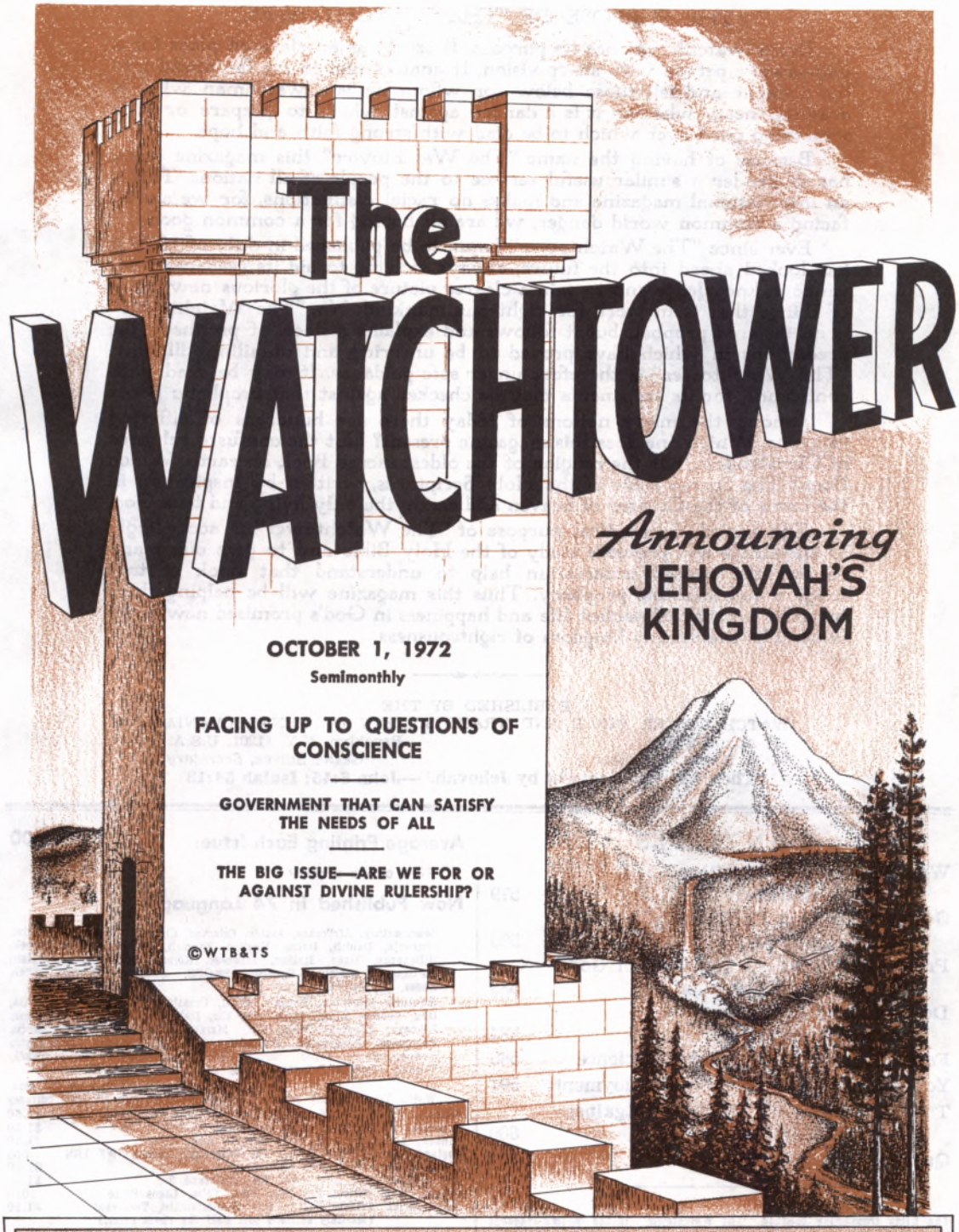

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

OCTOBER 1, 1972
Semimonthly

FACING UP TO QUESTIONS OF CONSCIENCE

GOVERNMENT THAT CAN SATISFY THE NEEDS OF ALL

THE BIG ISSUE—ARE WE FOR OR AGAINST DIVINE RULERSHIP?

©WTB&TS

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
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Will THE NEEDS OF THE POOR EVER BE SATISFIED?

POVERTY is not new to the world. Nearly 3,500 years ago the Israelites were told: "Someone poor will never cease to be in the midst of the land." (Deut. 15:11) Centuries later, when accepting an act of generosity, Jesus Christ acknowledged the same hard fact, saying: "You always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me."—Matt. 26:11.

Sad it is that in this present imperfect system of things millions of men, women and children continue to live in poverty. Perhaps you yourself are among those millions.

Do you find that holding a steady job is a problem? Do you worry about how you are going to get enough food for your family? Does it trouble you that a lack of life's necessities is robbing you and your family of good health? Do you feel that you are trapped in your present housing situation and have no means to get away from depressing surroundings? Have you ever asked yourself, Why must things be this way? Will the needs of the poor ever be satisfied?

Even if you do not number yourself among the poor of the earth's inhabitants, you surely know poor people. Even in prosperous nations poverty exists. Of the United States of America, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey observed, in his book *War on Poverty*, that 'one out of every five Americans lives in poverty, shame, misery, and degradation.' Do you feel compassion for these?

Throughout the earth many poor people entertain hopes that somehow human governments will be able to help them. But they readily admit that they have been disappointed all too often.

Consider, for example, what happened in Colombia, South America. Back in 1962 when the late Guillermo León Valencia ran for the presidency, he often quoted from a line of his father's poems: "A full cup for everyone." He promised that his would be "the government of the poor." But did it become such? His austere economic measures hurt the very ones he claimed to favor. From late in 1962 to early in 1964 the cost of living increased by 50 percent! Soon the Valencia government came to be referred to by the man in the street as "the government of the poor rich."

Because of repeated disappointments, many people turn to Communism and

Marxism in the hope that their situation might be improved. However, like lands controlled by other forms of human government, Communist countries have not been able to solve many of life's big problems. Is it not true that they are plagued by unsettled political conditions, divisive nationalistic factions and family and moral breakdown, including the problem of alcoholism? Also, their subjects have lost a considerable degree of freedom.

The undeniable truth is that no human government has ever been able to provide complete relief for the afflicted inhabitants of the earth. Does this mean that the lot of poor people is hopeless? that poverty will never cease? Not at all. There is One higher than man who is both willing and able to remove poverty. This One is the Creator of man, Jehovah God. Of him, the Bible says: "You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing."—Ps. 145:16.

But how will Jehovah God satisfy the needs of the poor? For the answer to this question, we invite you to read the following article.

GOVERNMENT THAT Can Satisfy the Needs of All

BY REASON of his Creatorship, Jehovah God is the rightful Sovereign of the universe. Even before human governments existed, yes, even before humans existed, he held that position. He has never given it up. However, due to the insurrection of our first parents, Adam and Eve, Jehovah God purposed to express his rulership over heaven and earth through a subsidiary government. By means of this government he will satisfy the needs of all. The governmental body itself is to be composed of persons taken from among earth's inhabitants.

The Bible book of Daniel describes Jehovah's deputy ruler as "someone like a son of man." (Dan. 7:13) He appears in God's heavenly courts and is given "rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him." (Dan. 7:14) This "son of man" is later identified in the Holy Scriptures as Jesus Christ. (Matt. 12:40) The book of Daniel also speaks of the associate rulers of the "son of man" as "holy ones of the Supreme One." (Dan. 7:27) In the last book of the Bible the number associated with Jesus Christ in rulership is shown to be 144,000.—Rev. 14:1-3.

Consider, now, the solid hope such a government offers to the world's needy ones.

A KING WHO CARES ABOUT THE POOR

We can trust God's deputy ruler, Jesus Christ, fully, as his most outstanding quality is that of unselfish, self-sacrificing love. In proof of this he left his home in the heavens, where he had everything. He "took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men." Then he let himself be "brought just like a sheep to the slaughtering," that by his death he might make possible everlasting life for those exer-

cising faith in him.—Phil. 2:6-8; Isa. 53:7.

Jesus Christ can deal sympathetically with the afflicted and needy, for he knows what it means to be poor. Regarding his own human circumstances, he once remarked: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (Matt. 8:20) Moreover, Jesus' heart went out to distressed people of all kinds. "He felt pity for them," and was ever willing to help them. (Matt. 14:14) On one occasion a leper said to him: "Lord, if you just want to, you can make me clean." Jesus lovingly responded: "I want to. Be made clean." (Matt. 8:2, 3) Would you not like someone so compassionate as your king? Does not Jesus' past record give you confidence that the prophetic words respecting his rule will be fulfilled, "He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one"? —Ps. 72:13.

Though now occupying an exalted position in the heavens, Jesus Christ is just as loving, compassionate and concerned about humans as he was when on earth. He is just as impartial, 'loving righteousness and hating lawlessness.' (Heb. 1:9) God's Word tells us: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8) Surely one who was willing to sacrifice his most precious possession —his life—to fill man's need for deliverance from sin and death deserves our trust and confidence!

A LOOK AT THE KING'S ASSOCIATE RULERS

Those selected to be associate rulers with God's Son must manifest the same kind of love, being willing to surrender their life in behalf of others. (John 15: 12, 13) Like Jesus Christ, they must be lovers of right and haters of bad. Concerning them the Bible says: "No falsehood was found in their mouths; they are without blemish." (Rev. 14:5) So their subjects will be given no double-tongued, hypocritical promises.

In all respects Jesus Christ set the perfect standard for those who would rule with him. Showing how they must humbly care for and lovingly serve the needs of his subjects on earth, he told them: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. This is not the way among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister." (Matt. 20:25-28) This assures us that their rule will have none of the undesirable qualities of imperfect human governments.

