

The **WATCHTOWER**

IS THIS THE WAY

**TO HONOR
JESUS CHRIST?**



Also In This Issue

Benefits and Rewards

FROM Being Spiritually Secure

DECEMBER 15, 1974

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

December 15, 1974
Vol. 95, Number 24

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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IN THIS ISSUE

Is This the Way to Honor Jesus Christ?	739
Insight on the News	742
Translating the Bible—A Hazardous Task	743
'Speeding Up' the Discipling Work in France	745
Who Will See "the Sign of the Son of Man"?	748
Standing Untouched, as Thousands Fall Victims	752
Benefits and Rewards from Being Spiritually Secure	759
Questions from Readers	766

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Is This The Way TO HONOR JESUS CHRIST?

“HE THAT does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.” (John 5:23) These words of Jesus Christ make it clear that an approved relationship with God depends upon honoring his Son.

If we want this approved relationship, we have reason to be concerned about whether we are giving the Son the honor his position deserves. And just what is his position? Of the authority entrusted to him by his Father, Jesus Christ said: “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.” (Matt. 28:18) Centuries earlier it had been foretold about him: “There has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” —Isa. 9:6.

Do you view Jesus Christ as God’s appointed King, with heavenly and earthly authority? That is quite different from thinking of

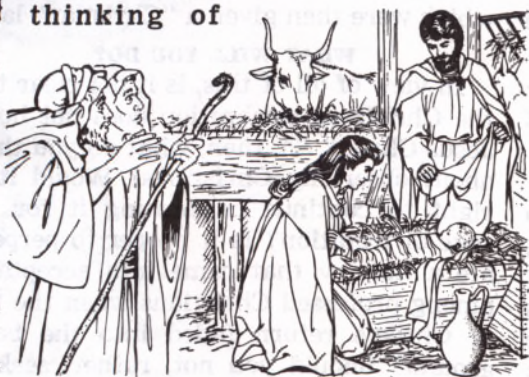
him as merely a babe lying in a manger. Only when we regard Jesus Christ as a king whose commands we should obey can we really honor him.

WHAT ABOUT OBSERVING JESUS’ BIRTH?

In view of Jesus’ position and authority, might honoring him also include commemorating the date of his birth as a man? Many professed Christians would say, Yes. Throughout the earth, on December 25, they celebrate “Christmas,” the claimed anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. But does observing Christmas really honor Christ? Is it in harmony with his commands and the spirit of his teachings?

For the celebration to honor Jesus Christ, should it not present matters as factually as possible? That should be expected, for Jesus himself said: “I am . . . the truth.” (John 14:6) Anything to which his name is attached should therefore be truthful, factual. Is that the case regarding the Christmas celebration?

Consider the date itself—December 25. The Bible does not give the exact date of Jesus’ birth. But it clearly shows when it could *not* have taken place. Jesus was born in Bethlehem at a time when shepherds were “living out of doors and keeping watches in the night over their flocks.” (Luke 2:8) Does this circumstance fit the month of December? No. In the Bethlehem area, during that month there are frequent frosts at night. Why, already with the start of the rainy season in the latter part of October, shepherds do not continue to



live outdoors at night. So the December 25 date actually misrepresents the facts about Jesus' birth at Bethlehem. Did you realize that?

That, however, is by no means all. Even the festivities held on December 25 do not find their origin in Christianity. Says the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "The Christmas festival is the Christian revision of the Roman day of the winter solstice—the festival of Dies Invicti Solis (the Day of the Invincible Sun) on December 25." (Macropædia, Vol. 4, p. 499, 1974 edition) Similarly, religious writer Louis Cassels observed: "Modern Christians who deplore the intrusions of secular customs upon the religious meaning of Christmas should bear in mind Christmas is not a Christian holiday that has been partially paganized. It was from the start a pagan holiday, partly Christianized."—*Detroit Free Press*, March 10, 1974.

Do you think that Jesus Christ would consider it an honor to have his name attached to a "pagan holiday, partly Christianized"? How could this be so when his faithful disciples recognized that there should be no mixing of the darkness of paganism with the light of Christianity? The apostle Paul, for example, reminded fellow Christians at Corinth: "What sharing does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does God's temple have with idols? . . . 'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing.'"—2 Cor. 6:14-17.

■ WHY SEPARATENESS NOT MAINTAINED

That was certainly strong admonition against involvement with paganism. How, then, was it possible for a pagan holiday to be celebrated as the birth of Jesus Christ? Does this not reveal that there must have been some weakening in the

position of Christians toward paganism? What might have caused this? Pointing to one strong factor, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "Christmas, the festival of the birth of Jesus Christ, was established in connection with a fading of the expectation of Christ's imminent return."—Macropædia, Vol. 4, p. 499, 1974 edition.

Such losing sight of the imminence of Christ's return was contrary to Jesus' admonition that his followers be awake and watchful at all times. They were not to become so concerned about the daily cares of life that spiritual interests would be crowded out of their lives. They were to live in a way that demonstrated faith in his return to execute judgment against the ungodly and to bring relief from suffering to them as his true followers. Only by maintaining a proper position before Jesus Christ as their Lord could they hope to survive the execution of divine judgment.—Luke 21:34-36; 2 Thess. 1:6-9.

From the second century onward, however, many professed Christians failed to heed Jesus' counsel. His coming in Kingdom power with angelic hosts ceased to be of immediate concern to them. So the time came when they no longer appreciated the vital need to maintain a clean and unblemished appearance before their Lord. This "fading of the expectation of Christ's imminent return" weakened their resistance to involvement with paganism, resulting in the adoption of pagan holidays, which were then given a "Christian" label.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

In view of all of this, is it not clear that the Christmas celebration does not honor Jesus Christ? So, then, what do you think about observing Christmas? Would it be right to continue celebrating it for the sake of tradition? Is it proper to perpetuate a holiday that came into acceptance among professed Christians when the fact of Christ's return faded into the background? Should you not, rather, seek to

honor Jesus Christ by living each day in full recognition of his being God's appointed King and Executioner? It is urgent that you do not put off making a decision on this, because what you do gives evidence of your attitude toward God himself as well as toward his Son.

Should you decide to stop celebrating Christmas, you will doubtless want to explain this to relatives and acquaintances. Kindly help them to see the reasons for your decision. Make it clear that you do not object to their doing what they desire and that you would therefore appreciate their being considerate of your feelings. Strive to aid them to understand that you do not wish to offend them but that you are concerned about not dishonoring Jesus Christ, even in what to others might appear to be little things. You might even point out that you are sure that they would not want you to do something just for their sake if doing it would make you feel guilty.

If you are a parent, your not sharing in the Christmas celebration does not have to mean that your children will be missing out on an enjoyable vacation period. Since the children will be at home from school, the whole family can participate in up-building and relaxing activities. Your going out of your way to spend time with your children can make their vacation period far more memorable than would one revolving primarily around gifts.

As for gifts—you can give these to your children anytime during the year, and gifts are often more appreciated when they come at unexpected times. You will be giving, not under compulsion or pressure from the commercial world when prices are high, but when your heart moves you to do it. Such giving—for which your children thank, not "Santa Claus," but their parents—does much more to strengthen family ties.

A decision not to celebrate Christmas

may also require explanations at one's place of work or at school. Special holiday parties may be planned there. In that case, what could you do? Perhaps you might speak with your foreman, employer or teacher, explaining why your beliefs about what really honors Jesus require that you do not share in the party this year. You could ask for suggestions as to what you could do so that your wishes might be respected without interfering with the planned festivities. Might it be advisable and possible to leave earlier that day? Could you do something else in another location so that you would not be giving the appearance of spoiling others' enjoyment of the celebration? What does the foreman, employer or teacher recommend?

Even in chance contacts your not celebrating Christmas may give rise to questions as to how to handle a particular situation. Others may wish you "Merry Christmas." Rather than making an issue about your not observing Christmas, you may simply wish to thank them. If some really do want to know your position, you can let the circumstances guide you as to whether an explanation would be appropriate then or at another time.

Of course, unexpected situations may arise. In coping with them, be kind and remain firm in your conviction to act in a way that will truly honor Jesus Christ. If you do, you can rest assured of God's approval and blessing.

IN COMING ISSUES

- **Will You Live to See Christ's "Coming"?**
- **Appreciating the Things of God.**
- **Are You Too Bad to Be Forgiven by God?**

Insight on the News

- The major Moslem holy period of Ramadan ends with a three-day holiday called Bairam.

Moslem Bairam and Christmas

Similarities to Christendom's Christmas are notable: gift giving, feasting, merrymaking. But painful similarities are there too. A report to the New York "Times" from Cairo, Egypt, speaks of "frantic days of shopping and overspending" and says that "Bairam like Christmas can . . . be a backbreaking financial burden, driving many parents to distraction." Cairo newspapers have carried hundreds of letters complaining about "prices, profit-greedy merchants and the black market."

- The recent month-long Synod of Catholic bishops in Rome produced several proposals—

Bishops Rebuffed by Pope

most of which Pope Paul VI rejected. One major proposal was for greater participation by the bishops in Church administration, or "collegiality" versus papal primacy. Addressing the final session, the pope repeatedly insisted on his 'assigned' task of "tending his lambs and sheep." Any conclusions by the bishops would be regarded as only 'advice' to the pope, who would remain the authoritative administrator of the Church world wide. Commenting on the speech, a bishop from Rhodesia said: "It was the Pope saying: 'I have not been appointed the Lord's first minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the Roman Empire.' It was the Pope speaking as the boss man: 'I'm in charge, and I'm very grateful to you people for helping, but I'll make up my own mind.'"

Among first-century Christians no one replaced Christ Jesus as God's "first minister," neither Peter nor any other apostle, as the Bible book of Acts clearly shows. The Christian congregation, instead, was directed by a body of men, apostles and elders, dealing with one another as brothers.—Acts 6:1-6; 8:14; 15:4-22; 21:18-25; note also Galatians 2:1, 2, 6-9.

Early Christians also avoided contaminating their pure worship with pagan customs and practices. (2 Cor. 6:14-18) The pope's statement in dealing with requests by African bishops that Roman Catholic worship be

adapted to local cultures appeared to harmonize with this. He said of the Christian faith: "Peter and Paul did not transform it to adapt it to the Jewish, Greek or Roman world." These words, however, contrast sharply with the realities of Catholic history, past and present. The well-known nineteenth-century Cardinal Newman, writing on Catholic church history, said that "the rulers of the Church from early times were prepared, should the occasion arise, to adopt, or imitate, or sanction the existing rites and customs of the populace." Listing many Church practices and holidays, he said they were "all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church." ("Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," pages 355, 371, 373) Anyone traveling in Latin America or Asia cannot help but see the way in which local pagan rites and customs have been merged with Catholicism in those lands.

- About 300 million people—or nearly one out of every twelve persons on earth—chew

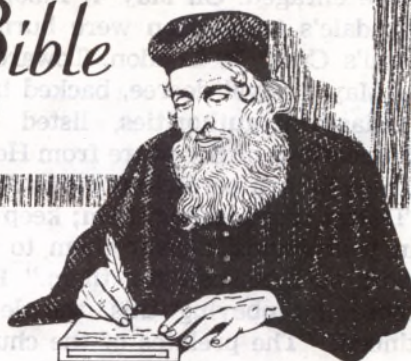
Betel Nut and Cancer

betel nut. This product of the areca palm is a major item in marketplaces throughout southern Asia and related islands. A stimulant, it is generally chewed along with a small amount of lime, and the chewer is usually distinguished without difficulty by the copious flow of brick-red saliva, temporarily staining lips and teeth.

