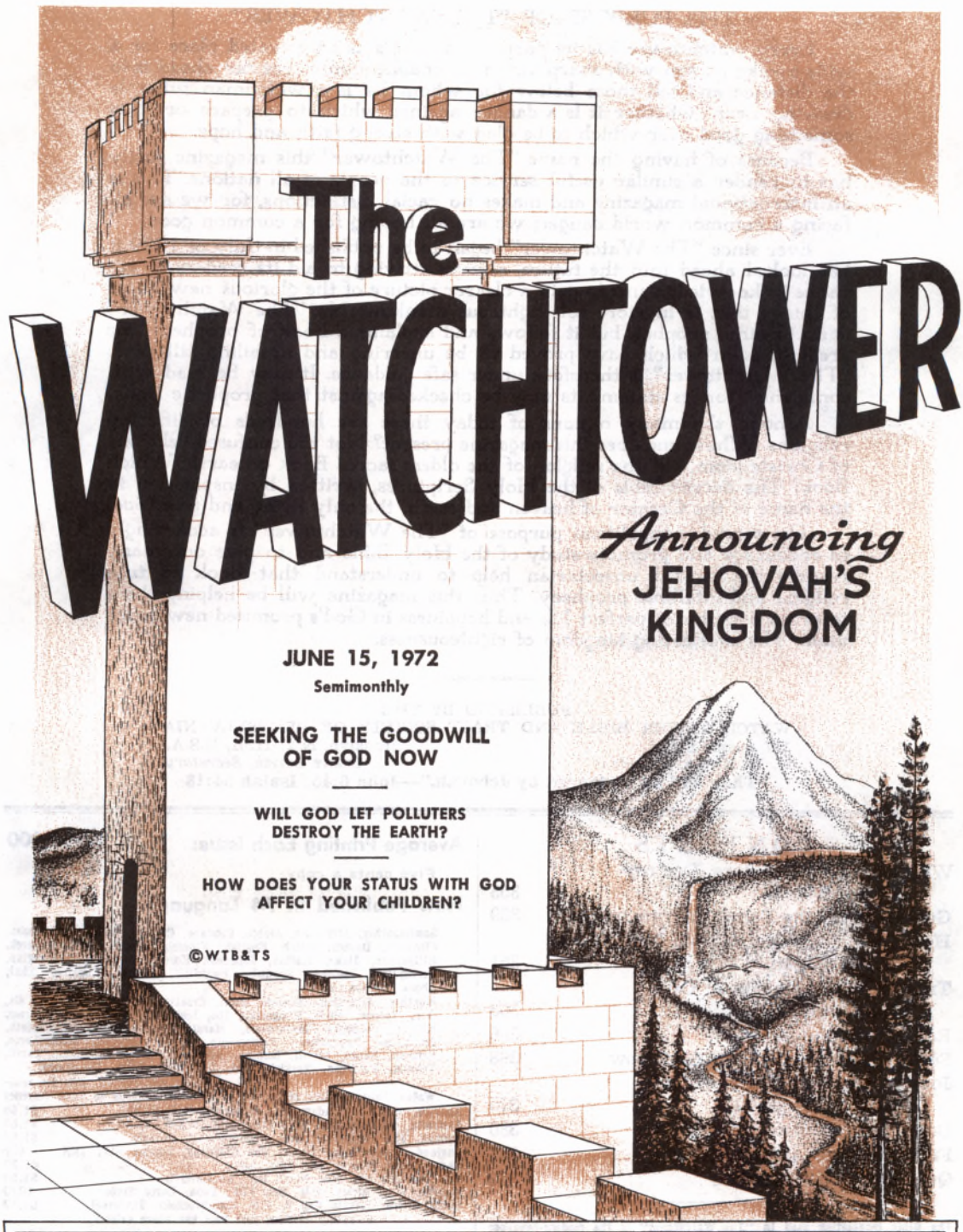

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

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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Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
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WILL GOD LET POLLUTERS DESTROY THE EARTH?

"BY 1984 THE EARTH COULD BE DEAD" read a headline in the London *Medical News-Tribune* in its issue of March 27, 1970. Alarming, but no more so than similar statements in hundreds of articles published in the past ten years. Certainly people have been repeatedly warned of the grave danger they face from pollution of land, water and air in every part of the civilized earth.

Scientists are aroused, as are legislators and statesmen. But in trying to reverse the ruinous trend, these men run up against a real roadblock—selfishness. People are generally willing enough to cooperate in fighting pollution—*provided* to do so would not inconvenience their way of life and livelihood. And the industrial and commercial system of this world does not know how to solve the problem without seriously affecting the economy or holding back "progress."

More serious than the literal pollution is the moral corruption and the defilement of the earth by the bloodshed of warfare, especially in the lands of the nations called "Christian." (Num. 35:33) And law-enforcement agencies in these nations are forced to admit they are fighting a losing battle against crime and corruption.

Is the problem beyond solution? It appears so, as conditions steadily worsen. But what about the Creator of this earth? Is he unconcerned about its being made into a desolate garbage dump and jungle of crime instead of the paradise garden that he commanded the first human pair to develop? Does he not care about the thousands dying every year because of both the literal and the moral pollution, or care about the danger of extinction hanging over the human race?

We can be assured, indeed, that the Creator does not enjoy what he sees. The earth is his creation and was meant to be a credit to him. When he started the human race he gave them a perfect start. Now, after nearly 6,000 years of ignoring God's laws, man has almost succeeded in making the earth uninhabitable instead of the joyful place God purposed it to be. Certainly this does not make the Creator happy. Will he do something about it? If so, what? Will he destroy the entire planet, together with those living upon it?

It is unthinkable that Almighty God

would do such a thing. It would be a waste of his creative activity, a sign of defeat. Well then, can we, in this time of crisis, know what he purposes to do and can we depend on him to do it? Yes. We can know, not only from what he has promised, but, additionally, from the record of what he has actually *done*. Let us examine a small-scale illustration recorded and preserved for our faith and assurance today.—Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11.

The time was the seventh century before our Common Era. It had been more than 850 years since God had brought Israel into the Promised Land, driving out the Canaanite inhabitants because of their corruption. Now the descendants of that faithful generation that entered the land had themselves become corrupt in morals, defiling the land by adopting idolatry and unrighteously shedding innocent blood. Even the land itself had deteriorated.

The prophet Ezekiel was in Babylon. But he was used to express God's displeasure with Israel's corruption and to tell what God was going to do about it. In doing so, he addressed, not the people, but the "mountains of Israel," hundreds of miles to the west and south of Ezekiel's location. Jehovah instructed him:

> "Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy to them. And you must say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah: This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said to the mountains and to the hills, to the stream beds and to the valleys: "'"Here I am! I am bringing upon you a sword, and I shall certainly destroy your high places. And your altars must be made desolate and your incense stands must be broken, and I will cause your slain ones to fall before your dungy idols. And I will put the carcasses of the sons of Israel before their dungy idols, and I will scatter your bones all around your altars. In all your dwelling places the very cities will become devastated and the high places themselves will become desolated, in order that they may lie devastated and your altars may lie desolated and be actually broken and your dungy idols may be actually made to cease and your incense stands cut down and your works wiped out. And the slain one will certainly fall in the midst of you, and you will have to know that I am Jehovah."'" —Ezek. 6:1-7.

The "high places" were places for idolatrous worship to be carried on. By means of their altars, incense stands and dungy idols, the unfaithful Israelites were polluting the mountains, hills, valleys and banks of the stream beds of their God-given possession. Jehovah God had meant for that beautiful land to be sanctified as a place of his clean worship, but after 860 years of occupancy it was desecrated. By turning from the pure worship of God and from following his laws, there was moral corruption. Bloodshed defiled the land.

Actually, their polluted condition all hinged on their bad attitude toward Jehovah. So the only way to cleanse the land was to take drastic action against its defilers, so that those mountains, stream beds and valleys would be clean and the land would, in effect, 'know that God is Jehovah.'

SPIRITUAL FORNICATION BRINGS THE WORST DEFILEMENT

Bodily fornication is unclean and brings all kinds of woes and sicknesses upon its practicers. But spiritual fornication is worse. It brings about every form of corruption and distress, and eventual judgment from the true God. Spiritual fornication was the outstanding sin of Israel. How was this? Because she was unfaithful to her 'marriage relationship' with Jehovah God. God had become a heavenly "Husband" to the nation by reason of the Law covenant that he had established by means of the prophet Moses in 1513 B.C.E.—Jer. 31:31, 32.

But Israel had no appreciation of that relationship. The Law covenant prescribed

death as the penalty for adultery. Was spiritual immorality, a worse sin, likewise punishable? Yes. The punishment unfaithful Israel would suffer was described by Jehovah to Ezekiel:

> "And when it [the drastic action God would take] occurs I will let you have as a remnant the ones escaping from the sword among the nations, when you get scattered among the lands. And your escaped ones will certainly remember me among the nations to which they will have been taken captive, because I have been broken up at their fornicating heart that has turned aside from me and at their eyes that are going in fornication after their dungy idols; and they will certainly feel a loathing in their faces at the bad things that they have done in all their detestable things. And they will have to know that I am Jehovah; not in vain did I speak about doing to them this calamitous thing."—Ezek. 6:8-10.

Those escaping the sword of execution in the land of Judah were but a remnant of the fornicators. Most of Jerusalem's population died from famine, pestilence and the sword. The rest were led away into slavish captivity from those mountains and valleys they had defiled. Their false gods could not save them from Jehovah's judgment. By hard experience in the distant lands of their captors they learned that He did not speak to them in vain when he repeatedly warned them of the dire consequences of forsaking his worship.

CHRISTENDOM, THE WORST POLLUTER

Christendom has never been recognized by Jehovah as belonging to him, but she has made that claim. (Compare Matthew 7:22, 23.) She has advertised herself as being the representative of the God of the Bible and as being the repository of Bible truth. She claims to stand, as Israel did, in a wifely relationship to God, professing to be in covenant relationship with him through the new covenant, with Christ as its Mediator.

But Christendom has practiced spiritual fornication by making alliances with the political, military and commercial elements of this world, and has carried on within her borders things worse than ancient Israel did. She has polluted the mountains, hills, valleys and stream beds by her adoption of pagan religious practices and items of religious worship.

Actually, who can distinguish between the motivations and actions of the so-called Christian nations and the pagan ones? In fact, Christendom, though she may be richer materially than most of the pagan nations, has problems, moral and otherwise, greater in number and complexity than the pagans.