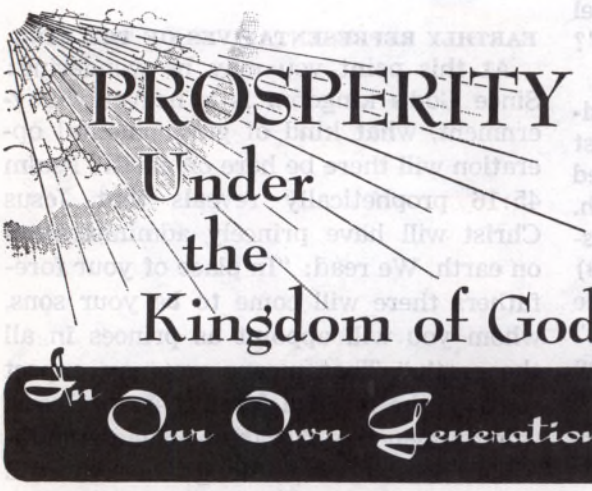
EARTHLY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KING

At this point you may be wondering: Since God's kingdom is a heavenly government, what kind of governmental operation will there be here on earth? Psalm 45:16 prophetically reveals that Jesus Christ will have princely administrators on earth. We read: "In place of your forefathers there will come to be your sons, whom you will appoint as princes in all the earth." That means we may expect some of the faithful forefathers of Jesus, worthy men like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to be numbered among those who will occupy those princely positions. Additionally, some who will be princely representatives are even now serving in positions of responsibility in the true Christian congregation. Such men are neither 'lovers of money' nor "greedy of dishonest gain." (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7) As spiritual shepherds they are "examples to the flock" and show loving concern for all within the congregation. (1 Pet. 5:2, 3) Their faithfulness now may mean being used in an

even grander way in the earthly administration of God's kingdom.

The subjects of God's kingdom can be sure that their needs will be satisfied. Not only will Jehovah's kingdom by Christ end poverty and hunger, but it will also bring good health and everlasting life to its devoted subjects. What Jehovah God will do by means of his kingdom is beautifully portrayed at Isaiah 25:6-8: "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples . . . a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes filled with marrow, of wine kept on the dregs, filtered. . . . He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces." Would not these grand conditions satisfy your needs?

It is indeed encouraging to know that Jesus Christ, his heavenly associate rulers, as well as his princely representatives on earth, will never abuse their authority. Jehovah God, who can discern every motivation and inclination of the heart, knows this for a fact. We, therefore, have no reason to doubt that our needs will be cared for in a loving and compassionate way. So would not life under the administration of God's kingdom be truly desirable? But when will all *this come* about?



PROSPERITY Under the Kingdom of God

In Our Own Generation

THE world situation today is so critical that many informed persons doubt whether life will continue much longer. Said a special report to the Washington *Post:* "Influential men have sensed an impending danger unlike any in human experience. Futurologists call it the crisis of crises, the culmination of man's timeless errors."

Never has man been so bent on ruining the earth, polluting the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. Never have governments been confronted with such a mountain of national and international problems that they could not resolve. And never have those opposing God's sovereignty made themselves so manifest. Millions deny that God exists. Even among those acknowledging his existence there are many who claim that he has no interest in mankind. So there is a great need for Jehovah God to show that he is King over all the earth.

The cheering news is that he will do so in our generation. His kingdom by Christ will soon smash to pieces all governments that stand in opposition to it and will itself administer man's affairs without a rival. (Dan. 2:44) True prosperity will begin, and poverty, suffering and oppression will end. Why can we be so sure of this?

First of all, Bible chronology shows that since the autumn of 1914 C.E. we have been living in the "last days" of this sys-

tem of things. Jesus Christ indicated that these "last days" would not extend beyond the life-span of the generation seeing their start. (Matt. 24:34) Hence, at least some people who witnessed the horrors of World War I will see the complete end of government by imperfect men and the bringing in of prosperity under the kingdom of God.

In verification of Bible chronology, we see the very conditions foretold in the Holy Scriptures as marking the "last days." Note, for example, what 2 Timothy 3:1-5 tells us: "Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." Have you not seen these very conditions? Is it not true that they are in evidence among those professing to serve God, that is, members of Christendom's churches?

The fact that the "last days" will terminate in the complete destruction of everyone and everything standing in opposition to God's kingdom gives reason for serious thought. A person should ask himself, Am I in a fit position to be preserved as one of the loyal supporters of God's kingdom?

For example, have you informed yourself as to God's moral standards, which are set out in the Bible, and are you living in harmony with them? (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Also, are you making the best of your opportunities? Are you doing your best in keeping your home neat and clean? Are you an industrious worker, striving to do what you can do to the extent of your abilities? Do you make wise use of your strength and capabilities, not wasting resources and energies on filthy habits?

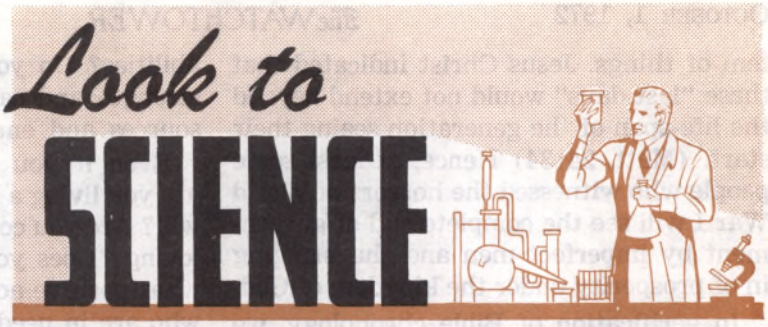
Even if you are not among the poor, are you living a life in harmony with God's will? Are you compassionate, generous and loving? Does your heart stir you to take what positive action you can to help those who are in need through no fault of their own? Are you grieved about the terrible oppressions that millions have to endure?

These things are important, for Jehovah God does not want as his subjects people who are unclean in habits, conduct, person or home. Christians are reminded: "In accord with the Holy One who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct, because it is written: 'You must be holy, because I am holy.'" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16) Moreover, Jehovah God does not approve of laziness. The inspired rule is: "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat." (2 Thess. 3:10) On the other hand, those who are insensitive to the needs of oppressed and afflicted people are pronounced wicked. Says Proverbs 14:21: "The one despising his own fellowman is sinning, but happy is he who is showing favor to the afflicted ones."

It is urgent that individuals take positive action to prove that they are lovers of right and haters of bad. One should be grateful that God has been patient with mankind, giving all people an opportunity to demonstrate whether they want to live in harmony with his ways or not.

If you are among those who love truth and righteousness and keenly desire to do God's will, we urge you to accept the invitation of Jehovah's Christian witnesses to study the Bible with them. Thus you, too, can share the comforting hope that God's kingdom will soon satisfy the desire of every honest-hearted person. Prosperity under the kingdom of God will become a reality in our generation.

Do You Look to SCIENCE FOR A BETTER WORLD?



DO MEN look to science to save the world from annihilation and to make it a place where people would delight to live? Opinions may be divided, some answering Yes, some, No. But what we hear and read in industrial advertising and through channels of public communication usually points to what man is doing or can do as 'the only hope.' Or at least the conclusion is generally reached that 'if there is a way to world peace and happiness, man's intelligence will have to bring it about.' God is, in effect, left in the background.

A sample of such thinking is an article in the Boston *Herald Traveler* on the subject "Can Man Run His World?" It called attention to man's grave mistakes, but then concluded: "[Man] will stumble along, bloodied and bloodying, . . . until he either learns to master his wars or blows up his planet."

In scientific journalism, science is credited with almost superhuman powers. Recently *Science News,* under the heading "Genetic engineering: Myth or reality?" said, in its heading-paragraphs:

> *"The code of life has been cracked and genetic engineering is on its way. . . ."*
>
> *"Under the magic wand of biology man is now gradually becoming quite different from what he was. . . ."*

Not content with attributing exaggerated accomplishments to the men involved, the article concludes, giving them a capitalized title and the main responsibility for humankind's future:

> "The New Biologists, contrary to their science fiction image, are deeply concerned about the power they hold to shape human destiny and are anxious to see that their achievements are not abused."

Is it intelligent to attribute to modern science and its industrial material developments the ability to save mankind? Or is it good sense to look to human philosophy and political science, which have so much to do with man's present distressing situation? But this a substantial, influential group in Christendom, including the modernist clergy, have done. They have turned from worshiping the God of the Holy Bible, Jehovah, to a substitute of their own choice. They even deny his existence. In place of looking to him as the source of enlightenment, they pay great respect to modern scientists and intellectuals, placing more faith in mere men than they do in Jehovah.

GOD'S VIEWPOINT

What is the attitude of the Almighty God, the Creator of man, who gave him reasoning powers and provided the things necessary for his welfare? What does He think of man's turning to science as a savior?

Jehovah God has caused something to be recorded in his Word the Bible that shows us what he thinks, and what he will do about it. This is found in the proph-

et Ezekiel's report of what was going on right among God's professed people in Jerusalem only about five years before its destruction in 607 B.C.E. Recounting what he saw in vision, Ezekiel wrote:

> "So [Jehovah] brought me to the inner courtyard of the house of Jehovah, and, look! at the entrance of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, there were about twenty-five men with their backs to the temple of Jehovah and their faces to the east, and they were bowing down to the east, to the sun. And he went on to say to me: 'Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it such a light thing to the house of Judah to do the detestable things that they have done here, that they have to fill the land with violence and that they should offend me again, and here they are thrusting out the shoot [twig] to my nose? And I myself also shall act in rage. My eye will not feel sorry, neither shall I feel compassion. And they will certainly call out in my ears with a loud voice, but I shall not hear them.'"—Ezek. 8:15-18; footnote reading.

There these Israelite men were, in the inner court of the temple dedicated to Jehovah. They were near the entrance of the temple itself, in the space between the porch and the altar of sacrifice at the center of the inner court. But, shockingly, they were not worshiping Jehovah at that place, nor were they bowing to his altar of sacrifice that was to the east of them. They should have been facing west, toward the temple. Why?

Well, there in the temple's innermost compartment, the Most Holy, was the sacred Ark of the Covenant. Above it was the miraculous Shekinah light that symbolized the presence of Jehovah. But rather than look toward this symbolic dwelling place of God those twenty-five men turned their backs toward the Divine Presence and faced east. Ignoring the God they claimed to represent, they were bowing down in worship to the sun in the sky! This was in direct violation of God's command at Deuteronomy 4:15-19.

Not satisfied with this flagrant disobedience, those men added insult, for, "here," said Jehovah, "they are thrusting out the shoot [or, twig] to my nose." (Ezek. 8:17) This shoot or twig was used in idolatrous worship and may have been carved to a certain shape to represent the human male organ. At least it must have been something very offensive or obscene to be held out to Jehovah's nose, as if he would find pleasure in smelling it. Such idolatrous sun worship on the part of those twenty-five men was accompanied by their filling "the land with violence."

MODERN-DAY INSULTERS OF GOD

Has Christendom really, actually, done things as bad as those Jewish men did? Is there a modern-day parallel? Yes.

