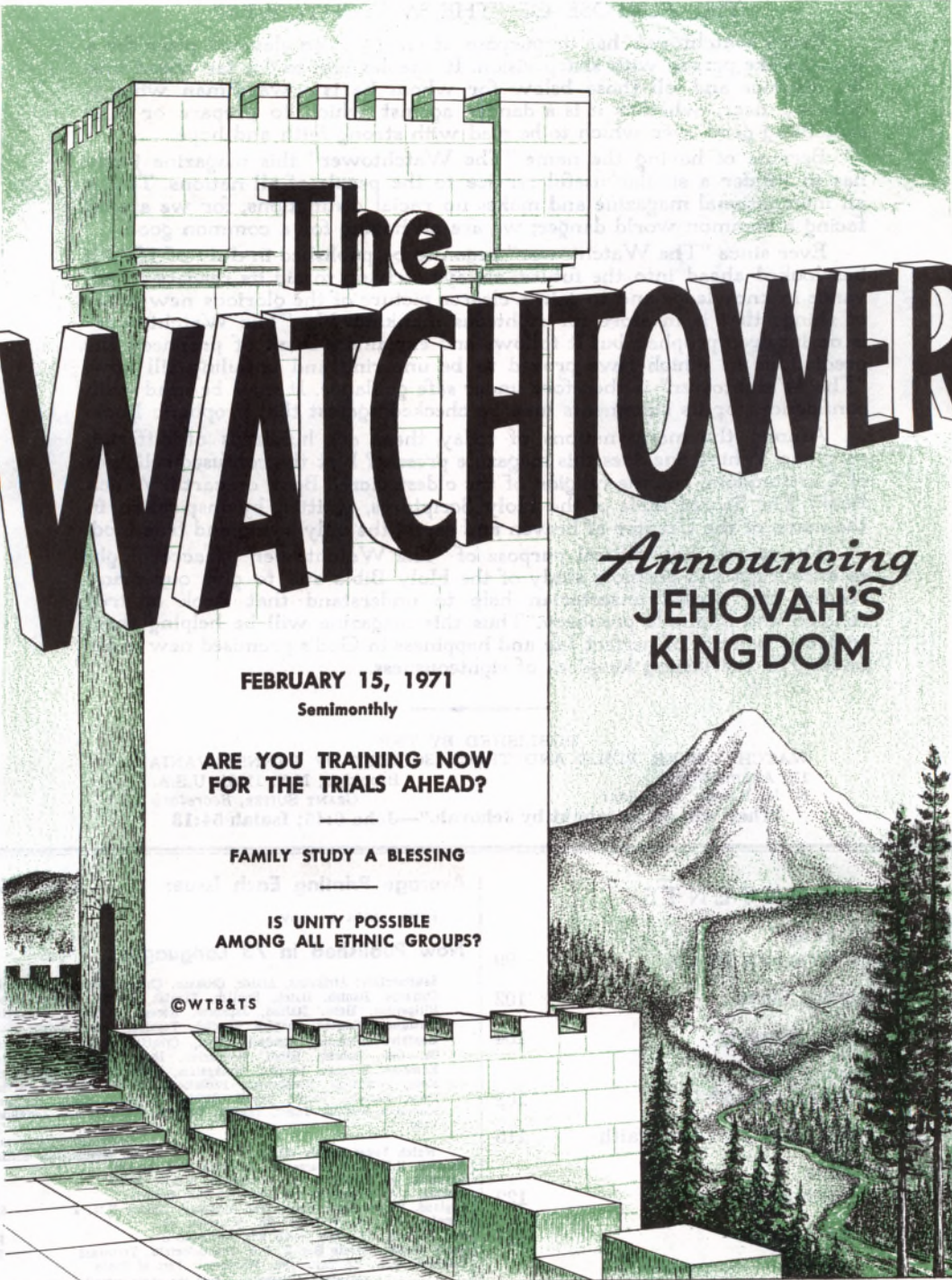




The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

FEBRUARY 15, 1971

Semimonthly

**ARE YOU TRAINING NOW
FOR THE TRIALS AHEAD?**

FAMILY STUDY A BLESSING

**IS UNITY POSSIBLE
AMONG ALL ETHNIC GROUPS?**

©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.

PUBLISHED BY THE
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
N. H. KNORR, President
GRANT SUITER, Secretary
"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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Average Printing Each Issue: 6,900,000

Five cents a copy

Now Published in 73 Languages

Semimonthly: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chishona, Cibemba, Cinyanja, Danleah, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malayag, Norwegian, Portuguese, Sesotho, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu.
Monthly: Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Croatian, Eek, Ewe, Fijian, Ga, Gun, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Ibo, Icelandic, Indonesian, Kanarese, Kikongo, Lingala, Malayalam, Marathi, Melanesian-Pidgin, Motu, Pampango, Pangasinan, Papiamentu, Polish, Russian, Sermar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Siamese, Silosi, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Swahili, Tamil, Tswana, Tumbuka, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu.

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates for semimonthly editions
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	\$1
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	\$1
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto 390, Ontario	\$1
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London N.W. 7	65p
Jamaica, W.I., 41 Trafalgar Rd., Kingston 10	\$1
New Zealand, 621 New North Rd., Auckland 3	90c
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, Transvaal	70c
Trinidad, W.I., 21 Taylor St., Woodbrook, Port of Spain	\$2
(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)	

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn.

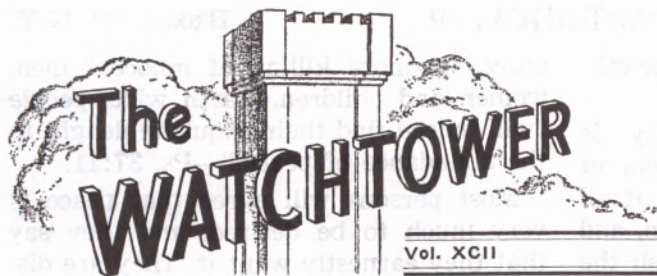
Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.

Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y.

Printed in U.S.A.

The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, New York 11201, U.S.A.



Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Vol. XCII

February 15, 1971

Number 4

DO YOU ever say the Lord's Prayer? If so, then, like many millions of other persons, you repeat the words, "Thy kingdom come," or, perhaps in modern English, you say, "Let your kingdom come."—Matt. 6:9-13.

But stop and think. Do you fully realize what you are praying for when you say these words? And just as important, Do you really *want* that kingdom to come?

The Bible says that the coming rule of God's kingdom or government will bring drastic changes, nothing short of a glorious and peaceful paradise here on earth. This, of course, is the *ultimate result*. But first consider how such a condition will be brought about.

POLITICAL RULE BY MEN REPLACED

Did you know, for example, that, according to the Bible, God's kingdom will replace the now-existing governments of men? God's kingdom will be no world federation, nor will it be a continuation of the present United Nations concept; it will not be a glorified polylingual debating society whose members, with or without veto power, champion various political ideologies.

The Scriptures abound with prophetic descriptions of just what the coming of God's righteous kingdom will mean. Dan-

What the "Coming" of God's Kingdom *Means*

iel's prophecy (2:44) says: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."

Do you fully comprehend what that will mean? The prophecy of Daniel likens God's kingdom to a stone that grinds the entire complex of human governments to powder, after which the Kingdom grows until it fills the whole earth.—Dan. 2:34-45.

Keep in mind that our wanting it or not wanting it will not in the least affect the certainty of its coming; this is the determined purpose of Almighty God. However, depending on our attitude, its coming will be for good or for bad to us individually. We must make our own choice. If we sincerely want it we will act in harmony with it, and that with benefit to ourselves.

Not everyone wants God's kingdom to come. "The kings of earth," the Bible psalmist says, "take their stand and high officials themselves have massed together as one against Jehovah and against his anointed one." (Ps. 2:2) Obviously, those whose positions of power will be eliminated by the coming of God's kingdom are not eager for its coming, and they fre-

quently try to silence those who urge others to put faith in it.

Many persons whose prosperity is geared to the present selfish system of competition are not anxious to see it all end. Great stars of stage and screen, and athletic and sports heroes who relish the huzzah and praise of the populace will not rejoice to see the end of the system that puts them on glamorous tinsel-bedecked thrones of fame. Superpatriots and radical racists who worship nationalism and pride themselves over racial origins do not want to lose their cherished distinctions, yet under God's kingdom there will be "neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave, freeman."—Col. 3:11.

Despite such self-centered attitudes, the need for a great change, a global change, becomes daily more evident. God's solution to the grave problems facing mankind is to replace the wicked old system with the righteous new one of His design. The whole social and economic system of the present must be terminated with the grinding destruction of human rule by God's kingdom as promised. "Look! I am making all things new," says the Sovereign Ruler who authorizes this new government.—Rev. 21:5.

If you truly love your Creator, your neighbor, your family, yes, your own life, you will be anxious for that change to come. You will not be disappointed either, for its coming will mean many more essential, yes, delightful benefits.

FINALLY—THE END OF ALL WAR

Under the new administration of God's kingdom, "nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war any more." (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3) What a blessing this will be! No more bombing of

cities, no more killing of innocent men, women and children. Earth wide, people "will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Ps. 37:11.

Most persons will agree that peace is very much to be desired, and they say that they earnestly want it. They are disappointed with international negotiations for peace that go on for years without tangible results. They realize that stockpiling of death-dealing weapons is not a reasonable way to promote an atmosphere conducive to genuine security. They cannot agree with those who protest the war policies of their governments by themselves engaging in acts of violence. They are also well aware that the United Nations has not put mankind on the way to peace. But are they willing to listen to what God's Word says about peace? Are you?

God's purpose to bring peace is not dependent on negotiations with any other government, nor is it hindered by their stockpiles of weapons. Jehovah is the Almighty, and all the forces of the universe are at his disposal. It is by means of his kingdom that "he is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth." (Ps. 46:9) This he will do by removing all peace disturbers.

