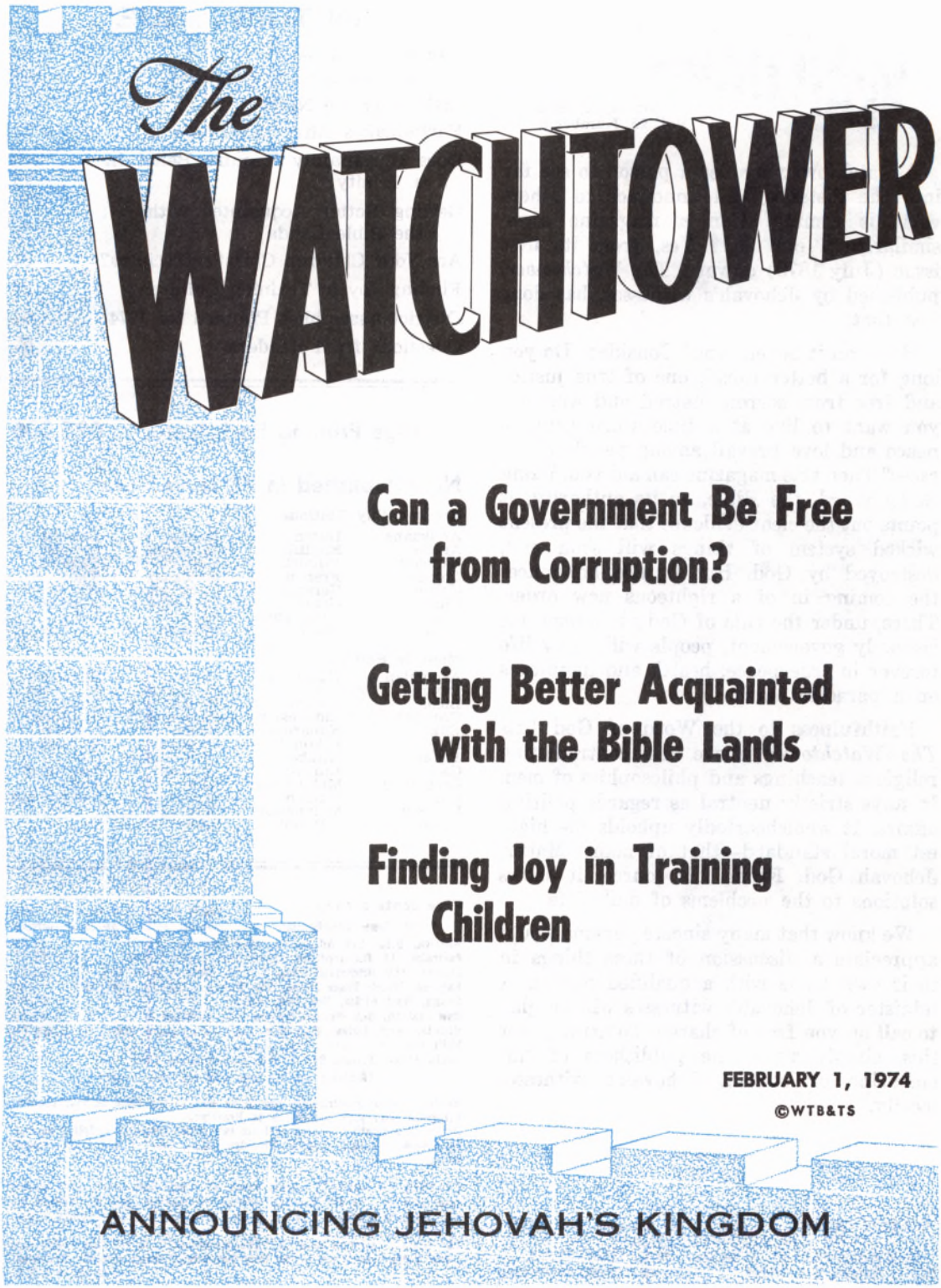
The
WATCHTOWER
Can a Government Be Free from Corruption?
Getting Better Acquainted with the Bible Lands
Finding Joy in Training Children
FEBRUARY 1, 1974
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ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

February 1, 1974
Vol. 95, Number 3

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. A minister of Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's witnesses locally.

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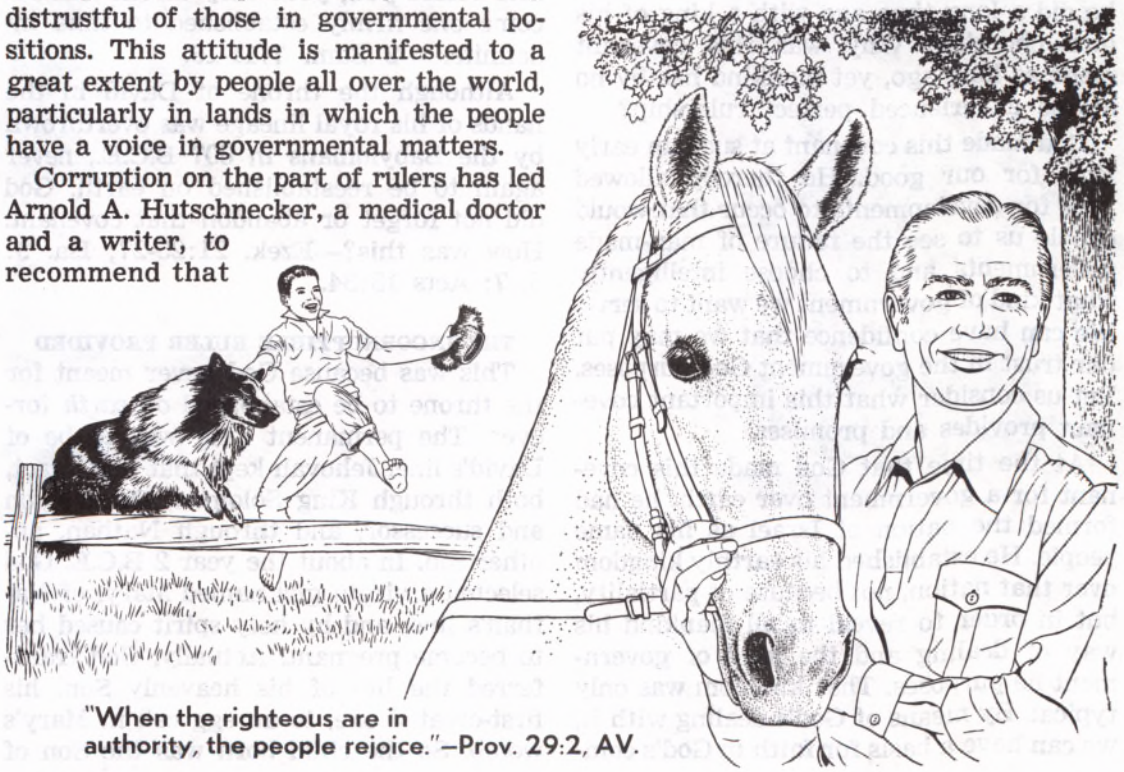
Can A GOVERNMENT Be Free From Corruption?

HOW do you feel about government? People in various countries have manifested a high level of discontent and distrust toward rulers. Many are abandoning the major political parties. Others become independent or turn to some new party, while some withdraw from politics completely. A number feel that picketing and demonstrating will accomplish some reform.

It is not that people are turning away from government *per se*. They are merely distrustful of those in governmental positions. This attitude is manifested to a great extent by people all over the world, particularly in lands in which the people have a voice in governmental matters.

Corruption on the part of rulers has led Arnold A. Hutschnecker, a medical doctor and a writer, to recommend that "candidates, before being allowed to enter a political race, ought to be cleared by a board of physicians and psychiatrists to make certain that they are healthy in mind and body."

Almost everyone agrees that government of some kind is essential. The undesirable alternative is mobocracy, anarchy. But the happiness of the people depends in large measure on the integrity and ability of those in ruling positions. And, of themselves, no man or body of men has the ability to govern in a fully righteous way. All men are imperfect and therefore subject to pressures and influences that they cannot in their own strength resist when given power over their fellowman. A man who was himself a king and a sharp observer of governments spoke of the calamities that had taken place "during the time that man has dominated man to his injury."—Eccl. 8:9.



"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice."—Prov. 29:2, AV.

Consequently, rulership has to come from a source higher than man. Only the Creator can make laws that operate equally and fairly for the benefit of all, and can then enforce them in a fully fair and impartial manner. Only he knows man's makeup and what he needs for happiness. But, then, is the Creator willing to provide such a government? Does he purpose to do so?

Yes, he wants to. He has purposed it and has made his selection of an incorrupt ruler. Can we be sure his choice is correct? Can we believe and trust in his appointment, that this ruler will keep his government free from corruption? It is to our interest to investigate carefully, for our own assurance and guidance.

A COVENANT FOR INCORRUPT GOVERNMENT

God has already made a royal covenant, a decree, for such a government. This he did a long time ago with a king of his own choosing. Why was this covenant made so long ago, yet mankind has by no means experienced perfect rulership?

God made this covenant at such an early time for our good. He thereby allowed time for developments to occur that would enable us to see the failure of man-made governments and to choose intelligently what kind of government we want to serve. We can have confidence that we may put our trust in the government God purposes. Let us consider what this important covenant provides and promises.

At the time that God made this covenant for a government over earth, he had formed the nation of Israel as his name people. He established his earthly kingdom over that nation, not because of partiality, but in order to reveal to all mankind his way of dealing and the kind of government he purposes. That kingdom was only typical. By means of God's dealing with it, we can have a basis for faith in God's coming government for all the earth.—Deut. 4:5-8; Ps. 67:1-7.

Jehovah God made the kingdom covenant with a man named David, king of Israel at that time. This was because David was a wholehearted worshiper of Jehovah. He exerted his whole soul in promoting true worship throughout his realm. If you read the Psalms or lyrical poems written by David, you will see how he felt toward divine government. For example, in Psalm 40, David said: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts."—Ps. 40:8.

David desired to honor God's name and worship by building a temple. In appreciation Jehovah made a covenant or a solemn promise to build a house for David, not a literal residence, but a house of a line of kings in David's family. He said to David: "Your house and your kingdom will certainly be steadfast to time indefinite before you; your very throne will become one firmly established to time indefinite."—2 Sam. 7:11-16.

Although the throne of David in the hands of his royal lineage was overthrown by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E., never again to be reestablished on earth, God did not forget or abandon that covenant. How was this?—Ezek. 21:25-27; Isa. 9:6, 7; Acts 13:34.