Christendom, therefore, is wrongly occupying any standing as Christian. But God holds her to her claim, nevertheless, and he will punish her according to the way that she has detestably violated that claim. She must be removed from such a professed standing and name. When Jehovah deprives her of such name by destroying her, any adherents who escape execution at her destruction will have no prospect of a future free life. They will be taken over and brought under the control of the secular elements of this world, just as Israel was brought under captivity and control of the militaristic Babylonians.

GOD FAITHFUL TO ALL TERMS OF A COVENANT

Christendom will have to learn, as did ancient Israel, that God is a covenant keeper. They will have to know he is Jehovah. Israel could not treat the covenant with Jehovah as a mere scrap of paper. A covenant with God cannot be torn in pieces and canceled by the unfaithful party to the covenant at any time that he likes! God is faithful, rewarding and blessing the covenant keeper. (Heb. 11:6) And he is just as faithful in punishing the covenant breaker according to the punishments

specified in the covenant. (Deut. 7:9, 10) Otherwise he would be undependable. Jehovah emphasized this fact when he went on to say to his prophet Ezekiel:

> "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'Clap your hands and stamp with your foot, and say: "Alas!" on account of all the bad detestable things of the house of Israel, because by the sword, by the famine and by the pestilence they will fall. As for the one far away, by the pestilence he will die; and as for the one that is nearby, by the sword he will fall; and as for the one that has been left remaining and that has been safeguarded, by the famine he will die, and I will bring to its finish my rage against them. And you people will have to know that I am Jehovah, when their slain ones come to be in the midst of their dungy idols, all around their altars, upon every high hill, on all the tops of the mountains and under every luxuriant tree and under every branchy big tree, the place where they have offered a restful odor to all their dungy idols. And I will stretch out my hand against them and make the land a desolate waste, even a desolation worse than the wilderness toward Diblah, in all their dwelling places. And they will have to know that I am Jehovah.'"—Ezek. 6:11-14.

By this experience the rebellious ones would find out that he is indeed the Purposer and the Keeper of his covenant, living up to *all* its terms. He would not leave any doubt that it was he, Jehovah, who was taking action.

As Israel's conqueror, King Nebuchadnezzar, led the remnant of survivors of Jerusalem and Judah away toward Babylon as captives, what a desolation they left behind! "Worse than the wilderness toward Diblah," said Jehovah, evidently referring to the gravelly, unbroken plain of the Syrian Desert that lies to the south and southeast of Riblah. (See *Revised Standard Version*.) For seventy years the land would not be inhabited by man or domestic animal, until God considered it cleansed and rested up from its pollution. —Jer. 25:11, 12; 2 Chron. 36:21.

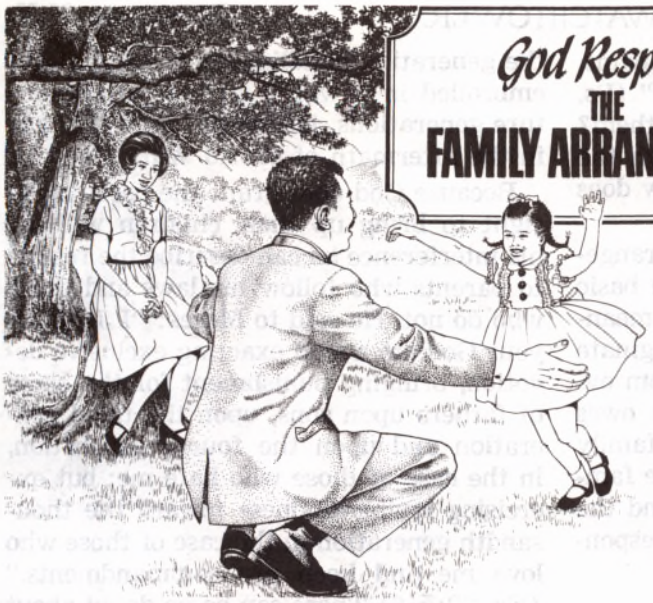
A CLEANSED EARTH

Consequently, in our day God the Creator will show his concern for his creation by destroying all who share in polluting and ruining it, both inside and outside of Christendom. At this time when complete ruination seems unavoidable, Jehovah's appointed time is very near to "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Rev. 11:18) With the polluters gone, the way will be clear for reconstruction in the manner that the Creator designs and directs.

Will there, then, be any survivors to enjoy a cleansed and beautified earth? Yes, for in ancient Jerusalem's destruction there were those who had kept covenant faithfully with God. They were preserved from death when the city fell. In exile they were able to raise offspring, some of whom returned in 537 B.C.E. to restore true worship. These found peace and freedom from pollution in the formerly corrupted land.

Likewise in Christendom, and in some of the other nations, there are persons who are grieved by the pollution, particularly moral and spiritual, that they see all around them. What can these do? This: Get away quickly from all moral and spiritual filth, learn of God's laws and respect his creation. Find the proper way of approach to Him and what faithfulness to him requires. This can be done only by gaining a true understanding of Jehovah's Word the Holy Bible.

Then, though a person's health may be adversely affected by the present pollution of air, water and land, spiritually he can remain clean and can receive God's favor and protection when He desolates polluters. And what a prospect, to look forward to breathing clean air, drinking pure water, eating clean food and enjoying cleanness of living when the earth is brought to the state that the Creator originally purposed for it!—Rev. 7:15-17; 21:1-4.



God Respects THE FAMILY ARRANGEMENT

WHEN a child is born, the friends and relatives gather around and remarks are heard, such as: 'He's the image of his father!' or, 'He looks just like his mother!' Sometimes the likeness to the other parent is not so obvious in physical appearance but becomes evident later on in the child's personality traits. Truly, it is with us today just as it was with the first man Adam, who, the Bible relates, "became father to a son *in his likeness, in his image,* and called his name Seth." —Gen. 5:3.

In the matter of parenthood and parental rights Jehovah God has been very constant. He gave parents the privilege and power to bring forth children in their own image and likeness. Yes, and more than that, he allows them to bring up their children in the way they desire. And regardless of the fact that some parents have neglected their children and some have even brought them up to be fighters against God, he has not taken their children away from them and given them to others to care for.

Certainly this is just and reveals great forbearance on God's part. No one can justly complain that God deprived him of training his children in the way he wished. And no person who has failed to teach God's principles to his children can rightly complain about the distress that the bad conduct of his (or her) children brings. Negligent parents cannot sidestep the principle that "a boy let on the loose will be causing his mother shame."—Prov. 29:15.

YOUNG CHILDREN ARE NOT SINLESS

All the children of mankind, although inheriting some desirable traits from their parents, also inherit some undesirable ones. And, without exception, all have been born sinful as a result of their original forefather's losing his status with God through disobedience. The Bible tells us: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."—Rom. 5:12.

Through sin, 'missing the mark' of God's standard of perfection for him, falling short of the glory of God, which he should have reflected, Adam failed to pass on perfection to his children. So the entire human race was affected. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." —Rom. 3:23.

Thanks to God's undeserved kindness, the ransom sacrifice of Christ can remove the sin in which one was born. The individual must, of course, be of an age to accept God's provision for himself. But what of children not yet old enough to exercise such faith? They are not sinless. The psalmist David said: "Look! With er-

ror I was brought forth with birth pains, and in sin my mother conceived me." (Ps. 51:5) So, how does God deal with them? He deals with these children through the family arrangement. Why? And how does this principle operate?

Jehovah believes in the family arrangement and has made the family the basic unit of earthly society. The place, meaning and function of the family originate with him. He is the Father "to whom every family in heaven and on earth owes its name." (Eph. 3:15) He gives the family dignity and status. The father in the family is head, the mother is helper, and the two together have divinely given responsibility for the children's control.

PARENTS ACCOUNTABLE FOR CHILDREN

Very young children who have not reached the age of responsibility are almost altogether the product of their parents through inheritance, with, additionally, the training and environment provided by the parents. Accordingly, God holds the parents responsible until the child reaches the age of responsibility for his own decisions and acts.

What the parents do as to their relationship with God therefore affects the entire family. Just as the law of men calls the parents to account for the acts of their minor children, so does God. If a child commits a crime, damaging property, the father can expect the police to be knocking on his door to bring charges against him and require that he pay for the damage. Why, then, should not God likewise hold parents responsible for the acts of their young children?

FAR-REACHING RESULTS OF PARENTAL TRAINING

The right or wrong acts of parents or the right or wrong training they give can reflect on the children's children, even on great-grandchildren. For example, when the generation handling world affairs gets embroiled in a war it greatly affects future generations, just as has been the case in the aftermath of World Wars I and II.

Because God does grant the parents the right to bring up their children without his interference he can describe the results to parents who follow his laws and those who do not. He said to Moses: "I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion, bringing punishment for the error of fathers upon sons, upon the third generation and upon the fourth generation, in the case of those who hate me; but exercising loving-kindness toward the thousandth generation in the case of those who love me and keep my commandments." (Ex. 20:5, 6) There can be no doubt about it: Children brought up in the wrong way are almost sure to practice bad things and receive the recompense due for their actions.

Abraham was an example of a family head who kept God's way and taught his children obedience to God. This proved to be a long-lasting blessing to his descendants.—Gen. 18:19; Deut. 4:37.

However, when Abraham's descendants later turned to idolatry and other wickednesses they were taken into captivity by enemy nations. In fact, from the exile in Babylon right down to Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E. the Jews were constantly under the domination of pagan world powers, first Babylon, then Persia, Greece and Rome. Descendants for many generations felt the weight of the sin of their ancestors.

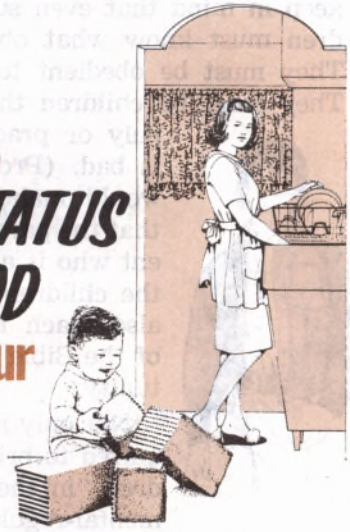
This principle proved true in pagan nations also. At the building of the Tower of Babel, the people that had broken away from the worship of Noah's God, Jehovah, were split up into various language groups, and nations developed from them. Their offspring later found themselves "alienated

from the state of Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise, and [they] had no hope and were without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12) Only those who have turned away from the bad course of their forefathers, forsaking paganism, have come to know God by taking up worship of him.

