



The **WATCHTOWER**

**Do Not Let Riches or Poverty
Be Your Ruin**

**"When You See Jerusalem
Surrounded by
Encamped Armies"**

**Have You Really Come
to Know God?**

JULY 15, 1974

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

July 15, 1974
Vol. 95, Number 14

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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DO NOT LET Riches OR Poverty

BE YOUR RUIN

RICHES can result in hurt to the rich, even as poverty can be harmful to the poor. An ancient inspired proverb, as true today as it was when written, well expresses this fact: "The valuable things of a rich man are his strong town. The ruin of the lowly ones is their poverty."—Prov. 10:15.

But if the rich man's valuable things are a strong town, how does this result in hurt to him? It is undeniable that the rich tend to view their riches as a protection, like a wall around a town. And it is understandable why they might. For riches generally mean to them good food, fine homes and other material benefits. Money does unquestionably have certain value, even as the Bible says: "Money is for a protection."—Eccl. 7:12.

But does wealth make one immune to cancer, heart disease and other calamities? Can it buy happiness—a secure marriage, or well-behaved, respectful children? On the contrary, a person may actually lose his health and damage his family ties because he tries too hard to be in an upper-income bracket. It is just as another inspired proverb explains: "The valuable things of the rich are his strong town, and they are like a protective wall in his imagination."—Prov. 18:11.

HOW RICHES CAN LEAD TO RUIN

Yes, the exaggerated importance that a rich person may attach to his material wealth is simply a figment of his imagi-

nation. Actually, riches can contribute to one's ruin. Have you noted, for example, that the wealthy are commonly

the target of criminals? Often reports are heard of their being kidnapped, held for ransom, and sometimes murdered. Or this occurs to loved ones of theirs, ruining the family circle.

Riches also contribute to calamity in other ways. It has become common for the children of the wealthy to reject their parents' materialistic way of life. They may even reject their parents, resulting in untold family sorrow.

But more serious yet is the effect that riches can have upon a person's relationship with God. While perhaps not rejecting belief in God, they tend to relegate Him to a secondary place in their lives. Really, they trust in themselves more than they trust in God. Such an attitude leads to eventual ruin, even as Jesus Christ showed in his illustration about the rich man who was overly occupied with satisfying his own desires.—Luke 12:16-21; Prov. 11:28.

Yet riches may not necessarily cause a person to become proud and to trust only in himself. A person with riches may think seriously about God and the need for God's will to be done on this earth. Perhaps you do that. When Jehovah's witnesses call to talk to you about God's kingdom, you listen. You may take Bible literature and offer to contribute generously for it. But is that what is required to please God?

A true-life experience helps us to un-

derstand. A rich man approached Jesus and asked what was required of him "in order to get everlasting life." This man already obeyed God's basic laws, but when Jesus explained that to please God and gain eternal life he must cease making material possessions his chief concern and, instead, become Jesus' disciple and copy his example of sharing spiritual things with others, the rich man sadly walked away. Why?—Matt. 19:16-22.

The problem is identified in an illustration that Jesus used about those who hear "the word of the kingdom." Of a certain type of person mentioned in that illustration, Jesus explained: "The anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches choke the word." (Matt. 13:22) Material abundance often has that effect. The rich are generally so concerned with their own material interests that they do not give "the word of the kingdom" the attention it deserves. Is that true of you?

If you really want to please God, now is the time to make a change. Do not allow entanglements of social and commercial interests to strangle you spiritually. If need be, make radical adjustments so you can regularly study God's Word. Jehovah's witnesses will gladly help you, free of charge. Become one of Christ's disciples, really copying his example, and thus lay hold on God's gift of "everlasting life."

DO NOT LET POVERTY BE YOUR RUIN

On the other hand, the poor must also be on guard, for poverty can likewise contribute to their ruin. They may profess to believe in God, and to practice the true religion, but poverty can depress their spirit and twist their thinking. A wise man of long ago recognized that this could happen, and so prayed: 'May I not come to poverty and actually steal and assail the name of my God.'—Prov. 30:9.

In dire need, a person could be tempted to steal. In many instances today the poor

person sees many around him living in abundance and he may be resentful over the inequities. Yet such circumstances are not justification for stealing, under either the laws of God or those of man.

If one does yield to temptation and stoops to stealing or similar dishonesty, what are the consequences? He may end up in prison, which can mean disgrace both to the person and to his family. Further, his conscience may torment him, or, even worse, it may be seared and he may become a habitual wrongdoer. If corrective steps are not taken, the result will be God's disapproval and one's losing out on the prospect of everlasting life in God's righteous new order, now near.

A person needs to appreciate that it is not what he owns that makes him a true success. Rather, it is his right standing with Jehovah God. Why so? Because it is only God who can and will establish a righteous government under which there will be no inequities, with some being favored over others. The certain promise of God's Word the Bible is that all who meet God's requirements to live then will enjoy an abundance of the fine produce of the earth.—Isa. 25:6-9; Rev. 21:3, 4.

In the meantime, while this system's inequities are permitted to exist, whether one is rich or poor does not influence one's standing with God. It is as the inspired proverb says: "The rich one and the one of little means have met each other. The Maker of them all is Jehovah." (Prov. 22:2) Yes, all stand before the true God, Jehovah, on the basis of what they are, not what they own.

That is also how those who truly worship Jehovah God view one another. They do not judge others by their economic or social standing, but accept them for what they are as persons. Would you like to associate with people who deal with one another in that way? You can find them at the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Is the Holy Spirit

REALLY A PERSON?

THE holy spirit can be grieved and can speak, teach, bear witness, act as a remembrancer and serve as a helper. Would you not expect that to be said about a person, yes, about the "third person" of the Trinity? Yet some other things attributed to God's spirit are never applied to persons. For example, that spirit can be 'poured out' upon humans and can 'fill' them. How might this be explained? Who or what really is God's holy spirit?

A PERSON OR AN ACTIVE FORCE?

In themselves, the Hebrew and Greek words for "spirit" give no hint of personality. They convey the idea of breath, air in motion, wind. (Compare Zechariah 2:6; Job 41:16; John 3:8.) So these terms point to something that is invisible, an active force. Such an active force could be 'poured out' or imparted to numerous persons at the same time and could 'fill' them, as is stated of the holy spirit.—Acts 2:4, 33.

Of course, the Bible does apply the term "spirit" to persons. We read: "God is a Spirit." (John 4:24) "And he makes his angels spirits." (Heb. 1:7) God and his loyal angelic sons are holy and therefore all are 'holy spirits.' Might God's holy

spirit likewise be a person? If that were so, should we not expect the Bible to differentiate between that holy spirit and other 'holy spirits'? Whenever no identifying term is used in connection with such holy spirit, the definite article should at least appear to show that THE Holy Spirit is intended. But is this the case? No. An examination of a number of passages in any inter-linear translation reveals that the expression "holy spirit" appears without the definite article, indicating the spirit's lack of personality.—Acts 6:3, 5; Rom. 9:1; 1 Cor. 12:3; Heb. 2:4; 6:4; 2 Pet. 1:21; Jude 20.

But what about such functions as speaking, guiding, teaching, bearing witness and the like? Do not these functions indicate the personality of God's spirit? Not necessarily. Note the comments of a Trinitarian source, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. 13, p. 575):

"The majority of N[ew] T[estament] texts reveal God's spirit as something, not someone; this is especially seen in the parallelism between the spirit and the power of God. When a quasi-personal activity is ascribed to God's spirit, e.g., speaking, hindering, desiring, dwelling (Acts 8.29; 16.7; Rom 8.9), one is not justified in concluding immediately that in these passages God's spirit is regarded as a Person; the same expressions are used also in regard to rhetorically personified things or abstract ideas (see Rom 8.6; 7.17). Thus, the context of the phrase 'blasphemy against the spirit' (Mt 12.31; cf. Mt 12.28; Lk 11.20), shows that reference is being made to the power of God."

Yes, personifications are no positive proof of personality. For example, the Bible speaks of sin as 'ruling as a king,' "receiving an inducement," 'working out covetousness,' 'seducing,' and 'killing.' (Rom.

5:21; 7:8-11) Wisdom is similarly personified and is spoken of as having "children" and "works." (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35) Yet no one would claim that this means that "sin" and "wisdom" are persons. Likewise the personifying of God's spirit does not conflict with clear Bible testimony that it is indeed "something, not someone."

Since the holy spirit is closely associated with its Source, God, one who goes contrary to God's will 'grieves his spirit.' (Eph. 4:30) How can this be so if the holy spirit is not a person? The apostle Paul's words about his own spirit or dominant attitude illustrate this. At 1 Corinthians 5:3-5 we read: "I for one, although absent in body but present in spirit, have certainly judged already, as if I were present, the man who has worked in such a way as this, that in the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are gathered together, also my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus, you hand such a man over to Satan."

In this case, through Paul's letter, the Corinthian Christians knew Paul's spirit or attitude regarding the allowance of corrupting influence in the congregation. So when they met to consider this matter, Paul's spirit or forceful attitude was right there, as if a person. Once a decision was made that agreed with the spirit Paul showed, Christians at Corinth could in effect say, 'We ourselves and Paul's spirit have decided to expel the unrepentant man.' On the other hand, had they gone contrary to the right spirit that the apostle manifested, they would have 'grieved' it.

'But,' someone may object, 'all that does not change the fact that the Bible refers to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the same context. Surely this proves that the Spirit is a person.'

We might, therefore, consider two scriptures that are pointed to as examples of

such proof: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—2 Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19, *Authorized Version*.

Do these texts, 2 Corinthians 13:14 and Matthew 28:19, prove that the "Holy Ghost" is the "third person" of the Trinity? Do they say that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are but one God? No, and the mere mention of Father, Son and Holy Ghost does not tell us what their relationship is to one another.

Moreover, the fact that baptizing is to be done in the "name" of the holy spirit does not in itself establish that the spirit is a person. Even Trinitarians recognize that the word "name" at Matthew 28:19 does not mean a personal name. Says Greek scholar A. T. Robertson (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 245): "The use of name ([Greek] *onoma*) here is a common one in the Septuagint and the papyri for power or authority." That the term "name" so used does not necessarily imply the existence of a person might be illustrated with the English expression "in the name of the law." No one familiar with the English language would conclude therefrom that the law is a person. The expression simply means 'in recognition of what the law represents,' its authority. Similarly, baptism 'in the name of the spirit' signifies a recognition of that spirit and its source and functions.

