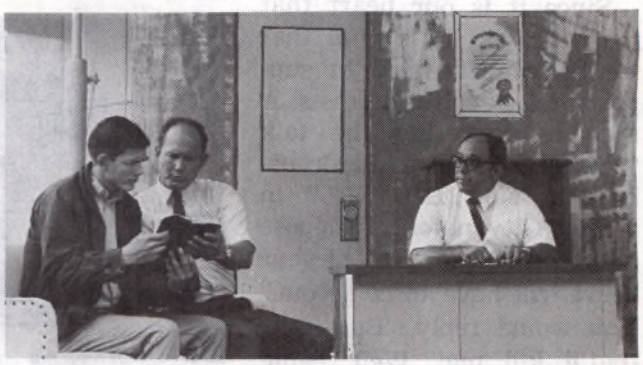
"Maybe during the week you ran across some particular chapter in the Bible in your reading of the lesson for the Theocratic Ministry School. Maybe those particular chapters in the Bible intrigued you. So now this night, when having these new ones in your home, you are just going to talk about these verses, and read them.

"Read them out loud, and ask them what they think about it, and express what you think about it. And in two hours' time, you can go through a portion of the Bible —maybe you could take the Sermon on the Mount, or maybe something in Ephesians, or something about overseers —anything; but talk about the Scriptures. The Scriptures are what is going to help them become mature. . . . They will go home refreshed, spiritually built up, and you will be built up too."

"These 250,000 new people need all the spiritual help we can give them," President Knorr stressed. Can you help?

ASSISTING YOUNG ONES

Several portions of the assembly program also were designed to assist young ones. Outstanding was the presentation entitled "Who Needs Your Help?" It provided assistance particularly for teen-



A father, along with a doctor friend, gives guidance to his son regarding sex, the program illustrating how this could be done by fathers

ASSEMBLY CITY	PUBLIC TALK	BAPTIZED
Alexandria, La.	9,075	157
Amarillo, Tex.	10,023	203
Anaheim, Calif.	49,091	1,067
Anchorage, Alaska	1,488	48
Bismarck, N. Dak.	4,275	73
Bloomington, Minn.	20,777	377
Boston, Mass.	22,623	469
Butte, Mont.	6,555	117
Charlotte, N.C.	17,431	392
Detroit, Mich.	37,111	733
El Paso, Tex.	4,731	132
Eugene, Ore.	16,370	317
Fort Worth, Tex.	16,137	295
Fresno, Calif.	13,256	262
Hallandale, Fla.	15,777	407
Hampton, Va.	13,786	247
Jacksonville, Fla.	12,261	238
Jersey City, N.J. #1	18,886	228
Jersey City, N.J. #2	21,791	399
Jersey City, N.J. (Span.)	10,609	359
Laurel, Md.	19,756	292
Macon, Ga.	9,589	203
Monroe, La.	7,623	115
Oakland, Calif.	29,031	574
Pittsburgh, Pa.	22,432	359
St. Louis, Mo.	30,247	697
Salt Lake City, Utah	8,724	176
San Antonio, Tex.	11,398	290
San Antonio, Tex. (Span.)	7,500	268
San Bernardino, Calif. (Span.)	10,996	275
Seattle, Wash.	15,675	319
Tuscaloosa, Ala.	10,546	168
Wilmington, Del.	18,229	271
Totals	523,799	10,527

agers, dealing with problems they frequently have.

One part considered the problem of masturbation. Although this is a practice frequently considered normal by worldly persons, it was shown that it is a bad practice that can cause much harm. It can lead to homosexuality. But what can be done to break this practice? "To stop seems to be easier said than done," observed one teen-ager on the program.

A number of suggestions were given by the boy's father and a doctor friend. Particularly was the need of spiritual help stressed—turning to Jehovah in prayer and filling the mind with other matters when this urge arises.

Many were the expressions of appreciation for this frank and helpful consideration. A youth at the Anaheim, California, assembly said: "I've always wanted to talk to my dad about these things but didn't know if it would be right or not. Now I feel I can talk to my parents without any embarrassment."

Other parts of this program emphasized the danger to unmarried persons of necking and petting. In one of them a mother wisely counseled her daughter that necking was not going to help her find the qualities she was seeking in a marriage partner.

Also greatly appreciated was the assembly discussion "Inculcate God's Word in Your Children." This demonstrated to parents how they can best use the articles designed for teaching children, which are now appearing in issues of *The Watchtower*. The need of a lively presentation of these articles was stressed. "Read in a lively and enthusiastic way to stir the child's imagination," the speaker said.

