The WATCHTOWER

Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

NOVEMBER 15, 1973
Semimonthly

SOWING SEEDS OF GOOD NEWS IN A WAR-PLAGUED WORLD

WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF WORLD PEACE?

GOING TO A WEDDING?

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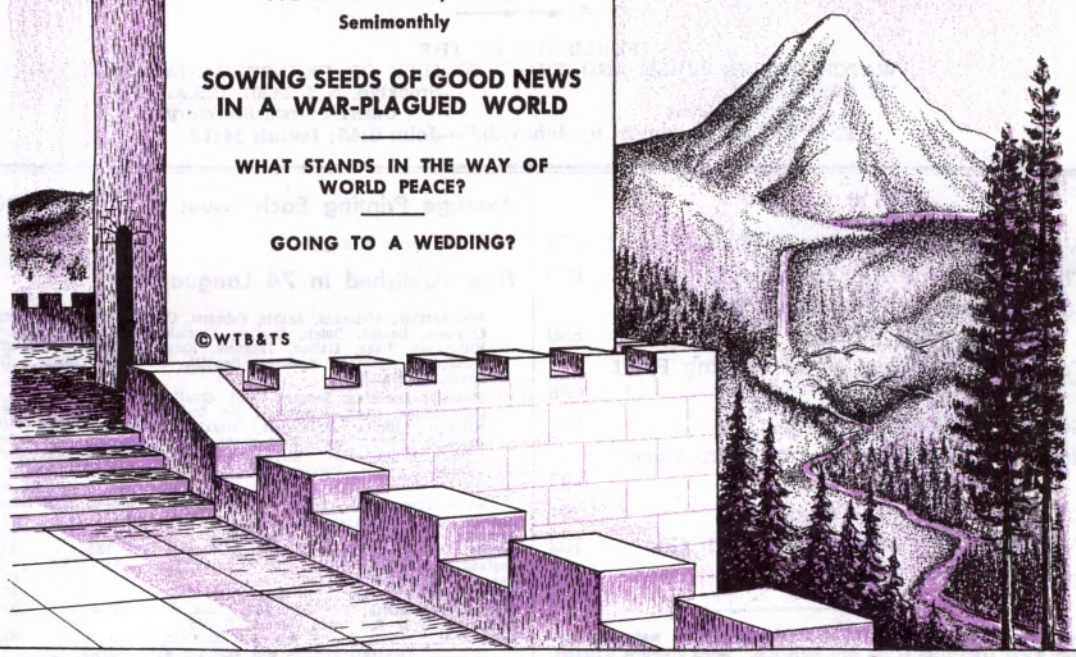

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLISHED BY THE
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street — Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
N. H. KNORR, *President* — GRANT SUITER, *Secretary*

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

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

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

Average Printing Each Issue: 7,875,000

Five cents a copy

Now Published in 74 Languages

Semimonthly: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chishona, Cibemba, Cinyanja, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malagasy, Norwegian, Portuguese, Sesotho, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu.

Monthly: Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Croatian, Efik, Ewe, Fijian, Ga, Gun, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Ibo, Icelandic, Indonesian, Kanarese, Kikongo, Lingala, Malayalam, Marathi, Melanesian-Pidgin, Motu, Pampango, Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish, Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Silozi, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Tamil, Tswana, Tumbuka, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese.

Yearly subscription rates for semimonthly editions in local currency

Watch Tower Society offices	
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	$1.50
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	$1.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5	$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	75p
Ghana, West Africa, Box 760, Accra	¢1.90
New Zealand, 621 New North Rd., Auckland 3	$1.50
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	N1.05
Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila D-406	P8
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, Transvaal	R1,10

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

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

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

Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A.

The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
Vol. XCIV November 15, 1973 Number 22

WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY of World Peace?

TRY as they might, the people of the world have been unable to achieve genuine peace. Why?

Until two obstacles are removed, true peace can never come.

The first of these obstacles, according to the Bible, is the world's false religious systems. Informed men are also beginning to view world religions as an obstacle.

Under the headline "Now Church Upsetting World," John Chamberlain, editorial commentator for the King Features Syndicate, calls attention to the churches' interfering in politics, their even going so far as to support revolutionary movements. He writes:

> "Ironically, the biggest enemies of the growing spirit of universal détente [a relaxing of strained relations between nations] are a few functionaries who claim to be speaking in the name of Christianity. The World Council of Churches is the worst offender. But the Roman Catholic Church has produced its own radicals, whom it should disown."—*The Daily Oklahoman*, August 8, 1973.

And the United States president, in his August 15, 1973, television address to the nation, implicated the clergy in political meddling and lawbreaking when he said that, in the nineteen sixties,

> "individuals and groups increasingly asserted the right to take the law into their own hands, insisting that their purposes represented a higher morality. Then, their attitude was praised in the press and even from some of our pulpits as evidence of a new idealism. Those of us who insisted on the old restraints, who warned of the overriding importance of operating within the law and by the rules, were accused of being reactionaries.
>
> "That same attitude brought a rising spiral of violence and fear, of riots and arson and bombings, all in the name of peace and in the name of justice."

Actually, the Bible says that the true servants of God should stay out of politics completely, being totally neutral, and should proclaim the kingdom of God as the hope of the world. But, instead, world religion, particularly the churches of Christendom, has meddled in politics, has taken sides in national disputes and has misrepresented God. Therefore it has his disfavor. He has said that he will destroy it. How?

God's instrument will be the political elements with which the religious organi-

zations have 'played the harlot.' But right now, in most of the so-called "Christian" nations, the religious leaders "hobnob" with politicians and are often prominent in their political gatherings. Even though there are some godless rulers, it is not to be expected that the political elements, on their own, would act unitedly to destroy false religion. What, then, will cause them to do so? Note what action God says he will take toward harlot-like world religion.

THE "WILD BEAST"

In his Word the Bible God describes the great world political organization as a "wild beast." We know this from what God revealed centuries ago through his prophet Daniel. Daniel was given a vision in which he saw beasts—a lion, a bear, a leopard and a fearsome beast with iron teeth. God's angel explained, "as for these huge beasts, because they are four, there are four kings that will stand up from the earth." These turned out to be Babylon (then in power), Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.—Dan. 7:4-7, 17; compare Daniel 8:3-8, 20, 21.

Likewise, in the book of Revelation the apostle John reports a vision in which he saw a "wild beast" having seven heads and ten horns. This beast, being a composite, represents the world political organization that has expressed its authority through seven world powers. (Rev. 13:1, 2) The Devil is shown to be its real ruler and god. —2 Cor. 4:4; Matt. 4:8, 9.

THE "HARLOT"

An "image" of the symbolic "wild beast," an international organization for peace and security, now known as the United Nations, has been set up, its membership being comprised of the chief political powers of earth making up the political "wild beast." Its "ten horns" represent all the national rulers therein. This "image," also called a "scarlet-colored wild beast," is ridden by the "harlot" "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion. She is shown directing this "wild beast" toward total war against the "Lamb," Jesus Christ, and his Kingdom interests in the earth. False religion has had a strong influence in directing the political rulers against Jehovah's witnesses, and they have been bitterly persecuted. "Babylon the Great's" powerful influence makes her a religious "empire" over the earth's political organization, as the Bible says: "And the woman whom you saw means the great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth."—Rev. 17:1-3, 5, 13, 14, 18.

How does the end of the entire false religious system come? The Bible answers: "The ten horns that you saw [all the national rulers], and the [scarlet-colored] wild beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire." —Rev. 17:16.

What prompts them to act, since they have not done so even though they see the churches meddling in political matters? Jehovah God himself. "For God put it into their hearts to carry out his thought, even to carry out their one thought by giving their kingdom to the wild beast, until the words of God will have been accomplished."—Rev. 17:17.

False religion's end will therefore come with surprising suddenness, while she is thinking, "I sit a queen, and I am no widow, and I shall never see mourning." But God says: "That is why 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. 18:7, 8.

REMOVING THE SECOND OBSTACLE

What, then, is the second obstacle to world peace? It is the "wild beast" itself, the earth-wide political organization that governs this world.

The "wild beast's" record is indeed a bad one. It is a record of far more years of war than of peace. And even during peacetime millions of people have always been under oppression or in slavery. Now nationalism forms a positively impenetrable barrier to world peace. So God's Word tells us that, after false religion is 'burned up,' right on its heels will come the destruction of the "wild beast" and all who support it.

Does this destruction come by a nuclear and chemical war? Enough of these weapons are now stockpiled to destroy the entire human race. But no, the Bible shows that the entire "wild beast" fights against God and his kingdom in the hands of Christ Jesus. From heaven, Christ conquers them. This is the battle that takes place at the stage of world developments called Har-Magedon, as it is written: "And they gathered them [the kings of earth] together to the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon."—Rev. 16:14-16.

Therefore, let no reformers think that by protests and demonstrations they can make the "wild beast" a tame 'peace beast,' assuring human rights to all earth's peoples. Nor should revolutionaries think that by violence, guerrilla tactics or terrorism they can unseat the "wild beast" from its control of earth. The book of Revelation, describing Har-Magedon, reveals the only way that the "wild beast" can be subdued:

> "And I saw the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage the war with the one seated on the horse and with his army. And the wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received the mark of the wild beast and those who render worship to its image. While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulphur. But the rest were killed off with the long sword of the one seated on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth. And all the birds were filled from the fleshy parts of them." —Rev. 19:19-21.

The one seated on the horse is described earlier (verses 11-16) as the "King of kings and Lord of lords." Who else but the "Lamb," the Lord Jesus Christ, would be the one on the horse, fighting this battle of the "retribution of God the sovereign Lord"? (Rev. 19:15, *The New English Bible*) Notably, along with the "wild beast" there is seen a "false prophet." This evidently would be a part of the "wild beast's" forces acting as a mouthpiece or chief spokesman. And we find that this "false prophet" is the very one that spoke so loudly to get the "image of the wild beast" set up for the people to worship, to look to for world peace and security.

Yes, it is one of the heads of the beast and is itself a "wild beast" when viewed as a single world power, as were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. It is represented as a "two-horned" wild beast. (Rev. 13:11-15) It proves to be the seventh world power, having two "horns," two separate but usually cooperating ruling political powers, Britain and the United States.

HAR-MAGEDON NOT OF LONG DURATION

No part, therefore, of this world's political system will be on the sidelines. Even so, the heavenly forces under Jesus Christ will not take long to wipe out the entire military forces of all the armies of earth and all their equipment at Har-

Magedon. Earthly weapons cannot touch *the* heavenly forces, of course. But weapons can threaten those on earth who stand on the side of God's sovereignty. Yet these earthly servants of God will not engage in any fighting. They rely on Christ's heavenly forces, which the "wild beast," however powerful and elusive, cannot evade. It will be "caught" while committing its last misdeeds against the faithful worshipers of Jehovah God.