THE INCORRUPTIBLE RULER PROVIDED

This was because God never meant for the throne to be established *on earth* forever. The permanent king was to be of David's line. Jehovah kept that line intact, both through King Solomon, David's son and successor, and through Nathan, another son. In about the year 2 B.C.E. God selected a virgin girl named Mary, of Nathan's line, and by holy spirit caused her to become pregnant. Actually, God transferred the life of his heavenly Son, his first-created one, to an egg cell in Mary's womb. So the child born was the Son of

God. There was nothing unholy in this. (Luke 1:26-33) God, through his angel, explained the matter to Joseph, the young man to whom Mary was engaged. This righteous man faithfully and obediently took Mary as his wife, and when the child was born and named Jesus by divine direction, Joseph adopted Jesus as his son. After this Joseph and Mary had other children.—Matt. 1:18-25; 13:53-56.

So Jesus was the natural heir of David through his mother, a descendant of David's son Nathan. But what about the kingly right, which belonged to the line of Solomon? Jesus legally had this right also, because his foster-father Joseph was a descendant of King Solomon. Therefore, it was as a rightful heir of King David that Jesus, when about thirty years of age, presented himself to God's representative, John the Baptist, for baptism. Jesus was here embarking on a course that would test him and prove him to be a fully trustworthy and incorrupt ruler on the throne of David forever.—Heb. 10:5-10; 5:8-10.

However, this rulership was not to be exercised from an earthly throne. At his baptism Jesus became the Messiah, the Christ, God's Anointed One. Other kings of David's line had been anointed with oil, but Jesus was anointed with holy spirit and begotten as a spiritual Son of God. (Matt. 3:13-17; Acts 10:38) He was eventually to die and be resurrected to heaven, where he had previously been with his Father, even before the world was founded.—John 1:1-3, 18; 8:58; Col. 1:13-17.

A TESTED, PROVED RULER

How can we be sure that Messiah's government will be incorruptible? God foretold and prepared for his rulership for centuries. Even before his Son came to earth God used him, as the invisible caretaker of the nation of Israel. (Ex. 33:1, 2; 23:20-23) In this office the Son of God had much experience in applying God's laws and in God's way of dealing with mankind. Moreover, long before that, this Son, who came to be Jesus Christ, was a "master worker" during the very creation of all things under Jehovah's supervision. He therefore had great interest in humankind.—Prov. 8:22, 30, 31.

As to his incorruptibleness, his life course on earth proved that he was beyond being bribed, pressured or forced to do wrong, to deviate one iota from strictly right, honest principles. He fulfilled God's stated qualifications for a ruler. To those who would be appointed judges and officers in his typical, pictorial government of Israel, God commanded: "You must not pervert judgment. You must not be partial or accept a bribe, for the bribe blinds the eyes of wise ones and distorts the words of righteous ones. Justice—justice you should pursue, in order that you may keep alive."—Deut. 16:19, 20.

Take, for example, a master attempt at bribery with which Jesus was faced early in his earthly ministry. Satan the Devil, who the Scriptures say is "the god of this system of things" and who actually runs the man-made kingdoms of this world, made Jesus an offer that no human ruler today would resist. (2 Cor. 4:4) Jesus was shown, in panoramic view, all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus was offered these on the stipulation that he merely perform *one* act of worship toward the Devil. Think of it—world rulership offered by one who could give it immediately! Whether a ruler thought he could do the world good or was entirely selfish—either way, what politically oriented man could resist such an offer?

But Jesus knew that *one* act of unfaithfulness meant denial of Jehovah's sovereignty. He knew that only Jehovah is the Good One, and that from this Source only could government come that would bring peace and righteousness to earth. (Mark 10:18) He also knew that, while he might

rule for a long time as such a world ruler over political kingdoms, Jehovah would eventually destroy his government. (Dan. 2:44) Without meditating on or considering the offer for even a moment—not at all—he instantly replied: "Go away, Satan!"—Matt. 4:1-11.

Jesus did not even try to make himself an earthly king over the house of David or over the house of Jacob, the father of his nation. He repulsed a popular effort to make him king. (John 6:14, 15) He looked to Jehovah's covenant with the line of David to bring him kingship in God's due time. He proved himself the trustworthy and uncorruptible choice for king of God's heavenly government. He bore witness to his kingship before Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, but at the same time he explained: "My kingdom is no part of this world. . . . my kingdom is not from this source."—John 18:33-37.

The greatest of pressures came against Jesus—hatred from his own people, slander, official persecution. Finally he was put to death on a stake under the worst of charges, falsely made—charges of blasphemy and sedition. He could have avoided this kind of death by compromise, by 'watering down' the truth to please the religious and political leaders. But he stood by the truth in the face of ridicule, hatred, suffering and even death.—John 8:31, 32; 1 Tim. 6:13.

Moreover, Jesus could not be blackmailed to pervert justice, as many politicians have been. No one could find any wrongdoing that could be used to pressure or embarrass him, not even the "small" sins common to people in general. His religious enemies would certainly have seized upon even the most minute deviation from God's perfect law. But Jesus could openly say to them: "Because I . . . tell the truth, you do not believe me. Who of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:45, 46) Before his death he could say: "The ruler of the world [the Devil] is coming [to have Jesus put to death]. And *he has no hold on me.*"—John 14:30.

As to his love for the people whom he will rule, Jesus gave his life so that they could have their sins and imperfections removed. He bought the human race—all of them, from the greatest to the least. (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) As King of God's righteous government he will have a legal basis on which he can exercise his power to heal them spiritually and physically to the point of human perfection, with everlasting life in view.—Heb. 9:28.

Who, then, in heaven or on earth, can find fault with the earthly life of the Messiah, the Christ, the One anointed to rule as king over all mankind? No one can. Pointing to the faultless life of Jesus Christ on earth, the apostle Peter said to the Roman centurion Cornelius and his Gentile friends: "You know the subject that was talked about throughout the whole of Judea, starting from Galilee after the baptism that John preached, namely, Jesus who was from Nazareth, how God anointed him with holy spirit and power, and he went through the land doing good and healing all those oppressed by the Devil; because God was with him. And we are witnesses of all the things he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem."—Acts 10:37-39.

The deteriorating state of governments today points to the end of man-rule under Satan's influence. Its nearness makes it urgent for all to look to God's government of justice and uncorruptness. All who want life must support that government by learning about it and by bearing witness to others about it. Jehovah's witnesses, who devote much energy and time to bearing witness concerning it, will be glad to help you to become an active supporter of God's incorruptible government under Jesus Christ.

Insight on the News

Stock Market

● The past year, perhaps as never before, has clearly manifested the unstable nature of the world's stock markets. In the U.S., in January 1973, for example, the Dow-Jones industrial averages hit an all-time high of 1052 points. But by autumn the market was in one of the severest plunges of the century, plummeting a total of 57 points on two days in November and finally dipping well below 800 points. Exchanges in Europe, Canada, Australia and Japan also reported drops of as much as 30 percent from high points earlier in the year.

Why? Fears of a possible 1974 worldwide recession were brought to a head by the Arab oil embargo.

This jittery nature of the stock market is not new. A phenomenal drop took place back in 1955 with the news of President Dwight Eisenhower's heart attack; fear of grave national consequences arose due to one man's health.

What was new in 1973 was the market's continual and drastic fluctuations over a course of many months. Regardless of what happens to the market in coming months, last year's *actions illustrate* how fearful world leaders are. (Luke 21:26) Christians can take warning and not be overly anxious, knowing how easily wealth can 'make wings and fly away.' —Prov. 23:5.

Freedom from Tobacco

● World tobacco production has risen about 12 percent in the past decade. This despite the fact that medical science links smoking with numerous ailments. Evidence grows that even the children of smokers suffer. Why do not more quit?

Dr. F. R. Wake, of Canada's Carleton University, says: "The major problem is not getting people to quit smoking, but to keep them off it after they've quit." Strangely, just knowing smoking causes cancer is often not enough.

Smoking has never been a sizable problem among Jehovah's witnesses. They have, since the 1890's, published warnings against it. Now, since the latter part of 1973, anyone becoming one of Jehovah's witnesses or desiring to remain an acceptable member of their congregations has been required to drop the tobacco habit. A similar restriction rests on those who make their living in the tobacco business.

Why the concern to free their congregations completely from any connection with tobacco? Jehovah's witnesses recognize the health dangers that the habit presents. Besides, the vital moral question with them is, Do we use our bodies in a way that shows appreciation to our Creator by 'cleansing ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit'? (2 Cor. 7:1) They also see tobacco promotion as contradicting one's love for neighbor. The desire for God's favor motivates them to gain freedom from tobacco.

Catholics and Communists

● The Italian clergy of the Catholic Church have requested that the pope rescind a 1949 decree ruling that anyone 'showing favor to the Communist party' be excommunicated. What else has happened, and what does it indicate?

In recent times the Vatican has received official dignitaries from a number of Communist nations and has even conceded a desire to establish relations with Red China. In these moves alert observers see drastic changes from the church's previous positions. True, the Catholic Church has always been a 'friend of the world,' and, with worldly expertise, she has usually arranged to have priests and bishops and large followings on both sides of political issues, even wars. In that way, regardless of how matters are settled, she maintained a position of influence with the winner.

But today world events are forcing her to make concessions that reveal a steadily weakening position. Peace appears to be developing between the Western nations and the Communist East. To maintain some political strength, the church is forced to reconcile herself with her long-time atheistic enemy.

Thus a church of great worldly power is losing its grip on the reins of political control. Her voice in world affairs is now conciliatory. All of this calls to mind the prophetic picture presented in the Bible book of Revelation chapter 17. There all false religion is depicted as a prostitute who, losing command over the beastly nations, is eventually destroyed by those very nations.

EARTHQUAKES Affect Everyone

HAVE you been in an earthquake? If so, then you know the sickening dread that comes over one as "solid earth" wiggles like jelly. A few seconds become like hours. Buildings crunch and collapse, with hundreds, perhaps thousands, of persons trapped in the debris. Those living through such an experience do not soon forget it. On the other hand, maybe you have only read about earthquakes.

In either event, your life is affected by earthquakes. Why do we say this? Because modern earthquakes fulfill the prophetic words of Jesus Christ. They supply proof that we live in what the Bible calls "the conclusion of the system of things." Consider the evidence.

If you have a Bible, turn to Matthew chapter 24 and begin reading with verse 3:

> "While [Jesus] was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: 'Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?' And in answer Jesus said to them: . . . 'nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and *earthquakes in one place after another*. All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress.' "—Matt. 24:3-8; Mark 13:4-8.

And the Bible historian Luke adds that Jesus said: "There will be *great* earthquakes."—Luke 21:11.

NO DIFFERENCE IN EARTHQUAKE PATTERN?

