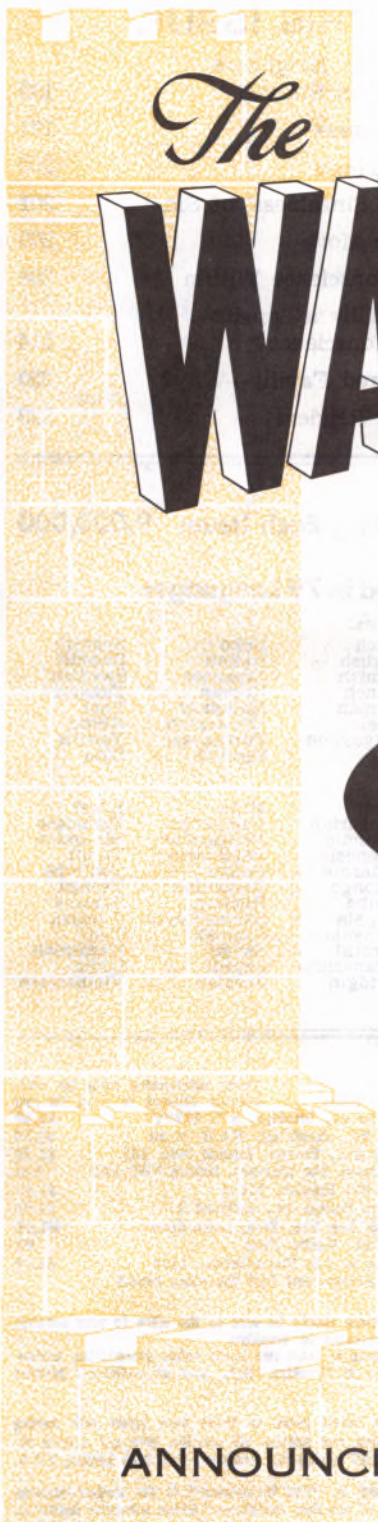




The **WATCHTOWER**

THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE WITHIN

Also In This Issue _____

**Will We Feed Our Neighbors
—Or Let Them Starve?**

APRIL 1, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

April 1, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 7

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.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Will We Feed Our Neighbors —Or Let Them Starve?	195
Coping with Shyness	197
Insight on the News	200
The 'Exceeding Sinfulness' of Sin	201
Minister on the Move	205
The Voice of Conscience Within	208
Are You Guided by a Sensitive Christian Conscience?	214
A Highly Favored Family—Why?	220
Questions from Readers	223

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Will We Feed Our Neighbors —OR LET THEM STARVE?

THROUGH world news sources, the faces of hungry people confront us with growing frequency. Hunger, of course, is not new. But the scope of today's problem is. As an article in the New York *Times* says:

"Famine here and there is recorded as far back as the Bible. What is new is the potential for food shortages not confined to particular places and times: a permanent crisis threatening hundreds of millions in large sectors of the globe."

Estimates are that some 500 million persons—most of them children—now near starvation. Surely the Bible prophecy, "there will be food shortages . . . in one place after another," is seeing fulfillment. —Matt. 24:7.

Who among us can see pictures of hungry people without feeling a desire to aid them? But what can we do?

On a local scale, it is not difficult to help neighbors temporarily in need, as when some disaster hits. People often respond with acts of kindness and generosity. On a worldwide scale, however, the situation is quite different. Why?

For one thing, there is more to today's situation than meets the eye. It would seem that the earth is just not producing enough food to go around. But this is not really the problem, yet. Grain crops now harvested would feed adequately every person living—if *they were distributed equally and if the grain were eaten directly as cereal or bread or similar products.*

But that is not the case. Much of the world's harvest is used by wealthier na-

tions to feed animals and produce meat, milk and eggs. It can take up to seven pounds of grain to produce one pound of meat. That is one reason why so-called "advanced" nations with only one third of earth's population consume more grain than the other, poorer, two thirds put together. So, too, with fuel and fertilizer, key production factors in modern agriculture.

But are not the "advanced" nations feeding much of the world? Yes, countries like the United States, Canada, Australia and Argentina export millions of tons of grain annually. The problem is that the poorer nations find it ever harder to pay. Spiraling inflation devastates their ability to buy food, fuel and fertilizer. And their populations keep growing. Each year there are over 80 million more mouths to feed—most in already hungry lands.



"I ask you, how can God's love survive in a man who has enough of this world's goods yet closes his heart to his brother when he sees him in need? . . . let us love in deed and in truth and not merely talk about it."

—1 John 3:17, 18, New American Bible.

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

What is the solution? Contradictory claims are made. Leaders of "advanced" nations say that the poorer nations must make greater efforts to slow population growth. But in such lands many children die at an early age. So parents actually want large families, hoping that some children will survive to care for them in their old age. To the "advanced" nations the

poorer nations say: 'Why do you buy our raw materials at low prices and then sell us your products at high prices? Why don't you live and eat more modestly so that your lands' bounty can benefit more of mankind?'

Faced with this situation, what can an individual, yourself, for example, do to help? Obviously, just your eating less is not going to put food on people's plates in another country. Can you confidently rely on national governments or other organizations to see that any efforts you make to contribute toward a greater food supply will bring relief for the world's hungry?

Unfortunately, there is much to discourage people's efforts. They see that, despite the vast amounts of financial aid given, conditions worsen. There are more hungry people now than ever before. Governments receiving aid may use it to buy costly military equipment rather than food. Corruption, black-market profiteering and waste cut deeply into food supplies sent, often reducing them to a mere trickle by the time they reach needy ones.

An article in *BioScience* magazine says:

"A wise and competent government saves out of the production of the good years in anticipation of bad years that are sure to come. This is not a new idea. The Bible tells us that Joseph taught this policy to Pharaoh in Egypt more than 2,000 years ago. Yet it is literally true that the vast majority of the governments of the world today have no such policy. They lack either the wisdom or the competence, or both."

Evidence is that "advanced" nations often do not really want food to reach the point of abundance. Why not? Because then prices would drop and profits would be cut. Production is geared to keep prices high on the world market. Food is even used to gain political advantage.

On the one hand, then, we often hear world leaders claim that they view all men as brothers and they speak of the "brotherhood of man." But when large areas of

mankind come into need, time and again nationalistic and commercial interests are put first, ahead of the needs of fellow humans.

Long ago, the inspired apostle wrote: "I ask you, how can God's love survive in a man who has enough of this world's goods yet closes his heart to his brother when he sees him in need? . . . let us love in deed and in truth and not merely talk about it." (1 John 3:17, 18, *New American Bible*) What is true of men is true of nations. Despite their religious claims, the nations of the world show that they lack love of God.

Clearly what is needed is an entirely new system for mankind, one that eliminates selfish nationalism and ruthless commercial competition, replacing these with systems that treat all persons as equals and that foster cooperation, unhypocritical generosity and love of neighbor. The book that foretold today's food shortages, the Bible, also foretold the coming of that new system. It shows that God's kingdom by his Son will soon take over full direction of earth's affairs and rid the earth of all systems that now contribute to human suffering.—Matt. 6:9, 10; Dan. 2:44.

Individually we cannot change the present conditions. But this does not excuse any indifference on our part toward the suffering of others. Are we making use of what opportunities we do have to give aid to others? Proverbs 22:9 assures us: "A blessing awaits the man who is kindly, since he shares his bread with the poor." —*Jerusalem Bible*.

Jehovah's witnesses today endeavor to prove their love for God by helping their needy brothers in all lands, without concern for nationality, race, color or social standing. And, most importantly, they seek to aid all persons everywhere to gain the hope of the coming new order, free from hunger, that God's Word promises.



Coping WITH SHYNESS



DO YOU find it hard to start conversations, especially with strangers? Are you slow in making new acquaintances? Do you feel hesitant about joining in group activities? Then you evidently are faced with the problem of shyness.

Shyness can be appealing. At least it is in little children—small tots of tender years who look at you with a wide-eyed gaze or hide their faces at even a small show of attention. Even with these, however, do we not enjoy seeing them overcome timidity and begin to take confidence in us, even display some childlike exuberance?

You are no longer a small child. And as we grow older, people rightly expect something more of us. As the apostle Paul put it: "When I was a babe, I used to speak as a babe, to think as a babe, to reason as a babe; but now that I have become a man, I have done away with the traits of a babe." (1 Cor. 13:11) True, a certain degree of shyness can at times be appealing even in grown-ups. It is akin to modesty, a humble attitude toward yourself, and modesty always has appeal, no matter what one's age.

But the restraining effect of shyness

Helpful facts that young people want to know

goes beyond that of modesty. And if it goes too far it can seriously hinder you from getting all you could out of life. It can be like a rope or chain that hobbles you, restricting your freedom of movement. It can slow down your progress to full manhood or womanhood, in effect making you lose precious time in your developing years. It can make even a simple thing, like eating a meal in front of others, become an unpleasant task.

But why are some persons shy or timid and others not? How can shyness be overcome or at least controlled so that it does not cut into your joy of living?

First, realize that being normal does not mean you have to be a talkative, supergregarious person. We can all be thankful that some people are naturally quieter than others and that some are not afraid of being alone for periods of time, doing serious studying, thinking or merely meditating. Such ones may not make as many contributions to a conversation as others do. But what they say may be of good quality and worth. (Compare Proverbs 17:27, 28.) There is a difference, though, in being naturally quiet or serene and being painfully shy, bashful or backward. What causes these latter traits?

CAUSES OF SHYNESS

It is due to an attitude of mind, one that may itself be of varied causes. Background may contribute. A person brought up in the city may feel more at ease around people than one brought up on a farm or in a sparsely populated area. Perhaps physical appearance is involved. When growing up we often pass through awkward stages of development. We may have complexion problems, or parts of us may seem out of proportion with the rest of our body or face. We may be teased about this, or about our shortness or tallness or chubbiness or skinniness. Or we may have a speech problem, lisping or stammering.

Even our parents may unintentionally play a part. Though loving us, they may expect more of us than they really should as to grades in school, athletic abilities, and so forth. Our failing to measure up to their high expectations may cause us to 'go into a shell.' If they frequently or severely criticize our slips in grammar or manners in front of others, this may affect us more than they may realize. Or if our questions are set aside as 'foolish' we may lose heart as to the value of communication.—Col. 3:21.

COPING WITH THE PROBLEM

But worrying about the past cause will not change anything, will it? What counts is what you can do now to cope with the problem. Really, it is mainly a matter of taking a balanced view toward people and not being overly concerned about their opinion of you. True, some people are unkind and critical and look down on others. But not everyone is that way. Why let the unkind ones rob you of the enjoyment that fellowship with the others can bring? If we let a few bad experiences overly affect us we could become like those Israelites who lost their courage to the point where even 'the sound of a leaf blowing about would chase them away.' (Lev. 26:

36) Happiness cannot come without overcoming some problems.