THE "HELPER" NOT A PERSON

What about the Bible's referring to the spirit as a "helper," "comforter" or "advocate" and using the pronoun "he" in this connection? Would that not be a conclusive proof that the spirit is indeed a person? Consider:

At John 16:7, 8, 13, the *Authorized Version* quotes Jesus as stating: "If I go not away, the Comforter [*para'kle-tos*] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world . . . when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."

In connection with this passage, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. 13, pp. 575, 576) observes: "So clearly does St. John see in the Spirit a person who takes Christ's place in the Church, that he uses a masculine pronoun [*e-kei'nos*] in reference to the Spirit even though [*pneu'ma*, spirit] is neuter in gender (16.8, 13-16). Consequently, it is evident that St. John thought of the Holy Spirit as a Person, who is distinct from the Father and the Son, and who, with the glorified Son and the Father, is present and active in the faithful (14.16; 15.26; 16.7)."

But did John really use the masculine pronoun despite the neuter gender of the word "spirit"? Was his purpose to show that the spirit is indeed a person? Why not reread the above quotation from John chapter 16? What is the antecedent of the pronoun "he"? Is it not the word "Comforter"? Yes, and the Greek word so rendered is *para'kle-tos* and is masculine in gender. Rightly, then, John used masculine pronouns in this passage because grammatical usage required it.

However, John did not use masculine pronouns when the antecedent was actually the neuter word *pneu'ma* (spirit). This can readily be seen from the readings of literal translations, such as the one by Rotherham. At John 14:16, 17, Rotherham renders Jesus' words as follows: "I will request the Father, and Another Advocate [*para'kle-tos*] will he give unto you, that he may be with you age-abidingly,—the Spirit [*pneu'ma*] of truth,—which the world cannot receive, because it beholdeth

it not nor getteth to know it. But ye are getting to know it; because with you it abideth, and in you it is." Notice that the pronoun is masculine in gender ("he") when the antecedent is the masculine noun *para'kle-tos* but neuter ("it") when the antecedent is the neuter noun *pneu'ma*.

This fact is often concealed in Bible translations, as neuter pronouns are replaced with masculine pronouns. A footnote in *The New American Bible* on John 14:17 admits: "The Greek word for 'Spirit' is neuter, and while we use personal pronouns in English ('he,' 'his,' 'him'), most Greek MSS [manuscripts] employ 'it.'"

Thus we can see that Trinitarians point to personal pronouns when these seem to support their view but ignore them when they do not. A careful examination of passages used by Trinitarians, however, reveals that John's use of pronouns—both neuter and masculine—is a matter of grammar and therefore does not support their claim that the spirit is a person, the "third person" of the triune God.

So, then, not just a majority of Bible passages, but *all* the Scriptures are in agreement that God's spirit is, "not someone," but "something." A simple but careful reading of the Scriptures makes it clear that God's spirit is indeed his invisible active force.*

* For details, see the booklet "The Word"—Who Is He? According to John and Aid to Bible Understanding, pages 1541-1548.

IN COMING ISSUES

- Divine Mercy Points the Way Back for Erring Ones.
- Behind Christendom's Religious Architecture.
- Alcoholism—The Cause and the Cure.

Insight on the News

● The Italian legislature in 1970 passed a historic law providing for civil divorce. Now, on May 12 of this year, a referendum was held to decide whether the law should be repealed. For two months Italy's bishops and most—but not all—of its 190,000 priests and nuns mounted a strong campaign in favor of repeal, which was also supported by the Christian Democratic party. International interest was stirred because of the vote's significance as to the future of the Church in Italy. What resulted?

How Far Will It Go?

Overwhelming defeat, as Italians voted almost three to two in favor of retaining the divorce law. The city of Rome itself voted 70 percent against repealing the law. Even the pope's home district of Brescia voted against repeal. A United Press dispatch called it "the worst setback for the Roman Catholic Church in Italian political affairs since Italian troops chased Pope Pius IX to the Vatican, ending the church's temporal power in 1870."

Referring to a "soul-searching review on the part of the leadership of the Italian Church," the Catholic magazine "America" (May 25, 1974) saw the event as probably stepping up the "process of disengagement from an outmoded pattern of church-state relations."

That far more than a divorce law may be at stake is seen by dispatches showing that, once the outcome of the referendum was known, "anti-clerical groups announced a nationwide drive to collect signatures on a petition calling for a referendum on all laws giving the Church a special position." Among these laws is one saying that "the Roman, Catholic, Apostolic religion is the only religion of the state." Other laws grant tax exemptions and special privileges to Church agencies.

Readers of "The Watchtower" will not be surprised at such developments. The "hand-writing" has long been on the wall, recorded in Bible prophecy.—Rev. 17:15-18.

● Herpes-virus infections are not new. They cause, among other things, the common "cold sore" in or around one's mouth. But since 1960 herpes infections have made a dramatic appearance in the role of a highly contagious venereal disease. In this field, genital herpes-virus now ranks next to gonorrhea (which

is about thirty times as prevalent as syphilis).

Herpes infections of the male or female genital areas cause painful lesions. Though temporary, these can bring serious consequences. Newborn babies passing through the mother's birth canal can pick up the infection, and about one in

four cases proves fatal. Babies surviving often suffer brain damage. Besides this, evidence points to a link between genital herpes and cancer of the female cervix and perhaps of the male prostate. Studies too show a greater possibility of abortions during pregnancy.

"Time" magazine says that genital herpes tends to afflict "primarily the sexually promiscuous," particularly among young people. Writing in "Medical World News" (April 26, 1974), Dr. Elmar G. Lutz relates that for years he has pointed out to patients inquiring about oral-genital sex the possibility of this virus being "transmitted from the oral cavity to the genital area and vice versa." He warns that liberation from stricter sexual attitudes "does not necessarily lead to freedom, or if so, only at the expense of other freedoms. Cunnilingus and fellatio [forms of oral sex] can be dangerous bedfellows," he says, while "morality often is a matter of health."

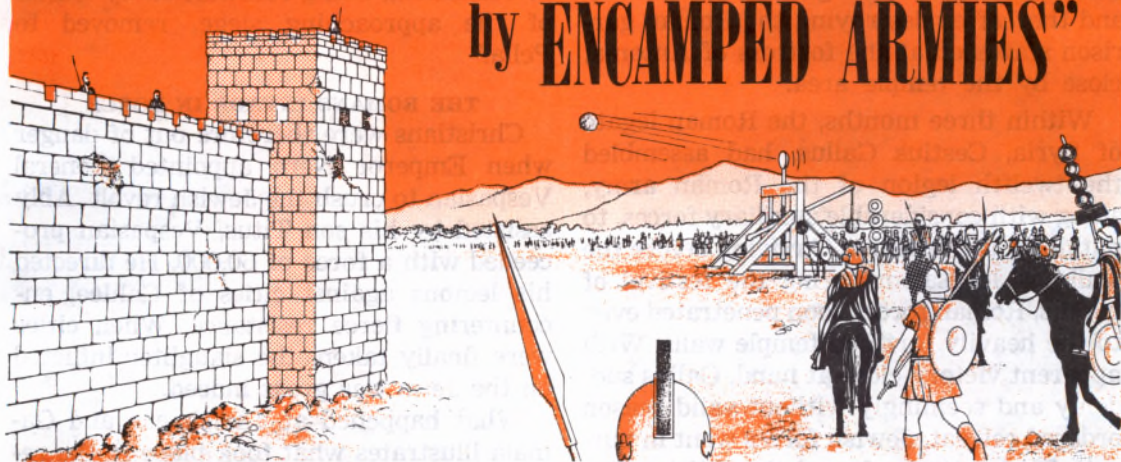
This emphasizes once again the truth stated at Romans 1:26, 27. Those engaging in sexual practices "contrary to nature" eventually "receive in themselves the full recompense due for their error."

● In contrast with modern emphasis on youth, the Bible often links wisdom with old age. (Job 12:12, 20; 32:6, 7)

Older, but Not Less Intelligent

But does not old age bring a decline in mental ability? Some aged persons become senile. But a recent article in the Detroit "Sunday News" says that many psychiatrists, educators and gerontologists now view any automatic declining intelligence in old age as "a myth." "There is plenty of evidence," says University of Michigan professor Howard Y. McClusky, "that if life is rewarding and people continue to use their talents, they will keep growing intellectually regardless of age." Compare this with the fine description at Psalm 92:12-15.

"When You See **JERUSALEM SURROUNDED** **by ENCAMPED ARMIES"**



THE final siege of Jerusalem in the first century C.E. was a time of unparalleled suffering for those bottled up inside the city. But it should have come as no surprise. The greatest prophet of all time had pointed forward to it decades before it became reality. That prophet wept when contemplating the horrors of the siege and its outcome.—Luke 19:41-44.

What happened to Jerusalem over nineteen centuries ago should be of more than passing interest to us today. Jesus Christ, the prophet who foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, also pointed forward to a time when even greater calamity would befall, not just one city or one people, but the entire world of mankind. (Matt. 24: 3-37) Hence, there are vital lessons to be learned from the experience of ancient Jerusalem. If heeded, these lessons can lead to the preservation of human life.

The Jewish historian Josephus is the main source of information for this period. He was an eyewitness and, at times, a participant in the events that he describes. But, unlike the Bible writers, he was not divinely inspired. His account is evidently

colored by a desire to avoid offending his Roman overlords and also to justify his surrender to the Romans in the early stages of the Jewish war. While Josephus cannot be fully depended upon, we can, nevertheless, gain valuable background information from his writings.

JEW'S REVOLT

In the year 66 C.E. a chain of events was set in motion that, according to Josephus, made war with Rome inevitable. A band of Jews captured the fortress of Masada, near the Dead Sea, destroyed the Roman garrison there and replaced it with their own. In Jerusalem, the temple captain Eleazar convinced the temple ministers not to accept gifts or offerings from foreigners. As a result, despite the appeals of the chief priests and prominent citizens, they stopped making offerings for Rome and Caesar.