If one angel of God could destroy 185,000 of the chief men and leaders of the Assyrian army in one night, how long would it take all the myriads of angels under Christ's command to annihilate the armies of this world, even though they should number into tens of millions? —2 Ki. 19:35; 2 Chron. 32:21; Dan. 7:9, 10, 13, 14.

At Har-Magedon the King of kings issues the order for the destruction of God's enemies at the hands of the heavenly angels under his command. While "still alive" —strong, functioning institutions—the political organizations are annihilated by being thrown into the symbolic "lake of fire." What disorganization and confusion this destruction of their organization brings among the ranks! But it proves too late for flight and too hopeless to fight. Jesus Christ, by the 'long sword proceeding out of his mouth,' orders their execution as if a long sword of an officer with authority were being applied.

SURVIVORS

Note that the account does not say that God will burn up the literal earth over which the world political system ruled for centuries and which it polluted and desolated to a great extent. Neither does the prophecy say that the earth will be a dead, uninhabited place. There will be survivors. How do we know?

Jesus Christ himself implied survival by giving instructions for survival and then saying: "Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:36.

Accordingly, not all will worship the "wild beast" or its "image." The pressure applied to make everyone do so provides a test of endurance for the spiritual brothers of Christ on earth. (Rev. 13:7-10) But they defeat the "wild beast's" efforts and are 'conquerors' of the world without armed conflict.—John 16:33; Rev. 2:7, 17, 26.

Besides these spiritual brothers of Christ, who have heavenly hopes, the Bible definitely shows that there are others who do not worship the "wild beast." These are the "great crowd" of Revelation 7:9-17, who are specifically said to "come out of the great tribulation" and over whom God will spread his "tent" of protection, and his Lamb will "guide them to fountains of waters of life." These are not of the "new creation" that make up the "Israel of God." (Gal. 6:15, 16) The apostle John saw them appear on the scene after he had witnessed the sealing of the 144,000 of spiritual Israel.

Also, these are depicted as the "sheep" who do good to Christ's spiritual brothers during his presence in Kingdom power. They are invited: "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world."—Matt. 25:34.

Consequently there will be no vacuum, no empty, uninhabited earth. God will merely cleanse the earth of polluters, ruiners. (Rev. 11:18) He will annihilate his enemies. All who survive will see the disgrace of those who fight against God, and all living will praise him for his justice, righteousness and mercy.—Ps. 145:9-21.

They found the KEY TO PEACE

THROUGHOUT the earth many people are filled with bitterness. They do not enjoy peace with their fellowmen. Persons of one nationality, race or skin color feel animosity toward individuals of another nationality, race or skin color, often because of injustices committed in the past. Can such persons overcome their animosities?

The experience of a minister of Jehovah's witnesses in California shows what can be done. He was engaging in the house-to-house ministry, speaking with people in the neighborhood about God's purposes. He says:

"At one door, a six-foot-tall man answered. As soon as I introduced myself, he interrupted, saying, 'I don't talk to white people!' Sincerely wanting to speak with him, I asked him what the problem was. He told me that he was an American Indian and that the whites had taken their land and killed off his people.

"I acknowledged that a great wrong had been done. I also informed him that I was Armenian and that if I wanted to take the same attitude, I could feel the same way about the people who had massacred thousands of Armenians. But I assured him that I was placing my trust and faith in Jehovah God, knowing that he would soon rectify matters through his heavenly Kingdom government. Then I assured him that this is why I was at his door, to explain how present world conditions gave proof that soon God's kingdom will end injustice, prejudice and wickedness throughout the earth.

"That so appealed to him that he accepted a Bible study aid designed to help people understand God's purposes. When I returned on a later occasion, we began a regular study of the Bible. Since then he and his wife have come each week to the meetings at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and are making rapid progress in learning the Bible's sure hope for the future."

Even persons trained for war can change their ways and begin pursuing peace. A man from Belgium relates:

"I was a mercenary in the African Katangese army and faced many perilous situations. In one campaign the Katangese army killed every creature, man and animal. Fearful of losing my life, I vowed, 'If I get out of here alive, I will go back to church.' I came out alive. Katanga was defeated and, as if by a miracle, I escaped death.

"Many years previously I had left the Catholic Church. But now I went back. The first time I went back they preached about hell. The illogical comments of the aging priest gave me such a shock that I left the church immediately. Later, I went back on Christmas night. I arrived just at midnight. The church door was locked. After knocking, I was let in. In the rear, amidst drunken Christmas celebrators, I felt fully absolved of my vow made on the battlefield. I left the church, never to return.

"However, from that time onward I thought more about the existence of God. I prayed to God to reveal himself to me by means of a sign so that I could fulfill the vow I had made to him.

"Then something happened. One of Jehovah's witnesses came to our door and I took everything that he offered to me and read it with keen interest. I examined, compared and studied.

"Soon afterward, I decided to test out what I had learned by visiting the Kingdom Hall. Impressed by the friendly and happy atmosphere, I soon became a regular attender. Never in my whole life, eventful and colorful though it was, with much travel, had I found the love and unity that I found in this Kingdom Hall."

This man had tremendous changes to make. As he put it: "All my life I had been trained for carnal warfare and now I had to learn to become a spiritual soldier of Christ."

Truly, then, a good relationship with the Creator, based on accurate knowledge of his Word, is the key to peace with fellowmen. If you are disturbed about the bitterness and prejudice existing today, why not take the opportunity to speak with Jehovah's witnesses. Find out from them what sure proof there is that God will soon terminate national and racial prejudice, as well as war earth wide. And also learn what steps to this end are already being taken by hundreds of thousands of Christians all over the globe.

Sowing Seeds of Good News IN A WAR-PLAGUED WORLD

"This hope you heard of before by the telling of the truth of that good news which has presented itself to you, even as it is bearing fruit and increasing in all the world."—Col. 1:5, 6.

TWO KINDS of seeds are being sown world wide today—the seed of good news of a lasting peace and the seed of war propaganda. The latter seed is being sown by the majority, the first-mentioned seed by the minority.

2 The armed nations are occupied with sowing the seed of war preparedness. Both in the field of agriculture and in the field of international relations it always works out that what is sown reproduces itself, produces its own kind. This has been true ever since the first man took up farming. (Gen. 3:17-19; 4:1, 2; 1:11, 12; 9:20) This law also operates relentlessly in the lives of nations. The divine prophecy has been true of many nations, and not just of ancient Israel: "It is wind that they keep sowing, and a stormwind is what they will reap." (Hos. 8:7) Since the majority of men are engaged in sowing the seed of war preparedness, what about the seed of peaceful good news? Can it thrive and produce fruit and increase? Yes, for time and again it has been demonstrated to be an infallible rule that "whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." (Gal. 6:7) Man's Creator fixed it that way.

3 Today those who are sowing the seed of the good news of lasting peace are really carrying on a work that started nineteen centuries ago. They are now carrying on this work upon such a scale that it cannot help but be observed by all the world. What was experienced by the seed sowers back there in the first century of our Common Era is being experienced by the seed sowers of today in this war-plagued twentieth century. Lovers of a lasting peace on earth ought to be interested. But we all have to decide on whether we care to be sowers of war propaganda or sowers of the peaceful good news.

1. What two kinds of seeds are being sown world wide, and by whom?
2. (a) What law works out regarding what is sown, not only in the field of agriculture, but also in international affairs? (b) What rule as stated by Paul holds true with regard to sowing seeds of good news?
3. (a) When did this work of sowing the peaceful seed of the good news get started? (b) What decision on sowing do we have to make in this war-plagued twentieth century?

Our decision will determine the consequences to us.

4 During the sixties of the first century C.E., the air was electric with heated feeling against the Roman Empire. This was particularly so in the Middle East in the Roman province of Judea. Rebellion was brewing against the occupancy and domination of that land by the Roman armies under a pagan Roman administrator. The violent end of the sacred city of Jerusalem was drawing near. That city as a center of Jewish worship was in its time of the end. The generation of Jews whom Jesus Christ himself addressed during his public ministry on earth was the one that he said would not pass away until Jerusalem and its gorgeous temple were destroyed. (Matt. 24:34, 1-22) History records that this terrible destruction came in the mournful year of 70 C.E. Was there anything that could keep Jews from being overwhelmingly grieved at such a religiously shocking destruction? Yes, there was! There was just one thing that could comfort a Jewish heart, provided that the Jewish heart would accept it. What was that? Jesus Christ mentioned it when giving his marvelous prophecy upon the conclusion of the Jewish system of things over there in the Middle East. This cheering, heartwarming thing he spoke of after telling of the persecutions that would come upon his faithful disciples. He said:

5 "But he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved. And this GOOD NEWS of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matt. 24:13, 14.

4, 5. (a) Back there in the sixties of the first century C.E., what religiously shocking disaster was in the making? (b) In view of such a disaster, what was the thing mentioned by Jesus that would bring comfort to the Jew who accepted it?

6 The calamitous destruction of Jerusalem and her temple was heartbreaking news to the Jews around the world who still looked to that earthly city as their religious center. It was for them the worst of news. But the information that Jesus Christ proclaimed throughout his earthly ministry was GOOD NEWS, gospel, evangel! But good news of *what* kingdom? It was not the kingdom that Jesus Christ said would rise against kingdom at the same time that nation would rise against nation, to be accompanied by famines, pestilences and earthquakes in one place after another. It was the *only* kingdom that Jesus advocated and proclaimed. It was the one that he mentioned in this selfsame prophecy, calling it "the kingdom of the heavens." (Matt. 24:7; 25:1) He foretold the signs of its nearness, saying in this very prophecy: "In this way you also, when you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near." —Luke 21:10, 31.

7 So, then, even before the destruction of earthly Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E., because of her rebellion against the Roman Empire, "this good news" of God's kingdom, of the kingdom of the heavens, was to be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, nations inside and outside the Roman Empire. With what effect? Well, when the Roman legions wrecked Jerusalem and her temple, this would not shock the Christian believers in God, even the Christianized Jews. These were actually expecting that destruction. The Christianized Jews in Jerusalem and in all the rest of the province of Judea acted upon the advice given in Jesus' prophecy; they fled from Judea and Jerusalem as quickly as they could after

6. What kind of news was it that Jesus proclaimed, and about what government did it tell?
7. (a) Before Jerusalem's destruction, what was to be accomplished by Christ's disciples? (b) Why was Jerusalem's destruction no shock to the Christians, leaving them hopeless?

the temporary surrounding of Jerusalem by Roman armies in the year of Jewish revolt, 66 C.E. (Matt. 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; Mark 13:14-20) They knew that the desolating of Judea and Jerusalem did not mean the destruction of the "kingdom of the heavens," "the kingdom of God." No earthly city represented God's kingdom to them any longer. They rested their hope in God's heavenly kingdom that was to come, in which they were to share.