Jehovah's witnesses class the chewing of betel nut as an unclean practice unworthy of a follower of Jesus Christ, basically as unacceptable as the use of tobacco. Of interest, then, is a recent report out of Papua New Guinea that health authorities there plan a campaign against the chewing of betel nut. The reason? The high incidence of mouth cancer in that land. As with tobacco, however, officials contemplate no actual ban, because, as the report says, "the crop is economically important to both grower and retailer." How true the statements in the Bible book of Proverbs that the wisdom God gives is worth more than silver and gold, since its inspired principles can prove to mean "life to those finding them and health to all their flesh."—Prov. 3:13-18; 4:22.

Translating The Bible

-A HAZARDOUS TASK



BIBLE translating has an ancient history. Back in the third century B.C.E. Jewish scholars (seventy-two, according to tradition) began translating the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, from Hebrew into Greek. Since then Bible translators have at times faced stiff opposition, often from ecclesiastical authorities. They have had to be willing to suffer and even to die for their work.

How the Bible came to be translated into one of the many languages in which it is now available, the whole or in part, is a story that would fill many pages. Therefore, we shall consider but a fraction of that story as it relates to the hazardous initial efforts in translating the Bible into two major languages—English and Chinese.

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

It was in the late fourteenth century that the first English-language translation was produced. The name Wycliffe is attached to that version based on the Latin *Vulgate*. Just how much John Wycliffe actually translated is unknown today. It is certain, however, that there was fierce opposition to the translating work. Wycliffe and his associates incurred the bitter hatred of the religious authorities. Surprisingly, however, Wycliffe did not perish at their instigation but died of paralysis.

Thereafter the ecclesiastical authorities persisted in opposing the making of copies of Wycliffe's translation. Finally, in 1408, a synod of clergy meeting in Oxford at the direction of Archbishop Arundel prohibited the use of the Holy Scriptures in English. Despite the clergy's ban, the only English translation then available continued to be produced. Proofs of this are the nearly 200 copies of the translation (many of which were made after 1420) still in existence today. So hated was Wycliffe that his remains were dug up in 1428 and burned and then

the ashes were cast into the river Swift.

Not until the early sixteenth century did Bible translation from the original languages (not the Latin *Vulgate*) into English have its beginning. William Tyndale undertook this task. Hoping to gain the backing of Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall, Tyndale went to London. But he failed to get the bishop's support.

Though he remained in London, Tyndale soon realized that the attitude of the clergy was such that he could not translate the Bible in England. So he left for Germany in 1524. There, in Cologne, printing of his translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures (the so-called "New Testament") began. When news of this reached them, the magistrates of Cologne put a stop to the work. Tyndale quickly left for Worms, where the printing of the Christian Greek Scriptures was successfully completed. Soon copies of this translation were being sold in England. Meanwhile Tyndale was continuing with his revising and translating work.

The ecclesiastical authorities in England were enraged. On May 4, 1530, copies of Tyndale's translation were burned at St. Paul's Cross in London. Toward the end of May a royal decree, backed by the ecclesiastical authorities, listed Tyndale's translations of Scripture from Hebrew and Greek among pernicious books and stated: "Detest them, abhor them; keep them not in your hands, deliver them to the superiors such as call for them." Regarding those not obeying this, the decree continued: "The prelates of the church, having the care and charge of your souls, ought to compel you, and your prince to punish and correct you." Extensive efforts were put forth to destroy the translations in England and abroad.

One of the reasons that Tyndale faced such bitter opposition was that he did not stick to ecclesiastical terms but used words that conveyed the flavor of the original language. For example, he used "congregation," not church; "overseer," not bishop, and "love," not charity. The fact that Tyndale's choice of words was closer to the original Greek held no weight with the ecclesiastical authorities. Tyndale had even declared his willingness to change anything that might be found to be wrong or that could be more clearly translated. The religious authorities, however, simply did not want the Bible to be read by the common people, who would then be led to reject their ecclesiastical interpretations.

Not long thereafter Tyndale's labors were cut short. A certain Phillips feigned friendship and then betrayed him to his enemies. Tyndale was then imprisoned in the castle of Vilvorde, near Brussels. In September of 1536 he was executed by strangling and burned.

Thus ended the life of a great scholar whose labors influenced Bible translation into English for almost the next 400 years. Tyndale had worked at the risk of his life,

not for honor or personal recognition and position, but to make God's Word available to the common man.

THE BIBLE IN CHINESE

It was in 1807, about 271 years after Tyndale's execution, that Robert Morrison, a Protestant missionary, arrived in Canton, China. He was soon at work in translating the Bible into Chinese. Morrison had some knowledge of Chinese but needed further help with the language. Such help was not readily available, for translating the Bible into Chinese was a hazardous undertaking, punishable by death. Yet Morrison succeeded in getting the help of two Chinese scholars. One of them was so fearful of being apprehended and then put to death by slow torture that he carried poison in order to take his own life should he be caught.

The city of Canton was then open to foreigners only six months out of the year, requiring Morrison to leave every six months. During this time Morrison lived on the island of Macao. Having accepted a job as translator in the East India Company, he was able to return to Canton.

During the day, while working for the East India Company, Morrison cared for the routine business of trade and labored on a Chinese-English dictionary and a Chinese grammar. At night he and his Chinese helpers worked on translating the Bible.

In 1810 the book of Acts in Chinese was printed from handmade wooden blocks. Not wanting these blocks to fall into the wrong hands, Morrison buried them when he left for Macao. Great was his disappointment when, upon his return six months later, he discovered that termites had consumed the blocks.

Despite problems and setbacks, in 1814, Morrison, with the help of another missionary, William Milne, finished translating the Christian Greek Scriptures. By

1818 the whole Bible was translated.

Truly Bible translating has been a hazardous task. Translators like Tyndale and Morrison were dedicated, courageous men who were willing to persevere despite tre-

mendous obstacles. What they did was in harmony with God's will that all peoples have the opportunity to come to an 'accurate knowledge of the truth.'—1 Tim. 2:3, 4.

WHEN the question, "What is the present attitude of the French toward religion?" was recently put to some fifty Christian witnesses of Jehovah who cover France

from one end to the other, the word that occurred most often in their written answers was "indifference." There appear to be several reasons for this.

During recent years the standard of living has risen for the majority of the French people. For many, materialism has become their new religion. Also, many of the French are annoyed with the Catholic Church, not for genuinely religious reasons, but because of changes affecting popular customs. Other Catholics, especially among the older generation, are distressed by the more revolutionary changes within the Church, such as the abolition of meatless Fridays, the dropping of "saints," the discarding of images, changes in the Mass and the clergy's increasing involvement in politics. Nevertheless, a large number of people in France, particularly in the smaller towns and rural areas, still cling to the Roman Catholic religion for the traditional family rites.

Apart from the great mass of professed Catholics, the French population includes about a million Protestants, several million people who regularly vote Communist, and

'SPEEDING UP' THE DISCIPLING WORK in France

a large number of atheistic freethinkers, many of whom are teachers.

How do the French belonging to these various religions and schools of thought react to the activity of Jehovah's witnesses?

For years, Jehovah's witnesses were regarded in France as an insignificant Protestant sect, this idea being fostered by Catholic priests. But the Protestants here, while very proud of their religion, do little or nothing to spread it. Moreover, in recent years the French Protestants have been increasingly involved in politics. For these reasons, not to speak of the doctrinal differences, the French people realize that Jehovah's witnesses are not Protestants.

Prejudice against Jehovah's witnesses is dying harder in the rural areas, but more frequent visits by Witnesses are gradually breaking this down. In addition, a growing number of factories are opening up in rural areas, and the workers from elsewhere who know Jehovah's witnesses help to inform the local population about us. Finally, with nearly 57,000 active preach-

ers, well over 100,000 people attending our meetings, and a still larger number having studied the Bible with us, fewer and fewer French families have no one among their friends or relatives who is not well acquainted with Jehovah's witnesses.

On the other hand, the Catholic and Protestant Churches are falling into discredit through their unchristian teachings, practices and stand on many questions.

"WORKING HARD AND EXERTING OURSELVES"

An earnest effort is being made to reach everyone with the good news of God's kingdom. The May 1969 issue of the French monthly service folder *Kingdom Ministry* carried a headline saying "Over 5 Million People Need Visiting." The article explained that 5,376,276 people lived in territory unassigned to any congregation of Jehovah's witnesses. It appealed for volunteers to preach and make disciples in these areas, first during the summer vacation period, and perhaps later by moving permanently into these fields.

Since then, *Kingdom Ministry* has regularly published lists of *départements* (counties), cities and smaller towns where the need for preachers or for elders was particularly great. Hundreds of French Witnesses have responded to the call and have 'worked hard and exerted themselves' in these territories. (1 Tim. 4:10) Some families have moved several times, staying long enough to get a congregation started in one town before moving on to another. In addition, between 400 and 600 special pioneer full-time Witnesses have done fine work spreading the good news and doing discipling work in isolated areas.

The French Witnesses spare no efforts in endeavoring to reach the people with their comforting message. Publishers and pioneers from the Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie congregation take an hour's boat trip out into the Atlantic in order to witness to

the inhabitants of the Isle of Yeu. Then they hire bicycles so as to get around to every nook and corner of this island.

In the mountainous regions the congregations use large-scale maps showing every farm and chalet. Thus no house is missed. In the Vosges mountains, in north-eastern France, the Witnesses follow telephone lines leading to isolated farms.

Love for their fellowmen has led Jehovah's witnesses to 'work hard and exert themselves.' Thus they have spread the preaching and discipling work into such regions as Brittany, the uplands of Central France and the valleys of the Alps and the Pyrenees.

"A SAVIOR OF ALL SORTS OF MEN"

The apostle Paul states that God "is a Savior of all sorts of men." (1 Tim. 4:10) Jehovah is certainly saving people of all kinds in France, from factory worker to university professor, and from farmer to biologist, not to speak of medical doctors, prison guards, an ex-woman lawyer, architects, musicians, an ex-professional boxer and people of many other professions.

A young man in the western city of Nantes was an active member of a Catholic political movement. He even took part in a hunger strike in a church in Nantes, but he discovered that at night his fellow strikers were surreptitiously taking food. He eventually came in touch with young men who were Jehovah's witnesses, studied the Bible, and now is a zealous full-time proclaimer of the good news.

Many other sincere Catholics who were church workers, members of the J.O.C. (Catholic Workers Youth Movement), catechists, and so forth, are at present active Witnesses. Among the French Witnesses today are several ex-nuns, ex-priests and even an ex-monk.