Fearful of Roman reprisals, the leading citizens, chief priests and most prominent Pharisees called a public meeting and denounced the folly of revolt. But their efforts were to no avail. Hence, they dis-

patched delegations to Governor Florus and King Agrippa for help. Agrippa responded by sending a military force. Then fighting broke out inside Jerusalem, with the revolting element gaining the victory and thereafter destroying the Roman garrison stationed at the fortress of Antonia, close by the temple area.

Within three months, the Roman legate of Syria, Cestius Gallus, had assembled the twelfth legion of the Roman army, along with considerable auxiliary forces, to put down the rebellion. Arriving before the walls of Jerusalem during the festival of booths, Roman forces soon penetrated even to the heavily fortified temple walls. With apparent victory close at hand, Gallus suddenly and seemingly without valid reason ordered retreat. Jewish forces went in pursuit. Their attacks forced the retiring Romans to abandon the bulk of their baggage and their heavy siege equipment. Convinced that God had delivered them, rejoicing Jews struck coins bearing inscriptions such as "Jerusalem the Holy."

THE ONES WHO FLED

Christians living in Jerusalem and Judea, however, did not share in any rejoicing. They recalled what Jesus Christ had foretold: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her."—Luke 21: 20, 21.

Traditional sources indicate that the Christians heeded Jesus' prophetic command and forsook Jerusalem and Judea at that time. Ecclesiastical historian Eusebius of the third and fourth centuries C.E. writes: "The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the

war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella." Epiphanius of the same general period states that "the Christians who dwelt in Jerusalem, being forewarned by Christ of the approaching siege, removed to Pella."

THE ROMANS INVADE IN FORCE

Christians were therefore out of danger when Emperor Nero appointed General Vespasian to crush the Jewish revolt. Aably assisted by his son Titus, Vespasian proceeded with a force of 60,000. He directed his legions against cities of Galilee, encountering fierce resistance. When cities were finally taken, the slaughter inflicted on the Jews was great indeed.

What happened at Tarichaeae and Gamala illustrates what took place in the region as a whole. At Tarichaeae, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, over 6,000 Jews perished in battle. The survivors were treated mercilessly. The "aged and useless," numbering 1,200, were executed. Over 30,000 were sold into slavery, and 6,000 of the strongest young men were sent to work for Nero in digging the Corinth Canal. At Gamala, when the situation became desperate for the Jews, many men flung their wives and children as well as themselves from the walls of the city. Over 5,000 thus perished in the deep artificial ravine below. Another 4,000 were slaughtered by the Romans.

THE SITUATION DETERIORATES WITHIN JERUSALEM

As far as Jerusalem was concerned, the city became a literal battleground for rival Jewish factions—the Zealots and the Moderates. The Zealots gained control of the temple and made it their fortress. From that base, they carried out deeds of plundering and bloodshed.

Later, priest Ananus aroused the citizenry against the Zealots. Fierce fighting followed, and the Zealots were finally be-

sieged in the temple area. But Ananus did not want to push the battle into the sacred precincts and therefore arranged for a 6,000-man guard to keep the besieged Zealots from leaving.

Undetected, the Zealots got two messengers out of the city with an appeal for the Idumeans to come to their aid. Soon a force of 20,000 Idumeans was on its way to Jerusalem. Under the cover of darkness and storm, a group of Zealots got past the guards and opened the gates to the Idumeans. Much bloodspilling followed, and the Moderates suffered total defeat. Ananus was put to death.

THE NOOSE TIGHTENS AROUND JERUSALEM

While Jerusalem was reeling from the effects of internal strife and conflict, the Roman armies continued advancing, in fact, intensifying their campaign. But that was about to change.

There was serious trouble in the Roman Empire. The provinces were in revolt and strong elements were plotting against Nero. Finally the Roman senate passed the sentence of death on him. Rather than face execution, Nero committed suicide in June of the year 68.

Vespasian was getting ready to march his forces against Jerusalem itself when news reached him of Nero's suicidal death. This prompted him to hold up his plans, as he desired to know the wishes of the new emperor. Three rival emperors, Galba, Otho and Vitellius, replaced one another in rapid succession. Called on by his troops to be emperor (in 69 C.E.), Vespasian left off his personal direction of the war and concentrated on securing his position with a view to gaining the throne.

Meanwhile the situation was not improving in Jerusalem. Regarding the actions of the Zealots, Josephus reports: "Their passion for looting was insatiable: they ransacked rich men's houses, murdered men and violated women for sport, and

drank their spoils washed down with blood: through sheer boredom they shamelessly gave themselves up to effeminate practices, adorning their hair and putting on women's clothes, steeping themselves in scent and painting under their eyes to make themselves attractive. They copied not merely the dress but also the passions of women, and in their utter filthiness invented unlawful pleasures; they wallowed in slime, turning the whole city into a brothel and polluting it with the foulest practices. Yet though they had the faces of women they had the hands of murderers; they approached with mincing steps, then in a flash became fighting-men, and drawing their swords from under their dyed cloaks ran every passer-by through."

Bad as the situation was, escape from Jerusalem was now virtually impossible. The Zealots did everything they could to prevent desertion to the Romans. Any who did get out were in danger of being killed by another rival faction outside the gate of the city.

THE FINAL SIEGE

Internal conflict did not cease even when the Roman armies, now under the command of Titus, were before the very walls of Jerusalem around Passover time of 70 C.E. The city was then crowded with Passover celebrants. On Passover day, Nisan 14, worshipers were admitted into the temple area. But they unexpectedly found themselves surrounded by armed men of one of the city's rival factions. These men had gotten in undetected, as they entered disguised, with weapons hidden. They were bent on gaining control of the inner temple and its stores. There was violence and bloodshed.

Not long thereafter Roman siege engines were pounding against the outer northern wall of Jerusalem's triple wall system. On the fifteenth day of the siege this wall fell to the Romans. Four days

later the Romans captured the second wall. But Jewish counterattacks retrieved it. At great loss, the Romans, within four days, finally drove the Jews from the second wall and then demolished the northern section from end to end. Now only one wall remained.

Later, Titus held a war council and proposed building a wall around the city. As the Jews would thus be kept from leaving, Titus believed that this would bring about their surrender or make it easier to take the city owing to the resultant famine. His plan was adopted. The soldiers were organized to undertake the project. The legions and lesser divisions of the army competed with one another to finish the task. Individually the men were spurred on by desire to please their superiors. The over four-and-a-half-mile-long fortification was finished in just three days. Thus were fulfilled Jesus' prophetic words addressed to Jerusalem: "The days will come upon you when your enemies will build around you a fortification with pointed stakes and will encircle you and distress you from every side."—Luke 19:43.

Famine conditions in Jerusalem now became acute. Josephus writes: "The roofs were covered with women and babes, the streets full of old men already dead. Young men and boys, swollen with hunger, haunted the squares like ghosts and fell wherever faintness overcame them. To bury their kinsfolk was beyond the strength of the sick, and those who were fit shirked the task because of the number of the dead and uncertainty about their own fate; for many while burying others fell dead themselves, and many set out for their graves before their hour struck. In their misery no weeping or lamentation was heard." Prevented from gathering herbs on account of the wall, "some were in such dire straits that they raked the sewers and old dunghills and swallowed the refuse they found there."

The Romans received reports that during the siege no fewer than 600,000 corpses had been thrown out at the city gates. As the siege continued, the Romans finally battered their way into the temple area. After the sanctuary was in flames, they decided to set fire to everything else. On the last remaining colonnade of the outer temple some 6,000 had taken refuge, believing a false prophet who had told them to go there to receive signs of their deliverance. However, the soldiers set fire to this colonnade from below. Many Jews then jumped out of the fire to their death while others perished in the flames.

When the siege was over, the toll in lives lost was tremendous. Some 1,100,000 were dead, most of these having perished from pestilence and starvation. Captives taken from the start to the end of the war numbered about 97,000. The tallest and handsomest youths were kept for the triumphal procession. As for the rest, many were sent off to do hard labor in Egypt or Rome; others were presented to the Roman provinces to perish in the arenas. Those under seventeen were sold.

The siege had lasted less than five months. But, in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, it was indeed the greatest tribulation that had ever come upon Jerusalem. The city and its temple were razed to the ground. Only three towers and a section of the western wall of the city were left standing. Josephus states: "All the rest of the fortifications encircling the City were so completely levelled with the ground that no one visiting the spot would believe it had once been inhabited."

News of this would not have amazed any devoted disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. They could call to mind his words: "They will dash you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not discern the time of your being inspected." (Luke 19:44) "Truly I

say to you, By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down."—Matt. 24:2.

What befell Jerusalem and its inhabitants should certainly impress us with the importance of paying attention to Bible prophecy. Especially is this so since we today are living in the period that the Bible terms "the last days." And is it not true that the lawlessness and violence of the present is much like that existing in ancient Jerusalem prior to its destruction? (2 Tim. 3:1-5) But how will anyone escape the "great tribulation" that will bring these "last days" to their end? It is not by fleeing to another geographical location, for the coming "tribulation" will encompass the globe. God's Word points to the way of escape, saying: "Seek Jehovah, all

you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zeph. 2:3.

Are you seeking to conform to God's standard of righteousness? Are you humbly submitting to his judicial decision? If so, you may experience God's protective care during the tribulation soon to come. Whatever your present situation is, now is the time to take action to prove yourself to be a loyal servant of Jehovah God. This is the most important lesson we can learn from what befell Jerusalem in the first century C.E. Acting in harmony with it can mean life to us when the "great tribulation" comes upon the present ungodly system of things.—Rev. 7:13-17.



THE best teacher is one who, when imparting a certain fact or principle of life, can illustrate it clearly and simply. Jesus Christ set the master pattern as a teacher. Accordingly, we find him teaching primarily by parables, which are pro-

phetic illustrations using true features of life or applying principles. (Matt. 13:34, 35) There is deep significance in them.