Yet some persons say: 'There have always been earthquakes. This time in history is no different from the past in that respect.' A scientist asserts in *Natural History* magazine:

> "One notices with some amusement that certain religious groups have picked this rather unfortunate time to insist that the number of earthquakes is increasing. . . . It is worth remarking that the number of great earthquakes from 1896 to 1906 (about twenty-five) was greater than in any ten year interval since. Apparently this religious concern is associated with some of the words of the Gospels referring to the last days . . . [Jesus' prophecy] still impresses a seismologist [earthquake expert] as not much of a prediction."—December 1969.

Is this a valid objection? To answer that question, in your own Bible notice carefully what Jesus went on to say. He did not predict that the above-listed events (including earthquakes) would occur within any "ten-year interval." Rather, he said: "Truly I say to you that *this generation* will by no means pass away until all these things occur." (Matt. 24:34) A whole "generation" is much longer than ten years.

Further, remember that Jesus foretold "great earthquakes." What is it that makes an earthquake "great"? Is it not its effects on lives and property? But modern earthquake students tend to consider an earthquake "great" only if it rates high on the Richter Scale, which rates "magnitude," the power or force a quake releases. Some of the earthquakes with the highest magnitude ratings, however, are under the oceans! These have had virtually no effect on men. On the other hand, quakes with relatively low Richter Scale ratings have been among the most disastrous. The Aga-

dir, Morocco, quake in 1960 rated "light" on the Richter Scale. Does that mean that it was not "great"? Certainly not. Twenty thousand persons died!

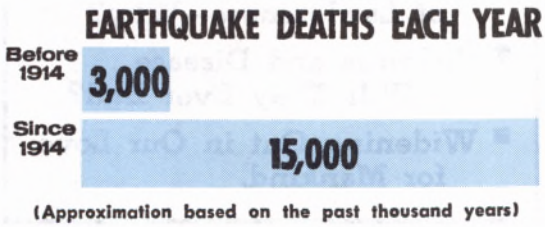
We must remember that Jesus' words had a certain fulfillment in the first century C.E. on the Jewish "system of things." They had no sophisticated scale to measure earthquakes then. But there were, nevertheless, "great earthquakes" and earthquakes "in one place after another" in that period prior to 70 C.E. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

Bible commentator A. Barnes attests to this, saying: 'Many earthquakes are mentioned as preceding the destruction of Jerusalem.' Large ones are known to have struck places in Asia Minor, Judea and Italy, including the destruction of a large section of Pompeii in 63 C.E. Obviously, what made those quakes "great" and what fulfilled the prophecy was not the reading on a then unknown instrument, but, essentially, their effects on people.

Yet Jesus' words, scholars admit, were to have a greater fulfillment. How do they know?

ANOTHER FULFILLMENT OF JESUS' WORDS

Portions of Jesus' same prophecy must come true at a later period. Jesus spoke of certain things as taking place "when the Son of man arrives in his glory." That did not occur back in the first century. (Matt. 25:31-46) Also, on other occasions Jesus referred to "the conclusion of the system of things" and meant more than just the end of the Jewish system. (See, for instance, Matthew 13:36-43.) We therefore should not be surprised to find a greater fulfillment of Jesus' words concerning earthquakes. This would be at Jesus' "presence" and the "conclusion of the system of things," and it would take place in a broader, worldwide sense. When, then, would this begin to take place?



In the year 1914, as has been shown many times in this journal. In that year World War I broke out; nation waged war against nation and kingdom against kingdom as never before. A terrible chain of unprecedented events followed. There were massive food shortages and disease epidemics (such as the Spanish flu). These things took place at a time and on a scale that made clearly evident that they fulfilled Bible prophecy. But what about the *earthquakes?* Has there been anything unusual about these in the generation since 1914?

EARTHQUAKES SINCE THE YEAR 1914

One way to prove clearly that the generation since 1914 is unusual as far as earthquakes are concerned is to consider how many deaths they have caused.

"During the past 1,000 years," according to the *1971 Nature/Science Annual,* published by Time-Life Books, "more than three million people (possibly four million) have died from their effects." But how many of these three (or, possibly, four) million persons have perished since the year 1914?

Nine hundred thousand—at least!

In other words, up to 30 percent of all those killed in earthquakes over the last thousand-year period have died since 1914! The other 70 percent or so of the deaths were spread out over almost nine hundred and fifty years.

These modern earthquakes have been widespread, some occurring in places where they have never before been known. They have also been "great" in terms of the number killed, property ruined and

even in their power. In highly respected reference works we read, for instance, of some of the great earthquakes in this generation: China (1920), "one of the most appalling catastrophes in history." Japan (1923), "the worst disaster in [Japan's] history." Pakistan (1935), "one of the greatest earthquakes of history." El Salvador (1951), "the most destructive quake in El Salvador's history." Egypt (1955), "Egypt experienced the worst earthquake in its history." Afghanistan (1956), "believed to be the worst in the history of the country." Chile (1960), "No earthquake in history has ever had a greater range than this." Alaska (1964), "the largest earthquake ever recorded in North America." Peru (1970), "the worst natural disaster on record in the Western Hemisphere."

This partial list should impress on us that Jesus' words, "there will be earthquakes in one place after another," and "great earthquakes," have indeed come true in the generation living since 1914. But what does this mean for you?

EARTHQUAKES INVOLVE YOU!

Scientists have learned a great deal about quakes in this same period. Yet, have men really shown wisdom and acted on this knowledge? Consider:

Experts know the general area where most earthquakes occur. Have men moved out of these areas? Have enlightened governments refused to allow further building in danger zones? Just the opposite has been the case! Some of the most dangerous earthquake zones also remain among the most heavily populated and industrialized. Managua, Nicaragua, was hit by a devastating quake in 1931, then again in 1972. Said the New York *Times:*

"The question inevitably arises why Managua was rebuilt and greatly expanded on the same location in the years after 1931. But of course the same question has to be asked of people who live in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Tokyo and many other great cities where similar danger *signals* abound . . . Recurrent tragedies can only be avoided if the lessons of history and of science are taken seriously rather than ignored in the planning of cities and the building of homes and factories."—December 25, 1972.

Observant men see the unwisdom of not heeding warnings about earthquakes. But even if you do not live in such an area yourself, are you able to see the greater warning inherent in what Jesus said?

The earthquakes of our time fulfill exactly what he predicted. They, along with other features of his "sign," clearly mark ours as a special time. It means that soon there will occur from God a "great tribulation" in which this entire wicked system will be swept away. Thereafter, under the direction of God's heavenly government, this entire globe will be made a paradise. No harm will then come to any righteous inhabitant of the earth. Would you like to live then?

If so, remember, we are almost *sixty years* into 'the generation that will *not* pass away until all things occur.' Its time must be running out! Ask Jehovah's witnesses to explain in detail Jesus' prophecy about our time. It is vital to get an accurate knowledge of God's requirements if you are to survive the fast-approaching end of this wicked system into that foretold paradise earth.—Matt. 24:21; Rev. 21:1-4.

IN COMING ISSUES

- **The Increasing of Lawlessness—Why?**
- **Sickness and Disease —Will They Ever End?**
- **Widening Out in Our Love for Mankind.**

Does Christianity Require Belief IN A TRINITY?

ALL major religions of Christendom accept the Trinity doctrine as an article of faith. The more than 250 churches belonging to the World Council of Churches confess "the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

While the views of the various religious bodies belonging to this fellowship vary radically, all are required to be in agreement that the "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" are but "one God." Hence, rejection of the Trinity doctrine is, in effect, regarded as a rejection of Christianity.

Though not belonging to the World Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Church likewise adheres to belief in the Trinity. Of this teaching, Catholic theologian Walter Farrell noted:

> "The mystery of the Trinity, as God has told it to us, is the mystery of three divine persons, really distinct, in one and the same divine nature: coequal, coeternal, consubstantial, one God. Of these persons, the Second proceeds from the First by an eternal generation; the Third proceeds from the First and the Second by an eternal spiration. . . .
>
> "The Trinity is a mystery; no doubt about it. Unless we had been told of its existence, we would never have suspected such a thing. Moreover, now that we know that there is a Trinity, we cannot understand it. The man who attempts to unravel the mystery is in the position of a near-sighted man straining his eyes from the Eastern Shore of Maryland for a glimpse of Spain."

The words of this theologian imply that it is impossible to know the God whom one worships. But that is not in agreement with Jesus' words to a Samaritan woman: "You worship what you do not know; we [Jews] worship what we know." (John 4:22) Though the Jews never viewed God as a trinity, Jesus Christ could still say that they knew what they were worshiping. Those accepting the Trinity doctrine, however, cannot explain or understand whom they are venerating. God is a great mystery to them. Does this not suggest that something is amiss in trying to speak of God in terms of a mysterious Trinity?

The previously quoted Catholic theologian indicated that it would be impossible to have come up with the idea of the Trinity apart from divine revelation. If that were so, why do even non-Christian religions teach a trinity concept? On the basis of his studies, Professor E. Washburn Hopkins said of the trinities of Hinduism, Buddhism and Christendom: "The three trinities *as religious expressions* are identical. . . . One may say: I believe in God as godhead, and in the divine incarnation, and in the creative Holy Spirit, as a Christian, a Vishnuite, or a Buddhist."

Noteworthy, too, is the fact that the trinity of Chinese Buddhism is defined in a way that is practically identical to what professed Christians say. We read:

"The Three are all included in one substantial essence. The three are the same as one; not one, and yet not different; without parts or composition. When regarded as one, the three persons are spoken of as the Perfect One (Tathagata). There is no real difference [between the three persons of the trinity]; they are manifestations, different aspects of the same unchanging substance." —*Origin and Evolution of Religion*, p. 348.

Surely no one would claim that such belief in a trinity makes a Buddhist or a Hindu a Christian. The fact that non-Christian religions can frame their belief in terms similar to the language of Christendom's theologians nullifies the claim that only the God of the Bible could have revealed this doctrine. No Buddhist nor Hindu would admit that this is the source of his belief. Well, then, did Christendom's churches get the basis for their doctrine from the God identified in the Bible?

The word "trinity" does not appear in the Holy Scriptures. True, the 'Father, Son and holy spirit' are mentioned together. (Matt. 28:19) But does this in itself imply the existence of a trinity? A family might consist of a father, a mother and a son. Yet no one would say that they are a trinity, with each family member having equal authority, knowledge and power. —Compare Matthew 2:19-21.

But someone might reply: 'The "New Testament" goes far beyond just naming the "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" together. It teaches the Trinity doctrine.' Is that the case?

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia,* after discussing the theological development of the Trinity, states: "The impression could arise that the Trinitarian dogma is in the last analysis a late 4th-century invention. In a sense, this is true." Does the "New Testament" provide the basis for this invention? Does it, for example, reveal Jesus Christ to be equal with God?