A case in point, of judgment of young children along with their wicked parents, is that of the Canaanites. Because of their long history of the deepest corruption their young children were executed along with them, at God's command, when the Israelites occupied the land.—Deut. 7:1, 2.

All this shows that God attributes merit or demerit to the young children of a family, based on the status of the parents. Is anything required of the parents, other than being worshipers of the true God Jehovah? And is anything required of the young children? Also, what about families where only one parent is a worshiper of Jehovah and a disciple of Jesus Christ? These questions will be discussed in the following article.

How does YOUR STATUS WITH GOD affect your children?



HISTORICAL evidences discussed in the previous article are demonstrations of the fact that what a parent does has profound effects upon his children, extending into several future generations. Parents' right course of life and their proper example are bound to result in good for their children, particularly so if the parents are true servants of Jehovah God. Their status with God means life to the children, provided they carefully teach them God's laws and instill in them obedience to parental authority.

What about the situation, though, where one of the parents is a "believer," a Christian, but the other is not? Does this union, or a continuation of the union without separation, make the believer contaminated or unclean, making the children unclean as a consequence?

No. Why not? Because of the righteous principles of God, by which he stands loyally, and because of his loving-kindness toward those who serve him with exclusive devotion. He comforts those in religiously divided households, where one is a believer and the other is not, saying in his Word: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in relation to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in relation to the brother; otherwise, your children would really be unclean, but now they are holy."—1 Cor. 7:14.

In the Hebrew and Greek languages, in which the Bible was written, words drawn from the Hebrew word *qa·dhash'*, which has the root meaning "to be bright, new, clean," and from the Greek word *ha'gi·os* are rendered "holy," "sanctified" and "set apart." Both the Hebrew and Greek usage had a religious, spiritual and moral sense. Anything sanctified, therefore, would be clean, holy, set aside for God's service.

This clean standing before God comes by the exercise of faith in God's provision through his Son. One not exercising this

faith has not been cleaned up from his inherited imperfection, sinfulness. Such persons, termed by the apostle Paul as 'unbelievers,' may be living honest, moral lives. But they have not separated themselves from the unclean world. They have not accepted God's provision for removal of their sinful state, not yet having been set free from slavery to sin by becoming true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such persons are not, of themselves, clean in God's eyes.—2 Cor. 6:17; Jas. 4:4; John 8:34-36.

Note that the apostle's statement, at 1 Corinthians 7:14, does not say that the unbeliever is, by the marriage bond, made clean or holy *himself*. He may, in fact, be one who carries on wrongdoing or unclean practices. Rather, Paul says the unbeliever is sanctified "in *relation* to" the believer. So God counts such marriage *relationship* or *union* clean, as a loving-kindness to the believer and the young children.

A young child who is rebellious cancels out the merit his Christian parent might bring him in the eyes of God

On what basis can God thus favor the young children of religiously divided families? Well, marriage is an institution of God, and the marriage relationship is a proper arrangement for humans. Therefore, any proper marriage has God's approval. He counts the marriage partners as "one flesh." (Matt. 19:5) Accordingly, when one of the partners is a faithful Christian, that one is not contaminated by continuing to live with the unbelieving one. The marriage is acceptable to God. If it were not acceptable, the children would be like illegitimates. But now they are counted as holy, clean. Or, if both the partners are unbelievers, the marriage itself is not condemned, but the children are counted like their parents, not sanctified or holy to God.

However, the children whom God counts as holy on the basis of parental merit are those children who are not yet old enough to understand fully all that is required of those who serve God. They are unable to make the momentous decision for themselves that is required of those who become baptized disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is a very important fact to keep in mind that even such young children must know what obedience means. They must be obedient to their parents. They must be children that are not unruly or practicers of what is bad. (Prov. 20:11) This would make it imperative that the parents, or the parent who is a believer, teach the children obedience, and also teach them the truth of the Bible at every opportunity.

Not only is the father required to bring up the children "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah," but the children also are given the direct command: "You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord," and, "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous: 'Honor your father and your mother'; which is the first command with a promise: 'That it may go well with you and you may endure a long time on the earth.' " —Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20.

Consequently, if a young child is rebellious and goes contrary to the commands and requests of his parents, if he, when away from his parents, does things

he knows are against their will, or are wrong in God's eyes, if he runs with associates that practice wrongdoing, then he certainly cannot claim to come under the benefits of family merit. He cancels out the merit that his Christian parent or parents might bring in the eyes of God, and he is unclean, just as those are with whom he practices wrongdoing.—Ps. 50:16-20.

What does having the merit of a Christian parent or parents mean to the obedient child? It means that he has the favor of God. He has God's protection and help, just as his Christian parent does. He does not have the judgment of God against him, as does the world. (2 Pet. 2:9; compare Psalm 37:25, 26.) When God executes judgment on the wicked he will spare such children as being clean, holy, just as the believing parent is holy.

Conversely, the Bible declares: " 'For, look! the day is coming that is burning like the furnace, and all the presumptuous ones and all those doing wickedness must become as stubble. And the day that is coming will certainly devour them,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'so that it will not leave to them either root or bough.' " (Mal. 4:1) When Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E. because of its unfaithfulness to God, children were killed along with their parents. Christians who had heeded Jesus' prophetic warning to get out of the doomed city before the Romans sealed it off were saved along with their children.

Likewise at the destruction of the wicked in this present system of things the principle will apply: The offspring (the bough) not taking a righteous stand on their own will receive the same adverse judgment as the parents (the root).

Jehovah God's recognition of his faithful servants reveals his great love and appreciation for those who love him, as well as showing his wise ability to make "all his works cooperate together for the good of those who love God." (Rom. 8:28) Moreover, Jehovah's justice is magnified in that he accomplishes all this within the framework of his own stated principles.

TRUST IN GOD, not your own understanding

PERSONS who render exclusive devotion to Jehovah God realize that all final judgments of mankind are in his hands. King David, in his parting counsel to his son and successor Solomon, said: "All hearts Jehovah is searching, and every inclination of the thoughts he is discerning."—1 Chron. 28:9; 1 Sam. 16:7.

For these reasons we should not feel anxiety about what judgment certain persons or groups receive. However, Jehovah does give us guidelines so that we may take the course that will bring favorable judgment to ourselves and also work toward the proper standing of others in God's sight.

Because of the very tender relationship and feelings that exist with regard to young children, and in view of God's principle of family merit, discussed in previous articles, some related questions arise that deserve discussion.

ADOPTED CHILDREN

Some have asked, 'What about young children who are adopted? Are they not part of the family unit into which they

are adopted, and would not their status with God be governed by the status of their adoptive parents?' Apparently so. If the foster parents are true Christians, they will teach the truth of God's Word to the child. If the child is obedient to his foster parents and to the laws of God that he is able to understand, then, what the apostle Paul said at 1 Corinthians 7:14 would evidently apply in this circumstance.

On the other hand, the child may be reared by non-Christian foster parents. It seems that he would be considered as sharing the foster parents' judgment before God. Of course, if the child is old enough to discern right and wrong and he does so, showing a definite love for righteousness, earnestly seeking to know and follow the truth even though his foster parents do not, then he could receive God's favor.—Ezek. 18:14-18; 33:18, 19.

In cases where a couple have legally adopted a child and have therefore assumed responsibility for him, they have a large share in either a good way or a bad way in determining the child's status. But persons or couples who merely keep a child in the home for a relative, or persons being paid for taking care of a child, could not expect the child to come under God's favor merely because of their being his caretakers. They are not the ones responsible for the child, and the principle of family merit would not here apply. However, if, while they have the child in their care, they teach the child from God's Word to the extent that they are able, this will, of course, be for the child's welfare if he listens and follows the good things he learns.

Those who are servants of God should do all they can to teach others the truth, but those who do not have the direct responsibility for a child should not feel that they must interfere with the rights of the parents. If one has relatives that are unbelievers, it is the responsibility of the *parents* in such unbelieving families to train the children, and God allows them to do so as they please. Of course, if opportunity is given to tell such children the truth, this may be done. But to go beyond this, for example, trying to get legal control of the children, would be meddling in the affairs of others. (1 Pet. 4:15) God does not do this; why should we? Leave matters to God, who cares for those with right hearts.

DANGER OF MARRYING AN UNBELIEVER

It should be noted that, even though God blesses the family unit where only one is a believer, it is a very unwise thing for a Christian to marry an unbeliever. For, while God views the marriage relationship as holy, it does not mean that very distressing problems may not arise. It is much harder to teach children God's way in a religiously divided household. The unbeliever may try to counteract the teaching the children receive, or may even try to prevent the teaching being done. This would have detrimental effects on the children. They may not show themselves obedient to the things taught by the believing parent, and, if so, these children would share God's judgment upon the unbelieving parent.

A very difficult situation may arise if the unbeliever decides to separate from the believer because of religious differences. If the unbelieving one insists on separation, the believer may let him (or her) depart. The apostle Paul points out that "a brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace." (1 Cor. 7:15) But what if there are children? The unbeliever may try to take the children. He or she may even get custody granted by

the court. Then what little opportunity the believing mate has of seeing the children and talking to them about God's way may not be sufficient to mold the children in the right way. Even if the unbeliever departs, leaving the children to the believer, what a hardship that works on the believer! It puts added burdens on the Christian mate, having to support the children, at the same time seeing to their spiritual welfare in a proper manner.

Yes, single persons should not disobey the apostle's counsel on behalf of their own spiritual welfare and that of children that may be born to a union with an unbeliever. The apostle follows the Bible's counsel to the Israelites, not to make marriage alliances with unbelievers, when he counsels widows to marry "only in the Lord." —1 Cor. 7:39; Deut. 7:3, 4.

On the other hand, to those who may already be involved in marriage to an unbeliever, or in other binding situations that would pose some problems in connection with service to God, the apostle says: "In whatever condition each one was called, brothers, let him remain in it associated with God." (1 Cor. 7:24) If a person is married at the time that he comes to a knowledge of the truth, and the mate does not become a believer, nonetheless, God counts the relationship holy. But a single person who marries an unbeliever is not putting first his association with God. He is gravely risking his spirituality and is putting an extra strain on his integrity.

CONFIDENT IN GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

There are other questions that arise in connection with the principle of family merit. The Bible does not answer them all. It leaves the judgment of each individual case to Jehovah and his Son, whom he has appointed to judge the world in righteousness.—Acts 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1.

Should we worry and speculate as to who will survive the "great tribulation," or who will be resurrected? If we live according to God's commands now and proclaim the good news to the best of our ability, we will be doing God's will.