One Witness in the Paris area was a Carmelite nun in France, Egypt, Israel and Lebanon before finding the truth. Another

Carmelite nun in the north of France, who had previously had contact with a Witness, asked a Benedictine theologian if it was true that we *are* (and do not have) a soul and that a fiery hell does not exist. He answered that this was true, but said that the Catholic Church could not change after teaching these dogmas for so many years. He counseled her to do a year's theology "so as to understand these things." But she had already "understood," and she took necessary steps to quit religious orders and the Catholic Church in order to become a baptized follower, not of the Church, but of Jesus Christ.

An Augustinian nun quit after the "mother superior" had twice confiscated her Catholic Bible, had informed her that homosexual practices among nuns were preferable to their risking pregnancy with men, and after discovering that the school expenses for the children she was teaching were dishonestly being "blown up."

All these were sincere Catholics who thought they were serving God "in spirit and truth." (John 4:23, *Jerusalem Bible*) But sooner or later they discovered that their Church had neither God's spirit nor his truth. Now they have been freed from false religion and are happy to share in the discipling work as true Christians.

'SPEEDING IT UP'

Living in a world that is increasingly hostile to Bible principles and Christian living, Jehovah's witnesses recognize the need to 'gather together all the more as they behold the day drawing near.' (Heb. 10:24, 25) From Normandy, Brittany and the Atlantic coast in the west, to Alsace, the Jura mountains and the Alps in the east, and from north to south, reports show that congregations of Jehovah's witnesses have excellent meeting attendance. Many of them have more attending their meetings than they have active Witnesses, and in some cases the attendance reaches

two or even three times the number of local Witnesses.

In the summer of 1974, fourteen regional assemblies were held in France, with a total attendance of 79,411, whereas the peak number of active Witnesses is 56,972. In addition, 12,101 Portuguese-speaking Witnesses assembled in Toulouse, southern France.

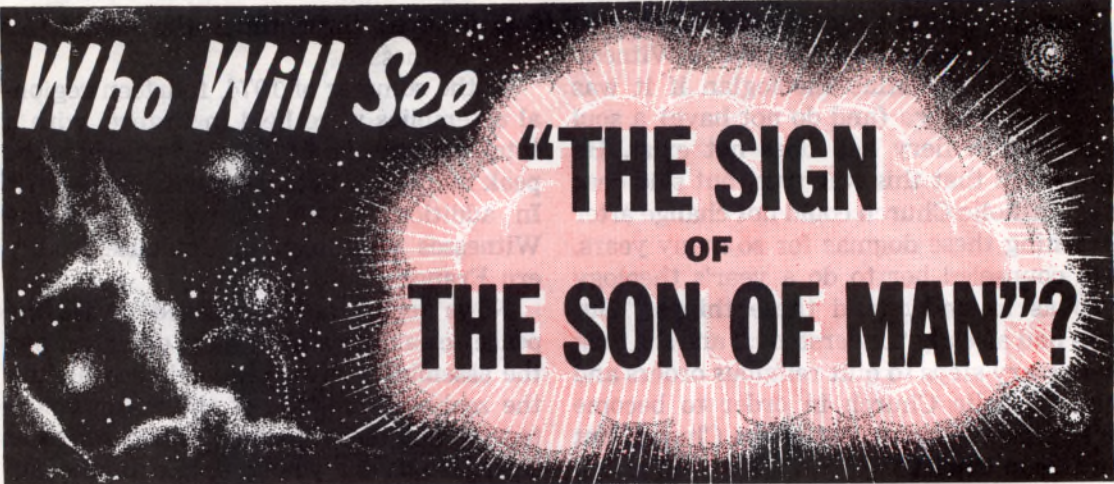
News reporters are amazed to see the peace, cleanliness and good order among the assembled Witnesses, and they admire the zeal and devotion of the many volunteers. They also express their surprise at seeing so many young people in the audience.

Yes, in France young and old, from all walks of life, are coming to learn that true Christianity is to be found within the congregations of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. Foretelling this ingathering and discipling work among his dedicated people, Jehovah long ago declared: "I myself, Jehovah, shall speed it up in its own time." —Isa. 60:22.

The work of making disciples is certainly being 'sped up' in France. Whereas in 1973 a total of 6,476 persons became dedicated, baptized Witnesses, the total for the 1974 service year reached 8,679. This means that, on an average, one person in France is becoming a baptized disciple every hour, day and night, throughout the year!

And the outlook for further increase is good. The more than 52,000 Witnesses taking part in the disciple-making work each month are conducting over 40,000 weekly Bible studies in French homes. At the Memorial of Christ's death held on April 7, 1974, there were 110,330 persons who met together in the local Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's witnesses.

Truly, the Kingdom witness is being given throughout France, in response to Christ's command to 'make disciples of people, baptizing them.'—Matt. 28:19, 20.



Who Will See

"THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN"?

ONE of the most striking prophecies that Jesus Christ uttered included an application to himself of Daniel the prophet's vision at Daniel 7:13, 14. The prophet was given a symbolic view of the world governments from Babylon (under which he then lived) down to the end of all human governments and to their replacement by Messianic rule. Concerning the Messianic King, Daniel wrote:

"I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him."—Dan. 7:13, 14.

Jesus Christ is the one here described as being "like a son of man." (Compare Luke 5:24; 7:34.) The Jews demanded that, to prove to them that he was truly the Messiah, he demonstrate it in a visible way by appearing on the clouds of heaven, according to their view of the prophecy and its fulfillment. But Jesus told them that they would receive no such sign. (Matt. 12:38, 39; 16:1-4; Mark 8:11, 12) Rather, the Scriptures indicate that the "sign of

the Son of man" in power and glory would be seen much later.

Who, then, will see "the sign of the Son of man" as he comes "on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"? Jesus indicated that all on earth would do so. He said: "All the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see the Son of man." (Matt. 24:30) Since Christ is now an invisible spirit person, human eyes cannot literally see him, but they can discern his presence by the things occurring. (1 Tim. 6:16) Some will discern his invisible presence early; others—described as beating themselves in lamentation—not until he begins taking action to destroy the elements that make up this present world system of things.

This action on his part, Jesus said, would mean a tribulation for the earth that would be without equal "since the world's beginning." (Matt. 24:21) The initial part of that tribulation will be the destruction of "Babylon the Great"—of all worldly religions, particularly focusing on the so-called "Christian" religious organizations professing to follow Christ, but actually misrepresenting him. (Rev. 17:1, 2, 16-18; 18:21) Following this will be the showdown fight between the political, commer-

cial and military elements of this world against the "King of kings," Jesus Christ.—Rev. 19:11-21.

DAYS "CUT SHORT"

The nation of ancient Israel claimed to be God's people. They had the inspired Hebrew Scriptures. But they practiced false worship and persecuted Jesus Christ and his followers. They were friends, not of God, but of the world. They rejected Jesus, the one whom God anointed and presented to the Jewish nation as King. Instead they cried, at the time of Jesus' trial before Roman governor Pontius Pilate, "We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:12-16) For their rebelliousness God cast them off from him and destroyed Jerusalem by means of the Roman armies, in 70 C.E.

Christendom has been like ancient Jerusalem. She has the Bible and claims to be the sole representative of the true God. But she has belied her claim by persecuting those who proclaim God's Messianic kingdom. She has been an integral part of this world, meddling in its politics. (John 17:14; Jas. 4:4) Therefore God will destroy her, just as he did ancient Jerusalem.

In the destruction of first-century Jerusalem the siege lasted a short time, only 142 days. During this time 1,100,000 Jews were killed and 97,000 survived, to be sold into slavery. Jesus had foretold: "Unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short."—Matt. 24:22.

In Jesus' words about the days being cut short, the "chosen" ones were, first, the Christians living in Jerusalem and Judea, who were the first ones to discern the prophetic judgment of Jehovah about to fall on Jerusalem, and who got out, fleeing to safety across the Jordan River. On account of getting these out in advance, 'out of the way,' as it were, God could

quickly do the job of destroying Jerusalem by means of the Roman army. It was a mercy on his part not to wipe out every last soul.

In a similar manner, God's "chosen ones," the anointed, spirit-begotten brothers of Jesus Christ yet on earth at this time, get into the place of safety. They discern by the evidences, the events of our times, that the Son of man is invisibly present and that destruction of this system of things is near. They do not bodily take themselves out from among the people, as in the case of the Christians in Jerusalem. But they take refuge in Jehovah under his Messianic king, whom they recognize and serve. They trust in his kingdom, not in the efforts of men, to bring peace and security to the earth. Their faithfulness has been noticed by a "great crowd" of other persons who join in worship with them.—Rev. 7:9-17.

The "chosen ones" and their companions having been clearly identified and brought under the invisible protection of the King, the destruction can then go ahead. It need not be a long, drawn-out tribulation, but can be "cut short." In this way some flesh is saved. This "flesh" is saved, not to be sold into slavery, but for survival into God's new order, because of exercising faith in the Messianic kingdom and discerning Christ's invisible presence. Hence, though spared from death as were those 97,000 survivors in Jerusalem, the "chosen ones" and the "great crowd" are not "pictured" by those unrighteous ones back there. There is a similarity only in the fact that, in both instances, flesh was spared; and also in Jehovah's mercy in not wiping out *all* the Jews there, nor *all* the people at this time.

NOT MISLED BY FALSE MESSIAHS

In telling what would happen to Jerusalem, Jesus warned his disciples of false messiahs in their day, and also the things

that would be necessary for Christians to watch for in expecting his *pa-rou-si'a* or "presence" in Kingdom power. He said:

"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Christ,' or, 'There!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones. Look! I have forewarned you. Therefore, if people say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out; 'Look! He is in the inner chambers,' do not believe it. For just as the lightning comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts, so the presence of the Son of man will be. Wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together."—Matt. 24:23-28.

When Christ would return in an invisible presence he would not come as a man on earth. Therefore Christians should not look for him "in the wilderness," so that they could train with him in some out-of-the-way place for a revolution. Nor would he be in some secret "inner chambers," where he could conspire against world governments with his followers. No, his presence was to be like lightning, not in its being instantaneous and unexpected, but in its being seen over a wide area, in the open, for everyone to behold. (Luke 17:24; compare Psalm 97:4.) His followers would not keep their knowledge of his invisible presence secret, but would give it widespread proclamation.—Matt. 10:26,27.

The "chosen ones," Jesus said, would not be deceived and disappointed by false Christs. They are symbolically like "eagles" in having sharp spiritual insight. As an eagle knows where the carcass on which he is to feed is to be found, so the farsighted "chosen ones" would gather together to the looked-for Messiah, Jesus, to feed on the spiritual food at the right Messianic place, because they would discern the true Christ.—Luke 17:37.

THE EXPRESSION "IMMEDIATELY AFTER"

Jesus gave these warnings, which had an application, first, to Jerusalem with her

people, and then to Christians during the centuries after Jerusalem's destruction. Following this warning he used the expression "immediately after the tribulation of those days." (Matt. 24:29) This expression constituted a division, time-wise. What he said from this point on applied only in *one sense*, namely, in modern times, not to Jerusalem back there. How can this be properly said?

The first-century usage of the term translated "immediately" (Greek, *euthéōs*) was different from our use of the English word today. The Greek expression did not necessarily mean that there was no time lapse. Dr. A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, in explaining this fact, refers to a similar expression (though a different Greek word is used), saying: "The use of *en tachei* ['shortly'] in Rev. 1:1 should make one pause before he decides. Here we have a prophetic panorama like that with foreshortened perspective." Also, we might note the long lapse of time involved in the expression by the apostle Paul: "The God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet *shortly*."—Rom. 16:20.