Modern science has come to be treated like a "sacred cow," that must be viewed with reverence and that must be considered ahead of the Bible and of God. The scientists' supposedly "advanced" intellectuality, with all its theories, has been treated as the up-to-date form of enlightenment that has made the Bible "out-of-date," "obsolete." In reality their technology is able to delve into God's laws only to a limited extent and can operate only within the framework and limitations of those laws. But news channels nearly always honor the technology rather than the God who made it possible. They speak as though man is great, 'wresting nature's secrets' away and becoming master of the universe.

Is this attitude something new, this focusing of all attention upon the human creature, this giving of all credit to man whom God created? No, the tendency of humans to do this was described centuries ago by one of the apostles, who wrote: "Although asserting they were wise, they became foolish and turned the glory of

the incorruptible God into something like the image of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed creatures and creeping things." The difference and the extreme seriousness of the matter, however, is that now the time has arrived for the issue to come to a head and to be settled forever.—Rom. 1:22, 23.

Christendom's infection with the worship of false gods, including the idolizing of modern science, betrays itself very slyly. For instance, on July 20, 1969, when for the first time a human astronaut set foot upon the moon, who was glorified thereby, according to the way that the scientific group responsible for it named things that were involved? Certainly not Jehovah, the Creator of the moon. It was the mythological sun-god that was honored. How so? Because the man-made spacecraft used on that occasion (as on successful moon landings since) was named "Apollo." Out of all the possible sources of names, idolatrous Greek mythology was selected. Phoebus Apollo was the sun-god of the ancient Greeks and was the twin brother of Artemis (or, Diana), the moon goddess.

Why should intelligent men use the Creator's laws to accomplish a feat and then advertise and make prominent the name of an ancient sun-god, who is actually no god at all? It is evident that the importance of men is being put ahead of God. Furthermore, Christendom's general acceptance of the unproved theory of evolution is one of the evidences betraying her as a worshiper of the "sun" of scientists.

Has this tendency of science toward paganism, wherein science is looked upon as a "sun," the principal source of human enlightenment, proved to bring mankind closer to a better world? Back in Ezekiel's day a similar course brought violence to the land of Israel. In this day it has proved to be no better. The clergymen of Christendom have either been unwilling or unable to halt the application of modern-day science to the invention and use of the most fiendish weapons of war, culminating in the developing of biological and radiological and atomic-nuclear weapons. The fighting of World Wars I and II was heavily dependent upon activity of scientists. Violence that has filled the earth has not been limited to those two world wars that were fought mainly by Christendom. The much worshiped modern philosophy has robbed churchgoing people of a real fear of God, and violence is being employed widely, even in peacetime. The time period since 1914 C.E. has been officially termed an "Age of Violence."

The technology of modern science has been applied to industry and commercialism. This has resulted in a growing pollution that is ruining man's natural environment. Fears are expressed that this earth will become shortly a place unfit for human existence. And what about man's moral environment?

A new morality has been adopted that views even fornication, adultery and homosexuality with indulgence and makes legal allowances for them. Christendom's clergymen refrain from declaring what the Bible has to say against these things. In fact, many prominent clergymen have come out publicly in favor of legislation that relieves immoral persons of punishment for committing such unclean things. Venereal disease continues to increase as a result, in fact, has become an epidemic! If this is offensive to many God-fearing people today, what must it be to God himself? It is just as offensive as when those twenty-five worshipers in Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem were obscenely "thrusting out the shoot" to His nose.

WHAT WILL GOD DO ABOUT IT?

Aside from showing Ezekiel the detestable things that were going on in Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem, did He take any action as a consequence? Yes. As he said: "I myself also shall act in rage. My eye will not feel sorry, neither shall I feel compassion. And they will certainly call out in my ears with a loud voice, but I shall not hear them."—Ezek. 8:18.

Did this actually occur? It did. When, only about three and a half years later, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, the people got to be in dire straits. Starvation prevailed. Mothers even ate their own children. Disease laid thousands low. Strife among the besieged Jews added to the distress. When Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers entered the city, young and old were slaughtered in the streets. Princes were hung up by the hand. The captives were hauled off to slavery in Babylon. Even though God had put his name on the city and its temple, he did not act to spare them, so great was his rage at the Jews' disgusting idolatry and obscene practices. (Lam. 2:21; 4:9, 10; 5:12) Are we to think God will act differently today?

Christendom has claimed to bear the name of God and of Christ and to direct the people in their ways. But, to the contrary, Christendom has brought the greatest reproach upon Jehovah God and his Son and upon His worship. It has been an instrument in the hand of God's enemy Satan the Devil to turn as many as possible away from the true God.

As a consequence, rebellious, apostate Christendom, with her religious systems, will feel Jehovah's rage without pity and without any heed to their cries. The Bible describes the fall of the world's false religious empire, symbolic Babylon the Great, of which Christendom is the dominant part. Depicting her as a great harlot, God's prophetic Word says: "In one day her plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and she will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong."—Rev. 18:2, 8.

Then her turning away of world leaders to a worship of the "sun" of man-made science with its evolutionary theory will bear its full fruitage. The Bible reveals that the political and commercial systems will suffer defeat and annihilation at the hands of Jesus Christ in the battle of Har-Magedon, which immediately follows the destruction of false religion.—Rev. 16:14-16; 19:17-21.

God's action, though severe, will work to the benefit of those who do not, stupidly and idolatrously, attribute honor and reverence to the sun, either the literal orb in the sky, or the man-made "sun" of so-called science. They are persons who have respect and reverence for the Creator of the universe. They look to him for life and the comforts of a better order, and they will not be disappointed.—Isa. 45:22.

Even those who have trusted in science, if they recognize that they have been committing idolatry, can receive forgiveness, if they turn to God. For "Jehovah is very tender in affection and merciful." They can learn of his provisions through a study of the Bible and can look for the blessings he originally purposed for men—a really clean, righteous earth. Then they will experience the truth of which the psalmist long ago sang: "Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; favor and glory are what he gives. Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness."—Jas. 5:11; Ps. 84:11.

Facing up to QUESTIONS of CONSCIENCE

DESPITE the flood of immorality, dishonesty and crime today, not all persons in the world of mankind are "past all moral sense." (Eph. 4:19) As in Paul's day, there are some today who, though not having accurate knowledge of God's Word, still retain a measure of decency, a vestige of that inner moral sense we call conscience.

[2] Paul said of the non-Israelite nations, those that were never under the Law covenant: "For whenever people of the nations that do not have law do by nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law [that is, a law code from God], are a law to themselves." In what way? In that "they are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them and, between their own thoughts, they are being accused or even excused." (Rom. 2:12-16) So this "law" that they are "to themselves" is not a law that they themselves make for themselves regardless of what others think.

[3] This moral nature, inherited from God's first human son, operates as a "law" or rule of conduct in people of all races and nationalities, now as in the past. This explains why the national or tribal laws of virtually all people have reflected at least some of God's righteous standards, even though these peoples were without the Bible as their guide. It explains why individuals, though not true servants of Jehovah God or even professed Christians, may live generally "decent" lives, often manifesting adherence to certain good principles. At the same time it explains why God could justly hold not only his covenant people of Israel but the whole world of mankind 'liable for punishment,' and why, in the coming expression of his judgment, he can justly "render to each one according to his works." —Rom. 2:6; 3:9, 19.

"I am not conscious of anything against myself. Yet by this I am not proved righteous, but he that examines me is Jehovah." —1 Cor. 4:4.

[4] Because of being separate from the world of mankind that is alienated from God, the Christian will suffer opposition. (John 15:18-20) But this does not exempt him from acting so as to appeal to whatever sense of decency, justice or morality that may still remain in persons of the world. People may misinterpret the motive for our separateness, calling us 'haters of everyone,' 'antisocial,' and accuse us of being inconsiderate, fanatical, unmerciful. The apostle Peter shows we can and should act so as to disarm our critics. "Hold a good conscience," he exhorts, "so that in the particular in which you are spoken against they may get ashamed who are speaking slightingly of your good conduct in connection with Christ. For it is better to suffer because you are doing good, if the will of God wishes it, than because you are doing evil." —1 Pet. 3:16, 17.

1. What still remains true of the moral sense of people generally?
2, 3. How do Paul's words at Romans 2:12-16 throw light on the matter, and what do they help us to understand as to human laws and decent conduct on the part of many individuals?

4, 5. (a) How can the Christian shame those who speak slightingly of his conduct? (b) Give examples.

[5] In modern times there are abundant examples where Christian kindness, helpfulness or generosity toward persons in the world has completely changed their attitude toward Jehovah's Kingdom proclaimers and their work and message. Even when they are unjustly persecuted and put into prisons and concentration camps, their fine conscientious work and respectful way has caused Jehovah's servants to gain the esteem of officials, and they have been placed in positions of trust and responsibility, just as was Joseph in ancient Egypt.—Gen. 39:21-23.

[6] Jehovah God has allowed human governments to function on earth and he lets them serve as his "minister" to the extent of punishing much crime and wrongdoing. As long as God lets these governments stand, the Christian should not oppose them, should not act unlawfully. He cannot expect God's protection if he commits wrong deeds and suffers for it at the hand of officials. But there is a greater reason than fear of governmental punishment that should move us to be law-abiding persons. Romans 13:5 tells us: "There is therefore compelling reason for you people to be in subjection, not only on account of that wrath [expressed in governmental punishment of crime] but also *on account of your conscience.*" The penalty's being light or severe is not what governs the Christian's attitude. His conscience moves him to do what is right, for he knows that, whether "Caesar" governments on earth take action or not, "we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of the Christ."—2 Cor. 5:10.

[7] Of course, we can never let the unenlightened or defiled and depraved consciences of others set the standard for our own consciences. Our conscience must be guided by God's Word and spirit and so may at times testify exactly to the contrary of what certain officials want of us. Then we must conscientiously respond as did the apostles: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29-32.

[8] The Bible is very clear, for example, in showing the need for true Christians to free themselves from all association with "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion. (Rev. 18:2-5; 2 Cor. 6:14-18) It shows that Christians are to be "no part of the world," hence not sharing in its politics or striving for the success of its anti-Kingdom goals. (John 17:14; 18:36; Jas. 4:4) Unequivocally the Bible sets forth the sanctity of blood, of human life and also the standard for God's people to 'beat their swords into plowshares and not learn war anymore,' since their fight is 'not against flesh and blood' but against demon powers. (Gen. 9:4-6; Isa. 2:2-4; Eph. 6:11, 12) God's Word is also specific and definite in its denunciation of sexual immorality in all its forms (fornication, adultery and homosexuality), as well as of other misconduct such as drunkenness, dishonesty and theft.—1 Cor. 6:9, 10; John 8:44; Eph. 4:28.

