

The **WATCHTOWER**

WILL
SCIENCE

*Really
Solve Your Problems?*



Also In This Issue:

GETTING TO KNOW GOD

FEBRUARY 15, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

February 15, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 4

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.

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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.

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

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Average Printing Each Issue: 8,850,000

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Gun	Melanesian-	Sepedi	Urdu
Hebrew	Pidgin	Serbian	Vietnamese

Five cents a copy

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	\$1.50
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	\$1.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5	\$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	90p
Hawaii, 1228 Pensacola St., Honolulu 96814	\$1.30
New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	\$1.50
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	₦1.05
Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	P8
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, 1406	R1.10
(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)	

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn.
Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.
Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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

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

"**W**E can solve our problems . . ." boasted an American science editor last year.

At one time such a statement might have been taken without challenge, for, until recently, the history of science seemed like a shining success story. But the 1960's and early 1970's brought a period of disenchantment.

True, science has made some remarkable



Will **SCIENCE**

Really Solve Your Problems?



advances. Nevertheless, in spite of its often sincere attempts to prevent it, hunger gnaws at more bellies than ever. "Scientific" crime-fighting equipment has not cut down lawlessness; rather, it has continued to mushroom and spread from urban ghettos into once-quiet rural areas. Air and water are befouled with pollutants. Science also gets the blame from some for arming missiles with ghastly power and aiming these at the major cities of the world.

So, as 1975 dawns, even those who once promoted science are not so cocksure about its potency for good. They see that it has become a "mixed bag" filled with some blessings but far too many evils. However, these flaws actually revolve around one central or major weakness. And this weakness is not new, only more obvious in the face of today's earth-wide problems.

This primary fault is identified in the Biblical book of Job, written over 3,400 years ago. Job took note of man's scien-

tific diligence, including his resourcefulness in mining deep into the earth to ferret out its riches. But what did Job say was missing? We read:

"But *wisdom*—where can it be found, and where, now, is the place of understanding?"—Job 28:12.

True wisdom—that was, and is, the missing ingredient in science. It needs proper guidance, direction. Or, as Harvard University's Milton Katz expresses it: "The trouble isn't the technology. The trouble is the way we've used our technology."

Wisdom, the ability to use in a right way what science has discovered, must come from outside science itself. Do the efforts of scientists to solve man's problems give evidence that they have found such wisdom? Look at the record and see.

PROBLEM-SOLVING REQUIRES CLEAR THINKING

For one thing, is it not logical to believe that if problems are to be solved,

then personal viewpoints and prejudices must be put in a secondary position? Surely. But this requires humility.

It is as the Bible says at Proverbs 11:2: "Has presumptuousness come? Then dishonor will come; but *wisdom is with the modest ones.*" The Hebrew word here translated "modest ones" carries the idea of 'hiding oneself,' that is, in the sense of putting oneself in the background. This does not mean that a modest person ignores problems. No, but he digs out what are *real* problems. Such a one is not seeking his own prominence or wealth nor is he selfishly trying to cling to some position.

It is to their credit that many scientists earnestly endeavor to be this way. In some cases they have given their lives trying to find the truth. Yet, as one reads scientific literature one cannot help but notice that narrow dogmatism, ambitiously presented with a religious fervor, is often prevalent. Concerning this, Robert K. Merton wrote in the Spring 1969 issue of *American Scientist*:

"The fact is that almost all of those firmly placed in the pantheon of science

—Newton, Descartes, Leibniz, Pascal or Huggins, Lister, Faraday, Laplace, or Davy—were

caught up in passionate efforts to achieve priority [that is, to be first with a certain discovery] and to have it publicly registered. . . . Sometimes . . . the desire for recognition is stepped up until it gets out of hand. It becomes a driving lust for acclaim."

"Modesty" has not marked the history of science. Instead, there has been "presumptuousness," as the Bible's proverb refers to it. As a consequence, science has fallen into a certain "dishonor."

WHERE IS CONCERN FOR OTHERS OR COOPERATION?

Logically, wisdom should also manifest itself in a genuine concern for those who are afflicted. In Proverbs 8:22-31 "Wisdom" is personified and says: "The things I was fond of were with the sons of men." True wisdom is not oblivious to the needs of others, but takes pleasure in being of assistance.

Has science followed this noble pattern?

The world's food problems lie primarily in the tropics, but most scientific study is on crops that thrive in temperate zones. In fact, 98 percent of the research and development facilities of the world are located in the *developed* nations and aimed at solving *their* problems. Two thirds of the world must "make do" with products designed for another culture.

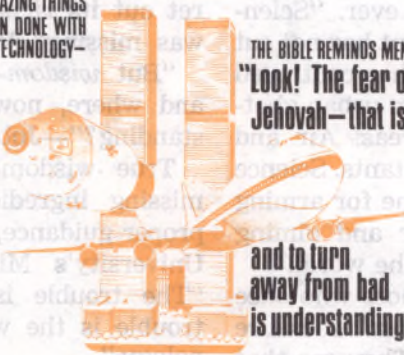
With what results? British scientist Lord Ritchie-Calder reminds us: "We give backward countries tractors which

they don't know how to use and lack the facilities to maintain. We should concentrate, instead, on technical cooperation. . . . Instead of treating the Eskimos like museum pieces and going into the Arctic with

blueprints, we should go into a partnership with the Eskimos."

An insistence that only one way—perhaps "Western scientific methods"—will solve problems has actually intensified adverse circumstances. A severe famine has seared parts of Africa, particularly the Sahel, in recent years. Many factors have contributed to the problem. Yet has Western science helped? Says an article in

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THE BIBLE REMINDS MEN:
"Look! The fear of
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and to turn
away from bad
is understanding." —Job 28:28.

Science: "Western science and technology . . . have in fact made a principal contribution to the destruction. . . . In fact, when the Sahelian peoples have been conservative and resisted changes advocated by Western experts, it has often been with reason. . . . few Western interventions in the Sahel, when considered over the long term, have worked in the inhabitants' favor."

Lack of real concern for others and cooperation with them has caused science to add to problems in other ways. It has often bypassed warnings about coming disasters such as food, transportation, housing and energy problems. Those very problems have now closed in on the human race at a phenomenal rate.

Of course, that is not to say that any man or group of men can accurately know the details of the future. Yet reasonable precautions in the face of reasonable warnings are always proper. When crises threaten, *action* is mandatory. But time and again the best that science has been able to muster is an after-the-fact *reaction*. "A sensible man foresees danger, and hides from it," says the Bible, and then it adds: "But the simple pass on, and are punished." (Prov. 22:3, *An American Translation*) Millions suffer, feel "punished," because of the lack of sensible foresight and action on the part of the scientific world.

Clearly, science has not solved man's problems; it lacks true wisdom to do so of itself. But is this saying that a God-fearing person should be "anti-science"?

BALANCED VIEW OF SCIENCE

A Christian appreciates true learning and scientific discovery. However, he has the benefit of real wisdom to direct his thinking. This proper guidance does not come from any man. The upright man, Job, referred to at the start of this article, acknowledged this fact. After admitting that even scientific men do not have wis-

dom, Job, inspired by God, raised the question:

"But wisdom—where can it be found?" His answer:

"Look! The fear of Jehovah—that is wisdom, and to turn away from bad is understanding."—Job 28:1-28.

What are the results of looking to God in guiding one's thinking about matters of a scientific nature? Very favorable; the problems of life get solved.

This can be illustrated by an ancient event. A king of Babylon ordered that young captives, Jews, be brought in before him for special training. Which ones? According to Daniel 1:4 in the *King James Version*, it was those "skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science." But "science" in this verse does not mean the foolish astrological and magical sciences based on the philosophical and religious views of that day. The ancient Jews were not ignorant of basic astronomy, chemistry, and so forth, but neither were they deceived by the pseudoscience of Babylon.

Instead they were particularly noted for the wisdom and morality expressed in their literature, their architecture, natural history agriculture and other practical sciences. "In many of these respects," notes commentator Albert Barnes with reference to the Jews, "they were, doubtless, far in advance of the Chaldeans [Babylonians], and it was probably the purpose of the Chaldean monarch to avail himself of what they knew."

So also today, true Christians have a balanced view toward scientific knowledge, and this brings good results. They are not misled by "scientific" ideas that are often more personal opinion than established fact. Karl Popper, the philosopher of science, confesses: "Science is not a system of certain, or well-established statements; . . . we do not know: we can only guess. And our guesses are guided by the

unscientific, the metaphysical . . . " What the Christian apostle wisely told Timothy is appropriate even today; he counseled him to turn "away from the empty speeches that violate what is holy and from the contradictions of the falsely called 'knowledge.'"—1 Tim. 6:20.

Godly wisdom, found in the Bible, assists true Christians in appraising the value of any scientific material. Thus, for example, when a scientist speaks of remaking this present worldwide system of things "for the better," a true Christian is not deceived. He knows that, according to the Bible, "the world is passing away," and the evidence indicates that its exit is near at hand. A new system—one designed by God—will follow in which all knowledge, including scientific learning, will be used for the good of man and to the glory of God.—2 Pet. 3:7-13; 1 John 2:15-17.

Actually, it is quite reasonable to look to God for assistance in solving mankind's problems. Why do we say this? Well, are not most of the big problems that science faces outside its control? Definitely. Science, for one thing, is tied into the modern political and economic systems. Thus even when science spawns a "green revolution" people still go hungry. Why? Because political bureaucrats or others interested only in personal gain keep the food from ever reaching starving people. Yes, science is inevitably crippled by the system in which it is found.

Another thing: science's knowledge, even when accurate, is usually incomplete. For instance, science recently cut the death rate due to disease in some countries by using wonder drugs and DDT; but science has not prevented those same people from starving to death because of food shortages. Egypt's Aswan Dam was engineered to provide such things as electric power and irrigation. But it has also contributed to the swifter spread of the dreaded schistosomiasis. So one seeming scientific

advance often offsets another. What is needed is a knowledge of man's whole environment. Who has this?

