The WATCHTOWER

Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

SEPTEMBER 15, 1971
Semimonthly

SET APART FROM THE WORLD

BAPTIST CONCERN OVER CHURCH PROBLEMS

CHOOSE THE BIG THINGS IN LIFE!

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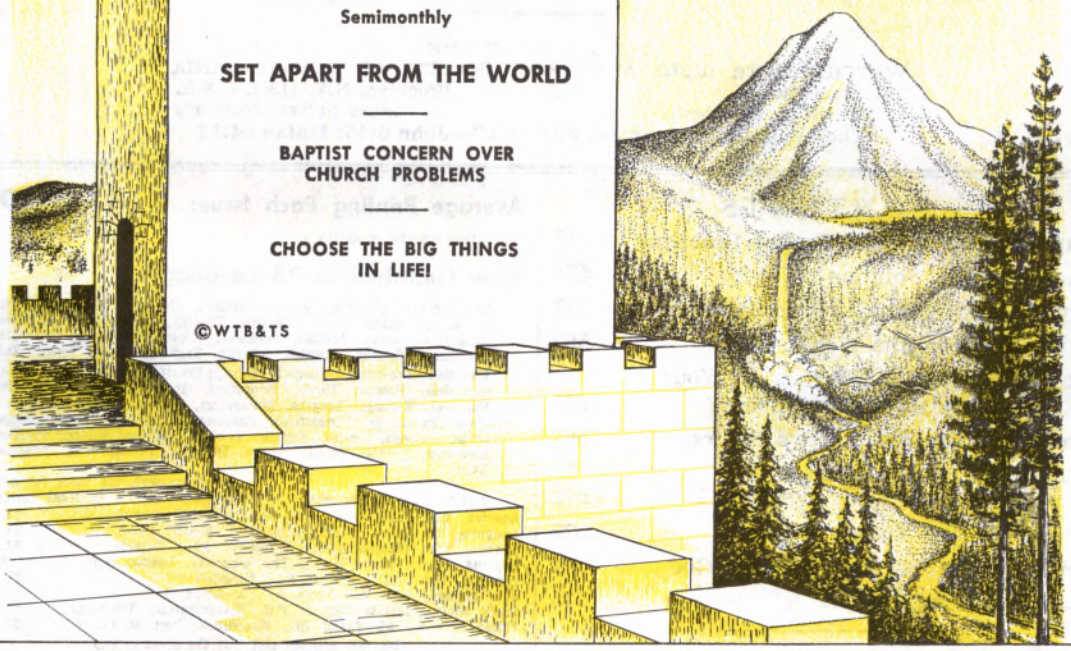

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
Vol. XCII September 15, 1971 Number 18

Baptist Concern over CHURCH PROBLEMS

BAPTISTS today number into the millions. Nearly every country has at least a small Baptist community.

But about nine out of every ten Baptists, over 26,000,000, live in the United States.

More than a third of these Baptists are members of churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. This largest of the Baptist bodies, according to the 1971 edition of *The World Almanac,* has missionaries serving in sixty-nine countries.

Very likely you know some Baptists. You may be one yourself, belonging to one of the churches affiliated either with the Southern Baptist Convention or with one of the twenty or more other recognized Baptist bodies. If so, have you noted concern over any of the following problems?

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY IN BELIEF

Truths We Hold, a leaflet published by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, points out that "a church's authority is expressed by its members, not by bishops or potentates, . . . each church is independent in its action under the lordship of Jesus Christ."

So, as you may know, within the overall framework of the Southern Baptist Convention, affiliated churches differ to a greater or lesser degree in what they teach. Does this present any problems?

Some Baptist sources say Yes. A former Baptist minister in Athens, Georgia, observed: "The people who belonged to my church said they believed the Baptist teachings. But when I began to teach the Trinity the way it should be taught, they just wouldn't accept it."

The members of the church, however, probably felt they were within their right as Baptists to exercise 'independence' and express their 'member-oriented authority.'

But a Director of Education associated with a leading Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina, voiced the opinion that 'the difference in teaching and belief is due to a warping of the Scriptures to fit the ideas held by the individual.' When asked if this difference of belief did not create problems for Baptists moving to other locations, he agreed that it did, but added: 'It is not just a problem between

separate Baptist churches, but within a given church. In our church here we have three factions existing.'

So, while some Baptists take difference of belief within the ranks of their local church group (or between their group and other churches of the same faith) as a matter of course, other Baptists are disturbed. Is their concern justified? You may feel that it is, particularly in view of the words of the apostle Paul to the church at Corinth:

"I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—1 Cor. 1:10, *Authorized Version.*

CONCERN FOR RIGHT SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Then, too, some feel that this situation places many Baptist ministers in a compromising position. In Clarkston, Georgia, a close relative of a Baptist minister remarked: "A minister serves a given church at the pleasure of the local church's power structure. God's truths are to be molded to fit the prevailing views and prejudices of those in power in the local congregations."

Is the picture overdrawn? Some church leaders evidently feel it is not. A few years ago, Dr. Samuel Southard, of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky, stated: "We have subverted our message to hold our numbers and our wealth." Dr. K. Owen White, a Southern Baptist clergyman, noted: "We have drifted away from the practice of Scriptural Christianity."

Sincere concern is expressed over present-day church services and their content. You, like other Baptists, may have noted that sermons are becoming more secular, urging support for men's efforts to solve the worsening political, social and economic problems of modern society. Some feel that, instead of this emphasis on human projects and schemes, more attention should be given to the spiritual guidance provided by the Bible and to building faith in the hope it sets forth. They may have in mind Jesus' words about his true followers: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."—John 17:14, *AV.*

Some of the concern doubtless springs from the entry of new members into the Baptist ministry, men who have completed their seminary studies only in recent years. In many non-Baptist Protestant denominations, it is quite well known that evolutionary teachings, doubts about the existence of a personal God, and reluctance to accept the entire Bible as inspired by God, are becoming more and more common among new members of the ministry. But, surprising to some, Dean Rosco Brong of Lexington Baptist College voices this warning: "Baptist churches are being overrun and their testimony destroyed by a flood of infidels masquerading as ministers poured out of modernistic colleges and seminaries —infidel preachers who deny the Bible, serve self instead of Christ."

Likely you accept as true the Bible's accounts of creation and the Flood. The Bible, of course, shows that Jesus and his apostles accepted these accounts as divinely inspired truth. (Matt. 19:3-6; 24:37-39; 1 Tim. 2:12-14; 1 Pet. 3:20) To ask your minister about his acceptance of these accounts may seem a little strange to you. But today such questions often bring surprising answers.

CONCERN OVER LACK OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Truths We Hold says that Baptists may be called "a people of the Book," that is, the Bible. Like people in many other Protestant denominations, however, some Bap-

tists have felt that all too often fellow members do not take that Book seriously enough in their daily lives. A recent survey by *Ladies' Home Journal* revealed that, among both Catholic and Protestant women churchgoers, one out of four was distressed by "the feeling that many of my fellow worshipers are hypocrites." Continuing, the article states: "Among Baptists, the sense of sharing a pew with hypocrites rose significantly: one in three say they feel this way."

As with other Protestant groups, the question here seems to be: Does being a member of a Baptist church really make a difference in people, does it distinguish them from others as to their daily life, their values and morals?

One Macon, Georgia, housewife, discussing her former association with a certain Baptist church, said that, as a result of her employment, she gained definite knowledge that "the 'pillars of the church' were just as immoral, and did illegal things as much as those outside." She was disillusioned and for a while lost interest in the Bible. Not all become so disturbed. But still the fact that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" makes many sincere persons ask, What should be done with church members whose conversation and conduct violate Bible principles?—Gal. 5:9, *AV*.

In this time of religious ferment, sincere Baptists are expressing concern about such problems as:

- Lack of unity in belief.
- The Bible's being overshadowed in church by secular matters.
- Modernistic clergymen.
- Failure of so many to put the Bible to work in their daily lives.

WAS IT DIFFERENT IN THE EARLY CHURCH?

Admittedly, first-century Christians also had their problems. Baptists may point to disputes over doctrinal matters back there as reason for not getting upset over differing beliefs today.

True, at times disputes arose over doctrines among early Christians. There were occasions when certain ones in their midst failed to maintain right conduct. And false teachers manifested themselves within the churches. But what did first-century Christians do about these problems? Did each church decide for itself what it should do?

While the apostle Paul was at Antioch, a dispute arose as to whether non-Jewish converts should be circumcised. The church at Antioch did not take it upon itself to decide the matter nor did it permit this dispute to result in division. A delegation was sent to Jerusalem to present the question to the apostles and elders of the church there. Testimony was given by Peter, Barnabas and Paul. The apostles and other elders carefully examined the Holy Scriptures on the matter. With the help of the "Holy Ghost" or God's spirit, they reached a unanimous conclusion. You can read about this in Acts chapter 15.

It should be noted that the decisions made by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem benefited, not merely the church at Antioch, but all the other churches. Acts 16:4, 5 tells us: "As they [Paul and Silas] went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith."—*American Standard Version*.

While we do not have the apostles with us today, we do have their writings. Is it not reasonable, therefore, to expect that true Christians would enjoy oneness of belief because of their faithful adherence

to the Word of God? The Baptist pamphlet *Truths We Hold* states: "Baptists believe that the Bible is the only safe and sure guide in religious faith and practice. From this Book—and not from church councils or man-made creeds—Baptists have formulated their basic beliefs."

This gives rise to the question: If the Bible tells Christians to "speak the same thing," why should it be difficult for a Baptist who moves to another location to find another Baptist church teaching exactly the same doctrine as the one in his former place of residence? Does this perhaps suggest that, in actual practice, the Bible is not really being looked to as a "safe and sure guide"?

In the churches of first-century Christians, habitual thieves, fornicators, adulterers, drunkards, and the like, were not tolerated. To the church at Corinth the apostle Paul wrote: "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. . . . Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. 5:11-13, *AV*) Does the church of which you are a member follow this Biblical admonition? Or are known violators of God's righteous commands allowed to remain in good standing, perhaps even permitted to hold important church offices?

In the first century definite steps were taken against professed Christians who promoted false doctrines. The apostle Paul instructed Titus: "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject." (Titus 3:10, *AV*) If this were done by Baptist churches today, would it be possible for a dean at a Baptist college to say that such churches were being "overrun and their testimony destroyed by a flood of infidels"?