As we have seen, this means the destruction of selfish political governments, but that is not all. The Bible also shows that those who personally indulge in strife, hatred and fits of anger, as well as those who disrupt relations with their fellowman by practicing fornication and adultery, "will not inherit God's kingdom." (Gal. 5:19-21) So, if we personally want to enjoy the peace that God's kingdom will bring, we need to take steps now to root such tendencies out of our own lives. That is something that we can do by a

conscientious study of the Bible and earnest application of its principles.

NO MORE FALSE RELIGION

The coming of God's kingdom also means the end of all false forms of worship. Do you know that this too is what you are praying for when you repeat the Lord's Prayer?

Your Grand Creator tolerates no rivalry. As he states in the Ten Commandments: "You must not have any other gods against my face [or, "in defiance of me"] . . . because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion." If Jehovah insisted on such devotion when he ruled over Israel as Judge, Statute-giver and King, no less can be expected when his rule is extended over all the earth.—Ex. 20:3-5; Isa. 33:22.

This means that drastic changes will come with the take-over of earth's affairs by the Kingdom, for, as in Paul's day, so now "there are those who are called 'gods,' whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and many 'lords.'" (1 Cor. 8:5) Why, India alone is said to have 330,000,000 gods and goddesses, and these plus many others are worshiped by many persons among the more than two and a half billion of the world's population who are no part of Christendom. Obviously, if there is to be one united world the divisive forces of all such polytheistic worship must be removed.

Jehovah will likewise soon put an end to the hundreds of different so-called



Most people would be glad to see war gone, with 'swords beaten into plowshares,' but do they also welcome the prospect of the end of divisive nationalism and false religion?

Christian denominations that make up Christendom's sectarianism. There can be only *one* way of worshiping the one true God, the way he alone approves. The apostle writes, there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all persons." —Eph. 4:5, 6; 1 Cor. 1:10-13.

So when you pray for God's kingdom to come, it could mean that you are praying for the end of your own church. Did you know that? If you belong to one of the more than 230 denominations active in the United States, the mathematical likelihood that your church will survive into God's new order, is only

about four tenths of one percent. But if we take into consideration the great variety of additional religious groups found in all parts of the world, then the mathematical likelihood that your religion is the right one is reduced to one tenth of one percent or even less.

Why gamble on so important a matter when it means your very life? Why not make sure that your religion is the one that survives? It *will* survive only if it agrees with God's Word the Bible. Write us today and we will put you in touch with Bible teachers in your community who truly believe in God's kingdom and who will gladly aid you in searching the Scriptures for the truth that leads to eternal life.—John 8:32.

THE UNFORGIVING SLAVE

HAS anyone ever done something wrong to you? Did he hurt you or say something unkind to you? It made you feel bad, didn't it?

When something like that happens, should you treat the other person in the same unkind way that he treats you? What do you think?

If someone hurts them, many people will hurt the other person right back. But Jesus said that this is not good. He taught that we should forgive those who do wrong to us.

But what if a person is mean or unkind to us many times? How many times should we forgive him? That is what the apostle Peter wanted to know one day. So he asked the Great Teacher: 'Do I have to forgive him as many as seven times?'

Jesus did not tell Peter that seven times would be plenty. He said: 'You are to forgive seventy-seven times,' if the person sins against you that many times.

That is a lot of times to forgive someone! We do not even remember that many wrongs or bad things done to us, do we? And this is what Jesus was showing. We should forgive others over and over again. We should not try to remember the number of wrongs others may do to us. If they ask to be forgiven, we should forgive them.

Jesus wanted to show his disciples how very important it is to be forgiving. So after he answered Peter's question, he told

his disciples a story. Would you like to hear it?

Once there was a king. He was a good king. He was very kind. He would even lend money to his slaves when they needed help.

But the day came when the king wanted to get his money back. So he called his slaves who owed him money, and asked them to pay him. Well, one man was brought in who owed the king sixty million pieces of money! That is a lot of money. It is more money than I have had in all my life.

The slave had spent the king's money and had nothing with which to pay it back. So the king gave orders for this slave to be sold. The king also said to sell the slave's wife and his children and every-

**An article specially designed for
parents to read with their children**

thing that the slave owned. Then with the money received from the sale the king was to be paid. How do you suppose this made the slave feel?

The slave felt very bad. So right away he fell down before the king and put his face to the ground. 'Please, do not do that to me,' he begged the king. 'Give me more time. And I will pay back everything that I owe you.' If you were the king, what would you have done with the slave?

The good king felt very sorry for his slave. So he told the slave that he did not have to pay back any of the money. He did not have to pay back even one of the sixty million pieces of money! How happy that must have made the slave!

But what did the slave do then? He went out and found another slave who owed him just one hundred pieces of money. That is not much money at all when compared to sixty million pieces. The man grabbed his fellow slave by the neck and began to choke him. And he said to him: 'Pay back that one hundred pieces that you owe me.'

Can you imagine a person doing something like that? The slave had been forgiven so much by the king. And now he turned around and demanded that a fellow slave pay back one hundred pieces. This was not a kind thing to do.

Well, the slave that owed just one hundred pieces was poor. He could not pay the money back right away. So he fell down at the feet of his fellow slave and begged: 'Please give me more time, and I will pay back what I owe you.' Should the man have given his fellow slave more time? Would you have done it?

Well, this man was not kind, as the king had been. He wanted to be paid right now. And because his fellow slave could not do it, he had him thrown into jail. He certainly was not forgiving.

Other slaves saw all this happen. They did not like it. They felt sorry for the slave who was thrown into jail. So they went and told the king about it.

The king did not like what happened either. He became very angry at the unforgiving slave. So he called him, and said: 'You bad slave, did I not forgive what you owed me? So, should you not have been forgiving to your fellow slave?'

He should have learned a lesson from the good king. But he had not. So now the king had the unforgiving slave thrown into jail until he paid back the sixty million pieces of money. And, of course, in jail he could never earn the money to pay it back. So he would stay there till he died.

As Jesus finished telling this story, he said to his followers: 'In the same way

my heavenly Father will also deal with you if you do not forgive each one his brother from your hearts.'—Matt. 18:21-35.

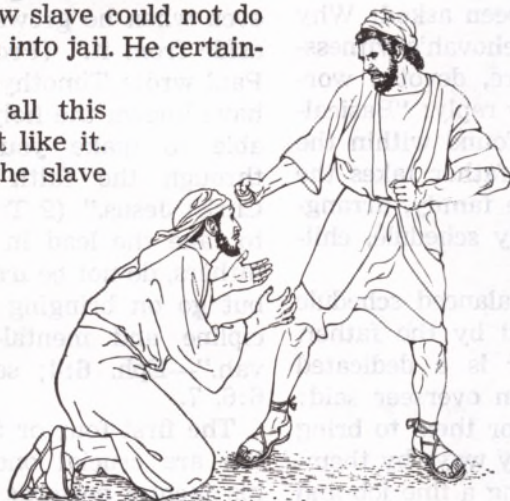
You see, we all owe God very much. Everything good that we have has come from God. Our life comes from God, but because we do wrong things he could take it away from us. Never, in our whole lifetime, could we earn enough money to pay God what we owe him.

When compared with what we owe to God, other people owe us very little. What they owe us is like the one hundred pieces of money that the one slave owed to the other. But what we owe to God is like the sixty million pieces that the slave owed to the king.

God is very kind, and he will forgive us what we owe him. But he does that only if we believe in his Son Jesus, and if we forgive other people who do wrong to us. That's something to think about, isn't it?

So, if someone does something unkind to you, but then says that he is sorry, what will you do? Will you forgive him? What if it happens many times? Will you still forgive him?

If we were the person who was asking to be forgiven, we would want the other person to forgive us, wouldn't we? We should do the same for him. We should not just say that we forgive him, but we should really forgive him from our heart. When we do that, we show that we really want to be followers of the Great Teacher.



CHRISTIAN fathers and mothers want their children to grow up to be God-fearing men and women of integrity. Such children are a real blessing to parents. "The father of a righteous one will without fail be joyful; the one becoming father to a wise one will also rejoice in him. Your father and your mother will rejoice, and she that gave birth to you will be joyful." —Prov. 23:24, 25.

Overseers in the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses have been asked: Why do so many children of Jehovah's witnesses grow up to be sincere, devoted worshippers of Jehovah? They reply: "Basically, the answer is to be found within the family circle. When the father takes the spiritual oversight of the family, arranging for a practical family schedule, children really benefit."

A key element in a balanced schedule is a family study guided by the father. But if only the mother is a dedicated Christian, then what? An overseer said: "We know it isn't easy for them to bring up their children in Godly ways by themselves. Yet many are doing a fine job and their youngsters are holding fast to the truth. These mothers have a regular Bible study with their children."

Thus the key element for the successful Christian family is studying the Bible and Bible publications together regularly. And it is not only the children that need to be considered. The father and the mother also need the spiritual upbuilding that comes from a united family study of God's Word. Jesus pointedly said: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's

FAMILY STUDY *a* Blessing

mouth."—Matt. 4:4.

START WHEN YOUNG

Godly principles are not born in children. Instead, "foolishness is tied up with the heart of

a boy; the rod of discipline is what will remove it far from him." (Prov. 22:15) From an early age they need proper training to counteract wrong tendencies. —Ps. 51:5.

That is why the Bible counsels: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it." (Prov. 22:6) The apostle Paul wrote Timothy: "*From infancy* you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:15) And who is to take the lead in this training? "You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Eph. 6:4; see also Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

The first four or five years of a child's life are crucial ones. During this time his mental patterns and abilities are being established. Dr. Joseph M. Hunt of the University of Illinois said: "It is during the first four or five years of life that a child's development is most rapid and most subject to modification. During this period a child acquires the abilities on which his later abilities will be based. Perhaps 20 percent of those basic abilities are developed before his first birthday, perhaps half before he reaches four."

Very important in the child's development is the acquiring of reading skill, since so much else depends on that. At a

family study young ones will be helped to acquire reading skills before they go to school. The value of this is noted by *U.S. News & World Report*: "It was shown that the parents of high achievers in first grade usually have read to their youngsters in preschool years—often from infancy."