The One who created the universe surely has the knowledge of earth's ecology and the power to control it. Since he originally designed the earth's intricate food-producing systems, certainly he is in the best position to undo the harm that man, in his ignorance of the interrelationships of the systems of life, has caused and thus to make these arrangements function for the good of mankind. His promises, recorded in the Bible, to end such things as hunger and pollution are therefore reliable.

We can believe God when he says: "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples . . . a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs." (Isa. 25:6) Similarly, we can accept with full confidence his promise to "bring to ruin those ruining the earth."—Rev. 11:18.

There is yet another reason to look to God—not human science—to solve man's problems.

SCIENCE CANNOT CHANGE PEOPLE —GOD CAN

At the root of many of man's problems is man himself. Science cannot really change people—their motives. As a case in point, consider the crime problem. Experts may devise special equipment to try to prevent the spread of crime, but they cannot root out wrong desire in people who, if clever enough, simply find ways to baffle any new gadget. But God made the human heart. Is he not in the best position to know who must, if necessary, be removed from human society in order for others to live without molestation?

So it is for this reason that He can positively assure us that when this present system of things is gone and His new one

arrives it will not be plagued by crime: "They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain."—Isa. 11:9.

Wisdom that comes from God can show men how to use their learning and science aright. With a study of the Bible you will find that it shows you how to solve or

better cope with the real problems that you face every day. Too, it offers you a dependable hope for the future. Are these not the things that you want? Surely. Consult Jehovah's witnesses; they will gladly help you to learn more about this true godly wisdom.

A Look At THE ANCIENT SAMARITANS

THE greatest teacher ever to walk the earth, Jesus Christ, once related a heartwarming illustration about being neighborly. He spoke of a kind and compassionate man, one who was willing to expend himself in behalf of a total stranger. Both a priest and a Levite ignored the plight of this stranger who had been beaten up by robbers and left behind half-dead on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. But the compassionate man attended to the stranger's immediate needs and paid out the equivalent of two days' wages for his care. He even obligated himself to pay any expense incurred beyond that amount. (Luke 10:30-35) The compassionate man of Jesus' illustration was a Samaritan. What did that mean? Just who were the Samaritans?

Other statements made by Jesus Christ about the Samaritans reveal that they had a partly foreign, non-Jewish heritage. He specifically excluded them when instruct-

ing his apostles to concentrate their efforts on the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5, 6) On another occasion he spoke of a Samaritan as a "man of another nation" or "race."—Luke 17:16-18, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

But how did a people not of the "house of Israel" come to live in a large section of Israelite territory? This happened after the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in the eighth century B.C.E. The Assyrians carried many Israelites into exile, thereafter replacing them with foreign peoples.—2 Ki. 17:22-24; Ezra 4:1, 2.

These foreign peoples in time came to share certain religious beliefs of the Israelites. How did this happen? Because the Assyrian conquest devastated much Israelite territory, lions increased in the land and began to roam closer to towns and villages. (Compare Exodus 23:29.) Apparently for this reason many foreigners fell prey to lions. The new settlers reasoned that this was happening because they did not worship the God of the land, and notified the king of Assyria accordingly. In response, the Assyrian monarch sent back a calf-worshipping Israelite priest from exile. This priest taught the transplanted population about Jehovah. But he did so in the same manner as had the first king of the toppled ten-tribe kingdom, Jeroboam, who introduced calf worship. So although knowing something about Jehovah, the foreign people still continued worshipping false gods.—2 Ki. 17:24-31.

Eventually the beliefs of these foreign-

ers appear to have been modified. Mixed marriages doubtless contributed to this, as an Israelite population (though greatly reduced) still remained in the territory that had been conquered by the Assyrians. (2 Chron. 34:6-9) Racially, then, the Samaritans appear to have been descendants of remaining Israelites and the foreign peoples brought into the land. It appears that, in the centuries that followed, the Samaritans did not have any contact with the worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem and so continued to differ religiously from the Jews.

The Samaritans even built their own temple on Mount Gerizim in competition to the one at Jerusalem. While that temple no longer existed in the time of Jesus' ministry, the Samaritans were still worshiping on Mount Gerizim. (John 4:20-23) They accepted only the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, and rejected all the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures, with the possible exception of the book of Joshua. Therefore they had but an incomplete understanding of Jehovah God and his purpose. For this reason Jesus Christ told a Samaritan woman: "You worship what you do not know." (John 4:22) Nevertheless, on account of their basic acceptance of the Pentateuch, the Samaritans practiced circumcision and looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, the prophet greater than Moses.—Deut. 18:18, 19; John 4:25.

The racial and religious divisions existing between the Jews and Samaritans gave rise to considerable prejudice. The Jews generally looked down on the Samaritans and refused to have any dealings with them. (John 4:9) The term "Samaritan" was even used as an expression of reproach. A case in point is when unbelieving Jews said to Jesus: "Do we not rightly say, You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"—John 8:48.

Jesus Christ, however, did not adopt

such a prejudiced view toward the Samaritans. Of the ten lepers he healed of loathsome leprosy at one time, one was a Samaritan. This Samaritan was the only one who returned to Jesus, thanking him and glorifying God with a loud voice. (Luke 17:16-19) Still another time, at Jacob's fountain, Jesus spoke extendedly to a Samaritan woman and thereafter spent two days in the Samaritan city of Sychar to declare God's truth. As a result many became believers. (John 4:5-42) Furthermore, Jesus' illustration about the neighborly Samaritan made it clear that an uncompassionate view of Samaritans was wrong.—Luke 10:30-37.

It was doubtless because the Samaritans were far more closely related to the Jews racially and religiously that the opportunity for them to become disciples of Jesus Christ was extended even before it opened up to uncircumcised Gentiles. Many Samaritans became believers and, as disciples of Jesus Christ, enjoyed an equal standing with Jewish believers. (Acts 8:1-17, 25; 9:31) After this, Peter first declared the "good news" to the Gentile Cornelius and his household.—Acts 10:25-48.

True Christianity indeed brought unity to peoples who had long been estranged and divided. It was just as the apostle Peter told Cornelius and his household: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) Therefore, in the early Christian congregation, Jews and Samaritans and Gentiles, having rejected false ideas and unfounded prejudices, enjoyed companionship as brothers and sisters. Barriers that had existed for centuries were eradicated from their midst.

True worship today also unites people of all races and nationalities. Evidence of this can be seen among Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

Anointing to a Heavenly Hope

—HOW IS IT MANIFEST?

WRITING to the congregation of anointed Christians in Corinth, the apostle Paul said that God has “put his seal upon us and has given us the token of what is to come, that is, the spirit, in our hearts.”—2 Cor. 1:21, 22.

How do those who have been anointed by God to be his heavenly sons and who receive the sealing of the spirit manifest this? Is it possible for someone to think that he or she is thus anointed and yet be mistaken?

There is an evident need for Scriptural understanding of these points. For example, in a few congregations in one large country of Africa, certain persons attending the celebration of the Lord's Evening Meal partook for the first time and were seen to shake visibly or to make other unusual movements while partaking. Is this in harmony with the Scriptures as to the way God's spirit acts toward those anointed? Is it evidence of his spirit in the hearts of such ones, giving them a “token” or foretaste of the heavenly sonship to which they are called?

The answer to these questions must be No. Such strange conduct is instead characteristic of certain religious sects that encourage giving way to unrestrained actions, or of ritual dances of certain tribes that encourage emotional excitement.

The Bible nowhere indicates that—either at the time of God's anointing of someone as called to the heavenly kingdom or after such anointing—the action of God's spirit produces conduct of an abnormal, showy or undignified nature. On the day of Pentecost it is true that Jehovah God caused miraculous things to occur, such as the “noise just like that of a rushing stiff breeze” that filled the house where the disciples were, and the “tongues as if of fire” that sat upon those anointed by holy spirit. These miraculous features provided by God himself served to draw many people there so that a mighty witness could be given and also to give powerful evidence that God's favor had passed from fleshly Israel under the Law covenant to spiritual Israel under the new covenant. The disciples were able to speak in the different languages of those drawn there, a gift also miraculously given. But there is nothing to indicate that the disciples acted in a highly emotional way or with any undignified behavior. The accusation made by some of the observers that the disciples were drunk was not because of any shaking action by the disciples but, as the account shows, it was because such observers heard these Jewish disciples speaking in foreign languages. The address there given by the apostle

Peter was a very sober, sensible, logical presentation, not one of emotionalism.—Acts 2:1-36.

After this initial outpouring of the spirit at Pentecost, the Bible does not indicate that the 'noise like a rushing breeze' or the "tongues as if of fire" were ever repeated in the cases of others thereafter anointed. Even the gifts of the spirit, such as the miraculous ability to speak in foreign languages, were due to end and did end with the death of the apostles and of those to whom they had imparted such gifts.—Acts 8:14-18; 19:2-6; 1 Cor. 13:8-12.

RECEIVING A TRUE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP

How, then, does God's holy spirit operate toward those whom he anoints? Romans 8:15-17 tells us, saying: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out: 'Abba, Father!' The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. If, then, we are children, we are also heirs: heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together."

Similarly, at Galatians 4:6, 7, we read: "Now because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts and it cries out: 'Abba, Father!' So, then, you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, also an heir through God."