Obviously, there is a great difference between the situation of first-century Christians and that prevailing among members of Baptist churches. While first-century Christians faced problems, they knew what had to be done to preserve unity of belief and congregational purity. And they took action. Their efforts resulted in maintaining unity of belief in all the congregations.

THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Is My Home Wholesome?**
- **Do Your Children Confide in You?**
- **Be Too Big for Spite.**

If such unity is not in evidence in your church, does this not indicate that you should be taking positive action? True, your membership in a particular church may give you a certain standing in the community. And social acceptance may seem very important to you. But would it not be reasonable to investigate whether there is a body of Christians today that strives to maintain unity, as did first-century Christians?

Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ wants persons who are truly devoted to what is right. The church of the Laodiceans was told: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:16, *AV*) Surely you would not want to be associated with a church that stands in danger of being rejected by Christ because of his not finding its "works perfect before God." (Rev. 3:2, *AV*) Therefore, would it not be truly wise to concern yourself about God's view of matters, rather than the opinion of relatives, friends or the community?

THEY FOUND *a Solution*

UNDER inspiration the psalmist David declared: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"—Ps. 133:1, *Authorized Version.*

Today many churches are undergoing a crisis. Not only the Catholic church, but Protestant churches as well are feeling the forces of disunity working within them. Daily, it becomes ever clearer that *unity of belief* is vital, essential, if there is to be *unity of action.* And there must be genuine love of God, love of truth, and love of neighbor for people to enjoy the goodness and the pleasantness of 'dwelling together in unity.' No matter how well concealed under a cloak of religious piety, no matter how smoothly carried out, such things as dishonesty, immorality, subtle slander, acts of favoritism, pride—these inevitably produce friction and disunity.

Many sincere Baptists desire, even long for, the full unity the Bible describes. You may be one who does. Back in the first century, during Jesus' earthly ministry and in apostolic times, there were people who hungered for real knowledge of the truth and the unity that such clear understanding brings. The fact that the Pharisees and Sadducees and others misrepresented Jesus and his apostles, causing them to be viewed as a 'sect that everywhere is spoken against,' did not deter these persons. (Acts 28:22) They investigated.

People today, Baptists included, are investigating. Sometimes they do it in the face of pressure from relatives and friends, despite warnings from clergymen. Rather than blindly accept the word of others, they have insisted on letting the Scriptures be their guide as to finding true religion. (Acts 17:11) In their search, they have investigated the work and publications of the Christian group known as Jehovah's witnesses. What did they find?

WHAT SEARCHING BAPTISTS FOUND AMONG JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

A mother from Charleston, South Carolina, relates the following: "I had asked our Baptist minister to help us find someone in the church to aid me and my children to learn the Bible. Our minister's answer was: 'I don't have anyone in the church who is qualified to teach you.' He did not offer to do so. Later I went to several churches in Charleston, South Carolina, for two or three Sundays each, trying to find where people really studied the Bible. After several months, one of Jehovah's witnesses came to my home. I let her read from the Bible and comment on the Scriptures. She said that she would like to come back. So, I told her, please do.

"When the lady came back the next week, she showed me so many nice things from the Bible. She read to me from her Bible, which I thought 'they' must have printed up just for themselves. As soon as she was out of the house, I looked up what she had read in my *King James Version.* Well, there it was! When she came back each week, she would help me learn more and answer any questions I had about the Bible. Within a month, I was going to the Kingdom Hall and learning even more. I could see these people really lived the Bible and enjoyed it. Soon my children and I were doing the same."

A man in Macon, Georgia, relates: "My wife told me that a Witness was coming to teach us the Bible. Since I had been a deacon in the Baptist church, I told her to

tell him to come on and I would teach him the Bible. When the Witness brought up the subject of the 'new earth,' I went to my preacher to ask him about it. He said that it was a mystery; all we had to do was believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. He also told me not to get mixed up with those people because I would be disliked. I began to think about the scripture at Matthew 24:9 ['ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake'] and decided that maybe this was the religion that was right. Everything else they told me had been in harmony with the Bible."

From Athens, Georgia, come these comments: "As a sincere Baptist preacher, I thought Jehovah's witnesses were wrong. I ordered them out of my home, destroyed their literature, and even stopped my mother-in-law from studying with them. Later I began to think that it was my Christian duty to show these people that they were wrong. I accepted a Bible study to show them that they were wrong and that I was right. I was amazed to see that they could back up everything they said from the Bible, and I was hardly using the Bible. I told myself that Jehovah's witnesses really knew the Bible, but they were still wrong.

"I agreed to go to one of their meetings and there I interrupted by asking a question. It surprised me to see the loving-kindness that was shown me in the way the question was answered. This proved to me that Jehovah's witnesses are concerned about people. From that time on, I have continued to study with Jehovah's witnesses, and have realized that no other religious organization is teaching the Bible the way Jehovah's witnesses are."

Recalling her experience, a former Baptist lady residing in the vicinity of Columbia, South Carolina, observes: "I can remember the first meeting I attended and how the love of these Christian witnesses radiated throughout the congregation. After the meeting they would stand around and discuss what we had just heard and other Bible truths. I started attending five Bible studies a week and found more and more joy as I learned about my Creator.

"For the first time in my life I have peace of mind and a close relationship with my Creator. I know to whom I'm praying now, and I have learned of his wonderful promises to those who love righteousness."

AN INVITATION TO YOU

Why not examine the evidence for yourself? Without any cost or obligation to you, Jehovah's witnesses in your area will be happy to give of their time to study the Bible with you in the privacy of your home. You will be able to consider such questions as: Why do we grow old and die? Where are the dead? How can we be sure which religion God approves? Why do so many prayers go unanswered? What must we do to be heard by God? Are present world conditions a fulfillment of Bible prophecy? What do they mean? Why has God permitted wickedness until our day?

Could you presently answer these questions to the satisfaction of yourself and others, using your own copy of the Bible? Availing yourself of the free home Bible study arrangement offered by Jehovah's witnesses, you can soon enjoy the ability to answer these and many other questions.

We invite you to accept the offer made by Jehovah's witnesses the next time they call on you. Or, if you wish, write to the publishers of this magazine and arrangements will be made for someone to visit you. Prove to your own satisfaction whether Jehovah's witnesses know the Bible, live in harmony with it and are united in teaching Biblical truth. Heed the words of the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—1 Thess. 5:21, *AV*.

Joyful Always IN JEHOVAH'S SERVICE

"Rejoice in Jehovah and be joyful, you righteous ones; and cry out joyfully, all you who are upright in heart." —Ps. 32:11.

JEHOVAH'S loving-kindness is beyond compare! "His wonderful works to the sons of men" do indeed call forth heartfelt thanks, stirring lovers of righteousness to make known his matchless name and purposes. (Ps. 107:21, 22) The living God, Jehovah, surpasses all other gods in grandeur and wisdom. Is not Jehovah our Creator, the Giver of life itself? Did not Jehovah create man to serve him everlastingly in a paradise of pleasure? And after our unappreciative first parents plunged the race into sin and death, did not Jehovah make the marvelous, undeserved provision through Christ to ransom mankind from the power of the grave? What joy to behold the "sign" today that this resurrected Son rules in the kingdom of the heavens, as he prepares to oust all wickedness from the earth! Very soon, in the restored paradise, everything that breathes will again praise Jehovah.—Isa. 42:8; Gen. 2:7-9; John 11:25, 26; Heb. 1:1-3, 13.

[2] What incomparable joy is to be found in serving Jehovah God! This service is also a need for all who wish to enter into the everlasting blessings of his new order. Indeed, the paramount need of all mankind always has been, and is, to serve Jehovah. Ancient Israel was called upon to 'serve Jehovah with all their heart and soul.' (Deut. 11:13) The newly formed Christian congregation served daily "with great rejoicing and sincerity of heart." (Acts 2:46) And in looking forward to God's creation of a new order for mankind, the prophet Isaiah calls on us today to be "joyful forever" and to serve God with "joyfulness" and "exultation."—65:17, 18.

[3] Does the world of mankind rejoice today? What does the situation on international and home fronts tell us? The "pangs of distress" that Jesus foretold would mark the end of the present system of things become daily more agonizing. (Matt. 24:3-12) Religious leaders of Christendom find that their Babylon-based institutions and doctrines can no longer hold restive flocks. So, Protestant pastors lament empty churches, and Pope Paul VI bemoans the priesthood crisis as causing him "great worry and pain." It is just as Jehovah foretold: "You yourselves will make outcries because of the pain of heart and you will howl because of sheer breakdown of spirit." On the other hand, Bible-based

1. (a) In what respects is Jehovah beyond compare? (b) What provision has Jehovah made for mankind, and how?
2. What has always been the paramount need of all mankind?
3. How does the condition of Babylon the Great differ from that of true Christians today?

Christians, God's own people, "eat" to the full of an abundance of spiritual food, "drink" to the full of life-giving Bible truths and "cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart." They are strengthened for joyful service to Jehovah, and to make known his salvation in all the earth, "for he has done surpassingly." —Isa. 65:13, 14; 12:2-5.

4 This joyful service to Jehovah is a necessity for all who seek everlasting life in the coming system of things. (Mark 10:28-30) This service cannot be dispensed with without loss or damage. Jehovah's marvelous, loving provision, made for mankind through his Son, calls for expression of appreciative thankfulness on the part of all. (Rom. 11:33-36) The full depth of this appreciation can be shown only by serving Jehovah in *his* way, making known the Kingdom good news to others. Even before this crucial "time of the end," the apostle Paul expressed it in this way: "Necessity is laid upon me. Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!" —1 Cor. 9:16.

BONDAGE WITH JOY

5 Those who come really to love and appreciate Jehovah dedicate themselves to him. What a privilege is this—to devote oneself and one's all to the highest Person —the loving God—of all the Universe! (Neh. 9:5, 6) Really, every worthwhile thing we have comes from Jehovah. So is it not fitting, yes, imperative, that we pay back to him out of this abundance? (Job 41:11; Ps. 116:12, 13; Jas. 1:17) In dedication, we come under bondage to our Creator, subject to his direction. Like Joshua of old, who worshiped Jehovah "in faultlessness and in truth," dedicated family heads today may declare: "As for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah."—Josh. 24:14, 15.