Yet further information to help young people was presented in the talk "Assisting Others to Acquire Faith in the Creator and His Word." The speaker noted that evolutionary thinking often saturates school textbooks. "If you are a parent," he asked, "do you take time at the beginning of each school term to examine the textbooks that your children will be using so you know what they are going to be taught?" This was encouraged as the loving and wise thing for parents to do.

RECEIVING BLESSINGS DESPITE OBSTACLES

The blessings of the "Men of Goodwill" assemblies were indeed manifold. Contributing to these blessings is the fine reputation that Jehovah's witnesses have estab-

lished in the past for holding peaceful and smooth-operating conventions. Thus in Anaheim, California, city officials gladly welcomed the Witnesses. The comments of the head of the Orange County Health Department were typical. He said that 'it was not necessary for him to come in and discuss anything with the Witnesses because he was familiar with our ways and anything we did would be alright.' When city officials visited the assembly they were deeply impressed by the zeal and fine conduct of the tens of thousands of Witnesses.

Non-Witnesses were also impressed by the fine blessings of the assembly program itself. One wrote the Watch Tower Society:

"I feel the inward compulsion to express heartfelt thanks for this assembly. The excellent balance of program topics, the excellent manner of presentation of formal talks, informal experiences, dramatic productions, etc., all marvelously facilitated the main purpose: knowledge and understanding of the Bible and dedication to your God, Jehovah. I became a most absorbed listener and student throughout the four days.

"One could not escape the spirit of this assembly: the brotherly love and compassion, the trustworthiness and respect that went from each person to each other person."

How blessed were those that made every effort to attend! And many persons, in anticipation of these blessings, overcame extreme obstacles to be there. A case in point is a woman involved in an automobile accident the day before the Hallandale assembly. Her husband was killed and she was left unable to walk. Yet she was present at the assembly with her children, a three-month-old infant and a four-year-old!

A real obstacle threatened the Corpus Christi Spanish assembly, scheduled to be held in the spacious Coliseum and the accompanying Exposition Hall. On Monday, August 3, just three days before the assembly was due to begin, hurricane Celia swept across the bay, ripping like a bull. She punched out a wall of the Exposition Hall, gored up the roof of the Coliseum and drenched both areas with water and debris.

The next morning inhabitants investigated the wreckage. Celia's fierce 160-mile-per-hour winds had been vented impartially on all sections of the city, toppling structures from flimsy shacks to huge brick buildings. A reporter remarked that the city looked much like Hiroshima after the atomic bomb.

With the city a disaster area, holding an assembly there was impossible. What could be done? Quickly arrangements were concluded and a contract signed to use the HemisFair Arena in San Antonio, where an English assembly had concluded just two days before. But now it was late Tuesday evening. How could word of the assembly change reach the far-flung congregations in time?

To some extent by radio, but largely by word of mouth. Word traveled throughout the South that night and the next day. And what a thrill to see 5,827 on hand for the assembly's very first day! Sunday saw 7,500 at the public talk, more than were originally anticipated for Corpus Christi! What blessings were realized at this marvelously smooth-operating assembly!

Truly the blessings of the true God Jehovah were with his people as they enjoyed the pleasantness of dwelling together in unity at the "Men of Goodwill" District Assemblies! Already Jehovah's witnesses are looking forward to the five-day assemblies that were announced for next year. Will you be there?

Fulfilling Our Declaration as Peacemakers

What disclaimers did Jehovah's witnesses make in the Declaration they adopted last year at the "Peace on Earth" Assemblies?

They disclaimed having any connection or part whatever with the professedly Christian sects of Christendom. These sects have proved themselves to be fomenters of religious and other wars and have not promoted the interests of God's kingdom. Jehovah's witnesses also disclaimed having any share in the political and ideological controversies that are dividing the peoples of the world.

In favor of what did Jehovah's people declare themselves in this Declaration?

They declared themselves in favor of the long-promised kingdom of Jehovah God by his Son, the Messiah. It alone will bring enduring peace for all the world of mankind. By supporting that kingdom they are at peace with God.

In this Declaration what did Jehovah's witnesses resolve to do?

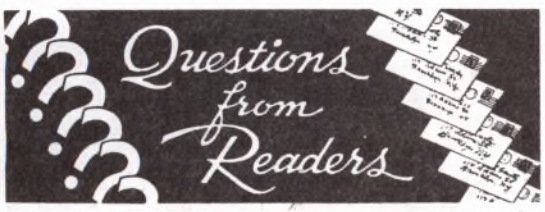
They resolved to be peacemakers. (Matt. 5:9) They also declared their purpose to continue to serve as the "light of the world" by preaching and teaching the Word of God. (Rom. 10:10)* In keeping with the example set by Jesus Christ they cannot hold back from pointing out to the trusting people of Christendom the delinquency of their clergy and other religious leaders before God. (Matt. 23:13-36) In obedience to God's Word the Witnesses confessed themselves to be under orders to reveal to the people that there is no possibility for spiritual life now and everlasting life in the future by means of Christendom.