Therefore the principal evidence one anointed to the heavenly calling has is this spirit or dominant sense of sonship, that is, of having been begotten by God to spiritual sonship as one of the 144,000 heirs of the heavenly kingdom. One genuinely begotten can testify in all good conscience that the heavenly hopes produced in him are not born of his own desires or imaginations but are from Jehovah

God, the result of His spirit's action toward such a one. (1 Pet. 1:3, 4; Rev. 14:1-3) This is at once an awesome privilege and a grave responsibility—becoming the spiritual son of the Universal Sovereign whose 'name is majestic' and of whom it is written, "Dignity and splendor are before him." (Ps. 8:1; 96:6) Certainly for those honored with such call to be his sons, conduct should be expected that would be fittingly representative of this dignified Father, upholding his reputation. They should surely manifest the fruitage of God's spirit, which includes "self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23; 1 Cor. 14:33) Those anointed have as their model God's Chief Son, Christ Jesus, and should also reflect his spirit or dominant expression of himself. To give in to practices that smack of fleshly tribal customs or of religious sects that encourage uncontrolled emotionalism would not give evidence of genuine spiritual sonship. As the inspired apostle states:

"However, you are in harmony, not with the flesh, but with the spirit, if God's spirit truly dwells in you. But if anyone does not have Christ's spirit, this one does not belong to him."—Rom. 8:9.

At the annual celebration of the Memorial of Christ's death, then, the conduct of one who is truly of the anointed joint heirs of Christ should be above reproach or question. The apostle Paul had to reprove certain ones in the Corinthian congregation because their conduct at the Lord's Evening Meal was 'unworthy' of the occasion. Some were treating the Memorial emblems as mere food and drink for satisfying hunger and thirst, or, before the occasion they might have used wine to the point of intoxication. Such unworthy conduct showed failure to discern what was represented by the emblems—namely, the blood and body of Christ Jesus that had been offered as a ransom sacrifice. Such disrespectful conduct could

bring a judgment upon those engaging in it. It could bring disciplining action from Jehovah.—1 Cor. 11:20-32.

So, no true Christian would want to take lightly the occasion of the Lord's Evening Meal, either in the ways described by the apostle or in other ways, such as by making a display of himself. The minds of all present should be focused on the vital meaning and significance of the occasion, not on the strange actions of certain individuals. Actions serving to draw attention to the individual would cast a shadow of uncertainty on such a one's claim to be of God's anointed. It would be an indication that he did "not have Christ's spirit."

REASONS FOR WRONG ASSUMPTIONS BY SOME

What might cause some to assume mistakenly that they are of the anointed ones who should partake of the Memorial emblems? The apostle John said to his fellow anointed Christians: "You have an anointing from the holy one; all of you have knowledge." (1 John 2:20) Lack of knowledge could be responsible for someone's assuming wrongly that he or she was thus anointed. One may fail to realize that, as with other favors of God, receiving such anointing "depends, not upon the one wishing nor upon the one running, but upon God." (Rom. 9:8, 16; Jas. 1:18) So it is not because an individual decides that he or she would like to be of those who will serve as heavenly kings and priests, being taken into the new covenant validated by Christ's shed blood, which blood is symbolized by the wine used at the Memorial. It is God's choice, not the individual's that counts.—Matt. 26:27, 28.

There is no room for presumption, any more than there was when Jehovah God selected those who would serve as priests for him in ancient Israel under the Law covenant. (Compare 2 Chronicles 26:18;

Hebrews 5:4, 5.) Korah presumptuously sought the priesthood that Jehovah God had placed in the family of Aaron, and for his rebellious course Korah was executed by God. (Ex. 28:1; Num. 16:4-11) Somewhat similarly, it would certainly be displeasing to God if someone presented himself as called to form part of the heavenly "kingdom of priests" if God had not actually given him such a call. We cannot trifle with Jehovah's arrangements and still expect to receive his approval. In due time he makes known his judgment.—1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Tim. 5:24, 25.

A possible cause of a person's mistakenly assuming that he or she had such heavenly calling might be strong emotional pressure owing to severe problems in life—marital problems, perhaps even divorce or the death of a mate, or some other tragedy or great disappointment. These things can cause one to lose interest in life as it is now lived on earth, in effect causing one to become "sour" on such life. If this happens, the person might be moved to feel that life in heaven is what he or she wants. But this is not God's way of calling persons and giving them the 'spirit of sonship.' Such ones should realize that Jehovah God will soon transform life on this earth under his Son's kingdom and will see to it that "the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." So, even though "all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now," this will not go on forever. It would show a lack of appreciation for God's purpose regarding the earth to view life on it as no longer desirable and—on that basis—entertain hopes of life in heaven.—Rom. 8:20-22.

EXAMINING VALIDITY OF ONE'S HOPES

We can therefore examine ourselves in the light of these points. Has one perhaps

been influenced by others to entertain the idea of such heavenly calling? This would not be proper, for God has not assigned persons to "recruit" others through suggestive influence, thus trying to instill in others a hope that God himself has not placed there. Has one, as is the case with many young persons today, had experience with drugs before learning the truth of God's Word? An introverted tendency toward fantasy or dreaminess or abstract thinking is no sign of anointing by God, nor even of true spirituality. Nor does God employ methods that cause persons to think they hear voices, at times accompanied by music, or similar messages, to convey his anointing of Christian heirs to the Kingdom, though some in recent years have allowed such things to cause them to think they had received a heavenly call.

Finally, one may ask oneself in all honesty, Do I have a tendency toward desiring attention or prominence? Am I anxious for a position of authority, or ambitious to be one of the "kings and priests" associated with Christ Jesus? It is good to remember that in the first century when a general invitation was going out to seek entrance into the heavenly kingdom, not all the anointed Christians held positions of responsibility, not all were elders or ministerial servants of congregations. Nor does such anointing of itself bring exceptional understanding of God's Word, as can be seen by the way the apostle Paul found it necessary to write certain anointed Christians in his day. (1 Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-14) It is noteworthy also of persons today who have long years of service as anointed Christians that they do not view themselves as distinctive or make it a habit to draw attention to their being anointed. They manifest the humility that is to be expected of those who "have Christ's spirit." They recognize that the vast majority of requirements that God has set

for those gaining life in heaven and those gaining eternal life on earth are the same.

As discussed in the book *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God*, pages 147 to 151, evidence indicates that by 1934 God's attention turned to developing the "great crowd" of persons who will survive the coming "great tribulation" to enter into an earthly New Order and that by that time the number of those called to the heavenly kingdom had reached its full number of 144,000. (Rev. 7:9-14; 14:1-3) Hence, it would be expected that thenceforth only as a result of an anointed one's proving unfaithful would there be occasion for another person to be called as a replacement. (Compare Revelation 3:11.) And, as shown in the November 15, 1974, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 698 to 700, Jesus' statement that "there are many invited, but few chosen" does not indicate that the majority of those who are anointed would prove unfaithful and have to be replaced. The "many" Jesus referred to were the millions of persons forming the Jewish nation to whom God's "invitation" first went and from among whom only a few, comparatively speaking, were chosen as joint heirs with Christ.—Matt. 22:14.

All of us, then, whether having an earthly or a heavenly hope, should be on guard against any presumptuousness on our part and should seek in all ways and at all times to reflect with dignity the ways and qualities of our heavenly Father. We will realize that, as regards being anointed to the heavenly calling, the important thing is not the simple act of partaking of emblems of bread and wine by an individual, but, instead, the important thing is God's action and decision. So, too, it is not an individual's claim that is most important but his having "Christ's spirit" as an anointed son and, in the face of tests, finally conquering so as to become a spirit son of God.—Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:11, 21; 21:7.

THE WAGES

OF

DISLOYALTY

THERE is no place in any arrangement of God or man for a disloyal person. This is especially true of those placed in positions of responsibility. "What is looked for in stewards is for a man to be found faithful," the Bible says.—1 Cor. 4:2.

When Jesus Christ was on earth twelve men had the unparalleled opportunity to be his close associates—to learn directly from him and to be his most responsible disciples. One of them, however, lost appreciation and turned disloyal, causing great trouble for Jesus and the eleven faithful apostles. Judas Iscariot's disloyalty forfeited for him the marvelous prize of heavenly life as an associate king and an underpriest of Christ. He was dismissed from Jesus' intimate group before Jesus instituted the Memorial meal and he missed out on Christ's promise to the faithful eleven that "you are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; and I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom."—Luke 22:28, 29; 13:22-30.

What were the wages of Judas' disloyalty? On one side of the "ledger," a mere thirty pieces of silver (the price of a slave if killed by a man's bull)—on the other side, God's disfavor and death. (Ex. 21:32) Even Jesus' enemies, with whom Judas collaborated, despised this traitor. Af-

ter Jesus was condemned by the Jewish high court, Judas suffered terrible mental anguish, to the point that he threw the betrayal money away and went out and hanged himself. This was not in true repentance, but because he saw that he had lost out on everything. Jesus called him "the son of destruction."—John 17:12; Matt. 27:3-10.

EACH ONE MUST WATCH HIMSELF

Shortly after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven he formed the Christian congregation, on Pentecost day of the year 33 C.E. There the "faithful and discreet slave" class, with Jesus' apostles taking the lead, began to feed the individuals in God's newly formed 'household of faith' with spiritual food. (Acts 2:1, 14, 46, 47) This "slave" class, the spirit-anointed Christian congregation, would remain loyal right down to the time of Christ's coming to destroy the present wicked system of things.—Matt. 28:18-20.

Nevertheless, Jesus gave a warning to them with respect to loyalty. Why? Well, as a *class*, God's congregation would remain faithful. The Bible shows that the foreordained *number* of 144,000 would be completed. That number would eventually be "sealed" as faithful. (Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5) Thus 'all [spiritual] Israel [or, the Israel of God] would be saved.' (Rom. 11:

26; compare Galatians 6:16.) But as to *individuals* who would make up that body, or that "slave" class, each one was to be tried, tested and required to prove his integrity and loyalty. "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved," Jesus said.—Matt. 24:13; Jas. 1:3; Rev. 14:12.

Accordingly, after speaking of the "faithful and discreet slave" that would be loyal till his coming, Jesus went on to say: "But if that evil slave should say in his heart, 'My master is delaying,' and should start to beat his fellow slaves and should eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards [literally, the (ones) getting drunk], the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know, and will punish him with the greatest severity [literally, he will cut asunder him] and will assign him his part with the hypocrites."—Matt. 24:48-51; Luke 12:45, 46, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

We note that Jesus did not say that the "faithful and discreet slave" would turn disloyal. But, as to the individual members of that "slave" class, Jesus merely indicated the possibility that not all would be loyal, just as one of the twelve, Judas, after a right start, had turned out bad. Jehovah God will have only loyal, tested ones as inheritors of the Kingdom. (2 Pet. 1:10, 11) Jesus therefore warned each one of his spirit-begotten, anointed followers to watch himself. He said to all his disciples: "Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:36.