Actually, Jesus spanned a space of centuries of time by the expression "immediately after," for the things he thereafter described were not seen in the first century. Historical records do not show that the Roman besiegers of Jerusalem and the other "tribes of the earth" beat themselves in lamentation at any sight of the Son of man coming on clouds and with "power and great glory."

Rather, the things Christ here foretold find their fulfillment in our time. He predicted the darkening of conditions in the world, as if the sun had gone out and the stars had fallen from heaven, there being no bright outlook ahead. These things have happened since 1914, when World War I marked a turning point in world

affairs, introducing the darkest period of mankind's history.

But this planet or its entire population will never be destroyed by nuclear warfare, nor by any man-directed means. For, at earth's darkest moment, "then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."—Matt. 24:30.

This refers, not to the beginning of Christ's *parousi'a* or invisible presence, but to his "coming" (Greek, *er-kho'menon*) at the "great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." When he comes "with the clouds, and every eye will see him" he will be invisible to fleshly eyes. (Rev. 1:7) "Clouds" would naturally hide anyone in them, the expression therefore symbolizing that the one "coming" is himself invisible. Not with fleshly eyes in a literal sense, but from observation of what the Son of man does at that time, everyone will see that what takes place is not from men, but from heaven. The "tribes of earth" who have been brought into conflict with God because of false religion and by the commercial, political organizations will "beat themselves in lamentation" as they see the Son of man's superhuman power exercised against their armies and systems.

During Christ's *parousi'a*, which precedes his "coming" to execute judgment, the message of the Kingdom and its establishment has been declared like a mighty trumpet blast in the direction of the "four winds"—in every direction—for the gathering of Jehovah's anointed, spirit-begotten "chosen ones" into unity of worship. (Matt. 24:31) Also, others have heard and listened with a desire to serve God, and are serving along with the "chosen ones."

TO FIND FULFILLMENT IN THIS GENERATION

Not one thing only, but many things now taking place concurrently prove that we are near the day and hour of that future appearance of the "sign of the Son of man" to all persons, even unbelievers. But before that, by viewing the events since 1914 C.E. in connection with Jesus' prophecy, those who believe God's Word see the already-existing "sign" of Christ's invisible presence now. Jesus' next words to his followers indicate that he will not allow them to be caught going along with the worldly system of things in its hopes, schemes and frustrating works. He said: "Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur."—Matt. 24:32-34.

Since the kingdom of the "Son of man" is "an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away," it is a comfort to know that these things will take place in our own generation. (Dan. 7:13, 14; 2:44) For this One will reign in the fear of Jehovah his God, and he will rule, not to exploit the people, as men have done, but for their peace and happiness.—Isa. 11:1-5; 32:18.

If the readers of this article observe with discernment the things Jesus described as taking place now, they can count themselves greatly favored to have their eyes open to see the "sign" of Christ's presence. Now they have opportunity to take steps to learn more about Jehovah's purpose for this earth and can correct all their ways to walk in a manner pleasing to God. They can thereby look for God's protection when they see the "sign of the Son of man" when "coming" to execute judgment on this system of things.

Standing Untouched

"A thousand will fall at your very side and ten thousand at your right hand; to you it will not come near."—Ps. 91:7.

WHEN the inspired writer of Psalm 91 likened Jehovah God to a bird mighty of wing, he had God's own point of view. After God brought the people of Israel to Mount Sinai, he told Moses to say to them: "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, that I might carry you on wings of eagles and bring you to myself." (Ex. 19:4) Forty years later He inspired Moses to sing before Israel: "Just as an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its fledglings, spreads out its wings, takes them, carries them on its pinions, Jehovah alone kept leading him, and there was no foreign god along with him."—Deut. 32:11, 12.

² According to the prophetic picture of Revelation 12:6, 14, after God's heavenly "woman" gave birth to the Messianic kingdom and had to flee into the "wilderness" for isolation, God gave her the means of swift flight: "The two wings of the great eagle were given the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place; there is where she is fed for a time and times and half a time away from the face of the serpent." What a fine comparison is thus drawn between Jehovah God and the "great eagle," the king

1. In likening Jehovah to a mighty bird, how did the psalmist have God's point of view as expressed through Moses?

2, 3. (a) How is comparison between God and a mighty bird made in connection with his heavenly "woman" in Revelation, chapter twelve? (b) So, as we now read Psalm 91:4, what bird can we have in mind?

AS THOUSANDS FALL VICTIMS

of the birds, the lord of the skies, the monarch of the air!

³ We can have this royal bird in mind, then, as we next read the inspired words of Psalm 91:4: "With his pinions he will block approach to you, and under his wings you will take refuge. His truthness will be a large shield and bulwark."

⁴ The "pinions" are the terminal segments of a bird's wings, and under them a bird can cover and protect its young close to its body. Thus the bird can keep away all predators from its young. We, too, like helpless fledglings, can take cover under the outspread pinions of the protective symbolic bird, Jehovah God, and there we can rejoice in our spiritual security. It is just as the psalmist David said to Jehovah: "All those taking refuge in you will rejoice; to time indefinite they will cry out joyfully. And you will block approach to them, and those loving your name will exult in you." (Ps. 5: superscription, 1, 11) Being blocked from getting near us, those desiring to do us spiritual harm cannot do so. They cannot snatch us away from God's organization.

4. (a) What are the pinions of a bird, and what can a parent bird do with them? (b) Whose approach to us is blocked by God's outspread "pinions" over us?

The great "birdcatcher," Satan the Devil, is kept at a distance.

⁵ Like endangered birdlings, we have no other place to flee to for safety but the Almighty God. "And under his wings you will take refuge." (Ps. 91:4) Since there are just the two organizations, God's and Satan's, this finding safe refuge from Satan's organization requires us to be brought into God's organization of spiritual security. How beautifully this was illustrated in the case of the Moabitess Ruth, who forsook the false gods of Moab, and went with her widowed mother-in-law Naomi to Israel! In appreciation, Boaz, who later became Ruth's husband, said to her: "May Jehovah reward the way you act, and may there come to be a perfect wage for you from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge." (Ruth 2:12) As a reward to her, Jehovah chose Ruth as wife of Boaz, to contribute to the ancestry of Jesus Christ.—Matt. 1:5-25.

⁶ Jesus Christ himself drew upon the resemblance of a bird and its young, when he said to Jerusalem that rejected him as the Messiah: "How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks together under her wings! But you people did not want it." (Matt. 23:37) The book of Lamentations (4:20) speaks of Jehovah's Anointed One or Messiah as "the very breath of our nostrils, the anointed one of Jehovah, . . . the one of whom we have said: 'In his shade we shall live

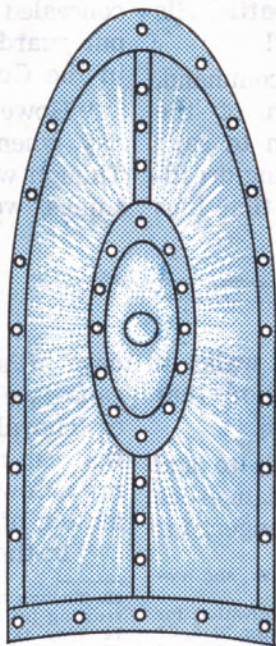
among the nations.'" So, today, the spiritual Israelites and their earthly companions who take refuge under the "wings" of Jehovah do, at the same time, take protective cover under Jehovah's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, like chicks under a hen's wings. The refuge they seek there for spiritual security does not fail them.

THE REASON FOR FREEDOM FROM FEAR OF SPIRITUAL HARM

⁷ In giving a further description of protection for spiritual security, the psalmist now turns from the bird world to the world of warfare. Referring further to the Most High God, the psalmist adds: "His trueness will be a large shield and bulwark."—Ps. 91:4.

⁸ God's trueness is associated with his loving-kindness. (Ps. 40:10, 11; 57:3; 61:7; 86:15) He recognizes his obligation to be true to those who worship him and trust in him. This characterizes His throne. (Prov. 20:28) He always proves true to his promise to us. He proves true to his name Jehovah and becomes what he needs to become in our behalf. This quality of His serves for our spiritual protection. It is like a large shield to us, and He becomes like a shield bearer to us. His trueness is demonstrated in faithful, loyal action in our behalf. Thus it shields us.

⁹ This shield of divine trueness stops the fiery darts or burning missiles of the Great Adversary and also wards off the blows or absorbs the thrust of the enemy sword. We can depend upon God's protective trueness. We must depend up-



"His trueness will be
a large shield"

5. Where is the only safe refuge from Satan's organization, and how was this beautifully illustrated in the case of Ruth?

6. Besides under Jehovah's "wings," under the "wings" of whom do Jehovah's worshipers find spiritual security at the same time?

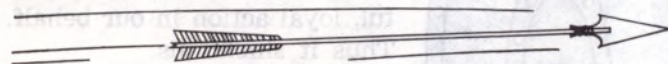
7, 8. What quality of Jehovah is like a large shield to us, and how does it characterize Him?

9. How does Jehovah's trueness serve as a "large shield," and what, on our part, must go along with it?

on it, have faith in it. It goes along with our faith, which also should be like the "large shield" in the "complete suit of armor" that God supplies to us. (Eph. 6:11-16) Our faith in "his" (God's) shieldlike trueness will free us of fear.—Gen. 15:1; Ps. 84:11.

¹⁰ A bulwark is a much larger protection than a shield. In warfare it is a defensive mound that is thrown up around a position that is to be held. To the enemy advancing over the ground, it says: "So far you may come but no farther!" Jehovah's trueness is like that. His trueness is very necessary in this time, which is described in Revelation as the time when the great Serpent, Satan the Devil, wages war against the remnant of the "seed" of God's heavenly "woman." Behind the bulwark of God's trueness we can stand firm and beat back the onrush and assault of our spiritual enemies. This divine bulwark is untakable, insurmountable; so let us stay behind it. According to God's trueness, loyalty and faithfulness, he will never desert us in this day of spiritual battle. His "bulwark" assures us of Victory!

¹¹ The spirit of the divine command, "Fear not!" is the motivation of the psalmist as he logically goes on to say: "You will not be afraid of anything dreadful by night, nor of the arrow that flies



by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in the gloom, nor of the destruction that despoils at midday."—Ps. 91:5, 6.

¹² The blackness of night tends to add to the dread one feels in a dangerous neighborhood or in a time of danger, for

in the darkness we cannot see any lurking enemy or harmful objects. But though we are in the period of moral darkness and spiritual thick gloom of the earthly national groups, Jehovah never gets drowsy and falls asleep as a guardian of his people. (Isa. 60:2; Ps. 121:4) So he is never unaware of wicked things that His enemies try to do secretly as under cover of darkness. The covert dreadful or dread-inspiring things by which the enemy tries to damage and destroy our spirituality are not to be feared. With strong confidence we can take up David's words in Psalm 64:1, 2: "Hear, O God, my voice in my concern. From the dreadful of the enemy may you safeguard my life. May you conceal me from the confidential talk of evildoers, from the tumult of practicers of hurtfulness."—Ps. 64:1, 2.