The Witnesses further stated that they publicly thanked God that he has taken his great power and begun his everlasting reign by his Son. And confidently the Witnesses stated that they will not fear the wrath of the political nations, but will loyally, to the end, give their unqualified allegiance to God's kingdom by preaching its good news.

How can Jehovah's witnesses fulfill their Declaration as peacemakers?

First of all, by continuing at peace with their Creator, Jehovah God. This, in turn, requires them to fulfill their vows of dedication. They will do all they can to live at peace with one another so that Christian congregations can be dwelling places of peace. (Jas. 3:18) They will also, 'so far as it depends upon them, be peaceable with all men,' yet never compromising when issues of neutrality are faced.—Rom. 12:18.

* For details see *The Watchtower*, December 1, 1969.



● Ezekiel 29:1-16 indicates that Egypt would be desolate for forty years. Did that actually take place?—U.S.A.

This desolation of Egypt may have come after Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt. Egypt's downfall had already been pronounced by Jehovah's prophet Jeremiah. (Jer. 25:17-19) It began with Egypt's decisive defeat at Carchemish on the Euphrates River by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar in the early part of 625 B.C.E. This event is described at Jeremiah 46:2-10 as well as in the Babylonian Chronicles.

Nebuchadnezzar next took over Syria and Palestine, and Judah became a vassal state of Babylon. (2 Ki. 24:1) Egypt made one last attempt to remain a power in Asia. The ruling Pharaoh (believed to be Hophra) came to Canaan in answer to Judean King Zedekiah's request for military support in his revolt against Babylon in 609-607 B.C.E. Producing only a temporary lifting of the Babylonian siege, Egypt's troops were forced to withdraw and Jerusalem was left to its destruction.—Jer. 37:5-7; Ezek. 17:15-18.

Despite vigorous warning by Jeremiah (Jer. 42:7-22), the remnant of Judah's population later fled to Egypt as a sanctuary. (Jer. 24:1, 8-10) But the fulfillment of Jehovah's prophecies caught up with the Israelite refugees when Nebuchadnezzar marched against Egypt and conquered the land.

Concerning this, Jehovah's prophetic words state: "And he [Nebuchadnezzar] must come in and strike the land of Egypt. Whoever is due for deadly plague will be for deadly plague, and whoever is due for captivity will be for captivity, and whoever is due for the sword will be for the sword. And I will set a fire ablaze in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he will certainly burn them and lead them captive." "Make for yourself mere baggage for exile, O inhabitress, the daughter of Egypt. For Noph itself will become a mere object of astonishment and will actually be set afire, so as to be without an inhabitant. . . . For the very day of their disaster has come in upon them."—Jer. 43:11, 12; 46:19, 21.

Thus, the certain devastation of Egypt by the forces of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar is foretold by Jehovah. And Nebuchadnezzar received Egypt's wealth as his 'pay' for military service rendered in Jehovah's execution of judgment against Tyre, the opposer of God's people.—Ezek. 29:18-20; 30:10-12.

While some commentaries refer to the reign of Amasis (Ahmose) II, the successor of Hophra, as prosperous, they do so on the testimony of Herodotus, who visited Egypt over a hundred years later. But the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1959, Vol. 8, p. 62) comments on Herodotus' history of this period: "His statements prove not entirely reliable when they can be checked by the scanty native evidence."

Also, the Bible commentary of F. C. Cook notes that Herodotus "was indebted for his information on past history to the Egyptian priests, whose tales he adopted with blind credulity. . . . The whole story [by Herodotus] of Apries [Hophra] and Amasis is mixed with so much that is inconsistent and legendary that we may very well hesitate to adopt it as authentic history. It is by no means strange that the priests should endeavour to disguise the national dishonour of having been subjected to a foreign yoke.

Hence, while the secular history of Egypt provides no positive evidence of the prophecy's fulfillment, we may be confident of the accuracy of the Bible record. There indeed was a forty-year period of desolation as Jehovah had clearly foretold. This may have come when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt following his desolating of Judah and Jerusalem.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 1: Breaking the Yoke of the Oppressor. Page 584. Songs to Be Used: 40, 59.

November 8: A Yoke That Is Kindly and a Load That Is Light. Page 590. Songs to Be Used: 77, 106.