8 Jerusalem's destruction filled them with more confidence than ever in the true Messianic kingdom of God. The evidence is that they continued to proclaim the good news of that kingdom to the very end of the first century, in spite of bitter persecution by the Roman Empire. The Christian apostle John, who died about the year 100 C.E., received the Revelation (the book listed last in the Holy Bible) shortly before his death. In the opening chapter he writes: "I John, your brother and a sharer with you in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in company with Jesus, came to be in the isle that is called Patmos for speaking about God and bearing witness to Jesus." (Rev. 1:9) By this time the "good news of the kingdom" had been preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations to even a greater extent than such good news had been preached before Jerusalem's end in the year 70 C.E. Thus Jesus' prophecy concerning the worldwide preaching of the good news of God's Messianic kingdom had not failed. This set the pattern for similar preaching of "this good news of the kingdom" in our present-time conclusion of the system of things, to which Jesus' prophecy applies in a culminating sense.

8. (a) The Christians were filled with more confidence in what government, and how was this shown down to the end of the first century? (b) For whom was a pattern of activity thus set?

"INCREASING IN ALL THE WORLD"

9 That the foretold preaching of the good news of the Kingdom was accomplished before Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E. was testified to even years before that Jewish calamity. Testified to by whom? By the Christian apostle Paul. About the year 60 or 61 C.E., he found himself under Roman custody in a private house in Rome and in chains. During his two years or longer of house arrest in Rome he wrote inspired letters to Christian congregations in Greece and Asia Minor. One of these letters was to the congregation in the Asia Minor city of Colossae, which lay near to the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, where there were Christian congregations also. Modern Turkey now holds these locations. The apostle Paul sends his letter in the names of himself and of Timothy, a fellow missionary. Paul had not founded the congregation in Colossae, and his letter indicates that he had never been there. But through a visiting fellow Christian, Paul heard about this Colossian congregation. He was so stirred by this report which came through Epaphras, that he was moved to write this letter to Christians unknown to him. He introduces himself, saying:

10 "We thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in connection with Christ Jesus and the love you have for all the holy ones because of the hope that is being reserved for you in the heavens. This hope you heard of before by the telling of the truth of that good news which has presented itself to you, even as it is bearing fruit and increasing in all the world just as it is doing also among you, from the day you heard and accurately knew the undeserved

9, 10. (a) The worldwide preaching of the good news before Jerusalem's destruction was testified to by whom, and how? (b) In his letter to the Colossians, how did Paul involve himself with the unknown congregation?

kindness of God in truth. That is what you have learned from Epaphras our beloved fellow slave, who is a faithful minister of the Christ on our behalf, who also disclosed to us your love in a spiritual way."—Col. 1:3-8.

11 At the time of writing this letter Paul, as an informed, widely traveled missionary, testified to the worldwide preaching of the good news by what he says in the above introduction of his letter. He writes of the "telling of the truth of that good news which has presented itself to you, even as it is bearing fruit and increasing in all the world." (Col. 1:5, 6) That he means a worldwide preaching Paul confirms some sentences later, when he speaks of their "not being shifted away from the hope of that good news which you heard, and which was preached in all creation that is under heaven. Of this good news I Paul became a minister." (Col. 1:23) This, of course, did not mean that every individual on earth under heaven was being personally reached. It meant that the preaching of the good news was being pushed to all quarters of the inhabited earth under heaven and that all human creatures, without regard for language, color, race or nationality, were being given the opportunity to hear the Kingdom message. There were no limits. In his earlier letter to the congregation in Rome (about 56 C.E.), Paul expressed his intention to carry the good news into Spain. The Americas still farther west were not then known to him.—Rom. 15:24.

12 This preaching of "this good news of the kingdom" by the then small band of disciples of Christ during the first century in Asia, Europe and Africa was in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8) But it did not complete the fulfillment of the prophecy. It was to be duplicated in a climactic way on a global scale after the discovery of the Americas by Europeans and before the destruction of the antitypical rebellious Jerusalem, modern-day Christendom, in this time of her end since 1914 C.E.

13 The spiritual effect of this spreading of the Kingdom hope now should be the same as that in the days of the apostles of Jesus Christ during the first century C.E. Accordingly let us consider what the apostle Paul says of its effect with reference to the congregation there in Colossae, Asia Minor. He says that to the Colossians there had been a "telling of the truth of that good news which has presented itself to you, even as it is bearing fruit and increasing in all the world just as it is doing also among you." (Col. 1:5, 6) So the "telling" of the spoken word "of the truth of that good news" was "bearing fruit" world wide, including Colossae.

14 The apostle Paul here likens the "good news" that was truthfully told to them to seed planted in the ground. The ground or soil is good and fine, and seed takes root and sprouts and produces fruit, a fruit of its own kind. This picture corresponds with the parabolic illustration that Jesus Christ gave about the productive abilities of four types of soil. Here is what he said:

15 "Look! A sower went out to sow; and as he was sowing, some seeds fell alongside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell upon the rocky places where they did not have much soil, and at once they sprang up because of not having depth of soil. But when the sun rose they were scorched, and because of not having root they

11. (a) That worldwide preaching was meant is shown how in Colossians 1:23? (b) In what sense was this true of the preaching by then?
12. Was that the complete fulfillment of the prophecy on preaching, or what was yet due?
13. According to Paul, what was the effect of the spreading of the Kingdom hope, as illustrated in the case of Colossae?
14, 15. (a) To what did Paul thus liken the good news as truthfully told? (b) The picture here drawn corresponds with what parabolic illustration given by Jesus?

withered. Others, too, fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them. Still others fell upon the fine soil and they began to yield fruit, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, the other thirty.

16 "You, then, listen to the illustration of the man that sowed. Where anyone hears the word of the kingdom but does not get the sense of it, the wicked one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart; this is the one sown alongside the road. As for the one sown upon the rocky places, this is the one hearing the word and at once accepting it with joy. Yet he has no root in himself but continues for a time, and after tribulation or persecution has arisen on account of the word he is at once stumbled. As for the one sown among the thorns, this is the one hearing the word, but the anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. As for the one sown upon the fine soil, this is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, the other thirty."—Matt. 13:3-8, 18-23.

17 According to what the apostle Paul had heard from his visitor, Epaphras, the members of the Christian congregation in Colossae had hearts that were like the "fine soil" described by Jesus. Hence, the "word of the kingdom" that was sown upon their hearts bore fruit and produced in varying amounts, like a hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold. The apostle Paul had not sown the Kingdom seed among the Colossian hearts, but, apparently, this Epaphras of Colossae had done so, for Paul speaks of him in the letter to the Colossians as "Epaphras, who is from among you, a slave of Christ Jesus." Paul also says to them: "That is what you have learned from Epaphras our beloved fellow slave, who is a faithful minister of the Christ on our behalf, who also disclosed to us your love in a spiritual way." (Col. 4:12; 1:7, 8; Philem. 23) This "minister of the Christ" was merely acting as an agent of the Great Sower of the seed, Jesus Christ. Said Jesus: "The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11) It is the "word of the kingdom." But it is not seed in a storehouse, but is seed that is "sown," that is to say, God's "word of the kingdom" that is preached, proclaimed, taught.

18 Those disciples who join together under the Great Sower, Jesus Christ, in sowing, preaching, proclaiming, teaching the seed of the "word of the kingdom" are, as the apostle Paul calls them, "my fellow workers for the kingdom of God." (Col. 4:11) Even while Paul was there in the custodial house in Rome, he did more than write letters, such as the one to the Colossians. He "would kindly receive all those who [like Epaphras] came in to him, preaching the kingdom of God to them and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with the greatest freeness of speech, without hindrance." (Acts 28:30, 31) Since this spiritual "seed" is the "word of God," the "word of the kingdom," it contains in itself good news, a message of hope, a message of the grandest government for the blessing of all mankind, God's Messianic kingdom. This message contained in the "seed" is something that the receiver of the "seed" has to understand and appreciate. He has to get the meaning of

16. What explanation did Jesus himself give of this illustration?

17. (a) The hearts of the Colossians were like what in Jesus' illustration, and who had done the sowing of them directly? (b) In actuality, what is the "seed," and in what situation?

18. (a) How did Paul in his custodial house in Rome continue to sow the "seed"? (b) What does this "seed" contain within itself, and what is necessary for it to take root in human hearts?

it, the sense of it, with his heart. In this way the "seed" will take root in his heart.

FAITH AND LOVE WITHIN THE HEART

[19] What effect did the "good news" as truthfully told to them have within the hearts of the members who made up the congregation in Colossae? It had an effect that moved Paul, when he heard about it, to write them his excellent letter. The effect within their hearts was what Paul mentions: "your faith in connection with Christ Jesus and the love you have for all the holy ones," "your love in a spiritual way." (Col. 1:4, 8) Such faith and love had to be cultivated in their hearts for the "seed" of the "word of God" to take root downward and sprout upward and make an outward expression, thus producing new, living seed grains thirty, sixty or a hundred times as many as the original seed. There must be this development in the heart first before there is an outward expression that reproduces what was sown inside.

[20] As regards Gentiles, non-Jews, such as many of the Colossian congregation were, it had taken faith on their part to accept the "seed" of the word of God. They had to abandon the many Greek and Roman gods to which they were dedicated and concentrate their belief upon the only living and true God, the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things in them, whose name is Jehovah. But whether they were uncircumcised Gentiles or were natural Jews, they also had to believe in Jesus Christ, that this Jesus the descendant of King David of Jerusalem was the promised Messiah or Christ. They had to believe that this one was the "firstborn of all creation." They needed to believe that he was also "firstborn from the dead," because Jehovah God has resurrected him from the dead to immortal life in the heavens. Besides, they had to believe that Jesus Christ is the "head of the body, the congregation," to which they desired to belong. Also, that "carefully concealed in him are all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge," so that their pagan philosophies or their man-made religious traditions must no longer be held to.—Col. 1:15-18; 2:3, 8; Acts 14:11-18.

[21] Those were some of the vital things that were contained in the "truth of that good news," and in these things they had to have faith with their hearts. It was just as the apostle Paul had written years previously to the Romans: "The 'word' of faith, which we are preaching. For if you publicly declare [or, you confess] 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 [or, one confesses] for salvation." (Rom. 10:8-10) Because the hearts of the Colossians were like "fine soil," they did exercise faith with their hearts and accepted the "seed" of the "word of the kingdom," the "word of God," and they did let it take root in their heart and express itself.