Maybe your face or figure is not just what you wish it were. But many persons with attractive faces and bodies are failures in life. (2 Sam. 14:25; 15:5, 6; 18:9, 14; Prov. 31:30) What really counts is what you are inside, in "the secret person of the heart." This is what God is interested in, seeing not "what appears to the eyes; but . . . what the heart is." (1 Pet. 3:4; 1 Sam. 16:7; Ps. 51:6) People who are worth having as friends will estimate you in the same way, according to the principles you live by, what you have in your heart and mind. Zacchaeus was very short, Paul evidently had poor eyesight, Elisha was bald, but all these earned the respect of God and righteous men by what they did and were inside.—Luke 19:1-10; Gal. 4:15; 6:11; 2 Ki. 2:23, 24.

Moses had a speech problem that made him hesitant about speaking publicly. Yet, with time, he evidently overcame this. (Ex. 4:10; compare Deuteronomy 31:30; 32:1, 2) Lisping and stuttering can be overcome or measurably improved if you will make the effort. Stuttering has no physical cause; it comes from a mental block that brings tension or confusion of thought. A helpful therapy is reading out loud at a slow pace. Then speak in the same way. Just as you are more likely to stumble when running than when walking, so with speaking. Keep speech in low gear until the stuttering finally fades away. Then you can gradually pick up speed. When speaking in public, remember that hardly anyone takes pleasure in your experiencing discomfort. They want you to succeed. After all, it is to their advantage that you do. So rather than look down on you, most people will be 'rooting for you.'

Lisping may or may not have a physical cause. But remember that in childhood (or when learning a new language) the organs of speech—tongue, lips, throat—all have to

learn how to pronounce each sound. They learn by exercise, making the same motions over and over again. To correct or lessen lisping, do pronunciation exercises, slowly putting speech organs (especially the tongue) through the motions necessary for the correct sound. In conversation, when words come up having difficult sounds, slow down. Determined and patient effort will bring improvement.

Learn not to take yourself too seriously, even to be able to laugh at yourself on occasion. One young man who had prominent ears would smilingly tell others that when he was born his parents were not sure whether he would walk or fly. Your own humor can relax you. Remember, too, that not all teasing is necessarily malicious; it may show affection. Thus the German proverb, "*Was sich liebt, das neckt sich,*" means, "The one loved is teased."

MAKING A START

The big thing is to make a start. You can never learn to swim if you are not willing to get wet. And you cannot overcome shyness unless you are willing to make the effort to break free by initiating conversations, making new acquaintances, sharing with others in doing things. Realize that everyone at times will feel somewhat uncomfortable or uncertain with certain persons. But do not make a mountain out of a molehill. Starting a conversation can be as simple as saying, "I don't believe I've met you; what is your name?" From there you can inquire as to where the person is from, what he or she is now doing, how things are going at work or school, perhaps ask about future plans. If you show interest in others, they will show interest in you. And especially if you express appreciation for the good you see in others you will find many friends.—Luke 6:38.

That is the key to success in conquering the problem. Think of others, how to benefit them, and you will not be self-conscious.

As Paul counseled Christians in Corinth, we often need to "widen out" in our affection and concern for others. (2 Cor. 6:11-13) Love should motivate us to do this, to make the effort rather than let fear of embarrassment control us. Think of the way that Jesus Christ was ridiculed and mocked without cause. Yet he showed real love and interest in persons of all kinds.—1 Pet. 2:21-24.

The apostle Paul went to Corinth in "weakness and in fear and with much trembling," evidently concerned as to being able to serve the Corinthians well and to overcome wrong attitudes among them. Though some opposers looked down on his appearance and speech, he did not let their twisted viewpoint hold him back from serving God's interests and those of his fellowman. (1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 10:10) His young fellow worker Timothy may have been somewhat retiring by nature. (2 Tim. 1:6, 7) But this did not keep him from taking on difficult assignments.—1 Tim. 1:3, 4; 4:12, 13.

Ingrained shyness can make us become "loners" with a hermit-like attitude. Proverbs 18:1 warns: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth." For good judgment in life we need to keep in touch with reality through association and conversation. Our minds and hearts need the stimulation and refreshing effect that such fellowship can bring. (Rom. 14:7) Otherwise our minds and hearts can become like rooms with closed windows and drawn curtains, getting stagnant, musty. True, reading can bring in some outside thought but it cannot completely replace fellowship with living persons.

Let love move you to make a start, today, to break free from shyness. And then day by day you will see your life grow richer, more interesting, more rewarding—to yourself and to those in whom you show interest.

Insight on the News

- The Gallup Poll organization has published a comprehensive survey entitled "Religion in America, 1975." The survey indicates that the steady decline in church attendance seems to have leveled off during the past three years.

Religion in America

Today about four out of every ten Americans attend church during an average week. But the survey also shows that the majority of Americans (56 percent) still feel that 'religion is losing influence.' The number believing that religion does not have the answer to today's problems is rising sharply.

Hope is often expressed that a 'religious awakening' is taking place in America. Among those polled, some expressed serious doubts about this. One 54-year-old educator said: "The fervor of the sects, of the Jesus freaks, . . . and other groups is, in my opinion, simply the last throes of a mortally wounded Christian church." A university professor commented: "America is awake to its materialistic problems, not to any spiritual demands—it is her stomach that bothers her, not her soul."

Interestingly, Bible reading increased slightly; 63 percent said that they had done some home Bible reading in the past year.

- Astronomers' theories on the origin of the universe vary. For a while the "steady state" theory was popular. It held that matter is in a constant process of being formed and destroyed, and that the universe is and always has been essentially as we now see it. That view was replaced in

Origin of the Universe

popularity by the "big bang" theory. According to it, the universe began with a giant fireball that exploded. The bits of matter flew out into space and eventually formed the stars and planets, and these are supposedly still flying away from the explosion's center.

Recently, however, Los Angeles physicist Allen D. Allen, at the annual meeting of the American Physical Society, said that those believing this theory 'would have to do so as an act of faith—just as they would if it were a religious rather than a scientific theory.' Why so? Not just because the theory seems inconsistent with certain astronomical obser-

vations. The main reason, he says, is 'because no theoretical answer to the question could be demonstrable,' that is, there is no way to demonstrate its validity. Obviously, stupendous power was involved in the origin of the universe, but as physicist Allen acknowledges: "Where the energy came from we don't know."

The Bible states in clear terms: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) Those putting faith in that statement have far greater basis for their belief than those who place their faith in the shifting theories of men.

- Under the heading "Polygamy Is African Way of Life," the Lagos, Nigeria, "Sunday Times" published an article

Polygamy for Christians?

by priest N. S. S. Iwe. Calling for a progressive church, he said that "the church must strive as a matter of policy and practice, never to infuse old wine into new bottles."

This reverses Jesus' more logical statement about not putting 'new wine into old bottles' (ancient bottles were of skin and became dried and hardened with age, hence unable to expand with the new wine). (Matt. 9:17) Though not explaining this reversal, the priest did show he felt the church should adapt its teachings to local cultures. Regarding polygamy in Africa, he said: "Polygamy as a significant aspect of our culture cannot be condemned without hearing. The concept of . . . polygamy deserves a thorough study and examination by Christianity for it is one of the honest concepts and institutions of our culture."

Nineteen hundred years ago, Christ Jesus said that God originally purposed for a man and his wife, just the two, to be "one flesh," with no one else properly coming in between. (Matt. 19:4-6) Paul, an apostle of Christ, said that men serving in responsible positions in the Christian congregation should each be a "husband of one wife," as examples for all the flock. (1 Tim. 3:1, 2, 12) Yet, not only Catholic, but also many Protestant churches allow polygamy in their African congregations. Evidently the Bible's teaching is viewed as "old wine" unsuited for their "new bottles."

HOW bad is sin? How far-reaching may the effects of even a "little" sin be? Jesus' statement in counseling his disciples on

faithfulness bears on the question. He said: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much." (Luke 16:10) Unfaithfulness to God is sin, and, according to the apostle John, "everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, and so sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4) As with one person, also with a group or body of people, large or small, a slight deviation from right principles, if let run, can cause gross lawlessness and incalculable trouble.—Rom. 7:13.

A forceful illustration of the terrible effects of what at first might have been considered a small thing is found in the development of the "man of lawlessness." The Bible describes it through the writings of the apostle Paul at 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. About the coming of this "man" the apostles Paul and Peter both gave the congregations advance warning that "from among you yourselves [elders in the Christian congregation] men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples *after* themselves," that they would "bring in destructive sects" and that many would "follow their acts of loose conduct."—Acts 20:30; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

DESIRE FOR PROMINENCE THE BEGINNING OF APOSTASY

'How,' someone may say, 'could such a situation originate in God's own congre-

gation?' Well, it was not something that occurred overnight. It developed in a very insidious way. Jesus had set the proper example, and he had clearly warned his disciples against the spirit of the religious leaders of the Jews, saying:

"All the works they do they do to be viewed by men; . . . They like the most prominent place at evening meals

and the front seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the marketplaces and to be called Rabbi [Teacher] by men.

But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One. Neither be called 'leaders,' for your Leader is one, the Christ. But the greatest one among you must be your minister. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."—Matt. 23:5-12.

There are many other like admonitions in the Christian Scriptures. But some men in responsible positions in the early congregation evidently began taking little advantages. They felt somewhat important in the position they held. They felt that it entitled them to a little more than the "ordinary" member of the congregation deserved. They allowed themselves special privileges, and they expected things of a material nature from the brothers. In that way they could live a little easier, they could be looked up to as being "somebody." That was all they wanted, at first. But gradually they and their successors in office became more demanding, more bold, more arbitrary in expressing authori-

The Exceeding Sinfulness of Sin

ty. They deceived and misled the congregation in order to gratify their desires and 'exploited them with counterfeit words.' The apostle Paul describes some such men at 2 Corinthians 11:19, 20.—2 Pet. 2:3.

Possibly at the beginning these men had no idea as to what their merely wanting a few favors would eventually lead to—the terrible, hideous thing their catering to the "small" selfish desire would in time produce. They likely felt that their deviation, if any, was minor. But let us trace the history of this trend and see the outcome for which these very men became responsible.

From the Bible's account of the preliminary manifestation of the apostasy of the "man of lawlessness" we can trace its development in historical records.