As to Jehovah's judgments, if we come to know God we will trust in him, and we will be like Abraham, who, knowing God's justice and mercy, used these as the basis for a plea in behalf of persons living in the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, saying: "Suppose there are fifty righteous men in the midst of the city. Will you, then, sweep them away and not pardon the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are inside it? It is unthinkable of you that you are acting in this manner to put to death the righteous man with the wicked one so that it has to occur with the righteous man as it does with the wicked! It is unthinkable of you. Is the Judge of all the earth not going to do what is right?" Jehovah's matchless mercy was shown in his listening to Abraham's plea to the point that if only ten righteous men were found in the district, God would completely spare the cities. —Gen. 18:22-33.

So, rather than be overly concerned, it is better to wait upon Jehovah, at the same time continuing to do his will with the confidence expressed by the psalmist, who said: "I well know, O Jehovah, that your judicial decisions are righteousness."—Ps. 119:75.

THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Are Your Prayers Answered?**
- **Blessing Jehovah in Our Daily Associations.**
- **Caring for Yourself Physically.**

Religion in the News

THE church systems of Christendom claim they have God's backing. Yet, observing the condition of the churches today, many thinking persons ask: If the all-wise and all-powerful God is backing the churches, then why are they in such turmoil and crisis?

Surely, if God is backing the churches, news reports about them should reflect God's qualities, his order and truthfulness. They should show the churches upholding God's laws and teachings, making these clear to honest-hearted persons. But notice now just a few of the many items the press contains about the churches these days.

ANGLICANS TO ACCEPT POLYGAMISTS

From Port Moresby, Papua, comes the following report published by the New York "Times": "The Anglican Church gained points recently when the Synod of Bishops here threw out a rule that prevented men with plural wives from being baptized."

This may come as a surprise to persons who recognize Bible teachings as allowing only one wife to Christian husbands, thus equating polygamy with adultery.—Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:2.

So, the question raised in the minds of many thinking persons will be: With whom did the Anglican Church 'gain points'? Very possibly with the natives—but what about God whose law the polygamists violate?

WHERE IS THEIR "GOOD NEWS"?

Jesus Christ had a dynamic message for mankind, a message that God commissioned him to preach. It was really good news, the best news. As part of a sign of these "last days" Jesus foretold that "this good news of the kingdom" would be preached throughout the earth before the end came.—2 Tim. 3:1-5; Matt. 24:14.

Is this dynamic good news being preached in the churches of Christendom? Dr. John Bennett, former president of New York's Union Theological Seminary, admitted that "today's sermons are often dull, unimaginative, ill-prepared and boring," reports the Seattle "Post-Intelligencer."

Then, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Murdo Nicolson, stated: "We have got the greatest message in the world, but you would never know it from going inside a church." This clergyman, the Windsor "Star" noted, "blames disenchantment with the church on the way the Bible's message is being transmitted."

Is it just a matter of the way the preaching is presented, or is it also a question of knowing what to preach and being filled with the zeal to preach? The Washington "Post" published this news report: "The 95 bishops of the United Methodist Church said today their denomination is caught up in a crisis of faith, with legions of clergy as well as laymen unable honestly to profess traditional Christian beliefs."

Hans Küng, a leading Roman Catholic theologian who teaches in Germany, says of his church: "The church's credibility is so low that we cannot imagine how this happened." And, according to the St. Louis "Globe-Democrat," East St. Louis priest Stanley Roth declared that the "diocesan priesthood is dead," and added: "It cannot be reformed from within or without. It is an inoperable institution." Catholic layman William Durbin answered that the priesthood and laity were "not dead, but in a pathological stupor, alive but leading a vegetable existence."

Does all of that sound as if God is leading and backing these institutions where the "good news" is so sadly lacking?

CHURCHES IN POLITICS

The "Spectator" of Hamilton, Ontario, relates that many people no longer attend church because they are disgusted with the political activity of clergymen. They feel that "the church is 'too activist,' or 'too involved' or is taking on interests at variance with the gospel."

Is political involvement by churches indeed "at variance with the gospel"? Well, Jesus said of his true followers: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world."

(John 17:16) He refused to become involved in politics.

Yet, Jesuit priest John J. McLaughlin, a speech writer for President Nixon, stated according to the Boston "Globe": "Politics is a vocation of the highest order." The priest had run for a U.S. Senate seat for Rhode Island in 1970. He also said: "Vatican II urged all citizens to become involved in political action, and I did not see 'except priests' in parentheses."

And in Canada, the Toronto "Star" carried this headline: "Cleric asks churchmen to enter city politics." The clergyman was Noble Hatton of the Metropolitan United Church.

As a by-product of their political involvement, more and more clergymen and churches are coming into conflict with political leaders. In the United States many claim that the government is applying pressure to try to stop them from taking their stand on political issues, and even "spying" on church personnel. The Bangor, Maine, "Daily News" said: "The latest protest came last week in a brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court, contending that military surveillance has included church leaders."

WHO WILL TEACH THE YOUNG?

One thing is certain—if the churches do not have God's backing, then all their adherents will suffer. And not only adults, but children too will pay a price.

In this connection note what R. L. Hodapp, the Bishop of Belize, British Honduras, stated in a pastoral letter issued for the entire country: "As time goes on it seems quite evident that there will be proportionately fewer priests, sisters and brothers. Hence, full responsibility for passing on the faith to their children will rest more and more upon the parents. From studies and even casual observation, we are forced to conclude that many of our Catholic schools are not turning out real Christians. . . . Quite often the reason for this is that parents themselves have been negligent in teaching and setting the example for their children."

But who is responsible for the lack of spirituality among the parents? Why are they not equipped to teach the "good news" to their children? Must not the religious leaders share a large part of the blame? Can they expect parents to be able to teach their children when they, the clergy, are themselves not sure as to what to believe and teach? Commenting on the book "Priests in the United States," written by priest Andrew Greely, Washington "Post" book reviewer Richard Neuhaus notes that the majority of priests "are increasingly unsure about what either [the church or the priesthood] are supposed to be and increasingly cynical about the leaders who are supposed to have the answers."

WHAT DOES IT SHOW?

Ask yourself: Does all of the foregoing show any dynamic good news from God working through the churches? Or does it show just the opposite: that the churches are in a state of decay, confusion and crisis? The facts show that the ranks of clergymen, seminary students and laity are dwindling and they are not even certain of what the truth is.

And why not? Of religious leaders in ancient Israel, the prophet wrote: "They have rejected the very word of Jehovah, and what wisdom do they have?" (Jer. 8:9) God's Son said of religious leaders of his generation: "It is in vain that they keep worshiping [God], because they teach commands of men as doctrines." So if we find the same conditions today, we may be sure that the result will be just as it was in Jesus' day: "Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."—Matt. 15:6, 9, 14.

However, for a certainty there is a dynamic message, really "good news," being preached throughout all the earth today. If not by the churches of Christendom, by whom then? Well, who is it that comes to your door telling you the same things that Jesus Christ taught? Who is sounding the warning of the near end of this ungodly system of things and of the coming in of God's new order? Who upholds God's standards of morality? Who refuses to become involved in worldly politics? Who regularly teaches adults the Bible and equips them to teach their children? Who gives evidence by their growth and spiritual prosperity that they have God's backing? We trust that your reading the rest of this magazine will help to supply you with the logical answers.

SEEKING THE GOODWILL OF GOD NOW

"For the one finding [wisdom] will certainly find life, and gets goodwill from Jehovah." —Prov. 8:35.

FOR what are you seeking? Are you searching for that which will bring you good health, happiness, contentment, security, and long life? Millions of persons on earth fervently desire these blessings but have not been able to find them, for they are seeking them from a wrong source. Many are seeking material wealth and financial success, only to find that the rewards of riches are most uncertain and that money cannot buy health and life. Others search for pleasure and self-gratification, all too often at the cost of their morals and self-respect. Some strive for power and influence, while others merely seek for justice and equality. Some become sorely disillusioned by what they see about them and seek to change it all by rebellion and violence, while others seek an escape by deluding their minds with excessive drinking and brain-benumbing drugs.

[2] But is any of this the source of true happiness and life? Do the present unsolved problems that plague and divide humanity cast the warm glow of hope upon the future? Do the unresolved issues that become more complex and confusing each day, issues that cause men and women to quarrel and fight, to hate and destroy one another—do these promise to provide what you are seeking? Does a world of increasing greed and hatred, of mushrooming crime, violence, immorality, drug addiction, delinquency and wickedness of every kind—does such a world offer you the prospect of attaining the good things you so fervently desire? If not, you might want to consider these words of wisdom from the Proverbs: "He that is looking for good, will keep seeking goodwill; but as for the one searching for bad, it will come upon him." (Prov. 11:27) If you are seeking for good, then consider the question that more than any other will have a profound effect on your future—yes, upon that of all mankind—namely, Are you seeking the goodwill of God?

[3] Why is this question so vital? Why at this time particularly must we make our decision as to the seeking of God's goodwill? Because according to the unmistakable proofs from God's Word the Bible we have reached the time in human history identified in the Scriptures as the "last days," the time "to proclaim the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God." —2 Tim. 3:1-5; Isa. 61:2.

[4] God has always shown his goodwill

1, 2. (a) Why are millions failing in the search for health and life? (b) The one desiring good should consider what question?

3. Why is now the appropriate time to seek God's goodwill?

4. How has God demonstrated his desire to extend goodwill toward mankind?

toward those who have exercised faith in him and who have shown appreciation for his goodness and loving-kindness. He has never rejected any of mankind who truly sought his favor. Many men of faith down through the centuries have sought after his righteousness and truth and thus gained his favor and blessing. They never regretted it, as the proverb states: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it." (Prov. 10:22) Jehovah himself has always taken the initiative in making his loving-kindness and goodwill available to those of mankind who would desire it. The greatest evidence to date of that loving concern for the world of mankind was the sending forth of his Son Jesus to the earth, for it demonstrated God's loving desire to bestow blessings and life upon those of earth's inhabitants who would accept them, even as Jesus himself expressed it: "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." —John 3:16; 1 John 4:9, 10.

5 For centuries the inspired prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures had foretold God's interest in the earth and its human inhabitants. The prophecies go back to the Garden of Eden right after the disobedience and downfall of the first human pair, Adam and Eve. That first prophecy foretold the "seed" that would hate the "serpent," God's chief enemy Satan, and that seed would eventually mortally "bruise" the "serpent" in the head, thereby bringing to an end mankind's greatest enemy, the one who wickedly maneuvered the human family into sin and death. Later prophecies spoke of God's promise of a king, greater than David, the seed of Abraham, who will bring to all nations of mankind the blessings of a just government with righteousness and peace, a king who will rule with wisdom and understanding, whose rulership will be an indefinitely lasting rulership, to whom all peoples can turn for justice and peace, a kingdom that will put an end to warring political kingdoms and governments, and stand in righteousness to time indefinite. —Gen. 3:15; 22:17, 18; Isa. 2:2-4; 11:1-5; Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14.