¹³ We can be sure that the dreadful things schemed by the enemies under cover in confidential talk of theirs will fail of their objective when suddenly launched. Though we do not fear such things from concealed sources, never should we be off our guard as we keep continually trusting in the God of trueness.

¹⁴ However, there are also dangers by day when we can see menacing things. Though we expect and are aware of such things, we should not be paralyzed with fear. In this time of spiritual warfare, "you will not be afraid of anything dreadful by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day." (Ps. 91:5) Why is this? It is because we are behind the "large shield" of Jehovah's trueness, loyalty, faithfulness, that can make of no effect the flying enemy arrows. Daytime is the period for the aiming of arrows accurately.

¹⁵ In the spiritual warfare waged against

10. What kind of wartime utility is a bulwark, and how is God's trueness like one to us?

11. The spirit of what command is the motivation for what the psalmist now logically says in Psalm 91:5, 6?

12. What adds terror to the blackness of the night, and what about Jehovah at night removes fear of nighttime dreadful things?

13. Though we feel no dread, what must we do while trusting in God?

14. Why is it that we do not fear the "arrow that flies by day"?

15. What are the 'arrows' that fly by day, and who are the bowmen?

us, these 'arrows' are unwarranted verbal attacks, false accusations, lying propaganda, malicious slanders, gross misrepresentations, violent intimidating threats, misapplications of law in legal courts, yes, the framing of mischief by law, the 'framing of trouble by decree' against the innocent! (Ps. 94:20) The anointed David, in Psalm 64:3-5, describes the enemy bowmen as those "who have sharpened their tongue just like a sword, who have aimed their arrow, bitter speech, to shoot from concealed places at someone blameless. All of a sudden they shoot at him and do not fear. They hold themselves down to bad speech; they make statements about hiding traps. They have said: 'Who sees them [the traps]?' "

¹⁶ Despite all such figurative 'arrows' that have flown by day since the year 1919 against Jehovah's Christian witnesses, they have not ceased in their worship of the one living and true God or in the proclaiming of the good news of his Messianic kingdom world wide. It has been as Jehovah has said to those now belonging to his organization: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn." (Isa. 54:17) Fearless of the enemy 'arrows,' Jehovah's witnesses have carried on behind Jehovah's "large shield," and the enemy bowmen have proved to be falsifiers, whereas Jehovah's worshipers have been vindicated and keep spiritually alive.

¹⁷ Again the psalmist contrasts the darkness and the light and the dangers associated with each, for he says: "You will not be afraid . . . of the pestilence that walks in the gloom, nor of the destruc-

tion that despoils at midday."—Ps. 91:5, 6.

¹⁸ The "pestilence" here mentioned, like that of verse three, is not a pestilence that is sent by Jehovah upon his earthly enemies, or upon those disobedient to Him. It is a worldly pestilence that is bred in the morally, religiously diseased world amid its gloom. It is meant to infect and lay low not only worldlings, but particularly Jehovah's worshipers. It haunts the moral, social, political, religious "gloom" of this world in its nighttime of impending doom, and the people of the world do not let the pestilence-laden gloom be dispelled by the "sun of righteousness" that has "healing in its wings," its curative beams. (Mal. 4:2) Moreover, we are told in 2 Corinthians 4:4 that "the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through."

¹⁹ The resulting gloom conduces to the spread of the figurative "pestilence." Adding to the terrors of the gloom, this pestilence strikes in the dark, that is, during the state of affairs when the minds and hearts of the people are bedarkened as regards the true God and his personality, his purpose and his loving provisions. So under these circumstances the pestilence produces a deadly diseased condition of mind and heart in those infected. (1 Tim. 6:4) It is apparent, then, that the figurative "pestilence" consists of the demon-inspired moral and religious doctrines that come through human agencies from what Ephesians 6:12 calls "the world rulers of this darkness, . . . the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places."

²⁰ That these spiritually diseased demon angels would insinuate their unhealthful

16. Despite such enemy 'arrows,' how have Jehovah's witnesses fared behind His "large shield"?

17, 18. The "pestilence that walks in the gloom" has what source, is meant particularly for whom, and is not permitted to be cured among whom by what means?

19, 20. What is the "pestilence" here mentioned, and what conduces to its spread?

teachings among professed Christians, the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "In later periods of time some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons, by the hypocrisy of men who speak lies."—1 Tim. 4:1, 2.

²¹ True to prophecy, this pestilence of demon-inspired moral and religious teachings, including man-made traditions contrary to the Bible, has spread beyond pagandom all through Christendom. Thus the churchgoing people of Christendom have been infected and reduced to their sick religious condition, endangering their salvation. But God has enlightened us against pestilence-breeding "gloom."

²² What, though, about "the destruction that despoils at midday," of which the true Christians behind the "large shield" of God's "trueness" are not afraid? Midday, the brightest part of a sunny day, is directly opposite to the gloom of night. (Job 11:17) Yet there is a 'despoiling,' a "destruction," that accompanies the brightness and heat of this "midday." It runs parallel with the "arrow that flies by day." The "destruction" here is not described as anything visible or tangible, yet it despoils like despoilers who make an attack at midday. (Jer. 6:4; 15:8; 20:16) It may reasonably be understood to be a highly contagious, epidemical scourge that lays low many victims, despoiling them of life.

²³ The "midday" here is meant in a worldly sense. The brilliant light is the so-called "enlightenment" of the world's Brain Age, its nuclear age, its space age. Its doctrines and propaganda boast of hu-

man intellectualism and are materialistic. Those yielding to such indoctrination suffer destruction spiritually, because it is against God's Word, his worship, his Messianic kingdom. So it is pestilential, and many become confused and lose faith because of the "contradictions of the falsely called 'knowledge.'" (1 Tim. 6:20, 21) In the end the victims suffer the bitterness of disappointment, frustration. The world today is eating the bitter fruitage of its falling for human intellectualism. The brightly shining scientists and political, educational, social philosophers have only increased the 'heat' upon worldly society. With their godless doctrine they have polluted the mental and moral atmosphere in which modern society lives.

²⁴ The spiritually deadly "destruction that despoils at midday" was especially exposed by the "fourth plague" described in Revelation 16:8, 9. The bowlful of this "plague" began to be emptied out upon the "sun" of human intellectualism in 1925, at the Indianapolis (Indiana) convention of Jehovah's witnesses that summer. That same year the birth of God's Messianic kingdom and the ousting of Satan and his demons from heaven were explained from the prophetic description given in Revelation 12:1-13. Thus the life-giving spiritual enlightenment of Jehovah's worshipers was set in contrast with the modernistic worldly-wise enlightenment of those despoiled of spiritual life by the "destruction" at their midday.

SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL AMID THREATENING DANGERS

²⁵ The afore-described threats to spiritual life are things of which those who are "in the secret place of the Most High" and

21. How far has this gloom-infesting "pestilence" spread?

22. As regards "the destruction that despoils at midday," what may we reasonably understand it to be like?

23. What is the "midday" here meant, and what is the "destruction that despoils" during it?

24. When was that "destruction that despoils at midday" especially exposed, and what spiritual enlightenment was set in contrast with it?

25, 26. Who are the "thousand" that "fall at your very side," and in what sense do they fall, and why?

"under the very shadow of the Almighty One" are not afraid. Faith-inspiring assurance is now given by the psalmist in his next words addressed to these as a class: "A thousand will fall at your very side and ten thousand at your right hand; to you it will not come near."—Ps. 91:7.

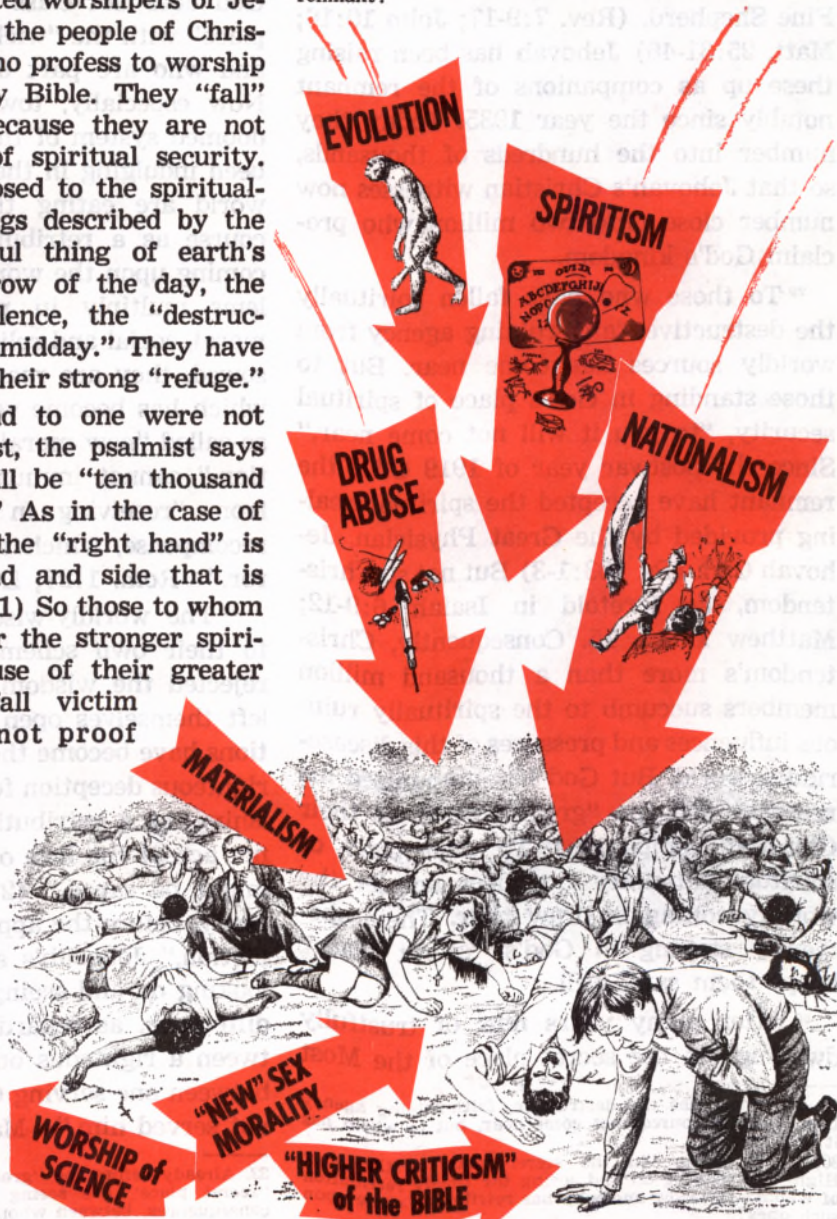
²⁶ Those spoken of as being at the "very side" of these dedicated worshipers of Jehovah God would be the people of Christendom and Jewry who profess to worship the God of the Holy Bible. They "fall" in spiritual death because they are not in Jehovah's place of spiritual security. Hence, they are exposed to the spiritually death-dealing things described by the psalmist, the dreadful thing of earth's night, the flying arrow of the day, the gloom-infesting pestilence, the "destruction that despoils at midday." They have not really made God their strong "refuge."