Since parental guidance early in a child's life has so much to do with his mental abilities, then what about early training in moral and spiritual matters? This is even more vital than other training, for eternal life is at stake. By beginning early, a child's life pattern can be correctly set.

Of course, parents may study God's Word with their children individually, especially when their ages vary greatly. The mother can do this with particular effectiveness when children are of preschool age, as she has time during the day. But in addition to this, the father will want to study with the entire family together. There is no more fruitful arrangement for families than this united study of God's Word.

SETTING ASIDE TIME

When can such family studies be held? One opportunity for a brief family study is at breakfast. For a few minutes a Scripture text such as provided in printed form by the Watch Tower Society can be discussed. The father may have the Scripture text read and then invite comments, perhaps asking a question. After others comment, he can summarize. Experiences may also be read from the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* where such is available in the local language.

This upbuilding morning discussion has long been the rule at Bethel and missionary homes of Jehovah's witnesses all over the world. Families do well to imitate the pattern. And if breakfast is not a con-

venient time, perhaps the discussion can be held when all are together at the evening meal.

A most profitable arrangement for family study is taking perhaps ten to fifteen minutes at the end of the day, before going to bed. The family can get together in a comfortable place and read directly from the Bible, each taking turns according to their reading ability. If just two pages of the Bible are read each day, in less than five months the entire Christian Greek Scriptures will be covered! Is there a more upbuilding way to end the day?

EVENING FAMILY STUDY

Another occasion for regular family study, one of the most vital, should be a longer period of time. At Bethel and missionary homes, this time is Monday evening, although you may choose some other evening or time more suitable to your schedule.

How long should such a study be? Each family head will have to determine this, depending on the circumstances. Where some of the children are quite young yet, the time may be more limited. As they grow older and are better able to concentrate, the time can be expanded so that at least an hour is taken for this vital activity.

All the children should be included. Even those who are too young to read can learn. They will also profit by learning to sit quietly. In that way they will come to understand that there are times when they must do what the entire family is doing and cannot have their own way.

If the children are quite young, the family head may choose to concentrate on the articles especially designed for children, appearing in the *Watchtower* magazine. The book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained* can also be used to good advantage.

When children are a little older, many families imitate the pattern at Bethel and missionary homes by studying the *Watchtower* lesson that will be considered at the Kingdom Hall the following week. Some parents vary this coverage when a particular need arises. They may take the evening study time to concentrate on a portion of one of the books, or articles in *The Watchtower* or *Awake!* that deal with the particular problem at hand.

STUDY PROCEDURES

There are several ways to discuss the material at the family study. Some suggestions are as follows.

First, the father can read the title of the material under consideration. If it is the *Watchtower* lesson for that week, it is well to read the Scripture text that highlights the theme. Then he can briefly state the general plan of the material, which is often indicated by the subheadings of the article.

He may then ask the question on the first paragraph. If the family usually read the lesson beforehand, he can call for answers. But if they do not read the lesson beforehand, he can have the paragraph read immediately after the question is asked. The members of the family can take turns in reading, helping all to keep alert, and young ones will benefit from the reading of the adults. After the paragraph is read, the question can be restated for anyone to answer. Some choose to allow the one who read the paragraph to have the first opportunity, enabling each one to express himself.

When the main points are isolated, they can be underlined as a memory aid for use at the congregation study later. Also, additional thoughts can be called for and pertinent scriptures that are cited but not quoted can be read.

Bring younger children into the discussion as soon as they are able to respond. Simple questions requiring answers of only a few words can be phrased for them. When they are able, they can be allowed to read a portion, perhaps only a few sentences at first. This would be limited until the child's ability is adequate to handle longer portions.

The main object of the study is not just to find an answer for the congregation study later. The object is to inculcate Jehovah's thoughts in the heart. (Eph. 3: 17-19) This means working to get information down past the head into the heart. Give the family reasons why they should want to do God's will, why it is the very best course. Help all to see the folly of following the course that this world is taking. Show how the material applies to the family.

In all this, a key element is to draw the comments out by using questions. A good teacher will not only give answers, but concentrate on drawing them out of his pupils. And even the questions can vary—some short ones, true or false, multiple choice, and others. Variety adds spice.

Keep the view of eternal life in Paradise bright before the eyes of all, especially young ones. In one case, a six-year-old girl being taught the Bible started to school, but spoke only Spanish, and her teacher only English. One day the assignment was to tell the class what each one would like to do in the future. This little girl tried hard when her turn came, but could not make the teacher understand. Finally, she drew a picture of a furry lion and placed the teacher's hand upon the drawing. Still not understanding, the teacher called the mother, who through a friend explained the child's desire to play with a lion in Paradise. The teacher's interest was aroused. She began studying the Bible and attending meetings at the King-

dom Hall, all because a little girl had learned about playing with a lion in Paradise!—Isa. 11:6.

This also shows the value of highlighting illustrations when they appear in the study material. Take time to explain them, as they make a deep impression. In addition, you can make use of other aids such as charts or maps. When places are mentioned, their location can be noted on the map. Visual aids help to make the study more interesting.

Keep the setting comfortable, not too rigid. After the study, mother may get refreshments for the family, helping to make the evening enjoyable. Some families even choose to include other families in their study. They take turns in going to each other's homes, adding to the interest and variety of comments. But others feel that they want their study limited to the immediate family.

A REAL BLESSING

The family study is truly a blessing from Jehovah. It provides spiritual feeding for both young and old, and that is so vital in these critical times. It also improves reading skills and mental abilities, particularly of the young. It builds close family bonds. It builds respect for father and mother. But most important of all, it builds deep respect for Jehovah, bringing his favor and eternal life in his new order.—John 17:3.

Will your children appreciate the family study? At first they may not, since "foolishness is tied up with the heart" of children. But in time they will. Note the comments of a married woman who wrote:

"I am so thankful for being raised in a home where we were instructed in Jehovah's way. And maybe if parents know how much we do appreciate this way of life it would encourage more to take a strong stand with

their children in teaching and enforcing Bible principles.

"Along with countless other Christian youths who 'from infancy have known the holy writings,' I daily thank Jehovah for my God-fearing Christian parents. I would like you to know how much this kind of training and discipline is appreciated.

"We three girls are in our twenties now and married, but I can easily remember our weekly Bible studies. Our Bible reading was another valuable part of this learning. We used to sit on the end of the bed every evening and take turns reading it.

"There were youths at school who ridiculed, and said things like 'you never have any fun.' But we had answers for these things. For one thing these decisions were ours. Dad always sat down with us and looked up scriptures until we had an answer for ourselves. He would say, 'Let's see what Jehovah says about this or that.' An early love for Jehovah made us want to do the things that would please first our heavenly Father and in turn our earthly parents.

"Then in answer to not having fun we usually left the other youths with their mouths open. For one thing we had traveled to so many different assemblies, seeing firsthand many historical places, museums, zoos, gardens, national parks and other sites. We had been through the Bethel home and the factories in New York. We knew missionaries in different parts of the earth. We had brothers and sisters everywhere. In addition, our parents spent time with us in family picnics, outings and camping trips. We learned much about plant and animal life, many times watching various wild creatures play and work in their wild state.

"In all these things our parents made sure we didn't miss the point: 'Jehovah has given us all this and a promise for life everlasting, asking back only our love, obedience, and worship.'"

Yes, family study is the basis for true blessings. It provides children, and adults as well, with the firmest kind of foundation for life, both in this system and in God's new order.

Are you having a family study? If not, why not organize one this very week?

Are You Training Now

"Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial."—2 Pet. 2:9.

FOR THE Trials Ahead?

HUMANKIND faces extremely severe trials ahead. All the evidence points to this conclusion. The human family has reached its most critical time in history. In fact, the world situation is deteriorating so rapidly that world leaders believe that the very survival of humankind is in danger. The New York *Times* of January 6, 1969, reported: "The politicians and social scientists of Russia, China and America probably would agree on one thing: Unless remarkably positive steps are taken in the next five years, the chances of the world celebrating the dawn of New Year's in the year 2,000 are far dimmer than at any moment in recorded history."

² When present-day events are examined in the light of the prophecies of God's Word the Bible, the conclusion is forced upon us that these are the foretold "last days" of this system. (2 Tim. 3:1; Matt. 24:3-14) This means that we have reached the days of which the Bible prophecy speaks: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Dan. 2:44) The evidence in God's Word is that this kingdom of God, the very one for which Christians have long prayed, was established in heaven in this very generation, in the year 1914.

1, 2. (a) How serious is the world situation? (b) What is the meaning of present world events?

(Matt. 6:9, 10) At that time the enthroned King Jesus Christ proceeded to cleanse the heavens of the Kingdom's angelic opposers.

³ The Bible describes the results of this heavenly war in this way: "So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come to pass . . . the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ . . . On this account be glad, you heavens, and you who reside in them! 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. 12:7-12.

⁴ Think of it! The Bible says that at the coming to pass of God's kingdom in heaven Satan and his angelic forces were cast to earth. Here on earth they have been stirring up great trouble because they know their destruction is near. Has it not been apparent that the nations have been driven on madly by demonic forces since 1914? What, therefore, lies immediately ahead? There can be no doubt about it. Demon-inspired woes are certain to increase, and the Bible says that the in-

3, 4. (a) What heavenly war was fought at the time of the establishment of God's kingdom, and what was its outcome? (b) What, therefore, lies immediately ahead?

creased wrath of the ousted Devil will be particularly directed against those "who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus." (Rev. 12:17) This means that the faith and loyalty of all Christians are certain to be tested. Severe trials of their faith lie ahead. Are you training now to meet these trials successfully? If you are, you can take comfort in the assurance: "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial."—2 Pet. 2:9.

APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

⁵ It would be foolish to conclude that somehow you are an exception, and that your faith will not be tested. The Devil would like to lull you into such a frame of mind. He does not want you to train. He would be so pleased if you would forget entirely the divine warning: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone. But take your stand against him." (1 Pet. 5:8, 9) Yes, show yourself to be wise by heeding this divine warning. Be on guard against any thinking, regardless of its source, that would discourage you from preparing for the difficult tests of faith ahead.