6 Now came the next step in God's purpose to bestow blessing and goodwill upon deserving mankind. How dramatically his loving interest in humanity was illustrated by the circumstance surrounding the miraculous events that occurred in 2 B.C.E. there in the Roman province of Judea. The time had come for the arrival of that promised Messiah King, the princely ruler of peace and righteousness foretold by the prophet Isaiah centuries earlier: "For there has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this."—Isa. 9:6, 7.

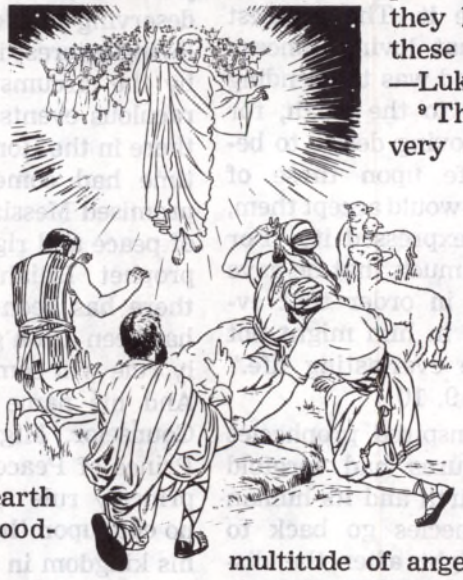
7 The birth of that Messiah prince promised for centuries would certainly be a cause for joyful acclamation and good news to all who desired the goodwill of God and longed for peace and righteous-

5, 6. (a) How do the Bible prophecies indicate that God's goodwill is shown toward humanity? (b) When did the princely king make his appearance in fulfillment of prophecy?

7, 8. (a) What were the circumstances of the angelic announcement, and what further promise of blessing did it contain? (b) How was interest in the promise and appreciation for God's goodwill demonstrated by the shepherds?

ness. On that occasion, even the very angels of God shared in the joyful announcement of that outstanding birth in the city of Bethlehem. The shepherds tending their flocks on the Judean hillside were the privileged and favored viewers of the fear-inspiring angelic spectacle that followed. For the benefit of those seeking the goodwill of God, the Bible writer Luke relates it for us: "The angel said to them: 'Have no fear, for, look! I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have, because there was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in David's city. And this is a sign for you: you will find an infant bound in cloth bands and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there came to be with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: 'Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill.' "—Luke 2:8-14.

At Jesus' birth the angels proclaimed to humble shepherds, 'Peace on earth among men of goodwill.' Are you seeking the goodwill of God in these "last days"?



[8] Those humble shepherds proved to be men interested in the goodwill of God, for they immediately made their way to Bethlehem to see the child whose birth moved even the angels to proclaim, 'Glory to God in the heavens,' and whose birth carried with it the promise of 'peace on earth among men of goodwill.' How favored of God they had been to have received the special announcement of this most important and extraordinary event in human history, not through the sophisticated electronic channels of communication to be later devised by men, such as radio or television, but by direct communication from superhuman extraterrestrial spirit sons of God. By his goodwill toward them, God through his angels had permitted them to be eyewitnesses of what he was doing in behalf of mankind by sending the promised Messiah or Christ the Lord, the royal descendant of King David, for Mary his mother was a descendant of David. Filled with appreciation for the goodwill shown them by God, "the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all the things they heard and saw, just as these had been told them." —Luke 2:20.

[9] Thus, as shown by the very special favor bestowed upon those faithful Judean shepherds, God's "men of goodwill," who receive his peace, are those upon whom God bestows his favor and good pleasure. This is the thought indicated by various Bible translations in their rendering of the words of that heavenly multitude of angels at Jesus' birth. The *American Standard Version* translates Luke 2:14 this way: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Dr. Moffatt's translation reads: "Glory to God in high heaven, and peace on earth for men whom he favours!" *The New English Bible* reads: "Glory to God in highest heaven, and on earth his peace for men on whom his favour rests." Thus it is plain that the blessing of God's peace is for those who have sought his goodwill and gained his good pleasure.

9. What does it mean to become one of God's "men of goodwill"?

10 During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ called attention to the fact that God's goodwill was then available to those of the Jewish nation who wished it. His very presence among them meant that God was specially exercising goodwill in their behalf, and their accepting his goodwill would work for their everlasting benefit. In the synagogue in the city of Nazareth, where he had been a carpenter until thirty years of age, Jesus on one occasion was given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Out of it he read from chapter sixty-one, verses one and two: "The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, for the reason that Jehovah has anointed me to tell good news to the meek ones. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to those taken captive and the wide opening of the eyes even to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God." When Jesus finished reading this prophecy, he turned to his audience and affirmed: "Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled." (Luke 4:17-21) Wonderful blessings are thus in store for those who accept the good news offered by Jesus. However, it is not difficult to note the strong contrast of thought in the references to the "year of goodwill" and the "day of vengeance on the part of our God." Opposite destinies are obviously involved, which makes manifest the fact that God's goodwill is not toward all persons. If it were, there would be no need for a "day of vengeance."

AN EXAMPLE FOR OUR DAY

11 Back there in first-century Jerusalem, that promise of a "year of goodwill" followed by the destructive "day of vengeance" saw a typical fulfillment in a series of circumstances that give cause for concern in this day. The proclaiming of the "year of goodwill" begun by Jesus, was later taken up by his faithful anointed followers after Pentecost. It featured a message of good news that centered around the promised Kingdom by God's appointed Messiah, and was made public by the preaching activity of those whom God had anointed by his holy spirit. It offered to all those Jews there in Judea the very blessing for which their forefathers had hoped for centuries, those who had exercised faith in the promises written down by the prophets. God's Chief Agent for salvation and life was among them. Truly this was their "year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah."

12 But would they accept it? Would this "year of goodwill" with its prospects of blessings always be available to that Jewish nation so that they could turn to it if and whenever they pleased? No, the circumstances that followed indicate that such was not the case. Just as a year is a definite time period with a beginning and an end, so their "year of goodwill" would not last indefinitely. Those who truly desired to gain God's goodwill and avail themselves of its benefits and blessings would have to act quickly and decisively before it ended, before the "day of vengeance on the part of our God" came upon them.

13 Jesus' prophecy concerning what would befall those who rejected God's goodwill had carried with it a warning of a limited time period. Jesus had described the sweeping events that would lead up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.: "Furthermore, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then

10. (a) In what ways did Jesus make it known that God's goodwill was available to many? (b) How was it apparent that not all received goodwill from Jehovah?
11. Explain why the Jews of Jesus' day were enjoying a "year of goodwill" on the part of Jehovah.
12. Why was their "year of goodwill" not to last indefinitely?
13. Jesus' prophecy foretold what conclusion to the "year of goodwill" in the first century?

know that the desolating of her has drawn near." With this warning in mind, those Jews in Judea who truly had a sincere desire to gain God's goodwill would have a profound interest in the instructions that follow: "Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her; because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled." Then pinpointing just how limited that "year of goodwill" would prove to be for that nation, Jesus added the ominous warning: "Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur."—Luke 21:20-22, 32.

[14] Exactly as Jesus foretold, 37 years later, within that very generation, that "year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah" came to a halt, to be followed quickly by the destructive "day of vengeance" that fell violently upon the Jewish people, especially upon Jerusalem. In the year 66 C.E. the armies of Rome came just as Jesus had warned and surrounded the city. When the Roman armies withdrew for a time, those who sought God's goodwill still had time to heed Jesus' warning to 'flee to the mountains.' This they did, and speedily. However, 70 C.E. saw the Roman general Titus come with his legions, this time to wreak a horrible desolation upon both people and city, slaughtering 1,100,000 Jews, and taking captive another 97,000 miserable slaves to be scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Thus just as God had used the military forces of the ungodly ruler Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 607 B.C.E. to punish the nation that had rejected him, so in 70 C.E. the military legions of Rome under General Titus served his purposes very well, as his destructive "day of vengeance" fell violently and painfully on the nation that chose to reject his "year of goodwill." Those wretched victims who had persecuted and perpetrated the deaths of Jesus and his faithful followers, and who had turned deaf ears to the warning by Jesus and his obedient disciples to flee for their lives from the imminent disaster were forced to feel the harsh effects of God's "day of vengeance," an experience they could not avoid.

14. (a) Did the Jewish nation choose to accept God's goodwill? (b) What were they forced to accept, and how?

[15] To that entire nation God had made his goodwill available through the announcement of his Son and his disciples, but only a few accepted it and demonstrated their faith in it by their obedience. Only a remnant sought to gain the peace of God's men of goodwill, and these became Jesus' disciples, publicly going on record as to their decision by being baptized as the followers of Jesus. Thus these "men of goodwill" escaped the destruction of Jerusalem and the enslavement of the miserable survivors because they heeded the warning and acted on the instructions given by Jesus.

LESSON FOR TODAY

[16] In all of this there is a strong lesson for everyone living on earth today. The very "critical times" that now engulf all nations and families of the earth place us unmistakably in that period of time known as the "last days," the time of the "conclusion of the system of things." (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Matt. 24:3) This limited Scriptural time period, although filled with increasing world woes and trouble for the world of mankind, is at the same time a most happy time for those who love God. For in the prophecy of Isaiah read by Jesus on that sabbath day there in Nazareth, he

15. How did accepting God's goodwill benefit the remnant of believers?

16, 17. (a) For whom does the circumstance of that Jewish nation serve as a lesson? (b) What are some beneficial features of the "year of goodwill"? (c) Why is there still time to seek God's goodwill?

described the spiritual blessings to be received by many prior to the "day of vengeance on the part of our God." These include 'telling good news to the meek ones, binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to those taken captive and the opening of the eyes even to the prisoners,' all to be accomplished along with the proclaiming of the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah.

17 This means we are living at the time when God's goodwill may still be had, when it is not yet too late before the "day of vengeance on the part of our God" closes in on those who have not sought his goodwill. That "day of vengeance" will see its reality in the coming great tribulation that culminates in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," the battle of "Armageddon," when God expresses his vengeance toward all those who have rejected his goodwill and lined themselves up against him, his kingdom, and his righteousness.—Isa. 61:1, 2; Rev. 16:14, 16.