DIFFICULT DECISIONS OF CONSCIENCE

[9] Thus there are many, many acts and practices that are *specifically* approved or condemned in the Bible. Many, many others are clearly in harmony with, or in violation of, *principles* contained therein. Yet, particularly in the modern, complex society that has developed in many parts of the earth, there remain situations and circumstances where personal decision, based on the individual conscience of the

6. How does conscience affect the Christian's relationship with worldly governments?
7. In 'appealing to the consciences' of others, can we safely let their consciences set the standard for our own?
8. Give examples of basic commands, prohibitions and principles found in God's Word that should mold Christian conscience.
9. (a) Inasmuch as the Christian is not without Scriptural laws and principles, why is it that questions of conscience still arise? (b) What generally determines how great a part individual conscience must play in deciding on the rightness or wrongness of a matter?

one involved, is required. So many things in life are a matter of *degree*. The difference between a gentle pat and a vicious blow is a matter of degree of force. The difference between simple respect—as, for example, respect to a ruler or a national emblem—and reverential worship is also a matter of degree. Where extremes are involved there is no real question. It is when the matter comes within what might be called a 'gray area,' approaching the borderline between what is clearly right and what is clearly wrong, that questions arise. The closer to such 'borderline situation' the matter comes, the greater the part the individual's conscience must play in his decision. Faced with such circumstances, what should we do?

[10] Jehovah God expects us to use our faculties of intelligence, our knowledge, understanding and judgment, and to do conscientiously what our faith points us to do. God does not place us under the conscience of some other human in such matters. We must each make our own decision in harmony with conscience—conscience molded by God's Word. We must also take the consequences of our own decisions, not expect someone else to make the decision and bear that responsibility for us.

[11] It would therefore be wrong in such matters to try to extract from someone else, from a body of elders or from the governing body of the Christian congregation, some rule or regulation that 'draws the line' on matters. Where God's Word does not itself 'draw the line,' no human has the right to add to that Word by doing so. God in his wisdom allows us to show what we are in the "secret person of the heart," and the decisions we make in such personal cases may reveal this. True, we may err at times without wrong motive, and God, who reads our hearts, can discern this.

[12] But whatever our decisions, and even though these are made with a clear conscience, we must always realize that, in the final analysis, God will be the One to make manifest the rightness or wrongness of our course and that in his own due time and way. Recognizing this, the apostle Paul wrote: "For I am not conscious of anything against myself. Yet by this I am not proved righteous, but he that examines me is Jehovah. Hence do not judge anything before the due time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring the secret things of darkness to light and make the counsels of the hearts manifest, and then each one will have his praise come to him from God." —1 Cor. 4:3-5.

[13] Where such 'borderline' cases arise, we should not place

10, 11. (a) What does God expect of us when such questions of conscience arise? (b) When faced with such a personal matter of conscience, should we expect some ruling to be handed down telling us what to do, and who should bear the responsibility for our decision? (c) What do such decisions reveal about us to God?

Should you write to the Society for a ruling on this matter? Where a personal decision, based on your conscience, is required, the decision is yours to make. Act so as to have a clean conscience before God

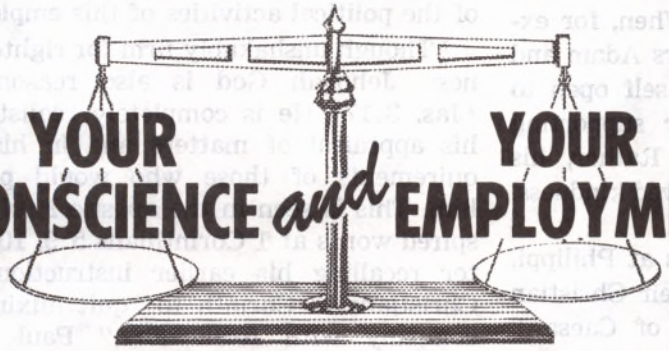
12. Does the fact that we are not conscious of any wrongdoing of itself guarantee our righteousness? For what reason?

13. (a) What does Romans 14:4, 10-12 show as to the right attitude to take toward the one who makes such personal decisions of conscience? (b) However, where do the consciences of those in positions of responsibility in the congregation also come into play with regard to such ones?

ourselves as judges of the individual who must make his own conscientious decision. Nor should we ourselves feel guilty of making a mistake by recognizing such individual as still an approved servant of God if his decision on a 'borderline' case is not precisely what ours would have been. God is his Judge. (Rom. 14:4, 10-12) On the other hand, those in responsible positions in the Christian congregation must also exercise their own consciences in their oversight of the congregation. Though they may feel that their decision would have been different from that of some brother in a particular matter, the protest of their consciences may be very mild, due to the Scriptures' apparently leaving the matter within the realm of personal decision. If the individual gives evidence of having acted with a clean conscience, their consciences may allow them to assign him responsibility or recommend him for some position of responsibility. Nevertheless, it may be that their consciences will speak with sufficient strength in the matter so that they cannot conscientiously recommend him in this way. Again, God is *their* Judge and they are not to be condemned.

[14] Many times these 'borderline' questions arise in the field of employment. Does the work you do allow you to have a clean conscience before God? Does it allow you to 'recommend yourself to every human conscience' as a genuine follower of Jesus Christ? These are important questions we will consider in the following article.

14. What questions now come up for discussion?



YOUR CONSCIENCE *and* YOUR EMPLOYMENT

MOST of our waking hours are spent in work. Certainly a Christian should want to have a clean conscience as to the work he performs, 'doing all things for God's glory.' (1 Cor. 10:31) Does your work allow you to do that?

[2] Obviously, any work that directly and principally requires one to perform acts that are either specifically condemned by God's Word or are out of harmony with its principles is wrong. A Christian cannot simply place the responsibility on his employer for the wrong. But what if the labor *in itself* is not incompatible with God's Word but is part of an operation that is pursuing ends incompatible with God's Word? What then?

[3] As a simple illustration, serving as a chauffeur and driving an automobile is in itself proper employment. But how could a person professing to be a Christian serve as chauffeur for a gang of bank robbers? Or how could a Christian let himself be identified with a house of prostitution by serving as its doorman or maid? But, on the other hand, suppose you had a milk route or a newspaper route; would your delivering bottles of milk or the news-

1. Why is a Christian's employment a vital area for his conscience to be exercised?
2, 3. (a) What employment is obviously wrong, and can the Christian taking up such employment escape responsibility? (b) How is it that certain kinds of work that *in themselves* are not wrong can, nevertheless, raise questions of conscience?

paper to such house of ill repute make you a part of an immoral operation?

[4] Clearly there is a difference between being an accomplice to wrong deeds and simply being one who renders certain services such as are commonly rendered to all persons, without discrimination for or against anyone. We have an example in God himself as to providing service to personal needs without taking into account people's righteousness or lack of righteousness. As Jesus pointed out to his disciples, Jehovah God "makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matt. 5:45) Paul, too, says that God the Creator "gives to all persons [without discrimination] life and breath and all things." (Acts 17:25) Since God permits rain to fall even upon the fields of wicked men, does this make him share in the guilt of their wrongdoing? When, for example, God clothed the sinners Adam and Eve, did he thereby lay himself open to the charge of condoning or supporting them in their wrongdoing? Rather, his act was simply one of undeserved kindness. —Gen. 3:21.

[5] In his letter to Christians at Philippi, Paul sends greetings from their Christian brothers "of the household of Caesar." (Phil. 4:22) Evidently these were domestic servants in the imperial quarters, whether slaves or freedmen the record does not indicate. They perhaps rendered human services there, such as cooking, cleaning and similar work, on behalf of the imperial family and staff. As we have seen, human governments do perform some legitimate functions in the eyes of God, though also being guilty of other condemnable practices. (Rom. 13:1-5) Whatever the particular work these Christians of Caesar's household performed, they apparently could do it without feeling that they were participants in the politics, religion or military ventures and schemes of Nero.

[6] So in modern times. There are many acts we may perform for others that are rendered to them simply as fellow humans, without concerning ourselves with their righteousness or unrighteousness. As in our simple illustration, the selling of milk to a prostitute would not logically cause one to be viewed as condoning her immorality, would it? Nor would one's being employed by a politician to teach him music reasonably mark one as a supporter of the political activities of this employer.

[7] Though unshakably firm for righteousness, Jehovah God is also reasonable. (Jas. 3:17) He is completely realistic in his appraisal of matters and in his requirements of those who would please him. This is seen in the apostle Paul's inspired words at 1 Corinthians 5:9, 10. After recalling his earlier instructions to Christians in Corinth to "quit mixing in company with fornicators," Paul then said, "not meaning entirely with the fornicators of this world or the greedy persons and extortioners or idolaters. Otherwise, you would actually have to get out of the world." While Christians seek to avoid 'bad associations that spoil useful habits,' they cannot become hermits, isolating themselves in caves, deserts or on islands. Why not? Their very commission to serve as the "light of the world" requires that they be 'in the world though no part of the world.' (1 Cor. 15:33; Matt. 5:14-16;

4. (a) Where a person or business engages in wrongdoing, does all service rendered to such person or business necessarily make the one rendering the service an accomplice in such wrongdoing? (b) What example does God himself give us as to providing certain services to wrongdoers without becoming party to their deeds?

5, 6. (a) In what way could Christians evidently perform services in the household of Caesar and still maintain a good conscience? (b) How can similar circumstances prevail in modern times?

7, 8. How does God's Word manifest a reasonable and realistic viewpoint, and how should this guide us in our application of Bible principles in matters of conscience?

John 15:19; 17:15-18) To require them to fulfill their commission and at the same time to maintain separateness to an *absolute* degree would be to require contradictory things of them. God does not do this. Neither should we be unreasonable in our application of the principles of God's Word, trying to push every principle to its absolute limit and force applications to an extreme degree and then insist that all our brothers do so. —Phil. 4:5.

[8] With these points in mind, let us consider certain types of activity to see whether these are ruled out as definitely unchristian by the Bible or are within areas where individual conscience must determine what the Christian will do, or to *what extent* conscience may enter into the matter.

GAMES OF CHANCE

[9] Gambling is not mentioned specifically in the Bible. What, then, should be the Christian's attitude toward it?