[22] In conjunction with their faith that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ, they had to believe that Jehovah God had seated him at His own right hand like a King-Priest, who was foreshadowed by Melchizedek the ancient king of Salem.

19. (a) According to Paul, what effects did the telling of the good news have within the hearts of the Colossians? (b) Because of the "seed" sown, why must there be a development of faith and love in the heart?
20. (a) Why did the Gentiles especially have to exercise faith in order to accept the "seed"? (b) Whether Jew or Gentile, they had to accept what vital facts concerning Jesus?
21. (a) What did the Colossians have to do with that "word" that had been placed in their mouths, and why? (b) What quality did they have to exercise with their heart to move them to give outward expression?
22, 23. (a) Those Colossians were obliged to believe Jesus occupied what official position, and so under what rule were they? (b) Hence, like Paul the letter writer, what position with reference to that government did they hold, and what command of Jesus did they share in carrying out?

In consequence of this, they had come under Christ's spiritual kingdom. Yes, they were required to believe that God "delivered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." (Col. 1:13) Not only were they under the present kingship of the Son of God's love, but they were also "ambassadors substituting for Christ" in God's program of "reconciling a world to himself" by means of Christ. (2 Cor. 5:19, 20) While in the prison from which Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians, he spoke of "freeness of speech to make known the sacred secret of the good news, for which I am acting as an ambassador in chains." (Eph. 6:19, 20) So, like the apostle Paul, the Colossian congregation was a body of ambassadors for the "sacred secret of the good news." They were obliged to take part in the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, in Matthew 24:14:

[23] "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations."

[24] By engaging in this ambassadorial activity in behalf of the Messianic kingdom of God, those Colossians were bringing forth the fruits of the Kingdom. They proved themselves to be part of the "nation producing its fruits." The "kingdom" that had been taken away from the nation of natural, circumcised Israel had now been given to the nation of spiritual Israel, to which nation those Colossian Christians belonged. (Matt. 21:43) The symbolic "seed" of the "word of the kingdom," "the word of God," had been sown on their hearts, and now that their hearts were found to be fine soil they were producing a crop of the same kind of thing that had been sown on their hearts. That is, they too were bringing forth, preaching, teaching, the "word of the kingdom" to others, those outside the Colossian congregation.—Matt. 13:19; Luke 8:11, 15.

[25] An excellent example worthy of imitation was set back there in the first century C.E. in connection with the Christian congregation in Colossae, Asia Minor. Is it being duplicated today in this war-plagued twentieth century? If so, then we, like the apostle Paul, will have cause to "thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always" when we pray to Him regarding the religious situation.

24. (a) To what nation did those Colossians now belong, and what fruits were they obliged to bring forth? (b) So what kind of fruitage was it that the "seed" sown on their hearts was bringing forth?

25. In view of the example set by the Colossians, what question do we ask as regards our war-plagued century, and for what will we thank God?

TELLING OF THE GOOD NEWS BEARING FRUIT WORLD WIDE

IN THE first century with which our Common Era began, the most hair-raising event was, not the burning of the city of Rome in 64 C.E., but the siege and destruction of the city of Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. For his oustanding victory over that mightily fortified city, the Roman General Titus was rewarded

1. What was the hair-raising event of the first century C.E., and, before it became known world wide, what had been preached world wide?

with a victory procession on his return to Rome in 71 C.E., a triumphal arch being erected in his honor. However, the sanguinary war with the rebellious Jews did not end until the capture of their last Judean stronghold, the fortress of Masada that overlooks the Dead Sea, in the year 73 C.E. This brought great shame, reproach and religious frustration to the Jews world wide, with tens of thousands of them being sold into slavery. However, years before this bad news for those circumcised Jews became known world wide, the good news of an everlasting joy had been spread throughout the then known world. It was the good news of the Messianic kingdom of God, a kingdom that is not dependent upon earthly Jerusalem.

[2] Who were the bearers of that good news in that first century C.E.? Not the natural circumcised Jews who looked to Jerusalem as their religious center. Rather, it was those who were falsely accused by Emperor Nero for the burning of Rome, namely, the peaceful, harmless followers of Jesus Christ who had been called "Christians" first in the Syrian city of Antioch. (Acts 11:26) Back there those Christian disciples included thousands of Jewish believers, like the Christian apostles Simon Peter and Paul. Before the burning of Rome the apostle Peter found himself in Babylon, Mesopotamia, from which he wrote to the Christians throughout Asia Minor. The apostle Paul found himself, for at least the first two years of his stay in Rome, Italy, under house arrest and booked for having his appeal in behalf of Christianity heard before Emperor Nero. (1 Pet. 5:13; Acts 28:30, 31) From Babylon, near the eastern limit of the Roman Empire, to Rome itself was a distance of about two thousand miles. Quite a spread for Christianity!

[3] Through the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch of Queen Candace by the evangelizer Philip, Christianity had also penetrated far south, all the way down into Ethiopia south of Egypt. (Acts 8:26-39) Thus the good news of God's Messianic kingdom was penetrating deep into Africa and Asia and Europe. Among the Christians to whom the apostle Peter wrote in his first general letter, in five provinces in Asia Minor, were the Christians in Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis in the Roman province of Asia. (1 Pet. 1:1) About the time of Peter's general letter, the apostle Paul wrote directly to the Christian congregation in Colossae and mentioned to them his letter to the congregation in Laodicea. (Col. 4:16) It was to these Colossian Christians that Paul spoke of the "telling of the truth of that good news" world wide, this being years before the end came upon earthly Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. Along with such good news there went a hope for those accepting the good news, and with reference to this Paul writes, saying:

[4] "This hope you heard of before by the telling of the truth of that good news which has presented itself to you, even as it is bearing fruit and increasing in all the world just as it is doing also among you, from the day you heard and accurately knew the undeserved kindness of God in truth."—Col. 1:4-6.

[5] That the hope of God's heavenly kingdom had been spread world wide is emphasized by Paul when his letter continues on to say to the Colossians: "Provided,

2. (a) Who were the bearers of that good news in that first century C.E.? (b) How wide a spread did Christianity have from east to west, before the burning of Rome?

3, 4. (a) Before his letter to the Colossians, how had the truth penetrated deep into Africa as well as elsewhere? (b) According to Paul's letter, how extensively was the "good news" bearing fruit?

5. In Colossians 1:23, how did Paul emphasize the preaching of the good news world wide?

of course, that you continue in the faith, established on the foundation and steadfast and not being shifted away from the hope of that good news which you heard, and which was preached in all creation that is under heaven. Of this good news I Paul became a minister."—Col. 1:23.

6 The apostle Paul was not the only minister of the good news back there. All the faithful Christians of that first century were, including the disciple Epaphras of Colossae, who visited Paul during his house arrest in Rome. (Col. 1:7, 8; 4:12, 13) All these ministers of the good news joined in sharing their hope with others, not particularly by copying by hand the inspired Gospel accounts of Christ's life and the letters written by his inspired disciples, but especially by word of mouth, by preaching to all hearers and by giving oral teaching to all interested ones. The amount of work connected with this we can only imagine for workers under those first-century circumstances. Those Christian ministers had the only good news to tell to the first-century world. They were not silent about the Kingdom, but were very vocal about it.

7 The "seed" of the "word of the kingdom" that was spoken to them did not fall upon unproductive soil. But up from the fine soil of good and honest hearts there sprang a growth bearing seed like that sown. There came forth the multiplying of the seed of the good news of God's Messianic kingdom by the telling of it to all others within reach or hearing distance. Thus, just as the apostle Paul remarked to the Colossian Christians, "the telling of the truth of that good news . . . is bearing fruit and increasing in all the world just as it is doing also among you." (Col. 1:5, 6) The "telling of the truth of that good news" was bearing fruit and increasing not only among the congregation in Colossae but also in all other congregations in Europe, Asia and Africa. The "seed" that they brought forth was used in sowing the Kingdom message in the hearts of others. What wonder, then, that within a matter of thirty years from the time that Jesus Christ began sowing the seed by his preaching of the kingdom of God such a witness to the Kingdom was brought about in "all the inhabited earth"!—Matt. 4:12-17; 24:14.

6. (a) Who were ministers of the good news, besides Paul? (b) How did those ministers share jointly the hope of the good news with others?

7. (a) Because the "seed" of the good news was not sown on unproductive soil, what occurred in the congregation of Colossians and others? (b) Because the "good news," as truthfully told, was "bearing fruit," what was accomplished within thirty years from when Jesus started preaching?

ANY MODERN SIMILAR FEAT?

8 The power of growth in a seed that is planted in fertile soil is astonishingly great. The "seed" of the "word of the kingdom" amazed the world with its power back there nineteen hundred years ago. Has that seed of the "word of God" lost its power in this twentieth century? That should not be the case, and it is not the case! What was written to the Christianized Hebrews nineteen centuries ago remains true today: "The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword."—Heb. 4:12.

9 Age has not decreased its grow power. What do we have to show for this fact? Shall we say that it is the religious realm known as Christendom? According to the published estimates of the church membership of Christendom, after reaching a peak in the 1960's she suffered a temporary slump in membership by the tens of millions. But now the latest estimate gives Christendom a new peak of 985,363,400 members.—See *The 1973 World Al-*

8. How great is the power of growth of a seed rightly sown, and has the seed of the "word of God" lost such power of growth in this twentieth century?

9. (a) Has old age decreased the grow power of the "seed" of God's Word? (b) Why do we here consider the growth of Christendom's membership?

manac and Book of Facts, page 343, under the heading "Religious Population of the World."

10 Let it be admitted that Christendom is not declining in its claimed membership. Yet, may it also be that the quality of her members is increasing in spirituality, to produce more genuine Christians? Let us compare them with the brand of Christians at Colossae, to whom Paul was strongly moved to write spontaneously. Those Colossian Christians were far different from what most people who claimed to serve God would be much later on, "in the last days." The fact that Christendom, after more than sixteen centuries of existence, is increasing does not disprove that she is in her "last days." That she is in "critical times hard to deal with" cannot be questioned. What did the apostle Paul foretell would be the reason for this, and is this the reason for Christendom's religious difficulties? Paul said:

11 "But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. [Why?] 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."—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

12 Who is there that can deny that this prophetic description explains the reason for Christendom's difficulties today, after sixteen centuries of numerical growth. In having this inspired prophecy fulfilled upon her, Christendom proves herself to be diametrically opposite from what the Colossian congregation was. For all these centuries Christendom has regularly prayed what she calls the Lord's Prayer. This model prayer as offered by the Lord Jesus Christ in his Sermon on the Mount begins by saying: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:9, 10, *Authorized Version*) Christendom today explains this coming of the heavenly Father's kingdom to be by the establishing of the Kingdom in the *hearts* of the believers. As Dr. Adam Clarke said in commenting on Matthew 6:10:

13 "When the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit, is established in the heart, there is then an ample provision made for the fulfillment of the Divine will."—*Commentary,* Vol. 5, page 86, col. 1.