6 Is this bondage to God a burden to be avoided? Assuredly not! Coming into subjection to Jehovah and his law can bring nothing but blessing and joy. All around us in the earth, living things of God's creation flourish under divine law. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus invites us: "Take a lesson from the lilies of the field, how they are growing; they do not toil, nor do they spin; but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these." (Matt. 6:28, 29) If lilies of the field, developing according to implanted laws of growth, can display such breathtaking glory, how much more pleasing in Jehovah's sight must be the moral beauty of those humans who uphold his righteous laws and principles! Just as bondage to God's laws of creation is no hardship, but rather a blessing, to the abundance of living things on this earth, so the bondage that the Christian enters in dedicating his life to his Creator brings only satisfying joy, and in the end eternal life.—Ps. 104: 24; 145:16, 17.

7 Those in bondage to God find meaning, beauty and purpose in life. There is incomparable joy in doing God's will, serving him daily. There is satisfying assurance of God's blessing. (Prov. 10:22) But just as a glorious flower of the field may be stricken by contaminated air or soil, so Christian growth may be stunted by the intrusion of Satan's spirit of "the air," immoral thoughts, blights of materialism and dissipated living. These pollutions bring joy neither to man nor to his Creator. Unless poisons are eradicated and replaced by healthful nourishment, the sick plant will wither and die.—Rev. 16:17; Jude 12; 2 Tim. 1:13, 14.

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4. How and why should we express appreciation for Jehovah's provision?
5. What is involved in dedication to Jehovah?
6. Is bondage to Jehovah a hard burden? Explain.
7. (a) How are those who come into bondage to God rewarded? (b) What dangers may call for positive action?

[8] Though they may hate to admit it, scientists must constantly acknowledge man's bondage to God's physical laws. Anyone who steps outside the boundaries of those laws stands in disaster's way. Thus while the lives of the three astronauts in the crippled Apollo XIII hung in the balance, they and helpers on earth struggled desperately to keep the spaceship within the framework of the Creator's laws, for a safe return to earth. Actually, their underlying problem lay in that, in the first place, they had moved outside the Great Lawgiver's stated purpose: "As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth [not outer space] he has given to the sons of men." Dedicated Christians respect God's physical *and* moral laws.—Ps. 115:16.

OTHER THEOCRATIC BONDS

[9] Back in 1513 B.C.E., the entire nation of Israel came under bondage of dedication to Jehovah. From birth, each Israelite was a part of that dedicated nation. The situation is different, though, with spiritual Israel in the new covenant, in that each person must grow up in accurate knowledge and appreciation to the point of making a personal dedication to Jehovah. —Eph. 3:14-19.

[10] However, the same principles that applied in ancient Israel teach us much that is practical for the Christian congregation today. For example, children must still be subject to parents, and parents can take to heart the laws that operated in Israel with regard to training their little ones. When should this training begin? Well, when did it begin in Israel? The record tells us that "the little ones" were to be found in the assemblies of God's people from very earliest years. (Deut. 29:10-13; 31:12; 2 Chron. 20:13) The same principle was applied in the early Christian congregation, for Lois and Eunice taught Timothy the holy writings so that he knew them—from five years of age? from three years? from one year? No, but *"from infancy."*—2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15; see also Luke 1:80; 2:40-52.

[11] Why should young children—even infants—be denied their part in the theocratic arrangement? It is courting disaster not to talk to them about our marvelous God from infancy. Moreover, if they are taken to Christian meetings from infancy, they will grow up to appreciate these as part of the Christian way of life.—Prov. 4:1-13.

[12] But what if parents learn the truth after the children have started to grow up? Here, there may be problems. But parents that love their children should start without delay to train them in the theocratic way. (Prov. 22:6; 23:13, 14) Even as laws of instinct prompt mother bear to spank her erring cub, so God's law plainly stated in his Word requires human parents to discipline their young—not in anger or with irritating nagging, but reasonably and out of love. (Eph. 6:4) Until discipline takes effect, parents may show loving consideration for others, too, by sitting someplace in the Kingdom Hall where unruly "little ones" will cause least distraction.

[13] The discipline most productive of results is that administered daily in the home. Here the loving parent can make time to instill respect for law and principle, to reason with little ones, to answer questions, to build up love for the family arrangement and respect for the theocratic arrangement in Jehovah's earth-wide family. (Deut. 11:18, 19; 32:45, 46) Little ones

8. Why is it beneficial to respect God's laws?
9. How does dedication in the Christian congregation differ from that in ancient Israel?
10. How may principles that applied in Israel benefit us today? Illustrate.
11. What is the value of training young ones from infancy?
12. (a) What instruction do the Scriptures give on disciplining children? (b) How may parents show loving consideration to others?
13. What is the value of home training, and how may it be imparted?

can be trained to sit still with a loving parent for five minutes, fifteen minutes, thirty minutes—while Bible helps are used for sounding down into little hearts the thrilling events and instruction of Bible record. (Gal. 6:6; Ps. 78:4) *The Watchtower* has carried articles specially prepared for reading to children. Parents have used these well in building youthful appreciation of spiritual things. Yes, it means effort on the part of parents. It takes planning and time. But the daily training of little ones will build up the family bond. Youngsters will come to love parents for their companionship, and for sacrifices made on their behalf. They will be encouraged to become useful themselves, growing up morally, spiritually and theocratically to the point of making their own dedication to Jehovah God.—Deut. 29:29.

[14] Our bond of dedication to Jehovah calls for respect for other bonds—the family bond, the marriage bond, the bond of love in the Christian congregation. (Eph. 5:33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:14) Think of all the things God's people can do together! A family can consider the day's Bible text, receiving a daily blessing just like that of the biggest of families, the Brooklyn Bethel family of over 1,500 members. At mealtimes and other times together, your family can discuss interesting Bible questions, recent reports in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, or experiences from the field of service. They can engage in healthful family hobbies or outings together. Or if one's natural family has not yet joined in studying Jehovah's Word, many of these things can be done in association with Christian brothers and sisters.—Matt. 19:29; Rom. 12:13.

[15] Is this bond of dedication a hardship? Rather, it is a constant joy, bringing refreshment and satisfaction not experienced by others of the world of mankind.—Matt. 11:28-30.

14. How may worthwhile bonds be strengthened?
15. How should we regard the bond of dedication?

KINGDOM INTERESTS

[16] What are our interests? Should not our God, Jehovah, come first and foremost in our lives? We want to know this loving God, so that we may be like him. His magnificent qualities are reflected in his Son, Jesus Christ, who made known his heavenly Father while he was on earth. (John 1:14, 18; 8:19; 15:15; 17:3-6) Should we be less zealous than our Exemplar in glorifying Jehovah's name? Jesus declared, "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34) That should be our food and our sustaining interest in life, too. If our prime interest is Jehovah and his worship, and we love truth, then we will indeed rejoice to render exclusive devotion to our God.—Deut. 6:4-7; Mark 12:28-30.

[17] The Christian's interests must be moral interests, in line with Jehovah's righteous laws. "O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad," says the psalmist. (97:10) Jehovah will not tolerate what is bad, and this was clearly demonstrated in Moses' day when Israel formed an immoral attachment to the Baal of Peor. Jehovah killed 24,000 Israelites by plague, and this was stopped only when upright Phinehas took positive action by striking a spear through the immoral Zimri and his Midianitess "girl friend." Priest Phinehas hated what Jehovah hates, and acted accordingly. Many modern-day priests are far different, as press dispatches often show. For example, an AFP report, dated June 5, 1970, described "an extremely

16. What should be our sustaining interest in life, and why?
17, 18. (a) What are the moral interests of those who love Jehovah? (b) What contrast is noted between those who love and those who ignore God's moral principles? (c) How may we enjoy peace with God?

sympathetic meeting" between the Dutch homosexuals party and a cardinal, the Roman Catholic primate of the Netherlands. The reported topic of discussion was "religious blessing" for homosexuals. How could anyone who loves God and righteousness entertain homosexuality, let alone sit down and negotiate about it!—Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:24-27, 32.

18 Today, an avalanche of immorality descends on mankind through news and entertainment media. But we do not have to join with the world in feasting on this poisoned food. That would be fatal! May we be zealous like Phinehas in upholding standards of moral purity. May we continue to enjoy peace with God by feeding our minds on the pure things of his Word and through his service.—Phil. 4:8, 9.

19 The modern world has grown proud, independent, rebellious and demanding. (2 Tim. 3:1-13) How different from Jehovah's worshipers, who cultivate humility and obedience after the example of Jesus! "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake." (Phil. 2:5-8) What a fine example for all who would place Jehovah's kingdom interests first!—Matt. 6:33.

BEWARE OF WORLDLY INTERESTS

20 What do people live for today? Is it to please God? Or is it to please self? For the majority, is it not to get as much for *self* as possible out of this brief life-span? Some accumulate money for money's sake. Others accumulate possessions. Some wreck themselves morally and physically for the sake of "thrills." Others aim for high station or prominence in society. How shortsighted! One of history's wealthiest men, wise King Solomon, stated: "And I, even I, turned toward all the works of mine that my hands had done and toward the hard work that I had worked hard to accomplish, and, look! everything was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing of advantage under the sun." (Eccl. 2:11) Do you thus strive in vain? Or is your goal a permanent place in God's new system of things?

21 Does the world's showy, material display intrigue you? If so, you stand in danger's way, for misdirected desire, "when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin." Encroaching worldly interests can chop more and more out of a person's life, until he is engulfed in sin. "Sin, when it is accomplished, brings forth death." But the person who places Jehovah first in his heart and who does the will of God "remains forever."—Jas. 1:14, 15; 1 John 2:15-17.

22 Through the precious blood of Jesus, Jehovah's dedicated witnesses have been set free from sin, to become slaves of righteousness. May we stand fast, therefore, never becoming enslaved again to worldly interests!—Rom. 6:17, 18; Gal. 5:1.

"HEART" SERVICE TO JEHOVAH

23 Mere lip service falls short of Jehovah's requirements. Jesus so reminded religious people of his day, and applied

19. In contrast with the world, what attitude do Christians cultivate?

20, 21. (a) Why is it useless, and even dangerous, to seek worldly interests? (b) What worthwhile goal may be attained, and how?

22. What appreciation should we show for Jesus' sacrifice?

23, 24. (a) How may we be pleasing to Jehovah? (b) Why have many failed in this in former and later periods of time?