In fact, illustrations, such as Jesus used, are generally more helpful in driving home

a point, for (1) they command interest and attention, (2) they stir up the thinking ability, (3) they stir emotions and reach the heart, (4) they aid memory, and (5) they preserve the truth, because they are based on life and natural things, whereas mere words may change in meaning.

Consequently, though Jesus taught on earth more than 1,900 years ago, his teachings are not archaic, and we can understand them and get as much out of them as if they were spoken in our time. Indeed, many of them have primary application in our day.

THE PARABLE'S PURPOSE

One of Jesus' most colorful illustrations was that of the "ten virgins." It is also highly significant to us, particularly at this time. What was its purpose? It was given to aid Christians, especially Christians living today, to discern Christ's presence in Kingdom power.

Jesus' apostles had asked him: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matt. 24:3) In reply, he listed many events, including several illustrations, occupying Matthew chapters 24 and 25. All those things he pointed to are features constituting the great sign of his presence, invisible, in Kingdom power.

Jesus' parable of the "ten virgins," recorded at Matthew 25:1-12, was given not only so that his disciples living on earth at the time of his second coming would discern his presence. Additionally, Jesus designed the parable to show them the need for watchfulness, awakeness, so as not to miss out, as did the Pharisees at Jesus' first coming. Also, the parable points out responsibilities and duties that Christ's disciples would have during his presence as King. (Ps. 110:3) Jesus wanted all whom God had given the "heavenly calling" to remain faithful and to achieve that marvelous goal of joint heirship with him

in the Kingdom.—Heb. 3:1; Rom. 8:17; Rev. 20:4, 6.

WEDDINGS IN BIBLICAL TIMES

Since the parable of the "ten virgins" includes a marriage feast, it will be helpful first to consider a brief description of the customs observed in weddings of the time in which Jesus spoke the parable.

While the wedding itself apparently had no formal ceremony, there was, nevertheless, a very joyous celebration of weddings in Israel. On the day of the wedding, at her own home the bride usually made elaborate preparations. She prepared herself for the marriage by adorning herself with her finest garments, ornaments and jewelry. In those ancient times her ensemble included a form of veil that covered the head and, in some cases, reached to the feet. (Jer. 2:32; Isa. 3:19, 23; 49:18) This head covering symbolized the subjection of the bride to her bridegroom.—Gen. 24:65; 1 Cor. 11:5-10.

The bridegroom, likewise arrayed in his best attire, would leave his house in the evening for the home of the bride's parents, escorted by his friends. From there the procession moved toward the home of the bridegroom or the house of his father, accompanied by musicians or singers and usually by persons bearing lamps.

The people along the route would take great interest in the procession. Some would join the procession, particularly maidens bearing lamps, lighting the way and adding color to the celebration. (Jer. 7:34; 16:9; Isa. 62:5) Since there was no hurry, the bridegroom might spend considerable time at his home and, then again, some delay might take place before the procession would leave the home of the bride, so that it would be quite late, and some persons waiting along the way might get drowsy and fall asleep. The singing and exultation could be heard quite a distance ahead, those awake hearing it crying:

'Here is the bridegroom!' The attendants were ready to greet the bridegroom, and those invited to the marriage supper would enter the house along with him. After the bridegroom and his entourage had gone into the house and closed the door, it was too late for tardy guests to enter.—Gen. 29:22; Matt. 22:1-3, 8.

As we consider the parable, we see how the illustration fitted the way of life of that time. It reads, as recorded at Matthew 25:1-12:

"Then the kingdom of the heavens will become like ten virgins that took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were discreet. For the foolish took their lamps but took no oil with them, whereas the discreet took oil in their receptacles with their lamps. While the bridegroom was delaying, they all nodded and went to sleep. Right in the middle of the night there arose a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Be on your way out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and put their lamps in order. The foolish said to the discreet, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are about to go out.' The discreet answered with the words, 'Perhaps there may not be quite enough for us and you. Be on your way, instead, to those who sell it and buy for yourselves.' While they were going off to buy, the bridegroom arrived, and the virgins that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterwards the rest of the virgins also came, saying, 'Sir, sir, open to us!' In answer he said, 'I tell you the truth, I do not know you.'"

WHY THE SYMBOLISM "VIRGINS" IS USED

In relating this parable, Jesus did not mention the bride. Why? Because he wanted to highlight certain aspects of the responsibilities of his spiritually begotten, anointed "brothers" while they were still on earth and before they were actually joined with him by resurrection into the heavens. He did not want to confuse the understanding of the parable's application. Therefore he confined this illustration to

picture them, not as a "bride," but as "ten virgins."

While on earth those anointed ones are counted as 'promised in marriage' to Christ, as chaste virgins. (2 Cor. 11:2, 3) The few remaining ones of this class of persons on earth now are "*invited* to the evening meal of the Lamb's marriage." (Rev. 19: 9) The actual marriage takes place in heaven. They have not yet attained to the heavenly inheritance. The "bride" class is *selected from* among the "ten virgins." As the parable shows, not all prove to be discreet. Some are foolish. The term "bride" is applied to Christ's joint heirs as a congregation and as a heavenly *body* of persons eventually numbering 144,000. As individuals, whether they are male or female, they are variously called "children of God," "brothers" of Christ and "virgins."—1 John 3:2; Matt. 25:40; Rev. 14:1, 4; Gal. 3:28.

In what way are they "virgins"? The Bible explains. Concerning the 144,000, who are seen standing with the Lamb of God on the spiritual Mount Zion, it says: "These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women [like the religious harlot Babylon the Great, and her daughters]; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones that keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes." (Rev. 14:4; 17: 3-5) After becoming spirit-begotten ones, having hope of reigning with Christ in the heavens, they do not commit spiritual "adultery" with this world. Consequently, these Christians do not defile themselves with the religious and political system of this world. They do not meddle or interfere in any way with politics or the operations of human governments.—2 Tim. 2:3, 4.

The position of these "virgin" Christians was clearly outlined by the apostle Paul when he wrote: "As for us, our citizenship exists in the heavens, from which place also we are eagerly waiting for a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will

refashion our humiliated body to be conformed to his glorious body according to the operation of the power that he has, even to subject all things to himself." (Phil. 3:20, 21) These Christians are friends of the people, calling at their homes with the good news of the Kingdom. But they are not friends of the world, that is, of the system of things of this world. The Bible severely reproveth those professed Christians who would be the world's friends, saying: "Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God."—Jas. 4:4; 1:27.

So those receiving the "heavenly calling" from God must 'make the calling and choosing of them sure for themselves.' (2 Pet. 1:10, 11) They desire to receive God's seal of final approval before God orders the "four winds" to destroy this system of things. (Rev. 7:1-8) This requires faithful devotion on their part, becoming "patterned after the image of [God's] Son." (Rom. 8:29) Thus, they are like the engaged virgin girl in Israel, desirous of keeping herself clean and undefiled. They submit now while on earth to the headship of the One to whom they are promised in marriage, with a view to being glorified as his "bride" in heaven. (Col. 1:18) In ancient Israel an engaged virgin who committed fornication with another man was counted as an adulteress and was put to death. (Deut. 22:23, 24) Likewise, unfaithful ones would forfeit the hope of heavenly life for these betrothed "virgins."—Rev. 21:7, 8.

A TIME FOR MORE THAN THE USUAL AWAKENESS

Therefore, in this strenuous time, there is a need for unusual awakeness, alertness. The apostle Paul says to such ones: "Now as for the times and the seasons, brothers, you need nothing to be written to you. For

you yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman; and they will by no means escape. But you, brothers, you are not in darkness, so that that day should overtake you as it would thieves, for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We belong neither to night nor to darkness. So, then, let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake."—1 Thess. 5:1-6.

It would be disastrous therefore, particularly at this time, for any of these to become spiritually sleepy, indifferent or negligent. If they should take up worldly practices, or should become lax in Kingdom-preaching, they could find themselves in the situation of an "evil slave." Jesus said that, if such one should begin to say in his heart, "'My master is delaying,' and should start to beat his fellow slaves and should eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect . . . and will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his part with the hypocrites." (Matt. 24:48-51) Now is no time to be affiliated with spiritual "drunkards." If anyone of these "virgins" betrothed to Christ now lives or speaks in the manner of those supporting the false religious systems of "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion, he shows himself drunk along with this harlot-like system and will "receive part of her plagues."—Rev. 17:1, 2, 6; 18:4.

So we see that Jesus' parable of the "ten virgins" constitutes a strong warning. But there is additional meaning in this parable. How does the parable give strong guidance to God's people today? What is the meaning of the "lamps," the "oil," and other symbolisms? These matters will be discussed in the next issue of this magazine.

HAVE **YOU Really** **COME TO KNOW GOD?**

"For this very cause I am also suffering these things, but I am not ashamed. For I know the one whom I have believed, and I am confident he is able to guard what I have laid up in trust with him until that day."—2 Tim. 1:12.

DO YOU know God? 'Why, yes,' you reply, 'everyone knows God, does he not?' On the surface it may seem so, but 2,700 years ago a prophet by the name of Hosea said something that may make us stop and ask ourselves, 'Do I really know God?' Hosea lived in Israel during a time when that nation was in a special covenant relationship with Jehovah God. Doubtless most Israelites knew that God's name Jehovah literally meant "He Causes to Become." No doubt they knew the part God had played in their national development and, for the most part, knew his laws. Yet despite all this acquaintanceship with their Creator the prophet Hosea was compelled to say to them: "Hear the word of Jehovah, O sons of Israel, for Jehovah has a legal case with the inhabitants of the land, for there is no truth nor loving-kindness nor knowledge of God in the land."—Hos. 4:1; compare John 7:28.

² So, then, these Israelites did not really know God. There is, therefore, more to knowing someone than just to know his

name and perhaps have some information about the person's history, or his likes and dislikes.

³ How much do you really know about God? Are you willing to stake your life on what you know? You are going to have to do so. The nation of Israel was rejected on account of their lack of knowledge, and God feels the same way today



Has your church really helped you to learn God's will? Are you truly conforming your life to God's requirements as set out in the Bible?



about those who reject true knowledge of him. The time is near at hand when "he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God."—2 Thess. 1:8; John 17:3.