18 The question therefore that faces us is: Will we be wise and accept the opportunity now open to us to seek the goodwill of God and allow him to favor us with life? Or, like those in Jerusalem in the first century who lacked faith, will we foolishly spurn the warning, and reject the instruction, thereby sealing our destiny in permanent death, the victims of God's final "day of vengeance"?

19 According to God's timetable as shown by the prophecies of the Bible and the events of this twentieth century, the year 1914 C.E. marked the beginning of the "time of the end" of this wicked system of things. This time has undeniably witnessed a steady worsening of human affairs since that time, punctuated by two major world wars, as well as dozens of smaller wars, some of which still continue, and others threaten to break out at any time. The increased selfishness, hatred, crime, immorality and godlessness of all kinds all point to the fact that the majority of mankind have not sought the goodwill of God, nor have they given him any cause to extend his goodwill in their behalf. Once again the prophecy of Jesus at Matthew twenty-four in which he provided a detailed description of the degradation of human relations in this day finds fulfillment, this time not merely in the land of Judea, but in the events that affect people of every nation of earth. He foretold that "nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom," along with food shortages, "earthquakes in one place after another," distress, and the persecution of God's faithful servants. "Many will be stumbled and will betray one another and will hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and mislead many; and because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matt. 24:7-13) No rational person can deny that these words are true in this generation, more than at any other time.

20 Truly this is a time when the goodwill of God is needed more than ever before. Happily, the "year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah" has opened up not merely to a limited community of fleshly Israelites, but to all the families of the inhabited earth. How so? Jesus explains a verse later in his prophecy for our day: "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:14) Jesus is not here with us to preach that good news on earth. In obedience to that command, however, the worldwide body of Jehovah's

18. What choice faces humans today?
19. Enumerate some of the evidence that proves Jesus' prophecy is once again undergoing fulfillment.
20. (a) To whom is God's "year of goodwill" now made available? (b) What announcement does it feature? (c) To whom especially is the Kingdom announcement "good news"?

Christian witnesses has been preaching "this good news of the kingdom" earth wide, since the birth of that Kingdom in the year 1914, and with increasing effectiveness. They have been faithfully announcing to all lovers of righteousness who desire perfect and peaceful government on earth that God's long-sought and prayed-for kingdom, with God's exalted Son, Christ Jesus, upon its heavenly throne, was empowered by God in 1914. This announcement is "good news" to those who are seeking God's goodwill, for it carries with it the prospect of gaining God's favor and goodwill to their everlasting blessing and benefit under that perfect government. It is "good news" to God's "men of goodwill," for it means that God's enthroned king will soon turn his attention decisively to the earth to execute the world-shaking changes necessary to permit the restoration of the earth to the delightful and peaceful conditions that God originally purposed.—Dan. 2:44; Zeph. 3:8; Ps. 37:10, 11.

[21] What a grand opportunity is now open to those who heed the warning and make the choice to seek God's goodwill in the remaining time left in the "year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah." Is it not wise to choose that which will benefit one most? Is it not the course of wisdom to seek future benefits from a source that is reliable and sure? Listen as Wisdom speaks to us out of the Proverbs of the Bible, saying: "For the one finding me will certainly find life, and gets goodwill from Jehovah. But the one missing me is doing violence to his soul; all those intensely hating me are the ones that do love death." (Prov. 8:35, 36) Is it not practical wisdom then to protect one's life? Is it not wisdom to prepare for and provide for one's future? Those who reject godly wisdom and choose the course of lawlessness are hating wisdom and are the ones that "do love death."

21. What course does wisdom direct us to take? Why?

[22] The choice that faces us today is reminiscent of a choice that was placed before the wandering children of Israel on the wilderness plain of Moab just before they were to cross over the Jordan River into the land promised to their forefather Abraham. On that occasion Moses addressed the congregated throngs and offered this warning: "I do take the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you today, that I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the malediction; and you must choose life in order that you may keep alive, you and your offspring, by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him."—Deut. 30:19, 20.

[23] So likewise, we today have a choice. If we desire life, we will want to listen to Jehovah's voice and take the steps that will guarantee his favor. If we desire what is good, we will do something toward gaining God's goodwill, as Proverbs 11:27 admonishes: "He that is looking for good, will keep seeking goodwill; but as for the one searching for bad, it will come upon him." Happily we are still in the "year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah." There is still opportunity for us to seek and gain his everlasting favor and goodwill. Wisdom dictates that we must neither wait nor delay. Now is the time to make our decision, for the opportunity to seek the goodwill of God will not always be with us. So act now and choose life. Seek the goodwill of God and enjoy forever on earth God's "peace among men of goodwill."

22, 23. (a) What ancient example illustrates the choice placed before those who would find favor with God? (b) Why is it important not to delay in seeking the goodwill of God?

JOINING The "GREAT CROWD" of "MEN OF GOODWILL"

CHRIST JESUS was God's greatest 'man of goodwill.' As the only-begotten Son of God sent to the earth as a man, Jesus enjoyed his Father's goodwill more than any other human that ever lived. It was out of God's love for the many of sinful and dying humanity who incline toward righteousness that God gave his most favored Son as a ransom. God foreknew that not all of Adam's offspring would share the disregard of their first father for obedience and righteousness, but some would cultivate a love for godliness and truth and seek to regain His favor. It was these for whom the ransom was provided. This sacrifice of His most trusted and beloved companion was an act far too costly, too precious, to be squandered and wasted on those who neither deserve nor appreciate it. (Rom. 5:15, 18; 1 John 4:9, 10; Matt. 20:28) Jesus' presence on earth nineteen hundred years ago was proof of God's goodwill, for it guaranteed that God would never forget, nor fail to fulfill his announced covenant for bringing blessings to deserving ones of all families of earth. (Gen. 22:17, 18) Prophetically, God expressed that promise of his goodwill toward his faithful Son long before his coming to earth, saying: "In a time of goodwill I have answered you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you; and I kept safeguarding you that I might give you as a covenant for the people, to rehabilitate the land, to bring about the repossessing of the desolated hereditary possessions, to say to the prisoners, 'Come out!' to those who are in the darkness, 'Reveal yourselves!' "—Isa. 49:8, 9.

[2] Centuries later the apostle Paul drew on this same prophecy to support his encouragement of first-century Christians who were seeking the goodwill of God. Paul wrote: "Working together with him, we also entreat you not to accept the undeserved kindness of God and miss its purpose. For he says: 'In an acceptable time I heard you, and in a day of salvation I helped you.' Look! Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:1, 2) What folly to misuse the opportunity, to "miss its purpose" when we are nearing the end of the "especially acceptable time," the "day of salvation," and the end of the "year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah"!

[3] Well aware of our imperfect and sinful condition and of our inherited enmity with him, he invites us to seek a reconciliation to friendship with him, if we would gain his favor and goodwill while it may still be found. Through faithful witnesses on earth now who have already accepted the privilege of worshiping him as their God, and who have already become his "men of goodwill," God makes his entreaty, his invitation, known to still others who desire righteousness and truth. Paul speaks of the privilege of representing God by bearing this message as the

1. (a) Why has there been goodwill shown toward the descendants of Adam? (b) How did Jehovah prophetically express his desire to bring goodwill through his Son?
2. When does this prophecy find fulfillment, as shown by Paul?
3. What special ministry has God authorized? Through whom?

"ministry of the reconciliation": "All things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of the reconciliation, namely, that God was by means of Christ reconciling a world to himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and he committed the word of the reconciliation to us. We are therefore ambassadors substituting for Christ, as though God were making entreaty through us. As substitutes for Christ we beg: 'Become reconciled to God.'"—2 Cor. 5:18-20.

4 In Paul's day ambassadors were sent to nations at war or threatening war to try to arrange peaceful relations between the troubled nations and thus avert bloodshed. (Luke 14:31, 32) All of humankind is at enmity with God due to inherited sin and imperfection from Adam. God has already taken the steps to make possible the removing of that enmity, and he lovingly and mercifully sends out his "ambassadors" to show the way to "become reconciled to God" and be restored to his favor and goodwill. Will you accept the invitation brought to you by God's "ambassadors substituting for Christ," and put yourself in line for everlasting life through the provision that God has lovingly made through his beloved Son?

5 Thousands every month are taking advantage of the time left in the "year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah." They recognize the hopeless plight of the present system of things, and they are choosing the course of practical wisdom. They are turning their attention to God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, there to learn that God has wonderful blessings in store for his "men of goodwill." They are an ever-growing "great crowd" who are accepting the invitation from God through his servants to "become reconciled to God."

4, 5. (a) Why does God send out his "ambassadors" in the earth? (b) Is the "ministry of the reconciliation" finding success?

6 The existence of this "great crowd," however, is no surprise to those familiar with God's Word, for they were long ago seen in a prophetic vision of our day given to the faithful apostle John on the island of Patmos and written down in the book of Revelation. He described them this way: "After these things I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" (Rev. 7:9, 10) This "great crowd," who are obviously "men of goodwill," are not divided by racial and national barriers, nor is there any hatred or inequality among them because of skin color or language differences. They come from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, and they stand unitedly, shoulder to shoulder, proclaiming their praise and their indebtedness to God and to the Lamb.

7 When do these put in their appearance? John records the answer: "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation." Thus, their favorable standing with God has won for them his protection from the wrathful "day of vengeance on the part of our God," for the "great tribulation" from which they come out could be nothing other than the execution of God's judgment against this wicked system of things. The fact that they are survivors of the "great tribulation" indicates that they must have been gathered together during the "year of goodwill," before the "day of vengeance" of God broke in all its fury in the great

6. How was the growing crowd of believers foretold, and what characteristic marks their worship of God? 7. When does the "great crowd" make its appearance according to the prophecy?

tribulation that culminates in the battle of Armageddon.—Rev. 7:14; Matt. 24:3, 21, 22.

[8] Have these favored ones sought reconciliation with God by means of his provision of life through Christ Jesus? John replies: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple." (Rev. 7:14, 15) Thus they recognize their own sinful and unclean condition, and see the need to take the initiative, to take positive steps to prove themselves qualified to receive God's favor and become his "men of goodwill." That is why they are described as having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This means they have repented of their former course of life and accepted in faith the cleansing power of Jesus' sin-atoning sacrifice.