Isaiah 29:13 to them: "This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me." (Matt. 15:8) Sincere obedience from an appreciative heart is what pleases Jehovah. It is with our whole heart, and with all our other faculties, that we must love and serve our one God, Jehovah. (Mark 12:29, 30) We must endure joyfully, in positive service to Jehovah, year in and year out. When Joshua expressed his household's clear determination to serve Jehovah, all Israel answered him: "It is unthinkable, on our part, to leave Jehovah so as to serve other gods. . . . As for us, too, we shall serve Jehovah, because he is our God."—Josh. 24:15-18.

[24] "Unthinkable," they said. But later their descendants *did* go after other gods. And why? Because they let their love for Jehovah grow dim. Their service lost its positive drive. They stopped their daily meditation on his Word, stopped making progress. They retreated from their faith and spirituality. Their minds became warped to worldly ways, and their consciences seared so as no longer to distinguish between right and wrong. If they had continued to rejoice from the heart in serving Jehovah, disaster would never have befallen them.—Deut. 4:3-10; Josh. 1:7-9; Heb. 10:36-39; 1 Tim. 4:1, 2.

[25] This should serve as a warning to Jehovah's people today. How important that we continue to serve Jehovah joyfully, without letup! How important that we regularly study and meet to maintain spirituality and joy! How important that we joyfully cherish the incomparable privilege of serving Jehovah as his witnesses! Remember, the thing that Jehovah, the Creator and Owner of the whole earth, delights in is loving obedience to his voice. —Ex. 19:5; 1 Pet. 1:13-16.

25. What kind of children should we become to Jehovah?

[26] All our hopes, all our service, all our daily living must be centered on God's kingdom. All our worthwhile interests are Kingdom interests. Our daily prayer is for the Kingdom to come, with its glorious revelation of Christ's power, and for God's will to take place, as in heaven, also upon earth. (Matt. 6:9, 10; 2 Thess. 1:6-8) We want none of the world's depravity, none of the rulers' anxieties, none of the nations' perplexities. The nations are against Jehovah and his anointed One, Jesus. Shortly, they will be dashed to pieces. (Luke 21:25, 26; Ps. 2:2-9) Mankind is fast approaching that "great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." As "pangs of distress" worsen, may we be like the first-century Christians in praying to Jehovah for boldness to keep speaking his Word.—Matt. 24:7, 8, 21; Acts 4:24-30.

[27] What do we want in life? Surely we do not want to live by the shifting sands of the world's moral code—which have lately become quicksands sucking in the unwary for destruction! Nor do we want any part with the world's broken-down religion or its corrupt politics, its ideologies or hatreds, its frustration or its confusion. We want to live the real life, do we not? Then we must love righteousness and hate wickedness, even as Jehovah does, and build "a fine foundation for the future." (Ps. 11:7; Prov. 6:16-18; 1 Tim. 6:17-19) We must continue to abound more and more in love, treasuring up Bible knowledge and becoming "filled with righteous fruit" in God's service. (Phil. 1:9-11) With the goal of everlasting life in view, may we be at one, then, with Christ Jesus and with all other faithful witnesses in serving Jehovah "with a complete heart and with a delightful soul."—1 Chron. 28:9.

26. What should be our attitude toward (a) God's kingdom, (b) the world and its nations, and (c) speaking God's Word?

27. How may we attain the goal of everlasting life?

SET APART from the WORLD

"These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you." —John 15:17, 18.

IN HIS thrilling prophecy on 'the sign of the conclusion of the system of things,' Jesus describes the "pangs of distress" that mankind now suffers world wide. He then ties in his arrival in kingly glory in the heavens, and a separating work among the nations. Humble, sheeplike people receive his invitation: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world." (Matt. 24:3-8; 25:31-34, 46) Since the time of faithful Abel, Jehovah God has been preparing this Kingdom realm for the world of redeemable mankind.—Luke 11:50, 51; 2 Pet. 3:13.

[2] Do you wish to be part of the righteous world that is rewarded with everlasting life in the Kingdom's earthly realm? Then you must learn about Jehovah and his Son, and exercise faith in Christ's precious sacrificial blood. (John 17:3; 1 Pet. 1:18-21) But in doing so, you will meet with opposition, even bitter hatred, from a different world—the world of mankind outside the Christian congregation. This world hates Christ because he bears "witness concerning it that its works are wicked." He warns his disciples, "Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you." (John 7:7; 15:19) This is the world that is soon to perish in the fiery "great tribulation." It will never be renewed. —2 Pet. 3:5-7; Matt. 24:21, 22; Nah. 1:9.

[3] This wicked world and its system of things is under the control of God's archenemy, Satan the Devil. (2 Cor. 4:3, 4; 1 John 5:19) Hence we should never want to befriend it. That would be adultery of the worst kind—spiritual adultery. "Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." (Jas. 4:4) The issue is clear-cut. Christians cannot have any part with the present wicked world.

WHO HAS THE TRUTH?

[4] Concerning his true followers, Jesus made request to his Father, "not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one." Hence they must continue to live among the world of godless mankind, but avoid becoming a part of it. They must be like Jesus, who said: "They are no part of the

1. What has Jehovah long been preparing, and for whom?
2. (a) What is required in order to "inherit the kingdom"? (b) Why can you expect opposition?
3. What clear-cut issue do Christians face?
4. How are true Christians set apart from the world?

world, just as I am no part of the world." But how is this setting apart accomplished? Jesus answers, in prayer to Jehovah: "Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth. Just as you sent me forth into the world, I also sent them forth into the world. And I am sanctifying myself in their behalf, that they also may be sanctified by means of truth." It is truth that sanctifies, and sets Christians apart.—John 17:15-19.

5 But where, today, is truth to be found? Not in the Babylonish sects of Christendom and pagandom, with their shifting sands of doctrine, will you find it—but in God's inspired Word, the Bible, and with the nonsectarian organization that is teaching God's Word today. This is the theocratic society of Jehovah's witnesses, whose 26,524 congregations operate in 206 lands of earth. A remarkable thing about this society of preachers is that, though they have been preaching in 160 different languages, all see eye-to-eye on Bible doctrine, all are united in the one work and purpose, and all have the common goal of everlasting life, in joyful service to Jehovah.—Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 8:23.

6 For the past one hundred years, Jehovah's Christian witnesses have advocated strict adherence to the Bible as God's inspired Word, and this has set them at variance with the clergy and the nations. These nations have propagandized many man-made blessings for this world, such as a world made safe for democracy, four freedoms for mankind, a brighter world of tomorrow, peace and harmony for all mankind, and so forth. But can the present corrupt world really expect any kind of blessing? The Bible answers, Far from it!

7 In the later 1870's the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was calling attention to the year 1914 as a marked date in Bible prophecy. But was this to mark the start of an era of blessing for the world? That is what world leaders had been hoping for, even up to the "last year of normalcy" in human history, 1913. However, in 1914, there came instead—World War I! Concerning this the New York *World* of August 30, 1914, commented: "The terrific war outbreak in Europe has fulfilled an extraordinary prophecy. For a quarter of a century past, through preachers and through press, [Jehovah's witnesses] have been proclaiming to the world that the Day of Wrath prophesied in the Bible would dawn in 1914. . . . And in 1914 comes war, the war which everybody dreaded but which everyone thought could not really happen." Whose forecasts proved to be truth—those of world leaders, or those of the Bible-based witnesses of Jehovah?

8 As the war ended, a badly jolted world brought forth its League of Nations, and the executive committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, in its Declaration of December 12, 1918, endorsed the proposed League as "the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth," going on to say that the Church can "give a powerful sanction by imparting to the new international order something of the prophetic glory of the Kingdom of God."* To the contrary, Jehovah's witnesses consistently exposed the League for what it was—"the disgusting thing that causes desolation," as prophesied by Daniel and by Jesus. (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Rev. 13:14-18) In the 1930's the League disintegrated, and the 1940's were marked, not by "pro-

5. (a) Where only is truth to be found today? (b) How do Jehovah's witnesses differ from all other organizations on earth today?
6. (a) Why are Jehovah's witnesses at variance with the world? (b) What promises has the world failed to fulfill, and why?
7. In 1914, whose forecasts proved to be true?

* See page 207 of *"Your Will Be Done on Earth,"* published in 1958.

8. Who proclaimed truth about the League of Nations? Explain.

phetic glory," but by the most desolating war of all history. Who had proclaimed truth—the worldly clergy or Jehovah's witnesses?

[9] Even before World War II ended, the League was revived under a new name, the United Nations, for the purpose of 'uniting our strength to maintain international peace and security.' Religious and political leaders have hailed the U.N. as man's last hope for peace. But has it fulfilled this hope? Worsening crises in the Near and Far East, in Europe, in Africa and in the Americas, bespeak that mankind is far removed from the peace and security so fondly desired. Jehovah's witnesses call attention to Bible prophecy, which describes the League and the U.N. as a "wild beast" that goes into eclipse, only to reappear and "go off into destruction." (Rev. 17:8) Who have been speaking truth about the U.N.—world leaders or Jehovah's witnesses?

[10] For fifty years and more, through the *Watchtower* magazine, Jehovah's witnesses have consistently warned of the dangers inherent in the materialistic society. Science and technology boast of material progress, but for half a century they have in fact been ruining the earth. (Rev. 11:18) Self-seeking materialists have played havoc with the productive land, polluting air and soil, river and sea, and decimating the living resources of the earth. In some countries the few rich are very, very rich, and the many poor are very, very poor. With populations exploding all over the earth, many nations now stand at the brink of starvation, and disaster is predicted by experts for the mid-1970's. Rather than fit in with political promises of a bright, materialistic tomorrow, this devastation on earth fits Jehovah's prophecies on mankind's waywardness in the "last days." (Mark 13:8; 2 Tim. 3:1, 2; Rev. 6:5-8) Who have been making known the truth about materialism—the world's propagandists or Jehovah's witnesses?

[11] For many decades, Jehovah's witnesses have been pointing to Bible prophecies that show that the world empire of false religion, the modern-day Babylon the Great, is on her way out. The Bible-based warning has been: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." The sins of Babylonish sectarian religion have massed clear up to God in heaven, and soon she is to be completely destroyed. (Rev. 18:4-8) Why, the clergy of Christendom have even rejected the Bible, the foundation textbook of Christianity! In a recent poll, covering 7,400 clergymen in the United States, those who declared that they do not believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God were in the great majority —Methodist 82 percent, Episcopalian 89 percent, Presbyterian 81 percent, and Baptist and Lutheran 57 percent of the clergymen polled. Truly, the clergy have become 'blind guides of the blind.'—Matt. 15:14.