⁴ It is readily apparent that today the majority reject knowledge of God, just as the nation of Israel did in the days of Hosea. After decrying the deplorable lack

1. What situation in ancient Israel causes us to ask ourselves if we really know God?
- 2, 3. (a) What is involved in really knowing someone?
- (b) Why is it important really to know God?

4. How does lack of knowledge about God become apparent?

of knowledge among his fellow Israelites, Hosea went on to show how evident was their lack of knowledge. He said: "There are the pronouncing of curses and practicing of deception and murdering and stealing and committing of adultery that have broken forth, and acts of bloodshed have touched other acts of bloodshed." (Hos. 4:2) Yes, one's actions reveal how well one knows God. A Christian writer commented on this when he said: "And by this we have the knowledge that we have come to know him [that is, God, as referred to in 1 John 1:5], namely, if we continue observing his commandments. He that says: 'I have come to know him,' and yet is not observing his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this person." (1 John 2:3, 4) So, for one to know God means more than merely being a religious churchgoer. He would have to be obedient to the will of God. Where do you stand in this regard?

⁵ An accurate knowledge of God is characterized by complete confidence and trust in him. The psalmist David says: "And those knowing your name will trust in you, for you will certainly not leave those looking for you, O Jehovah." (Ps. 9:10) Those who know God's "name," that is, his characteristics and reputation, will not believe lies about their heavenly Father. If He does or says something they do not readily understand, they will not impute bad motives to him. They know there is a good reason for all that He does even if they do not understand it at the time. And if He seems a little slow to you, surely there is a good explanation. In the first century of the Common Era some felt this way, causing the apostle Peter to write: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to

5. In what way does knowledge build confidence in our Creator?

attain to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9) God is just as patient now as then, and people are just as impetuous now as then.

ELDERS, DO YOU REALLY KNOW GOD?

⁶ Elders or overseers in the Christian congregation can demonstrate how well they know God by their dealing with others as God would. For example, take the matter of how elders view their brothers. Is their attitude a reflection of Jehovah's viewpoint? Notice what is written in the Psalms: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" (Ps. 130:3) So the Creator does not go around looking for faults, nor is he hypercritical. The general tenor of Jehovah's viewpoint toward mankind is further expressed in the Psalms: "Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness. He will not for all time keep finding fault, neither will he to time indefinite keep resentful. He has not done to us even according to our sins; nor according to our errors has he brought upon us what we deserve. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, his loving-kindness is superior toward those fearing him. As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions. As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Ps. 103:8-14) Do our dealings with the brothers reflect that we really know these things about God?

⁷ If so, the elders cannot be oblivious to how the flock is doing. They might well apply to themselves as spiritual shepherds the words: "You ought to know positively the appearance of your flock." (Prov. 27:23) But what do elders do with their knowledge of the flock? Well, like Jeho-

6. How can elders reflect Jehovah's viewpoint of imperfection?

7, 8. How does the elders' knowledge of the flock serve to benefit the congregation?

vah, they see the good in people. They acknowledge the good being done by others, and so they strive to be upbuilding to those around them. Is this not in harmony with the example of Jehovah and the counsel he gives us in his word? "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. But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you." —Eph. 4:29, 32; Gal. 5:22, 23; Heb. 10:24, 25; 1 Thess. 5:14, 15.

⁸ Also, they are aware of those needing assistance in the congregation. Perhaps some of the older ones are having difficulties that affect their service to God. Maybe they are depressed and thus need encouragement. Are others missing meetings or in other ways slackening off in their service to God? Do some travel alone to meetings and field service through dangerous neighborhoods? Could younger ones be used to help other younger ones in field service and in preparing talks for the Theocratic Ministry School? Could they be given responsibilities around the Kingdom Hall? The elders are alert to all the details that affect the spiritual lives of the brothers and do what they can to help. These are the things they talk about when they meet together.

⁹ However, what if a member of the congregation is starting in a trend that the elders feel may lead to spiritual difficulty? Is it an expression of kindness to ignore the situation? Jehovah's dealing with Israel on the occasion of their asking for a human king illustrates how to handle such a situation. Jehovah warned the Israelites in unmistakable terms what would happen to them as a result of having a human king; nevertheless, he did not interfere

with them. Their request really amounted to a rejection of Jehovah, and even though they insisted upon ignoring his counsel at this time he did not turn his back on them, but made further appeals to the nation right down to their destruction. Knowing God, elders deal in a similarly patient manner even with those who ignore counsel.—1 Sam. 8:4-22.

¹⁰ An unmarried member of the congregation may be having close association with an unbeliever of the opposite sex. The elders will offer appropriate Scriptural counsel explaining how God views matters, showing that it is really against Jehovah's law to marry an unbeliever. Even if the counsel is ignored, the elders will lovingly try to help such a one as long as this one remains a part of the Christian congregation. The elders need not feel discouraged if their advice is ignored, but they should remember that it is their responsibility "to exhort . . . and to reprove those who contradict," and it is also true in the final analysis that "each one will carry his own load."—Titus 1:9; Gal. 6:5.

¹¹ In regard to giving counsel, something important should be learned from the example of Jehovah: Be kind, be tactful, but be specific. Make sure that the one being counseled gets the point. For example, situations arise in which counsel must be given to a married couple. Perhaps they are having difficulty in getting along with each other and thus seek the assistance of an elder. The first thing one may do is to listen to both sides of the story, with the husband and the wife present. Jehovah God always listened to the nation of Israel when they asked for help. Often the elder will find that only the symptoms of the problem are brought to his attention and that at the root of the matter is something more basic, such as their view of

9. Did the Israelites receive the counsel of Jehovah regarding the taking of a human king, and what was God's reaction to their attitude?

10. Explain the proper viewpoint of the overseers toward one who rejects counsel.

11. What quality is very important for counsel to be effective? Illustrate.

sex. It could be that the wife has been influenced by the idea that sex is only a necessary evil and thus she resents sexual attention from her husband. Or, on the other hand, perhaps the husband is inconsiderate of his wife's emotional makeup and is overly demanding in sexual matters.

¹² If, now, the elder merely tells this couple to pray to Jehovah and that things will work out, they may feel as hopeless as before. Chances are that they already have prayed to God and Jehovah is now answering their prayer through the counsel of His Word and the help of a loving elder. Realizing this, once the problem has been completely surfaced, the elder now proceeds to give Scriptural counsel. He is not evasive but goes right to the Scriptures that deal specifically with their problem. He may first explain that one should not feel impure because he has sexual desires, and the fulfillment of these within the marriage arrangement is a wholesome thing. Of course, self-control and consideration for the other are essential to a balanced sexual life. All of this and more may be pointed out in detail when the Scriptures are read and discussed to establish the points.—Gen. 1:28; Prov. 5:15-19; 1 Cor. 7:3-5; 13:4, 5; Gal. 5:22, 23; 1 Pet. 3:7.

¹³ Whether the couple want to follow the Scriptural advice in their sexual life or in any other regard is up to them; still the elder can be happy that with the help of Jehovah he was able to give proper direction and demonstrate that he really does "know" God. Of course, elders should not try to tell people what to do, but when giving counsel they should be very straightforward in explaining the Scriptural principles involved.

12. How can pointed Scriptural counsel be used to aid a married couple toward a more balanced relationship?

13. Should an elder feel discouraged if counsel he has given from the Scriptures is not put into practice, and why?

¹⁴ There is another way in which elders can show that they have a true knowledge of God, and that is by the way they listen to viewpoints expressed by members of the congregation. Surely Jehovah God always knows how to handle any situation and always has matters completely in control. Yet, in dealing with unfaithful King Ahab of Israel, Jehovah allowed the angels to express their viewpoints as to how to deal with Ahab. Certainly the God of the universe did not need the advice of his angels, but he listened. On other occasions God listened to men. What better way for an elder to feel the pulse of the congregation than to listen to what others say and take it to heart. How much more effective a teacher this will make the elder who listens.—1 Ki. 22:19-22; Gen. 18:22-33; Prov. 21:13.

ALL IN THE CONGREGATION NEED TO KNOW GOD

¹⁵ As we see the conclusion of this system drawing near, all who are to endure will have to know God. Unless we are well acquainted with the way he deals with us, we could easily succumb to the pitfall of doubting, as some dedicated, baptized Christians have done. Doubting usually does not involve fundamental Bible truths such as (1) Jehovah's sovereignty, (2) the Kingdom or (3) the ransom. Rather, we may become concerned with some minor matter, and due to pride we put our personal opinions ahead of God's Word and Jehovah's organization. A half brother of Jesus warned us against doubting: "He who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. In fact, let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from Jehovah; he is an indecisive man, unsteady in all his ways." (Jas. 1:6-8) A knowledge of how God has dealt with

14. What action of Jehovah God in connection with King Ahab shows the value of listening to others?

15. Why is doubting to be avoided among Christians, and how can it be avoided?

his people in the past and the present will help us to avoid doubts.

¹⁶ Those who know God will well recall how God has used imperfect men in positions of weighty responsibility to keep his people organized. For example, there was Moses, whose imperfection forfeited for him his right to enter the Promised Land. Yet, God continued to use him. At the edge of Canaan when Moses reviewed and explained the law of God to the nation of Israel, the Israelites could easily have reasoned: 'Who are you to counsel us, Moses? Why, you are not even worthy of going into the Promised Land.' How easy it would have been to criticize the man, rather than to benefit from God-directed counsel!—Num. 20:2-12.

¹⁷ God's using imperfect men continued with the establishment of the Christian congregation. Consider the apostle Peter. On the day of Jesus' death, Peter denied Jesus three times. That was a serious mistake. However, it is of interest to note that only fifty-two days later Peter became a member of the anointed governing body of the newly formed Christian congregation. He was used quite prominently on that day of Pentecost as a spokesman for the apostles to deliver a stirring discourse. Though imperfect, on that day Peter demonstrated that he knew God well and was intimately acquainted with his Word, as shown by the references he made to the Hebrew Scriptures.—Luke 22:54-62; Acts 2:1-47.