14 For a long time it was thought that God's kingdom would come by the converting of all mankind to be church members of Christendom. But now that Christendom is lagging behind the world's population growth, the religious clergy say the Kingdom's coming is only into the hearts of as many as believe. There is no teaching that God's Messianic kingdom will come against this present worldly system of things and destroy it and then rule as an actual government over all the inhabitants of the earth and fill the whole earth with righteousness and peace and happiness forevermore. (Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14) Jesus Christ said: "A good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart." And: "Where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also." (Luke 6:45; 12:34) But where is the evidence

10, 11. (a) What question about growth arises as to Christendom, and does numerical growth prove she is not in her "time of the end"? (b) What conditions foretold by Paul for the "last days" may be the reason for Christendom's religious difficulties?

12, 13. (a) How, then, does Christendom compare spiritually with the ancient Colossian congregation? (b) How does Christendom explain that the Lord's Prayer will be fulfilled regarding the heavenly Father's kingdom?

14. (a) Since Christendom's growth lags behind that of the world population, how do her clergy explain the Kingdom's coming? (b) How do two world wars inside of thirty-two years raise a question about the Kingdom's coming as regards Christendom?

that God's kingdom has been established in even the hearts of the church members of Christendom and that their hearts are with God's kingdom as their treasure? Are two world wars inside of thirty-two years of this twentieth century the evidence that God's "kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit" was established in the hearts of the hundreds of millions of church members of Christendom?

15 During the twenty years between the two world wars the League of Nations for world peace and security was the treasure of Christendom, for her churches said: The League of Nations is "the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth." But where is the League of Nations today? And what is its successor, the United Nations, accomplishing in halting the international arms race for military superiority in a third world war that threatens the existence of all mankind? The making of more deadly weapons answers.

16 All these things prove that the kingdom of God has not been established in the hearts of the clergy and church members of Christendom and that it has not come into their hearts. The kingdom of God cannot be expected to come in that way, and it will not come in that way. Yet the kingdom of God by Christ is coming in answer to the Lord's Prayer, and that theocratic government is now actually at the doors. This is what all mankind are today being told in the "good news of the kingdom" that Jesus Christ prophesied would be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations before the end came. (Matt. 24:14) This good news, "the word of the kingdom," is being sown like seed in all the earth, in 208 countries and island groups, and it is bearing fruit the same as in the days of the apostle Paul. And as he said to the Christian congregation in Colossae, "it is bearing fruit and increasing in all the world just as it is doing also among you." (Col. 1:6) Inside and outside of Christendom this seed of the good news is being sown.

17 And as regards the relationship between God's kingdom and the human heart, it is not the Kingdom, but the *seed* of the good news of God's Messianic kingdom that comes into the heart. This "seed" is established there by taking root and bearing fruit. This seed is sown by the preaching of the good news to all those who will listen to it and receive it. This seed of the good news bears fruit by causing the mouth to speak, out of the abundance of the heart of those in whose hearts the seed has been planted. Thus the implanting of the "seed" makes everyone in whose favorable heart the seed has been sown become a new proclaimer of the good news. That is the way the seed of the good news is increasing through the proclaiming of the good news by more and more preachers of the Kingdom. And whereas Christendom tries to prevent the sowing of the seed of the Kingdom in human hearts, the Christian witnesses of Jehovah keep on scattering the seed of the good news world wide. Likewise, just as in the apostle Paul's days, the bearing fruit and increasing have taken place—world wide, Christendom notwithstanding.

THE ATTENDANT FRUITAGE

18 This sowing of the seed of the Kingdom good news has abundantly borne fruit

15. (a) Between the two world wars, what organization was Christendom's "treasure"? (b) What is the League's successor doing about the arms race?
16. Is God's kingdom truly coming in spite of Christendom's condition, and how are all mankind being told about this today?
17. (a) If not the Kingdom, what is it that is established in the hearts of humanity, and how? (b) So, as in Paul's day, how has the "bearing fruit and increasing" of the good news come about, despite Christendom?
18. What has the sowing of the "seed" produced besides more Kingdom proclaimers, and so what qualities mark Jehovah's Christian witnesses today?

and increased in more than merely producing more Kingdom proclaimers. It has had an attendant fruitage in the hearts of those in whom the seed has been sown and who proclaim the Kingdom. It has produced the contrary of what the apostle Paul foretold for Christendom in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 regarding her. It has produced the same things that it did in the hearts and lives of the Christian congregation in Colossae to whom Paul wrote his letter. It has produced the Christian qualities that Paul mentions in his letter, namely, love, hope and faith. Miraculous powers and abilities marking the true Christian congregation might pass away after the death of the Christian apostles, but, said Paul, "now, however, there remain faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:13) These are the things that remain, not with war-plagued Christendom, but with Jehovah's Christian witnesses. Faith, hope, love mark them.

19 Said Paul to the Colossians: "We heard of your *faith* in connection with Christ Jesus and the *love* you have for all the holy ones because of the *hope* that is being reserved for you in the heavens. This hope you heard of before by the telling of the truth of that good news . . . Epaphras our beloved fellow slave . . . also disclosed to us your love in a spiritual way." (Col. 1:4, 5, 7, 8) Not the sexy, passionate, fleshly love that characterized the pagan Greek-speaking world in the apostle Paul's day, but "love in a spiritual way"—this is what has been produced by the sowing of the good news in the hearts of Jehovah's Christian witnesses of today. This true Christian love is part of the fruitage of God's spirit, according to Paul's words in Galatians 5:22. It is this spiritual love in the heart that moves them to open their mouths in preaching.

20 Jesus' prophecy respecting the conclusion of this worldly system of things is being fulfilled in Christendom today, namely, "Because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matt. 24:12) But the prayer that the apostle Paul expressed when writing to the Colossians is being fulfilled toward Jehovah's Christian witnesses today: "that their hearts may be comforted, that they may be harmoniously joined together in love." (Col. 2:1, 2) But they must cooperate with the apostle's prayer for them by doing what the apostle wrote to the Colossians: "Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union." —Col. 3:14.

21 It is not surprising, therefore, that, although Jehovah's Christian witnesses of today come from "all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," they do not recognize any racial, national, tribal or skin-color barriers among themselves. Not only do they not fight among themselves in their congregations and general assemblies, but they refuse to engage in any untheocratic international wars. Such wars would oblige Christian witnesses of one country to kill fellow Christians of another country.—Rev. 7:9.

22 It requires great faith to take this course in a war-plagued world. But, like the congregation in Colossae, our twentieth-century witnesses of Jehovah have full faith in the rightness of the laws and rules of conduct set forth in the Holy Bible. They have faith that the Bible has God as its Author and that it is a

19. (a) What did Paul have to write about the faith, love and hope of the Colossian congregation? (b) What kind of love is it that moves Jehovah's Christian witnesses to open their mouths in preaching?

20. What, as foretold, is happening to the quality of love in Christendom today, and so what prayer of Paul must they cooperate with him in fulfilling, and how?

21. How does such love affect Jehovah's witnesses who are of such different backgrounds in their relations with one another?

22. For them to take such a course in this world requires faith in what facts, and how must they be like the Colossians as respects their faith?

theocratic Book, to which they must unquestioningly adhere. They have faith that Jesus Christ is God's Son and is their Lord whose words and examples they must follow unswervingly. That they may be "open to no accusation before him," they do like the Colossians: they "continue in the faith, established on the foundation and steadfast." The apostle Paul told the Colossian Christians that he rejoiced at "the firmness of your faith toward Christ." (Col. 1:22, 23; 2:5) For a like reason we can rejoice over Jehovah's witnesses of today.

[23] There are many political lords on earth at present, but Jehovah's Christian witnesses abstain from worldly politics. Why? Because they have "accepted Christ Jesus the Lord." Quite appropriately, then, they obey the apostle Paul's admonition to the Colossians: "Go on walking in union with him [Christ], rooted and being built up in him and being stabilized in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with faith in thanksgiving." (Col. 2:6, 7; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6) There are thousands of examples in twentieth-century history to prove that the Christian worshipers of Jehovah as God will hold to this faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord down to the very death, even a violent death at the hands of persecutors. Their belief in the resurrection of the dead strengthens them to do this. They have the faith of the Colossian Christians, which, the apostle Paul said, is the "faith in the operation of God, who raised him [Christ] up from the dead."—Col. 2:12.

23. (a) During this time of political lords, in whom do they put faith as their Lord? (b) What strengthens them to endure even to a violent death under persecution?

THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Religion Seeks Peace with Communism —Why?**
- **Gaining Wealth for Earth's New King.**
- **Jehovah Brings 'Sealing' of His Chosen Ones to a Close.**

[24] Nineteen centuries ago, O what a "hope" those Colossians had! It was a vital factor in helping them to keep acceptable to God through Christ; and for that potent reason the apostle Paul reminded those Colossian Christians about "not being shifted away from the hope of that good news which you heard, and which was preached in all creation that is under heaven." (Col. 1:22, 23) The Colossian Christians, many of whom were doubtless converted from pagan nations, lived in a most wonderful time when secret features of God's purposes were first made manifest, this making it possible for God-fearing believers to take advantage of such manifestation. Most certainly those Colossian believers must have felt highly favored in this regard when the apostle Paul wrote them and said that he was made a minister "to preach the word of God fully, the sacred secret that was hidden from the past systems of things and from the past generations. But now it has been made manifest to his holy ones, to whom God has been pleased to make known what are the glorious riches of this sacred secret among the nations. *It* is Christ in union with you, the hope of his glory."—Col. 1:25-27.

[25] This meant that for the first time such a sacred arrangement existed as "Christ in union with" not only the Jewish believers but also believers from all the non-Jewish or pagan Gentile nations.

24. (a) What other factor strengthened the Colossians to keep acceptable to God, and what did they have to do about this? (b) Why did they live in a wonderful time as to forming a faith, and so why did they feel highly favored?

25. What did that statement by Paul mean with respect to believers back there, and what Christian qualities did that hope promote in the Colossians?

Christ's being now in union with all these furnished the basis for a remarkable hope, "the hope of his glory." This hope was therefore that of their sharing with Christ the Messiah in his heavenly kingdom for the everlasting blessing of all mankind. Ah, then, what excellent Christian qualities such a hope produces! The apostle Paul said that the love and faith of the Colossians were "because of the hope that is being reserved for you in the heavens." (Col. 1:4, 5) Such a marvelous hope lives today!