[12] Over the years, honest-hearted persons in "Christian" and "heathen" countries have been fleeing false religion, to take up true worship with Jehovah's witnesses. And now, as we enter the 1970's, an astonishing picture presents itself. Traditional religious organizations are starting to fall apart, with even the priests abandoning their posts *en masse*. It is as though Babylon the Great's people, whom she has so long exploited for commercial greed, are now drying up from under her. Who have been preaching the truth about Bab-

9. As what has the U.N. been hailed, but where is truth on this to be found?

10. (a) What boasts have been made on behalf of the materialistic society? (b) But what are the facts, and who has been making known the truth about materialism?

11, 12. (a) Why has God been warning the people to get out of Babylon the Great? (b) How do the clergy regard Bible truth? (c) How is Babylonish religion now fulfilling true prophecy?

ylonian religion—the clergy or Jehovah's witnesses?

13 While Satan's organization crumbles, the organization of Jehovah prospers marvelously under his protection and guidance. Those who symbolize their dedication to Jehovah by water baptism are increasing rapidly year by year—82,842 in 1968, 120,905 in 1969, and 164,193 in the 1970 service year. With more than 1,500,000 publishers in the field each month, the publishing organization of Jehovah's witnesses is hard pressed to keep up with the demand for publications. In 1967 the Brooklyn factory's production of Bibles and hardbound books reached a total of 8,252,860 volumes, in 1968 it was 12,130,996 volumes and in 1969 an astounding 24,038,531 volumes. But in 1970 Bibles and books printed reached 26,232,766 copies. Magazine production continues to mushroom also, and toward the end of 1969 the Watch Tower Society took a necessary step in nearly doubling its factory space in Brooklyn, through purchase of another factory complex. The demand for truth and true Bible education on the part of persons seeking righteousness is on the increase. Jehovah's witnesses are most happy to have the truth, and to dispense it to others. "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—Ps. 144:15.

AVOIDING THE WORLD

14 The truth sets Christians apart from the world. They can have no part in demonstrations, or in other political emotionalism that is being whipped up throughout the world. If Jesus had been interested in worldly politics, he could have gathered an army of followers in no time. But on the night of his arrest, he did not permit his few disciples to fight even on his behalf. Why? Jesus answers: "My kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:10, 11, 36) The materialistic philosophy so rampant today is 'eat, drink and be merry' with no thought for the morrow. But as Jesus showed in his illustration concerning "a certain rich man," at Luke 12:16-21, disaster will inevitably catch up with such a one. "So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God."

15 Though a little time remains to live in this world, we do not have to associate with it unnecessarily. We need not let our guard down by hobnobbing with worldlings at office parties, in outings or in sports groups. (1 Cor. 15:33) Worldly people are not governed by God's principles, and a "nice" exterior can conceal wicked intents. Walk in integrity with Jehovah by shunning worldly associations, and you will be happy in finding that he does not hold back any good thing from you. Truly, those who studiously avoid associations in "tents of wickedness" are rewarded many times over. "O Jehovah . . . Happy are those dwelling in your house! They still keep on praising you. . . . For a day in your courtyards is better than a thousand elsewhere."—Ps. 84:3, 4, 10-12.

16 Impressionable youths are often the target of greedy materialists. Parents, fortify your children. See that they avoid the bad influences at school—dances, parties, dating. This glamorous, sensual age is reaping its bumper harvest of youth immorality, horrible sex diseases, thievery, dope addiction and rebellion against society. With wise foresight, Jehovah commanded Israel: "You must not follow after

13. What indicates that many of mankind still love truth?
14. How has the truth set Christians apart from the world?
15. Why are associations in God's organization far to be preferred to worldly associations?
16. (a) Against what should parents fortify children? (b) What wise counsel is given at Exodus 23:2?

the crowd for evil ends." (Ex. 23:2) This applies also to our young people today. The mob, with its degraded thinking, will only lead them away from Jehovah's fine principles. When a mob gets on the loose, it is often the novice or the curious bystander that gets hurt. For mental, moral and physical well-being, it is wise to keep well away from "the crowd."

17 All worldly careers are soon to come to an end. So, why should today's youth get interested in 'higher education' for a future that will never eventuate? The colleges are falling into chaos, anyway. The essentials of education for a useful life can be obtained by studying well at high school, and beyond that there is also the 'highest education' that Jehovah provides through his organization, preparing for a satisfying career of full-time service that goes on forever. (Ps. 71:5, 17; 61:8) Let young people, and older people, too, avoid reading matter, TV and movies that highlight worldliness. Rather than see how close one can keep to the world's course and yet stay in the truth, how much wiser to see how far away one can get from the interests and ways of the world!—2 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 12:2.

18 The bustle of twentieth-century living brings its problems. If not watched, it can start to crowd theocratic interests out of one's life. Some negatively permit it to do this. But there is an antidote. It is to give more than the usual attention to personal Bible study, to the meetings and to serving Jehovah. Use theocratic activity to crowd unnecessary material interests out of your life, and you will be blessed. Do not fail to bring your offerings, your very best, to your God. " 'Test me out, please, in this respect,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want.' " (Mal. 3:10) Jehovah is always true to his promise.—Isa. 55:11.

19 Stay close by what Jehovah provides. Trust in him with all your heart. (Prov. 3:5) Imitate the faith of other zealous witnesses, ancient and modern. (Heb. 6:11, 12) If personal problems seem too great, take them to the mature servants in the congregation, and follow through on the loving counsel given. (Heb. 13:7, 17) In times of trial or weakness, lean all the more heavily on Jehovah in prayer, for he is a Source of power that can overcome any problem. (Isa. 40:29, 31; Ps. 59:16, 17) As Paul admonishes: "Always be rejoicing. Pray incessantly. In connection with everything give thanks. . . . Abstain from every form of wickedness."—1 Thess. 5:16-22.

AVOIDING THE WORLD BRINGS BLESSINGS

20 Can the world be described as "happy"? Is anyone happy in his death throes? That is just where this world is situated. It is past cure. Politically, commercially, religiously, morally—this world has "had it." Education is in disorder. Prices of life's necessities are soaring. Demonstrations and racial riots add to the confusion. Many nations stand at the brink of anarchy. But you need not share in the world's anxieties, in its fears or in its gloom. You can have accurate knowledge concerning what is happening in the world, and by acting on that knowledge you can share in a satisfying freedom. Jesus' promise is: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and

17. (a) How should education be regarded? (b) How may we stay in the truth?
18. How may we successfully cope with the pressures of life?
19. How may we overcome personal problems?
20. What actually is the world's situation today, but what sets the Christian free from this?

the truth will set you free."—John 8:31, 32.

21 And how does one become a free disciple? It is by listening to, and studying with, those who are already Jesus' disciples, and who are carrying out Jesus' command: "Go . . . make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them." The resurrected Jesus is directing this work, right through "until the conclusion of the system of things." Soon it will be too late to become a baptized disciple. (Matt. 28:19, 20) "Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2) Now is the time for people world wide who love righteousness to learn the truth, and to come into an approved, dedicated relationship with God. As the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy about "pangs of distress" approaches its *finale,* it is time to flee in haste from this condemned world and its system of things.—Matt. 24:15-22.

22 All who seek a place in the *redeemed* society of mankind thereby come into association with the happiest people on earth —Jehovah's witnesses. These are the only people who know for a certainty where they are going. (Rom. 5:1-5; 8:19-21) They are the happy slaves of the happy God. (Matt. 5:3-12; 1 Tim. 1:11) What a contrast they present to the formalistic, sanctimonious religious sects of Babylon the Great! In going to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's witnesses, one finds no cold aloofness, no embarrassing ceremonial, no saluting of idols or symbols, no exalting of creatures, no clergy class, no passing of collection plates, no bondage to creeds or traditions. (Mark 7:3-8) These halls are happy places, where a happy people congregate. They are people with a bright hope, and they joyfully welcome others who come to learn and share that hope with them. Their attitude is well expressed by David: "I rejoiced when they were saying to me: 'To the house of Jehovah let us go.' " In the theocratic association of Jehovah's witnesses there are to be found refreshing "peace" and "freedom from care."—Ps. 122:1, 7; Isa. 2:2-4.

23 As the wicked world grows progressively wickeder, and the hope of the righteous progressively brighter, the contrast between the dying world and those set apart as Jehovah's redeemed ones deepens. These latter hope to be of the world of mankind that will never pass away. Joyfully they heed Jehovah's counsel: "Into the path of the wicked ones do not enter . . . Shun it, . . . turn aside from it." In so doing, what do they find? That "the path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Prov. 4:14-18) What joy, indeed, it is to receive ever clearer understanding of Jehovah and his glorious Kingdom purposes that are fulfilled through his Son, Christ Jesus!

24 A world of mankind, Satan's domain—with its unholy system of things, now faces demolition. The warning signal is plain for all to see: Stand clear! Set yourself apart! Take and hold your place among the redeemed ones of mankind who have found "the Way of Holiness." These exult that Jehovah, through Christ, now reigns in heavenly Mount Zion, with Kingdom power. They "come to Zion with a joyful cry; and rejoicing to time indefinite will be upon their head. To exultation and rejoicing they will attain, and grief and sighing must flee away."—Isa. 35:8-10.

21, 22. (a) Why is it urgent for all who love truth to become Jesus' disciples without delay? (b) How do the slaves of the happy God contrast with worldly religion? (c) Why do these go up to Jehovah's house?

23. What joy is now experienced by those set apart from the world?

24. What way do the redeemed ones now find, and with what result?

How can you be 'PERFECT as your HEAVENLY FATHER is PERFECT'?

IN THE Sermon on the Mount Jesus told his listeners: "You must accordingly be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) Does this sound impossible? How could sinful humans be perfect like their heavenly Father? Yet, Jesus' words show that we *must* if we want to prove ourselves his disciples. How can we do so?

To understand this, we first should rid ourselves of the idea that "perfection" must always be unlimited, all-embracing, and indicating supreme excellence in the most minute aspect. Only God has such *absolute* perfection. Perfection of any other person or thing is *relative*. That is, a thing is perfect in relation to the *purpose* appointed for it by its designer, producer or user. If these find no fault with it, then it is properly called "perfect."