CLERGY-LAITY DISTINCTION

Jesus Christ had given no instructions for his disciples to be divided up into clergy and laity. They were all equals as members of a spiritual family, all spirit-begotten brothers of Jesus Christ, anointed to be a body of priests, with prospects of being heavenly kings and priests with Christ. The apostle Peter called them "a royal priesthood." (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) Though some had responsibilities as "shepherds," all were priests in a spiritual sense and all engaged in the work of offering spiritual sacrifices. (1 Pet. 5:1-4) There was no hint of a "clergy-laity" division. However, note what history says:

"The Jewish antithesis of clergy and laity was at first unknown among Christians; and it was 'only as men fell back from the evangelical to the Jewish point of view' that the idea of the general Christian priesthood of all believers gave place, more or less completely, to that of the special priesthood or clergy. . . . So Tertullian, even (*De Baptismo*, c. 17, before he became a Montanist): 'The laity have also the right to administer the sacraments and to teach in the community. The Word of God and the sacraments were

by the grace of God communicated to all, and may therefore be communicated by all Christians as instruments of the divine grace. But the question here relates not barely to what is permitted in general, but also to what is expedient under existing circumstances. We may here use the words of St. Paul, "All things are lawful for men, but all things are not expedient." If we look at the order necessary to be maintained in the Church, the laity are therefore to exercise their priestly right of administering the sacraments only when the time and circumstances require it.' From the time of Cyprian, . . . the father of the hierarchical system, the distinction of clergy and laity became prominent, and very soon was universally admitted. Indeed, from the third century onward, the term *clerus* (*kle'ros*, *ordo*) was almost exclusively applied to the ministry to distinguish it from the laity. As the Roman hierarchy was developed, the clergy came to be not merely a distinct order (which might consist with all the apostolical regulations and doctrines), but also to be recognised as the only priesthood, and the essential means of communication between man and God."—M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopædia*, Volume II, page 386.

The above-mentioned Thascius Caecilius Cyprian was the bishop of the church in Carthage, Africa. He was born about 200 C.E. and died in 258 C.E. He was a clergyman, called here "the father of the hierarchical system," one of the body of clergy that existed not much more than a century after the death of Christ's apostles and their close associates. From that time on, throughout the "Dark Ages," into the time of the Reformation and the beginning of the Protestant Churches, and down to the present, this clergy-laity distinction has existed in Christendom.

It is this so-called "Christian" clergy that demonstrated itself to be "the man of lawlessness . . . the son of destruction," in connection with the apostasy or rebellion of 2 Thessalonians 2:3. It is evident that by the use of this expression the Holy Bible means a composite "man," who exists over a long period of time and whose

makeup and personnel change as time goes by.

DIRECT OPPOSITION TO GOD

This rebellion being (as discussed in our previous issue) against Jehovah God, it is no cause for surprise that this composite "man" should try to make a god of himself, as did the great rebel Satan the Devil, whom the Bible calls "the god of this system of things." (2 Cor. 4:4) The apostle Paul said prophetically of the "man of lawlessness": "He is set in opposition and lifts himself up over everyone who is called 'god' or an object of reverence, so that he sits down in the temple of The God, publicly showing himself to be a god." —2 Thess. 2:4.

The "man of lawlessness" is a composite body of men. We can, however, point to the claim made for one of these clergymen that reflects the general attitude of the body. Of the pope of the Roman Catholic Church, Ferraris' ecclesiastical dictionary* says:

"The pope is of such dignity and highness that he is not simply a man but, as it were, God, and the Vicar of God. . . . Hence the pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven, of earth and of hell. . . . Nay, the pope's excellence and power are not only above heavenly, terrestrial and infernal things, but he is also above angels, and is their superior. . . . So that if it were possible that angels could err from the faith, or entertain sentiments contrary thereto, they could be judged and excommunicated by the pope. . . . He is of such great dignity and power that he occupies one and the same tribunal with Christ. . . . So that whatsoever the pope does seems to proceed from the mouth of God. . . . The pope is, as it were, God on earth, the only prince of the faithful of Christ, the greatest king of all kings, possessing the plenitude of power; to whom the government of the earthly and heavenly

kingdom is entrusted. . . . The pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, declare or interpret the divine law. . . . The pope can sometimes counteract the divine law by limiting, explaining," etc.

This power and might attributed to the pope has been upheld by the Catholic clergy, and, though many of the Protestant clergy may disagree, they too hold themselves up as "Reverend," "Right Reverend" and "Father" and use other titles that put them high above the laity, to be looked up to, honored and materially supported, often in a very elaborate way—in a manner similar to the spirit of the papal claim.—Job 32:21, 22.

Not only in this self-exaltation, but also in making himself a "friend" of the world, the "man of lawlessness" has manifested himself to be in opposition to God. (Jas. 4:4) This collective "man" also opposes God when he tries to nullify the inspired Word of God, calling it "myth," "outdated," "unreliable," "full of error" and even saying that "God is dead."

THE 'MARRIAGE' OF CHURCH AND STATE

In many lands there has been and even now is a union of Church and State. In such 'marriages' the Church has endeavored to do the dictating. The clergy have controlled the thinking of the people to a great extent, and the political rulers, knowing this, have accorded the clergy authority, prestige, protection and immunities, financial support, and so forth. Concerning "Church and State," *The Encyclopedia Americana*, Volume 6, pages 657, 658, says:

"Between these two institutions, in modern times, there has rarely, if ever, existed perfect harmony. This struggle, so long protracted, bids fair, unless some astonishing upheaval occurs, to last for all time. It has been a bitter one. It has involved large interests and brought to the forefront momentous discussions. It has fomented uprisings of all kinds and originated a literature of vituperation without parallel outside of political strife. It has been, not seldom, mere political

* *Prompta bibliotheca canonica, juridico-moralis, theologica partim ascetica, polemica, rubricistica, historica*, prepared at Bologna, Emilia-Romagna region, in Italy, in 1746 by Lucio Ferraris, Vol. VI, pp. 31-35; according to copy at Columbia University, New York city.

contention. . . . Under Constantine the Church entered the arena of universal activity as a collaborator in the task of civilizing the peoples. Acknowledged as the spiritual ruler, it gradually acquired a local habitation and a name as a temporal potentate. It became a world power. This success was the beginning of all the many disasters of the Church. . . . From Constantine to Charlemagne the civil power, while giving legal recognition to the Church, interfered in its government. From Charlemagne to a period approaching that of the Reformation, Church and state were closely united and there was a generally acknowledged subordination of the civil to the spiritual authority."

In this twentieth century, the situation has continued. Wars have been fought over religious issues, and the greatest, most gory, devastating World Wars have been fought, Christendom's nations taking the lead with the most murderous weapons.

Think of the heartaches, the misery, the slaughter, the defamation of God's name and of the name of Christianity, that have resulted from that beginning of desire for personal prominence and gain! Of those early elders appointed to shepherd the flock of God, many remained faithful. They followed the principle stated by Jesus, who said: "Whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all." (Mark 10: 44) But the selfish ones among them caused a religiously lawless rebellion that resulted in misery to millions. If they had followed the clear, simple command and example of Christ, such a terrible thing would not have taken place.

We as individuals can learn much from this. When God says a thing is wrong, it is *really wrong*. When we ignore his warning against any form of sin, we should never think we are doing 'only a small thing.' We are out of harmony with God's uni-

versal arrangement and are indulging in the beginning of something that could be greatly harmful to many persons. The Bible rule is: "A little leaven ferments the whole lump." (1 Cor. 5:6) Unless we quickly repent, turn away from such sin and do all we can to straighten up the

matter, we can be responsible for unbelievably bad developments.

As an example, note what James the half brother of Jesus Christ wrote of a loose tongue:

"The tongue is constituted a world of unrighteousness among our members, for it spots up all the body and sets the wheel of natural life aflame and it is set aflame by Gehenna." (Jas. 3:6) Wrongly used, the tongue can upset our life and the lives of many others. James also showed that sin can have a very deceptive beginning. He said: "Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death."—Jas. 1:14, 15.

Everyone, it is true, sins at times. But, thanks to Jehovah God for providing help, through his undeserved kindness, so that we may avoid going on in a course of sin, with its awful effects. We can avoid the disastrous course of the "man of lawlessness." This we can do through faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ. (Rom. 7:21-25; 8:1, 2) Only by recognizing sin's 'exceeding sinfulness,' and, when committing a sin, going to Jehovah for forgiveness on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, can we get Jehovah's help to escape the full consequences of our errant action.

NEXT ISSUE—SPECIAL!

"Who Is Jehovah," so that All Should Worship Him?

MINISTER

On The Move

AS TOLD BY
ANGELO CATANZARO



services for them. But he insisted on a guaranteed payment of \$75 for the one-hour service that he conducted. Additionally, he received the donations obtained that day at the services.

So, in view of all this, the Jewish man in whose home we stayed could hardly believe that, not only would we stay in private homes, but we also did our work without a salary. Each day he would ask me to relate experiences that we had in our house-to-house

preaching work. And repeatedly he remarked that he knew that his rabbi was working for money, not for love of God and the congregation.

When it came time for me to give a public talk that week, this Jewish man asked: "Aren't you going to invite me to hear your sermon?" He attended the talk and has been regular in attending meetings of Jehovah's Christian witnesses since.

Sometimes we have been invited to stay in homes where the people were not Witnesses, although they showed interest in the Bible's message. In Ardmore, Oklahoma, we spent a week with such a family. Both husband and wife were chain smokers who read much of the night. Cigarette smoke would waft its way around our bedroom door and awaken us at night. But before we left in the morning and after we returned from our preaching activity, they would ask us many Bible questions.

Well, six months later, at an assembly, this couple were among those getting baptized. No longer did they smoke, and they were feeling much better, as praisers of Jehovah. During our stay with them this man and his wife had been deeply im-

I HAVE been a minister on the move ever since 1947. In that year the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society assigned me to be a circuit overseer or traveling minister, to visit congregations of Jehovah's Christian witnesses, to build them up and encourage them. But I am just one of about two thousand traveling overseers in various parts of the world. I would like to tell you about our work.

For one thing, we travel a great deal. My assignments have taken me into forty-two states of the United States, starting first in Georgia. Since we do so much traveling, you may wonder just where we stay.

HOME AMONG MANY FRIENDS

My wife and I stay in homes of our Christian brothers, who gladly share with us whatever facilities they have. In big cities we often have stayed with people who have just three rooms. And they frequently insist that we sleep in their bed while they sleep on the couch.