¹⁸ The same holds true in the Christian congregation today. Imperfect men who know God are used to take the lead. Perhaps an elder in your congregation will give you counsel on your attitude. Are you going to spurn the good Scriptural advice he gives and have the viewpoint: 'Who

are you to be telling me what to do? You are not exactly perfect.' Or are you, rather, going to show that you "know" God, that you realize he uses imperfect men to counsel, organize and direct his people on earth? Really, if Jehovah is content to work with imperfect men, who are we to be critical of the arrangement? The key thing is that we should benefit from the Scriptural counsel given.

¹⁹ On the other hand, perhaps you hear something about one of your brothers that seems to put him in a bad light. Do you relish hearing such things and immediately believe them? Perhaps the brother is an elder in the congregation. Do you now not only begin to doubt the brother, but perhaps develop serious reservations about the whole body of elders? One who knows Jehovah will act quickly to dispel such doubts. He will ask himself: 'Do I really have all the facts, or is it just hearsay? I should not sit in judgment of my brother in view of Paul's words: "Who are you to judge the house servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls." '—Rom. 14:4.

²⁰ It may be that you disagree with the way matters have been handled in connection with the remodeling or building of a Kingdom Hall. Perhaps you feel that you would have selected a different design, another type of floor covering or a different color of drapes. But are there not many possible designs, many types of floor coverings and numerous colors of drapes? Will a different interior decoration affect our relationship with Jehovah? Why not follow the advice of Paul: "Make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others up to the day of Christ"? (Phil. 1:10) Should we not thank Jehovah that he has provided men to take the lead and to see

16, 17. Has God used imperfect men to lead his organization in the past? Give examples.

18. Can a Christian excuse himself from accepting the advice of overseers in the congregation because they are imperfect, and why?

19. What is the proper reaction to statements made against a brother in the Christian congregation?

20. Keeping what things in mind will help us always to get along with our spiritual brothers and sisters?

that we have a place to meet together for pure worship?

²¹ Perhaps something is said in one of the Watch Tower publications that you do not grasp or that adjusts our previous understanding of matters. How do you view this? Will you allow doubts to creep in? Will confidence be replaced with skepticism? Ask yourself: 'Where did I gain the knowledge of the Scriptures that I already have? Has not the spiritual food provided through the Watch Tower publications helped me to change my life and find contentment and satisfaction? Where else would I go?' This is the feeling toward Jehovah's arrangements that the disciples had toward Jesus: "Lord, whom shall we

21. Why does one with a true knowledge of God not waiver on receiving an adjustment of his understanding of a Scriptural matter?

go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life."—John 6:68.

²² Today it is true concerning millions of persons: "They publicly declare they know God, but they disown him by their works, because they are detestable and disobedient and not approved for good work of any sort." (Titus 1:16) Insecurity, doubts, anxiety are all symptoms of a generation that does not know God. In contrast, Christians feel as did the apostle Paul: "For I know the one whom I have believed, and I am confident he is able to guard what I have laid up in trust with him until that day." (2 Tim. 1:12) Confident, steady, undaunted in these momentous days are all those who really know God.

22. How will an accurate knowledge of God in these "last days" prove to be beneficial to each one of us?

The Godly Qualities

OF LOVE AND HATE

"Hate what is bad, and love what is good."

— Amos 5:15.

LOVE and hate. Can one possess these opposite qualities and still be pleasing to God? Yes, according to the Bible writer Amos. He was inspired to command the ancient people of God, the nation of Israel: "Hate what is bad, and love what is good." (Amos 5:15) In a similar vein an earlier Bible writer, Solomon, said there is "a time to love and a time to hate."—Eccl. 3:8.

1. Is it proper for a Christian both to love and to hate?

² Love and hate are words often misunderstood today. What other word has been written about, talked about and sung about as much as the word "love," and yet how many people could even tell you what it is? People are said to love sports, television, cars, and even cats and dogs. On the other hand, people are said to hate such things as capitalism, Communism, dictatorships and other forms of governments. They also

2. (a) How do the majority of people express love and hate? (b) Where does one get the correct view of godly love?

hate taxes and authority. A strong hatred often exists between people of different nationalities and races, between management and labor, between rich and poor. Is this the kind of love and hate that the Bible writers are talking about? Have you as a Christian become influenced by the world's distorted view of love and hate? As we now examine the godly qualities of love and hate, you will be helped to determine the answer. First, let us examine the godly quality of love in detail, as outlined by the apostle Paul under inspiration in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

THE GODLY QUALITY OF LOVE

³ *"Love is long-suffering and kind."* This means more than just putting up with hardship but implies patient forbearance of unfavorable circumstances. In a family, Christians with godly love do more than just endure the imperfections of one another. Yes, they patiently "continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another." (Col. 3:13) Even in such a close relationship as that of husband and wife, differing viewpoints call for a display of this love. For example, one mate may enjoy visiting certain friends or relatives from time to time. This may not be especially appealing to the other. Are we going to insist on having our own way, or go along begrudgingly, making the occasion unpleasant for all? One with godly love will cultivate an interest and find enjoyment in what pleases one's mate. Outside the Christian congregation one may have additional opportunity to show long-suffering when talking to neighbors and others about the Bible's good news. Some may respond very discourteously or even rudely to a conversation about Jehovah God and his purposes. Will the loving Christian minister want to retaliate with

sharp words or curt remarks? No, because he is "long-suffering and kind."

⁴ *"Love is not jealous."* The circumstances of Jehovah's people are many and varied, some being materially poor while others may be well off financially. Both those who are poor and those who are well-to-do are the same in the eyes of Jehovah. So is there any reason for those of lesser means to be longing for the material advantage of their brothers, or should they hold that against their brothers? Such an attitude may subtly creep into a Christian if he is jealous. Remember, the Bible does not condemn money, but, rather, the "love of money." (1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Heb. 13:5) Or, in a different vein, perhaps your Christian brother has been given certain privileges in the congregation. You were passed over, even though you always felt you had more ability than he. Now how do you feel? Do you feel just a tinge of jealousy? Godly love is not jealous. It will not cause us to view our brothers as rivals; rather, we will be joyful to see others progress. We are just happy and content to have a place in Jehovah's organization.

⁵ *"Love does not brag, does not get puffed up."* Whom or what we talk about is a good measure of ourselves in this regard. Do you find that you talk about yourself quite a bit, always subtly trying to control the conversation and yet trying to leave the impression that you do not want to call attention to yourself? Are you always the one telling your experiences, relating your accomplishments in life? Is your motive for relating such experiences because you are trying to encourage your brothers, or are you trying to call attention to yourself? Certainly it is a fine thing to tell experiences about the field service, and it is even to be encouraged, yet the loving Christian will play down his own role as the one who was instru-

3. Illustrate the actions of one who is "long-suffering and kind."

4. In what ways may jealousy manifest itself, and how does love view matters?

5. How does humility manifest itself?

mental in aiding others. Rather, he will always give the credit to Jehovah. How considerate and beneficial it is to draw out others and hear what they have to say! It is an indication of humility, which is one of the identifying aspects of godly love.—1 Pet. 4:11.

⁶ Love “does not behave indecently.” Other translations say, Love is not “rude,” “does not shock people.” (*New English Bible; Byington*) There are many things that are strikingly indecent, such as fornication, uncleanness and fits of anger. (Rom. 13:13) However, have you ever considered that poor manners are indecent or rude? For example, children are often allowed to dominate a conversation with adults present, or to interfere with such by running around noisily. Sometimes they stick chewing gum on chairs or write on walls or on the furniture in a Christian meeting hall. Can this type of behavior be classified as anything but indecent? Parents who love their children do not allow them to “behave indecently” even in these ways.—Compare Deuteronomy 23:14.

⁷ In the Scriptures love and hospitality are closely associated. (Heb. 13:1, 2; 1 Pet. 4:8, 9) So how do we view those who move into our congregation? Perhaps they have sold their home and given up their job in order to come and be of assistance to the local congregation. They may even be those who spend their full time in the public preaching. Do we “behave indecently” by treating them coolly? Are we skeptical because they may speak with a different accent or wear a somewhat different style of clothing? Godly love moves us to display warm Christian hospitality. We are moved to do what we can to help and to make them feel right at home.—Rom. 12:13.

⁸ Love “does not look for its own interests”; rather, it is guided by a prin-

ciple stated earlier by Paul: “Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person.” (1 Cor. 10:24) At Christian assemblies do you push or shove to get ahead of others? Do you reserve seats for yourself without concern for others? Or in the local congregation there may be certain areas in the community that have been especially fruitful when calls were made at the homes in the preaching work while other sections may be noted for general lack of interest among the people. Do we insist on always having the most favorable localities for our preaching work? Do we feel possessive, not wanting others to call in these areas, feeling the territory belongs to us? Can we imagine Christ Jesus viewing matters in this way? Godly love will cause us to put personal interests in the background.

⁹ Love “does not become provoked.” When traveling by automobile, how do you feel when someone cuts in front of you? What do you do when you are stopped for a traffic light and the driver behind you blows his horn just as the light changes? Do you creep away very slowly just to show that person that there is no profit in impatience? One with godly love does not allow himself to become provoked by the poor manners displayed by this world. Why should a Christian become upset because taxes go up and many services deteriorate? Is this not more evidence of the fast-approaching end of this system of things? In the congregation, elders and ministerial servants should not get irritated or provoked because others fail to turn in certain reports on time or because some do not seem to appreciate fully the message from God’s Word the Bible. Godly love allows for human imperfection and acknowledges the right of each to determine how he will respond to God’s love.

6, 7. How may indecency manifest itself?

8. Whose advantage does godly love seek? Illustrate.

9. Illustrate how godly love will help us to view the actions of others properly.

¹⁰ Love “does not keep account of the injury.” Do you remember something done against you five or ten years ago? Perhaps you were offended, but it is just not in harmony with God’s Word to keep track of such things and continually bring up the past. One who keeps track of personal offenses and harbors grudges accomplishes no good for himself or others. His negative outlook causes a loss of joy for himself and those around him. His very relationship with Jehovah is affected, for how could such a man pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”? (Matt. 6:12) As James says: “For the one that does not practice mercy will have his judgment without mercy.” (Jas. 2:13) How fine it is, at the end of the day when we approach Jehovah in prayer and ask for his forgiveness, to know that we have not kept account of the injury!—Matt. 18:21, 22; Eph. 4:26.