⁶ Jesus Christ set a fine example in this connection. He did not allow favorable circumstances to lull him into thinking that he would not have to undergo severe tests of his faith. For example, consider the circumstances during the last year of his earthly ministry. Great crowds of people had come to him in the mountainous region near the Sea of Galilee. There Jesus healed their lame, crippled, blind and dumb. Also, because they had stayed with

him for three days and were hungry and tired, Jesus miraculously fed the "four thousand men, besides women and young children" on just 'seven loaves and a few fishes.' (Matt. 15:29-39) As a result Jesus was well received by the people. In fact, not long before, after performing a similar miracle, the crowds attempted to seize him and make him king. (John 6:10-15) Yet, Jesus did not allow his favor with the people to lull him into thinking that the difficult trials foretold in the Bible would not soon come upon him.—Isa. 50:6; 53:5-12.

⁷ When Jesus and his disciples had traveled farther north and were near Mount Hermon, the Bible record says: "Jesus Christ commenced showing his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the older men and chief priests and scribes, and be killed." How remote such sufferings must have seemed to them! The apostle Peter, therefore, "took him aside and commenced rebuking him, saying: 'Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all.'" (Matt. 16:21, 22) How would Jesus respond? After all, Peter meant no harm in contradicting his Master. He truly loved Jesus, and did not want him to be disturbed by what then seemed such remote possibilities.

⁸ Jesus, however, drew no comfort from Peter's words. In fact, he did not appreciate them at all. He knew that, if listened to, this type of talk would discourage him from training and strengthening his mind and heart for the severe trials the Scriptures foretold he was soon to face. So Jesus strongly reproved Peter, saying: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God's thoughts, but those of men." (Matt.

5. (a) What frame of mind should we avoid? (b) What should be our mental attitude, and why?

6, 7. (a) What favorable circumstances existed during the last year of Jesus' earthly ministry? (b) What shows that Jesus did not allow these circumstances to prevent him from training for the trials ahead?

8. (a) What was Jesus' response to Peter's well-meaning efforts to comfort him, and why? (b) What lesson can we learn from this?

16:23) Peter did not appreciate how vital it was that Jesus brace himself up for the trials ahead. Do you today appreciate the importance of training for future tests of your faith? Do not allow what may now be calm and favorable circumstances to lull you into thinking that severe trials cannot suddenly come upon you. Do not listen to any talk that would discourage you from preparing for an all-out demon-inspired attack. Only by such preparation can you be assured of experiencing Jehovah's deliverance out of trial.—2 Pet. 2:9.

TRIALS CAN COME SUDDENLY

⁹ It was less than a year after telling his disciples what would befall him that Jesus suddenly experienced the very sufferings of which he had spoken. He was in Jerusalem, in the garden of Gethsemane, when a mob armed with clubs and swords came by night and took him into custody. That night, as he was being tried, "some started to spit on him and some to cover his whole face and hit him with their fists." (Mark 14:65) But this was only the beginning of his ordeal. The next day Pontius Pilate had Jesus "whipped" or "scourged." (Matt. 27:26-30; John 19:1-3) Commenting on what this might have involved, the *Medical World News* of October 21, 1966, observed: "The tragic pantomime of crowning Christ with thorns and the heckling of the crowd may

have been accompanied by flagellation. The whip (*flagrum*) had several thongs ending in lead balls or sheep astragalus bones." Finally, weakened by such brutal beating, Jesus was nailed to a torture stake and hung up to die an agonizing death. But Jesus faithfully endured. He had trained for these severe trials.

¹⁰ Jesus wanted his disciples also to be prepared for the trials they must face. So the night before his own death he told them: "Bear in mind the word I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also . . . In the world you are having tribulation, but take courage!

I have conquered the world." (John 15:20; 16:33) At times these tribulations came unexpectedly and suddenly upon Jesus' followers.

¹¹ For example, there was the time that the apostle Paul and his fellow missionary Barnabas were ministering in the city of Lystra in Asia Minor. Here they were well received. In fact, after they healed a lame man, the people were so

impressed that they wanted to offer sacrifices to them. However, shortly afterward, the Bible record says: "Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and persuaded the crowds, and they stoned Paul and dragged



Jesus' betrayal and arrest came suddenly, but he had prepared for the trials ahead of him and faithfully endured

10. What did Jesus say to prepare his disciples for trials they would face?

11, 12. (a) What sudden opposition did Paul and Barnabas experience in Lystra, and why was it unexpected? (b) What should we learn from this, and how did Paul seek to prepare the disciples for what lay ahead?

9. What trialsome experiences did Jesus finally suffer, and did he faithfully endure them?

him outside the city, imagining he was dead." How suddenly there was a reversal and persecution came!—Acts 14:8-19.

¹² This should serve as a lesson to us today. Our Christian lives may be going along quite peacefully. The preaching work may be enjoying unusual acceptance with the people. But then something can happen and difficult trials can suddenly come upon us. We must anticipate such tests of our faith and train to meet them. The apostle Paul appreciated this, and urged his fellow Christians to do this very thing. The Bible says that after Paul's being stoned, he and Barnabas "returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to remain in the faith and saying: 'We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations.'" —Acts 14:21, 22.

¹³ Do not conclude that you will escape tests of your faith. God's Word is certain on this—all true Christians will be subjected to trials. (2 Tim. 3:12) How or in what form they will come, we do not always know. But even today they can come suddenly. For example, in the African country of Malawi in 1965 and 1966 the Christian witnesses of Jehovah were enjoying reasonably favorable conditions under which to carry on their ministerial work. But then in 1967 they were banned and vilified by the government, setting off a sudden wave of vicious persecution. Homes and meeting places were burned. Women were raped and men were tortured and killed. In recent years sudden outbreaks of persecution have also been experienced by Christians in Cameroon, the United Arab Republic, Malagasy, Equatorial Guinea and other places.

13. What evidence is there that trials can come suddenly upon Christians today?

WHY GOD PERMITS TRIALS

¹⁴ But why, someone may inquire, does Jehovah God allow his servants to suffer trials? Why is Satan the Devil permitted to go about like a roaring lion causing so much suffering and distress? There is good reason for this. This is shown by the fact that God says, "He that is touching you [people of mine] is touching my eyeball." (Zech. 2:8) Now think about it: Would God permit suffering upon his beloved people, which has the same painful effect upon him himself as a jab in the eyeball, if he did not have good reason for permitting it? Of course not! We are wise, therefore, to obtain a proper understanding of why God allows Satan to bring terrible suffering upon His servants.

¹⁵ The Bible shows that an issue of universal importance between Jehovah God and Satan the Devil is involved. It reveals that, after God created the first human pair and placed them in a paradise home on earth, a mighty angelic creature intervened and by means of a slanderous lie successfully enticed them to disobey their Creator. (Gen. 3:1-6) This troublemaker thus became the Devil, or Slanderer. The Scriptures indicate that the Devil later challenged God in claiming that he could turn away from God all the yet unborn offspring of that first human pair. Unmistakable evidence to this effect is found in connection with the faithful servant of God named Job.

¹⁶ The inspired Bible record takes us into heaven itself, revealing an important conversation there. It says: "Now it came to

14. What fact shows that God has good reason for permitting his people to suffer trials, so what are we wise to obtain?

15. Who enticed the first human pair to turn away from God, and of what challenge of his to God is there unmistakable evidence?

16. (a) As indicated in the conversation recorded in the book of Job, what is involved in the issue between Jehovah and Satan? (b) Was this issue new in Job's day?

be the day when the sons of the true God entered to take their station before Jehovah, and even Satan proceeded to enter right among them. . . . And Jehovah went on to say to Satan: 'Have you set your heart upon my servant Job, that there is no one like him in the earth, a man blameless and upright, fearing God and turning aside from bad?' At that Satan answered Jehovah and said: 'Is it for nothing that Job has feared God? Have not you yourself put up a hedge about him and about his house and about everything that he has all around? . . . But, for a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch everything he has and see whether he will not curse you to your very face.' This shows that involved in the issue between God and Satan is the question: Will humans remain faithful to God under test? Satan obviously maintained that they would not. So to settle the matter, at least in connection with the man Job, Jehovah said to Satan: "Look! Everything that he has is in your hand." But, regardless of the trials that Satan brought upon him, Job maintained his faith in God. He proved the Devil to be a liar, even as had faithful men before him, such as Abel, Noah, Abraham and others.—Job chapters 1 and 2; Heb. 11:4-38.

¹⁷ Although down through the centuries the faith and endurance of God's servants have time and again proved Satan to be a liar, Satan has refused to slow down in his insane course. He continues in his attempts to turn humans from true worship. Yet lovers of Jehovah have remained faithful to God despite whatever trials the Devil has brought upon them. Will you be able to withstand Satan's final onslaughts just prior to his destruction by God? Will you contribute to the evidence that hu-

mans will serve Jehovah God because they truly love him? Whether you will be able to do so depends upon whether you avail yourself of important aids.

AIDS TO ENDURING TRIAL

¹⁸ Consider, for example, how happy Jehovah God must have been with the course taken by faithful Job. Satan had said, in effect, that nobody would keep integrity to God under trial. Yet, Job's course of life was testifying before the entire universe, 'You are a low-down liar, Satan, for until I die I'll remain faithful to God!' (Jas. 5:11) How happy Jehovah is when persons like Job faithfully serve Him and thus prove his Adversary a liar! This is indicated by God's loving appeal: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me." (Prov. 27:11) So consider the privilege you have of making Jehovah's heart glad! Your faithfulness to Him under trial will add to the "reply" he can make to his taunter Satan the Devil. Your remembering this will serve as an invaluable aid to you to endure trial.

¹⁹ Another important aid to enduring trial is to consider its temporary nature. Really, the trial does not amount to anything in comparison with the blessings with which God will reward his faithful servants. (Rom. 8:18) Although Job suffered terribly at the hands of Satan, the Bible record says: "As for Jehovah, he blessed the end of Job afterward more than his beginning." (Job 42:12) And of even greater importance, Job's faithfulness assured for him the blessing of a resurrection from the dead to enjoy eternal life. How wise, therefore, it is to serve God faithfully! The Bible explains: "Happy is

18. (a) Why did Job's faithfulness make Jehovah's heart rejoice? (b) Therefore what will aid us to remain faithful to God under trial?