[9] It also indicates that they have made big changes in their lives, going on record that they have without reservation chosen to pursue the way of life that God approves. Their willingness to be clean and pure in God's sight shows that they have realized that God hates wickedness and uncleanness, and he approves righteousness, integrity and truth. Fittingly they are seen before the throne in white robes, clean and unspotted from the world. Thus they have made an unconditional dedication of themselves to God. Their worship is to God exclusively, for it is before his throne that they have positioned themselves, and before no other. This dedication is not a sudden emotional whim or isolated act of devotion. Theirs is an irrevocable lifelong dedication, one that they have made willingly and freely and that without coercion. They have taken the initiative. The choice was theirs. They have recognized from their study and research into the Word of God that His way is the way of wisdom and his rewards and blessings are permanent and sure. To gain his goodwill they must put forth the effort and obediently take the steps that please him.—Acts 3:19; Heb. 9:22; 1 John 1:9.

[10] As true Christians and followers of Christ they happily and eagerly join in actively worshiping God alongside the remnant of the "little flock" of spiritual Israelites, the 144,000 "sealed ones" of God mentioned earlier in the seventh chapter of Revelation. (Luke 12:32; Rev. 7:4; 14:1-5) Under the supervision of the anointed remnant of spirit-begotten ones, this "great crowd" of faithful disciples have accepted the privilege of sharing in the work that God has assigned for this day, namely, the preaching of "this good news of the kingdom." Their zealous efforts have assisted greatly in getting the message into "all the inhabited earth for a witness" in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy. God has allowed them to share in the "ministry of the reconciliation," along with the remnant who act as "ambassadors substituting for Christ." Truly they have been "rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple."—Matt. 24:14; 2 Cor. 5:20.

[11] Like Jesus and his "little flock," they do not hide or conceal their decision to worship God, nor are they ashamed to be known as worshipers of Jehovah, his faithful witnesses. For John sees them shouting aloud and publicly confessing their faith in God and in the Lamb before all men. The fact that they have publicly stated and affirmed their position before

8. What steps do these take to indicate their faith in God's promises?
9. What have the "great crowd" done with their lives to gain goodwill from God, and on what basis have they made this choice?
10. With whom have the "great crowd" eagerly joined, and what benefit has this served?
11. The public confession of their faith indicates what about these "men of goodwill"?

God further attests to the fact that they are unreservedly dedicated to God. They have demonstrated their complete trust and confidence in Jehovah and in his promises for life. They know that Jehovah is the only true God, that he is right, and that his cause will be victorious.

12 God does not overlook their humble acceptance of his provision of life. He does not miss their faithful and zealous acts of righteousness. But his warm smile of approval and goodwill beams down upon them and he rewards them with blessings that even their fondest dreams could not imagine. John continues: "And the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them. They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat down upon them nor any scorching heat, because the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—Rev. 7:15-17.

13 Are you among that "great crowd" that John the apostle of Jesus has just described for us? Do you desire this favored standing as a true worshiper of God? Are you willing obediently to take the steps that are required for you to gain God's favor and goodwill and thus place yourself in line for salvation and life at the hands of Jehovah? If so, then you will see the need to make your personal dedication to Jehovah and then obediently to submit to the Christian act of water baptism in public affirmation of that dedication.

14 Outward piety and the repeating of traditional religious prayers and phrases will not gain the approval of God. Even the possession of such admirable qualities as zeal and sincerity are not themselves sufficient to gain God's goodwill. In the days of the apostle Paul, there were doubtless many devout and sincere persons among those of his own nation, yet he showed a great concern for them because of what they lacked: "Brothers, the goodwill of my heart and my supplication to God for them are, indeed, for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge; for, because of not knowing the righteousness of God but seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10:1-3) To become one of God's "men of goodwill," it is vital to acquire and exercise true faith based on accurate knowledge and humbly to subject oneself to the righteousness of God. This requires first of all the reading and study of the Bible, which provides the instruction and guidance that lead to life. —John 17:3; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

15 From this study you may find that you must make some adjustments in your viewpoint. You may even have to alter your way of life. But these are changes well worth making when your life is at stake. The apostle Paul counsels: "And quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."—Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24.

16 As you take in knowledge from God's Word and reason on these truths and principles, you will recognize the folly and hopelessness of human reasoning without God. As you contemplate God's will and purposes for the earth and for humankind who were created on it to enjoy its

12. How is God's goodwill toward the "great crowd" demonstrated in a tangible way?
13. To become part of the "great crowd" of "men of goodwill," what is required of each one?
14. (a) According to Romans 10:1-3, are zeal and sincerity sufficient to gain God's goodwill? (b) What is the primary requirement?
15. According to Romans 12:2, what changes are necessary?
16. (a) What mental realization and motive precede dedication? (b) How does one make public affirmation of one's dedication?

blessings and delights, you will begin to see your place in God's arrangement of things. For there are wonderful opportunities and privileges open to those who wisely choose to do the will of God and become his "men of goodwill." Thus you demonstrate your love of God and your appreciation of his provision of life in a righteous new order. Your desire to worship God exclusively and to be a recipient of his blessings is manifest when you make your dedication to God and affirm it publicly by your water baptism.

17 No greater example of this righteous pattern approved by God could there be than that of Jesus himself. When he was thirty years of age and the time came for him to begin his earthly ministry, the Bible records how he presented himself at the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. By this humble and willing act, he presented himself to his Heavenly Father for the accomplishing of His will on earth. Immediately following Jesus' immersion or baptism in the waters of the Jordan, God expressed his approval and delight of the willing obedience of his beloved Son, as Matthew wrote: "After being baptized Jesus immediately came up from the water; and, look! the heavens were opened up, and he saw descending like a dove God's spirit coming upon him. Look! Also, there was a voice from the heavens that said: 'This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.' "—Matt. 3:13-17.

18 True Christians are happy to follow this example which brought approval from God, for Jesus left us a 'model for us to follow his steps closely.' (1 Pet. 2:21) In the first century of Christianity, the Greek Scriptures provide a record of literally thousands who were baptized in symbol of their decision to become disciples of Christ and worship God in spirit and in truth. All this was in obedience to the last command given by Jesus to his faithful followers: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20) That command has not been changed. If we truly desire to become God's "men of goodwill" today, we must humbly and obediently submit to being baptized in recognition of our unreserved personal dedication to God, for this is pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

19 This "ministry of the reconciliation" still continues unabated throughout the earth by the modern "ambassadors substituting for Christ." In obedience to Jesus' command, Jehovah's Christian witnesses have faithfully and zealously been performing the work assigned to them, 'making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them.' During 1971 alone, 149,808 baptized disciples were added to the growing "great crowd" of "men of goodwill." These 149,808 have sought God's goodwill and have found it. They have joined with one million four hundred and forty thousand other faithful "men of goodwill" earth wide in unitedly worshiping God and showing others the way to God's goodwill. By faithfully living up to their dedication, they will forever enjoy the good pleasure and favor of God as his "men of goodwill."

20 Their dedication and baptism is not the conclusion or end of their relationship with God. It is only the beginning. They are devoted to performing obediently God's divine will for this day, which is to preach

17. What lesson do we learn from Jesus' example of baptism?
18. According to Jesus' command at Matthew 28:19, 20, why must every believer submit to the Christian act of baptism?
19. How has the "ministry of the reconciliation" resulted in blessing and benefit to many today?
20. (a) How do God's "men of goodwill" demonstrate their obedience to God? (b) What prospect for others exists so long as God's "year of goodwill" remains?

this "good news" that God's kingdom has been established in the heavens with his appointed King, Christ Jesus, on the throne, and this "in all the inhabited earth for a witness." The fact that they come from every race and nationality creates no division or problem for them. It is rather a blessing for through them the "ministry of the reconciliation" reaches all nations regardless of language or race or color. They will continue faithfully to perform this earth-wide service to God 'day and night' as long as the "year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah" allows. As their preaching continues and spreads out in the earth, more and more persons of all nations will hear the "good news" and turn around and seek the goodwill of God, and he will not reject them. They too will join with God's growing crowd of "men of goodwill," dedicating themselves to God and to his worship, and symbolizing this dedication through a water baptism in obedience to the divine will. They accept God's appointed king and thus bring pleasure to his heart, as the proverb declares: "The pleasure of a king is in the servant who is acting with insight." "The lips of righteousness are a pleasure to a grand king; and the speaker of upright things he loves."—Prov. 14:35; 16:13.

[21] Because of their spiritual insight and understanding these "men of goodwill" have learned and spoken upright things. Alongside the remnant of anointed disciples of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, they have rendered to God "sacred service day and night in his temple." By remaining loyal and spiritually clean they will ever retain the goodwill of God, receiving spiritual sustenance and strength from God, and protection from the scorching heat of his anger when it is expressed on that "day of vengeance on the part of our God." Then, "the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes." Such is the joyful prospect for those who today, while there is yet time, join the "great crowd" of God's "men of goodwill."

21. Describe the hope that awaits those who faithfully remain God's "men of goodwill."

DOES YOUR MINISTER QUALIFY?

● Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, instructed the disciple Titus to appoint Christian overseers in various cities. In setting out the qualifications to be met by these ministers, Paul emphasized various aspects of exemplary personal conduct as well as the ability to teach God's Word.—Titus 1:5-9.

If you attend one of the churches of Christendom, does your clergyman serve because he meets these qualifications? Or might the situation be more like what recently developed at the First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. Needing a Senior Minister, the congregation chose a Pastoral Succession Committee to locate and obtain the personal records of those who might serve as the church's minister. Were they going to select a man on the basis of the qualifications set out in the Bible? It hardly seems so. In a letter to the members of the church this committee said that they would: "Evaluate those records on the basis of these general guidelines: a person between 35 and 50 years of age who possesses strong pulpit ability, orientation to the fine arts, orientation to the government and academic community, leadership ability and sensitivity to persons and groups so that reconciliation may be accomplished when needed."

You can imagine the consequent lack of spirituality in a church when a minister is selected with emphasis on "orientation to the fine arts" and "orientation to the government and academic community" instead of on the qualifications in God's inspired Word.

FINE CONDUCT Attracts

THE preaching and teaching activity of Jehovah's Christian witnesses does not escape public notice. And their fine daily conduct gives real force to their words. Often people are motivated thereby to listen to them. This is well illustrated by what Jehovah's witnesses have experienced in various lands.

● In a gold-mining town of Ghana where crime and violent labor disputes have kept the police busy, a clergyman approached one of Jehovah's witnesses and asked for a Bible study. Explaining the reason for his request, he said: "I was called to the police station the other day to bail out two members of my church who had fought each other and had been arrested. I asked the police officer to strike off the case so that I might settle it in church. He asked me, 'Do you know those people who go from house to house preaching the Bible, Jehovah's witnesses?' I said, 'I do,' and he told me, 'You will never see them fight or do anything that would require the police to bring them to the station. Why don't you ask your members to study the Bible with them and follow God's Word as they do?'"