Once we stayed in the home of one of our Christian sisters whose husband was Jewish and not a Witness. He was impressed by the fact that we were so happy, and yet not paid a salary like the clergy of Christendom. In this town of Portsmouth, Ohio, there was a small Jewish group, and a rabbi would come to conduct

pressed by our reliance upon Jehovah and by our referring them to the Bible for the answers to life's problems.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

When visiting a congregation of Jehovah's witnesses, my work involves a good deal more than giving Bible talks to the congregation. Much of my time is spent in working with my Christian brothers in the house-to-house preaching work. I am able to share my experience with others, and I too learn by observing the methods that they use in reaching honest-hearted people in the community with the Bible's message. So we get mutual benefits by working with our Christian brothers.

I have shared in the preaching work with persons of all ages. Recently I went along with a ninety-three-year-old woman who is in the full-time preaching work. I also worked with a four-year-old. In the latter case, I told the householders that the youth with me was practicing to be a preacher, and 'there is something he wants to tell you.' He then handed them a handbill, inviting them to a public Bible discourse.

When we talk to the people about God's kingdom and the coming righteous New Order of things, we often hear comments such as: "Why is it that our clergy have not told us these things?" I have met many persons who admit that their ministers, priests and rabbis have failed to give them a solid hope. Often they complain that all the clergy seem to be interested in are money and personal comforts. It impresses such householders that, without cost, we are bringing them God's Word and a grand hope.

Since we travel so much, we preach to people of all kinds. Accordingly, we need to discern what is the best way of helping various people. Often we find it desirable to get householders to express themselves

by our asking questions. But not all persons can readily be drawn into conversations in that way. For example, we have preached on Indian reservations out West, and though most Indians do not say much, they watch and observe. We have found that we are able to help the Indians most by befriending them and showing them that we are really interested in them. They soon learn that the Witnesses show no partiality with regard to race and nationality, but have proper respect for all.

On the other hand, there are persons who readily wish to express their viewpoints. If we were to ask them questions and not listen to their views, they would resent it. For example, I called at a home and a doctor came to the door and we discussed today's decline in morality. When I asked him whether he thought there was a solution, he expressed his views, talking for quite some time without any outstanding remarks from me. When he concluded, I found areas of agreement. Toward the end of our discussion, he said that he especially appreciated that my companion and I had allowed him an opportunity to speak. He took four Bible study aids, and arrangements were made to call back on him.

In big cities, such as New York, we find that many people are fearful and seldom open their door for strangers. Nevertheless, we endeavor to express a few thoughts from the Bible, speaking to them, if possible, right through the peephole. They see us, but we do not see them—except possibly an eyeball.

On one occasion, when I talked to a lady through the peephole, she said that she appreciated what I read to her from the Bible but that she was not going to open the door. Yet she wanted the Bible study aid that I offered her. So she instructed me to put it into the mailbox. We returned a little later and the book was gone and a contribution was found in its place.

FINANCES

People often ask me how the work of Jehovah's witnesses is financed and how I myself manage. The work of Jehovah's witnesses, like that of the early Christians, is financed by voluntary contributions. Most of Jehovah's witnesses support themselves by secular work. As a full-time circuit overseer, I receive \$7 a month (formerly \$5) from the Watchtower Society for personal expenses, if this is requested, also a modest sum once a year for clothing. But we are cared for, since our Christian brothers are very hospitable and kind. Like the apostle Paul, we are content with food, shelter and clothing.—1 Tim. 6:8.

Once in Indianapolis, Indiana, all of our clothes were stolen from our parked and locked car. But we were not left destitute. Our loving Christian brothers promptly saw to it that we were properly clothed.

At one time I appeared on a radio show in which the interrogator often tries to make people look somewhat foolish. After I remarked that I received \$5 a month, he looked at my suit and said: "I could not afford a suit like that if I got \$5 a month."

"Well," I explained, "the suit, the shoes, socks, shirt, tie—all of these were given to me by my dear Christian brothers and sisters who know what work we are doing. We don't ask for this. But as the Bible says, 'the workman is worthy of his wages.'" (1 Tim. 5:18) After my explaining that we do our work out of love for others, the Jewish interviewer remarked that clergymen, including Jewish rabbis, could not get along the way we do.

Often, when answering questions, I have opportunity to explain that our purpose as Jehovah's witnesses is not to make money. We are all working to help people to know Jehovah and gain His approval.

JOY THAT MONEY CANNOT BUY

While we appreciate all that our Christian brothers have done and are doing for

us, yet the most important reason why we are doing this preaching work is that Jehovah has commanded it. It is an expression of our love for him. And in compensation we receive something better than money—the grand joy and satisfaction of knowing that we are doing what God wants us to do.

Sometimes I am asked what I have especially enjoyed in the circuit and district work. Well, I think that one of the most outstanding joys is seeing Jehovah's blessing on the work we do. If we seek God's guidance and blessing, instead of our fretting because something is not done in a way that appeals to us, God will bless our efforts with growth. (1 Cor. 3:6, 7) Seeing this growth brings us deep and satisfying joy.

Of course, the warmhearted hospitality we receive from our Christian brothers is a source of great joy too. In what other work could you travel virtually anywhere in the United States and receive the warmth, kindness and hospitality that we do? In almost any direction that we travel, in forty-two states, there is not a city where the Witnesses live that we would not be warmly welcomed to stop overnight and have a home in which to stay.

Then there is the joy of getting to know so many of our Christian brothers and sisters who have been loyal to Jehovah over the years. Many have stuck to Jehovah and his organization through thick and thin, and they are an inspiration to us. There is also the pleasure of seeing many thousands of newer ones, sheeplike persons, come into Jehovah's organization in the areas where we serve, and our having some part in helping them to grow spiritually—this in itself is a grand reward.

It is true that our life is one that does not permit us to settle down anywhere for very long, but my being a minister on the move has brought me unbounded joys that money cannot buy.

THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE WITHIN

"Whenever people of the nations that
do not have law do by nature the things of the law,
... [they] demonstrate the matter of the law to be written
in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them."

—Rom. 2:14, 15.

TODAY what is "right" or "wrong" is in a state of constant change. In a speech on "Public Morality" Dr. Emanuel Demby stated: "An important reason why it is so difficult for us to pin down the exact moral nature of our times is that it is a period of great transition." What were widely followed as the accepted standards just a few years ago have been altered or replaced. And with life becoming ever more complex, who is to say how valid the new standards are, or for how long they will last? What guidance does one have?

² This situation faces particularly us living since 1914 C.E. Why especially since then? Dr. Archibald Chisholm observed: "So great has been the upheaval in thought and morals, that some suggest that we should regard ourselves as living in the year [61] A.B. (anno belli [the year of the war]), thus indicating their view that a new epoch began with the outbreak" of World War I. The very fact that there has been such upheaval in thought and morals since 1914 emphasizes our need for a guiding voice, for proper direction.

³ Many persons who are aware of this

1, 2. (a) What is the situation today as respects moral standards? (b) Why is moral guidance needed particularly since 1914?

3. What questions arise as to relying on conscience?

need express the view that in the final analysis each person ought to rely on his conscience. They say: "Let your conscience be your guide." By "conscience" they have in mind that each person seems to have a "voice" within him, an inner sense that tells him what is right or wrong. But is that true in all cases? Do you know what is the source of conscience and just how widespread it is? Also, just how reliable is this inner sense? Even if others can depend on their conscience, can you?

CONSCIENCE—FROM WHERE?

⁴ Were you to look to intellectuals and philosophers for an explanation of the source of your conscience, you might be told that it is merely a social product of evolution. The opinion of evolutionist Charles Darwin was "that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, . . . would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become well, or nearly as well developed, as in man." And Sigmund Freud felt that we could "reject the suggestion of an original—as one might say, natural—capacity for discriminating between good and evil."

4. According to some worldly authorities, what is the source of conscience?

⁵ But do such views represent the true explanation? The most ancient and consistently reliable record of man's history and dealings answers, No! In the first place, the Bible correctly states what has been borne out by honest scientific observation, that all living things reproduce 'after their kind.' Thus man is not merely a product of evolution, nor is his conscience. (Gen. 1:21-26) The Bible, furthermore, accurately identifies the source of that voice within you, your conscience. It shows why—despite efforts of men such as Hitler, who boasted, "I am liberating man from the degrading chimera known as conscience"—humans earth wide continue to have a conscience. And it can help us to use and benefit from conscience.

⁶ The Scriptures tell us that the Creator made man in His own image, with intelligence and a moral sense, just as God himself has these. (Gen. 1:27) And right from the start the first man possessed a God-given conscience; it was not something that simply developed as society grew. This can be seen in the account of Adam's actions and attitude after he broke God's command concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. (Gen. 2:17) The record says that Adam and Eve then "went into hiding from the face of Jehovah God in between the trees." And when Jehovah spoke, Adam did not quickly respond. Why not? Because he sensed his guilt; it was as if there were a voice within him that was condemning him, accusing him, testifying that he had sinned.—Gen. 3:7-10.

⁷ So, the oldest historical record available indicates that

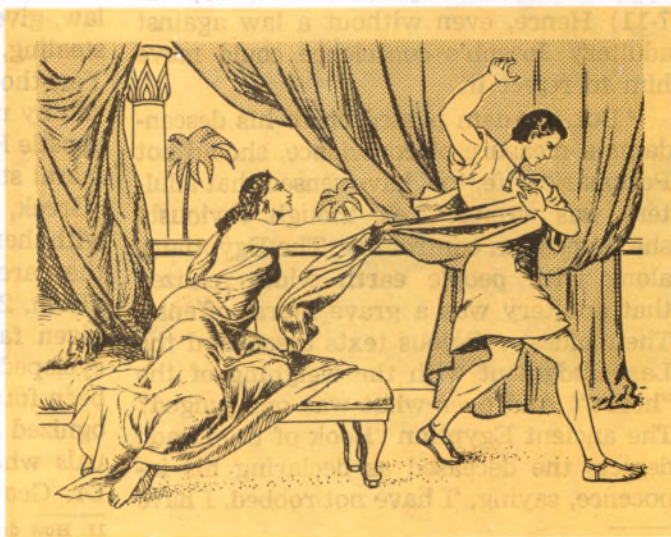
5. Does the Bible uphold these views of man's conscience?

6, 7. (a) God's Word indicates what about the origin of conscience? (b) What was Adam's conscience?

man's conscience was in evidence right from the start. Interestingly, in the first century C.E. the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, writing in Greek, pointed out that Adam's reluctance to reply to God was evidence of his "evil conscience." For the word "conscience" Josephus used the Greek term *synei'desis*, which means literally "having knowledge of something with oneself" or "co-knowledge." Adam's conscience was from God; it was his inner moral sense, and it involved his intelligent mind. Since he was created in God's image, when Adam acted contrary to God's qualities or revealed will he felt an inner conflict. But how does this relate to our feelings and actions? Was conscience passed on to Adam's descendants? Yes, both Biblical and non-Biblical evidence proves that it was, even down to each of us today.