THE ACTIONS OF AN "EVIL SLAVE" AND HIS REWARD

Consequently, each individual had to keep a close watch, not becoming self-

assured, negligent or sleepy. The apostle Paul counseled: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." (1 Cor. 10:12) Certainly the time was past for getting drunk, either on literal wine, or in a spiritual way with the religious drunkards.—Isa. 29:9; 1 Pet. 4:3.

Jesus described, at Matthew 24:48-51, how the individual who becomes unfaithful would think, speak and act. Some of those who were once members of the "slave" class would lose their joy of anticipation and would tire of waiting for the Master's coming. They would become self-seeking. Those taking such a course would become friends of the world, hence enemies of God. (Jas. 4:4) They would start to 'beat their fellow slaves' in a verbal way, opposing them and their work of proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. In these "last days" there are some of such who constitute a class that, according to their conduct, do not recognize the invisible presence of Christ and do not discern and acknowledge that the time is at hand for his coming to destroy the world system of things.

This 'beating their fellow slaves' in a verbal way would be because they wanted to dominate or exercise power over others. They desired a high position so that they would be looked up to. But they could not achieve their ambition. Christ would not let any such disloyal ones have domination over or break up his congregation and stop the work it is doing. Instead, on inspection, Christ would "cut asunder" such ones, cutting such individuals off from the "faithful and discreet slave" class.

Though Christ described the conduct that would characterize disloyal ones, he certainly did not foreordain them to be such. They take the course of disloyalty according to their own free will and desires. They are similar to the "wicked and

sluggish slave" of the parable of the talents. (Matt. 25:24-30) They are disloyal, unfaithful 'stewards' and therefore cannot remain in Christ's 'household staff' of "domestics." (Matt. 24:45) The Christianity of such ones turns out to be hypocritical and they belong with the religious hypocrites of Christendom. In fact, some of them actually have returned to belief in the false doctrines of Christendom, such as the Trinity, immortality of the human soul and literal torment in an everlasting 'hellfire.' Some have allied themselves with Christendom's churches and their efforts to oppose Jehovah's witnesses in preaching the good news.

Among the hypocrites of Christendom these disloyal ones find no real spiritual pleasure and they must share the experiences of those hypocrites. As for such an evil "slave," "there is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be," Jesus said. (Matt. 24:51) Their expressions are not those of true repentance, but are those of vexation and disappointment, a "sadness of the world" that "produces death." (2 Cor. 7:10) They have no desire to associate or work with the "faithful and discreet slave" in true service to the Master.

A TIME OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO ALL

Since Christ says that he will execute judgment, which 'begins at the house of God,' it is vital for everyone taking a stand alongside the "faithful and discreet slave" class to watch himself. (1 Pet. 4:17) He should constantly examine himself as to his own loyalty. He knows that faithfulness from the heart is required. In these days it is possible to fall prey to "the sin that easily entangles us"—the loss of faith. (Heb. 12:1) There is all the more danger of doing so now because the Devil knows that he has but a short time and is waging

strenuous warfare against God's spirit-begotten, anointed ones on earth as well as any who associate and cooperate with them in preaching the good news of the Kingdom.—Rev. 12:12, 17; compare 1 Peter 5:8.

Seeing clearly the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy concerning our time—recognizing the "sign" proving we are living in the "conclusion of the system of things," we need to 'lift our heads up because our deliverance is getting near.' Also, we must give earnest attention to ourselves and the lives we live. While Jesus was talking for the benefit of his disciples with him right then, he also said: "What I say to you I say to all, Keep on the watch."—Mark 13:37; Luke 21:28.

The situation, therefore, is a serious one for all. The apostle Peter summed up our position when he said: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah, through which the heavens being on fire will be dissolved and the elements being intensely hot will melt! But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell. Hence, beloved ones, since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace."—2 Pet. 3:11-14.

Consequently, while there are many temptations and even difficult tests, the wages to the loyal one are God's favor, happiness, peace and everlasting life. On the other hand, disloyalty may give some satisfaction to fleshly desires for a short time, but it soon ends up paying only unhappiness, disgrace and death.

Insight on the News

● In the Sunday services of many large churches today, choir singing is a major feature. Marching up the aisle in white robes, choir members are generally the picture of piety and reverence, singing with religious fervor. But it is quite possible that they do not belong to the church where they sing or, for that matter, even believe in God. Why, then, are they there singing?

Today's Church Choirs

An article in the New York "Sunday News" shows that the choir members in most of that city's big churches sing for money. This is nothing new. Manhattan churches have been paying choir members since the 1920's. But they were generally members of the church. Today, as the article states, "religious affiliation has absolutely no importance. . . . In any one choir you're likely to find atheists, agnostics, Catholics, Jews, Protestants and even Zen Buddhists. You could easily see the same singer at synagogue on Saturday, Episcopal services Sunday morning and a Catholic wedding on Sunday afternoon."

● Down in the Negev desert, near the town of Eilat on the Gulf of 'Aqaba, a British-backed archaeological team has located what they call the 'oldest underground copper mines ever found.' Described as 'enormous and sophisticated,' the mines are believed to date from about 1400 B.C.E. They had air shafts allowing miners to work several hundred feet below the surface. According to the "Sunday Times" of London, analysis of slag samples, made by a Chessington, Surrey, laboratory, showed that the "smelting method then used in Israel was every bit as efficient as present-day techniques in separating copper from ore." It says the discovery calls for rewriting "the entire pre-history of metal technology."

Such discoveries may surprise archaeologists, but the Bible shows that, even before the global flood of Noah's day, men were making tools of copper and iron.—Gen. 4:22.

Ancient Mines Found

● The Roman Catholic Church finally has an American-born "saint," known as "Mother Seton." The official canonization is to take place September 14 in St. Peter's Basilica when, according to priest Francis X. Murphy, "the pope declares infallibly that Mrs. Seton lived a heroically holy life and is actually in heaven."

After 92 Years, a "Saint"

It was ninety-two years ago that Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore first advocated sainthood for "Mother Seton." Why has the matter taken so long? Priest Murphy says that the process is "long, difficult, and replete with political and financial as well as religious considerations. . . . Immediately behind the decision to canonize Mother Seton is the culmination of a number of pressures, not the least of which is the desire of the Sisters of Charity in the United States to have an officially acknowledged saint as their foundress. There is likewise the ambition of the archbishops of New York [where Mrs. Seton was born] and Baltimore [where she served as a "Mother Superior"] . . . to have 'one of their own' raised to veneration on the church's altars." As to the costliness, he says that "investigatory teams, advocates, translators, judges, and consultants have to be paid," and there is the cost of exhuming the body for "identification and relics."—"The National Observer," Dec. 21, 1974.

The "New Catholic Encyclopedia" says that those reaching the required "stage of heroic virtue" and canonized as saints are "constituted as intercessors with God for the living and for souls in purgatory," and hence prayers are to be directed to them.

Very different from all of this, the Bible clearly shows that all anointed Christians were addressed as "holy ones" or "saints" right while they were alive. (See 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1, and Colossians 1:1, 2 in such Catholic translations as the "Douay Version" or the modern "Jerusalem Bible.") No political or financial pressure was involved. As for intercession, 1 Timothy 2:5 says: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus." And Jesus himself said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."—John 14:6, 14.

Getting to **KNOW GOD**

"You have come to know God, or rather ...you have come to be known by God."

—Gal. 4:9.

MANY persons know about God. They may live in communities where most citizens claim to believe that he exists. But does this mean that they really know God? Well, there is a difference in knowing about the ruler of the country where one lives and in having a personal acquaintance with him. So, too, with knowing God. People who really know God enjoy an actual relationship with him.

² Of course, some persons have no interest in learning anything about God. They do not even believe that he exists. Why? They may be appalled at the hypocrisy carried on by many who claim to believe in him. They may point to the terrible atrocities and wanton bloodshed some have carried on in the name of God and religion. But is it reasonable to deny God's existence on the basis of what men have done? Would it not be like saying that the ruler of a certain country does not exist because persons falsely claiming to be his loyal subjects have misrepresented him? Would it be reasonable to let other people's misrepresentations block the development of a relationship that could contribute to one's lasting happiness and welfare?

³ Still others simply do not want to be

accountable to God. They want to set their own standards for living. They may invent arguments in an effort to show that God does not exist. Their arguments often amount to no more than self-deception, as the well-known author Aldous Huxley once confessed: "I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning, consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption." But a person's preferring to believe that God does not exist so as to lead a "free" life obviously does not cause God to disappear. He remains, he is.

⁴ Reasoning on the subject, most persons are moved to admit that there really must be a God. The awesome universe, its beauty and order, the abundance and variety of plant and animal life, man himself—all point to the existence of a masterful Designer, a Creator of life and matter. Based on what they can see, millions of thinking persons throughout the world have also come to appreciate certain qualities of God. They agree with the inspired apostle Paul: "[God's] invisible qualities are clearly . . .

1. Is there a difference between knowing God and knowing about him?

2, 3. Why do some persons not believe that God exists?

4. What evidence has convinced most persons that there must be a God?

perceived by the things made.”—Rom. 1:20; Acts 14:16, 17.