Jesus Christ never made such a claim. He recognized his Father as his God. To Mary Magdalene, Jesus said: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God." (John 20:17) He looked to his Father as the source of his authority, saying: "The Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing." —John 5:19.

Rather than hint at equality, the Scriptures clearly point to Jesus' subjection to his Father. We read: "The head of the Christ is God." (1 Cor. 11:3) "The Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone." —1 Cor. 15:28.

Then, too, if the Father, Son and holy spirit were equal and constituted one God, a sin against the Son would also be a sin against the Father and the holy spirit. But this is not so. Jesus Christ said: "Every sort of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. For example, whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him."—Matt. 12:31, 32.*

So, then, can the Trinity doctrine be viewed as Christian? No, for it denies the clear Biblical statements that Jesus Christ is the "Son of God," the "firstborn of all creation" and the "beginning of the creation by God." (John 20:31; Col. 1:15; Rev. 3:14) It falsely claims that he is coequal and coeternal with the Father.

True Christianity, therefore, *requires* that we reject the Trinity doctrine as false, as an "invention" of sinful men. We should worship the Father as the only true God, and do so *through* his firstborn Son Jesus Christ, the One who occupies the first place among all of God's intelligent creatures.—Col. 3:17.

* For a detailed Scriptural discussion, see the booklet *"The Word"—Who Is He? According to John* and the book *Aid to Bible Understanding*, pp. 918-920.

Getting Better Acquainted with The BIBLE LANDS

BETWEEN July 18 and September 26 this past year, some 3,500 of Jehovah's witnesses availed themselves of special arrangements to tour the Bible lands. There were over 800 of these travelers who came from France, and a similar number from the British Isles, upward of 750 from North America, and hundreds more from other lands in northern Europe.

For years it had been the desire of many of them to see for themselves the places associated with the Hebrew prophets of God and with the ministry of God's own Son and his apostles. During their stay in Israel they traveled from Mount Hermon on the far north down to the road leading into Beer-sheba in the Negeb, and from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea.

SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS

Many of the places pointed out to them were either mountains or the ruins of former cities. To a casual observer they might not have seemed impressive. But to students of the Bible the hill of Moreh, Mount Tabor, the sites of ancient Samaria and Bethel are filled with meaning. These are locations where Jehovah executed judgment on people who opposed his purpose. As could be plainly seen, the places are still there. The Bible accounts concerning them are not imagination.

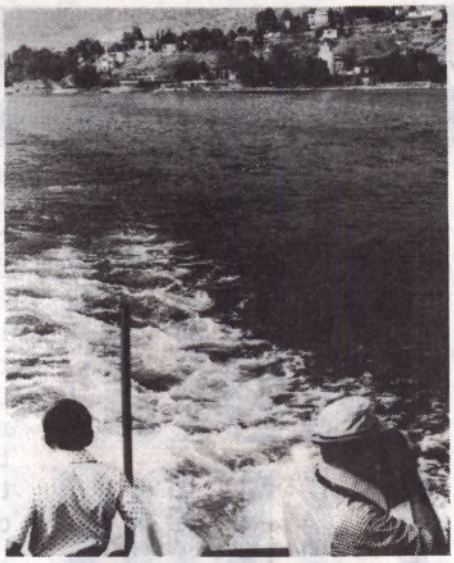
In the hot sun the tour groups trekked to the top of the mound of Megiddo and saw evidence of the fortifications that once were there. What a view it afforded of the Plain of Esdraelon below! From its location near the entrance to the pass through the Carmel mountain range, it was evident that this city could easily control the trade routes that came through here from the south, the north and the east. As one Egyptian Pharaoh reportedly said: "The capturing of Megiddo is the capturing of a thousand towns!" Control of this city represented international political and military dominance in Bible times. It was not hard for the visitors to see why the name Har-Magedon (meaning "Mountain of Megiddo") is associated with the coming divine victory over the political powers of the world.—Rev. 16:14, 16.

VIVID REMINDERS OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

In Galilee they were reminded of events that unmistakably identify Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Early one morning they set out by boat across the Sea of Galilee. A visitor from France reports: "One of the moments that particularly impressed me was when the boat on which we were traveling stopped offshore and the guide read Matthew 14:23-33." They could visualize those times when Jesus walked on the water there and when he spoke to a storm and caused it to grow still. Could

anyone do these things by mere human power?

Landing at Capernaum, on the northern shore, those on tour found little but ruins. Here were the remains of a synagogue built sometime after Jesus' earthly ministry. In this city Jesus had expelled demons and healed every sort of sickness; the inhabitants knew that he had even raised the dead. Yet they did not believe. In a spiritual sense Capernaum had been exalted heaven high by Jesus' presence, his teaching and his miracles, but Jesus said: "Down to Hades you will come!" (Luke 10:15) The ruins seen on this trip testified that his words had been fulfilled.



Crossing the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus performed miracles

Farther to the north the travelers visited Caesarea Philippi, where the apostle Peter, thoroughly convinced by the things that he had seen, acknowledged to Jesus: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And nearby they saw Mount Hermon, evidently the "lofty mountain" where Jesus was transfigured and where a voice came from heaven itself, saying: "This is my Son . . . listen to him." (Matt. 16:16; 17:1, 5) It was not seeing these places that convinced these visitors of the truthfulness of these things. But, as one of them said, as a result of being here "we have grown spiritually richer."

As they moved from one location to another, the minds of the travelers frequently turned to the time when Jesus was here. In old Nazareth, built on a hillside, they got a feel of the humble surroundings in which he grew up and recalled that in a synagogue here he publicly read from the scroll of Isaiah his commission to "tell good news to the meek ones." (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:16-21) Though they were traveling in air-conditioned buses, they frequently remarked about the fact that Jesus had traveled through all this mountainous region on foot.

The hot, dry climate now gave added meaning in their minds to Jesus' commendation of those who would give "only a cup of cold water" to his disciples. (Matt. 10:42) And in these surroundings one could not help but recall that ancient hospitality here involved washing the feet of one's guests—how good it would feel! Jesus performed such a loving service for his apostles. —John 13:3-5.

In contrast, when those on tour were shown an old millstone in Capernaum, and saw how heavy it was, they felt the full force of Jesus' warning to anyone who, lacking love, would stumble a Christian brother. As he said: "It would be of more advantage to him if a millstone were suspended from his neck and he were thrown into the sea."—Luke 17:2.

Jerusalem was a highlight of the tour. As the buses crossed from the north onto the Mount of Olives and suddenly the walled city came into view, there was a feeling of excitement! It is true, the ancient temple of Jehovah is no longer there. The city was completely destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 C.E. Yet, as a person stands on the Mount of Olives, he can still discern the geographical features of the ancient city.

Looking westward across the Kidron

Valley, one sees Mount Moriah at the northern part of the city. There is likely where Abraham came to offer up his son Isaac. It is there that Jehovah's angel instructed David to build an altar to Jehovah, and in this place his son Solomon erected the glorious temple of Jehovah. To the left, south of the temple area, can be seen where the City of David once stood on Mount Zion, and beyond that is the Valley of Hinnom.

It was here on the Mount of Olives that Jesus sat as he described vividly to his apostles world events that we have seen since 1914 C.E., events that prove that Christ is invisibly present in kingly power. (Matt. 24:3-14) Just a few days after speaking about these things, in the Garden of Gethsemane, apparently on the side of this same hill, Jesus was arrested. The next morning, having been falsely condemned, he was impaled on a stake at a location named Golgotha, meaning "Skull Place." While in Jerusalem, the visitors saw the place where this is believed to have occurred—outside the Damascus Gate to the north, where the rock formation of a cliff gives the appearance of a human skull. Nearby they also inspected an empty tomb in a cave that many believe to be the place where Jesus was buried.

Modern-day Jerusalem as viewed from the Mount of Olives

Knowing the exact spot where these events occurred is not the vital thing. What is truly important is what happened there and its meaning to us. And those who made this trip found that seeing these locations helped them to visualize the events.

LASTING MEMORIES

The memories that the travelers associate with their visit to Israel are many and varied. A mother from England will probably not forget the day that an Arab, perhaps jokingly, offered to buy her attractive seventeen-year-old daughter for five camels.

Some have had occasion to mention to acquaintances at home what they saw in museums in and around Jerusalem. There the Divine Name was clearly in evidence on the "Lachish Letters." An inscription on display from a tomb declared: "Jehovah is the God of the whole earth." Another one made mention of exile in Babylon. A noteworthy inscription bore the name of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who yielded to the clamor of the Jewish priests to have Jesus impaled. And there were ancient scrolls of portions of the Bible, all testifying to the accuracy with which it has been passed down to us.

Many have warm memories of their meetings with fellow Witnesses in Israel. One such occasion was in a restaurant on the slopes of Mount Carmel. It was in this area, in the days of the prophet Elijah, that the difference between true worship and the false was vividly demonstrated. Here the materialistic sort of worship associated with Baal was exposed as falsehood, but a supernatural display of fire from heaven moved observers to confess: "Jehovah is the true God!" (1 Ki. 18:19-40) While having a midday meal there on Mount Carmel, the visitors heard heart-

warming experiences about the work of the modern-day witnesses of Jehovah who point people away from materialism and to the worship of the true God.

There were other opportunities to meet with the local Witnesses too. One particularly inspiring occasion was when Scandinavian travelers met with two local congregations in the old Roman theater at Caesarea. The excellent acoustics of that partially restored structure permitted all to hear with ease, and the old walls were made to resound with songs to Jehovah's praise.

WHERE THE APOSTLE PAUL PREACHED

The apostle Paul had passed through Caesarea more than once on his missionary travels. Among other places to which he had traveled with the "good news" were Cyprus, Greece and Rome. These places were also visited by many of the travelers to the Bible lands this past year.

In Cyprus they had opportunity to see Paphos, where Paul and Barnabas had preached to the Roman proconsul. And just as those early Christians were opposed by the sorcerer Elymas, who sought to distort the righteous ways of Jehovah, so today, the visitors observed, Christendom's clergy continue to try to stir up hatred against Jehovah's people by misrepresenting their work. (Acts 13:6-12) Though the clergy themselves have been deeply involved in the violence that has repeatedly erupted on the island, they had a sign hung across the road near the peaceful assembly of Jehovah's witnesses charging: "The Millennialists [as they call the Witnesses] Are the Enemies of the Nation." But those who visited the assembly site could readily see for themselves that there was no danger from these peace-loving people.