⁸ Note the historical account of what occurred with Joseph over two thousand years after Adam's sin. Joseph was a slave in the household of the Egyptian court official Potiphar. Tempted perhaps by Jo-

8. What later Bible account reflects an inherited moral sense?



Joseph listened to the voice of his conscience and fled from a "sin against God"

seph's masculine beauty, Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph. Since he was but a slave, he easily could have felt obliged to obey her, possibly with the hope of bettering his position. Yet, Joseph flatly rejected her immoral advances, saying, "How could I commit this great badness and *actually sin against God?*" (Gen. 39:1-9) What moved Joseph to view adultery as a sin against God?

⁹ He did not respond that way because of a written law of God forbidding adultery, such as only later appeared in the Ten Commandments. (Ex. 20:14) And here was Joseph in Egypt, far from any family pressure or patriarchal rules. Clearly Joseph's conscience was involved. Adultery violated his moral sense. He likely could "feel" that it was wrong to take what did not belong to him, another man's wife. And this feeling could have been strengthened by his having reflected on the fact that a man and his wife are "one flesh," a fact with which Adam was well acquainted. (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4,5) Also, he would have heard of the experiences of Abraham and Isaac, which did not show approval of adultery. (Gen. 20:1-18; 26:7-11) Hence, even without a law against adultery Joseph's conscience could move him to reject it.

¹⁰ But if Adam passed on to his descendants a measure of conscience, should not Potiphar's wife, too, have sensed that adultery was wrong? Yes, though obviously she let passion control her. The Egyptians, along with people earth wide, realized that adultery was a grave moral offense. Their oldest religious texts associated the Last Judgment with the weighing of the "heart." And over what was one judged? The ancient Egyptian "Book of the Dead" depicts the deceased as declaring his innocence, saying, 'I have not robbed. I have

not killed men. I have not lied. I have not defiled any man's wife.' So, it must be that conscience led them to *sense the wrongness of adultery*. Bringing conscience into the picture, historian Josephus later wrote of Joseph's urging Potiphar's wife to shun a lust that would bring remorse and suffering, but to be faithful to her husband and enjoy "a good conscience."

¹¹ Additionally, we find both Biblical and non-Biblical descriptions that illustrate a functioning conscience. On one occasion King David of Israel had a census of the nation taken. The Bible describes David's reaction when he realized that he had sinned. Showing the operation of conscience, the Bible says that "David's heart began to beat him." (2 Sam. 24:1-10) A similar effect of a smitten conscience is mentioned in an ancient cuneiform tablet that gives the prayer of a Babylonian who had sinned. He implored his god to listen "on account of his breast, which complains like a resounding flute."

¹² All of this shows that we have a conscience because of inheriting intelligence and a moral sense from Adam. Thus, even nations that knew nothing of the Mosaic law, given by God, forbade things such as stealing, lying, incest, murder and adultery. Yes, though they "do not have law," they "do by nature the things of the law." The apostle Paul highlighted the basis for their moral standards, saying, "their conscience [Greek, *synei'desis*] is bearing witness with them and, between their own thoughts, they are being accused or even excused." (Rom. 2:14, 15) So universal is the God-given faculty of conscience that one encyclopedia states: "No culture has yet been found in which conscience is not recognized as a fact." And regarding individuals who seem to "have no conscience," Dr. Geoffrey Stephenson wrote: "It was,

9. Why did Joseph reject adultery as a "sin against God"?

10. What evidence is there that other peoples, too, inherited the faculty of conscience?

11. How do both Biblical and non-Biblical sources illustrate a functioning conscience?

12. (a) So, what can correctly be concluded about the faculty of conscience, as pointed out by the apostle Paul? (b) Is conscience manifested by all people?

and still is by some, regarded as a genuine form of insanity or psychosis.”—Compare Titus 1:15.

CONSCIENCE—ITS OPERATION AND TRAINING

¹³ Hence, can we simply “do by nature the things of the law”? No, more is needed. Just understanding the true source of conscience and how it is that we have that faculty does not assure us that we are fully benefiting from it. Recall that the ancient Egyptians had certain moral standards that manifested the effects of conscience. But was that sufficient in itself? Did that alone protect them from every improper thing? Their repulsive worship of animals, rendering “sacred service to the creation rather than the One who created,” proves that merely having a degree of conscience was not sufficient. (Rom. 1:20-25) Consequently, we need to know more than just that we have a conscience. We ought to know how it operates, how it can be trained and what God says about our using it in daily life.

¹⁴ The Biblical examples we have considered illustrate two essential ways in which your conscience can and should function. Likely the most commonly-thought-of operation of conscience is that of looking back and judging one's past moral performance. We noted this function in the case of Adam's sin and the experience of David after he had acted improperly. Their consciences smote them. Have you not felt your conscience operating in this way? This inner voice of conscience afflicting those who have done wrong can be so insistent that they take drastic action to clear their conscience or they may be pained by their conscience for years.

¹⁵ A far more important effect, though,

of this operation of conscience is that it may move one to godly repentance. David wrote: “When I kept silent my bones wore out through my groaning all day long. My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover. I said: ‘I shall make confession over my transgressions to Jehovah.’ And you yourself pardoned the error of my sins.” (Ps. 32:3, 5) Thus, your functioning conscience can bring you back to God, aiding you to recognize the need to have his forgiveness and to follow his ways in the future.—Ps. 51:1-4, 9, 13-15.

¹⁶ The other function of conscience is its operation ahead of time in guiding and advising one who needs to make a moral choice or decision. Lecturer Eric D'Arcy observed: “In the pagan writers conscience did not appear on the scene until *after* the action was performed, and its role was purely *judicial*; but in [the Bible], conscience is credited with a legislative function.” It was this aspect of conscience that enabled Joseph to sense beforehand that he must not commit adultery. He followed his conscience in rejecting a course that was against his moral sense. Has your conscience functioned in this way? Is it aiding you as it should?

¹⁷ Both of these functions of our conscience need attention and training if we are to be guided and benefited by it. That neither aspect can be ignored or suppressed is evident from what occurs when that has been done. Normally, as a result of inheriting it from Adam, a person's conscience might prick him or signal him that it is wrong to lie or steal. This is similar to the signal you get when your hand comes near a flame; your built-in sense receptors alert you to the danger and you can pull your hand away. But what if you

13. Why is more needed than just knowing that we have a conscience?

14. What is one way in which your conscience operates?

15. This can help you in what important way?

16. How else can and should your conscience function?
17, 18. (a) What danger exists if a person suppresses his conscience? (b) In what condition would this leave one?

had already developed a heavy callous on that part of your hand, or maybe your hand was badly scarred from a previous burn? In that case your senses might be blocked; the callous or scar tissue would make the area insensitive, unresponsive. In like manner the conscience can become deadened if it is repeatedly ignored or suppressed. The apostle Paul wrote about men "whose consciences are as dead as seared flesh." (1 Tim. 4:2, J. B. Phillips) Such men, without pangs of conscience, could lie, act hypocritically or intentionally mislead Christians, as Paul said.

¹⁸ Consequently, an ignored or suppressed conscience not only no longer pains a person after he has done wrong, but it fails to provide reliable guidance beforehand. Persons in that situation were described in Ephesians 4:19: "Their sense of right and wrong once dulled, they have abandoned themselves to sexuality and eagerly pursue a career of indecency of every kind." (*Jerusalem Bible*) It is easy to understand why Hitler wanted to bring people into that condition. Their conscience would not restrain them at all, but they could do anything asked of them, no matter how debased. Surely we want to avoid becoming like that, but, rather, want to keep our conscience functioning and responsive.

¹⁹ The Bible is an invaluable aid in this. Since it presents the greatest indications we have as to God's qualities and ways, it can aid us to become attuned to his image. Thus the psalmist sang: "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Your spirit is good; may it lead me in the land of uprightness." (Ps. 143:10) The more we learn of and appreciate his dealings and will, the more we will strengthen the influence of godly conscience in our lives.

19. How is the Bible an aid to one's having a functioning conscience?

(Ps. 119:1-16) The inner voice becomes stronger and clearer, just as through cultivation and training the soloist gains more accurate voice and hearing and the watchmaker sharpens his sight.

²⁰ The Bible contains clear laws or commands from God against some grave moral offenses, such as stealing, lying, adultery and murder. Such wrongs were forbidden in the Law he gave to Israel, and the prohibitions are repeated in God's counsel for Christians. (Ex. 20:13-16; Eph. 4:28; Col. 3:9; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Rev. 21:8) Hence, even if by his upbringing or experience in life, a person's conscience had been deadened to any of these sins, he could easily see from the Bible that they are wrong. There would be no basis to say, 'But my conscience did not bother me; I did not feel it was wrong.' Additionally, such laws would allow those responsible for the Christian congregation to act so as to protect its members from any practitioner of sin. He would be disfellowshipped or cut off.—1 Cor. 5:11-13.

²¹ But in addition to laws against gross wrongs, the Scriptures contain many principles of conduct that reflect God's personality, ways and standards. These are broad indications of how we can be in his image. While numerous examples of Bible principles could be cited, note the clear indications that God is just and impartial. First of all, we are told that directly. (Deut. 32:4; Job 34:10, 12; Acts 10:34, 35) And this is backed up with instances of God's displaying such qualities. For instance, when an anointed king of Israel sinned and acted unjustly toward some of his subjects, Jehovah plainly showed the wrongness of his course. And, in accord with God's own justice, he did not exempt from punishment even the king. (2 Sam.

20. Since conscience is inherited, why does the Bible contain laws against certain moral offenses?

21. Of what additional value are Bible principles?

chaps. 11, 12) By our impressing on our heart and mind such principles of conduct and indications of God's personality, we fortify our conscience so that it acts in a reliable way. Thus we read: "In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."—Prov. 3: 6; Ps. 16:8.