⁵ Man’s faculty of conscience is but one example of this truth. The Bible shows that this faculty, this inward realization or sense of right and wrong, gives evidence of a ‘law written in the heart.’ (Rom. 2:14, 15) Obviously humankind did not get such “law” from the brute animals, as its workings are not in evidence among them. The existence of this internal “law” proves that there must be an intelligent lawmaker—God. Moreover, this faculty reveals the Creator’s wisdom and great concern and love for man. Man’s conscience has served to deter acts that threaten the life, welfare and security of humankind. The faculty of conscience normally condemns the same wrongs at all times and places. Even without any written ‘law code,’ men throughout history have recognized that such things as murder, theft, adultery and sex perversion are wrong. This innate knowledge has given a measure of stability to human society, especially to the family arrangement. (Gen. 34:7; 39:9; Job chapter 31; 2 Pet. 2:6, 7) Truly the faculty of conscience is the gift of an all-wise and loving God.

HOW TO GET TO KNOW GOD

⁶ But how can we really come to know the invisible God who has revealed himself through his creative works? The first step in this respect is to recognize that he is a person. Only with a person can one enter into an intimate acquaintance or solid relationship. (Heb. 11:6) Often those claiming to believe in a supreme God fail to recognize him as a person. Biographer R. W. Clark asserts of one famous scientist: “Einstein’s God appears as the physical world itself.” But, then, does not the phys-

ical world reveal order? And is not order a sign of intelligence? Is not intelligence always associated with personality, with a person? So the one responsible for the order in the universe, God, must be a person.

⁷ Reason and observation definitely reveal not only that God is but that he is indeed a person, and that he has admirable qualities. But more than reason based on observation of the physical universe is needed for one to come to know God, enjoying a relationship with him. Why? Because our reasoning on the things we see still leaves many questions about him unanswered. Reason, for instance, may tell us there is a God. But will it tell us why there is wickedness in the world? Reason might imply that a God who is good would not forever tolerate wickedness. But does it tell us when we could expect such conditions to end?

⁸ So, then, what else is needed? *Revelation* from God himself. An ancient proverb says: “Where there is no vision [or, revelation] the people go unrestrained.” (Prov. 29:18) Yes, without the guidance of divine revelation, many people are inclined to be unbridled in their conduct, especially if they think they can ‘get away with it.’ (Eccl. 8:11) Their imperfect conscience is not enough to restrain them. For our guidance, God has therefore provided revelation in his written Word, the Bible. It reveals to us that his name is Jehovah and relates his dealings, purposes, feelings and attitudes in such a way that we can really get to know him. (Ps. 83:18) The Bible does not leave us in doubt as to what God approves or disapproves.

⁹ But why can we say that the Bible is from God? Because it contains information that simply could not originate with men.

5. (a) How does the faculty of conscience prove that God exists? (b) What does man’s having the faculty of conscience reveal about God?

6. Why is recognizing God as a person basic to our getting to know him?

7. Creation and reason leave what questions unanswered?

8. What does man need to get in order to know God personally?

9. Why can we say that the Bible is from God?

Humans cannot predict with unerring accuracy what will happen just a few months from today. The Bible, however, contains many prophecies written long in advance, which have been accurately fulfilled or are in the course of fulfillment. Though written during a period of over sixteen centuries, the Bible is not a book filled with conflicting and shifting philosophies, as would be expected from a work originating with men. Its inner harmony clearly points to a divine origin. The laws and principles the Bible contains are unmatched by anything men have originated as a guide for living. What the Bible says by way of legislation appeals to a good conscience and even assists it in making right decisions. At the same time the Bible reveals the high standards of the Lawmaker, God. Let us consider how one particular part of the Bible, the Law given through the mediator Moses (found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) helps us to know God as a just and merciful Lawmaker. We might do this by comparing that Law with human efforts in making and enforcing laws.

LEARNING ABOUT GOD'S MERCY

¹⁰ The laws of virtually every nation condemn social evils like theft. But when someone does steal—then what? How should the thief be dealt with? For centuries men have grappled, for the most part unsuccessfully, with problems like this. Imperfect human conscience of itself does

10, 11. (a) How have men tried to cope with social evils like theft? (b) How does what the Mosale law says about theft reveal God to be merciful?



A thief who stole a bull and sold it had to compensate with five bulls



not fully reveal the answer. In ancient Babylon, the Code of Hammurabi was harsh, commanding, for instance, that a thief caught at a fire should be thrown into the fire. A burglar was to be hanged publicly opposite the breach he made when breaking into the house. Today men and women convicted of theft are usually placed in prisons where, more often than not, they become hardened criminals. Meanwhile, the poor victims must live with their losses.

¹¹ How did God reveal that cases of theft should be handled in the ancient nation of Israel? In a merciful, yet just, manner.

We read at Exodus 22:1-4:

"In case a man should steal a bull or a sheep and he does slaughter it or sell it, he is to *compensate* with five of the herd for the bull and four of the flock for the sheep. . .

He is to make compensation

without fail . . . If there should be unmistakably found in his hand what was stolen, from bull

to ass and to sheep, alive, he is to make double compensa-

tion." Thus, the thief was punished by having to replace what he had stolen, with an added penalty. This served to impress upon him the full effects of his wrong. Then, too, he was required to make certain sacrifices, acknowledging thereby that he had also sinned against God. (Lev. 6:2-7) As for the victim, he had his loss restored. The added penalty imposed on the thief benefited the victim, amply compensating him for the lost use of his property and any problems resulting therefrom.

¹² But what if the thief was poor and could not make such restitution? He was

12. Suppose a thief was unable to make compensation for his theft—then what?

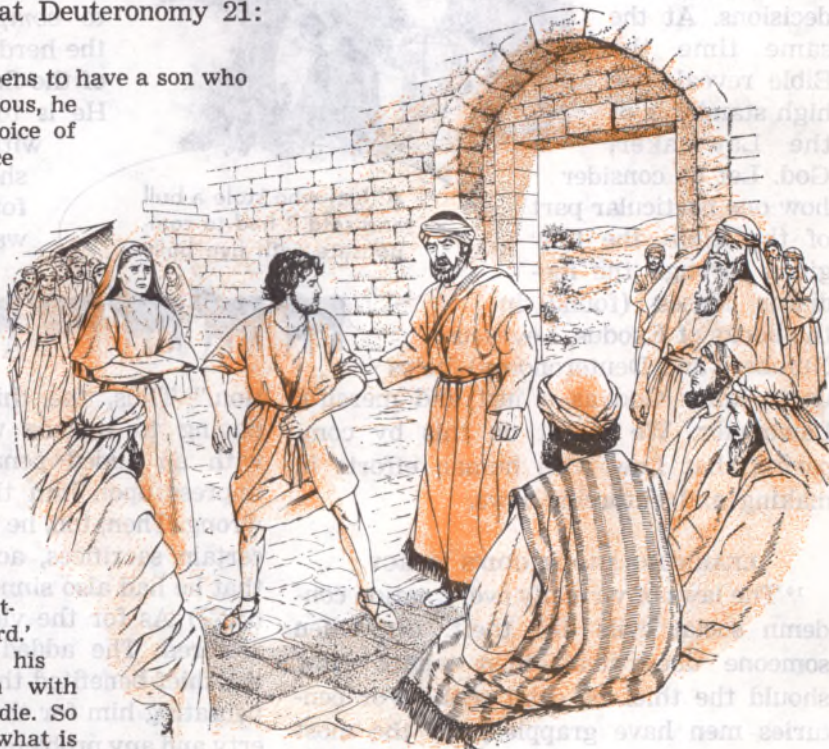
to be sold to work as a slave or bond servant and thus pay off his debt. (Ex. 22:3) Who can deny that such an arrangement was both just and merciful? The victim did not suffer permanent loss. The thief was not killed; his life was not equated with mere property that he had stolen. Nor was his spirit broken nor his energy sapped by imprisonment. His temporary period of bondage permitted him to rectify the wrong. Surely such a wise and merciful way of handling the matter was from God.

THE LAW REVEALS GOD'S JUSTICE

¹³ From the Law we also get to know that God's mercy has limits. Does this mean that the penalties of the Law were at times merciless, cruel? What about the following statement at Deuteronomy 21:18-21?

"In case a man happens to have a son who is stubborn and rebellious, he not listening to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and they have corrected him but he will not listen to them, his father and his mother must also take hold of him and bring him out to the older men of his city and to the gate of his place, and they must say to the older men of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he is not listening to our voice, being a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his city must pelt him with stones, and he must die. So you must clear away what is bad from your midst, and all

Israel will hear and indeed become afraid." Is this, as some say, an example of extreme cruelty toward children? By no means! Actually, this account clearly shows God's justice in dealing with those who were incorrigibly wicked and refused to respond to merciful treatment. The "son" in this case was not a young child but was old enough to be a "glutton and a drunkard." Further, his parents had repeatedly warned him, but he would "not listen to them." And, very importantly, notice that the son was not put to death until he was brought to trial before "the older men of his city." This just standard is in stark contrast with what has been practiced in some patriarchal societies. Discussing certain desert



13. (a) What charge is sometimes leveled against the account at Deuteronomy 21:18-21? (b) How, in reality, does it demonstrate God's justice?

God's law to Israel showed that his mercy has limits. A rebellious son who refused to heed the merciful correction of his parents was brought before "the older men of the city" for trial

tribes in the Middle East, Raphael Patai says:

"In fact, the patriarch's absolute power over life and death of the members of his family included the right to decide at the time a child was born to him whether to let it live or to condemn it to die. We know from historical documents . . . from pre-Islamic times down to the nineteenth century that often a father decided to put to death a daughter either immediately upon her birth or at a later date. The usual method of putting a newborn daughter to death was to bury her alive in the sands of the desert."

—*Family, Love and the Bible*, p. 122.

So, among many peoples, family members had no opportunity for getting just treatment when the patriarchal head arbitrarily decided against them. By requiring a trial before the 'older men of the city,' the Law, however, protected even an accused family member, permitting him to have a fair hearing. This reveals, not a harsh God, but One of genuine justice. How perfectly his Law balanced mercy and justice!