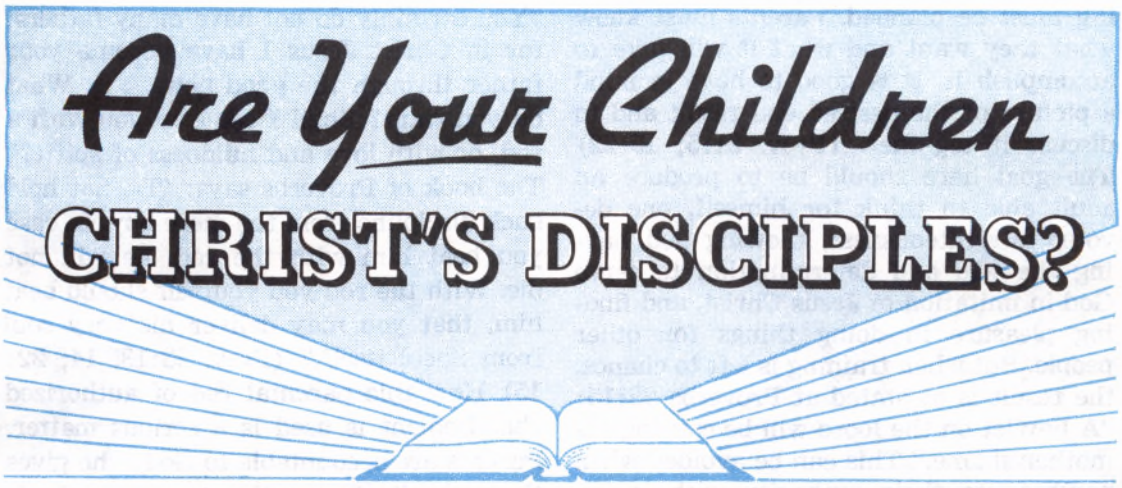
Further accounts from the Bible book of Acts came to life as the travelers went on to Greece. In Athens they climbed onto the Areopagus, where Paul had preached in full view of the towering Acropolis with its pagan temples. (Acts 17:19, 22) In the ruins of ancient Corinth they stood before the Bema, the "judgment seat" where Jewish opposers had brought Paul for a hearing before proconsul Gallio. (Acts 18:12) And they visited Delphi, an ancient center for the worship of Apollo, where an inscription was found mentioning the proconsulship of Gallio and providing further information that has been used to ascertain the date when Paul appeared before him.

In Rome they saw the arch of Titus, testimony to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.—an experience, however, from which the Christians were spared, because they heeded Jesus' warning and got out of Jerusalem when the Roman armies lifted their siege in the year 66. Near that historic arch is the Colosseum, built by the labor of Jews who had refused to exercise faith in Jesus and so had been taken to Rome as slaves when Jerusalem was devastated.

Earlier, it was from there in Rome that Paul wrote six inspired books of the Bible. In that city there was also a Christian congregation. And those whose tours took them through Rome this past year saw that interest in true Christianity is very much alive today, over 55,000 attending the "Divine Victory" International Assembly there in August.

From start to finish, the tour of the Bible lands was an enriching experience. As a British traveler expressed it: "In a very vivid fashion, our eyes have been opened, bringing to life the place names mentioned in the Bible, and I am sure that henceforth we shall be able to read its pages with a mental picture of the topography of the country. No longer will the picture be in plain black and white, but in full color and in three dimensions."

Are Your Children CHRIST'S DISCIPLES?



"These words that I am commanding you . . . you must inculcate them in your son." —Deut. 6:6, 7.

WHY even take time pondering that question in our title? Why not simply provide what Caesar's law demands—food, clothing, shelter, a secular education—and then allow the child to decide religious or ethical matters for himself when he is old enough? You would not be alone in following this course.

[2] But there are good reasons for asking the question. Has the increase in violence robbed you of a sense of security? Has the growth of dishonesty saddened you? Has the mushrooming of drug abuse and immorality been at least somewhat disturbing? Have the resultant tax increases affected you? If so, then in view of the involvement of youths in these problems, you have good reason at least to wonder if better child training would not have helped.

[3] Make no mistake about it. Children usually can be trained to be what their parents want them to be. Researchers in child development have learned that most of a child's personality has been established before he enters school and that such personality traits are not thereafter easy to alter. The Creator of man, in his Word the Bible, says: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it." (Prov. 22:6) Fundamental principles governing conduct inculcated during childhood usually are not forgotten even though one might temporarily turn aside to wrongdoing because of imperfection. This thought is incorporated in Jesus' illustration of the prodigal son who asked his believing father for his inheritance and then "traveled abroad into a distant country, and there squandered his property by living a debauched life." (Luke 15:13) What brought him back? For one thing, he remembered his father. Not just the material provisions that his father always made but his father's love of spiritual things. He said: "I will rise and journey to my father and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.' " (Luke 15:18) Yes, right training during childhood is a major factor in shaping a child's life.

[4] To be successful, of course, such train-

1, 2. (a) How do some parents feel about raising children? (b) What reasons are there for being interested in better child training?

3. What indicates that most children can be trained to be what their parents want them to be?

4. (a) Why is planning necessary in child training? (b) What should the goal be?

ing must be planned. Parents must know what they want and what it will take to accomplish it. It is good to have in mind a picture of the desired end result and to discuss it together. (Prov. 21:5; 15:22) The goal here should be to produce an adult able to think for himself, one devoted to righteousness, knowing God, having the will and determination to serve God in imitation of Jesus Christ, and finding pleasure in doing things for other people. But when training is left to chance, the result is as stated at Proverbs 29:15: "A boy let on the loose will be causing his mother shame." This can be avoided when parents use their authority with loving concern for the child's lasting welfare.

THE ROD OF AUTHORITY

[5] One having authority must eventually render an account to the one delegating that authority. Thus parents have a heavy responsibility in rearing their children in that they must answer to God for the trust placed upon them. As Psalm 127:3 reminds parents: "Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah." So the apostle Paul counsels: "You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Eph. 6:4) Doing this includes teaching your children that, in harmony with Jehovah's will, Jesus left a 'model for us to follow his steps closely.' —1 Pet. 2:21.

[6] In Israel, a rod was an instrument of chastisement. In 2 Samuel 7:14 Jehovah said concerning King David's successor: "When he does wrong, I will also reprove him with the rod of men and with the strokes of the sons of Adam." Also, to the members of spiritual Israel, the apostle Paul writes, in 1 Corinthians 4:15-21: "You certainly do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have become your father through the good news. . . . What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and mildness of spirit?" The book of Proverbs says: "Do not hold back discipline from the mere boy. In case you beat him with the rod, he will not die. With the rod you yourself should beat him, that you may deliver his very soul from Sheol itself." (Prov. 23:13, 14; 22:15) How this parental rod of authorized chastisement is used is a serious matter. Parents are accountable to God, who gives the authority to chastise, to use the "rod" properly. Failure to do so may well result in death to the child, as the proverb states, as well as divine disapproval of the parents. Jehovah himself sets the example in the proper exercise of fatherly authority to discipline, as pointed out at Hebrews 12:7, 9, 10: "God is dealing with you as with sons. For what son is he that a father does not discipline? Furthermore, we used to have fathers who were of our flesh to discipline us, and we used to give them respect. Shall we not much more subject ourselves to the Father of our spiritual life and live? For they for a few days used to discipline us according to what seemed good to them, but he does so for our profit that we may partake of his holiness." Jehovah disciplines his people, not because he is irritated, but "for our profit," that we may have his approval and live. He expects Christian fathers to do likewise toward their children, with a view to their becoming true disciples of his Son.

THE FATHERLESS BOY

[7] The manner in which Jehovah commanded the Israelites to care for fatherless

5, 6. (a) What must parents keep in mind regarding disciplinary measures that they have to take? (b) How does Jehovah set the example in the exercise of parental discipline?

7, 8. (a) Describe Jehovah's concern for the fatherless boy. (b) Why was a household with no father a tragic thing?

boys impresses upon us the good that a godly father can accomplish within the family circle. Note Jehovah's loving concern for such bereaved ones: "You must not pervert the judgment of the alien resident or of the fatherless boy, and you must not seize the garment of a widow as a pledge. And you must remember that you became a slave in Egypt, and Jehovah your God proceeded to redeem you from there. That is why I am commanding you to do this thing." (Deut. 24:17, 18) There is no mistaking God's recognition of the void that existed in such a bereaved household.

[8] A household with no father was tragic in many ways. The father was the one who would provide material necessities. He could protect them against those who might steal, defraud or otherwise oppress. He would provide the son with fatherly guidance and counsel, companionship and love. So, in the absence of the father, the Law provided reminders of the need for special concern.—Ex. 22:22-24.

[9] The expression "fatherless boy" was even included when God was describing the degree of faithfulness of the entire nation of Israel. When the nation became spiritually impoverished and began to pervert justice, the fatherless boy would be one of the first to feel the bad effects. Thus Jehovah caused the prophet Jeremiah to write: "If you will positively make your ways and your dealings good, if you will positively carry out justice between a man and his companion, if no alien resident, no fatherless boy and no widow you will oppress, and innocent blood you will not shed in this place, and after other gods you will not walk for calamity to yourselves, I, in turn, shall certainly keep you residing in this place, in the land that I gave to your forefathers, from time indefinite even to time indefinite." (Jer. 7:5-7) God's view on this matter has not changed. One way to identify true Christians today is to note their care for bereaved ones. At James 1:27 it says: "The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself without spot from the world."

[10] Is it possible for a boy today to have a father and still, in a sense, be a fatherless boy? This could, unfortunately, be true. If a boy finds it necessary to go alone to Christian meetings, though his father really could be with him, then the boy is fatherless on at least that occasion. If, to receive any training at all in the Christian field ministry, the boy must look to someone else, then he is fatherless in that area of his life. The same is true in other ways. But what a fine thing it is when the Christian father shoulders his responsibilities: taking the lead in family Bible study, providing for recreation, making himself available for consultation when problems arise, and personally giving training in caring for responsibilities around the home so as to lay a good foundation for shouldering responsibilities later in life. Practical instruction in the whole scope of Christian living is needed. Children do not automatically become Christ's disciples simply because their parents profess to be such. They need personal help. The father who is a helper at all stages in a child's life is, indeed, a blessing.

YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

[11] In Christendom, those who are still churchgoers usually listen to a brief ser-

9. (a) How was the attitude toward 'fatherless boys' an indication of the spiritual condition of the nation? (b) What does one's view of such afflicted ones have to do with Christianity?

10. (a) How might a boy today have a father and still, in a sense, be a fatherless boy? (b) What part do parents have, then, in their children's becoming Christ's disciples?

11, 12. What does Deuteronomy 6:6, 7 say concerning worship, and how can application of that counsel affect the members of our families?

mon on Sunday, and children have a brief weekly session in Sunday school. This is expected to care for the religious needs of the family. How does this compare with what Jehovah outlined for the family circle? Deuteronomy 6:6, 7 says: "And these words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." From this it is obvious that worship of Jehovah was to be a way of life and that discussing his purposes was to be done on appropriate occasions throughout one's daily routine.