[10] Some might link it to extortion, mentioned at 1 Corinthians 6:10. However, the objection may be raised that "to extort" (a word having the same source as the word "torture") carries the basic idea of using force, threats or other pressure (as by the abuse of official authority) to obtain something from an unwilling person. While individuals who lose money in gambling are not pleased to lose it, they generally gamble willingly and with full recognition that they run the risk of losing money. So, then, if gambling is not extortion, on what basis would the Christian refuse to approve it?

[11] There is more than one Scriptural reason for doing so. Gambling certainly merits being classified as a form of "greediness," and greediness and covetousness are classed along with idolatry in God's Word. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Col. 3:5) It clashes with the basic Scriptural precept that we should love our neighbor as ourselves, and that man should do honest, productive labor to obtain gain. What productivity results from gambling? Its history shows that it is almost inevitably contributory toward crime in one fashion or another. And why? Because it is unloving. It incites selfishness and fosters lack of concern for others. The gambler wants the money of others without giving them any genuine service in return. Though some may class gambling with entertainment, the evidence shows that as often as *not* it creates tension, anxiety,

Gambling—rooted in greed, contributing to crime and fomenting superstition. Could a Christian be associated with such a practice?

9, 10. Does the Bible provide a specific command as regards gambling, and why may objections be raised against calling it a form of "extortion"? 11, 12. (a) What Scriptural principles provide the basis for the voice of conscience to speak up regarding gambling? (b) What does the effect gambling historically has had on people show?

resentment and even murderous anger.

12 One woman who worked in a casino is quoted as saying: "Gambling hardens all who come in contact with it. After a year or so of work in the casino, the dealer is no longer moved by the spectacle of men and women, many of them mentally ill, gambling away the money that should be used to support themselves and their families. One of the world's greatest and oldest tragedies—the wrecking of countless human lives because of man's greed for easy money and his infatuation for the false goddess, Lady Luck—no longer affects [the dealer]."

13 Yes, gambling also foments superstition, gamblers as a class being among the most superstitious people. Money becomes an idol and Lady Luck a goddess. At Isaiah 65:11 God's Word speaks of those leaving Him and "setting in order a table for the god of Good Luck and those filling up mixed wine for the god of Destiny."

14 Certainly all this stands in direct contrast to the apostle's exhortation to Christians at Thessalonica to "make it your aim to live quietly . . . and work with your hands," so that they might be "walking decently as regards people outside and not be needing anything." (1 Thess. 4:11, 12) Yes, there are still standards of decency in the world of mankind as to doing honest, productive labor, and the Christian will want to 'recommend himself to every human conscience' in this matter as in all others.—2 Cor. 4:2.

THE USE AND PRODUCTION OF HARMFUL ADDICTIVES

15 Another matter causing concern in many parts of the earth is the use and production of materials that result in harmful addiction. In India, the Philippines and the Malaysian areas, for example, an ancient and popular practice is the chewing of betel nut, also known as areca nut, the seed of a palm tree. Pieces of betel nut are rolled in a leaf smeared with quicklime and chewed. The betel nut colors the person's saliva a blood-red color and blackens the teeth, generally causing their deterioration. Many habitual betel-nut chewers become toothless at as early an age as twenty-five. According to the *Encyclopedia Americana* (1956, Vol. 20, p. 573), betel-nut chewing produces "an effect similar to the chewing of tobacco." In India, in fact, tobacco is sometimes included in the betel-nut "chew," the admixture being known as *pan*.

16 The Bombay *Evening News* of April 4, 1972, tells us that *Extra Pharmacopia*, a publication of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, classifies betel nut as a "drug." An Indian court therefore ruled that betel nut could not be classified as "food."

17 Notably, many persons who have used both tobacco and betel nut say that, of the two, they found the betel-nut habit the more difficult to break. During the Japanese rule of Taiwan, an unsuccessful effort was made to stamp out the habit. Many Taiwanese doctors believe there is a link between the practice and the high incidence of mouth and face cancer in Taiwan.

18 In some Latin-American countries a somewhat similar practice prevails, that of chewing coca plant leaves with lime. Since the leaves contain cocaine, this practice is addictive. While it keeps the users from feeling the pangs of hunger or the ache of tiredness, like other such narcotics it eventually has very damaging

13. What shows that the Scriptures' linking covetousness and greediness with idolatry also holds true with regard to gambling?
14. In contrast with the covetous course of the gambler, what exhortation is made to Christians?
15-17. (a) What practice involving the use of betel nut exists in certain areas of the earth? (b) What effect does this have on the user, and how have authorities in some countries viewed the practice?
18. What similar practice exists in Latin America, and what is its effect?

Is it consistent to talk of neighbor love and yet to produce tobacco that may ruin your neighbor's health?

effects on their health as well as their mental powers.

[19] The use of betel nut and coca leaves is somewhat regional. The use of tobacco, on the other hand, is virtually world wide. It, too, is addictive. Evidence of the power of its addiction may be seen from the fact that its production still runs around three and a half billion tons a year—despite medical warnings of the damage it brings to human health. In the United States, for example, some 576 billion cigarettes and 7 million cigars are manufactured annually. Yet a committee appointed by the Surgeon General of the United States found that the risk of lung cancer was ten times greater in moderate smokers, and twenty times greater in heavy smokers, than in nonsmokers. Dr. Charles Cameron of the American Cancer Society said: "Cancer of the lung is showing the most rapid increase ever ascribed to any noninfectious disease in medical history." Smoking was also reported as being contributory to heart disease, chronic bronchitis and emphysema. As a result, various governments have passed laws restricting the public advertising of cigarettes.

19. What does modern-day evidence show regarding the use of tobacco in smoking and chewing?

APPLYING BIBLE PRINCIPLES TO THE PROBLEM

[20] Again, the Bible does not mention the chewing of betel nuts, coca leaves or the chewing, snuffing or smoking of tobacco. Some persons have said: "Until you show me something in the Bible about the use of tobacco [or similar products], I will keep using it." But might not one just as well say that, since the Bible does not specifically forbid throwing garbage into your neighbor's backyard, there is nothing wrong in doing so?

[21] The Bible certainly does provide us with principles to guide us in this matter. The inspired apostle wrote at 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Since we have these promises [of being accepted by God as his approved children and servants], beloved ones, *let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit,* perfecting holiness in God's fear."

[22] "Holiness" means the quality of being clean, bright, untarnished and devoted to sacred uses. Can the use of betel nut and its befouling effect on the user's mouth and teeth, or the defiling effect that coca leaves and tobacco are recognized as inflicting on the user's body, be harmonized with this Scriptural injunction? The greatest commandment is to 'love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.' Can one say one is serving God with one's 'whole

20. Since none of these practices are mentioned in the Bible, does this remove them from becoming questions of Christian conscience?
21, 22. What Bible principles are clearly involved, and what questions must the Christian conscientiously ask himself as to engaging in such practices?

strength' while using products denounced even by national governments as seriously damaging to one's health? Or, if one becomes addicted to coca leaves, can one say one is serving Jehovah with one's 'whole mind'? Really, is not the using of such things an acting 'contrary to nature,' subjecting the body to abuse it was never designed to take?—Mark 12:29, 30; Rom. 1:26.

LET YOUR CONSCIENCE SPEAK

[23] What, then, of the person who farms, prepares or sells such things as his means of livelihood? Certainly the matter of conscience is involved here. What principles should guide us?

[24] Some may argue that these things are all part of God's creation placed here on earth, and that hence there is no reason to object to anyone's growing them. True, they are God's creation, but things that are correct in themselves may be put to bad uses. Mushrooms are part of God's plant creation but only some are edible. If we make a mistake and eat one of the poisonous types this could cause our death. Jehovah provided minerals and metals, too, but when men convert iron into destructive weapons for political warfare, is this a good use of God's provisions?

[25] Consider the matter of hard drugs, such as opium and heroin. People addicted to these do not simply pick them up from the earth. There are many steps involved. Poppies must be grown, the juice extracted and refined into opium powder. To obtain morphine or heroin, further distilling must be done. Then there is the marketing and sale of these addictive drugs. Where along the line does responsibility for the immense harm and crime involved in drug addiction begin or stop?

[26] Though tobacco, betel nut and coca leaves may be slower in their destructive effects than these hard drugs, the same question may be asked as to their production and sale. These plant products may have legitimate uses—tobacco nicotine, for example, is used as the base for an insecticide—yet the fact remains that the legitimate usage forms a very minimal portion of the total usage. We can never forget that the second-greatest commandment is that we love our neighbor as ourselves. If we willingly and knowingly contribute toward serious damage to his health for the sake of gain, are we doing this?—Matt. 22:39.

[27] Some may object that even such things as tea, coffee and, more particularly, alcoholic drinks, are also accused of being harmful to health. Yet, with regard to alcoholic beverages the Bible clearly and specifically allows for their use in moderation. (Deut. 14:26; John 2:1-10; Prov. 23:29-31; 1 Tim. 3:3, 8; 5:23) But no such approval can be found in favor of tobacco, betel nut, coca leaves, or, for that matter, marijuana, opium and similar products.

[28] As to such beverages as tea and coffee, it might be asked: After all the centuries of their use, what clear evidence of their being consistently dangerous has been produced, or where have governments been moved to issue health warnings against them? True, to the person with health problems, such as ulcers, any of these beverages could be dangerous and, in such case, he should avoid them. To the diabetic sugar is dangerous; but it is not to other people. For an overweight person even bread and potatoes or rice can be dan-

23, 24. (a) Is it only the personal use of harmful addictives that raises questions of Christian conscience? (b) Does the fact that these plant products result from God's creation remove all objections regarding their commercial production and distribution today? Illustrate.

25, 26. (a) Is it only the seller of harmful addictives who bears responsibility for the damage they cause to humans? (b) What questions will the Christian conscientiously consider in this regard?

27, 28. Can the use of certain popular beverages reasonably be classed with the harmful addictives described, thereby forming the basis for the same objections to their production and sale? If not, what difference exists?

gerous. (Compare Proverbs 25:27.) We should be reasonable, then, in our consideration of matters. Are we seeking to suppress the voice of conscience by trying to rationalize away the facts about substances that have been demonstrated to be fundamentally harmful and dangerous?