²² Having learned that God is just and impartial, would not your conscience be more responsive to injustice or partiality toward others? Perhaps you were raised with a prejudice against individuals of a certain background, and so it did not bother you to discriminate against them. If you were waiting on customers in a store, you might have tended to ignore such ones or treat them with less care or kindness. But then you learned from the Bible of God's justice and that he urges justice and impartiality on the part of those who would have his approval. (Mic. 6:8; Prov. 24:23) And you came to appreciate that all humans are from the same original human parents, Adam and Eve. (Acts 17: 26; Gen. 3:20) Confronted with a similar situation in which in the past you would have acted unjustly, the "voice" of your conscience now urges you to act with justice and impartiality. Also, if you should go ahead and follow your former prejudice, likely afterward your conscience would afflict you. It would be as if you heard a voice within condemning you for taking a course you knew to be wrong. So you can see that your conscience has received training, it has been sharpened, become more responsive. Now it provides better guidance for you, bringing you closer to God's image.

²³ As mentioned, we today are confronted with widespread moral change and breakdown. This makes it increasingly dif-

ficult for those who want to cooperate with the voice of their conscience. Also, does it not seem that life is getting ever more complicated? There seem to be so many factors that have to be considered in making a decision. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter once observed: "There is hardly a question of any real difficulty before the Court that does not entail more than one so-called principle. Anybody can decide a question if only a single principle is in controversy."

²⁴ Nonetheless, the more comprehensive our knowledge of the divine principles found in the Bible is, the better able we are to weigh matters and decide. When faced with a question or decision, we can reflect on Bible principles that seem to apply. Depending on the nature of the matter, the principles might be ones such as: respect headship (Col. 3:18, 20); be honest in all things (Heb. 13:18); hate what is bad (Ps. 97:10); pursue what makes for peace (Rom. 14:19); obey governmental authorities (Rom. 13:1; Matt. 22:21); render exclusive devotion to God (Matt. 4:10); avoid bad association (1 Cor. 15:33); do not stumble others (Phil. 1:9, 10). While the principles themselves will help us, by our increasing our knowledge of and appreciation for God's principles and ways, the voice of our conscience will be more reliable. Paul said that his conscience was a 'witness-bearer.' (Rom. 9:1) Our will be too. The proddings of our conscience that has been trained by God's Word will help us to reflect God's personality and qualities in our decisions.

²⁵ Thus, we all have available for our guidance a measure of conscience, provided by God. But by increasing our knowledge of God's qualities and principles, our conscience can become even more valuable in guiding our steps and making decisions.

22. Give an example of an important Bible principle. How might this affect one's conscience, with what benefit to the individual?

23. Why is it increasingly difficult to decide matters today?

24, 25. (a) What can we do when faced with a complicated decision? (b) How, then, will our conscience be of aid to us?

Are You Guided by

A SENSITIVE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE?

WHAT vast changes have been made by many who have become Christians! Persons in ancient Corinth who became Christians had been fornicators, idolaters, homosexuals, thieves and drunkards. But upon hearing and applying the truth of God's Word, they changed and were "washed clean." (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Do you know of persons who have made similar changes? Perhaps, with God's help, you yourself have done so.

² How fine it is when persons who are touched by the Christian message move away from matching the description in Titus 1:15: "To persons defiled and faithless nothing is clean, but both their minds and their consciences are defiled." Yet, more than just avoiding flagrant moral wrongs, as a person learns of God's laws and principles he develops a more sensitive conscience. Has not your own conscience become more responsive as you have increased in knowledge and appreciation of God's will and personality? This is something highly desirable. Having and responding to a properly sensitive Christian conscience can help you to gain God's favor, can make your life more peaceful, sparing you the pain that often comes to those who have a defiled conscience, and can aid you to live a life that exemplifies true Christianity.—Compare 1 Peter 3:21.

CONSCIENCE—HOW SENSITIVE?

³ Without question, as Christians we do not want a conscience that is "defiled" or "seared," for such a conscience would be of no value in aiding us to reflect God's image. (Eph. 4:19) On the other hand, our conscience should not become sensitive in an exaggerated or unbalanced way; we being imperfect humans, that might occur if we are not careful.

⁴ For example, a person might recognize that Jehovah is not backing the wars of the nations, but that he urges his people to learn the ways of peace. (Isa. 2:4) Knowing that usually the nations support their armies with tax money, would it be balanced and Scriptural for his conscience to lead him to refuse to pay taxes? Or to pay his taxes minus a percentage corresponding to what the government spends on its defense budget? While some persons have taken such a stand, the Bible evidence weighs against a conscience that leads to such a course. Christians are plainly told to pay their taxes, and this was put in the Bible despite the fact that the then-existing Roman government supported a vast army. (Matt. 22:17-21; Rom. 13:1, 7) Thus the Christian can, with a clear conscience balanced by God's Word, pay his taxes, leaving with the governments the responsibility of how the money is used.

1. In what way has the Bible's truth affected persons?
2. What is the effect of God's Word on one's conscience, and why is this beneficial?

3. Regarding conscience, Christians want to avoid what?
4. How might an oversensitive or unbalanced conscience move one to act regarding taxes?

⁵ By the same token, this Bible counsel should mold a person's conscience so that he pays all his taxes. Is that how your conscience moves you? Or has your conscience been influenced by the common prevalence of tax evasion? As an illustration, if your circumstances have changed—perhaps the children got married and left your home, meaning higher taxes for you—has your conscience moved you to report the facts and pay the full tax? True, the likelihood of one's tax return being carefully audited and the facts detected might be slim. But for the Christian with a properly sensitive conscience, desire to avoid punishment is not the sole reason for acting properly; conscience is also a factor. Do you find that to be so in your case?

⁶ In this connection Paul wrote: "There is therefore compelling reason for you people to be in subjection, not only on account of that wrath [against lawbreakers] but also on account of your conscience." (Rom. 13:5) Thus your sensitive and properly balanced Christian conscience should be a restraining and guiding force for good. Is it? Just how sensitive and helpful is your conscience? Let us consider a few illustrations that may help us in deciding.

CONSCIENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

⁷ Employment is an area that brings up many problems calling for the exercise of Christian conscience. Some forms of employment, such as making idols, working in a gambling establishment or being employed by a false religious organization, are clearly contrary to the Scriptures. So Christians shun these. (1 John 5:21; Col. 3:5; Rev. 18:2, 4, 5) Not all employment matters, though, are that clear-cut. Certain employment may be in a "gray area," so to speak. And sometimes, while one's

basic work is unobjectionable, one may be asked occasionally to do something questionable. So conscience can be involved.

⁸ For example, there are employment problems involving blood. The Bible states plainly that God's servants should not feed on blood. (Gen. 9:3, 4; Acts 15:19, 20) Hence, Jehovah's Christian witnesses do not eat food containing blood, such as blood sausage, or accept blood transfusions. But what if, on your job you were asked to handle blood or blood products occasionally? Would your conscience permit that? A Witness in Colorado worked in a hospital as the chief medical technician running tests of various types on body tissue and fluid. Among the many things he was expected to test were blood samples. Sometimes it was simply to check a patient's blood for the level of sugar or cholesterol. But at other times it was to cross match for transfusion purposes. Could he do that?

⁹ This Christian gave careful thought to the matter. It could be seen that it would not be right for a Christian to work exclusively for a blood bank, where everything was devoted to an end that was in violation of God's law. But that was not his situation; he ran tests of many kinds. Also, if one were a doctor responsible for the decision, one could not order a blood transfusion for a patient, any more than a Christian store owner could order and stock idols or cigarettes. However, this technician realized that in connection with blood he was merely running a test, even as a nurse might have taken the sample, a messenger might have delivered it to the laboratory and someone else might administer a transfusion or other medication on a doctor's orders. He reflected on the principle at Deuteronomy 14:21. According to that text a Jew finding a carcass

5, 6. (a) On the other hand, how should a properly sensitive conscience affect one in this regard? (b) How does the Bible bear this out?

7. How does conscience enter the picture as to one's employment?

8, 9. (a) Illustrate an employment problem calling for the use of conscience. (b) What considerations came to that Christian's mind at the time?

of an animal that died of itself could clear it away by selling it to a foreigner who was not under the Law's restrictions about animal flesh not drained of its blood. So the technician's conscience at that time allowed him to run blood tests, including those of blood for transfusions to patients who did not care about God's law on blood.

¹⁰ Is that how your conscience would have reacted? If not, for the sake of discussion, ask yourself whether your conscience would permit you as an employee to bring the blood sample to the laboratory for testing. Or, taking yet another step farther away from the actual transfusion, could you as a truck driver deliver the testing equipment to the hospital? Or would your conscience let you make glass from which such equipment might be produced? It is clear that not all these things reasonably can be viewed as direct contributions to violating God's law on blood. But where does one "draw the line"? Here is where conscience comes into play. While the Christian must avoid things that are unmistakably in conflict with God's law, he is called upon to use his conscience in settling many matters. Would your conscience serve you well in such situations? Is it sensitive?

¹¹ In this particular case, after many years of running tests, the technician began to be troubled by his conscience. It was not as if someone else should or could tell him that he was doing wrong. Nor was he looking for someone else to make his decisions for him. But he began to think: "Is it consistent to talk of neighbor love, and yet contribute, in part, to my neighbor's breaking of God's law?" (Matt. 22:39; Acts 21:25) Appreciating his Christian duty to support his family, he discussed the matter with his wife. (1 Tim. 5:8) Together they agreed that, if his con-

science was troubled, it would be better to make a change. He left his \$15,000-a-year job and began doing cleaning work, though he started off earning just \$3,600 a year.

¹² Let us not miss the point of this example. It is not related here to suggest that a Christian cannot be a medical technician; there are Christians who continue to work as medical technicians, nurses, truck drivers, and so forth. This example is given to illustrate that conscience can come into play on matters of employment. In your case the type of job and what you are asked to do may be quite different. But all Christians should give thought to whether they are living as closely as possible in accord with God's ways and principles. If your conscience trained by God's Word is pained because of what is asked of you, will you ignore it? Just how important is it to you to have a clear conscience before God and men?—1 Tim. 1:5, 19.

¹³ Of course, we cannot altogether avoid employment problems, for we are still in this system of things. (1 Cor. 5:9, 10) Thus you likely realize that you may not be able to move your boss to cultivate a Christian conscience. He may choose to disregard certain laws, he may exaggerate the merits of his products or he may stock some items that you would not if you owned the business. Or your fellow workers may lie on their production reports or loaf when the boss is not nearby. Still, *you* can and should respond to *your* conscience. So if it does not allow you to do certain things or if you are ridiculed for your hard work, accept that. The apostle Peter wrote: "If someone, because of conscience toward God, bears up under grievous things and suffers unjustly, this is an agreeable thing."—1 Pet. 2:18, 19.

10. What questions can we consider as to how we would resolve this employment problem?

11. How did conscience move this same Christian many years later?

12. Does this mean that his earlier decision was wrong, or just what is illustrated by this case?

13. How can we each beneficially give thought to our employment?

SENSITIVE CONSCIENCES DIFFER

¹⁴ Another area that might involve your conscience has to do with patriotic matters, such as patriotic exercises in public places. Just how does your conscience cause you to react? This is an appropriate question, for in this and other areas consciences differ.