17. What has the Devil continued to attempt to do, so what questions do each one of us face?

19. Keeping what else in mind will aid us to endure trials?

the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him."—Jas. 1:12; Matt. 5:10-12.

²⁰ Still another important aid to enduring trial is to consider the faithful endurance of your Christian brothers throughout the world. On occasion a person may think that his trials are unique, that no one has experienced exactly the same difficulties he is undergoing. But the Bible says: "Take your stand against him [Satan the Devil], solid in the faith, knowing that the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world." (1 Pet. 5:9) Yes, "the same things in the way of sufferings" are befalling your fellow Christians elsewhere. You can read about this in the annual *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. But since others are taking their stand faithfully against Satan under such suffering, you can too. Remembering this will help you to endure trial.



TRAINING NECESSARY TO ENDURE TRIAL

²¹ Besides availing yourself of these

20. (a) Are the trials we may undergo different from those experienced by other Christians? (b) How can considering the experiences of others aid us to endure trial?

21. What part does prayer play in training for the trials ahead?

aids, it is absolutely necessary that you train for the trials ahead by keeping in close communication with Jehovah God by means of prayer. The Bible urges: "Persevere in prayer." "Pray incessantly." (Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17) Just as a soldier in battle should keep in communication with his superior officer, so too Christians need always to go to God for direction and strength. Jesus encouraged his followers to pray to God: "Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one."—Matt. 6:13.

²² However, this does not mean that after praying you can simply sit back and wait for deliverance. More is required if you are successfully to endure trial. This is evidenced from the way in which God answers that prayer, "Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one." God does this principally in two ways. First,



by giving *forewarning* through his Word concerning the way Satan operates. Thus, you can know what to expect from Satan in the way of trials. Being forewarned, you are forearmed. (2 Cor. 2:11) And secondly, Jehovah answers that prayer by *strengthening* his servants by means of his Word. This enables them to endure the trials that God permits Satan to bring.

²³ How clear it is, therefore, that your training for the trials ahead must include study of God's Word the Bible! This study is necessary in order to be properly forewarned and strengthened. But in addition

22. How does God answer the prayer 'not to be brought into temptation but to be delivered from the wicked one'?

23. What must be included in our training for the trials ahead?

your training must also include regular association with God's people in congregational meetings. Here at these meetings you receive God's spirit, and here you can receive loving help and strengthening from God's visible organization. (Matt. 18:20) You cannot isolate yourself, for as the Bible says: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth." —Prov. 18:1.

²⁴ If you avail yourself of these provisions of Jehovah God for your strengthening—His Word, His Spirit and His Organization—what a grand assurance you have! Note the promise that is given in the Bible: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10:13) Yes, no matter how great the temptation or trial may be, Jehovah will make it possible for his servants to endure it faithfully. What a wonderful assurance! But remember, this promise does not apply to everyone. It applies only to those that avail themselves of God's provisions for their strengthening. If you do not keep in regular communication with Jehovah God by means of prayer, and if you do not regularly study God's Word and attend congregational meetings with his people, you simply cannot expect Jehovah to make the way out for you when you are tempted. Surely this should impress the vital importance of proper training now for the trials ahead!

24. What grand promise do we have from Jehovah, but does this promise apply to everyone?

²⁵ To illustrate how Jehovah can make the way out for those who have availed themselves of his provisions, consider the example of God's servants in the United Arab Republic. They were beaten on the bottoms of their feet and on their backs because they refused to share in activities that would violate their Christian neutrality. But one wrote: "While I was lying on the ground being beaten I was praying to Jehovah to help me endure this torture. I was very happy because Jehovah, the Almighty God, helped me." Another Witness wrote: "Regardless of the amount of insulting and beatings that we received, a few seconds would pass and we would not feel anything more even though the beatings continued. We were feeling that Jehovah God was always with us." How marvelously Jehovah can make the way out! Just as he delivered tormented Lot long ago, so Jehovah has proved time and again today that he "knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial." —2 Pet. 2:6-9.

²⁶ Your faith, too, is certain to be tested. This is so because Satan the Devil knows his end is near and he will bring trials upon you in an effort to turn you from God's service. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that you avail yourself of God's provisions for your strengthening by praying to God regularly, by studying his Word, and by meeting regularly with his organization of people. In this way you will obtain Jehovah's approval and will successfully endure any trial that may come upon you.

25. What modern-day examples do we have to show how Jehovah can help his servants endure trial?

26. What is it absolutely essential that we do now?



Enduring Trials That Test Our Faith

"You have been grieved by various trials, in order that the tested quality of your faith . . . may be found a cause for praise."—1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

TRIALS are not pleasant. They can be very grievous. It certainly was not pleasant, for example, when Jesus Christ was spit upon and ridiculed, and finally viciously beaten and nailed to a torture stake to die an agonizing death. (Matt. 26:66-68; 27:26-30) Those trials that put his faith to the most extreme test were indeed grievous. Yet Jesus' faithful course under trial proved a cause for praise. First, it brought praise to God's name, for Jesus' faithfulness proved Satan the Devil incapable of turning him from the worship of God. Then, too, Jesus was rewarded for his faithfulness with praise and honor when God resurrected him from the dead to heavenly life.—Phil. 2:9-11.

² When we always keep in view the praise brought to God's name and the grand reward he gives for faithfulness, we can maintain genuine happiness even when undergoing trials. In fact, Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount: "Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens." (Matt. 5:11, 12) The disciple James wrote similarly: "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue

loving him." (Jas. 1:12) Yes, it is a source of joy when we know that our faithfulness under trial is pleasing to God and will merit his reward of eternal life. We can also be happy for the opportunity that trials afford to prove our love for our heavenly Father.

³ When they are viewed properly, therefore, we can actually welcome trials, for they produce beneficial results. This certainly is true in connection with the training that is necessary for a runner or swimmer. Those persons must undergo many demanding trials and tests to cultivate the needed quality of endurance. Only after being put through such trials can they ever hope to win in fiercely competitive track and swimming meets. It is similar with a Christian; trials serve to make him stronger in the faith. It is for this reason that the disciple James wrote: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance."—Jas. 1:2, 3.

⁴ An experience of the apostles illustrates how tests of faith can produce endurance, and actually result in joy. On one occasion they were summoned by the Sanhedrin officials, who "flogged them, and ordered them to stop speaking upon the basis of Jesus' name." How did they react? The Bible says: "These, therefore, went their way from before the Sanhedrin,

1. Are trials pleasant? How can faithfulness under trial prove a cause for praise?

2, 3. (a) How is it possible to be happy even when undergoing trials? (b) What benefit do trials serve?

4, 5. (a) Why could the apostles rejoice after receiving a flogging? (b) In what way are we strengthened by trials?

rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name." (Acts 5:40-42) The apostles were happy for the opportunity to prove their loyalty to Christ and his heavenly Father. Also, the fact that their faith had been tested by a severe trial and proved to be of genuine quality was a source of joy to the apostles. They could rejoice that the trialsome experience had produced in them endurance.

° Just think of that! Those experiences through which Satan endeavors to tear down our faith can in fact build us up. For when we faithfully endure trial, our mind is filled with the conscious realization that we are pleasing to God. This consciousness of God's approval strengthens and makes our hope more sure. Trials and tribulations thus set in motion a sort of "chain reaction" through which the Devil's attempts against us are completely thwarted. The apostle Paul explained the matter nicely, urging: "Let us exult while in tribulations, since we know that tribulation produces endurance; endurance, in turn, an approved condition; the approved condition, in turn, hope, and the hope does not lead to disappointment." (Rom. 5:3-5) What a victorious combination Jehovah God has given us! Yes, sufferings and trials can only serve to build us up and strengthen us when we remain faithful.

° It is significant that Satan the Devil has no new methods, no new ways of endeavoring to turn us from God's service. That is why the apostle Paul once said regarding Satan: "We are not ignorant of his designs." (2 Cor. 2:11) Also we are told at 1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation [or trial] has taken you except what is common to men." In the Bible there are recorded for us the many different trials

by which we may be tempted to reject Jehovah. By examining these Bible examples we can be warned of what to expect, and to be forewarned is to be forearmed. We also want to remember that Satan is very clever. He will not necessarily bring the same trials upon everyone. For what is a severe trial for one person may be something relatively easy for another person to endure. So we can be sure that the Devil will endeavor to strike us at our most vulnerable point. With this in mind, let us consider briefly some trials that may come upon us to test our faith.

TESTED ON LOYALTY TO GOD

° It is in connection with obedience to God's laws that our faith will be tested. Satan the Devil endeavors to create circumstances that constitute a severe test, making it very difficult for us to obey God. One of Jehovah God's laws or commands that Satan frequently attempts to get God's servants to break is this: "You must not have any other gods against my face. . . . You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion." (Ex. 20:3-5) Jesus stated the command this way: "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him *alone* you must render sacred service." (Matt. 4:10) God's servants frequently have undergone severe trials that have tested whether they would remain faithful to this requirement to give God exclusive devotion.

° For example, when ancient Babylon was a world power her ruler King Nebuchadnezzar set up a huge golden image, and the order was issued to all present:

6. (a) How do we know that the Devil has no new methods in his attempts to turn us from God's service? (b) Why may the Devil seek to bring different trials upon different individuals?

7. (a) How does the Devil seek to make persons break God's laws? (b) What is one law of God that Satan has often endeavored to get persons to break?

8. In what way were the three Hebrews tested in connection with the above law of God?

"At the time that you hear the sound of the horn, the pipe, the zither, the triangular harp, the stringed instrument, the bagpipe and all sorts of musical instruments, you [must] fall down and worship the image of gold that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. And whoever does not fall down and worship will at the same moment be thrown into the burning fiery furnace." (Dan. 3:5, 6) Among those present were three Hebrew servants of Jehovah God, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. What a severe trial this was for them! What a test of their faith! God had commanded, "You must not bow down," and yet the command of the Babylonian king was, "Fall down and worship the image of gold" or die in the furnace. This was a deliberate attempt of Satan the Devil to get the three Hebrews to break God's law by bowing to the State, the State's image.