GETTING TO KNOW GOD THROUGH HIS SON

¹⁴ As from the Law, so from the rest of the Bible, we can really come to know and appreciate God's admirable qualities, especially as revealed through his Son Jesus Christ. For countless thousands of years before coming to earth, the Son resided with his Father in the heavens. (John 17:5; Col. 1:13-17) So close was their relationship and so completely in harmony were they that the Son could say: "He that has seen me has seen the Father also." (John 14:9; 1:18) During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ stressed the principles underlying the Mosaic law and the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. He lived by those principles and revealed the real spirit of the Law. Through him, God's admirable qualities can be better appreciated.—Compare, for instance, Matthew 5:21-48; 19:3-9; 23:23.

14. How does the life of Jesus help us to get to know God?

¹⁵ Getting to know God, then, involves knowing both him and his Son. Jesus Christ pointed this out when saying in prayer to his Father: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of [or, "knowing," *An American Translation*] you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Such "knowing" of God and his Son is not just head knowledge, acquired information. It actually means to recognize the authority of God and his Son and to submit to it. By way of illustration, a worker might have a specific job assignment from his manager. However, were he to receive a conflicting assignment from a lesser supervisor, he might say to such one, 'I know no other manager.' In saying that he would not mean he did not know the lesser supervisor existed or that he did not know him as a person. Nevertheless, he "knows" or recognizes no *manager* other than the one under whom he works as having authority over him.

¹⁶ Similarly, a person may acknowledge that Jesus Christ exists and that he is the Son of God who sacrificed his life for the world of mankind. But that is not the full extent of "knowing" the Son of God. According to Jesus' own words, he has been given "authority over all flesh." (John 17:2) So the person who really knows Jesus Christ as having such authority shows this by *obeying* his commands. (John 14:15; 15:10) As the apostle John called to the attention of fellow believers: "By this we have the knowledge that we have come to know him, namely, if we continue observing his commandments. He that says: 'I have come to know him,' and yet is not observing his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this person." (1 John 2:3, 4) Since Jesus' commands actually

15, 16. (a) What did Jesus mean when he said one should 'take in knowledge' of or 'know' the Father and the Son? Illustrate. (b) Why is acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Lord who died for us not all there is to "knowing" him?

originated with his Father, knowing or recognizing the Son as one deserving of obedience also means knowing or recognizing the Father as being one deserving of full submission.—John 7:16-18; 14:10.

BEING KNOWN BY GOD AND CHRIST

¹⁷ By coming to know God as a person and recognizing his authority, we also come to be known by him. That was the case with the faithful man Abraham. Jehovah God said that he 'knew' Abraham, not meaning that he was merely aware of Abraham's existence but that he had become well acquainted with him. The Almighty had observed Abraham's obedience and interest in true worship for many years and, as a result, came to know him as a man of faith who would instruct his offspring correctly. (Gen. 18:19; 22:12) Furthermore, God knew or recognized Abraham as his approved servant, his friend.—Jas. 2:23.

¹⁸ Gaining God's recognition as Abraham did is not based on mere factual knowledge of the Bible. There are people who can answer questions about the Bible and, in some cases, even know it in its original languages. They may also acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Lord who died for them. But if they are not proving themselves to be obedient servants, neither Jehovah God nor Jesus Christ will recognize such persons as belonging to them. (2 Tim. 2:19; Titus 1:16) Jesus Christ gave this warning: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?'"

17. How does the case of Abraham show what is meant by being known by God?

18, 19. What shows that factual knowledge of the Bible and acknowledging Jesus Christ as the one who died for the sins of mankind are not enough for one to be recognized as an approved servant of God and Christ?

And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matt. 7:21-23.

¹⁹ Obviously Jesus Christ would have to be *acquainted* with these persons whom he rejects. Otherwise he could not speak of them as "workers of lawlessness." However, he does not know or *recognize* them as having any approved relationship with him; he does not know them as his authorized representatives. It is vital for us, therefore, to make sure that we are conducting ourselves in a way that is in harmony with God's personality, ways and dealings so as to be recognized as approved by him and by his Son. (Gal. 4:9) Only if that is the case can we hope to escape the destruction of all who disregard the commands of Jehovah God and Christ Jesus, refusing to know or recognize their authority.—2 Thess. 1:6-9.

²⁰ One who is known or recognized by God enjoys a personal relationship with his Creator. In his own life, he experiences God's direction and help. When a serious situation comes up in life, one requiring a major decision, the person who really knows Jehovah as the all-wise, all-powerful God will not lean on his own understanding. (Prov. 3:5, 6) He will approach Jehovah God in prayer, asking for his help and guidance. By means of his spirit, Jehovah will bring back to the person's mind appropriate principles from his Word and aid him to make the correct application. (Compare John 14:26.) Whatever the trialsome circumstances or problems may be, the individual will time and again find the following words of the disciple James to apply in his case: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him."—Jas. 1:5.

20. If a person is known by God, what evidence can he point to that his relationship is a personal one?

²¹ As we continue to act in harmony with godly wisdom as revealed to us in God's Word and in answer to our prayers, what will result? By means of his spirit, Jehovah God will continue to help us to make advancement in developing a godly personality. The "force" or driving element that is 'actuating our minds' will move us to conform ever closer to God's righteous standards. (Eph. 4:20-24) God's commands

21. What results from knowing God and continuing to follow a course that he approves?

will not just be words printed in a book. Rather, they will be a part of our very being, impressed upon our mind and heart. We will know what they mean and appreciate their exceedingly high value from having experienced the benefits that come from obeying them. (Ps. 119:1-16, 74-77, 164-168) We will, as the apostle Paul states, be able to 'prove to ourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'—Rom. 12:2.

How You Benefit FROM **PURSUING GODLY DEVOTION**

"To be sure, it is a means of great gain, this godly devotion along with self-sufficiency."—1 Tim. 6:6.

ONLY those who accurately know God, and act in harmony with what they know, are in position to worship him in the proper way. They alone may be said to follow a course of "godly devotion" or reverentialness. Pursuing this course results in lasting gain. "To be sure," wrote the apostle Paul to the young Christian overseer Timothy, "it is a means of great gain, this godly devotion along with self-sufficiency." (1 Tim. 6:6) "Godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Tim. 4:8) Notice that Paul says that godly devotion brings, not just future reward, but "great gain" and 'benefits' *now*.

1. Who alone pursue a course of godly devotion, and what comes to them?

² Just what is "godly devotion" or reverentialness? No better answer can there be to this question than the example of one who maintained godly devotion perfectly. The Bible points to one man as that example. At 1 Timothy 3:16 we read: "Indeed, the sacred secret of this godly devotion [literally, this revering well] is admittedly great: 'He was made manifest in flesh, was declared righteous in spirit, appeared to angels, was preached about among nations, was believed upon in the world, was received up in glory.'" Who was this one, and how was this sacred secret worked out in connection with him?

³ About six thousand years ago the ques-

2. What does 1 Timothy 3:16 call to our attention regarding godly devotion?

3. (a) What question arose respecting godly devotion about six thousand years ago, and why? (b) In what sense was the answer to that question a "sacred secret"?

tion arose, What man can maintain godly devotion perfectly? Occasioning this question was an irreverent act committed by the first man Adam. Though indebted to his Creator for everything, perfect Adam transgressed God's law, thereby failing to give his heavenly Father the love, respect and devotion he deserved. Having lost perfection through his disobedience, Adam could father only sinful offspring who would be incapable of maintaining godly devotion perfectly. Nevertheless, Jehovah God knew that he could put a perfect man on earth who would be able to do so. Until that man appeared on the earthly scene, the answer as to who could maintain godly devotion perfectly remained a sacred secret, that is, a secret known only to God. As other scriptures clearly show, the one around whom this secret revolved is the Son of God who "was made manifest in flesh" as the man Jesus. (John 1:14; 1 John 4:2, 3) Accordingly, the entire life course of Jesus Christ as a man in sticking loyally to his God and Father is a tangible demonstration of godly devotion or reverentialness. Our taking to heart the lessons involved in this "sacred secret" can lead to marvelous benefits now and in the future.

4 When considering what happened to Adam, we can clearly see that forsaking a course of godly devotion brings no gain. Because of failing to reverence his God and Father, Adam lost perfect human life with all its rights and prospects. Gone was the close relationship he had once enjoyed with his heavenly Father. No longer did he have God's direction and guidance. His conscience was defiled. The only heritage he could pass on to his children was imperfection and death. Having been forcefully ejected he was debarred from re-entering the beautiful paradise that had

been his home in perfection.—Gen. 3:8, 17-19, 24.

5 But what about Jesus Christ? Did he lose by maintaining godly devotion? True, it was not an easy course for him to follow. The world hated him for it. He was reviled, physically abused and finally nailed to an executorial stake like a criminal of the worst kind. (John 15:18; 1 Pet. 2:23, 24) Nevertheless, his course was still one of great gain. He preserved a clean conscience and continued benefiting from his Father's help, guidance and reassurances. Three times Jesus Christ heard the voice of his Father approving his course. (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28, 29) He experienced his Father's backing, being empowered to perform miracles, signs and portents. (Acts 2:22) When Jesus Christ successfully resisted the temptations of the Devil, "angels came and began to minister to him." (Matt. 4:11) Also, on the final night before his death, an angel "appeared to him and strengthened him." (Luke 22:43) For his faithfulness to the very death, Jehovah God resurrected his Son, bestowing upon him the grand prize of immortal heavenly life. Wrote the apostle Paul under inspiration: "God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground [in gravedom but awaiting a resurrection], and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."—Phil. 2:9-11.

6 By remaining exclusively devoted to God as did Jesus Christ, we can be among those who enjoy great gain now and have the prospect of experiencing even grander blessings in the future. This is not to say that the sole reason for serving God and

4. What does the course of Adam reveal as to the result of failing to maintain godly devotion?

5. Did Jesus Christ gain by maintaining godly devotion?
6. Explain the term "gain" used by Paul at 1 Timothy 6:6.

pursuing a Christlike course is to reap personal gain. An understanding of the original-language word for "gain" as found at 1 Timothy 6:6 helps one to get a balanced view of the matter. The term was used only twice in the Christian Greek Scriptures, namely, in 1 Timothy 6:5, 6. This Greek term (*po-ris-mos*⁷, not *po'-ri-sma*) comes from the Greek verb meaning "to provide; to procure" and hence means "a providing; a procuring," and then "a means of gain; means of livelihood." Moffatt's translation renders it "a paying concern" and "rich profit." *The New English Bible* translates it "dividends."