[26] What, then, is the hope of Jehovah's Christian witnesses of this time of world upheaval and political confusion? Is it the hope of becoming the king or queen of England? Is it to become the president of the French Republic? Is it to become the prime minister of West Germany? Is it to become the chairman of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia? Is it to become the governor of the State of New York or of any other state in the United States of America? Not for a moment! The hope of the Christian witnesses is not to fill such political offices in any of the world governments of this doomed system of things. Let the office-seeking politicians of Christendom and pagandom fill those worldly positions on earth down to the end. Those of Jehovah's witnesses who have the upward call like that of the first-century Colossians hope for a governmental position reserved for them in the heavens, in union with Jesus Christ the "King of kings and Lord of lords." In that heavenly kingdom they will serve God and help to bless all mankind.

[27] As for those Christian witnesses of Jehovah who desire to live in an unpolluted, peaceful Paradise earth, their hope is not to live forever under the "Stars and Stripes Forever," nor under the Hammer and Sickle to all time to come, nor under the emblem of any other nation of this present system of things. Their hope is to live forever on earth under the heavenly kingdom of Jehovah God the Sovereign of all the universe. In that theocratic government Jesus Christ and his glorified congregation will reign as kings and priests for the endless welfare of all mankind, the living and the dead. To this Government alone these hopers in an earthly Paradise look for deliverance from all the misrule over mankind by Satan the Devil and all his agents, demon and human. Because of such a grand, all-excelling hope they have no desire and ambition for any political offices of earthly nations. They want no share in the community responsibility for the sins and corruption of politics. They know that the ones who keep clean from such worldly defilements will be the ones whom God will preserve into His new order.

[28] All thanks to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ for such matchless "good news." This is the good news that is being preached today to all creation under heaven. The telling of this good news is bearing fruit and increasing, through the victorious power of Almighty God. Those who are receiving the seed of this good news are, as a consequence, cultivating within themselves faith, hope and love, in spite of being in a war-plagued world. Only the true "good news" could bring forth such Christlike qualities. Motivated by these qualities, the Christian witnesses of Jehovah will continue to preach the good news of God's Messianic kingdom in all creation that is under heaven, clear down to the end of this fruitful seed-sowing season.

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26. At this time, what is the hope of Jehovah's Christian witnesses as to rulership, and for what purpose?

27. As for those Witnesses who desire to live in the paradise earth, what are their hopes about rulership, and how will they be among those whom God preserves into his new order?

28. To whom go the thanks for such "good news," and what Christian qualities has it produced to motivate preachers onward to the end?

Going to a Wedding?

SOME folks never attend a wedding, even the wedding of a close friend, claiming they are too busy. But it is good to remember that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, when upon earth was not too busy to attend the marriage feast in Cana. In fact, the first sign he performed as proof of his Messiahship was at this wedding. When the wine ran out, he miraculously supplied more, the very best wine and that in abundance. Incidentally, the result of that miracle was that "his disciples put their faith in him." —John 2:1-11.

The first wedding was that of Adam and Eve and it was performed by Jehovah God, the Creator. God first had Adam come to appreciate his need for a mate, for we read that after having named all the animals Adam found that for himself there was "no helper as a complement." Then God created Eve and "proceeded . . . to bring her to the man." No wonder that, upon being introduced to her, Adam said: "This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one will be called Woman, because from man this one was taken." —Gen. 2:18-23.

Among God's servants in ancient times there is no record of a formal religious ceremony associated with weddings. And there was no such thing as a marriage license, though definite steps were taken that made the marriage tie legally binding. However, one thing is certain, that, even as is the case today, a wedding was a joyous occasion. Underscoring the joyousness associated with marriage feasts is the reference to the marriage of the Lamb, thus using this arrangement that is well understood by humans to illustrate the relationship that comes to exist between Jesus Christ and his followers in heaven. Concerning this marriage, we read: "Praise Jah, you people . . . Let us rejoice and be overjoyed, and let us give him the glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has arrived and his wife has prepared herself." —Rev. 19:6, 7.

Weddings are customarily very joyous affairs and they do have many appealing factors, especially for the womenfolk, who generally are inclined to be more romantic and more interested in weddings than the menfolk. Usually there is a beautifully adorned bride. And often there are flowers and music to add to the festiveness of the occasion.

It has been observed that brides make a great deal of their wedding; they like to dramatize it as much as possible. And this they do with peculiarly feminine wisdom. Quite likely most grooms would prefer otherwise, but by going through with all the arrangements even these ones may well have impressed upon their hearts and minds the importance of the step they are taking. As has been observed by worldly psychologists, the dramatic ceremony so impresses itself on the male or groom that he is made more aware that he is from now on a married man. Then, too, brides are wise in making much of

their wedding, for getting married is one of the most serious steps one can take and it is taken with the expectation of its lasting a lifetime.

REASONS FOR GOING

Many and varied are the reasons why people go to a wedding. A person who is quite romantic will usually find a number of excuses for going to a wedding. A very good reason for going is, of course, because a good friend or close relative is getting married. A couple getting married consider it an expression of love or respect for others to attend their wedding. Some people go because they are related to the bride or groom and so feel obligated to put in an appearance. Others go because of business or political connections that seem to recommend their presence. Curiosity may cause still others to go, even as the opportunity to wear fine clothes might cause some women to attend.

While a wedding is a joyous occasion, let it never be forgotten that, according to the Bible, it is also a most serious one. A man and woman in marrying are supposed to be contracting "for keeps," as the saying goes. It is commonly recognized that couples marry "for better or for worse" and "until death" parts them. Fittingly, at weddings conducted by Jehovah's witnesses the officiating minister reviews the Scriptural basis for marriage and the Scriptural obligations of the man and the woman. While all of this is primarily directed to the couple being married, is it not also good counsel for all in the audience? Most surely!

FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Today, among people in general, marriage is being downgraded as more and more couples live together as husband and wife without first getting married. Among those that do marry there is ever less loyalty and faithfulness to the marriage vows and to each other and ever more divorcing. All the trends of the day, such as materialism, sexual immorality and perversions, combine to make it more difficult to make a success of marriage. Thus even among dedicated Christian servants of God some may be tempted to separate and go their own ways if not able to get a Scriptural divorce.

Might not all such, as well as any others who are having more "tribulation in their flesh" than they bargained for, benefit from attending a wedding ceremony—the kind conducted in the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses? (1 Cor. 7:28) How well it would be for them to compare their actions toward each other with the Scriptural counsel being presented! As the groom is being counseled, each husband can well ask himself to what extent he measures up to the standard set forth by the Originator of marriage in his Word the Bible. The same goes for each wife as the bride is counseled on her Scriptural obligations toward her husband. If a couple's marriage has got into a commonplace rut, attending a wedding and seeing and hearing young people in love and full of hope take their marriage vows may well help to recall the time when they felt that way toward each other. It may even motivate them to do something about rekindling their "first love."

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Parents, ever hopeful as regards a happy marriage for their children, can also benefit from attending such a wedding ceremony. Thus, one Christian minister, in the course of his wedding talk, commended the parents of the youthful couple for having reared their children "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah" so that their children were able to have an honorable marriage at their house of worship.

Without doubt, all parents with marriageable or even younger children, when hearing such remarks, are caused to appreciate more how much is involved in properly rearing their children.—Eph. 6:4.

Further on, this same minister also commended the young pair themselves for having avoided the snares of sexual immorality so that they could have such an honorable wedding ceremony. What an incentive those remarks were to all the young folks in the audience to follow Bible principles and to exercise self-control! They were also helped to appreciate how true the apostle's words are that "godly devotion is beneficial for all things," including happiness in marriage.—1 Tim. 4:8.

Those who are seriously contemplating marriage also stand to benefit from attending such a wedding. As they hear the speaker outline the duties as well as the privileges of married folks, it should help them to take a mature view of marriage rather than just a sentimental romantic view, as though marriage were a bed of roses. They will be helped to see how much one's happiness in marriage depends upon practical factors, such as being thoughtful, unselfish and considerate of each other. Also, they will have impressed upon them that in marriage people do have "tribulation in their flesh" and so must be prepared to "take the bitter with the sweet."

BENEFITING FROM THE RECEPTION

There are those acquaintances of a couple getting married that take the attitude that they do not have time to attend the wedding ceremony at the Kingdom Hall, but they do have time for the festivities that follow, when there will be wining, dining and dancing. This might be said to be putting the cart before the horse. Really, it borders on the mistake made by the ancient hunter Esau, who preferred a bowl of lentil stew to the spiritual blessings of the promise first made to his grandfather Abraham. One's presence at the wedding is an expression of esteem for those getting married, but one's presence *only* at the reception may mean that one's primary interest in life is having a good time.—Heb. 12:16.

Wedding receptions among Jehovah's witnesses have often been made occasions of spiritual profit and upbuilding. Recently, at one of these there were short talks, combining humor and practical counsel by several close friends of the bridal pair. There was also some fine singing of Christian songs that were especially appropriate to the occasion, and, of course, the festivities began with asking God's blessing on the occasion.

Here also care should be taken that the reception keeps a high tone and does not sink to the level of riotous living or drunken revelry, as is so often the case among worldlings. In short, at wedding receptions also let there be a heeding of the apostle's advice: "Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory." Doing so will make the wedding ceremony, as well as the festivities afterward, not only joyous occasions but also occasions for mutual upbuilding and for fond memories.—1 Cor. 10:31.

BUSH MEDICINE
—Should Christians Seek Its "Cures"?

GENERALLY, people in North America and Europe view superstitions current among some of the population as absurd. They laugh at beliefs that handling toads produces warts, that sleeping with the moon shining on one's face can cause lunacy, and similar ideas. Yet many of them are just as superstitious in different ways. For example, fear of the "unlucky" number thirteen prevents hotels from having a thirteenth floor or such a room number. Moreover, many prominent persons, even political leaders, consult astrologers and fortune-tellers.

In Central and South America, Africa, Asia and islands of the sea, "bush medicine" and Voodoo are often taken very seriously by much of the population.

The practitioners of bush medicine and Voodoo attribute all or most sicknesses to evil supernatural powers, to "witches" and evil spirits. Therefore, they appeal to the supernatural in their treatment of disease. Sometimes they seem actually to effect a cure by their incantations, rites and sacrifices of chickens, pigs and goats.

Consequently the question arises: May those who become Christians properly look to bush medicine or Voodoo for healing of their afflictions?

The answer to this question would depend on the source of such "healings" and what the Bible says about them. The whole issue revolves around whether the person is giving exclusive devotion to the true God or not—whether he is dividing that devotion with other "gods." For the God of the Bible says: "I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion." —Deut. 5:9.

A person's present life is not so important that he should violate the principles of righteousness and turn to other gods for help. (Matt. 16:25) For example, a real Christian would not commit murder or adultery to save his own life. But do bush medicine and Voodoo call upon the Christian to turn from his allegiance to God, to share it with other gods?—Compare Isaiah 42:8.