⁹ The Devil's methods have not changed. He still maneuvers God's servants into similar trying situations. For example, just as nations did in the days of ancient Babylon, so nations today set up emblems and command their citizens to salute, bow or perform other worshipful honors toward these. Regarding a prominent symbol of the nations in modern times, Catholic historian Carlton Hayes observes: "Nationalism's chief symbol of faith and central object of worship is the flag, and curious liturgical forms have been devised for 'saluting' the flag, for 'dipping' the flag, for 'lowering' the flag, and for 'hoisting' the flag. Men bare their heads when the flag passes by; and in praise of the flag poets write odes and chil-

9. To what image or symbol have nations in modern times often required that service be paid?

dren sing hymns."* And just as obligation was laid upon citizens of ancient Babylon to bow before the image of the State, so in modern times nations often require that service or worship be paid to some State emblem or some human representative of the State.

¹⁰ In Nazi Germany people were commanded to hail Hitler and raise their arm to the swastika. Failure to comply with this idolatrous practice was punishable by brutal treatment and the horrors of a concentration camp. What a severe test of faith this was for true Christians! Would they hail a man and render worshipful honors to an emblem of the State? Or would they obey God? What would you have done? Thousands of Christian witnesses of Jehovah obeyed God and refused to render devotion to Hitler or an emblem of the State. True, they were sent off to concentration camps and suffered horrible treatment, but the majority of them came out rejoicing that the trial—some experience had produced in them endurance.

¹¹ More recently, persons in the United Arab Republic

* *What Americans Believe and How They Worship* by J. Paul Williams, pages 359 and 360.

10, 11. How have God's servants in modern times been tested in connection with idolizing a man or rendering allegiance to an emblem of the State?

Despite fear-some threats, the three Hebrews refused to bow down to the king's image. Can you endure similar trials that test your faith?



were commanded to shout such patriotic cries as: "Long live the president Gamal Abdel Nasser!" How happy were those who loyally refused to share in such idolatrous practices toward a man who has since died—in 1970. Although they received beatings, they were conscious of Jehovah's help during this troublesome experience. The *Washington Post*, reporting on another African country, said: "Hundreds of children from Witnesses' families have been expelled from school. They refused to sing the anthem and salute the flag."† Despite the Scriptural precedent and the conscientious objections of these children who were put under much pressure to break God's law, the High Court ruled that there was sufficient basis to deny them an education.

¹² We can be certain that Satan the Devil will continue in his efforts to pressure Christians to pay worshipful honors to persons or emblems of the State. He does not want anyone to remain loyal to God by giving God exclusive devotion. In many countries schoolchildren are regularly called upon to salute the flag, repeat an oath of allegiance to it, and in some places even to kneel before it and kiss it with their lips. Ridicule and in some cases physical harm have been meted out to those who have not complied with such requirements. This may soon become the practice where you live, if it is not already. What will you do? Will you endure such deliberate attempts of the Devil to cause you to become disloyal to God? Will you pass this test of your faith?

TESTED OVER ISSUE OF BLOOD

¹³ Another law in connection with which

† The *Washington Post*, Feb. 21, 1969, p. F2.

12. To what test are schoolchildren frequently subjected?
13. (a) What is God's law regarding blood? (b) How were early Christians tested in connection with this law, and with what results?

servants of God frequently have been tested is the prohibition regarding blood. God's command to the Israelites was: "You must not eat the blood of any sort of flesh, because the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood. Anyone eating it will be cut off." (Lev. 17:14) The command was repeated to Christians: "Abstain . . . from what is strangled and from blood." (Acts 15:19, 20) The early writer Tertullian reports that the Romans knew about the stand of Christians on blood, and that Christians were tested in connection with this law. Tertullian writes: "When you are testing Christians, you offer them sausages full of blood; you are thoroughly well aware, of course, that among them it is forbidden; but you want to make them transgress."* But faithful Christians would not transgress. They could not be coerced to break God's law even when threatened with the punishment of death.



What will you do if doctors insist on giving you blood?

¹⁴ Due to the modern medical practice of transfusing blood into ill persons,

Christians today frequently are faced with a similar test of their faith. Some medical authorities insist upon giving this blood treatment, or no treatment at all. This can be a real trial for a Christian. What if you should find yourself in a circumstance where doctors insist on giving blood to you or to one of the members of your family? Will you faithfully adhere to God's clear law that commands abstinence from blood? Or will you be tempted into breaking his law by pressures instigated by the Devil? How happy are those who have faithfully obeyed God when

* Tertullian's *Apology*, translated by T. R. Glover, pp. 51-53 (1931).

14. (a) What is a common medical practice today, and how can this constitute a trial for true Christians?
(b) How does obedience to God's law prove a real protection?

faced by such a test! Not only do they have the grand consciousness of God's approval, but they have been protected from the many horrible diseases and dangers with which blood transfusions are associated.

TESTED ON MORAL REQUIREMENTS

¹⁵ On the other hand, Christians are also frequently tested in connection with God's moral requirements. God commands: "You must not commit adultery." "Abstain from fornication." (Ex. 20:14; 1 Thess. 4:3; Acts 15:20) The Devil has found many of Jehovah's people to be vulnerable in this area. Therefore, one of his favorite methods to alienate persons from God is to seduce them to break these laws. For example, when Jehovah's people of Israel were about to enter the land of Canaan, Satan used attractive Moabite women as bait to seduce Israel's men to commit immorality and thus bring upon them God's wrath. (Num. 25:1-9; Rev. 2:14) In recent times, too, Satan the Devil has employed sex to tempt Christians into immoral conduct. The tremendous emphasis upon sex, with the glorifying practically everywhere of illicit sexual practices, can constitute a real trial for Christians.

¹⁶ How can we successfully endure this trial? By allowing our minds to dwell on immoral thoughts? By going to movies, reading books and watching television programs that condone prostitution, adultery and other God-dishonoring practices? By looking on persons other than our own marriage mate with the thought of having immoral relations with them? Of

course not! For the thoughts with which we continually fill our minds are what will eventually motivate us to act. How dangerous, therefore, to allow our minds to focus upon immoral desires!—Matt. 5:28; Jas. 1:13-15.

¹⁷ To pass this test of our faith successfully we need to persistently control our thoughts. We need to heed the instruction of God's Word: "Whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things." (Phil. 4:8) Yes, make it your mental resolve, and reinforce that resolve over and over again, that no matter what situations arise in your life you will obey God's moral requirements. When tempted, pray to Jehovah. Think about making His heart glad. Also, strengthen yourself by considering such faithful examples as Joseph, who resisted enticement to immorality. Oh, how fine to be like that God-fearing man!—Gen. 39:1-13.



Will watching TV programs that condone immoral practices help you to endure trials?

THE COMMAND TO PREACH —A TEST OF FAITH

¹⁸ God's will for Jesus Christ was that he be a preacher of the "kingdom of God," and Jesus faithfully did this work in the face of mounting opposition that eventually claimed his life. (Luke 4:43; 8:1) Later Jesus commanded his followers: "Go

therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20) This command to preach is applicable to all Christians to-

15. (a) What are God's laws in connection with moral conduct? (b) How has Satan tempted God's servants in connection with these laws, and is he doing so today? 16, 17. How can we successfully avoid falling into sexual immorality?

18, 19. (a) What was God's will for Jesus, and is it the same for Christians today? (b) What evidence is there that the Devil has made it difficult to obey God's command to preach, but with what effect upon Christians?

day. In fact, it is especially urgent now that Christians preach, for Jesus foretold that 'this good news of the kingdom must be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness before the end comes.' (Matt. 24:14) Little wonder, therefore, that Satan the Devil is concentrating his efforts to make it difficult for God's servants to obey this command. This means that the solemn charge: "Preach the word, be at it urgently,"

poses a real test of faith for Christians. —2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 9:16.

¹⁹ In the first century it certainly did. You will recall that Satan stirred up his religious representatives against the apostles, and they "flogged them, and ordered them to stop speaking upon the basis of Jesus' name." (Acts 5:40) What would you have done? Stopped preaching to avoid another flogging? Not the apostles! They endured the trial, passing this test of their faith. In recent years, too, Christians have faced similar circumstances. Authorities have banned the preaching work in some places. But in imitation of Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles true Christians have continued right on preaching. They have said in effect: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) What courage! What faithfulness to God! This is the example that we certainly want to imitate.

²⁰ In most places, however, the preaching work has not been banned. Nevertheless, people frequently are indifferent to the Kingdom message; they may even scoff and ridicule. This, too, is a trial. It

poses a real test of our faith. Are you enduring this trial? Do you recognize the responsibility of Satan for the indifferent attitude of people? It is a fact. By means of his propaganda he has molded their thinking. (2 Cor. 4:4) He is thereby endeavoring to discourage you from even attempting to preach to them. But do not let him succeed! Recognize in the indifferent and sometimes even hostile atti-

tudes of people the efforts of Satan to slow you down and keep you from zealously and tactfully presenting the Kingdom message to them.

Do not allow the Devil in any way to stop you from obeying our heavenly Father's command to preach.

PASSING THE TESTS OF OUR FAITH

²¹ God's commands to us can prove to be a test even when Satan does not bring trials. The Bible gives an ancient example, telling us: "God put Abraham to the test. Accordingly he said to him: 'Abraham! . . . Take, please, your son, your only son whom you so love, Isaac, and make a trip to the land of Moriah and there offer him up as a burnt offering.' " Just imagine how difficult it was for Abraham to obey this command of God! But Abraham did. He went to the very point of using the knife to slaughter his dear son. What faithfulness to God! After holding back his hand from harming his son, Jehovah said to Abraham: "Now I do know that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me."—Gen. 22:1-18.

THE NEXT ISSUE

- Serving Jehovah with a Complete Heart.
- Do You Really Want God's Kingdom?
- Why People Do Bad Things.