We *could,* of course, go around all the time examining everything with a high-powered microscope in our hand. Then 'perfectly straight' lines would all show up wavy and ragged; 'perfectly clean' clothes, freshly laundered, would all reveal microscopic bits of foreign matter; a 'perfectly *smooth*' table top would appear to have little craters and valleys and resemble the moon's surface. Yet even if these microscopic factors were eliminated, would it really make any difference to us in our use of these things? So, while we *could* be dissatisfied with all these things as being "imperfect," why should we? Such a demanding attitude would be impractical, foolish; it would fill our lives with discontent and exasperation.

The Bible does not present perfection in such an impractical, unreasonably demanding way, but in a sensible, realistic way. In fact, the very same Greek word (*te'lei·os*) rendered "perfect" in the record of Jesus' speech (Matt. 5:48) can also be translated "complete" (1 Cor. 13:10), "full-grown" (1 Cor. 14:20) and "mature." (Heb. 5:14) The same is true of the Hebrew words translated "perfect" in the Bible. So, in Funk and Wagnalls' *A New Standard Bible Dictionary* (p. 694) we read this statement about "perfection" in the Bible:

> "When applied to impersonal objects [such as commercial weights (Deut. 25:15)] . . . the word is the synonym of 'complete,' . . . The notion does not, however, occur with an attempt at precision, but with the same freedom and approximation to exactness as outside the Bible. . . . When used of man it denotes, first of all, conformity to the ideal entertained at the time, and is there a relative and quite variable and expansive term. David claims to be perfect [faultless] in this sense (Ps 18 23), tho[ugh] elsewhere confessing sinfulness (Ps 51 3ff.)."

"FAULTLESS," "BLAMELESS" SERVANTS OF GOD

Yes, the Bible speaks of Noah as being "faultless among his contemporaries" and of Job as being "blameless and upright." (Gen. 6:9; Job 1:8) The same Hebrew words translated "faultless" and "blameless" may also be rendered "perfect," for anything without fault is "perfect." Obviously this does not mean these persons were without sin, for they were all de-

scended from the sinner Adam. So, in what sense were they "faultless" and "blameless"?

They could be spoken of in this way because they measured up *fully* to what God required of them and God *did not require of them more than they could attain.* As Micah 6:6-8 shows, God does not make unreasonable demands upon his servants. "He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?"

Yes, Jehovah mercifully and reasonably took into account the imperfection and disabilities of his earthly servants. A father would not expect of his young son what he would of a full-grown man, would he? Nor would a potter expect the same quality when molding a vase from ordinary clay as he would when forming one from special refined clay. Jehovah God, who is the Great Potter, takes into consideration the inherent weakness of his human servants. For, "as a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust."—Ps. 103:13, 14; Isa. 64:8.

In his *Notes on the Gospels,* Albert Barnes, Bible scholar of the nineteenth century, makes somewhat similar observations about the "blamelessness" (or "perfection") of such men. Of the word "perfect" he says: "Originally it is applied to a piece of mechanism, as a machine that is complete in its parts. Applied to men, it refers to completeness of parts, or *perfection,* where no part is defective or wanting. Thus, Job (i. 1.) is said to be perfect; that is, not holy as God, or *sinless* —for fault is afterward found with him (Job ix. 20; xlii. 6); but his piety was *proportionate*—had a completeness of parts —was consistent and regular. He exhibited his religion as a prince, a father, an individual, a benefactor of the poor. He was not merely a pious man in one place, but uniformly. He was consistent everywhere. This is the meaning in Matthew [5:48]. . . . let the piety be *complete,* and *proportionate,* and *regular.*"

These men of faith of ancient times merited being called "faultless" or "blameless," not because they never committed any error or wrong, but because, within the limits possible for them to attain, their devotion and loyalty to God was complete, sound. They manifested "a complete heart" (or "a perfect heart" according to many translations) toward Jehovah. (1 Ki. 11:4; 2 Ki. 20:3) They humbly accepted correction and discipline when they erred. (Job 42:1-6; Ps. 51:1-4, 7-11) Despite their errors and weaknesses, the sum total of what they did added up to what God required of them *at that time* and *under the existing circumstances.* Jehovah God was pleased with their worship. So, then, if he did not find fault with their sincere effort and overall course, who could rightfully do so? Compare what the apostle Paul says about anointed Christians at Romans 8:31-34.

How comforting it is to us today to know that Jehovah God will deal with us in the same understanding way, requiring of us only what we are actually capable of doing. This should encourage us to make our expression of love and devotion to him one that is full, constant, one that is manifest in every part of our life.

PERFECTING OUR LOVE AND MERCY

With this in mind, consider again Jesus' words: "You must accordingly be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." The word "accordingly" takes us back to what

Jesus had been discussing with his listeners. What was that? Love and generosity. Luke's account shows that Jesus also brought in the matter of mercy at this point. (Luke 6:32-36) He had shown his disciples that for them to love those loving them was no great thing. Why, even the tax collectors and people of the nations did that. But if they wanted to 'prove themselves sons of their heavenly Father' the disciples must imitate God in the way that he showed generosity. How is that? God "makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matt. 5:45) Why, God's mercy is great enough to include even the animals, as shown by the ancient sabbath provisions and in other cases.—Ex. 20:10; Jonah 4:11.

True Christians, then, should not be narrow, incomplete, imperfect in expressing love and generosity but should show these qualities in a broad, complete, hence *perfect* way, their love extending even to enemies. (Matt. 5:43, 44) Jesus here was not talking about being like the Most High God in all respects, something impossible for humans, but was emphasizing this particular aspect of expressing a full, rounded-out love.

Do we today manifest love in this way? Do we show love to the point of 'loving our enemies and praying for those persecuting us'? Jesus himself set us the example. He was like his heavenly Father in all these things. Jesus served and taught all kinds of persons, impartially, generously, lovingly, finally giving his life on behalf of imperfect, sinful mankind. If we perfect our love by broadening out our interest in others, not letting partiality and prejudice hold us back from showing kindness and mercy, then we will be imitating God's Son as he imitated his Father. This expansive feeling in our hearts will make for fine relations with others. It will assure real warmth and consideration in our family life and keep out friction and disunity and maintain harmony and cooperation in Christian congregations. And, far more than this, our rounded-out, amply expressed kindness will extend out to worldly neighbors, making us considerate, helpful toward them, yes, even toward strangers. Our mercy can often be shown in material ways. But we will always remember that spiritual help is the most vital, as Jesus' course showed. Our hearts will move us to offer this with the patience and mildness that mercy and love imply.

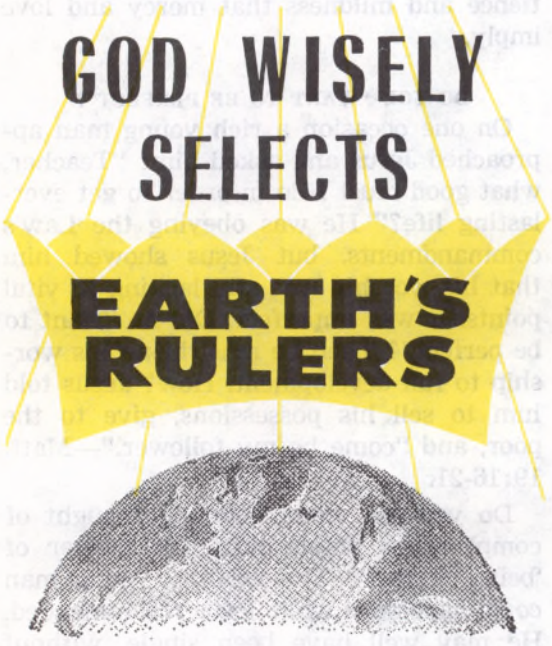
DO YOU "WANT TO BE PERFECT"?

On one occasion a rich young man approached Jesus and asked him: "Teacher, what good must I do in order to get everlasting life?" He was obeying the Law's commandments, but Jesus showed him that his worship was still lacking in vital points. It was imperfect. Did he "want to be perfect"? Then he must bring his worship to full development. How? Jesus told him to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and "come be my follower."—Matt. 19:16-21.

Do you see, then, how the thought of completeness enters into this matter of 'being perfect'? The wealthy young man *could* have done what Jesus recommended. He may well have been single, without family obligations. Even if not, he could have done as others of Jesus' disciples were doing, for not all of them were single. But the young man did not want to convert his wealth into a means for aiding others, such as the poor among his fellow Israelites. How different his self-centered attitude from that of the heavenly Father, whose love and mercy moved him to give his dearest possession, his own Son, on behalf of suffering mankind! (Rom. 5:7, 8) The young man's "many possessions"

meant more to him than taking hold of this grand opportunity of accompanying God's own Son in his ministry.—Matt. 19:22, 27-29.

So, today, it is not a question of being asked to do the impossible, something beyond your reach. It is a matter of doing what you *can* do in service to God and your neighbor—and doing it wholeheartedly. Are you doing that? Do you study his Word and put it to work in your life? Then you may have the pleasure and joy of knowing that, on the basis of his Son's ransom sacrifice and your faith in it, God accepts this as a perfect service on your part. Prove yourself a true child of your heavenly Father. Show love, kindness, generosity and mercy in the way that he does, and let his worship pervade every part of your life.



FOR sixteen centuries the churches of Christendom have been working feverishly at their claimed commission—the conversion of the world to Christianity. What has been their success?

They have failed miserably. Why? Because converting the world was their own idea, not God's. If it had been God's idea, they would have been successful. (Isa. 46:9, 10) Well, then, is God not interested in all men? He is, indeed, very much so. But during these nineteen centuries he has not been busying himself with any effort to convert mankind in general, nor has he commissioned true Christians to do so.

Do not misunderstand; God certainly purposes to bring salvation within the reach of all. And he has a time for this. (Eccl. 3:1) However, during the past nineteen hundred years he has been selective as to those whom he has saved. Why? Because, until recently, he has been choosing only those who will be rulers of mankind.

CHRIST BEGINS THE SELECTION

You will recall that when Jesus Christ was on earth he, too, was selective. He was here, it is true, to provide the ransom for the salvation of all men who will accept it. (Matt. 20:28; John 3:16) But Christ was on earth primarily to prove his integrity to God in order to qualify as King of God's kingdom that will rule the world in righteousness. He bore witness concerning the truth of that kingdom.—John 18:36, 37.