'BE WALKING DECENTLY AS REGARDS THOSE OUTSIDE'

29 These are just a few areas in which questions of conscience may arise as to one's employment. In all such matters, however, the Christian does well to recognize that 'what one sows one reaps' —in more ways than one. (Gal. 6:7) What if one's work is such that, rather than benefit, it produces detriment or harm to others? Though not specifically condemned in the Bible, will such work not have an adverse, perhaps even degrading, effect on the heart and mind of the worker? And may it not also have a weakening effect on his conscience, perhaps allowing him to excuse himself for engaging in practices that *are specifically* condemned in God's Word?—1 Thess. 4:12.

30 Then, too, there is the matter of recommending ourselves to others' consciences as regards sincerity. Not long ago a number of prominent religious organizations in the United States came in for criticism because, while claiming to be for peace, they were investing heavily in war industries. If a Christian takes a stand against a certain practice as incompatible with Bible principles, yet makes his living from work that is primarily and basically directed toward furthering and fomenting that practice, will he be recommending himself to others' consciences? Will they believe him to be sincere in his advocating of other principles of God's Word and its promise of a new order of righteousness?

31 What of the Christian who is 'reaching out for the office of overseer' or is desirous of serving as a ministerial servant in a congregation? If employed in work that produces things detrimental to humankind, could such a man be considered as "free from accusation" or as having "a fine testimony from people on the outside"?—1 Tim. 3:1, 7-10; Titus 1:6.

32 These requirements for Christian overseers and ministerial servants do not deal with unfounded or unjust accusations. In lands dominated by the Catholic Church, as an example, divorce may be portrayed as always wrong, even where the Scriptural grounds of adultery exist. To be criticized for being Scripturally divorced would not disqualify one from serving as an overseer or ministerial servant, for such criticism is unfounded.

33 One might say, 'True, the work I do is not really for the good of my neighbor. But where I live the majority of the people engage in this type of employment. This business or production is the main source of money for the area.' Would this change matters as far as one's conscience is involved?

34 If gambling, for example, is the major business in a certain city or state, perhaps people there would be little concerned over a person's being employed in a gambling establishment, even though the person claimed to be a sincere follower of Jesus Christ. But does that make it right in the sight of God? Furthermore, what of the effect on the individual's own

29. In harmony with Galatians 6:7, what serious questions should one ask about employment that, in its end results, primarily brings detriment to mankind?
30. How must the consciences of those outside the Christian congregation also be considered as regards such employment?
31, 32. (a) What questions might arise concerning the Christian man so employed as to fitness for positions of congregational responsibility? (b) Does being "free from accusation" mean that the overseer or ministerial servant has to please every single person's scruples or beliefs?
33, 34. Does the commonness of certain work in a particular area or its general acceptance by people in that area necessarily remove objections of conscience to it?

conscience and heart? Would his conscience let him approach his Father with "freeness of speech" as being clean of anything meriting God's disapproval? 1 John 3:19-22 says: "By this we shall know that we originate with the truth, and we shall assure our hearts before him as regards whatever our hearts may condemn us in, because God is greater than our hearts and knows all things. Beloved ones, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have freeness of speech toward God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we are observing his commandments and are doing the things that are pleasing in his eyes." Surely this "freeness of speech" is something to be highly prized and treasured, yes, conserved at all cost.

NEED FOR FAITH

[35] True, to strive for a clean conscience before God and to recommend ourselves to the consciences of others may require some major changes in our lives. Employment that does not conflict with our consciences may be difficult to obtain. This places a test on our faith in God's power to come to our aid in response to our conscientious efforts to please him. With good reason the Bible closely ties in faith with the matter of conscience. (1 Tim. 1:5, 18, 19; 3:8, 9; Heb. 10:22) Do we really believe that Jehovah God not only exists but also "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him"?—Heb. 11:6.

[36] Throughout the earth there are men and women by the thousands who can testify to God's power, ability and willingness to come to the aid of those striving to maintain a good conscience before him. A person may feel that giving up his present occupation for reasons of conscience would leave him in a virtually hopeless position. But think of what others have done. Think of the women who were living in concubinage to married men and had borne children to them before they learned the truth of God's Word. Refusal to continue living in such concubinage meant losing all visible means of support, even the home they lived in. Yet hundreds of women took that step in faith, and Jehovah God cared for them.

[37] Think too of the many slaves in the Roman Empire who accepted Christianity. They were the property of the men who owned them, dependent on them for all life's provisions. Yet they had to exercise their Christian consciences and if their masters should command them to perform acts in violation of Christian principles they would have to refuse, recognizing God and his Son as their superior masters. This, too, would take great faith indeed. —1 Pet. 2:18-20; Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25.

[38] Then, too, there are thousands of men who, while not changing their type of employment, have had to alter their business methods radically or have had to resign because the establishments they worked for insisted on their using dishonest practices in an otherwise legitimate business. Many types of personal services, such as repair work on radios, autos, watches, and similar services, are frequently involved in dishonesty, overcharging customers or charging them for parts that were never installed or work that was never done. This is a form of theft. Other men in selling work, before becoming true Christians, falsified matters to obtain customers. This is lying and fraud. Christians have "renounced the underhanded things of which to be ashamed" and do not walk "with cunning" either in the congregation or outside thereof. (2 Cor. 4:2) They heed

35. How may a test of faith result because of our being conscientious about our employment?

36, 37. If obtaining other employment that does not clash with Christian conscience seems nearly impossible to obtain, from what modern and ancient examples can we draw comfort and assurance?

38. Though not discontinuing their present *kind* or *type* of work, how have many Christian men also had to make major changes to keep a clean conscience?

the exhortation: "Now that you have put away falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, . . . Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need." Their consciences move them to abandon their wrong ways so as 'not to be grieving God's holy spirit.'—Eph. 4:25-30.

MAINTAINING REASONABLENESS AND BALANCE

[39] Again, let it be noted that Jehovah God is realistic in all his requirements. He provides us principles that give good, clear guidance; yet he does not push matters to an impossible extreme, to the point that we would have to "get out of the world" in order to have a clean conscience. —1 Cor. 5:10.

[40] Consider, as an example, an individual who may work on a farm devoted almost exclusively to the growing of a product fundamentally harmful to human use. His work may be directly connected with the production or distribution of this material. His own conscience may or may not move him to quit such work. Even though his conscience does not move him to quit, if he belongs to a Christian congregation the consciences of the elders of that congregation may not allow them to recommend him as qualifying to be an elder or ministerial servant in the congregation.

[41] On the other hand, the individual may work on such a farm but may do work that is not materially related to the development of such product, perhaps rendering services of a personal nature to the family of the farm owner, doing housecleaning or similar domestic work. He may feel that his work does not link him with the operation that produces the harmful product. Whether elders of the congregation where such an individual associated recommended him as an elder or ministerial servant or not would depend on their consciences. They would also take into consideration the effect such recommendation would have on the congregation as a whole and on the community in which it is found.

[42] So, then, like the apostle, we all want to be 'exercising ourselves continually to have a consciousness of committing no offense against God and men.' (Acts 24:16) At the same time we should realize the futility of debating all the minor ramifications or possible applications of any one Scriptural principle or trying to draw fine lines of demarcation and thereby set up a Talmudic code as to precisely what is allowable and what is not. In instructing Timothy as to his ministry in Ephesus, Paul wrote: "Really the objective of this mandate is love out of a clean heart and out of a good conscience and out of faith without hypocrisy. By deviating from these things certain ones have been turned aside into idle talk, wanting to be teachers of law, but not perceiving either the things they are saying or the things about which they are making strong assertions." (1 Tim. 1:3-7; compare 6:3-5.) Where the decision must rest with individual conscience, we will not try to superimpose our conscience on others, neither belittling others as overscrupulous nor criticizing and judging those whose consciences are not as restrictive as ours in such 'borderline' cases.—Rom. 14:3, 10.

[43] We will make mistakes, do things we

39-41. (a) As in all other matters, whose viewpoint do we want to maintain when exercising our conscience regarding employment? (b) Where an individual's employment raises questions of conscience, what decision may the elders in the congregation make? By whose conscience are they governed?

42. (a) While striving to maintain a clean conscience, what futile activity will we avoid, and what will we make our aim? (b) In 'borderline' matters, what balance will we maintain?

43. While striving to act always in good conscience, if we, nevertheless, make mistakes, what can we do to become free of a bad conscience?

subsequently regret—for we are imperfect. But we will not suffer from a guilty conscience if we are quick to confess our error to God and turn from it, seeking Jehovah's forgiveness through his Son. Read King David's personal experience in this matter as recorded at Psalm 32:1-6. Rejoice in knowing that the ransom sacrifice of God's Son can make propitiation for our sins and cleanse our consciences, giving us the comforting assurance that God does not hold such errors against us. Thereby we can continue serving him with a good conscience and with all the joy, contentment, peace of mind and the hope of everlasting life that this brings.

THE BIG ISSUE —Are we FOR or AGAINST DIVINE RULERSHIP?

DURING the past few months hundreds of thousands of persons have squarely met this issue at the series of four-day "Divine Rulership" District Assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses. Reports available from 152 assemblies show that so far 1,246,419 have attended, with many assemblies yet to be heard from. Eventually the whole world of mankind will be compelled to face up to this issue, resulting in either life or death, depending on their choice.

If you have not already done so, sooner or later you too must face this same big issue. Hence, this brief report on what was said at these assemblies should prove most beneficial in helping you to decide.

The issue is really not a new one confronting us today for the first time. This was pointed out on the first day of the assembly in the talk entitled "Divine Rulership—Are We for It or Against It?"

This keynote talk showed that hostility to divine rulership had its start in the invisible realm many millenniums ago. A spirit creature or angel made himself both "Satan" and "Devil," that is, a "Resister" and a "Slanderer" of God. As a consequence, all opposing divine rulership take their stand with Satan the Devil and show themselves to be like such other rebels as Adam and Eve, their firstborn son Cain, the disobedient angels who lived as husbands with women prior to the global deluge, and like the post-Flood rebel Nimrod.

In sharp contrast with such rebels was the Lord Jesus Christ. He too had to decide whether he was for or against divine rulership. When offered the rulership over all this world's kingdoms by Satan, the "god of this system of things," he turned the offer down, saying: "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service." (2 Cor. 4:4; Matt. 4:10) Do you view the world and its political affairs in the same way that Jesus Christ did?