20. How is the Devil responsible for people's attitudes, and what is the intended effect upon Christian ministers?

21. How did God test Abraham, and how did Abraham respond?

²² God's instructions to Christians today pose a similar test. For example, how difficult some find it to preach "publicly and from house to house"! (Acts 20:20) And how hard they find it to prepare for this preaching work by giving talks in the Theocratic Ministry School or by making comments at congregational meetings! (1 Tim. 4:13; Heb. 10:24, 25) But are these tests any greater than the one God applied to Abraham? An extremely timid person may almost think so. But remember, Jehovah is a loving, merciful God. He never asks his people to do anything that is not for their own good and blessing. Think, for example, about the blessings Abraham received for obeying God. He had the joy of being stopped by God's angel and hearing God's approval pronounced upon him. He became ancestor to the seed of promise. (Gen. 22:17, 18; Gal. 3:16) Also, his faith is recommended in the Bible for all Christians to imitate. (Heb. 11:17-19) And Abraham served as a prototype of God himself who offered his Son as a sacrifice for mankind. (John 3:16) We, too, will be blessed by God if we obediently do what he says.

²³ It is a real mistake to try to avoid or sidestep a test by failing to do what God commands us. The Bible says that "Abraham got up early in the morning" and took Isaac and immediately began his journey to Moriah. He did not put it off. Neither should we put off obeying God's instructions to preach his Kingdom message. Obedience will only be more difficult the longer we put off doing what we know that we should do now. And that test will always stand between us and obtaining God's approval and blessing.

22. (a) What requirements for Christians today may be about as hard for some to obey as the test applied to Abraham? (b) How was Abraham blessed for his obedience, and what does this indicate about us if we are obedient?

23. What mistake do we want to avoid making?

²⁴ As an example, consider the Israelites whom God brought out of Egypt to the land "flowing with milk and honey." The land was theirs, but there was a test they first needed to pass. The land was filled with demon worshipers who participated in truly abominable practices. What is more some were of unusual, giantlike size. (Num. 13:1-33) This caused the Israelites to become fearful and to refuse to obey God's instructions to go in and take the land. Therefore God said that they would not go in, but that all of those over twenty years of age would die in the wilderness. (Num. 14:29-34) However, forty years later when the next generation of Israelites proceeded to go into the land at God's command, what was the situation? Why, there were those same powerful men, or at least their offspring! The test still had to be passed. But the Israelites at this time did not avoid the test. They trusted in God and obediently went right on in and began taking the land. (Josh. 11:21-23) How much better, though, it would have been for their fathers to have passed the test forty years before!

²⁵ Now we are at the portals of God's righteous new system of things. (2 Pet. 3:13) How close the end of this system is! This is no time, therefore, to put off or neglect to do God's will. We must trust in Jehovah, and courageously do what he says. Very shortly now we can expect Satan in his final all-out assault against God's people to bring tremendous trials upon us. But in God's strength we can endure these trials that test our faith. Yes, and then consider the grand reward of eternal life in his righteous new system with which God will bless us!—Jas. 1:12; Rev. 21:3, 4.

24. What test did some Israelites fail to pass, and what shows that if they had trusted in God they could have passed it?

25. What should we do now, and with what prospect in view?

IS UNITY POSSIBLE

Among All Ethnic Groups?

IS THERE a basis on which people can get along together in real, heartfelt love and unity? Is it possible, particularly if they are of different race or nationality, language and social background?

Near the close of 1970, when a group of 236 persons from the United States and Canada visited Africa, they had opportunity to get firsthand information about this matter. Where could a greater diversity of ethnic groups be found? And where on earth is there now a stronger expression of the quest for freedom than in this continent, awakening like a giant to its privileges and place in the world?

The travelers chose December for their trip, because throughout this month Jehovah's witnesses in Africa were to hold their "Men of Goodwill" assemblies. These conventions would bring together thousands of Africans of many tribes and varied backgrounds. The traveling group were themselves Jehovah's witnesses. They knew that the Bible says, 'God made out of one man every nation of men.' And they had seen unity and co-operation displayed in the first series of such assemblies held in North America last summer. Would this be possible in *all* lands? Moreover, would these North American visitors be received as "brothers" and would

they, in turn, feel like brothers to the assembly delegates in Africa?

DAKAR, SENEGAL

In order to cover the ten assemblies to be visited the travelers took different itineraries, some visiting one assembly and some another. Dakar, Senegal, situated on the westernmost point of Africa's great bulge into the Atlantic Ocean, was first.

Arriving in Dakar, the tourists were warmly greeted at the early hour of 7:30 in the morning by a large delegation of local Witnesses, assisting them through customs and whisking their luggage onto waiting buses. Some were accommodated near the main hotel in quaint conical-shaped huts after the Senegalese fashion, to get the real feeling of a visit to Africa.

The four-day assembly, opening on December 1, was held at *La Maison des Jeunes*, or Youth Building. Though the exterior of the building was very attractive, the interior had fallen into a state of disrepair. But the Senegalese Witnesses got to work ahead of time with buckets of water and soap. At no cost to the hall owners they used nearly one hundred gallons of paint, replaced light bulbs, repaired and replaced doors, unblocked sewers and provided water facilities. After



North American visitors arrive in Dakar, Senegal, to attend assemblies in Africa

1,200 man-hours of hard work everything was ready, including a fine platform with scenic backdrop. Surely the visitors from Western shores never had anything cleaner or more comfortable for a meeting place.

In this country of about four million people, 80 percent of whom are Moslem, 178 of Jehovah's witnesses carry on their preaching activity. The assembly was not advertised, but was in the nature of a private gathering. The peak attendance was 325. Both the president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, N. H. Knorr, and the vice-president, F. W. Franz, appeared several times on the program, speaking through interpreters.

AUDITORIUM DIRECTOR COMMENTS

What did the delegates from the American continent observe here as to the question of unity among people of various races and languages? Perhaps it is reflected in the remarks made by the director of *La Maison des Jeunes*. Commenting on the cooperation and discipline displayed, he asked: "Please, tell me how you do it?" When it was explained that it is not achieved by making an announcement over the public-address system but *is a way of life* learned through a study of the Bible and practiced in everyday life, he asked to receive subscriptions for the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines and wanted a copy of all the Watch Tower publications placed in the Youth Building's library. In *parting* he concluded: "I never realized that you have such a serious organization with such high standards of cleanliness and orderliness. And you are always in such a happy frame of mind; it is obvious you have a very noble purpose."

One of the Senegalese convention delegates exclaimed, as the visitors' plane took off for the next assembly point: "I did not speak English, so I hesitated to go

and talk with them, but how surprised and happy I was when they came to me and greeted me warmly when they first arrived and then said good-bye before they left. I felt loved so much. Jehovah's people in other parts of the world are truly my brothers and sisters."

MONROVIA, LIBERIA

While the Dakar assembly was in its third day, another planeload of travelers landed in the splendid modern city of Monrovia, Liberia. The Centennial Pavilion was a fitting place for this assembly. But the convention manager was given late notice that the government university had engaged the Pavilion for graduation exercises for the final day, the day of the public meeting. The meeting could be held afterward, at six o'clock. This adjustment did not seem wise, however, for the graduation might possibly be prolonged. So eyes turned toward a second effort to engage the four-million-dollar True Whig Party Building located nearby. The structure belonged to the government and was only nearing completion. It had never yet been used. Well, to get the use of such a building as this, a cabinet minister, the architect, the contracting manager, company president and the electrician had to be hunted up on this Sunday afternoon, for approval and access to the building. But it was all accomplished in time to let in the 1,427 persons patiently waiting outside to hear the public talk.

On the second day of the gathering the 679 active witnesses of Jehovah in Liberia were happy to see sixty-two persons baptized in the Atlantic Ocean. A wide variety of backgrounds and walks of life was represented in these newly ordained ministers. One was a well-known lawyer, another an American woman formerly with the Peace Corps. There was a young African girl who had suffered repeated beatings in

school because of her faith, and a seventy-seven-year-old former Protestant preacher. All were now united in the worship of the true God.

A REUNION

A real highlight, especially for the Liberian Witnesses, was the arrival on Friday of Milton G. Henschel, a director of the Watch Tower Society. Henschel had been present seven years previously at an assembly at Gbarnga, Liberia, when some persecution from those opposing Jehovah's witnesses had taken place. On Henschel's arrival this time, scores of the Liberians pressed forward to shake hands, recounting some of the sufferings that had taken place when their assembly had been broken up and very severe treatment had been dealt out to the four hundred then assembled. Now they were even able to laugh at some of the ludicrous or humorous aspects of the tense occasion. Some of the children present at that time have grown up to become strong, active witnesses of Jehovah, and they wanted their visiting brother to know this.

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone (meaning "Lion Mountains"), the site of the next assembly visited, is the world's third-largest producer of gems. Its capital city, Freetown, was founded by freed slaves in 1787.

The time for the assembly here early in December was ideal. It is the season of the "harmattan," a dry, cool wind that blows in from the Sahara Des-

ert, providing relief from the sun's hot rays by day and a cool, soft breeze at night. The natives call it the "Doctor," because those afflicted by malaria and other tropical diseases get "cured," at least temporarily.

Since there are 851 active ministers of Jehovah's witnesses in Sierra Leone, a sizable crowd was expected. So application was made for use of the Brookfields Stadium, the largest and best facility in Freetown. However, it was already booked by another organization. Undaunted, the convention planners approached representatives of the organization, who kindly relinquished their booking in favor of the assembly. The attendance at the public lecture proved to be 1,540.

CHANGING LIVES TO MEET GOD'S STANDARDS

A trying problem is faced by many desiring to serve God in Sierra Leone, as well as in many other parts of Africa. This is because polygamy prevails. How great the desire is on the part of thousands of honest Africans to bring their lives into line with God's will and to please him was portrayed in a real-life demonstration, in a special session arranged for the visiting delegates from North America.