12 How good it is when one's first thoughts on awakening are of Jehovah and of his Son! Are there better things to talk about in starting the day's activities than God's doings? Worship of Jehovah cannot be separated from the daily routine of life. When the speech and conduct of parents reflect the conviction that this is so, the children will grow in appreciation of the fact that God sees each thing they do and is interested in how they do it, that it is important to be an imitator of God's Son in everything that they do. God and his Son are then in the child's thoughts at all times, not only when special times are set aside for worship. They will be looking for Jehovah's blessing on each task performed and will seek the direction he gives through the Holy Scriptures. When a child receives this kind of training, it will most likely be true that "even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it."—Prov. 22:6.

13 But how easy many persons find it to go about their daily routine and leave God out of their thoughts! Allowing oneself to do this, however, could in time cause one to become like those of whom Jesus said: "As they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be." (Matt. 24:37-39) But the apostle Paul wisely encouraged keeping God in mind throughout the day no matter what we are doing. He said: "Therefore, whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory." (1 Cor. 10:31) He gave the same kind of exhortation to the Colossians: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men." (Col. 3:23) That is what a disciple of Christ does. Are you teaching your children to do that?

14 Do you and your son occasionally work together on the family car? What relationship does this part of the daily routine have with the Bible? Well, the car had to be engineered and manufactured in harmony with laws established by the Creator, and you must continue to recognize those natural laws if you are to keep it operating effectively. Periodic tune-ups and adjustments, lubricating and oil changes all are necessary because of God's laws. Do you remind your son of these things as he works? Another matter: Does governmental Caesar have certain safety laws governing automobile operation in your state? Must the tires, lights and brakes measure up to certain standards so that accidents can be avoided and lives protected? How important is it to conform to these requirements? At Romans 13:1 we are told: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God; the existing authorities stand placed in their relative po-

13. Why is it important to keep God in our thoughts at all times?

14. Give an example of how God can be brought into the discussion as father and son work together in some daily routine.

sitions by God." Are you impressing these thoughts on your son as you work together?

[15] Do mother and daughter ever work together in making a dress? What connection does this have with the Scriptures? Well, what style will it be? Will it be in harmony with 1 Timothy 2:9, 10, which says: "I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind"? With what will you trim it, and what accessories will your daughter wear with it? The rest of that same scripture says that women who reverence God should adorn themselves, "not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive garb, but . . . through good works." Possibly if one does not always wear the most expensive garb, one will learn reasonable economy and "have something to distribute to someone in need." (Eph. 4:28) There are many Scriptural principles that your daughter can learn as you work together to get the daily work done in the home, 'doing all things for God's glory.'

Scriptural principles that apply to clothing can be taught as a mother and daughter make a dress together

[16] What kind of language do you use in daily association with your children? Disciples of Jesus know that proper use of the tongue is important. (Matt. 12:36) The Bible admonishes: "Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth, but whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be, that it may impart what is favorable to the hearers." (Eph. 4:29; Titus 2:6-8) No matter what the subject, the ideas expressed should be in harmony with the inspired guidelines recorded by the apostle Paul, when he said: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things." (Phil. 4:8) It is true that we cannot be reading the Bible or Bible literature all day long. But, in imitation of Christ, we can always be thinking, speaking and working in harmony with the Scriptures. Reflecting this outlook, Psalm 119:97 says: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern."

SPECIAL PERIODS SET ASIDE

[17] In addition to teaching and training your children during the day's normal

15. Give an example of how God can be brought into the discussion as mother and daughter work together on some constructive project.

16. (a) What kind of language should both parents and children use, and why? (b) Though we cannot be reading the Bible and Bible literature all the time, what can we do?

17. Why is regular family study an important factor in training children?

routine, for real success it is necessary to set aside special periods for family study on a regular basis. Regularity in this is as important as is regularity in eating and drinking. Small wonder that we just naturally refer to Scriptural truth as spiritual food, having in mind the strength it gives, the enjoyment in partaking and the continued need for it.—Matt. 4:4; 5:3.

[18] The material to be studied should be selected by the family head. Just as he decides what the family will have with respect to material things, so it is his responsibility to decide what the family will study. He is in the best position to know what the family needs. Additionally, he can inquire as to what the others think will be beneficial and then take this into consideration. Each family will have particular needs on occasion. Articles on drug abuse, conduct with persons of the opposite sex, honesty, associations, kindness, and so forth, might be appropriate, depending on conditions developing.

[19] Generally, the family will find that they will profit much by following the course of study that has been arranged for the congregation, preparing for participation in the meetings. Unless there is a special need in the family, why not focus your attention on the study material that all others in the congregation are thinking and talking about? What a unifying effect it will have and what a fine contribution each one can make to the discussion at the meeting if families prepare at home in harmony with the congregation's program. Of course, those blessed with more study time can do additional research.

[20] Preparing for meetings might sound uninteresting to some children. That is because of their viewpoint. The goal such ones likely have in mind is simply to prepare a comment on the study questions. While this might be an acceptable goal to begin with, the real goal should be to grasp the Scriptural subject and then to help others to do so by the comments made.

18. Who should decide what the family will study, and why?

19. Usually, what will the family find themselves studying?

20. If preparing for meetings sounds dull and uninteresting for some, what might be the problem, and what could be the remedy?

Regularity in teaching your children is as important as regularity in eating and drinking

With this objective, study soon becomes a delight to one who is a lover of truth. —Ps. 1:1, 2.

[21] There are other things that parents can do to make the family study cheerful and interesting. Allowing the atmosphere to be friendly and relaxed will help. No one learns well when he is tense or apprehensive. Young minds will not be as receptive if parents are stern and demanding. While there needs to be sufficient firmness to maintain order and to demonstrate the seriousness of the occasion, yet there is plenty of room for the kind of warmth and loving concern for one another that draws the family together.

[22] It is true that in some instances the parents do not have the secular education that their minor children are now receiving. Some parents have come from another country, and when their children go through school they master the new language, but the parents do not. In worldly family circles the children under these circumstances often adopt a superior attitude toward the parents. But how can this obstacle be overcome in the Christian family circle as the parents seek to shoulder their God-given responsibility toward the children, "bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah"?—Eph. 6:4.

[23] Parents need never feel inferior to their offspring just because some of the conditions mentioned above develop. Their position of authority in the household is God-given. Furthermore, their years of experience and background in living make them better fitted to support the family materially, to manage the household, and to take the lead in family study and worship. In a parallel situation there might very well be young brothers in their late teens or early twenties in the congregation who can give more polished student talks than some of the older brothers, but this does not qualify them to be elders. Far more is involved in eldership. The same is true of children as compared to their parents within the family circle. Regardless of the education and background of the parents, they ought to schedule the time for family study, and then allow each one to contribute what he is able, for the benefit of others. The children, if they have greater ability in certain directions, can be helped to appreciate that it is not merely intelligence that counts with Jehovah, but humility and depth of devotion. Jesus said: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matt. 23:12) Jehovah's spirit will make up for any lack that a parent might feel. Confidently follow the Scriptural arrangement for family study, irrespective of the different mental abilities of various family members.

[24] Are your children Christ's disciples? Well, if they have not only presented themselves for Christian baptism but also make it a practice to base their decisions on what Jesus said and did, if they do not show love for the unrighteous ways of the world but keep an eye on the goal of always serving the Kingdom interests, if they submit willingly to your authority and enjoy discussing Jehovah's ways, if they fill your heart with warm love because you see these things in them, you will not have to guess. You will know that they are indeed Christ's disciples.

21. What else can parents do to make the family study cheerful and interesting?

22, 23. (a) Why need parents not feel inferior to their children just because of differences in secular education? (b) What can the children beneficially be helped to appreciate?

24. How will parents know if their children are really Christ's disciples?

FINDING Joy IN TRAINING CHILDREN

DURING the reign of wise King Solomon he was asked to judge between two women, living in the same house, who had given birth to sons. During the night one child died and its mother quietly exchanged it for the live one. In the morning the real mother, detecting that the dead child was not hers, charged the dishonest mother with the theft, and the case came before Solomon. Unable to determine the truth of the matter, Solomon ordered that the live child be cut in half so each claimant could share. The account says: "At once the woman whose son was the living one said to the king (for her inward emotions were excited toward her son, so that she said): 'Excuse me, my lord! You men, give her the living child. Do not by any means put him to death.' . . . At that the king answered and said: 'You men, give her the living child, and you must by no means put him to death. She is his mother.' " (1 Ki. 3:26, 27) Solomon understood the love of parents for children. Not only had he learned this from experience, being a father himself, but he was well acquainted with God's view of the family arrangement as expressed in the Scriptures.

[2] A close family relationship is a blessing. When Andrew of Bethsaida learned the identity of the Messiah, to whom did he first go with this good news? "First this one found his own brother, Simon, and said to him: 'We have found the Messiah' (which means, when translated, Christ)." (John 1:41) Blood relationship supplies a bond that cannot be denied. Andrew's was a natural reaction.

[3] There is an even closer uniting bond, and that is the Christian brotherhood. At Romans 12:10 the Bible says: "In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead." At 1 Peter 5:9 mention is made of "the entire association of your brothers in the world." At Mark 10:29, 30 fleshly relationships are compared with those that the truth brings, Jesus saying: "Truly I say to you men, No one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not get a hundredfold now in this period of time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming system of things everlasting life." Yes, Christians have learned that brothers in the truth have something that even natural fleshly brothers do not have.—John 13:34, 35.

[4] But when your family combines both relationships you are indeed in a favored position. Parents who are dedicated and baptized servants of God have the natural love for their offspring that God implanted in humankind. They also have the opportunity to forge a unity in the family circle that can bring happiness and satis-

1, 2. (a) What experience did King Solomon have in judging between two mothers, and what aided him to judge rightly? (b) How does blood relationship affect what a person does?