HOW AN APPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH JEHOVAH IS OBTAINED

These assemblies focused attention on gaining and maintaining a proper relationship with Jehovah in full recognition of his sovereignty. The importance and urgency of this was stressed in the keynote speech, when it declared:

> "We today stand very near the end of the 'conclusion of the system of things.' Human rulership by imperfect, sinful, dying humans is about to be removed from the face of the earth in mankind's greatest 'tribulation' foretold in the prophetic Bible."

This is why people cannot afford to delay in taking their stand on the side of divine rulership. This means informing ourselves as to the will of God and then diligently applying it in every aspect of life. It means maintaining integrity, seeking first God's kingdom and his righteousness, not getting involved in human politics but obediently proclaiming God's kingdom.

Has recognition of divine rulership moved you to take such action? Of course, there are other things that one must do to come into a proper relationship with God.

This was made clear in the discourse "Following the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership." Therein it was shown that individuals have to repent of their sins, turn around from their past course of conduct and dedicate themselves to God through Jesus Christ in order to do the divine will. This dedication then must be symbolized by water baptism. Have you taken such a step?

Much of the Scriptural argumentation in support of these points was drawn from the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. Verses 8 through 10 of chapter 10 read:

> "'The word is near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart'; that is, the 'word' of faith, which we are preaching. For if you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation."

The apostle Paul and his fellow missionaries of the first century brought the "word" or message about God and his Christ very near to the people. And many of these, in turn, were able to repeat that "word." They also accepted in faith that Jesus Christ was Lord and that God had raised him up from the dead. In harmony with this they abandoned their false worship and dedicated themselves to Jehovah.

No less true today—those dedicating themselves must be motivated by hearts full of love and appreciation to make a public declaration and confession, or acknowledgment, that Jesus Christ is their Lord. In acknowledging Jesus as their Lord, they are also acknowledging that Jehovah God is their Owner.

How so? Well, is this not what Jesus Christ their exemplar did? Yes, he disowned himself, acknowledging Jehovah's ownership of him. He also told his followers to likewise yield ownership of themselves to Jehovah God. Having done this, then, in imitation of Jesus, they get baptized.—Mark 8:34; Matt. 3:13-17.

But, you may ask, 'When does one make "public declaration for salvation," acknowledging Jesus Christ as his Lord and Jehovah as his Owner?' "This confession or acknowledgment," the speaker declared, "is what we orally make to or before the Christian minister who presides over the baptism in water." At this year's series of assemblies, so far, 29,087 have acknowledged such divine ownership by getting baptized. But this is not the end of the matter, for, as the speaker pointed out, after baptism the dedicated individual continues to make public declaration by commenting at Christian meetings and by sharing in the public proclamation of Bible truth.

MAINTAINING AN APPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Other parts of this fine assembly program highlighted what one must do to remain an approved servant of the Divine Ruler, Jehovah.

In this regard, there was a drama entitled "Serve Jehovah with Your Whole Soul," which showed the need to be totally, completely devoted to Jehovah in order to maintain a right relationship with him. It illustrated that one might have a good heart initially, and yet lose out on divine favor because of failure to use one's soul (every fiber of one's being) and one's strength in Jehovah's service to the full. The warning was forceful: Guard against using up your energy needlessly in fruitless pursuits, but always strive to be industrious in carrying out your Christian ministry in a fine manner.

Another feature of the program emphasized that we should serve Jehovah, not with a certain date in view, but with eternity in view. In this talk, "Serve with Eternity in View," the speaker made his point with the aid of an illustration. 'The present,' he said, 'is like a half inch on a measuring stick that extends for thousands of miles. So do not live only for the present, the half inch of a possible eternal existence!'

How the audiences at these assemblies thrilled when they watched the gripping drama about Joseph and his half brothers unfold! Here was portrayed the need to cultivate the godly quality of mercy. Joseph, as we may recall, tested out the attitude of his half brothers before revealing his identity and granting them merciful forgiveness. This example served well to illustrate the difference between being merciful and being permissive, between being forgiving and excusing or condoning wrongdoing. Then in applying these Bible principles to a modern-day case involving a wayward teen-age son, it was shown that a father can and should forgive his children, but he cannot and should not condone their wrongdoing. He must see to it that his children are corrected so they do not become involved in more serious wrongs.

Humility, a quality also necessary to remain approved by God, was the theme of another drama well received at the district assemblies. Entitled "Gird Yourselves with Lowliness of Mind," it showed the importance of getting rid of pride or high-mindedness and being truly humble. This was portrayed in Bible times by the proud Syrian army chief Naaman. In order to be cured of leprosy he had to exercise faith and humbly obey the instructions of Elisha's attendant to bathe himself seven times in the Jordan River. Humbleness brings grand blessings that the proud will never enjoy—this was the lesson learned by those who saw this drama.

Still another quality needed by those who would remain in God's favor is faithfulness. This was emphasized in the discourse "What Is Looked for Is to Be Found Faithful," and it was most helpful in getting a proper evaluation of matters. As the speaker stated: 'God can give ability to anyone, or can accentuate one's ability. But faithfulness is prized by Him, for this is something that the individual must develop himself. A faithful-hearted person is one whom God can use for any purpose he desires.'

Love and hate were two more qualities talked about, and *both* are necessary for the Christian to have in order to enjoy divine approval. In this discourse, "The Godly Qualities of Love and Hate," it was pointed out that one must love the things God loves. On the other hand, one must hate what He hates, including fornication, adultery, loose conduct, slander, vicious gossip and avowed enemies of God. Godly

love is a strong force in doing what is right, while godly hate protects one from walking contrary to Jehovah's way.—Ps. 119:113; Prov. 6:16-19.

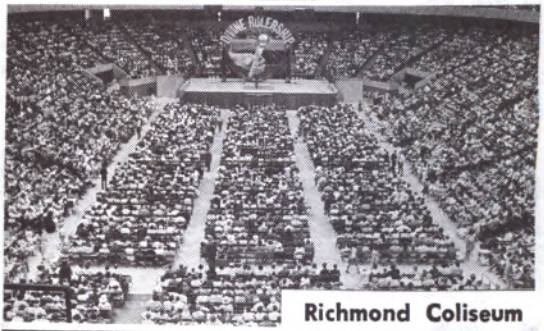
"Do You Appreciate the Power of Prayer?" This was the question directed to those facing the issue of divine rulership at these assemblies. Prayer has a beneficial inward effect, keeping the mind and heart turned in the right direction. It makes us feel impelled to work in harmony with what we request of God. But this is by no means everything. Sincere heartfelt prayer in harmony with God's will can bring action on the part of God. When reflecting genuine, intense concern, prayer can make a difference in *what* God does and *when* he does it. Prayer has power.—2 Cor. 1:8-11; Heb. 13:18, 19; Jas. 5:16.

CONGREGATIONAL RECOGNITION OF DIVINE RULERSHIP

One of the most significant features of this year's district assemblies had to do with the internal structure of the organization—the congregational body of elders and their responsibilities. If there was any one part of the program that dem-

Over 795,863 persons interested in divine rulership attended assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses at some 80 large convention sites in North America

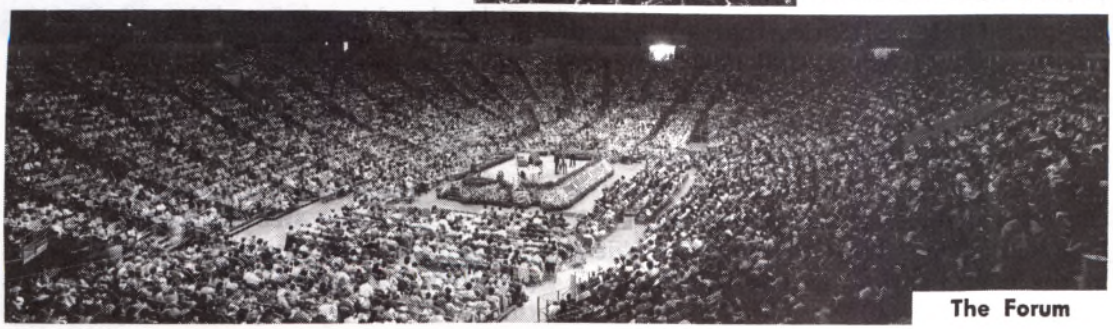
Denver Coliseum



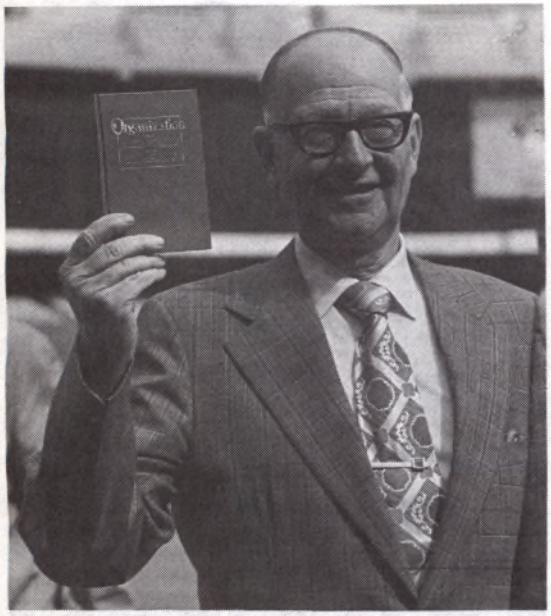
Richmond Coliseum

Sam Houston Coliseum

Hawthorne Race Course



The Forum



"Organization" book, released at assemblies, focuses attention on the big work of preaching and disciple-making

onstrated how divine rulership functions among Jehovah's witnesses in modern times, it was this. The changes and modifications that were here outlined for local congregations will cause those who attended to look back in the years to come on the 1972 assemblies as one of the great milestones in the progressive march of the Lord's people into the new order under divine rulership.

Practical aspects of the reorganization were outlined and demonstrated during the course of the four days, showing the Scriptural responsibilities that are placed on the body of elders, and how they are discharged to the blessing of the congregation and to the glory of God.

For example, when an individual has a personal problem that is more than he can cope with, to whom should he go for help and advice? Why, to one of the elders in the congregation, to one who is spiritually qualified and capable of giving wise counsel and sound advice. Such an elder, it was noted, is an overseer appointed by holy spirit "to shepherd the congregation of God." And so, as a loving shepherd, the elder consulted gives all the tender, loving help possible so that the one with a problem can readjust his thinking in order to avoid being overtaken in some serious transgression.—Acts 20:28; Gal. 6:1.