As reenacted on the platform, the scene opened with an African chief studying the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* with one of Jehovah's witnesses. Soon he came to the realization that one



Building assembly facilities in
Sierra Leone

cannot be accepted for baptism and become a servant of Jehovah God while in a polygamous state. But what would he do? He had six wives. Scriptures were pointed out showing that he could be acceptable only if he gave up all his wives but one. After much thought, he agreed to dismiss five and keep the young one, because she could bear him many children. But again, counsel from the Scriptures admonished: "Rejoice with the wife of your youth." —Prov. 5:18.



Presentation of the drama based on the Bible book of Esther, at Monrovia, Liberia

The man then gathered together his wives and explained to them what he must do, namely, keep the first wife and dismiss the rest. He offered to support the others until they were able to take care of themselves, or until they should marry again. He stood firm against the arguments of his wives, and also against the pressures brought against him when he resigned as chief. As a result, one of his dismissed wives, seeing the propriety and cleanness of this course of action, also became a witness of Jehovah. From this, which is only a sample of thousands of such cases, the visitors could see that Jehovah's witnesses in Africa live by the same high Bible standards as their Chris-

tian brothers in other parts of the earth.

A remarkable circumstance was noted by an observer of the assembly in Free-town. Here people from eleven tribes that are usually hostile toward one another had gathered, along with delegates from other nations. What was the result? He remarked: 'On the first day six policemen were seen strolling across the grounds. The second day two were sitting in the shade. On the last day, when 1,540 persons were present, not a policeman could be found. This is amazing when you remember that Sierra Leone is now under a state of emergency.' Among these people unity is not only possible but a present reality.

ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST

Ivory Coast received its name because of being a center of ivory trade in the fifteenth century. Coffee is now its main crop, however. In this land the work of Jehovah's witnesses was banned in 1964. This ban remained for three years. When it was lifted, the Witnesses were so overjoyed that at their first meeting they sang Kingdom songs until they were hoarse.

At the present time there are ten congregations in the land, and six missionary homes, with 440 active ministers. They are studying the Bible with 1,000 persons. A fruitage of their work was manifested when 1,003 attended the assembly in Abidjan. They were especially glad to receive the encouragement and fellowship of the American visitors who were able to visit their country.

ACCRA AND KUMASI, GHANA

Ghana, formerly called the "Gold Coast," still produces gold and diamonds, but the chief export is cacao, the source of cocoa and chocolate. Lake Volta, the world's largest man-made lake, is located in east-

central Ghana. The capital city, Accra, and the second-largest city, Kumasi, were the sites for two conventions in this country. More than fifty languages and dialects are spoken in Ghana, though six, including Twi, Ewe and Ga, predominate. English is the official language.

The visitors appreciated the beautiful, brightly colored garments of *kente* cloth worn by both men and women. They also noted that the "Afro" hairstyle is not the general style in Africa. The women in Ghana, for instance, divide their hair into sections, winding black thread around each tuft, in the nature of short braids. They give names to each style, such as "Corn Row," "Mother Popcorn," the "Y," and so forth.

There are 289 congregations in Ghana, made up of 14,363 active ministers of Jehovah's witnesses. A crowd of 14,526 at the Accra Race Course heard the public address "Saving the Human Race—in the Kingdom Way," given on the second day by M. G. Henschel. On the final day, N. H. Knorr gave the closing remarks, delighting the conventioners by announcing that sometime in the near future *The Watchtower* may be printed in three languages right in their own country, instead of being mailed from abroad.

The North American delegates to the assembly at Kumasi, Ghana, were greatly moved by the spontaneous welcome. As two busloads of visitors arrived, shouts of joy and a roar of applause broke out from the 18,000 then assembled. Hundreds lined up to shake hands and personally welcome them. For the public talk at Kumasi, the Sports Stadium was filled with an audience of 24,960, and 662 new ministers were baptized.

LOMÉ, TOGO

Togo is a country between Ghana and Dahomey having a coast forty miles wide,



Top: Some of 662 baptized at Accra, Ghana.
Bottom: Baptism of 25 at Dakar, Senegal

but reaching back from the coast 365 miles. Here the assembly in the capital, Lomé, turned out to be of only one day's duration, but nevertheless a very successful one. On the evening of that first day, some 4,000 persons gathered to see performed, by native Togolese, a dramatization of the Bible book of Esther. This attendance was the more remarkable in view of the fact that there are only 1,638 active ministers of Jehovah's witnesses in the entire country.

Disappointingly, at the close of the first day's session, the health authorities, because of a cholera epidemic scare in the country, closed the convention, even though the Witnesses had taken careful precautions to safeguard the assembly delegates against the epidemic. Nonetheless, the native Witnesses, who had spent long hours of work in preparing the assembly site and the necessary equipment, many of whom had also spent all their savings to come to the assembly over primitive roads and paths, enjoyed what they had seen and heard, as well as the association experienced. So they returned to their homes happy.

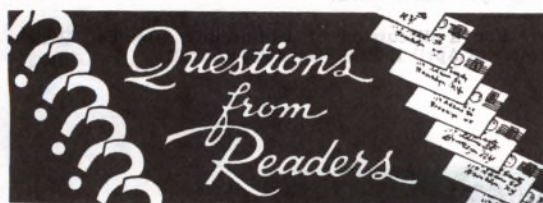
VISITING NORTH AMERICAN DELEGATES SATISFIED

Up to this point, what had the North American travelers observed? Is there a basis on which people can work together in real harmony with love? One writes: 'After the assembly was canceled in Togo the brothers were reluctant to go home. They just had to see the visitors who were scheduled to come in the second day. They came to the branch office throughout that entire day and into the night. When at five o'clock a busload of visitors arrived, the brothers broke out in song and held outstretched arms to welcome each one. What a sight of love among brothers! I don't think there was a dry eye among the visitors as they were overcome with such affection.'

After the assembly in Dakar one of the visitors remarked: "Dakar made a big im-

pression on our minds and hearts, because we were able to appreciate more than ever the apostle Paul's statement in Acts 17: 26, 27 ["And (God) made out of one man every nation of men, . . . and he decreed the appointed times . . . for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us."]. The seed of truth is being sown here, and we pray Jehovah's rich blessing upon all those here in this land as they seek Jehovah."

Before completing their tour, the travelers visited other African lands too. They saw well over 175,000 persons assembled in peace, talked with thousands and became personally acquainted with hundreds, all manifesting the same unity. They could certainly return fully satisfied that men of all ethnic groups can find unity on the basis of Bible truth.



● What is the Christian view of the payment of bills?—L. D., U.S.A.

While there are countless situations covered by this question, the basic answer is quite simple. The counsel at Romans 13:8 definitely applies to this matter: "Do not you people be owing anybody a single thing, except to love one another." Surely it would be unloving for a person to avoid paying money owed to another, whether it was owed because of having borrowed it or because of having received goods or services. In this vein the inspired psalmist wrote: "The wicked one is borrowing and does not pay back, but the righteous one is showing favor and is making gifts."—Ps. 37:21.

Also bearing on the matter is the fact that Christians are honest! The apostle Paul nicely

expressed the point, saying: "We trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things." (Heb. 13:18) When a person makes a purchase, he in effect says that he agrees to pay for the merchandise received. For a number of reasons it is usually wise to pay cash and not run up bills.* Yet there may be an instance wherein a Christian is billed for a purchase. In most places a person in that position is obligated to pay for what he has purchased or face legal action. But beyond any fear of such a consequence, the Christian is motivated by a personal desire to live up to the implied agreement he made when he purchased the merchandise. He accepts and follows Jesus' counsel: "Let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No."—Matt. 5:37.

It is quite common for worldly persons who care little about having God's approval to be willfully negligent when it comes to paying bills. Many of these persons might be repelled by the thought of breaking into a store and stealing merchandise off the shelves. But they think little of taking the same merchandise out

* See *Awake!* of November 8, 1970, pages 7 and 8, and *Awake!* of March 22, 1964, pages 17 through 19.

the front door and then deliberately refusing to pay for it. Is that much different from stealing?

Sometimes one receives a bill for some service rendered, such as from a repairman, doctor or hospital. The fact that one did not receive merchandise or goods in no way changes the reality of his obligation. Representative of the legal view in many places, *American Jurisprudence* (Vol. 58, p. 512) states: "In the absence of circumstances indicating otherwise, it is inferred that a person who requests another to perform services for him thereby bargains to pay for the services rendered." A wise course that can prevent difficulties from arising is to determine as nearly as possible ahead of time what the fee will be. This is true whether one is dealing with a professional man such as a dentist, lawyer or doctor, or with a tradesman such as a carpenter, painter or electrician. Jesus recommended such an attitude of forethought, saying: "Who of you that wants to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense, to see if he has enough to complete it?"—Luke 14:28.

Jehovah's witnesses are well known for their honesty in all aspects of life. And that is as it should be. They know that to have God's approval they must be as honest in their financial affairs as in any other avenue of life. Thus they do not engage in "sharp" business practices that cheat customers or the government, excuse

dishonest or unethical deals by hiding behind corporate laws or other legal technicalities, or willfully default on their bills.* All of this is consistent with the Bible's counsel to be honest and to avoid lying, stealing, defrauding and greediness.—Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:28; 1 Cor. 6:8-10.

In the rare case when something unexpected, such as an accident, does occur and makes it impossible at the moment for a Christian to meet the payment of a bill, his honesty and fairness will guide him. For instance, out of consideration for his creditor he will contact that one and explain what happened. Likely the creditor will very much appreciate the Christian's forthrightness and will agree to accept smaller payments or something of that sort instead of turning the case over to a collection agency and then receiving only a portion of what is collected. The Christian's obvious honesty in being determined to pay the bill will stand in clear contrast to those persons who just ignore a bill they cannot or prefer not to pay.

So even in the matter of paying bills a Christian can uphold the fine reputation Jehovah's witnesses have for being honest. Thus no reproach is brought on the congregation, and the way of the truth continues to be spoken of highly.—2 Pet. 2:2.

* For a discussion of bankruptcy, see *The Watchtower* of April 1, 1968, pages 223 and 224.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 21: Are You Training Now for the Trials Ahead? Page 108. Songs to Be Used: 79, 115.

March 28: Enduring Trials That Test Our Faith. Page 115. Songs to Be Used: 75, 87.