Knowing that the Kingdom meant so much to his Father as well as to the life and peace of mankind, Jesus Christ was greatly concerned with it. And just as any ruler not yet inaugurated into office thinks first of the men he will place in important administrative positions under him, so Jesus was interested, first, in those whom

he would associate with himself in the Kingdom government.—Luke 22:28, 29; John 17:12.

Accordingly Jesus, through prayer and direction of God's spirit, selected his apostles first. (Luke 6:12-16) These were to be foundations of an administrative body to operate under his headship. In Revelation's pictorial language this administrative organization is symbolized as a capital city, called "New Jerusalem." It is also represented as Christ's "bride," that will join him in the heavens. During his thousand-year reign over earth, he, along with his "bride," will extend attention and authority to the earth, to rule it in peace.—Rev. 21:1-4, 14.

Having this knowledge, Christ, after his death and resurrection, gathered those who had exercised faith in the good news that he and the apostles preached. He poured out holy spirit on them and commissioned them to preach to others, and to teach them. Thus Christ began preparation for the heavenly "city" or government that would rule mankind.—Acts 2:1-4; Heb. 11:10, 16.

TEST OF CHRIST'S ASSOCIATES TAKES TIME

In reading the Christian Greek Scriptures we observe that the hope held out to all those who accepted the preaching in the days of the apostles was that of sharing with Jesus Christ in his Kingdom rule in heaven. (2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:1-4) It was not time for God to gather together those who would live on earth as human subjects under his heavenly kingdom. This was because the Messianic kingdom of God was not to begin active rule toward all the earth until the second presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.—2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 10:13; Ps. 110:1-3.

So, the long time period prior to Christ's taking of Kingdom power would be occupied in selecting, training, testing, proving and qualifying those who would reign with Christ. The requirements were very strict, many being invited but few finally chosen. (Matt. 22:14) According to the Scriptures, God limited the number of this select administrative body under Jesus Christ to 144,000 persons.—Rev. 7:4; 14:1-3.

A SACRED SECRET REVEALED

In connection with this administrative body, the apostle Paul points out that for centuries God kept hidden a "sacred secret." This was that he would select humans both from Israel and from the Gentile nations as associates in the heavens with the promised "Seed," Messiah the King. (Eph. 3:4-6; 1:9-11) Paul says that the administration of this sacred secret was "to the end that now to the governments and the authorities in the heavenly places there might be made known through the congregation the *greatly diversified wisdom of God.*" How was God's wisdom made manifest "through the congregation"?—Eph. 3:9, 10.

It is not that the congregation on earth teaches wisdom to the heavenly authorities. Rather, it is that God, *by his dealings and the working out of his purposes in connection with the Christian congregation,* reveals surpassing wisdom, even to the angels.—1 Pet. 1:10-12.

First, consider God's wisdom in his dealing with the Head Member of the congregation. Through the sacrifice of his Son for the removal of sin, Jehovah proved his own rulership to be fully just and wholly righteous. For on the basis of this sacrifice God could "declare righteous" those whom he would select to be prospective Kingdom heirs with Christ. Since these were to be heavenly rulers, God, by his spirit, brought them into family relationship with himself, making them spiritual sons. By his spirit he placed in them a knowledge and realization of their *heavenly* hope. (Rom. 3:23-

26; 8:16) Jehovah leads, disciplines and molds them through all the tests they undergo, so that they become fitted exactly for the place he has for them in his government. (Rom. 9:21-24; Eph. 2:10) Additionally, because of his perfect wisdom in directing this training and testing he can be sure of their everlasting loyalty. He can safely give them incorruptible organisms and immortal heavenly life, as rulers over mankind. (1 Cor. 15:50-54) But let us now consider how God also had the rest of humankind in mind as he tested and approved those whom he would use as his governmental body.

SYMPATHETIC RULERS

Jesus Christ, the congregation's Head, underwent a most severe test to prove his qualifications. Of him it is said: "We have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin." (Heb. 4:15) What wisdom and fairness on God's part! For the Priest and Ruler that he puts over mankind is not one who lacks full understanding of our problems and feelings. From his previous experience in heaven, where he worked together with his Father in the creation of all things, God's Son understands the makeup of men and women, as well as of the angels. (John 1:10; 2:25; Col. 1:15-17) But more than that, by becoming a man of blood and flesh on earth he experienced the service of God under adverse conditions. He fully understands human problems. He knows what it means to suffer. (Heb. 5:7-9) All men can have full faith in Christ's priesthood, knowing that he has undergone the same trials successfully and knows what humans need.—Heb. 4:14-16; John 16:33.

Also, consider God's wisdom in his manner of selecting the body of 144,000 associate kings and priests. It has not been a waste of time. During the broad scope of nineteen centuries these have been chosen from all walks of life, all races and languages and all backgrounds. There is simply no problem that some of them, in putting on the new Christian personality, have not faced and overcome. (Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Cor. 10:13) These underpriests, too, will be sympathetic and merciful priests, able to help men of all kinds.

Furthermore, God has lovingly drawn a sizable portion of these spiritual heirs with Christ from among women. As to their spiritual standing with God and Christ, there was "neither male nor female" while they were on earth, and in heaven there is no sex principle or distinction. (Gal. 3:28) Nonetheless, those among the Kingdom heirs who have been women know by experience the problems, vicissitudes and thinking of women, and they have maintained integrity under test as women. This is comforting to women who desire to be faithful to God and who seek life under that Kingdom government. How wise our Creator is!

COMPLETION OF RULER SELECTION MEANS BLESSING FOR MANKIND

Bible prophecy foretold that Christ would take Kingdom power while the worldly nations were still active. (Ps. 2:1-6; 110:1, 2) On taking Kingdom power, he would give early attention to those of the 144,000 who had died. Then he would proceed to gather together all his prospective Kingdom associates on earth, called a 'remnant,' for testing and final approval. (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 12:10, 17) World conditions in fulfillment of prophecy indicate that we are in the closing days of this gathering, called the "harvest." With its completion and the destruction of the present wicked system and its administration, Christ and his associate kings and priests will begin the thousand-year reign

for the blessing of mankind.—Matt. 13:37-40; Rev. 11:18; 19:19-21; 20:1-4, 6.

What does this mean now for earth's inhabitants? It means that it is time for all of us to decide whether we will be willing and loyal subjects of the Kingdom administration. Today the principles of that administration and of its rulers can be known by all who desire to do so. We can apply these principles in our lives now. If so, we are in line for God's protection through the "great tribulation" that marks the end of imperfect man-made administration. Many are doing this today. (Rev. 7:9, 10, 14-17; Matt. 25:31, 32) If we are among these, we can be the first earthly subjects of that Kingdom. We can look forward to seeing the resurrection of the countless millions of the dead, whereby they will be given opportunity of life under that Kingdom.—Rev. 20:11-13.

So the Universal Sovereign, in selecting earth's rulers, has had mankind's interests at heart. He has not overlooked anyone. In his manner of selecting these kingly and priestly administrators he has wisely laid a solid foundation for faith, revealing his qualities and attributes so that men can intelligently love and serve him. He has created an unshakable, incorruptible administration for the earth.—Eph. 2:6, 7.

The "governments and the authorities in the heavenly places" see God's wisdom in thus working out his purpose. (Eph. 3:10) These angelic hosts gladly put themselves under the command of his Messianic King. (Heb. 1:6) Certainly we can exclaim in unison with them: "The blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever." —Rev. 7:12.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES—WHY WERE THEY WRITTEN?

HAVE you ever read the Bible through? Perhaps when you came to the book of First Chronicles you found little there to encourage you to continue reading. Seemingly endless lists of unfamiliar names confronted you. The historical narrative, primarily dealing with events from King David's reign, does not begin until chapter ten. Then, too, in Second Chronicles you found that the history basically covered events from the reign of David's son Solomon down to the desolation of Judah and Jerusalem, a period about which you had already read in the books of First and Second Kings.

Yes, you may have asked, 'Why was this information written and preserved in the Bible? What real purpose does it serve?' To learn the answer to those questions, consider the background of the Jewish people at the time that Ezra, a priest and scribe, committed First and Second Chronicles to writing.

Roughly eight decades had passed since the return of a faithful Jewish remnant from Babylonian exile. The exile itself had disrupted their ties with the past. So there was much that the Jews needed to know about their history to avoid the disastrous mistakes of their ancestors. Especially was it important for them to come to appreciate the vital role of true worship. They needed to be strengthened in their faithfulness to Jehovah and in fulfilling their covenant obligations. The books of First and Second Chronicles admirably filled the needs of the returned exiles in these respects. Let us see how.

The genealogies directly linked the Jews with their past history. These genealogies

furnished the basis for establishing royal descent and family inheritances. They also revealed who were authorized to serve at the temple as priests or in other capacities. The genealogy involving the royal line was of particular value, as it would provide one means for identifying the Messiah.

Though basically embracing the same period as covered in First and Second Kings, written more than a century earlier by Jeremiah the prophet, the later historical narrative of First and Second Chronicles gives greater prominence to temple worship. Why? Is it because Ezra, as a priest, was more interested in the worship at the temple than was the prophet Jeremiah? No, for Jeremiah was also a priest. Rather, like Jeremiah, Ezra wrote under inspiration and *according to the needs of his contemporaries*. The Jews then needed to be encouraged to continue upholding true worship as carried on at the temple, and the books of First and Second Chronicles served that purpose in a fine way.

The account is written in such a manner as to show that the events of Israel's history were shaped by the attitude of the rulers and their subjects toward Jehovah and his righteous law. The history itself becomes instruction. It establishes that faithful adherence to true worship results in blessings, whereas abandonment of true worship spells disaster. What strong encouragement this was for the Jews to avoid the course that had brought calamity upon their forefathers!

We today can also benefit from these historical examples that serve to encourage faithfulness to Jehovah. By loyally upholding true worship, we can demonstrate that we have not missed the purpose of the books of Chronicles.

CHOOSE THE BIG THINGS IN LIFE!

WHAT is big and what is little in your life? That is an important question. By your speech and your actions you let everyone around you know what you consider little and what you consider big.