But if there is a 'practice of sin,' a repeated and willful disobedience of Jehovah's righteous laws by those professing to have given themselves over to the ownership of Jehovah, what then? The program made it very plain that in such an instance the elders making up the judicial committee will correct and root out the wrongdoing. This is a responsibility that they must discharge before the Divine Ruler of the Christian congregation. In this way the cleanness, purity and integrity of the congregation is preserved, and the congregation remains suitable for use by Jehovah.

The assembly delegates were confronted with this question in the form of a discussion: "Can You Take Counsel Without Resentment?" Therein it was shown that, when corrected, one should preserve a right attitude toward the counsel or discipline if one is to continue enjoying God's approval. For counsel and discipline are really expressions of God's love. (Heb. 12:5-11) This thought-provoking observation was made in the course of the discussion:

> "When someone has our best interests at heart and he wants to help us to avoid a course that will end up in calamity, and this person has more wisdom, more experience and more insight than we have, then it is the course of wisdom to listen to him, isn't it?"

PERSONAL RECOGNITION OF JEHOVAH'S RULERSHIP

From start to finish the program emphasized that every aspect of the Christian's life should be governed by his rec-

ognition of God's rulership. The opening address of the assembly chairman, "Living No Longer for Ourselves," made this very clear.

The chairman asked his audience: 'Do you respect God's commands by giving them your heart's attention and by alert obedience? Do you let God's Word govern you, not only in big things, but in every facet of your life?' Searching questions indeed. God's way of rule is by love. There is no coercion, no placing of us in a degraded position. Jehovah trusts his servants. His rulership being based on love, righteousness, wisdom, justice and mercy, we should respond with willing obedience.

As pointed out in the talk "Have You Really Come to *Know* God?," there is an individual, whole-hearted personal response on the part of those who truly know Jehovah. To know Jehovah personally as he is means to know his characteristic qualities, his viewpoint on matters and his ways of doing things. This knowing him intimately also calls for complete confidence and trust in him. The person who really knows God will not give way to doubts about the faithful elders He appoints to take the lead in the congregation nor about the organization itself that Jehovah is using. The God of love will never allow spiritual harm to come upon the dedicated people for whom his beloved Son died.

There is no relationship that is to be cherished more than this personal and intimate relationship one has with the Divine Ruler as his approved servant. Those who attended these assemblies certainly had this truth impressed upon them. The point was also stressed that the sooner people come to an accurate knowledge of Bible truth the better it is for them personally. They are protected against using up energies, time and abilities in vain pursuits. It is most urgent that God's dedicated servants devote themselves wholeheartedly to the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. What makes it even more urgent now is that soon all who are not loyal supporters of Jehovah's rulership will go down in everlasting destruction.

ON WITH KINGDOM-PREACHING AND DISCIPLE-MAKING!

Before Jehovah God brings destruction on all those opposed to his rulership he wants people everywhere to be given opportunity to hear the "good news of the kingdom." So his witnesses throughout the earth are engaged in the greatest preaching and teaching work ever done. As a result, great crowds of right-hearted persons have responded, and are, in turn, sharing in this work—all evidence of their submission to God's rulership.

This Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work of Jehovah's witnesses certainly received a great impetus when, on the first day of the assembly, a new 192-page book, *Organization for Kingdom-preaching and Disciple-making,* was released. On the following days of the assembly other releases were received with a similar enthusiasm. There was *The Bible*

At assemblies 29,087 were baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah the Divine Ruler

in Living English, a new translation by Steven T. Byington, in which the Hebrew Tetragrammaton is consistently rendered as "Jehovah." Also released was the 416-page book *Paradise Restored to Mankind —By Theocracy!,* described on its title page as "A Look at the Fulfillment of the Restoration Prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, as Possible from the Twentieth-Century Vantage Point."

Following the release of the *Organization* book a discussion on the platform raised some very searching questions about one's motives for sharing in this God-ordained work. "Do we see how this work relates to the supreme issue over the rightness of Jehovah's sovereignty? Do we see how God's name is involved, and the part that our willing obedience serves in vindicating and sanctifying God's name?" How would you answer? The audience realized that they must have right motives if their answers were 'Yes' to the questions.

NEXT ISSUE—SPECIAL!

Divine Rulership— the Only Hope of All Mankind

If you are sharing in this preaching and disciple-making work together with Jehovah's witnesses, then you are assisting other people to come to God's temple of worship. But what is this temple, since the Bible speaks of many temples? The discourse "The Gathering of All Nations to One Temple of Worship" provided an 'in-depth' consideration of this question.

To begin with, it was pointed out, this temple is the spiritual sanctuary of Jehovah God. In the "Most Holy" of that temple, that is, in the part of heaven where God has his holy residence, the apostle John saw the 'ark of the covenant.' (Rev. 11:19) That ark represented God's presence and has to do with the "new covenant" of God with men, which covenant came into being in the year 33 C.E. Like the tabernacle constructed by the Israelites in the wilderness, and the material temples that later stood on Mount Moriah, God's great temple also has a "Holy" compartment and courtyards.

According to Hebrews 10:20, the curtain of the material temples separating the Holy from the Most Holy compartments, represented Jesus' flesh. That fleshly organism was a 'barrier' to his entering the heavens of God's presence. Only by death as a human and resurrection as a spirit could he pass that barrier and enter the Most Holy. This means that things outside that curtain—the Holy, the courtyard(s) and the copper altar—must represent things here on the earth.

The audience was now anxious to learn what the Holy, the courtyard(s) and the copper altar represented. Hebrews 10:7-10 indicates that the altar represents God's "will," that is, his willingness to accept the perfect human sacrifice of Jesus. Since Jesus presented himself in the year 29 C.E. for sacrifice in God's due time on the altar of His "will," it was then that God's great spiritual temple first came into being. God's heavenly residence now became like the Most Holy compartment of the material temples in that Jehovah was now willing to be propitiated by the perfect sacrifice of his High Priest Jesus Christ. So from his baptism onward, Jesus began walking in the antitypical priestly courtyard, and, in effect, was superintending his human sacrifice. And as a spirit-begotten Son of God, he offered up prayer, praise and service to God, as incense was

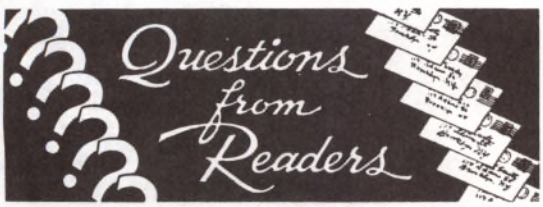
offered by the typical priests in the Holy of the material temple.

Similarly, the spirit-begotten followers of the Lord Jesus Christ serve in the priestly courtyard of God's temple, enjoying a special standing with God, being counted righteous and sinless. And their spirit-begotten condition while still in the flesh was pictured by the Holy compartment in the typical temple frequented by the underpriests.

The speaker next showed that these spirit-begotten sons of God, as "spiritual Israelites," were not the only ones who are found serving at Jehovah's temple today. People of all kinds are being invited to come and serve at this temple, even as the Bible foretold would occur. (Isa. 2:2, 3; Rev. 7:9, 15) Those who respond have the privilege of worshiping Jehovah in the nonpriestly courtyard, comparable to the "courtyard of the Gentiles" of the temple built by King Herod.

So you see why Jehovah's witnesses are urging as many people as possible to come to God's spiritual temple. They know that soon now all who are not true worshipers of Jehovah will be destroyed. Really, the essence of their message was contained in the widely advertised public talk delivered at the climax of these four-day assemblies: "Divine Rulership—the Only Hope of All Mankind." Everyone present was urged to take with him one or two printed copies of this timely talk.

All in all, what a grand series of district assemblies this has been! So many new things learned and so many old things made brighter. Indeed, Jehovah opened his hand and showered upon his people many rich and satisfying blessings, not the least of which was a comprehensive view of the increased responsibilities now resting upon the local body of elders in each congregation. Truly, Jehovah is bringing his congregated people into an organizational condition in which they will be able to ride out Armageddon into God's new order under divine rulership. Ah, yes, divine rulership! We are for it and we trust that you are too!



● What is "the bath that brought us to life" as spoken of at Titus 3:5?—U.S.A.

The apostle Paul was referring to those who became spirit-anointed Christians, when he wrote: "The kindness and the love for man on the part of our Savior, God, was manifested, owing to no works in righteousness that we had performed, but according to his mercy he saved us through the bath that brought us to life and through the making of us new by holy spirit."—Titus 3:4, 5.

The expression "the bath that brought us to life" may also be rendered "the bath of a rebirth" or "the bath of regeneration." Accordingly, this bath must be a cleansing that leads to a rebirth or a regeneration. The agency by which this cleansing comes about is identified at 1 John 1:7: "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." And, with reference to Jesus Christ, Revelation 1:5 states: "To him that loves us and that loosed us from our sins by means of his own blood." That this cleansing from sin brings about a new life is confirmed by the words of Ephesians 2:1: "It is you God made alive though you were dead in your trespasses and sins."—See also Ephesians 2:4, 5 and Colossians 2:13, 14.

Of course, the cleansing brought about through the blood of Jesus is not limited to spirit-anointed Christians. They are not the only ones who benefit from the expression of God's kindness and love for man in giving

his Son. The anointed apostle John wrote regarding Jesus Christ: "He is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's." (1 John 2:1, 2) In harmony therewith Revelation 7:9, 14 depicts a "great crowd" who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Thus on the basis of Jesus' blood this "great crowd" gain a clean standing before Jehovah God. But, as evident from the context of Titus chapter 3, they are not the ones there *referred to* as experiencing 'the bath that brings to life.'

The fact that 'the bath that brings to life' is mentioned before the 'making new by holy spirit' indicates that this bath precedes spirit-begettal. For an individual to be adopted as a spiritual son of God, he must first be justified or declared righteous, that is, he must have perfect human sonship imputed to him. This is because Jehovah God, being perfect and holy, cannot accept as his son anyone who is unclean. On the basis of Jesus' shed blood, however, he can justify sinful humans. As the apostle Paul states: "Those in union with Christ Jesus have no *condemnation*. For the law of that spirit which gives life in union with Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."—Rom. 8:1, 2, 33.

Thus it can be seen that Jehovah God cleanses or 'bathes' those whom he brings into a relationship of sonship. He 'bathes' them in the blood of his Son, applying in their behalf the merit of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Through this "bath" resulting in their justification, they gain the status of perfect human sons. This puts them in position to be 'made new through holy spirit,' that is, to become spirit-begotten sons of God. They become a "new creation."—2 Cor. 5:17.

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