²⁷ As if a thousand to one were not a big enough contrast, the psalmist says that those falling will be "ten thousand at your right hand." As in the case of the Almighty God, the "right hand" is pictorial of the hand and side that is the stronger. (Ps. 98:1) So those to whom we have had to offer the stronger spiritual resistance because of their greater religious strength fall victim because they are not proof against worldliness, modernism, anti-religious propaganda, popular theology and demon-inspired religious doctrines and practices. They are not immunized by the help of God's spirit.

²⁷. Who are the "ten thousand" that fall "at your right hand"?

²⁸ Today, when we contrast the reported number of the anointed remnant of spiritual Israel, around ten thousand, with the thousands of millions of members of religious Babylon the Great, we can see it to be literally true that ten thousand have

²⁸. How has it literally become true that ten thousand have fallen at the right side of the anointed remnant, and whom has God raised up to be companions to the remnant?



fallen at the right hand of this remnant of the "seed" of God's "woman." (Rev. 12: 17) But in place of those tens of thousands that have fallen in spiritual death at the right hand of this remnant, Jehovah God has raised up a "great crowd" of sheeplike believers who have dedicated their lives to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ the Fine Shepherd. (Rev. 7:9-17; John 10:16; Matt. 25:31-46) Jehovah has been raising these up as companions of the remnant notably since the year 1935. Today they number into the hundreds of thousands, so that Jehovah's Christian witnesses now number close onto two million who proclaim God's kingdom.

²⁹ To those who have fallen spiritually the destructive, faith-ruining agency from worldly sources has come near. But to those standing in God's place of spiritual security, "to you it will not come near." Since the postwar year of 1919 C.E., the remnant have accepted the spiritual healing provided by the Great Physician, Jehovah God. (Ps. 103:1-3) But not so Christendom, as foretold in Isaiah 6:9-12; Matthew 13:14, 15. Consequently, Christendom's more than a thousand million members succumb to the spiritually ruinous influences and pressures of this disease-ridden world. But God has immunized his remnant and the "great crowd" of their Christian companions. To their place of spiritual immunity God does not let the worldly contagion draw near. Their obediently staying in God's "secret place" keeps them safe, well.

³⁰ After many years now of trustfully dwelling "in the secret place of the Most

29. To whom has the destructive, faith-ruining agency from worldly sources not come near, but to whom has it done so?

30, 31. (a) Those "in the secret place of the Most High" are looking on and seeing the timely retribution of whom? (b) How and why has retribution come upon such ones?

High," the anointed remnant of spiritual Israel and, latterly, the "great crowd" of their fellow witnesses have observed the truthfulness of what the inspired psalmist next says: "Only with your eyes will you look on and see the retribution itself of the wicked ones."—Ps. 91:8.

³¹ It is evident that here the Most High God does not class those in His "secret place" with the "wicked," who are outside and who are part of this wicked world. Now especially, toward the end of this doomed system of things, those who have been indulging in the ways of this wicked world are eating the fruitage of their course as a retribution. Due requital is coming upon the worldlings as their problems multiply in political, commercial, moral, social and religious affairs. As they sowed, they are reaping. Modern society, which has become very permissive of the so-called "new morality," the "sex revolution," cannot immunize the sex perverts from "receiving in themselves the full recompense, which was due for their error."—Rom. 1:27; Luke 21:25, 26.

³² The worldly-wise are falling victims to their own schemes. Those who have rejected the wisdom of God's Word and left themselves open to Satan's machinations have become the dupes of "every unrighteous deception for those who are perishing, as a retribution because they did not accept the love of the truth that they might be saved." (2 Thess. 2:9, 10) Already, before the approaching "great tribulation," Jehovah's safeguarded ones are looking on and seeing with their eyes the difference, as regards consequences, "between a righteous one and a wicked one, between one serving God and one who has not served him."—Mal. 3:18.

32. Already before the "great tribulation," those in the "secret place" are seeing the difference, as regards consequences, between whom?

Benefits and Rewards

From Being Spiritually Secure

MATERIALISTIC, physical security of mankind is breaking down, but spiritual security is proving a safeguard against the moral, social, political and religious dangers of this drifting world. The spiritually secure are those who put the spiritual things set out in God's Holy Word first in their lives. They know that God will take care of all other needs.

² As regards our giving God the predominant place in our lives the inspired writer of Psalm 91 goes on to give us a sense of security by saying: "Because you said: 'Jehovah is my refuge,' you have made the Most High himself your dwelling; no calamity will befall you, and not even a plague will draw near to your tent." —Ps. 91:9, 10.

³ What a wonderful thought, this making of the Most High God "your dwelling"! This is because of not only saying to Jehovah, "You are my refuge," but also really making Him the place where we seek our haven for safety. Fearlessly, in open public, the anointed remnant of the spiritual Israel of God have declared Jehovah

to be their refuge, especially from the year 1925 onward. The recently appearing "great crowd" that have joined the remnant in worshipping Jehovah as God have imitated the remnant in declaring and making Him their refuge, and hence their "dwelling."

⁴ Unitedly these two groups have proclaimed the Most High, Jehovah, to be the Universal Sovereign. In the now-raging issue between God's rulership of the whole earth and human rulership, they have taken their stand for Jehovah's sovereignty. They continuously announce world wide that God's Messianic kingdom in the hands of his Son Jesus Christ is the only hope for distressed humanity. In Jehovah they dwell as the only Source of all security. Their eternal interests for now and the future are secure in Him!

⁵ For this wicked world, the calamities are mounting, not only in political and economic affairs, but far more hurtfully in moral, social and religious matters. But those making the one living and true God, Jehovah, their life's refuge, "no calamity will befall you." That is to say, none of the calamities described in the preceding verses of Psalm 91. Of course, they may share with the general public in large-scale natural calamities such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, epidemics, food shortages, the ravages of international and intertribal wars and political revolutions, but these do not destroy their spirituality or weaken their faith and trust in Almighty God. And they can recover materially and physically from those earthly calamities.

⁶ Spiritual calamity, however, is different. From it there is no recovery, as in

1. Who are the ones that are secure from the dangers of the drifting world?

2, 3. How have the remnant and the "great crowd" really made Jehovah their "refuge"?

4. These two groups have been united in their course of action in behalf of what outstanding issue?

5. What is the kind of calamity that does not befall those who make God their life's refuge?

6. Why is spiritual calamity more serious, and who are those who suffer therefrom?

the case of religious Christendom and Jewry. These religious groups are, just like pagandom, not spiritually prosperous. They continue in their sick, diseased religious state, with destructive calamity ahead of them in the coming "great tribulation." (Matt. 24:21, 22; Rev. 7:14) Calamity is ahead for all not taking refuge in Jehovah and dwelling in him.

⁷ Those trustfully dwelling in the Most High God are pictured as alien residents, dwelling in tents in this present system of things, outside city limits. (1 Pet. 2:11; Heb. 11:8-10) To these as a class the divine promise is: "And not even a plague will draw near to your tent." (Ps. 91:10) Among the spiritually harmful "plagues" that now infest the citylike world are such contagious things as nationalism, fanatical patriotism, the teaching of evolution as a fact, selfish materialism, drug abuse, the blood transfusion craze, spiritistic practices, the modern "new sexual morality," the love of pleasures rather than love of God, religious sectarianism, "Higher Criticism" of the Bible, worship of the "sacred cow" of science, also the worship of the political "wild beast" and worship of its postwar "image," the United Nations, successor to the League of Nations. (Rev. 9:20, 21; 13:1-18) Only as those making Jehovah their refuge keep their "tent" pitched far away from the "city" of this world will they keep free from the contagion of its many "plagues." So let us keep our distance, as being no part of this world.—John 17:14-16; compare Hebrews 11:9, 10.

ANGELIC PROTECTION AGAINST FALLING VICTIM

⁸ As we walk about in this world of spiritual dangers, we need more than human guidance that our ways may be pleas-

ing to God. Such superhuman guidance is assured to us, "for," as the psalmist adds, "he will give his own angels a command concerning you, to guard you in all your ways."—Ps. 91:11.

⁹ This promise reminds us that, through the prophet Moses, God said to the nation of fleshly Israel: "Here I am sending an angel ahead of you to keep you on the road and to bring you into the place that I have prepared. For my angel will go ahead of you and will indeed bring you." (Ex. 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2) Also, after God's Son, Jesus Christ, turned back three temptations presented to him in the wilderness of Judea, one of which involved Psalm 91:11, 12, "the Devil left him, and, look! angels came and began to minister to him." (Matt. 4:1-11) With reference to his childlike followers, Jesus said: "Their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10) These heavenly angels are now under divine command with respect to the remnant of spiritual Israelites and their loyal companions.

¹⁰ The assignment of these angels to "guard you in all your ways" would apply to the "ways" that Jehovah's worshipers take that are in harmony with His revealed Word and that are therefore under His approval and guidance. His angels would not go along with the "remnant" and the "great crowd" of their companions in ways that are otherwise—selfish, self-willed.—Matt. 13:41, 42.

¹¹ Jesus' own prophecy on the "sign of [his] presence and of the conclusion of the system of things" plainly foretold that in behalf of the gathering of the chosen members of spiritual Israel he would send

9. This reminds us of what promise to fleshly Israel, and of what ministry rendered to Jesus, and of what assurance with reference to his childlike followers?

10. The assignment of angels to "guard you in all your ways" applies to what "ways"?

11. How did Jesus' prophecy on the "conclusion of the system of things" and of the messenger flying in mid-heaven indicate angelic involvement with his followers on earth?

7. (a) What are the figurative "plagues" that infect the citylike world? (b) In what course does safety lie for us who are like tenting alien residents?
8. What do we need rather than merely human guidance, and is it available to us?

forth his angels. Also, when he came to separate the people of the nations like sheep and goats, the angels would be with him. (Matt. 24:3, 31; 25:31, 32; Rev. 7:1-8) The last book of the Bible, the Revelation as given through Jesus to the apostle John, definitely reveals that the heavenly angels would be involved with the anointed remnant of spiritual Israel in their earthly activities during this "conclusion of the system of things." For instance, in the fulfillment of John's vision of the angel that flew in midheaven with the everlasting good news to declare to all earth's inhabitants, angelic guidance and guardianship are indicated in behalf of Jehovah's worshipers who do that work on earth. (Rev. 14:6, 7) But more than that:

¹² When the "seven last plagues" began to be poured out during the years 1922-1928 C.E., through the anointed "remnant" at that time, there must have been angelic guidance and guardianship. Logically so, for Revelation, chapters 15-17, reveals that the "bowls" or "vials" that were full of the wrath of God were held and maneuvered by heavenly angels who received these vessels at God's hands. By proceeding thus in God's ways of service Jehovah's worshipers are assured of angelic guardianship.—Ps. 34:7; Heb. 1:13, 14.

¹³ The "ways" that we, as worshipers of Jehovah God, take lie amid this worldly system of things of which Satan the Devil is "the god." (2 Cor. 4:4) Hence, it might be expected that the earthly agents of this false god would place in our path figurative stones for Jehovah's worshipers to trip over to a disastrous fall. But with reference to such causes for stumbling the psalmist speaks further about Jehovah's angels, saying: "Upon their hands they

will carry you, that you may not strike your foot against any stone."—Ps. 91:12.