3. Why is Christian brotherhood an even stronger uniting bond?

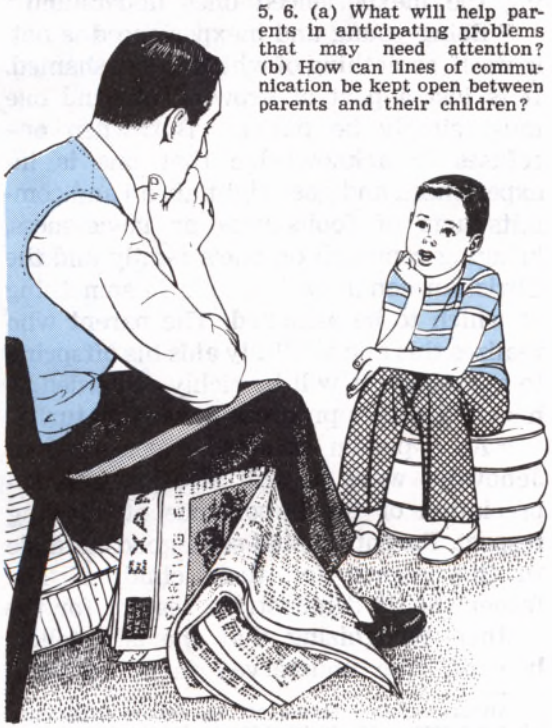
4. Why can Christian families expect to have a unity that other families cannot have?

faction unattainable by other means. They can aid their children to become faithful servants of God; not only will this bring the family closer together but it is the best inheritance they could pass on to the children. Yet today that is not as simple as it may sound.

ANTICIPATING PROBLEMS

[5] In raising a family, problems will arise. It does no good to imagine that they will not, because they will. So keep your eyes and ears open for any signs of them. When your child comes to you with small problems, it is not wise to turn him aside with quick answers. That is the time to show a keen interest in what is on the child's mind and to draw him out with questions. Many parents say that they have difficulty in getting their children to talk, to tell them what is on their mind. Might it be because the parents themselves have stifled conversation in the past when the children wanted to talk and needed help? How foolish to kill a conversation with your child just because you do not quite feel in the mood at the time.

5, 6. (a) What will help parents in anticipating problems that may need attention? (b) How can lines of communication be kept open between parents and their children?



Genuine willingness to listen to your children's little problems is important in keeping the lines of communication open

[6] The parent who watches for things to talk about with his children and shows a genuine willingness to discuss just about any subject will not find the lines of communication closing down but will find them constantly open and humming with messages that tell him what he needs to know, and that contribute to warmth and understanding in family relationships. A parent who is willing to listen will usually have children who are willing to talk. But will children go to parents with big problems if the parents do not listen to little problems, assisting in the solving of them and in a way that reflects kindness and understanding? Do you right now have a friend you trust and in whom you have confidence, one you could go to with a serious problem, knowing that he will take time to listen to all you have to say and will not look down on you just because you have the problem? Every child should feel that way about his parents. Do your children feel that way about you? Proverbs 17:17 says: "A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress." It is a sad thing when a child must look outside the family circle for that kind of relationship.

[7] The apostle Paul wrote that an overseer should be "a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness; (if indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?)." (1 Tim. 3:4, 5) This does not say that,

7. What does presiding over a household in a fine manner include?

regardless of how much time a father gives to other interests, it is all right as long as he steps in and handles matters when his children get into trouble. No, he needs to preside over his family in a fine manner, watching carefully, anticipating problems, looking ahead to what might develop among those in his charge. Preventive counsel is far better than corrective counsel. A father who specializes in forestalling problems is wiser than one who is satisfied to try to solve them when they crop up. It is true that lawyers build reputations by fighting battles in court. But Christian fathers build fine reputations by presiding in a manner that avoids problems.

GUIDANCE FOR 'THE INEXPERIENCED ONE'

[8] Children have had only limited experience in life, but it does little good for parents to keep reminding them of that fact. On the other hand, if a child is really helped to understand the high value that the Scriptures place on experience and how he personally should be alert to learn from each experience, then the child will likely have the right attitude toward the help the parent is giving and will indeed benefit from the various events that touch his life as the years go by. Actually, all of us ought to be learning from each experience we have. And if the child realizes that his parents appreciate that there are lessons they themselves can learn from various situations, then he will be less apt to resent his own inexperience and be more receptive to the learning process.

[9] What do the Scriptures say about experience? They soundly score those who stubbornly refuse to listen and learn from experience, saying: "How long will you inexperienced ones keep loving inexperience, and how long must you ridiculers desire for yourselves outright ridicule, and how long will you stupid ones keep hating knowledge? Turn back at my reproof." (Prov. 1:22, 23) "Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself, but the inexperienced have passed along and must suffer the penalty." —Prov. 22:3.

[10] There are ways in which parents can help to compensate for youthful inexperience. Thoughtful parents can kindly help the inexperienced ones over rough spots without embarrassing the children in front of others. Also, as they teach them the Bible they are equipping them with knowledge that can make one wiser than all the experience of a lifetime. Psalm 19:7 tells us: "The reminder of Jehovah is trustworthy, making the inexperienced one wise." And Psalm 119:130 adds: "The very disclosure of your words gives light, making the inexperienced ones understand."

[11] Being young and inexperienced is not, in itself, something of which to be ashamed. It is just a part of growing up, and one must simply be patient. But when one refuses to acknowledge that one is inexperienced and goes right ahead and commits acts of foolishness or lawlessness, bringing reproach on one's family and the Christian congregation, this is something of which to be ashamed. The parent who realizes this and skillfully aids his offspring to appreciate it will be richly rewarded as his child makes progress toward maturity.

[12] As a person becomes experienced in Jehovah's ways he will also grow in appreciation of the importance of showing respect. Parents should set a good example in this regard for their children. The father should demonstrate respect for the mother, recognizing that she is a fellow heir of "the undeserved favor of life."

8. How can parents aid their children to have the right view toward experience?
9. What do the Scriptures say about those who refuse to learn from experience?
10. Although young people are lacking in experience, what are some ways to compensate for this?
11. Is being young and inexperienced something of which to be ashamed?
12. How can parents aid their children to learn the importance of showing respect?

(1 Pet. 3:7) She, too, should show "deep respect for her husband." (Eph. 5:33) Both of them should have respect for the elders in the congregation, living in harmony with the Scriptural counsel: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account." (Heb. 13:17) By thus adhering to Jehovah's ways they show respect for Jehovah and his theocratic arrangement.—1 Cor. 11:3.

[13] When such a fine example is set by the parents, it is not difficult for the children to grasp the principle of respect. They will likely have a high regard for their parents and show them respect in many ways. It is true, as has been said, that parents and their children should be as companions. But this refers only to such things as the relationship of warmth and friendliness that should exist between them and not an actual equality in other ways in the household. Application of Bible principles requires that there be a clear understanding of who is the father and who is the child. In contrast, have you ever noticed on television commercials that children are often shown teaching the parents, showing them up as old-fashioned or needing to be corrected or brought up-to-date? Such advertising encourages a son to put pressure on his father to buy the kind of car the son wants. Or it encourages the daughter to put pressure on the mother to be permitted to buy "new" and "different" clothes, perfumes, deodorants, shampoos and other things that really are not new at all. This is simply a device of the commercial world to benefit itself financially without regard to the bad effect in the home. But the Bible shows clearly that it is the children who are the less experienced ones, and they should be encouraged to show respect for those who have lived longer and have seen more of life.

[14] Of course, children must be taught to do some thinking for themselves. Someday they will have to make their own decisions, and early training can help in this. The Bible highly encourages the developing of thinking ability, and this is one of the most important matters in which parents can assist their children. They will develop some pattern of thinking; so why not be sure that they learn to reason things out on the basis of what the Bible tells us about Jehovah and his ways. Proverbs 5:1, 2 says: "My son, to my wisdom O do pay attention. To my discernment incline your ears, so as to guard thinking abilities; and may your own lips safeguard knowledge itself." If you want to help someone to develop thinking ability it is important not to do for the student what he can do for himself. Christians, in presenting the truth to others, have learned the importance of drawing the listener into the conversation, getting him involved, learning what is on his mind, and then getting him to reason and come to right conclusions. These are devices that parents should have in mind in aiding their children to develop thinking ability.

[15] This ability can be developed progressively as the child grows. There are many decisions he can be allowed to make for himself, minor ones. Ask him, "What do you think would be best to do here?" Maybe his answer will show he needs a little more help. Reason with him and get him headed in the right direction. Do not get irritated or impatient. The apostle Paul reached back to his own childhood as an example and said: "When I was a babe, I used to speak as a babe, to think as a

13. (a) How should a feeling of companionship affect the parent-child relationship? (b) In what way do television commercials sometimes present a twisted view of this relationship?

14, 15. (a) Why should children be taught to do some thinking for themselves? (b) Offer suggestions that might assist parents in their efforts to help their children to develop the ability to think.

babe, to reason as a babe; but now that I have become a man, I have done away with the traits of a babe." (1 Cor. 13:11) He developed thinking ability as he grew older.

[16] Even some parents who are no part of the Christian congregation realize the value of preparing their children for the future. They do not leave the child's future to chance and allow him to choose what he wants to do, if anything, later, when he is old enough to do so. For example, they may begin early in the child's life to prepare him to manage the family business, to care for the family estate or to start a new career. Not when it comes to his financial future, but with respect to religion, something that they regard as of little or no importance, they often say they will allow the child to decide later. So, do not think that the world does not approve of the principle of preparation and training. It does, very much so, but in materialistic pursuits, not in spiritual matters.

GIVING COUNSEL THAT BUILDS UP

[17] Sometimes, after receiving counsel, persons have been known to say: "I didn't mind what he said; it was actually true and deserved. I just didn't like the way he said it." Of course, in a Christian household counsel should be accepted even if not presented in the most acceptable way. But are there things that a parent might keep in mind so as to make the counsel easier for his children to take? Undoubtedly there are. It is not just a matter of knowing what is wrong and what is needed for improvement, but knowing also how to approach the matter and how to say it.

[18] One thing to consider is the time to give counsel. Immediately after a mishap or wrongdoing may often be the appropriate time, but not always so. Waiting until both parent and child are in a more settled frame of mind might be better. Also, the place should be considered. If something amiss happened at the congregation's meeting place, at someone else's home or while shopping, it could be that the counsel, or at least any extended counsel, would be best postponed until you arrived home.

[19] The way to say it involves kindness, tact, calmness and reasonableness. You might allow the child to express himself on some points, appreciating that you may not have the entire picture. And you could ask questions to see if he gets the point. A smile might be appropriate if the matter is not very serious and the counsel is being readily received. But on a more serious occasion when firm counsel is needed the smile might give a wrong impression. In all cases one should be sure that the counsel is clearly understood.

[20] Threats and warnings do not usually produce the best results. Why? Because they may result only in fear of the threatened punishment, not hatred of the wrongdoing. (Ps. 97:10) At Ephesians 6:9, masters are counseled to 'let up on the threatening, for you know that the Master of both them and you is in the heavens, and there is no partiality with him.'