This clergyman is making good progress in his study of the Scriptures with Jehovah's witnesses and is attending their meetings. He has also followed the policeman's advice and encouraged members of his church to study with the Witnesses. Some of them are showing real interest.

● One of Jehovah's witnesses in Martinique who works in a dockyard tells his experience: 'During mealtimes it is usual for workers to tell all kinds of jokes. Often they are obscene. When this happens I go away. One of my workmates noticed this and asked, "You are not a Catholic, are you?" I told him I was one of Jehovah's witnesses and explained why I do not share in such conversation. Then I spoke to him about God's new order, where wickedness, corruption and the like will be no more. I also explained how those who maintain good Christian conduct will enjoy peace and happiness upon the earth. This impressed my workmate. He wanted to know how I had gotten such knowledge and expressed his desire to have a home Bible study. Today both he and his wife are Jehovah's witnesses.'

● At a school in Swaziland an eleven-year-old Witness found a purse containing 70 cents. She took it to the teachers to find the owner. This greatly surprised the teachers. They did find the owner and returned the purse to her. Schoolmates ridiculed the young Witness for having done this, but her honesty brought good results. The parents of the girl who had lost the purse were not favorably disposed toward Jehovah's witnesses. But they wanted to know the religious background of the girl that had shown such honesty. When told that she was one of Jehovah's witnesses, they said to their daughter, 'Those are the kind of children you should have as companions.' They requested that the young Witness conduct a Bible study with their daughter. Since then the father of the eleven-year-old Witness has started a Bible study also with the parents.

● In Turkey a young Witness attending evening school had to fill out an application for a student identification card in order to benefit from reduced transportation fares. One question on the application pertained to outside employment. Although nearly all students did some work in order to attend that school, they were advised to write "No." However, the Witness wrote "Yes." This created quite a stir among the other students. They knew that he was a Witness and they feared being exposed as liars. So they put pressure upon him to change his answer. The Witness was even asked to appear before the director of the school, who also requested that he alter the answer in order to be in line with all the other students. The Witness firmly refused, explaining that lying was against his beliefs. His answer was finally accepted. As a result he did not receive a student identification card. However, a fellow student, impressed by his honesty, agreed to study the Bible with him. This student has since become a baptized Witness.

● In the United Arab Republic a group of girls approached two fleshly sisters at school. One of the group spoke up: 'We just wanted to commend you for your good conduct. During

the two years we have known you we have never known you to have any problems or to be anything but kind and loving.' Another girl observed: 'And what is more unusual is that you are two sisters and yet you seem to have real love for each other. We have never seen you quarrel.' The sisters replied: 'What you are commending us for is really due to our studying the Bible. The principles we learn from our study we try to apply in our daily lives. The Bible contains much counsel about kindness, love and good conduct.' One of the sisters then took out her Bible, which she always carries with her, and read to the girls about the fruitage of the spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) One girl who was not so favorably disposed toward the sisters said: 'Do you know that these two girls whom you are praising so much do not even go to church?' At that one of the sisters quickly replied: 'You go to church, don't you? Why, then, are you not the one praised for good conduct?' When the discussion was finished, the sisters had arranged to conduct Bible studies with a number of the girls. Now ten of them are having Bible studies.

● A prominent family in Seoul, Korea, had been pillars in one of the leading Protestant churches of the city. The family was very close. Though living in various parts of the city, they kept in touch with one another. For many years all of them had turned Jehovah's witnesses away when they called. Their pastors had warned them never to listen to the "heresies" of the Witnesses. Then one of the sisters in the family rented a room to a Witness. The commendable Christian conduct of the Witness did not go unnoticed. It opened the eyes of this woman, moving her to conclude that Jehovah's witnesses are not heretics but people who truly practice Christianity.

Eventually she agreed to have a Bible study. She immediately began talking to other members of her family and requested that Witnesses call on them. According to the most recent information, five members of the family are now baptized. Nine of them are sharing with Jehovah's witnesses in their preaching work. Some of them are studying the Bible with still other members of the family. All this was brought about by the silent testimony of one person's commendable conduct.

Jehovah's witnesses everywhere seek to live in harmony with Bible principles—not to impress others, but because they recognize this to be the only right thing to do. It is an expression of their love for Jehovah God. As the apostle John wrote: "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments." —1 John 5:3.

● Is it proper for a married woman to leave her husband if they cannot get along well? Why did the wife of the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, C. T. Russell, leave him?—U.S.A.

The Bible does not encourage divorce or separation simply because a husband and his wife are not getting along well. Under inspiration the apostle Paul wrote: "To the married people I give instructions, yet not I but the Lord, that a wife should not depart from her husband; but if she should actually depart, let her remain unmarried or else make up again with her husband; and a husband should not leave his wife."—1 Cor. 7:10, 11.

So rather than resort to separation when difficulties arise in the marriage, a Christian woman ought to do everything that she can to work toward a better, more loving relationship with her husband. Appreciating marriage as God's institution and gift to mankind, she should want to make her marriage work out to the praise and honor of the Giver, Jehovah God. She should be careful never to give her husband any reason to want to leave, for the unbeliever should be able to see that true Christianity is responsible for making his marriage mate a more loving, kind, considerate and understanding wife. This would be in harmony with the counsel given by the apostle Peter: "In like manner, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect."—1 Pet. 3:1, 2.

At times, however, despite the fine conduct of his Christian wife, an unbeliever insists on leaving her. In that case, should the believing wife strive to prevent her husband from departing? Or should a Christian husband hinder an unbelieving wife from leaving him? No. The Bible tells us: "If the unbelieving one proceeds to depart, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace."—1 Cor. 7:15.

At times it may happen that a wife who claims to be a Christian leaves her believing husband. The husband may keenly regret the separation and may rightly hope for a reconciliation. But what if the wife's departure is over the issue of husbandly headship or a disagreement over some other Biblical principle?

In that case the Christian husband recognizes that he cannot compromise his position as family head or make any concession that would be contrary to the Scriptures in order to bring about a reconciliation. A Christian husband is under divine command to reflect God's glory. For him to abandon his position of headship would mean shaming the head of the Christian congregation, Jesus Christ, and dishonoring Jehovah God.—Compare 1 Corinthians 11:3-7.

C. T. Russell appreciated his Scriptural position as husband, as is evident from his handling of matters in connection with his wife. In a letter to a personal friend in England, dated December 27, 1899, he explained why his wife had departed and also expressed his feelings about it, saying:

"Our dear Sister Russell became afflicted with the same malady which has smitten others —notably those mentioned in the pamphlet, 'A Conspiracy Exposed.' Their difficulty was the same as that of the great Adversary in the beginning—ambition, and a desire to subvert matters in order to gratify that ambition.

"It is over twenty years since we were married, and for thirteen of those years Sister Russell was all that could be asked of a loving, noble, true helpmate, and at the time of the conspiracy she was still in this attitude to such an extent that she voluntarily made a trip through several states on the track of S. D. Rogers, correcting his slanderous statements. But the ambitious spirit which already had begun to work was fanned quite to a flame by the very warm reception which was accorded to our dear sister on the occasion above mentioned. She seemed to forget that she was received, not merely for herself, but also as a representative of the Lord's work, and as the representative of her husband.

"She returned from that trip very self-conscious, and in that respect very different from what she had been previously—especially for the first ten years of our married life. This spirit seemed to grow stronger instead of less, until about four years ago, when she began to 'strike' for the gratification of her ambition. You will remember that it is nearly four years since at her request her name was dropped, as associate editor, and thereafter attached to any articles which she might write in the WATCH TOWER. The next move was to insist upon more space, and upon liberty to write what she pleased, which should not have any correction or criticism. This lasted awhile, until I told her, kindly but plainly, that I could not think it to be the Lord's will to encourage her to take any part in the work so long as she manifested so ambitious a spirit. From that date nothing was published from her pen.

"Her next move was to seek to compel me to give her space, etc., or what she termed her proper liberties to use her talents. To this end she called two brethren to meet me, after the manner of Matt. 18:15. She was wholly disappointed in the results, for the brethren told her plainly that to their understanding the question she raised was entirely outside their jurisdiction, or that of any others; that so far as her judgment would guide them the Lord had not erred in putting matters into the hands of Brother Russell, and if he at any time saw fit to change the arrangements he was abundantly able to do so, and that they could only advise her to the contrary of her wishes, much as they regretted this disappointment of her exaltation.

"The next step of Sister Russell and her (natural) sisters was to organize a women's crusade against me in the Allegheny congregation. The result was a considerable stirring up of slander and misrepresentation, for of course it would not serve their purposes to tell the plain unvarnished truth, that Sister Russell was ambitious, etc. You can readily understand my position; as a man I would be at a disadvantage, and the slanders proceeded without my being able to do anything to counteract them, and as you well know my desire was not to say a word against the companion of

my choice, whom I dearly loved, and whom I still dearly love.

"Briefly, then, this female conspiracy came to a head, and resulted in a little sifting, the majority, under the Lord's providence, being recovered from the snare, and only about six or eight of our company of two hundred, injured by it. Sister Russell's next move was to give color to the slanders that had been started, by leaving me—she hoping that I would go after her and make any concession to have her back. But in this she was mistaken, and when she desired to come back I totally refused, except upon a promise that she should make reasonable acknowledgement of the wrong course she had been pursuing for a year, and give some assurance of being a friend and not an enemy. I esteemed that I had been delivered of the Lord, and that to put myself again into her power without reasonable guarantees would be wrong on my part. This is two years ago now. She is living in the city with her mother and sisters, and holds a little religious meeting, which her coterie of friends attend. I see her frequently, treat her kindly, and never have anything but the very best of wishes respecting her present and eternal welfare."

In summing up the matter respecting his wife, C. T. Russell wrote: "Sister Russell became afflicted with the spirit of ambition, as others have been, and in the Lord's providence it seemed best three years ago now that she should not be further identified with the publications [of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society], until such time as she might show a thorough change of heart in this matter."

Manifestly C. T. Russell acted rightly in doing what he could to be kind and considerate to his wife. But Scripturally he could not abandon his position as head to bring about a reconciliation.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

July 23: Seeking the Goodwill of God Now. Page 368. Songs to Be Used: 46, 74.

July 30: Joining the "Great Crowd" of "Men of Goodwill." Page 375. Songs to Be Used: 90, 81.