¹⁴ This means that these heavenly angels will sustain us, support us, so that we are not affected by such a "stone." Back in the first century of our Common Era the apostate Israelites, "both the houses of Israel," did not have such angelic assistance against stumbling into spiritual ruin. They stumbled over Jehovah's true Messiah, Jesus Christ, who was to them "a stone to strike against" and "a rock over which to stumble," as foretold in Isaiah 8:14. (1 Pet. 2:7, 8) Their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah has hurt the circumcised Jewish people spiritually to this very day. However, this is not the "stone" spoken of in Psalm 91:12.

¹⁵ This "stone" is something from Jehovah's Great Adversary, Satan the Devil; and so if one accepts what this "stone" is, one falls out of favor with God. This is unlike the Messianic "stone" of the first century, which, if accepted by the Jewish nation, would serve for their continued favor with God. But back there the nationalistic Jews followed false Messiahs not from God. Looking forward also to our time, Jesus Christ warned his disciples against false Messiahs or Christs in this "conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3, 5, 23-26) True to prediction, these "false Christs" have risen up, not particularly in the form of individual men, but in political and economic systems to whom Messianic powers have been ascribed and through which Messianic blessings were expected. For example, as when Nikita Khrushchev promised that Russian Communism of his brand would establish paradise for the people. And how could we ever forget that, in December of 1918, the Federal Council of the Churches of

12. According to the Revelation, when the remnant of that time began pouring out the "seven last plagues," why must they have had angelic guidance and guardianship?

13. What do Satan's earthly agents place in the path of those walking in Jehovah's "ways," and what does Psalm 91:12 say of this?

14. In the first century of our Common Era, what proved to be "a stone to strike against" for the nation of fleshly Israel, and why?

15. How is the "stone" of Psalm 91:12 different, and how can this be illustrated?

Christ in America hailed the proposed League of Nations as "the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth"?

¹⁶ Faithfully Jehovah's angels have 'carried His worshipers upon their hands' so that they have not struck their foot against "any stone" of that kind and fallen out of his favor. When, in November of 1939, they came out publicly in adherence to Christian "neutrality" toward all worldly controversies, this fortified them in their already chosen course of refusal of military conscription, in peacetime as well as wartime. Dictators in political government rose up after World War I, such as Adolf Hitler who aimed at reestablishing the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation for a thousand years. But Jehovah's Christian witnesses never yielded to such dictators as taking the place of Jehovah's true Messiah, Jesus Christ. In times of test regarding the supremacy of the law of the Most High God, they have taken up the words of Christ's apostles and have said to politicians, judges and police: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) Thanks to Jehovah's angels, not even "any stone" like bans and proscriptions against them and their preaching of God's kingdom has caused His worshipers to stumble and fall.

SECURE AGAINST OPEN AND SECRET ATTACKS

¹⁷ Near the end of the year 32 C.E., Jesus Christ sent out seventy disciples as evangelizers of God's Messianic kingdom. Evidently speaking in symbolic language to them, he said: "Look! I have given you

the authority to trample underfoot serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will by any means do you hurt." (Luke 10:19) Similarly, in a symbolic sense, the psalmist now says to the class that has made Jehovah its dwelling: "Upon the young lion and the cobra you will tread; you will trample down the maned young lion and the big snake."—Ps. 91:13.

¹⁸ The young lion makes an open, frontal attack, exposing itself. So, too, powerful political states have resorted to legislative action that names the victim. They have openly passed laws aimed at Jehovah's witnesses. Or they have applied nationalistic laws against these. With what purpose? To devour them, to assimilate them, to make them religiously subservient to the State, making them a national religious institution, torn apart from the worldwide body of Jehovah's witnesses that is ruled from God down. Loyal witnesses of Jehovah have turned down such a totalitarian, State-controlled arrangement. Theocratically they have held firmly to God's Rule!

¹⁹ Unlike the young lion, the cobra strikes in the dark from a place of concealment. It is dangerous, like a "serpent by the roadside," to which the tribe of Dan was compared and which "bites the heels of the horse." (Gen. 49:16, 17) Venomous, unsuspected attacks like those of the cobra have been made upon the intentionally victimized witnesses of Jehovah as they carry on their public work of proclaiming God's kingdom from house to house, even in lands where State religions hold power. Hiding behind the State



16. Thanks to the angels, what are some of the 'stones' against which Jehovah's witnesses have not struck the foot to a fall?

17. As to kind of language, how does Psalm 91:13 resemble Luke 10:19?

18. How, figuratively, has the "young lion" been trodden down?

19. How, figuratively, has "the cobra" been trodden down?

as executioner for them, clergymen of Christendom have made covert attacks upon Jehovah's witnesses through the politicians, the lawmakers, the police authorities and the judges of law courts. (Ps. 94:20) But as respects Jehovah's witnesses, they have not been paralyzed with fear by the venom of the unfair attacks. They have remained law abiding and have peacefully applied to the law courts for their constitutional rights, appealing to the Bill of Rights granted by the State. To the highest courts of the land they have carried their legal fight for establishing and defending by law freedom of religion and the right to preach God's kingdom. (Phil. 1:7, 16) Victory has often crowned their efforts!

²⁰ Whether the enemies used open, frontal attacks or covert, underhanded ones, they have been trodden down by the onward-marching witnesses of the Most High God. When their literature has been banned they have kept pressing forward in their Scriptural work of making disciples of Christ by using just the Bible alone in their witnessing work. Disciples have resulted!—Matt. 28:19, 20.

²¹ The psalmist heightens the intensity of the figures of speech when, in a parallelism, he speaks of trampling down "the maned young lion and the big snake." The maned young lion should be older and also fiercer-looking than just the young lion; and the big snake would be a monstrous reptile, which the Greek Septuagint Version of the Psalms calls a "dragon." However, no matter how impressive-looking, how fierce-looking the symbolic maned young lion may be when making his open, frontal attack, Jehovah's worshipers trample this dangerous attacker down. They walk right on, obeying the Most High God as Sovereign Ruler rather than lionlike

men or lionlike man-made organizations. They render to lionlike Caesar only what belongs to Caesar and in no way holding back anything that belongs to God, giving to him *all* the things belonging to Him. (Acts 5:29; Matt. 22:21) So they are not spiritually hurt by the menacing action of the "lion."

²² The dragonlike "big snake" reminds us of the father of the "seed" of the serpent, Satan the Devil, "the original serpent." (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:9) The psalmist here pictures him, not as a "sea monster," but as a land monster, a reptile of unusual size, long enough to get its coils around a human to crush him and swallow him. (Jer. 51:34) So if Jehovah's worshipers discern that Satan the Devil, by means of his monstrous world organization, is trying to wrap his coils around them and crush them with worldly pressures and swallow them down into his demon-controlled organization, they shake themselves loose and trample down this "big snake." They avoid and resist all forms of spiritism, thus not permitting the demons subtly to take control of their mind and will. (Luke 10:17) For one thing, the anointed remnant of joint heirs of Christ must do this if they desire to share in the fulfillment of Romans 16:20, having Satan crushed under their feet shortly. They must take positive steps against this fiery-red "dragon" now and keep him always underfoot.—1 Pet. 5:8.

LOVING GOD AND KNOWING HIS NAME

²³ Satan the Devil denies that human creatures can love God the Creator just for what He is. But the Most High God appreciates the true love of even earthly creatures of His. How God expresses his appreciation the psalmist shows, when he now represents God as speaking and saying with regard to His loving worshipers

20. Despite bans upon their Bible literature, how have the Witnesses still made disciples?

21. How do Jehovah's worshipers trample down the symbolic "maned young lion"?

22. How do Jehovah's worshipers trample down the symbolic "big snake"?

23. What does God say in Psalm 91:14 with regard to those who love Him for what He is?

as a class: "Because on me he has set his affection, I shall also provide him with escape. I shall protect him because he has come to know my name."—Ps. 91:14.

²⁴ The worshipers of the one living and true God have set their affection upon him because he is the highest personification of love. They have cleaved or clung to him affectionately, with their hearts simply going out to him spontaneously. They are commanded to love him, but they love him because he first loved them and expressed this love through his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. (Deut. 7:7; 10:15; Mark 12:29, 30; 1 John 4:19) So it is not merely a matter of finding spiritual security that they have taken refuge in Him.

²⁵ In responsive affection toward them, God the Almighty One has provided his worshipers with escape from being religious captives to this world and, yes, from being exterminated. In testimony of this, his true worshipers exist today in this most perilous time and are increasing in number. His ability to provide escape in the future cases of need is still as great as ever!

²⁶ Never will those who worship the Most High God with spirit and truth be wiped off the face of the earth. Otherwise, his name would be expunged from the earth. This is the point in his saying with respect to the company of his worshipers: "I shall protect him because he has come to know my name."—Ps. 91:14.

²⁷ From the year 1925 C.E. onward the anointed remnant of spiritual Israel took note that the Scriptures indicated that the time had come for God to make a name

for himself world wide. (Jer. 32:20; Isa. 63:12) This focused attention upon God's personal name, Jehovah. So right at the start of the following year, readers of *The Watch Tower* were confronted with the challenging question, "Who Will Honor Jehovah?" this being the title of the leading article published in the magazine issue of January 1, 1926.

²⁸ Less than three years later, showing that they had "come to know" the divine name, the International Bible Students Association, in international convention assembled in Detroit, Michigan, in the summer of 1928, adopted with loud acclaim "A Declaration Against Satan and for Jehovah." This proclamation as reproduced in print was then circulated around the globe in tens of millions of copies. In that marked year of 1928 there were 44,000 Bible Students reporting for field service to take care of that distribution. Still later, to cap the climax, what?

²⁹ On Sunday afternoon, July 26, 1931, at the international convention of the I.B.S.A. in Columbus, Ohio, there came the heartfelt adoption of the Resolution in favor of embracing the New Name, Jehovah's witnesses. Thereafter this Resolution was adopted by congregations around the world that thenceforth identified their religious organization as Jehovah's witnesses. To advertise the divine name still further, on March 1, 1939, some months before World War II broke out, the official magazine of the Witnesses came forth with the new legend, "The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom." And now, as the critical year of 1975 enters, it may well be asked: Has the Most High God of prophecy made a name for himself? The answer is self-evident, Yes! By whom? Not

24. So, rather than for just finding spiritual security, why have His worshipers taken refuge in Him?

25. From what has Jehovah provided escape for his worshipers, and what about the future?

26. What is the point that is made by Jehovah's saying: "I shall protect him because he has come to know my name"?

27. In 1925, attention began to be focused upon what, this resulting in what *Watch Tower* article of January 1, 1926?

28. In 1928, to show that Jehovah's worshipers had "come to know" His name, what did they do at the I.B.S.A. convention in Detroit?

29, 30. (a) To announce the divine name still further, what was done with the front-page legend of *The Watch Tower* in 1939? (b) Has Jehovah made a name for himself, and, if so, then by whom?

by Christendom or by Jewry, but by Jehovah's Christian witnesses!

³⁰ Truly, Jehovah's protecting his worshipers because they have "come to know my name" has meant protecting his own name and having a means for declaring his name "in all the earth."—Rom. 9:17; Ex. 9:16.