THE BENEFIT OF HAVING SINS FORGIVEN

⁷ One outstanding benefit from following a course of godly devotion is having our sins forgiven. Initially, in the case of a true disciple of Jesus Christ, this occurred when he repented, turned around from his former course, appealed to God for forgiveness on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, and then presented himself for baptism, dedicated himself to the Father (Jehovah God) through the Son (Jesus Christ) in the name of the Father, the Son and the holy spirit. Nevertheless, being imperfect, he still commits sins thereafter and so continues needing God's forgiveness. Said the apostle John: "If we make the statement: 'We have no sin,' we are misleading ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8) However, at heart, a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ does not want to sin. He feels, as did the apostle Paul when he wrote: "I really delight in the law of God according to the man I am within." This being the case, he very much regrets any sin he may commit and humbly asks God for forgiveness. Because of his repentant attitude and faith in the atoning benefits of Jesus' sacrifice, he gains that forgiveness.—Rom. 7:22-25; 1 John 2:1, 2.

7. What does the Bible reveal as to our need for forgiveness of sins, and on what basis does God extend it?

⁸ Because of having their sins forgiven, devoted disciples of Jesus Christ continue to enjoy a clean conscience. They are confident that Jehovah God is pleased with their sincere efforts to live a life consistent with the leading of his spirit. (Gal. 5:16-18) Therefore they have complete freedom of speech in approaching God with any matter, certain that, by means of his spirit, he will guide and help them to cope with trials or solve problems they may be facing. (Luke 11:11-13) As the apostle John noted: "Whatever we ask we receive from him, because we are observing his commandments and are doing the things that are pleasing in his eyes."—1 John 3:22.

⁹ At times, however, a true Christian may not even know what to pray for in view of what he is facing. There may be sustained persecution. He may feel burdened with many heavy responsibilities. Perhaps there is a personal problem that is weighing on him. He may not be sure of what to do. He may not even understand what the problem really is. Nevertheless, due to his having a clean standing before God, he is not left without help. As shown at Romans 8:26, 27, God's spirit will aid him. We read: "In like manner the spirit also joins in with help for our weakness; for the problem of what we should pray for as we need to we do not know, but the spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unuttered. Yet he who searches the hearts knows what the meaning of the spirit is, because it is pleading in accord with God for holy ones."

¹⁰ How, as here mentioned, does God's spirit, 'join in' with the Christian's 'unuttered groanings' to assist him? Well, Jehovah God, by means of his spirit, inspired men to write the Bible, including

8. Because of having our sins forgiven, how can we feel about approaching God in prayer, and what confidence can we have in his answering us?

9, 10. As shown at Romans 8:26, 27, how does God help us even when we might not know what to pray for?

prayers expressing his will and mind on matters. He knows the "meaning of the spirit," that is, of the things he caused his holy spirit to speak through the Bible writers. He also recognizes the feelings and needs of his people. Therefore, he accepts the inspired prayers as being what his people would be offering up if they but knew what to ask for, and he answers them. Thus he assists his people to work out matters in their life in a way that harmonizes with his Word, even though they may not know in advance what course to take. He does not let his faithful ones 'be tempted beyond what they can bear,' and neither does he leave them "in the lurch."—1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 4:8, 9.

GUARDED AGAINST THE WORLD'S ILLS

¹¹ Besides enabling us to preserve a clean conscience and to continue enjoying God's forgiveness and help, the pursuit of godly devotion guards us against the world's ills. Today, for example, venereal disease is sweeping the world. It is found even in remote places on earth. So severe is the problem of venereal disease that Dr. Marcolino G. Candau of the United Nations' World Health Organization warned (in the spring of 1973): "Quick action is essential before sexually transmitted diseases become completely out of control . . . the world is in the grip of a virtual epidemic."

¹² However, no "virtual epidemic" of venereal disease exists among those pursuing godly devotion. They appreciate that venereal disease is not merely a medical problem; it is primarily a moral one. They show reverential regard for the words of Jesus Christ: "You heard that it was said, 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with

her in his heart." (Matt. 5:27, 28) Heeding this command, true Christians guard themselves against getting into situations that could give rise to temptations. Their combating wrong sexual desires has contributed to their being free from the scourge of syphilis and gonorrhea and all their terrible consequences—blindness, sterility, insanity and an early death. Their godly devotion has definitely protected them.

¹³ Similarly, appreciating the Bible's admonition to 'cleanse themselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit,' Jehovah's servants shun the use of tobacco, betel nut and other harmful addictives. (2 Cor. 7:1) Their adherence to God's Word has also shielded them from the damaging effects of alcoholism. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Resources that were formerly squandered on harmful habits have been redirected to make individuals and their families productive members of the community and a credit to God's name and people. The course of godly devotion has brought this to them as a "dividend."

¹⁴ The tangible gain accompanying godly devotion is clearly seen when set alongside the tremendous loss that results from following the ways of the world. Take the case of a girl who has contracted some form of venereal disease or whose life has been scarred by drugs. Has she not lost a great deal? What about her parents? How much money do you think they would pay to have their daughter back again as she once was? There is probably no sum large enough that, if they had it or could get it, they would not pay. What about an alcoholic husband? Would he not consider it highly beneficial to regain the health, respect and position he may have lost through alcohol abuse? Would not his wife

11, 12. How does pursuing godly devotion preserve the Christian from ills like venereal disease?

13. What benefits come to those who obey the admonition to 'cleanse themselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit'?

14. When we observe the outcome of worldly persons, why can we say that pursuing godly devotion results in tangible gain? Illustrate.

be willing to give a large sum of money to have her husband become a fine family head, looking well to his responsibilities? Yes, people of the world would give much to get for themselves or their loved ones the gain that godly devotion brings even now.

GODLINESS BRINGS FRIENDS

¹⁵ Further, pursuing a course of godly devotion results in our having real friends. As true Christians, our foremost friends are Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ. As Jesus said to his eleven faithful apostles: "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, because all the things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15) We are also friends of one another. As friends, those who know God and Christ fit the description of Proverbs 17:17: "A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress." Only among those pursuing godly devotion in the true Christian congregation can you find such companions. There are no racial, social and economic barriers in the congregation; all therein are "brothers" and "sisters." (Matt. 23:8) Anywhere you go on this earth, you will find genuine friends among those practicing godly devotion. These friends are persons who can be trusted with your belongings and your feelings. They are willing to give of their time, energies and assets to assist and encourage you. Additionally, there are qualified men in each congregation of Jehovah's people who are genuinely concerned about the welfare of all associated, especially from a spiritual standpoint, and willingly and eagerly respond to their needs.

15. How does the pursuit of godly devotion provide us with true friends?

"WITH CONTENTMENT"

¹⁶ Truly, we receive much gain from pursuing a course of godly devotion. Even now this gain is something too precious to lose. We should therefore be concerned about safeguarding it. A prime way we can do this is by remaining content, really appreciating the numerous benefits we are enjoying. It is noteworthy that the apostle Paul linked godly devotion with self-sufficiency or contentment, saying: "To be sure, it is a means of great gain, this godly devotion *along with self-sufficiency* ["contentment," *Common Bible*]."—1 Tim. 6:6.

¹⁷ Should we ever become discontented, losing appreciation for the blessings that have come to us from pursuing godly devotion, we could be led into thinking that greater gain is to be found elsewhere. For example, a person may no longer share the attitude expressed at 1 Timothy 6:8: "Having sustenance [food] and covering [clothing and shelter], we shall be content with these things." He may come to look enviously upon the prosperity of others and become fully absorbed in material pursuits. From a spiritual standpoint, this could be very damaging, eventually perhaps leading to losing an approved relationship with God. Pointing to this danger, the apostle Paul wrote: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Tim. 6:9, 10; see also Hebrews 13:5.

16. As implied at 1 Timothy 6:6, what is needed to safeguard the gain resulting from the pursuit of godly devotion?

17. How can failure to be content with what we have materially become spiritually harmful?

¹⁸ Then, too, we must guard against letting circumstances seriously affect whether we are content. The apostle Paul set an excellent example in this regard. He expressed himself as follows: "I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be self-sufficient [or, content]. I know indeed how to be low on provisions, I know indeed how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want." (Phil. 4:11-13) Notice that Paul's contentment was constant. He did not reason, 'I will be content when I have riches, a position or prominence or the like.' His contentment was based on his relationship to Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, knowing them and being known by them. This is the only dependable basis for contentment.

¹⁹ In this world, nothing else has any real stability. Death can rob us of dear relatives and friends. Accidents or disease may leave us or loved ones helpless and crippled. Property can be stolen or destroyed. Hence, to make material things, position or any earthly relationship the real basis for our contentment can lead to bitter disappointment. Such disappointment might even cause one to blame God and come to reason wrongly as did Asaph: "All to no purpose have I kept my heart pure, and washed my hands in innocence." (Ps. 73:13, *An American Translation*) Unchecked, such reasoning could cause one to stop pursuing godly devotion.

²⁰ We need to remain ever on guard that this world and its attitudes, material outlook and ways do not corrode our contentment. That is why it is good to take time to reflect appreciatively on the great gain that has come our way since starting to

pursue godly devotion. May we feel about our having gained an approved relationship with God as did the psalmist: "Happy is the one you choose and cause to approach, that he may reside in your courtyards. He will certainly be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holy place of your temple." (Ps. 65:4) How foolish it would be to give this up because of something that may not go our way!