BUSH MEDICINE AND VOODOO RITES

It is true that bush medicine uses many herbs that are known to have healing effects. And, due to Western influence, some "medicine men" have come to be, to an extent, specialists in herbal medicines for certain illnesses. But the Voodoo and bush medicine "healers" hold that the herbs and potions they use are powerless in themselves. Medicines, these men believe, are effective only in connection with the power of the *nomma,* that is, the life-force that comes through the power of the medicine man's word, whether the "medicine" is swallowed, rubbed in or carried by a cord around the neck. Therefore, all bush medicine dispensed through such "healers" is connected with magic, with worship of the sorcerer's gods, even

though some of it may also have a specific, natural effect on the disease.

The !Kung Bushmen of Africa (the exclamation point represents a "click" sound) say that "medicine" was given by God to Bushmen in the beginning, but that men can transfer "medicine" from one body to another. When, by means of dancing, the "medicine" is brought to the 'boiling point,' the vapors rise up through the spinal column, and when the vapors reach the brain, the dancer enters a trance. One expressed the effect in this way:

"Bushman medicine is put into the body through the backbone. It boils in my belly and boils up to my head like beer. When the women start singing and I start dancing, at first I feel quite all right. Then in the middle, the medicine begins to rise from my stomach. After that I see all the people like very small birds, the whole place will be spinning around and that is why we run around. . . . You feel your blood become very hot just like blood boiling on a fire and then you start healing . . . then when I lay hands on a sick person, the medicine in me will go into him and cure him."—*Natural History* magazine, November 1967.

A variant of this rite is that of the "Zionists" of South Africa, a religious group originating from the work of missionaries of a sect in Zion, Illinois. During the circle dancing, the dancers grasp the afflicted parts of the body of persons to be 'cured.' This "laying on of hands" is supposed to impart "holy ghost" to heal them.

In Peru, the *curandero* or "healer" may have a *mesa* or table divided into three sections. The first is supposed to be governed by Satan. It contains artifacts associated with black magic and evil forces. The opposite section is called "the field of divine justice," and contains artifacts related to "white magic." This zone is said to be governed by Christ. The third (middle) section is of a neutral nature, governed by Saint Cyprian (said to be a powerful magician who was converted to Christianity).

The *curandero* acts as consultant for his clients on love, business or other matters. For these he may use divining cards. But for sickness or suspicion of possession by the spirit of a witch, he may rub the patient with a live guinea pig, then open the pig's stomach and perform entrail divination. If witchcraft has caused the ailment, it is expected that the guinea pig's spine will be found broken. If there is organic disease, the corresponding organ in the guinea pig is expected to be found spotted or black.

TWO TYPICAL ACCOUNTS OF "HEALING" SESSIONS

A researcher, writing in *Natural History* (Nov. 1972), recounts attending a "healing" session in Peru, held at night. A man had become sick and unable to walk. His business was declining and his children had become dropouts from work and from school. The *curandero's* diagnosis was that a sorcerer had cast a spell and that this was responsible for the family's troubles. During the ensuing "healing" ritual, a daughter of the family began to cough and sputter, regurgitating the brew of boiled San Pedro cactus juice she had drunk (she had also imbibed a mixture of cactus and wild tobacco juice). She began to lean crazily backward. Someone cried that a monster was pulling the girl's hair from behind. At this, the *curandero* grabbed a sword from the mesa and went into furious battle as though with an invisible foe, slashing fiercely and wildly. This, he said, was to break the spell of the sorcerer. The researcher reports that when he saw the family later, the man's health as well as his family and business had improved.

Louis C. Whiton, another researcher,

who has led six expeditions to Surinam to make a study of the people known as the Bush Negroes, reports an account of his own experience with a prominent witch doctor in Paramaribo. (*Natural History* Aug.-Sept. 1971) "Many of the city's more educated people employed his talents even though they attended Christian churches," he writes. Whiton was suffering a lameness and severe pain in his hip and leg. Over a period of eighteen months, specialists and Whiton's own physician had been unable to give relief. The following is a very condensed summary of the "healing" ritual.

> The ceremony began at midnight. Clay that had been blessed with ritual so as to have the power to ward off evil was rubbed over his body. Chanting and prayers to the jungle gods followed. The patient's "soul" was then questioned about his past life. The witch doctor prayed to the god Misah to "protect this Child of the Earth, even though he has sinned, so that no harm will come to him." The Voodoo altar was paraded around Whiton's head and the flags of the Indian gods were waved over him. After about two hours he was told that the gods had arrived. He was told to lie on the ground, and the "healer" lay in the opposite direction, the tops of their heads touching. Then an extremely large and heavy mortar was set on the witch doctor's chest, while one of his assistants stood on his stomach and another on his thighs, pounding the mortar with large wooden pestles. They believed that the pounding would keep his heart beating regularly during the ordeal, in which the evil spirit was supposed to leave the patient and enter the witch doctor.
>
> The witch doctor, now supposedly possessed by the evil spirit that had been in the patient, became quarrelsome, speaking in English, instead of his native Taki-Taki, in angry and unfriendly terms. After this, the evil spirit had to be transferred from him to an altar of snake bones, and finally, to the body of a chicken, which was held up by its neck feathers in front of the patient. If the evil spirit had been completely exorcised, the chicken was to die without the witch doctor's injuring it in any way. The chicken did not die, so the patient was told that probably not all the evil was 'pulled out of him.' Therefore he was to open the chicken's beak and spit into its mouth. He complied, and at this, the bird flapped its wings violently, went limp and died. Whiton reports that after the passage of two years since the rite there has been no recurrence of the pain in his leg and hip.

BY WHOSE POWER?

It seems evident from these reports that there is some kind of power in the bush medicine and Voodoo rites. But whose power? Is it the power of Jehovah God, the Creator of heaven and earth, or of some other "good spirits"? Who are really being called upon by those who seek healing by bush medicine or Voodoo? For an answer, let us look in on one of the Voodoo sessions—not a healing ritual, but one held periodically to appease their gods, called *loas*. It demonstrates who really gets into control of those who practice Voodoo and bush medicine:

> In an appeal to the loas to appear, the worshipers begin to dance to the accompaniment of songs and drums. As the drums get louder and louder, the tension increases. The dancers fall into a trance, leap, and begin to scream. Then the loas 'appear,' taking one after another of the dancers into possession, or, as they say, 'mounting and riding' them. The person becomes the "horse" of the loa. He then manifests the characteristics of that particular loa, of which there are many, one governing fertility, another, ruler of the seas, another, governor of agriculture, a group that are gods of war, of death, and a sex goddess, to name a few. The one 'ridden' embodies the loa; he *becomes* that loa, in effect. Then he may break forth with crude and very obscene words and actions. Often the person possessed by one of the loas of fire will walk barefoot upon the burning embers of a huge bonfire, holding red hot tongs in his hand, and laughingly walk slowly back down, without apparent injury.

Note that Jesus Christ acknowledged that demons actually exist, these wicked spirit persons being under the direction

of Satan the Devil, the enemy of God, a fact that the Jews also accepted. (Luke 11:14-20) Most people from whom Jesus expelled demons had an "incurable" physical or mental malady. Some were epileptic or paralyzed. (Matt. 4:24; 17:14-16, 18; Luke 9:38-43) Some were fierce, violent and dangerous. (Matt. 8:28-32; Mark 5:2-13) The demons had made some blind and mute.—Matt. 12:22; Luke 11:14.

Jesus expelled demons from possessed people, not by any ritual, and not by appealing to "the gods," but in the name of the true God, his Father, Jehovah. (John 10:25) He did not try to appease the spirits or employ ritual to get their help. He "rebuked" the unclean spirit with authority from God. On one occasion he healed an epileptic boy afflicted by an unusually strong demon that Jesus' disciples could not expel. But Jesus simply "rebuked it, and the demon came out of him; and the boy was cured from that hour."—Matt. 17:14-18; Luke 9:42.

Whom, then, is a person serving who calls on "the gods" to exorcise evil spirits, or who divines by cards or entrails, observes omens and offers sacrifices?

Jehovah God revealed his attitude toward all forms of divination, magic, astrology and occult practices when he said to the nation of Israel as they were about to enter the land of Canaan:

> "When you are entered into the land that Jehovah your God is giving you, you must not learn to do according to the detestable things of those nations. There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, anyone who employs divination, a practicer of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead. . . . For these nations whom you are dispossessing used to listen to those practicing magic and to those who divine; but as for you, Jehovah your God has not given you anything like this."—Deut. 18:9-14.

The apostle Paul warned Christians of the danger of dividing their devotion by looking to gods other than Jehovah: "You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of 'the table of Jehovah' and the table of demons. Or 'are we inciting Jehovah to jealousy'? We are not stronger than he is, are we?"—1 Cor. 10:21, 22.

TRUE CHRISTIANS GIVE GOD EXCLUSIVE DEVOTION

Does the true Christian view mean that the Christian is forbidden by the Bible to seek a cure from herbalists, medical doctors, chiropractors, and so forth? No. But true Christians will avoid Voodoo, bush medicine, witch doctors and all forms of spiritism, including those viewed by practitioners as "good spirits." (Rev. 21:8) There is no doubt curative value in some herbs and other remedies. But Christians realize that no cure is to be sought from witch doctors, medicine men, *curanderos* or any other practitioner who uses any form of spiritistic practice, charm, amulet or ritual, whether that doctor includes herbs or any form of medicine along with it or not.

Some may feel that they have received a cure, or a partial cure, for some ailment from bush medicine. However, those who have formerly practiced bush medicine acknowledge that the only "cures" the spiritistic healers generally claim to perform are those that involve affliction by the spirits, the demons. Some, it is true, use herbs that have curative powers, along with their magic. But they attribute any benefits to their spiritistic ability, and not to the herbs. Thus they deceive the patient into believing it was really the magic, not the herbs themselves, that brought some relief. Persons going to such healers come under the influence of the spirits, the

wicked demons, because they have appealed, through the witch doctor, to the demons, and have accepted what the demons offered.—Rom. 6:16; 1 Cor. 10:20, 21.

Many persons in Africa, Asia, South America and other parts of the earth where bush medicine, Voodoo, juju and other magic are practiced are being liberated from their superstitions and fears of witches and Voodoo gods by learning the truth of the Bible. As Jesus said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32) This freedom from fear of the demons gives them a wholesome outlook on life and contributes much toward their physical and mental health. They see, on the other hand, what degradation the practice of bush medicine, with its appeal to spirits, actually to wicked demons, has brought to the people. They realize that only through Christ's ransom sacrifice can man receive real, lasting recovery from his imperfection and sicknesses. They also learn that the application of such ransom benefits will come during the thousand-year Messianic rule, now near at hand.