³¹ The decision of these Christian witnesses of Jehovah now is that of Micah 4: 5: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever." Upon His name they will continue to call for aid, with full confidence in what he next says, in Psalm 91:15: "He will call upon me, and I shall answer him. I shall be with him in distress. I shall rescue him and glorify him."

RESCUE AND GLORIFICATION

³² Because of the world's mounting hostility against them and because of Satan the Dragon's unceasing war against them, Jehovah's worshipers have already passed through much distress. But, true to his word, Jehovah has ever been with them, never renouncing them as His witnesses. In the tremendous distress yet ahead of them, as this wicked world comes to its end in utter destruction, Jehovah will be with his worshipers and miraculously make this known! Rather than let them be ingloriously destroyed by all their enemies visible and invisible, Jehovah says: "I shall rescue him and glorify him," or, "bring him to honour."—*New English Bible*.

³³ The glorification here promised does not necessarily mean the glorification of the members of the anointed remnant of spiritual Israel in heaven with the reign-

ing King Jesus Christ. This will come in Jehovah's due time, after a promised "length of days."

³⁴ But already He has made brilliant rescues of his worshipers on earth, and this has brought spiritual glory to them, to the honor of His name. After such divine rescues, they have been privileged to glory over their enemies, who are also His enemies. To this day they have been honored with further service on earth as His witnesses and proclaimers of His invincible Messianic kingdom. Of course, during the world's coming "great tribulation" and its culmination in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon, there will come Jehovah's greatest, most remarkable rescue of them. Hence, they will survive that world-destroying "great tribulation" and share the glory of the winning side of that War of all wars! They will be honored with entrance into God's new order for this earth.

³⁵ Thus they shall live on to enjoy the glory of being those whom the Most High God rescues as he wars victoriously for the vindication of his universal sovereignty and the sanctification of his worthy name. (Rev. 16:14, 16; Ezek. 38:23; Ps. 83:18) His salvation of them will make this possible for them. By his psalmist, Jehovah says, in concluding this exquisite psalm: "With length of days I shall satisfy him, and I shall cause him to see salvation by me."—Ps. 91:16.

³⁶ Only from the end of the year 1928 was the prospect opened up to the spiritual understanding of the anointed remnant of the "Israel of God" to survive the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon and enter here on earth into Jehovah's righteous new order. (See *The Watch Tower* under date of December 15,

31. In whose name are they determined to walk, and upon what name to call for aid?

32. How does Jehovah show that he has not renounced as His witnesses those who call upon him, and how will he yet show this?

33, 34. After they are rescued, in what way is it that Jehovah's worshipers are glorified by Him?

35. Thus they live on to enjoy what glory on earth, and what on God's part makes this possible for them?

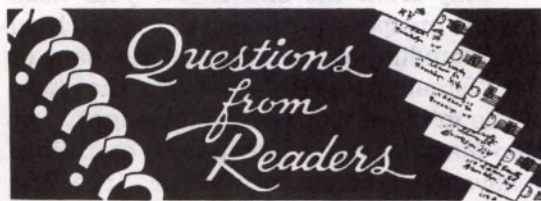
36. When was the prospect of surviving God's "war" at Har-Magedon opened to the view of the remnant, and to what point may they be satisfied with "length of days" on earth?

1928, page 376, paragraphs 35, 36.) And now, as the year 1975 opens up, some thousands of the anointed remnant, still alive on this earth, look ahead to realizing that joyful prospect. The increasing "great crowd" of their sheeplike companions look forward with them to entering the New Order without interruption of life. In the New Order Jehovah God will add to the "length of days" of the anointed remnant on earth to the point of satisfying the members thereof. It remains to be seen whether they will be yet retained here on earth to see the start of the resurrection of the earthly dead and to meet faithful witnesses of ancient, pre-Christian times. They would enjoy that, before being taken off the earthly scene to the heavenly reward with Christ.

⁸⁷ Those of the "great crowd," remaining faithful to the Universal Sovereign Jehovah God clear through the decisive test after the end of Christ's thousand-year reign over mankind, will be satisfied with "length of days" to life eternal, life without end in the earthly "Paradise of Pleasure" under Jehovah's universal sovereignty. O how rewarding is the worship of Jehovah!

⁸⁸ Do we now appreciate, do we sincerely

37. With what "length of days" will it be possible for the members of the "great crowd" to be satisfied?
38. If anyone "dwelling in the secret place" dies in faithfulness before the end of God's war at Har-Magedon and the abyssing of Satan, why will this in no way disprove the all-importance of the spiritual security?



● What is the view of Jehovah's witnesses toward attending the wedding of a worldly acquaintance or relative?

In the case of minors who contemplate attending, the final decision rests with the par-

ents. Otherwise it is a matter for personal decision, with each Christian being willing to bear his own responsibility. However, there are Scriptural principles and a wide variety of circumstances that should be considered.

desire, the spiritual security that Jehovah God furnishes? Is not this kind of security all-important if we want to be safeguarded for the glorious rewards that He has in store for all his faithful worshipers? All those who trustfully remain in Jehovah's place of spiritual security, "dwelling in the secret place of the Most High," will be caused "to see salvation by me," by Jehovah. (Ps. 91:16) This will hold true, even if one's days in faithfulness are cut short in death before the righteous New Order is actually ushered in after Jehovah's "war" at Har-Magedon and the imprisoning of Satan and his demons in the abyss. (Rev. 20:1-6) The Almighty God can still provide salvation from a death in faithfulness by the promised resurrection of the dead. Those who leave the divine place of spiritual security will never get through the coming "great tribulation" with God's approval and see salvation by Him!

⁸⁹ Jehovah will take pleasure in causing us to see salvation by Him and through Jesus Christ his Son. May we lovingly let Him have this divine pleasure in the case of each one of us. We can do so by remaining worthily in the "secret place" of spiritual security that he has provided for His faithful worshipers.—Prov. 21:31; Rev. 7:9-17.

39. What pleasure should we want Jehovah to have in the case of each one of us, and how can we let Him have it?

ents. Otherwise it is a matter for personal decision, with each Christian being willing to bear his own responsibility. However, there are Scriptural principles and a wide variety of circumstances that should be considered.

The wedding ceremony may be conducted in a religious building and by a clergyman. This would make it quite different from a purely civil ceremony. A true Christian could not conscientiously join or participate in any prayers or religious exercises that he knew to be contrary to Bible teaching. Nor is he interested to see how close he can come to apostate acts

without overstepping the line. He is under obligation to heed the Scriptural command: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? . . . Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? . . . Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves," says Jehovah, "and quit touching the unclean thing."—2 Cor. 6:14-17.

Understandably, one invited to attend a wedding of worldly relatives and acquaintances may at times be faced with quite a problem. For example, the invitation may have been extended to a Christian wife and her unbelieving husband. He may think that both of them should be present for the wedding. Yet she may be troubled about it. She may reason that, if she were to attend a church wedding, the emotional pressure of the circumstances could cause her to do something wrong. On the other hand, she might conclude that, out of regard for her husband's wishes, she could go with him merely as a respectful observer, but being determined not to share in any religious acts.

Regardless of how a wife might view the matter, it would be to her advantage to explain her position to her husband. If, on the basis of her explanation, he comes to the conclusion that his wife's presence may possibly give rise to a situation unpleasant to him, he may prefer to go alone. Or, he may still want her to go with him, but as a quiet observer, in which case she will have to decide whether to go.

Something that deserves consideration is the effect that attending a wedding in a religious building might have on fellow believers. Could it injure the conscience of some? Might their resistance to engaging in actual idolatrous acts be weakened by this action of yours? A Bible principle that comes into the picture is: "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; see also 1 Corinthians 8:9-13.

At times an invitation to a wedding may include being actively involved as a member of the bridal party. What if this required participation in certain religious acts? Manifestly one desiring to be pleasing to God could not share in acts of false religion; the person must act in harmony with his Word. But a Christian could explain just how he feels and point out that in no way does he want to mar the joy of the wedding day by being responsible for what

might prove to be an embarrassing situation.

In matters of this nature, Christians must carefully weigh all the factors involved. Under certain circumstances they may conclude that no difficulties would arise if they were to attend as quiet observers. On the other hand, the circumstances may be such that a Christian may reason that likely injury to his conscience or that of others by attending such worldly wedding outweighs the possible benefits of attending. Whatever the situation, the Christian should make sure that his decision will not interfere with his preserving a good conscience before God and men.

● Why does the *New World Translation* not show, in its preface, the names and scholastic standing of its translators?

Over the years, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania has printed many different Bible translations. In doing so we have not ignored the wishes of the translators. For example, in 1972 we published *The Bible in Living English* in the style and format desired by its translator.—See title page.

On September 3, 1949, the New World Bible Translation Committee presented us with a completed translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. This manuscript, along with their work on the Hebrew Scriptures that followed, became our legal property. In regard to this, page 258 of the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* notes: "The one request of the translation committee was that its members remain anonymous even after their death." We have kept our agreement and respected their wishes.

But why was this stipulation made? These translators were not seeking prominence; they did not desire to draw attention to themselves. In the spirit of 'doing all things for God's glory,' they wanted the reader to base his faith on God's Word, not on their worldly "qualifications." (1 Cor. 10:31) Other translation committees have taken a similar view. The jacket of the Reference Edition (1971) of the *New American Standard Bible* states: "We have not used any scholar's name for reference or recommendations because it is our belief God's Word should stand on its merits."

The merits of the *New World Translation* are easily studied. Its large-print editions carry numerous footnotes. Many show which Bible manuscripts were involved with decisions on particular renderings. And these footnotes,

along with an extensive Foreword, give the careful student more information concerning the sources and work of the translation committee than he could find in most translations.

Further, in 1969 we printed *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*, also the work of the New World Bible Translation Committee. This Greek-English work gives anyone the opportunity to examine closely the endeavors of the translation committee on that portion of the Bible.

Some may argue that even the Bible books themselves bear the names of the writers. In many cases this is true. However, in a number of Bible books the writers did not include their names. Similarly, we note that they say little about their personal qualifications or educational background. In translating God's Word, the New World Bible Translation Committee has felt that the particulars of their university or other educational training are not the important thing, though the translation itself testifies to their qualifications. A close examination of their work should direct the reader, not to the translators, but to the Bible's Author, Jehovah God.

Too, we note the humility of the committee

in acknowledging in their footnotes that there are other ways that passages could be rendered. Appreciating this, we have always both recognized and encouraged the use of a variety of Bible translations.* Thus, while deeply grateful for the work of the New World Bible Translation Committee, Jehovah's witnesses use whatever Bibles are available in the local languages. Whether it be the clear, modern-language *New World Translation* or another, we encourage all to use the lamp of God's Word to light life's roadway.—Ps. 119:105.

* See *The Watchtower*, 1950, p. 315.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

January 19: Standing Untouched, as Thousands Fall Victims, ¶1-24. Page 752. Songs to Be Used: 44, 91.

January 26: Standing Untouched, as Thousands Fall Victims, ¶25-32, and Benefits and Rewards from Being Spiritually Secure, ¶1-16. Page 756. Songs to Be Used: 105, 112.

February 2: Benefits and Rewards from Being Spiritually Secure, ¶17-39. Page 762. Songs to Be Used: 18, 119.

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