²¹ Remember, too, that pursuing godly devotion 'holds promise of the life to come.' (1 Tim. 4:8) As for the anointed brothers of Christ yet on earth, they do not 'hope in Christ in this life only.' The grand reward of ruling with him in the heavens for a thousand years is before them. (1 Cor. 15:19, 50-54; Rev. 20:6) An ever-increasing "great crowd" of persons associated with these anointed ones also have a grand hope. They look forward to the approaching "great tribulation," which will remove from this earth all who refuse to "know God" as his approved servants. Either by resurrection from the dead or by surviving that tribulation, those loyally serving God alongside Christ's spiritual brothers cherish the hope of living everlastingly in a cleansed earth, free from pain, sickness and old age. Then "the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea," not just head knowledge, but knowledge put to work in carrying out the divine will.—Isa. 11:9; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Rev. 7:9-17; 21:3-5.

²² Oh, what grand blessings are in store for those who continue pursuing godly devotion! May we pursuers of godly devotion allow nothing to dim the inestimable value of our having come to be known by God and Christ as their approved servants. May we continue to be on guard against anything that might rob us of contentment. May we ever keep before us the

18. (a) What should we not permit to affect our contentment? (b) As shown by the apostle Paul, what should be the reason for a Christian's contentment?

19. Why is it dangerous to let material things or earthly relationships seriously affect our contentment?

20. What can we do to preserve our contentment?

21, 22. (a) What future benefits will come to those who pursue godly devotion? (b) What can we do to avoid losing out on these benefits?

perfect example of Jesus Christ. "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame,

and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Indeed, consider closely the one who has endured such contrary talk by sinners against their own interests, that you may not get tired and give out in your souls."—Heb. 12:1-3.

**DO YOU
LET OTHERS**

STUMBLE YOU?

HE WAS a man of European extraction—evidently honest, modest, and having a love for the truth. When the Christian witnesses of Jehovah called at his home in New York city they found hearing ears in both him and his wife. Soon they were enjoying a regular weekly Bible study in their home.

But then something happened. One who purportedly was a Witness and whom this newly interested man held in high esteem committed a serious wrong for which he was expelled from the Christian congregation. The conduct of the wrongdoer so disappointed the man that he stumbled and fell, discontinuing his study of the Bible with the Witnesses. But not so his wife. She continued her studies, was baptized, and reared two sons, both of whom today, many years later, are full-time preachers of the good news of God's kingdom. Often she joins them for a month at a time in such joyous and highly rewarding preaching and Bible-teaching activities. As for the husband, he is still on the fence, pleased to meet the Witnesses and occasionally attending meetings, but still offended, stumbled.

This true-life story underscores the tragedy of letting others stumble us. Think about this. Reflect. Consider. Just because someone makes a mistake, whether great or small, it is no reason for you to take an unwise course, is it? Why harm yourself just because someone else did something that offended or hurt you?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, left us a model in this, even as he did in ever so many other respects. (1 Pet. 2:21) Did he get offended, did he stumble because one of his own apostles, Judas, turned traitor, because another one, Peter, three times denied even knowing him, or because all of them deserted him in time of danger? Did he? How unwise that would have been! Not only would he have harmed himself immeasurably but also he would have harmed the cause of his heavenly Father and all humankind!

More serious than the injury to ourselves and others when we allow people to stumble us is our failure to do what is right in God's sight. "He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and

IN COMING ISSUES

- **The Bible—Written by Men but Still God's Message.**
- **Lasting Gain from Living by the Bible as a Family.**
- **Why So Many "Christian" Sects?**

to be modest in walking with your God?" No matter what any other person may or may not do, such is no excuse for our not paying back to God what he asks of us.—Mic. 6:8.

To illustrate: The inhabitants of a country have the obligation to obey its laws, including the paying of taxes and observing of traffic regulations. Suppose a citizen is defrauded, robbed or in some other way dealt with unjustly by fellow citizens. Could he use that as an excuse to break whatever laws of the land he chose to break, refusing to pay taxes and ignoring traffic regulations? While a few today may so hold, for all to do so would be anarchy. The two things are wholly unrelated and have no bearing upon each other as far as obligations are concerned.

All that a citizen can do is to seek redress at law and then leave it up to the government to punish wrongdoers while he himself obeys the laws of the land. And so with our relationship with God, our Creator. We are under obligation to obey his commands and leave the settling of accounts with him. As the apostle Paul counseled: "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.'" Jesus Christ likewise assures us that, in God's due time, He will right all wrongs, saying: "Woe to the

man through whom the stumbling block comes!"—Rom. 12:19; Matt. 18:7.

Another point: To let others stumble us is unloving. It betrays a lack of love for God and for what he has done for us. How much we should appreciate all he has done for us in giving us life and providing all the necessities for sustaining life! And think of the gift of his only-begotten Son, through whom we can hope to gain everlasting life! (John 3:16) Surely we should do everything possible to show our appreciation for all God's loving-kindness toward us!

Further, if we truly have love for God and his law, then nothing will stumble us. The Bible says: "Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law, and for them there is no stumbling block."—Ps. 119:165.

Frequently, the words or acts that may offend a person are not of such a nature that any thought is given to expelling the inconsiderate one from the congregation. After all, as King Solomon said in his temple dedication prayer, "there is no man that does not sin." If God took note of all our imperfections and mistakes, where would any of us be? Yes, "if errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?"—1 Ki. 8:46; Ps. 130:3.

We ought to deal with others as we want God to deal with us. If we let others stumble us, we are not being forgiving, and if we do not forgive others their transgressions, neither can we expect our heavenly Father to forgive us ours. (Matt. 5:7; 6:14, 15; 18:21-35) On the other hand, if we have love for the members of our families and/or for our fellow worshipers, we will not dwell on their shortcomings but "have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."—1 Pet. 4:8.

In particular may those who profess to be truly Christ's disciples not use what

others have done as an excuse to stop studying God's Word, to stop associating with fellow Christians, to stop sharing in making known the good news of God's kingdom. Really, if they let what others do keep them from carrying out these Christian requirements, they make questionable the genuineness of their profession to be truly Christ's disciples. For such to stumble would make them suspect as looking for an excuse, consciously or unconsciously, to serve God no longer.

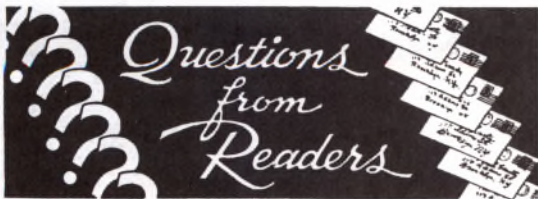
Not only do we want to be careful that we do not let others stumble us, but we lovingly and wisely want to exercise care that we do not stumble others. Justice requires that we do to others as we would have them do to us. (Luke 6:31) We would not want anyone to be careless or thoughtless as to stumbling us, would we? Then we should exercise care that we do not stumble others. For example, a letter

recently received by the Watch Tower Society complained that some immature persons were being stumbled because others to whom they looked as examples flaunted their fondness of liquor. Pursuing such a course in the use of liquor was not heeding the counsel of the apostle Paul: "Keep making straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather that it may be healed." Besides, Jesus warned: "Whoever stumbles one of these little ones who put faith in me, it is more beneficial for him to have hung around his neck a millstone such as is turned by an ass and to be sunk in the wide, open sea." Surely none of us would want that to happen to us, would we? —Heb. 12:13; Matt. 18:6.

So let all exercise care to do what is wise, loving and right, thereby keeping both from being stumbled by others and from themselves stumbling others.

Kindness Is Powerful

● Kindness can break down even intense opposition. This was the experience of a paralyzed man in the Philippines. His wife bitterly opposed his studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. The children even threatened that if he became a Witness they would no longer view him as their father. Relatives, on whose property he was living, told him to get off their land. Jehovah's witnesses in the area quickly came to his aid. They helped him to move his small house to another location and to make some renovations at the same time. What effect did this expression of kindness have on his wife and children? They were moved to begin studying the Bible. Now all are baptized Witnesses.



● Why do Jehovah's witnesses so strongly condemn other religions? Do they not believe that there are good people in all faiths?

What Jehovah's Christian witnesses say about the religions of this world is not for the purpose of condemning people. They are making known what God himself has set forth in his Word. Their exposure of religious error, hypocrisy and bloodguilt serves to help honest-hearted people to forsake the world empire of false religion, "Babylon the Great," and to escape God's adverse judgment. This exposure is in harmony with the Bible command: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to

share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind."—Rev. 18:4, 5.

Hence, in pointing out the failures and sins of false religions, Jehovah's Christian witnesses are working for the eternal interests of sincere people. Jehovah's witnesses are also imitating Jesus Christ. Note the strong words that he directed against Jewish religious leaders because of their wrong practices and false teachings: "You have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition. You hypocrites, Isaiah aptly prophesied about you, when he said, 'This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me.'" (Matt. 15:6-8) "Look out for the scribes who desire to walk around in robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and front seats in the synagogues and most prominent places at evening meals, and who devour the houses of the widows and for a pretext make long prayers." (Luke 20:46, 47) "They bind up

heavy loads and put them upon the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger." (Matt. 23:4) "Outwardly indeed [you scribes and Pharisees], appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."—Matt. 23:28.

Like their Exemplar Jesus Christ, Jehovah's witnesses call attention to unscriptural religious traditions and teachings, hypocritical actions and religious exploitation and oppression. At the same time, deep love for their fellowmen moves them to point all to the way of salvation, a way that includes cutting off association with "Babylon the Great" so as not to share with her in her sins and her disastrous end.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 23: Getting to Know God. Page 113.

Songs to Be Used: 50, 71.

March 30: How You Benefit from Pursuing

Godly Devotion. Page 119. Songs to Be Used: 62, 93.

What Jehovah's Christian witnesses say about the religions of this world is not for the purpose of embarrassing people. They are making known what God himself has set forth in the Word. Their exposure of religious error, hypocrisy and dishonesty serves to help honest-hearted people to forsake the world empire of false religion, "Babylon the Great," and to escape God's adverse judgment. This exposure is in harmony with the Bible command: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to



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