As an example of this clean break and the determination to give exclusive devotion to the Creator, one of Jehovah's witnesses in Africa was asked to type out some instructions provided by a witch doctor to tell his client how to use a special medicine he had prepared. The Witness refused to become a party to the treatment, saying to the "medicine man" that he had abandoned the use of such potions himself and did not want the responsibility before God to encourage someone else to use them. Such course shows true faith and obedience, assuring God's blessing.

So the clear-cut answer to the question, 'Should Christians seek bush medicine's cures?' is an unequivocal "No." Christians will realize that they cannot hold onto true Christianity and at the same time include as a sort of "interfaith" an appeal to any other god, even if they feel some healing of physical afflictions might come from that source. Jesus Christ, God's Son, said: "Whoever wants to preserve his own life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for me will find it." Also: "No one can slave for two masters."—Matt. 16:25, *AT;* 6:24.

True Christians know that God's approval is to be sought above all other things. They avoid attempts to get healing or anything else in a way that is lawless in God's eyes, and that would divide their devotion. They trust in his promised new order, for there they can enjoy a healing that will last, not for just a few years, but forever.

BIBLE TRUTH BRINGS FREEDOM

A missionary serving in West Africa relates: "I called on a woman who, though formerly opposed to our work, had now agreed to study the Bible. But the study was not held regularly and so I wondered if it would continue. However, when we considered the subject of spiritism, I saw that she was taking the study seriously. That week she threw out all objects related to spiritism except one.

"At our next study she brought this object to me, asking if it would be all right for her to look inside before destroying it. The item had been given to her by a 'medicine man' to ensure pregnancy, as she had wanted to have a baby but could not. In the middle of a large tray covered with sand sat a little upside down clay pot. Gingerly she upended the pot. Seeing nothing, she dug around the tray with a pair of scissors—again nothing! She was furious at having been fooled by the 'medicine man.' Rising immediately, she heaved the whole thing out the window."

Yes, the 'truth sets one free' from false belief as this woman, now a baptized Witness, can well testify.—John 8:32.

Footnotes That Magnify Jehovah God

HAVE you ever paid attention to the footnotes in fine print that appear at the bottom of the page of some Bible translations? Or have you usually been in too much of a hurry? If you have passed over them you have been missing items that are not only interesting but also faith strengthening. While not all footnotes are of the same value, many of those found in the large-print edition of the *New World Translation* (*NW*) do help us better to appreciate Jehovah God.

For example, this edition has a footnote at Genesis 5:22 that shows why this translation renders *ha Elohim* as "the true God." This rendering is based on the authority of the noted Hebrew scholar Gesenius, who shows that the definite article *"ha"* is used "when terms applying to whole classes are restricted (simply by usage) to particular individuals," and then other examples are cited in the Greek, such as *ho theos*, which, as he says, literally means "the one true God." One looks in vain in other translations for this distinction between *Elohim* and *ha Elohim*.

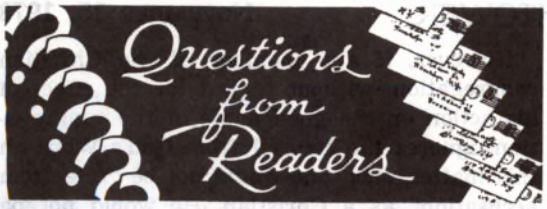
Another example of how this edition (*NW*) helps us better to appreciate Jehovah is by its expression "Sovereign Lord Jehovah." Even those versions that render the Tetragrammaton as "Jehovah" or "Yahweh" read only "Lord Jehovah" or "Lord Yahweh." Why does the *New World Translation* add "Sovereign"? Because, as shown in the footnote on Genesis 15:2, the term *Adonay*, usually rendered "Lord" in such instances, is in the plural of excellence, literally "Lords Jehovah." Since the plural is that of excellence rather than of number, the *New World Translation* adds "Sovereign" to show that this Lord is no ordinary Lord. Truly Jehovah is not ordinary, but is a very special Lord, the Sovereign Lord.

A similar explanation is given in the footnote on Ecclesiastes 12:1, for the expression "Grand Creator." There we are told that "the Hebrew participle of the verb 'create' is here in the plural number of grandeur or excellence." The title "Creator" in the singular would not do justice to the original, and so, most fittingly, the expression "Grand Creator" is used. Again, it is hard to find other translations that take cognizance of this fact, an exception being *Young's*, which, however, reads: "Remember also thy Creators in days of thy youth." Does that mean that there is more than one Creator? The Soncino Bible footnote on this text explains: "If the noun is construed as plural, it is the 'plural of majesty.' 'This designation of God was chosen as laying stress on Him as the ultimate cause and designer of our bodily frame.'"

Enlightening also is the footnote appearing at Deuteronomy 18:5, *NW*. It tells of a fragment of the Greek *Septuagint Version* containing this verse, which fragment goes back to the second century B.C.E. In it "a Greek rendering of 'Jehovah your God' does not occur . . . but the Hebrew tetragrammaton (יהוה, YHWH) for God's name is written in. This, besides occurrences in other fragments of this papyrus collection, indicates that Jehovah's name did appear in the form of the Hebrew tetragrammaton in the book of Deuteronomy of the Greek *Septuagint*, if not in all its Pentateuch." This is of great interest, for it indicates that *Septuagint* copies used in Jesus' day likely contained the Hebrew tetragrammaton.

Then again, at Exodus 23:28 many translations read that God would send "hornets" or "the hornet" ahead of the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites before them. (See *Authorized Version, American Standard Version, The Jerusalem Bible, The New American Bible, Revised Standard Version.*) This rendering might be said to reflect upon God's truthfulness, for the Scriptures contain no reference to his actually sending hornets ahead of the Israelites. However, the footnote of the 1971 *New World Translation* quotes the German Bible scholar Ludwig Koehler to show that the Hebrew word here corresponds with the Arabic word meaning "dejectedness; discouragement; abasement." Accordingly, the *New World Translation* reads that Jehovah would "send the feeling of dejection ahead of you." This indeed was the case, for Rahab the harlot of Jericho told the two Israelite spies that "the fright of you has fallen upon us, and . . . all the inhabitants of the land have become disheartened because of you." (Josh. 2:9-11) *The New English Bible*, at Exodus 23:28, in agreement with the *New World Translation*, says that God would "spread panic before you."

Yes, the footnotes of the 1971 edition of the *New World Translation* do contribute to a better appreciation of Jehovah as the one true God, the Sovereign Lord and the Grand Creator who fulfills his promises.



● Do Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 6:1-7 mean that under no circumstances should a Christian take to court a case involving a fellow believer?—U.S.A.

The apostle Paul's inspired admonition is: "Does anyone of you that has a case against the other dare to go to court before unrighteous men, and not before the holy ones? Or do you not know that the holy ones will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you unfit to try very trivial matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? Why, then, not matters of this life? If, then, you do have matters of this life to be tried, is it the men looked down upon in the congregation that you put in as judges? I am speaking to move you to shame. Is it true that there is not one wise man among you that will be able to judge between his brothers, but brother goes to court with brother, and that before unbelievers? Really, then, it means altogether a defeat for you that you are having lawsuits with one another. Why do you not rather let yourselves be wronged? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded?" —1 Cor. 6:1-7.

Here Paul was showing the Corinthian Christians the inconsistency of taking disputes between Christians before secular tribunals. The judges would be men who were not governed by the lofty principles of God's law and whose consciences were not trained through a study of his Word. As many of the judges at that time were corrupt and accepted bribes, Christians had little reason to believe that their judgment would be just. Paul referred to them as "unrighteous men." Were Christians to take their disputes before such men, they would be 'putting in as judges' men whom the congregation looked down upon as lacking integrity.

Then, too, in taking matters before unbelievers for judgment, they would, in effect, be saying that no one in the congregation had the wisdom to judge "matters of this life" among Christians. This was wholly inconsistent with the fact that spirit-anointed Christians as heavenly associate rulers of the Lord Jesus Christ would be judging, not only men, but also angels. And by dragging fellow believers before pagan judges, they would bring great reproach upon God's name. As outsiders would be led to believe that Christians were no different from other people in being unable to settle differences, the interests of true worship would be injured. It would have been far better for individual Christians to take personal loss rather than to injure the entire congregation by bringing their disputes to public notice.

In view of the foregoing, would dedicated Christians today go before secular courts if that were to injure the advancement of true worship or misrepresent it in the eyes of outsiders? No. Of course, as all other people, true Christians are still imperfect humans. They make mistakes, and problems arise in connection with business matters and the like. But differences of this nature ought to be settled within the congregation, for God's Word provides the needed guidelines and there are men in the congregation who are well grounded in the Bible.

However, if a Christian refuses to correct a *serious* wrong when it is made clear to him by elders serving in judicial capacity in the congregation, such a one would be expelled. This is in line with Jesus' words: "If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector." (Matt. 18:17) Thus, for example, one who defrauded his Christian brother or who failed to provide materially for his wife and children would find himself outside the congregation if he did not repent.—1 Tim. 5:8.

The injured party could thereafter decide whether legal action should be taken in an attempt to force the guilty one, now disfellowshiped, to rectify matters. Of course, the injured party would want to take into consideration whether it would be worth the time and expense as well as whether the congregation could still come into disrepute by bringing to public attention the actions of one of its former members. If the wronged Christian conscientiously felt that God's name would not be reproached and legal action was definitely needed, he would not necessarily be acting contrary

to the spirit of Paul's counsel if he were to take to court one who was no longer a part of the Christian congregation. Jehovah God has permitted secular authority to serve as his instrument in bringing lawbreakers to justice, and in this case the one wronged would be availing himself of legal help after exhausting the intracongregational means to have the wrong corrected.—Rom. 13:3, 4.

There may even be times when Christian brothers conscientiously feel that they could go to court with fellow believers. This might be to obtain compensation from an insurance company. In some countries the law may specify that certain matters have to be handled in a court, such as wills that may have to be probated by courts. But this does not create adverse publicity or bring reproach upon the congregation. In handling such legal matters that would not affect the congregation adversely, Christians can be governed by what they consider to be best under the circumstances.

However, if any member of the Christian congregation, without regard for the effect of his action on the good name of the congregation, ignores the counsel from God's Word on this matter, such one would not be "free from accusation" as a Christian. He would not be one who has "a fine testimony from people on the outside" of the congregation. (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim. 3:7) He surely would not be an example for others to imitate, so this would affect the privileges that he might have in the congregation.

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December 16: Sowing Seeds of Good News in a War-plagued World. Page 680. Songs to Be Used: 74, 62.

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