[21] The better method is to show the advantage of doing things in Jehovah's way and, where possible, the reasons why certain things are bad. Optimistically encourage the right course, but at the same time lovingly make clear what the consequences of disobedience will be. There is a difference between threatening and outlining what the consequences of a cer-

16. How do even worldly people endeavor to prepare their children for the future?
17. Is it sufficient simply to give accurate counsel, or is something more needed?
18, 19. (a) How do time and place enter into the matter of giving counsel? (b) What else will help in making counsel easier to take?
20, 21. (a) Why do threats not usually yield the best results in child training? (b) What is a better method?

tain course undoubtedly will be. Notice the inviting manner in which Jehovah encourages the proper course: "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; . . . in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God." (Prov. 2:1-5) But later on in this chapter, consequences are introduced in a kindly but firm manner: "The purpose is that you may walk in the way of good people and that the paths of the righteous ones you may keep. For the upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it."—Prov. 2:20-22.

ASSOCIATIONS

[22] Christian parents often find that problems arise when their children begin to associate with other children in the neighborhood or with schoolmates. They must, of course, have some association with outsiders. Complete isolation today is next to impossible and is inadvisable. Worldly associates vary in the degree of unchristian influence that they exert. But parents need to know with whom their children talk and play. While some worldly persons today have certain admirable characteristics, it must be remembered that one who is not a worshiper of Jehovah cannot be said to be good company.—1 Cor. 15:33.

[23] In a general way one might say that there are really only two kinds of associates. Proverbs 13:20 says: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." Of course, just who it is that are the wise ones is not identified here. But the Bible makes clear elsewhere what kind of wisdom is meant. Psalm 111:10 says: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." So worshipers of Jehovah are the wise ones with whom your children should associate. This will help them to become truly wise. The ideal situation is for parents to have such a fine program outlined for their children that little or no time remains for outside associations. Being with the family or other Christians becomes so interesting and absorbing that other associations do not become a temptation. But if they do, then parents should take time to make clear to the child the Bible's viewpoint on the matter; at the same time they should firmly exercise needed control.

[24] Should Christian parents actually be that frank and straightforward in teaching their children about worldly associations? Why not? Children, generally, appreciate being told the truth of a matter so it is not misunderstood. At least a number of them today claim they want older ones to "tell it as it is." Of course, children should also be taught kindness and tact so as to be able to deal with others in a loving way. But it is not sufficient for the parents alone to be aware of the dangers of wrong associations. If children are to be protected, then they too must know the dangers, and it is the responsibility of the parents to make the point clear.

[25] In seeking to build within their children the durable qualities that they need in order to survive the trials that are still ahead for all true Christians, parents should look to Jehovah for strength and

22, 23. How do associates affect a child, and so what should be the attitude of parents on this?

24. Why do the children themselves need to understand what the Bible says about bad associations?

25. To whom do parents need to look for guidance in training their children, and why?

guidance. (1 Cor. 3:10-15) Training children so that they grow up to be a source of pleasure to their parents and an honor to God is no easy thing. It requires constant vigilance. But, while it is a responsibility that causes anxious moments at times, it is also a privilege given to us by a loving God that primarily brings joy. There can indeed be satisfaction and joy in training children.

DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES PLANNED FOR 1974

LAST year, 1,402,238 persons in North America, Europe and the Far East attended a delightful series of international assemblies held by Jehovah's witnesses between late June and mid-August. Since then, hundreds of thousands more have been enjoying the same program in South America, Africa and the South Pacific.

What plans have been made for 1974? If it be Jehovah's will, there will be an even larger number of assemblies than last year. In the United States, for example, over three times as many assembly sites have been selected. This should reduce the need for extensive travel and make it convenient for more persons to attend.

In view of the nearness of the foretold "day of Jehovah," we urge all persons who seek the goodwill of God to put forth every effort to be present at one of these assemblies. Each assembly will provide a four-day program of timely information. Sessions will be held during mornings and afternoons, Thursday through Sunday, unless stated otherwise. Except for those places for which another language is shown, the programs at all assemblies listed here will be only in English.

This list of assembly dates and cities is published to help you to begin now to make your plans to attend. Further details will be provided later. All these assemblies are arranged by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society on behalf of Jehovah's witnesses.

If you are a person who longs for the time when rulership by God will bring righteous conditions to this earth, we encourage you: Do not miss any of the program!

UNITED STATES

June 20-23: Baton Rouge, La. (tentative); Detroit, Mich. (tentative); El Paso, Tex.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Laurel, Md.; Omaha, Neb.; Puyallup, Wash.; San Antonio, Tex.

June 21-24: St. Petersburg, Fla. (Note: Friday through Monday).

June 27-30: Charlotte, N.C.; Cincinnati, Ohio (tentative); El Paso, Tex. (Spanish only); Evansville, Ind.; Hammond, Ind. (Spanish only); Houston, Tex.; Laurel, Md.; Little Rock, Ark.; Miami, Fla. (Spanish only); Milwaukee, Wis.; Mobile, Ala.; Pullman, Wash.; Puyallup, Wash.; St. Petersburg, Fla.; Springfield, Ill.; Springfield, Mass. (tentative); Utica, N.Y.

July 4-7: Binghamton, N.Y.; Knoxville, Tenn.; Macon, Ga.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; St. Paul, Minn. (tentative); Salt Lake City, Utah; San Diego, Calif.; Shreveport, La.; Springfield, Mass. (tentative); Tulsa, Okla.

July 11-14: Allentown, Pa.; Anchorage, Alaska; Butte, Mont.; Hallandale, Fla.; Lincoln, Neb.; Pawtucket, R.I.; Portland, Ore. (Spanish also); Roanoke, Va.; Rochester, N.Y.; Tucson, Ariz.; Tuscaloosa, Ala.

July 18-21: Camden, N.J. (tentative); Fort Worth, Tex.; Greenville, S.C.; Hampton, Va.; Jersey City, N.J. (tentative); Oakland, Calif. (tentative).

July 25-28: Jersey City, N.J. (Spanish only) (tentative); Los Angeles, Calif.; New York, N.Y. (French only); Pittsburgh, Pa.; Pleasanton, Calif. (Spanish only) (tentative); San Antonio, Tex. (Spanish only).

August 1-4: Queens, N.Y.

August 8-11: Inglewood, Calif. (Spanish only); Queens, N.Y.

CANADA

July 11-14: Brandon, Man.; Nanaimo, B.C.; Ottawa, Ont.

July 18-21: Terrace, B.C.; Vancouver, B.C. (tentative).

July 25-28: St. Catharines, Ont.; Toronto, Ont. (English, Greek).

August 1-4: Edmonton, Alta.; London, Ont.; Moncton, N.B. (tentative); Saskatoon, Sask.

August 8-11: Quebec, P.Q. (French only).

August 15-18: Calgary, Alta.; Montreal, P.Q. (French only); St. John's, Nfld.; Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. (tentative).

August 22-25: Montreal, P.Q. (Italian only) (tentative); North Bay, Ont.

● Revelation 20:5 reads: "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended." Does this text show that the resurrection will take place after the thousand-year reign of Christ?—Ecuador.

No, this text need not be understood in that way.

There is even some uncertainty as to whether these words actually appeared in what the apostle John originally wrote. They are definitely not found in the fourth-century Sinaitic Manuscript. If they were in the original, these words must still be considered in the light of the context and the rest of the Scriptures.

Revelation 20:4-6 reads: "I saw thrones, and there were those who sat down on them, and power of judging was given them. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed with the ax for the witness they bore to Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had worshiped neither the wild beast nor its image and who had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand. And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection."

Manifestly, those experiencing the "first resurrection" come to life before the end of the thousand-year reign, as they are associated with their Lord in rulership during that period. But those not experiencing the "first resurrection," the resurrection to heavenly life, are spoken of as 'not coming to life until the thousand years were ended.' The question is: Does such 'coming to life' refer to their being resurrected?

No; viewed from the context, and in the light of other scriptures, it is plain that this is not the case. Describing the resurrection, Revelation 20:11-13 states: "I saw a great white throne and the one seated on it. From before him the earth and the heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. And the sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds." Then, in Revelation 21:1, we read: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away."

The context thus shows that the general resurrection of the dead takes place after the "former heaven and the former earth" pass away. When does this take place? According to 2 Peter 3:10, the former heavens and earth are to pass away in "Jehovah's day." That day, according to verses 3 through 6, will catch ridiculers unprepared, as did the flood of Noah's day, and therefore *precedes* the thousand-year reign of Christ.

In the days of Noah neither the literal earth nor the literal heavens perished. But a wicked human society, under the control of wicked spirit forces, perished in the floodwaters. Similarly, the destruction of "the heavens and the earth that are now" does not mean the end for the literal earth and the material heavens. (2 Pet. 3:7) However, an ungodly human society will perish. And Satan the Devil and his demons, who have been like ruling "heavens" over disobedient mankind, will be put out of action or abyssed.—Rev. 20:1-3.

Inasmuch as Revelation 20:11-13 links the general resurrection of the dead with the 'fleeing away of the earth and the heaven,' that resurrection must take place during the thousand years that Satan is in the abyss. Hence, the 'coming to life' of the dead at the end of the thousand-year reign, as mentioned in Revelation 20:5, cannot be applied to such resurrection of the dead in Hades. How, then, should it be understood (if actually part of the inspired text of the Bible)?

The Bible shows that even the living can be viewed as 'dead' from God's standpoint. Jesus Christ said: "Let the dead bury their dead." (Matt. 8:22) He also spoke of those accepting him in faith as 'passing over from death to life.' (John 5:24) Similarly, the apostle Paul, with reference to those in line for heavenly rulership, wrote: "Though you were dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcised state of your flesh, God made you alive together with him [Christ]."—Col. 2:13.

So it can be seen that a person does not become alive from God's standpoint until such time as he is free from condemnation resulting from sinfulness. In the case of those who will rule with Jesus Christ, Jehovah God, on the basis of his Son's sacrifice, "declares them righteous" and thus views them as being perfect, without sin, while yet in the flesh on earth. (Rom. 8:33) However, others of mankind, including those resurrected on earth during Christ's thousand-year reign, will not immediately be freed from sinful inclinations and their deadly effects. In fact, without the benefits of Christ's ransom being applied to them and their availing themselves of these, such resurrected ones on earth would die again. That liberation from sinful inclinations will eventually take place during the Christ's thousand-year reign is confirmed at 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. There we read that not until "the last enemy, death," is brought to nothing will Jesus 'hand over the kingdom to his God and Father.' This 'handing over of the kingdom' could not occur until the completion of Christ's thousand-year reign. Thereafter Satan will be released from the abyss and permitted to subject humankind to a final test.—Rev. 20:3, 7-10.

Those passing this test will be declared righteous and granted the gift of everlasting life. They will thus "come to life" in the sense of being justified or declared righteous to eternal life. No longer will sin or its deadly effects operate within them. They will become alive as members of God's family, 'free from enslavement to corruption and having the glorious freedom of the children of God.'—Rom. 8:21.

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