¹¹ Love “does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.” One who appreciates this aspect of godly love does not seek out as entertainment books, television programs, or motion pictures that feature what is unrighteous. To the contrary, such persons by the things they talk about in their daily conversation and in times of relaxation show that they ‘rejoice with the truth.’ Jesus said: “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”—Matt. 12:34.

¹² Love “bears all things.” This expression literally means “all things it is covering.” (1 Cor. 13:7, *Interlinear*) It covers like a watertight roof, protecting what is below. It fends off, repels. So the word also means bear up, sustain. (1 Cor. 9:12; 1 Thess. 3:1, 5) Godly love is realistic; it does not expect perfection from imperfect people. It is willing to put up with a lot and is not overly sensitive. When

a member of our family or of the Christian congregation makes a mistake, rather than advertising it, godly love will cause us to seek to overlook and protect the erring one where no serious wrongdoing is involved. Through mistreatment as a Christian in the field service, at our place of employment or in school, love “bears all things.”—Prov. 10:12; 17:9.

¹³ Love “believes all things.” This is not to imply that Christians are gullible. The point is that Christians have implicit trust in their heavenly Father; they do not question what he tells them through his written Word and organization. Things work out well for those who in this trusting way go along with God’s way of doing things. For example, Jehovah through his organization has for years warned his people of the harmful effects of using tobacco, and those who heeded this advice were benefited both physically and spiritually. Perhaps some did not understand why they should not use tobacco. Yet it was to their benefit to ‘believe all things’ though not completely understanding the reason why, Scripturally or physically. Today we have the Scriptural basis as well as the fact that the medical world recognizes the sound practical basis for refraining from the use of tobacco.—2 Cor. 7:1.

¹⁴ Love “hopes all things.” Perhaps we have been calling on people in a certain area in the Christian preaching work without much in the way of visible results. Godly love will keep us going with a positive, cheerful approach and with the hope that some will listen to the message and learn the truth. On the other hand, you may have lived with an unbelieving mate for many years. Godly love never gives up hope that the unbeliever will one day accept the truth. Some have had to set a faithful example for ten, twenty or more years before the unbeliever has accepted

10. How does love help us in our relationship with Jehovah and our brothers?

11. What identifies one who “rejoices with the truth”?

12. Why does a Christian “bear all things”? Illustrate.

13. How has it proved beneficial for a Christian to have faith in Jehovah and his organization?

14. Why should one never give up hope?

the truth. Never give up hope. It is a fine complement to faithful service that will keep us happy and optimistic in the face of adversity.—Rom. 8:24, 25.

¹⁵ Love “endures all things.” This aspect of love is especially essential in view of the words: “In fact, all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.” (2 Tim. 3:12) From the Colosseum of ancient Rome to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, there has been no breaking in the integrity of the true Christian witnesses of Jehovah, despite having been “objects of hatred by all the nations.” (Matt. 24:9) More recently Communist and dictatorial countries have taken stringent measures to exterminate Jehovah’s witnesses. These efforts, along with the less severe but equally hateful efforts of the democratic nations, have failed in their objective because love “endures all things.”

¹⁶ But is it really possible that godly love can help us in all the ways we have discussed? Can it really help marriage partners to stay together, happily serving God? Can it help us to be optimistic in the face of adversity, unprovoked when mistreated, as well as unselfish and forgiving? Can it do all these things? Yes! “Love never fails.”

THE GODLY QUALITY OF HATE

¹⁷ You have seen the benefit of godly love, but do you know how to hate? The Bible psalmist did, and said: “O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad.” Also, he said: “Do I not hate those who are intensely hating you, O Jehovah, and do I not feel a loathing for those revolting against you? With a complete hatred I do hate them. They have become to me real enemies.” (Ps. 97:10; 139:21, 22) These very strong

words are an expression of godly hate, and you too must have this quality to be pleasing to God.

¹⁸ Hate causes a feeling of disgust to well up inside you. You loathe, abhor, despise the object of your hatred. The very thought of it makes you recoil. When the wife of his master tempted, begged and even grabbed hold of Joseph for immoral purposes, he did not have to stop and try to reason out what he should do. A moment of hesitation could have meant ruining his relationship with Jehovah. He simply ran. His hatred of what was bad triggered an automatic reaction and protected his good conscience with God. (Gen. 39:7-12) Likewise today, as hatred separates people, godly hate will separate you from wrongdoing.

¹⁹ Why not ask yourself how you personally feel about the things that are detestable to Jehovah? “There are six things that Jehovah does hate; yes, seven are things detestable to his soul: lofty eyes, a false tongue, and hands that are shedding innocent blood, a heart fabricating hurtful schemes, feet that are in a hurry to run to badness, a false witness that launches forth lies, and anyone sending forth contentions among brothers.” (Prov. 6:16-19) Your reaction to these things is a measure of your godly hate.

²⁰ Godly hatred never has as its object our Christian brothers, no matter how imperfect. The apostle John said: “Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer, and you know that no manslayer has everlasting life remaining in him.” (1 John 3:15) Even though they have been involved in serious wrongdoing, we show compassion and mercy to our Christian brothers. If repentant wrongdoers are allowed to remain in the congregation by God, then we should also accept them.—Matt. 18:18.

15. What has helped our brothers to remain firm under persecution?

16. Name some areas in which love is sure to be a never-failing help.

17. Is hate compatible with the Christian personality?

18. How is godly hate a protection? Illustrate.

19. What are some of the things God hates, and how do you view them?

20. Whom must we never hate? Why?

²¹ Godly hatred is intolerant of what is evil. This does not mean that Christians use physical force to strike out against false religion or corrupt governments, for they realize that this is something God has reserved for himself. A Christian's hatred of such things is demonstrated by his zeal to tell others what God's Word says about the time when God's kingdom will be the only government ruling this earth. Godly hatred is further characterized by a feeling of contempt toward such things as lying, stealing, immorality. A Christian's conversation, way of life and choice of entertainment leave no question

21. How is godly hatred expressed?

as to his stand on these matters.—Eph. 5: 3-5.

²² Now is the time to cultivate fully the godly qualities of love and hate. Loving the things Jehovah loves and hating the things Jehovah hates will protect us against the practices of this wicked world. The godly quality of love is a powerful force for right. The godly quality of hate is a protection against wrongdoing and it helps us to continue walking in Jehovah's way. How genuine is our love and our hate? The value and worth of our whole life can be measured by our answer.

22. Why is it vital to practice the all-important godly qualities of love and hate?

Genuine Love Identifies Christ's Disciples

JESUS CHRIST stated that others would be able to identify his followers as his disciples by their having love among themselves. (John 13:35) We should expect this to be the case also today. Based on their own observations, increasing numbers of people everywhere have been convinced that Jehovah's Christian witnesses indeed display such love among themselves.

Some have been amazed to see the changes in attitude and action made even by persons who are just studying with Jehovah's witnesses. A man who in 1970 was serving a prison sentence in California relates: "At the start of my sentence in the prison camp I began taking part in an Afro-American group. I had become anti-white and antireligion. But at the camp I had a chance to see how two men tried to live their life according to God's will.

"These two men, one white and the other black, had agreed to study with one of Jehovah's witnesses. I observed these two men very closely, because we worked and ate together as well as lived in the same dormitory. Being antireligion, I often made fun of them. Periodically I would talk with them about God, and they would tell me about Jehovah. Their faith was strong. It had to be under the circumstances, for just about everyone made fun of them and lied about them. But they continued

showing love and kindness toward each other as well as those who would mock them."

What this man observed made a deep impression upon him and eventually, after his release from confinement, contributed to his studying with Jehovah's witnesses. Today he, too, is striving to live in harmony with God's will.

A youth in the Philippines had a similar experience. His mother became one of Jehovah's witnesses but he had no particular interest in the Bible. He comments: "My mother would take me to the Kingdom Hall, although I was not really interested. At the Kingdom Hall I saw how the young Witnesses acted. They were kind and friendly. There was no hypocrisy in them. They tried to live as true Christians. I started associating with them and this caused me to make great changes. I disbanded the group of vandals that I had organized and stopped smoking. Soon my mother did not need to ask me to accompany her to the Kingdom Hall. I did it voluntarily."

As to what he has experienced since then, he says: "I have found life more meaningful. There is so much to live for at the present and in the future. In the past I found my life to be filled with frustrations. It was all a waste."

If you have never been to a Kingdom Hall, why not consider this your invitation to come? See for yourself whether genuine love is in evidence among Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

HOW DO YOU REACT TO

APATHY?

ONE of the hardest things to endure is to be misunderstood. It is equally discouraging when a person to whom you are talking is apathetic toward you. You feel frustrated in not being able to “put across” your point, a point you may know is very important to him.

Jehovah’s witnesses find that, more and more, the general spirit of the people today is one of apathy—apathy toward the Bible and toward looking into something that deals with their morality or their prospects for better world conditions. In fact, many do not even want to *think* unless there is an immediate material, tangible benefit involved. Thousands are completely dispirited, tired of listening—they feel that there is just no use.

Why is there such widespread apathy? There are many factors. One is the failure of the world’s religions to bring about the looked-for results. The churches have not brought unity and peace. Rather, they have supported earth’s most devastating wars. Then there is the credibility gap between the world leaders and the people, so that people tend to look askance at promises made by anybody.

Also, almost everyone is busy—really busy. Particularly in the so-called “advanced” nations the people are “locked” into a complex system that takes virtually all their time. Of course, if they really knew the value of the Bible and appreciated the reality of God’s purpose to deliver mankind, they would lay aside some things

in order to get a better knowledge of Bible truth. Most, however, do not have the spiritual motivation to make the effort. Jesus Christ pointed to the reason when he prophesied about “the conclusion of the system of things,” saying that “the love [for God] of the greater number [of professed Christians] will cool off.”—Matt. 24:3, 12.