¹⁵ Jehovah's Christian witnesses appreciate that many people have deep sentiments regarding patriotic acts, probably the most common being saluting or pledging allegiance to the national flag. As the book *Essays on Nationalism* by Carlton Hayes points out: "Nationalism's chief symbol of faith and central object of worship is the flag, and curious liturgical forms have been devised for 'saluting' the flag . . ." While recognizing fully the freedom that others have in these matters, Christian witnesses of Jehovah, moved by their understanding of the Bible, abstain from such acts.—John 17:16; 1 Cor. 10:14.

¹⁶ But what course will your conscience motivate you to follow when a patriotic exercise is conducted? For instance, perhaps the audience that you are a part of is asked to *stand and salute* the national flag. As a Christian you would definitely avoid performing any act of idolatry. Yet, will your conscience allow you to stand? One Christian in this situation might conclude that he ought to remain seated, for in that way he personally feels sure that he is not involved in the ceremony. Is that how your conscience would move you? Another Christian in the same circumstance might decide to stand. He realizes that it is not as if all that was asked of one to show full participation was to stand. The audience is asked to stand *and salute*. He might recall how the three Hebrews apparently stood before, but refused to bow down to the image set up by Nebu-

chadnezzar. Consequently, he might conclude that in this case full participation involves both standing *and saluting*, so his own conscience allows him simply to stand respectfully without saluting.—Dan. 3:1-18.

¹⁷ As can be seen, with two Christians in the same sort of situation, conscience might motivate them to slightly different conclusions, though both refrain from what the Bible proves is improper. (Ex. 20:4, 5; 1 John 5:21) Such variation allowed for by the operation of conscience is not an evidence of confusion or lack of unity among Christians. Nor is it proof that one of the two definitely is wrong. Instead, such variation can be viewed as an expected effect of gaining and using Christian conscience.

¹⁸ Is this to your benefit? Is following one's conscience superior to following a "rule"? Yes, your being willing to train and respond to your conscience, in contrast to following a "talmud" of rules on every possible question and variation that might arise, does benefit you. It helps you to be more thoughtfully conscious of Bible principles. And without question you become better able to think clearly, your mind being stimulated and strengthened. Such a beneficial result was highlighted in an Australian study of "creativity" among twelve-year-olds. The report on this observed:

"In particular, a disproportionately large number of highly creative children were Jehovah's Witnesses. Four children from the total sample of 394 were members of this sect, and all four showed high creative ability. The girl who gained the highest total score on the Torrance tests, and the girl who was the only child, male or female, to be included in the top 20 percent of all five performance measures, were both Jehovah's Witnesses."—*Journal of Personality*, March 1973.

17. Does this indicate that something is wrong? What is the reason for the possible difference?

18. How can we benefit from being guided by conscience even though doing so may allow for variation from person to person?

14, 15. (a) What is another area involving conscience? (b) What is the basic attitude of Christians concerning the matter?

16. Conscience might lead two Christians to what two courses?

What explanation was offered for the outstanding creativity of these Witness children? The study specifically called attention to the fact that they do not just passively conform in patriotic exercises in school. Rather, they weigh the principles of God's Word and cultivate responsiveness to a sensitive Christian conscience.

**SENSITIVE, YET NOT ALWAYS
MORE RESTRICTIVE**

¹⁹ We have seen that as your conscience is trained and brought more in line with God's ways and revealed will, it usually becomes more restrictive. It no longer permits you to do certain things that you formerly did, for you now view these as contrary to godly principles. Yet, training your conscience by God's Word does not necessarily mean becoming more restrictive in *everything*. Your properly trained conscience actually may come to permit you to do some things that, before knowing God's will, you felt were improper.

²⁰ What makes the difference in such cases is accurate knowledge. This is illustrated in Paul's comments about meat that had been offered to an idol but that was later sold in a meat market or in a sort of restaurant connected with an idol temple. A person who had recently abandoned pagan worship and become a Christian might shun such meat, wanting to avoid anything at all related to an idol. Yet in time he might increase in knowledge and understanding. Paul wrote: "We *know* that an idol is nothing . . . and that there is no God but one." (1 Cor. 8:4) Coming to appreciate this, the Christian might discern that publicly sold meat was not defiled or poisoned just because it once had been offered to a no-god. With this knowledge his strengthened conscience might permit him to buy such meat at a meat

market or in a public restaurant.—1 Cor. 8:10; 10:25.

²¹ The same effect can be true of conscience today. For instance, one young man in Ohio grew up with the conviction that Christians should not drink alcoholic beverages. He even had memorized the warnings against drunkenness and the description of the drunkard recorded in Proverbs chapter 23. In later years when he became a dedicated servant of God his conscience still would not permit him to accept any wine or beer. Then he heard and gave thoughtful consideration to a lecture that outlined exactly what the Scriptures say about alcohol. It showed that the Bible unquestionably condemns drunkenness. (Prov. 23:20, 21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3) Still the Bible does not forbid *moderate* consumption of alcoholic beverages, even as Jesus once made wine and drank it on occasion. (Gen. 14:18; Ps. 104:15; Eccl. 9:7; John 2:3-11; Luke 22:17, 18) Though he had known those texts, he now saw the balanced conclusion to which they led. Thus when later an Italian man hospitably offered him a small glass of wine, this Christian's conscience permitted him to accept it.

²² Have you experienced such a strengthening and balancing of your conscience as you increased in knowledge of God's Word and ways? If so, you likely also appreciate the importance of taking into consideration the feelings of the one whose conscience may differ from yours. This was the point that Paul was making in discussing meat that had been offered to an idol that actually was "nothing." He wrote: "Nevertheless, there is not this knowledge in all persons." (1 Cor. 8:4, 7) Because of their past devotion to idols, some Christians could not with a clear con-

19, 20. (a) Why is a sensitive conscience not always more restrictive? (b) How did Paul show this in discussing meat and idols?

21. How is this same effect evident today?

22. What very important factor cannot be overlooked by one with a strengthened conscience?

science eat such meat even though it was sold publicly. If a Christian having "knowledge" and a strong conscience went ahead and ate "everything," it could ruin a brother "for whose sake Christ died." So Paul declared: "If [such meat] makes my brother stumble, I will never eat flesh at all."—1 Cor. 8:10-13; 10:27-29.

²³ Is that how you feel? For example, there may be something that appears to be allowed by what you know of God's revealed will and that your conscience would permit. It may be some aspect of your dress or grooming, what decorations you put up in your home or what you do for recreation. But what if the conscience of many others around you leads them to feel that it is not fitting for a Christian? Does your Christianity move you to conclude happily, 'If this makes my brother stumble, I will never do it, that I may not make my brother stumble'?

²⁴ And the consciences of others should be considered in another respect. Perhaps you have taken a liking to a certain modern fashion or mode of grooming. Your conscience is not disturbed by it. But as a minor or a married woman you must seek permission from your father or husband. Have you considered his conscience? Or if you are interested in a special privilege of service in the Christian congregation, the conscience of the body of elders comes into the picture. (1 Tim. 3:9) True, they realize that grooming involves each one's personal taste. But if they are asked to recommend you for special service, their conscience has to be at rest. They have a heavy responsibility as respects the *good name of Christianity* in the community, appreciating that those appointed to special privileges should be exemplary. (1 Tim. 3:2, 7, 10; 5:22) Hence, if some-

thing that your conscience permits conflicts with the conscience of those having authority or headship over you, whether your parents, husband or Christian overseers, be willing to make adjustments so that they can give permission or make a recommendation with a "good conscience."

CULTIVATE A SENSITIVE CONSCIENCE

²⁵ Developing and following a properly sensitive conscience calls for constant attention. It is ever so easy to be unduly influenced by those in the world around us whose conscience is too lenient, or is dulled or even defiled. (Titus 1:15) Many matters will come up that you must resolve in accord with your *own* conscience. If you have worked to cultivate a sensitive Christian conscience, that will help you. Be willing to listen carefully to the voice of your conscience, not feeling that if it is "up to your conscience" it does not matter what you do. It does. The decision you make may affect your entire outlook on life, your reputation as a Christian, your spirituality and, most importantly, your relationship with Jehovah God.

²⁶ In a matter of serious concern, but still one that is up to your conscience, do not hesitate to speak with mature Christians, such as the elders in the congregation. Of course, they cannot decide for you. (One sincere Christian, when inquiring about a certain family matter, asked: "Is this against Christian conscience?") No, an elder will not be able to tell you how your conscience should react, but he may be able to share with you balanced Bible counsel that you can evaluate. And if your conscience has been molded by Jehovah's ways and personality and it is responsive to His principles, you will thus be aided to make your way straight. (Ps. 25:4, 5)

23. In what way should the conscience of others be involved in our decisions?

24. What should we do if our conscience conflicts with the conscience of someone having authority over us? Why give consideration to his conscience?

25. What does it mean if a matter is "up to your conscience"?

26, 27. (a) In what way can speaking with an elder assist one, but what can he not do? (b) How will a sensitive conscience aid us?

Your sensitive conscience will help to guide you.

²⁷ Truly there is satisfaction in having and being able to use the God-given faculty of conscience. It is a blessing. When it is kept properly sensitive, balanced by God's

Word, it can assist you in walking wisely before God and men. (2 Cor. 4:2) It can serve as a witness-bearer that you are conducting yourself in a way likely to have Jehovah's everlasting approval.—2 Cor. 1:12.

A HIGHLY FAVORED FAMILY

—WHY?

WOULD it not be an honor for a family to have as one of its members a man who could provide the means for bringing lasting relief from sickness, pain, insecurity and violence? Over nineteen centuries ago there was such a family. It was the family into which Jesus, the Messiah or Christ, was born.

Of all the families then in existence, why was this one so highly favored? Was it because of its prominence, wealth or outstanding achievements in the Roman world? We should not expect that to be the case. Because Jehovah God does not judge by outward appearances but examines the heart—its motivations and desires. (1 Sam. 16:7) A consideration of the Biblical record about the human relatives of the man Jesus can, therefore, aid us in seeing what the Creator looks for in those whom he approves as his servants.

MARY

The Messiah was to come through the royal line of David. And it was a modest and humble woman of the Davidic line,

Mary the daughter of Heli,* whom Jehovah chose to be the mother of his Son. When told of this, Mary, with due modesty, replied: "Look! Jehovah's slave girl!" For her to become pregnant as an engaged virgin could have raised questions in the minds of others about her professed chastity. Nevertheless, she humbly consented to God's will, saying to the angel Gabriel: "May it take place with me according to your declaration." (Luke 1:38) Evidently, strong faith in Jehovah God made her confident that willing submission to his will could never lead to harm.