In this regard every true follower of Jesus Christ is faced with a challenge. He knows what should be the big things in his life. They are 'seeking first God's kingdom and his righteousness.' —Matt. 6:33.

Where then does the challenge come in? It lies in this: the big things are those seen chiefly by the eye of faith. (2 Cor. 4:16-18) Also the big things involve the future. Moreover, the big things require earnest effort and their enjoyment involves discipline of body, mind and heart.

God's Word, the Bible, gives us many examples of men who truly appreciated the big things. These same men recognized the little things for what they really were—little.

There was Moses, to whom all the treasures and pleasures of Egypt were as little

things compared with the big thing, the privilege of serving as God's anointed one, or "Christ," even though this privilege entailed suffering reproach. (Heb. 11:26) Was Moses' judgment proved right? It most certainly was!

Jehovah God used Moses to write more than one fourth of the contents of the Hebrew Scriptures. Through him Jehovah performed many mighty works and striking miracles, and by him God delivered his ancient people from Egyptian bondage. Wonderful privileges indeed, not to say anything about his future reward. What an example Moses is for Christians to imitate when faced with alluring enticements to make the pleasures and treasures of this system of things the big things in their lives, doing so at the cost of spiritual treasures! How wise the counsel that they should endeavor to be "rich in fine works," rather than rich in material possessions! —1 Tim. 6:17, 18.

Another one who had the right appreciation of what is big and what is little was the apostle Paul. Paul was a highly educated and respected Pharisee. In fact, he had everything of which to boast as a Jew. (Acts 26:5; 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5) Yet he said of all such things: "I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. On account of him I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ and be found in union with him."—Phil. 3:8, 9.

Paul encouraged Christians to imitate him, to forget the things behind, such as the ambition to become rich or famous, and to stretch forward to the things ahead, God's service, his approval and reward. These were to be the big things in their lives. The twelve apostles had the same attitude. They themselves had left all to follow Jesus Christ.—Mark 10:28-31; 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:13.

YOU MUST MAKE THE CHOICE

Christians are not to be unduly anxious about material things such as food, clothing and shelter. True, these are essential and we could not live without them. But these are not the most important things around which life should be built. That is why Jesus counseled: "Stop being anxious about your souls as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear. . . . For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things." —Matt. 6:25, 32.

Now how can we apply this counsel of Jesus to today's problems? In itself, there is nothing wrong with owning a fine home, a fine auto, a fine color TV set and suchlike things. But if a Christian becomes anxious about these things and pursues them to the extent that they rob him of time needed for personal study of the Bible, of time for his association with fellow Christians in congregation meetings and of time for his activity in carrying the word of life to others, then what? Is he not saying by his course of action that these fine material things are the big things in his life? And is he not saying that the interests of God's kingdom and the spiritual blessings are, if not little, at least the smaller things? Can any Christian hope to gain Jehovah's approval, and everlasting life in God's new system of things, with such a mental attitude?

Then again, there is the lure of fleshly desire. The pleasures associated with the use of the procreative powers have time and again caused Christians to lose their proper perspective. By their course of action they have betrayed that sexual

pleasures, even if obtaining them means going to the extent of sexual immorality, are the big things in their lives and that God's approval, the association with fellow Christians and the honor of serving as God's witnesses are comparatively little things. Only as a result of being disfellowshiped or excommunicated from the Christian congregation have some been sufficiently jolted so as to get the right view of matters, as was the case with a certain Christian in Paul's day. (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11) Others have suffered complete shipwreck of their faith.

What course will you choose? In your life, what really are the big things?

OTHER BIG AND LITTLE THINGS

Some let personal offenses betray what they consider big or little. If your pride or so-called 'personal honor' is a big thing in your life, then you will let personal offenses make you unhappy and resentful. You will hold a grudge and be unforgiving; you will seek to 'save face.'

But if harmony among Christian brothers and good relations with fellow worshipers are big things in your life, then you will be able to overlook petty slights, neglects or oversights. They will seem to you to be like the little things that they really are. Then instead of replying in kind or holding a grudge you will turn the other cheek, even as Jesus Christ counseled his followers to do.—Matt. 5:39.

Driving home this lesson is the apostle Peter's counsel: "Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." To do this shows one has the right perspective, namely, that such things as personal offenses are among the little things, and that love, peace and harmony among Christians are some of the big things in life.—1 Pet. 4:8.

Truly, it is the course of wisdom to consider carefully what we make the big things in life and what we make the little things. The right choice in such matters works for peace, joy and contentment now, and everlasting life in happiness in Jehovah God's new system of things so near at hand.

Persecuted for Trying to Serve God

MY GIRL FRIEND and I began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses around November 1967. We had met them a few times here in Miami, Florida. Up until this time we were part of this "new generation." As far as I was concerned I was rebellious enough to be a "guru," which means to the hippies being an expert in psychedelic experiences. This is how I was regarded by my associates in the area where I lived. After living constantly "high" for two years, being in jail several times and once in court, and after a few psychedelic trips during which I felt I needed a "guru" myself to help me through, I decided that it was time to get out of this empty way of life.

As we studied the Bible we began gradually to realize the importance of it and the beauty of its truth. Our interest grew, and soon we began attending the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses. This helped to heighten our interest and it was not long before we began to make changes in our appearance (hair, clothes) and in our personalities.

Our getting serious about the truth of Jehovah God and our loving this new life that he kindly opened up to us in connection with the wonderful things we were learning did not go unnoticed. Down upon our heads came fierce attacks from the family of my girl friend! They are Jewish and, despite the fact that they are not very religious nor very strong in their faith, they could not stomach the thought of their daughter's becoming a Christian, much less a Christian witness of Jehovah.

Her parents, brothers, grandmother and other relatives failed to appreciate the fine changes the truth of God was making in our lives. Instead, insults were heaped upon me because they thought that it was my influence that got her into this religious situation and that I was keeping her there. However, they were quite mistaken about this because it was not I but her own keen desire and appreciation that was responsible. This made all their efforts to stop us ineffective.

When I came to the house they hardly spoke to me except when they would surround us, asking a lot of questions and making false claims to try to weaken our faith. There was some terrible screaming. One evening during one of these tirades, they proposed that we bring another Witness and that they would get their rabbi to meet with us so that he could show us how false and fanatic we were. What a reversal of matters that turned out to be, for the rabbi told us that what we were doing was a beautiful thing and that he "gave us the green light"!

Sad to say, this did not stop their persecution, for now it went into a cold-war stage. They would just say Hello and Good-bye to me and nothing else. We were baptized in symbol of our dedication to Jehovah God in May of 1968. Months later we decided to get married. They said that they would have nothing to do with it and that they did not approve of it. They tried to tempt my fiancée with trips to Europe, but this, too, failed. They announced that they would not come to our wedding ceremony and that we were to expect no help from them.

Though their opposition pained us, we were not weakened by it. How happy we are that Jehovah God strengthened us throughout this ordeal to keep our integrity! We went ahead with our wedding plans with the help of our fellow Witnesses. Do you know what happened? They came to our wedding, along with almost every member of their family. And guess who gave the bride away? My father-in-law!

Our steadfastly maintaining our fine conduct to this day has changed my in-laws completely. It would take pages to tell you what they are like now. For example, when I went into the full-time preaching work, they offered me a part-time job in their construction company to help me in my ministry. Now I work a maximum of just three days a week for a fine salary. Because of this, it is going to be possible for my wife to join me in the full-time preaching work soon. All of this because of Jehovah God's undeserved kindness and love. How glad we are that we left behind the "hippie" way of life and endured the persecution for changing to the only road that leads to eternal life, the worship of Jehovah God.—*Contributed.*

● What is meant by the expression 'behaving like a prophet,' which appears at 1 Samuel 18:10 and 19:20-24?—U.S.A.

Jehovah God, by means of his holy spirit, commissioned his prophets. With reference to himself, the prophet Micah said: "I myself have become full of power, with the spirit of Jehovah, and of justice and mightiness, in order to tell to Jacob his revolt and to Israel his sin." (Mic. 3:8) However, this evidently does not mean that Micah and other prophets continually spoke under inspiration. Rather, at certain times God's spirit 'came upon them,' revealing the messages to be announced. This had a stirring effect upon the prophets, impelling them to speak. As the prophet Jeremiah said: "I got tired of holding in, and I was unable to endure it."—Jer. 20:9.

When God's spirit came upon them to 'fill them with power,' not only did the prophets do things that were out of the ordinary, but also their expression and manner must have reflected the intensity of their feeling. Take our own case. We may hear some very important news, perhaps joyful, perhaps disturbing. Is it not true that often before we can tell another that news he will ask, 'Why are you acting or looking so different?'

It may, therefore, be that the expression 'behaving like a prophet' alludes to the unusual way in which the prophets expressed or conducted themselves. Their total concentration and zealous boldness in carrying out their commission on occasion caused their behavior to

appear strange, even irrational, to others. For example, the prophet who anointed Jehu as king appeared to be crazy to the military chiefs. But, on realizing that the man was a prophet, the chiefs accepted his message with full seriousness.—2 Ki. 9:1-13.

At 1 Samuel 18:10 we read that Saul 'behaved like a prophet' while David was playing on the harp. Not that Saul began to utter prophecies, but he showed a physical disturbance like that of a prophet just prior to prophesying or when prophesying. While in that unusual, disturbed state, Saul twice hurled a spear at David.—1 Sam. 18:11.

Later, at the time King Saul sent messengers to seize David at Naioth, these messengers began 'behaving like prophets.' They apparently conducted themselves in a manner like that of prophets just before or during their prophesying. It appears that God's spirit operated toward these messengers in such a way that they completely forgot the purpose of their mission.—1 Sam. 19:20, 21.

When Saul afterward decided to go personally in pursuit of David, he was caused to 'behave like a prophet.' While 'behaving like a prophet,' Saul stripped off his garments and lay "naked all that day and all that night," during which time David evidently made his escape. (1 Sam. 19:22–20:1) Does this mean that the prophets frequently went naked? No, for there are only two instances of prophets appearing naked. These were Isaiah and Micah, and they went naked for a definite *purpose*, to represent some facet of their respective prophecies. (Isa. 20:2-4; Mic. 1:8-11) The reason for Saul's nakedness is not stated. It could have been to show that he was a mere man, divested of his royal garments and impotent against Jehovah's own regal authority and power. He could not hope to succeed in anything that was contrary to God's purpose respecting David.

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