Are you one who shares in telling the “good news of the kingdom” to others in this time of the end? Then, knowing why this situation exists, you should not be discouraged. Instead, you should be moved with pity for the people, as Jesus was. (Matt. 9:36) The great majority of the people did not accept what Jesus taught—they did not get the sense of it. Yet Jesus’ warmheartedness and persistent acts of love toward them provide an example for us.

Think also of Jehovah God’s long-suffering. He could immediately bring an end to this system of things, with its constant reproach upon him. But he endures it because “he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9) And his long-suffering has proved worth while, each year more thousands becoming his Christian witnesses.

GOD’S WORD EXERTS POWER

Furthermore, think of the power of the message you are taking to the people. The

truth of God's Word is not empty, like the propaganda of this world. "For the word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Heb. 4:12) Actually, God's Word "pierces" and brings out what the true inner spirit of the person is, and what he really is in his way of life—his entire "soul"—his outward conduct.

Therefore, when you speak the word of truth to a person, it sets to work in him, with results. Speak to people who are now Jehovah's witnesses and note how many heard the truth when young, or had some contact with the truth on and off, with years in between, but it never left their hearts. Then, at some future time when their hearts became ready to respond, Jehovah caused the long-dormant seed of truth to grow, and they became his dedicated, baptized servants.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

One of the thousands of such examples is the experience of an Indonesian couple who were staunch members of a church of Christendom. One of Jehovah's witnesses had called on this couple and had left the book *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie."* He had made return visits on which he encountered great opposition from a priest of the church. Finally the couple told him that they had decided to discontinue further discussion with the Witnesses.

About five years later, this couple happened to be on an airliner on which there was an international group of Jehovah's witnesses bound for a convention. Two Witnesses sitting next to them began to

talk about world conditions and the Bible. Immediately the Indonesian couple listened with interest. They also observed the good conduct and the happiness of the Witnesses, and that there was real love and brotherhood without hypocrisy among them, regardless of their color—black, white or yellow.

On returning to Indonesia, the couple were again called on by Jehovah's witnesses. They immediately arranged for a home Bible study and began to attend the Witnesses' meetings at their local Kingdom Hall. Daily this couple now study a portion of the Bible for themselves by use of the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. In a letter to the Witnesses they met on the plane, they have expressed thanks to Jehovah for getting them in touch again with his witnesses.

A DIVIDING WORK

The proclamation of the "good news of the kingdom," therefore, reveals what is in the heart. God sees the heart reaction and helps the ones whose hearts are right to warm up in their love of Him and of what is right. A division of people is brought about, for or against the Kingdom. —Luke 11:23.

We expect the majority, however, to react just as Jesus foretold when he said: "They were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. But on the day that Lot came out of Sodom it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all. The same way it will be on that day when the Son of man is to be revealed." —Luke 17:28-30.

HOW YOU CAN ATTACK APATHY

What can you as one of Jehovah's witnesses do in the face of the general apa-

thy? Rather than be discouraged, adopt the long-suffering attitude of God. Do not "give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out."—Gal. 6:9.

One of the "fine" things is your door-to-door preaching. You can improve its effectiveness by analyzing what causes the apathy in your neighborhood. If one approach does not work, change tactics. Sometimes it might be good to approach the homes at a different time, or on different days of the week. Again, you might try making a thirty-second offer of a book or magazines. When people see you coming they may envision an extended discussion for which they do not feel they have time. A very brief approach may surprise them, favorably.

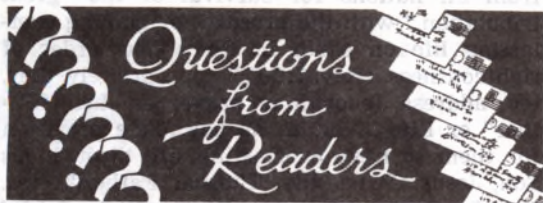
But many people will not be apathetic toward you if they really understand the purpose of your call. They do not usually know what the goal or purpose of Jehovah's witnesses is. Some may view you as fanatical or radical. Others may feel that your work is 'just another religious movement,' selling literature or seeking joiners. You might try opening up with the statement that you are there because of love of neighbor, that there is little of it today, and that people need help and understanding. Then you could explain how this help can come. You may not be able to give a full explanation the first time, but by your calling again and again over a period of time, the people eventually get acquainted with you and they begin to see that you have no political or commercial aims and that you are sincerely endeavoring to help them. As you find some interest and perhaps have Bible studies, the word gets around even more widely as to what you are doing and what you are encouraging people to do. Then the right persons will

eventually be located and helped, either by you or by other Witnesses.

So, whether the people speak well or ill of you, or whether there is just apathy, keep going. Keep your spirituality high by a more intensive study of God's Word. Fill your mind with the truth, and it will flow out. It was in Jeremiah's bones like a fire and he could not hold it in. (Jer. 20:9) Jesus said: "Every public instructor, when taught respecting the kingdom of the heavens, is like a man, a householder, who brings out of his treasure store things new and old." (Matt. 13:52) Keep bringing out the good things to the public. As Jehovah told Jeremiah: "Go; and everything that I shall command you, you should speak. . . . Do not be struck with any terror [and, it might be added, any discouragement] because of them, . . . I have made you today a fortified city and an iron pillar and copper walls against all the land."—Jer. 1:7, 17, 18.

The wise inspired writer of Ecclesiastes said: "In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest; for you are not knowing where this will have success, either here or there, or whether both of them will alike be good." (Eccl. 11:6) Remember, God is the One that makes the seed grow. Too, circumstances change. Consequently, where there has seemed to be no result, suddenly a certain neighborhood has blossomed out with many persons manifesting interest in the truth.—1 Cor. 3:6, 7.

Think also of the good that the prophets of old did. Not only did their words have tremendous influence at the time they prophesied, but they have had even greater impact today. Likewise, your preaching can have results beyond your fondest imaginations, in various ways aiding many others to gain eternal life under God's kingdom.—1 Tim. 4:16; Jas. 5:10, 11.



● Is it possible for Christians today to exorcise or cast out demons by praying over the one possessed by them?—U.S.A.

The Scriptures show that there may be much more involved in freeing a person from demon control than simply offering a prayer on that one's behalf.

It is true that, in the first century C.E., certain Christians, though not all, were empowered by God's spirit to expel demons. (1 Cor. 12:29, 30; compare Matthew 10:8.) Generally this was accomplished by ordering the demons, in the name of Jesus Christ, to release their hold on those possessed.—Acts 16:16-18; compare Acts 19:13-16.

The Scriptures, however, give no indication that the instantaneous expelling of demons and other miraculous gifts of the spirit were to continue with Christians throughout the centuries. To the contrary, miraculous gifts were to cease. The inspired apostle Paul wrote: "Whether there are gifts of prophesying, they will be done away with; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge [miraculously received], it will be done away with." (1 Cor. 13:8) Whenever the miraculous gifts of the spirit were transmitted, one or more of the apostles directly chosen by Jesus Christ was present. (Acts 2:1, 4, 14; 8:9-20; 10:44-46; 19:6) Hence, it is logical to conclude that the transmittal of these gifts ended with the death of the apostles, and the miraculous gifts themselves ceased when their remaining possessors died.

Moreover, one of the main reasons for the miraculous gifts was to establish that God's approval, which had rested upon the Jewish congregation, had now been placed upon the Christian congregation. (Acts 2:32, 33, 38-41; Heb. 2:14) Today miraculous gifts are not needed to establish that fact. The present-day Jewish congregation is unable to carry out the requirements of the Mosaic law, for it has no priesthood in the family line of Aaron and has no temple on the ancient site at Jerusalem.

Then, too, the most conclusive evidence for

establishing which is the divinely approved congregation is not the performance of apparent miraculous works. Jesus Christ said: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness." (Matt. 7:21-23) So Jesus indicated that even some "workers of lawlessness" might be able to exorcise demons. Evidently Satan, the chief of the demons, would permit this feat, which would give such "workers" the appearance of being "ministers of righteousness." (2 Cor. 11:13-15) But, as to the genuine identifying mark of his true disciples, Jesus stated: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." —John 13:35.

Though true Christians today do not claim to have any superhuman or divinely given demon-exorcising power, this does not mean that they cannot help those who are suffering from demonic harassment. They can pray in behalf of such ones, not in an attempt to effect an instantaneous casting out of the demons, but that those so afflicted might gain the spiritual strength to resist demonic assault. True Christians can also point to what the Bible says about resisting wicked spirit forces. (Eph. 6:10-18) Then, those who believe themselves to be troubled by the demons must personally make the effort to become free from such harassment and must sincerely want to follow the Bible's counsel. They can rest assured that Jehovah will bless their sincere and determined efforts. (Jas. 4:7) Case histories prove that many have thus been freed from demonic assault.

● Who may properly address God as "Father"?—U.S.A.

Because Jehovah God is the Creator and Source of life, all humans are really his "progeny," his children, as the inspired apostle states at Acts 17:28, 29. Hence, all who sincerely acknowledge that fact can rightly address him as "Father."

The Scriptures clearly show that using the expression "Father" with reference to God is

However, while all humans acknowledging the Fatherhood of God and living accordingly may properly address him as "Father," they do not all enjoy the same intimacy with him. Of the special intimacy enjoyed by spirit-begotten Christians, the apostle Paul wrote: "You received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out: 'Abba, Father!'" (Rom. 8:15) The term "*Abba*" is an endearing form of address. It is the intimate expression that children used for their fathers. Such intimacy is even now enjoyed by those of humankind who have been begotten by God's spirit with a view to becoming spirit sons in the holy heavens, where they will enjoy personal association with the Creator.

Presently a "great crowd" is being gathered from all nations for survival of the "great tribulation," with the prospect of gaining everlasting life on earth in God's new order of righteousness. (Rev. 7:9-17) Appropriately, they, too, address Jehovah in prayer as their "Father" or Life-Giver, as he has made provision for them to have everlasting life through his Son, Jesus Christ, the "Eternal Father." (Isa. 9:6) In God's new order, these will be joined by the millions who will be resurrected from the dead. Later, all who pass the final test described at Revelation 20:7-10 will have their names permanently written in the "book of life" and enjoy the special relationship of being perfect earthly sons of Jehovah, the heavenly Father.—Rom. 8:20, 21; Rev. 20:15.

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