Mary was devoted to true worship. Though, being a woman, she was not obligated by the Mosaic law to be present for the festival of the passover, yet she customarily attended that festival at Jerusalem along with her husband Joseph. (Luke 2:41; Ex. 23:17; 34:23) Her appreciation for spiritual things did not diminish with the passing of years. In fact, she became a loyal disciple of Jesus Christ.

* As shown at Matthew 1:16, Joseph was the son of Jacob; evidently, therefore, his being referred to in Luke 3:23 as the son of Heli is to be understood as meaning the son-in-law of Heli.

After Jesus' ascension to heaven she continued to assemble with the apostles, persisting in prayer with them and others. She was evidently among the about 120 disciples who received the holy spirit on Pentecost in 33 C.E.—Acts 1:14; 2:1-4.

JOSEPH

Mary's husband, the carpenter Joseph, was a righteous man who quickly responded to divine direction. Before his being united in marriage to Mary, he learned that she was pregnant. Not yet acquainted with the full facts, he wanted to handle the situation as mercifully as possible. Therefore he sought to avoid making a public spectacle of Mary when formally dissolving the engagement, which was then considered just as binding as marriage. However, upon learning the true circumstances and being given divine direction in a dream, Joseph unhesitatingly took Mary as his wife.—Matt. 1:19-24.

A comparison of Luke 2:22-24 with Leviticus 12:8 shows that Joseph was materially poor. Yet he took his whole family yearly to Jerusalem for the celebration of the passover. (Luke 2:41) Doubtless his appreciation for sacred things contributed to an atmosphere that was well suited for Jesus to 'continue growing and getting

strong, being filled with wisdom.' (Luke 2:40) Joseph evidently also taught Jesus carpentry.—Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3.

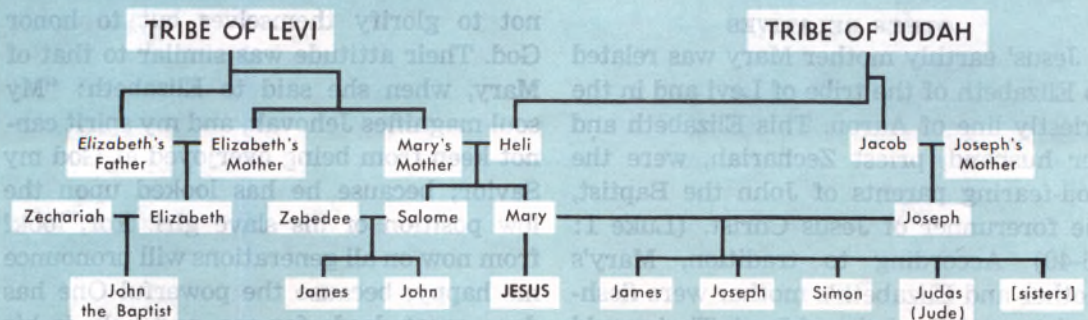
The Bible does not mention anything about Joseph's view of Jesus' preaching. It may be that he was already dead at the time that his adopted son was immersed by John the Baptist. Joseph doubtless did not live to see Jesus' impalement. Had he been alive, it is unlikely that the impaled Jesus would have entrusted Mary to the care of the apostle John.—John 19:26, 27.

HALF BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Jesus was Mary's "firstborn" son, but he was not an only son in the family of Joseph and Mary. (Luke 2:7) The Scriptures quote those who knew Jesus as saying: "Where did this man get this wisdom and these powerful works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Where, then, did this man get all these things?"—Matt. 13:54-56.

The fact that Jesus was a son in a large family explains an event that took place when he was about twelve years of age. The family was returning to Nazareth from the Passover celebration at Jerusalem. Though Jesus was missing, Joseph

RELATIVES OF JESUS



[Listed are only those for which there is at least some [though not always conclusive] Scriptural support.]

and Mary did not discover this until after having traveled for a day. They assumed that he was in the company of relatives or acquaintances. If there had been only one child for them to look after, it would be hard to imagine how such a thing could have happened.—Luke 2:42-45.

During the first three years of Jesus' earthly ministry, his half brothers did not exercise faith in him. (John 7:5) But by the time of Pentecost of the year 33 C.E. this had changed. After his resurrection, Jesus had "appeared to James," evidently his half brother. This doubtless contributed to building up the conviction, not only of James, but also of Jesus' other half brothers, that Jesus was the Messiah. Thereafter Jesus' half brothers met with the eleven faithful apostles and others in an upper room at Jerusalem and were evidently among those who received the holy spirit.—1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 1:14-26; 2:1-4.

Jesus' half brother apparently was the James who served as an elder in the Jerusalem congregation and he evidently wrote the inspired "Letter of James." (Acts 12:17; Jas. 1:1) The Jude who wrote a letter that became part of the Bible canon was likely James' brother. Neither of these writers capitalized on their fleshly relationship to Jesus but humbly acknowledged themselves to be 'slaves of Jesus Christ.'—Jas. 1:1; Jude 1.

OTHER RELATIVES

Jesus' earthly mother Mary was related to Elizabeth of the tribe of Levi and in the priestly line of Aaron. This Elizabeth and her husband, priest Zechariah, were the God-fearing parents of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ. (Luke 1:36-40) According to tradition, Mary's mother and Elizabeth's mother were fleshly sisters of the tribe of Levi. That would mean that Mary and Elizabeth were first

cousins and John the Baptist and Jesus were second cousins. The Bible, however, does not reveal just how Mary and Elizabeth were related.

Salome, the wife of Zebedee and the mother of two of Jesus' apostles, James and John, may have been a sister of Mary. There is some Scriptural support (though not conclusive) for this traditional view. John 19:25 reads: "By the torture stake of Jesus . . . there were standing his mother and the sister of his mother; Mary the wife of Clopas [Alphaeus], and Mary Magdalene." At Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40, mention is made of Salome or the mother of the sons of Zebedee in connection with the same incident. Hence, if the same women are referred to as at John 19:25, Salome would be the sister of Mary. This would mean that Jesus' faithful apostles James and John were his cousins.

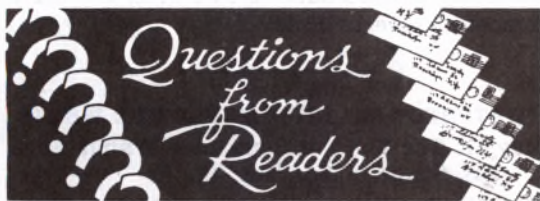
Tradition claims that Jesus was related to yet another family. The husband of the "other Mary," Clopas or Alphaeus, referred to at John 19:25, was supposedly the brother of Joseph. This would make another apostle, James the son of Alphaeus, a cousin of Jesus.—Matt. 10:3; 27:56, 61; Acts 1:13.

Whether tradition is correct or not, among those whom the Scriptures definitely identify as Jesus' relatives there were men and women of outstanding faith and devotion. Their main objective was not to glorify themselves but to honor God. Their attitude was similar to that of Mary, when she said to Elizabeth: "My soul magnifies Jehovah, and my spirit cannot keep from being overjoyed at God my Savior; because he has looked upon the low position of his slave girl. For, look! from now on all generations will pronounce me happy; because the powerful One has done great deeds for me, and holy is his name; and for generations after genera-

tions his mercy is upon those who fear him. He has performed mightily with his arm, he has scattered abroad those who are haughty in the intention of their hearts. He has brought down men of power from thrones and exalted lowly ones; he has fully satisfied hungry ones with good things and he has sent away empty those who had wealth. He has come to the aid

of Israel his servant, to call to mind mercy, just as he told to our forefathers, to Abraham and to his seed, forever.”—Luke 1: 46-55.

Truly God's choice of the family into which his Son was born reveals that heart appreciation for sacred things is of real value in his eyes. Are you developing such heart appreciation?



● If, for taking a course in harmony with the Scriptures, a Christian were to be arrested and then sentenced by worldly authorities to pay a fine, would it be an act of compromise to pay it? If given the option of either paying the fine or serving a sentence in jail, would this alter matters?

Jesus Christ foretold that his followers would be 'delivered up to local courts' and be 'put on the stand before governors and kings for his sake, for the purpose of a witness to them.' (Mark 13:9) Such official action toward Christians may be due to their preaching the good news of the Kingdom or for some other action involving their Christian conscience. (Compare Acts 4:1-3, 18-21; 5:27-40; 1 Peter 4:15, 16.) A court may rule against them and the judgment may call for paying a fine. This may be the sole penalty or it may be as an option to going to jail or may be part of a combined punishment involving both jailing and the paying of a fine.

In the past Jehovah's witnesses have generally taken an adverse position toward paying fines where their preaching activities were involved. It was felt that paying the fine might be viewed as an admission of having committed an actual wrong. It was also felt that refusal to pay and suffering jailing instead might contribute to better success in the "defending and legally establishing of the good news." (Phil.

1:7) In many cases this accomplished much good, impressing authorities with the firmness of our determination as to serving God, and it manifestly had Jehovah's blessing. And in some cases today, due to prevailing circumstances, it may be viewed as a wise course to follow. The question that primarily concerns us here, however, is whether the paying of the fine is Scripturally acceptable or not.

Fines are mentioned in the Bible and were used in the Law covenant as a form of penalty or punishment. (Deut. 22:19; compare Exodus 21:29-32; Proverbs 19:19; 21:11.) Ezra 7:26 shows that the Persian officials listed a "money fine" as a form of punishment along with imprisonment, banishment and death. In modern times, as the 1973 *World Book Encyclopedia* states, "A fine is often the punishment for a *misdeemeanor* (minor crime)."

So a fine should not be confused with an effort by the offender to "buy" his way out of being imprisoned. It is not like the bribe that Governor Felix hoped to obtain from the apostle Paul and that Paul did not pay. (Acts 24:26, 27) A Christian, then, may rightly view a fine assessed against him as a form of punishment, and, even though he may be satisfied that he was guilty of no wrong, having acted in harmony with God's Word, his conscience may allow him to pay the fine in submission to the superior authorities of this world. (Rom. 13:1, 2; 1 Pet. 2:13, 14) While it is true that in the minds of some observers our payment of a fine may imply the stigma of guilt, it is also true that being imprisoned would carry the same stigma in the minds of most observers. We are not primarily concerned with the viewpoint of those of the world but with that of God. Whether we are paying a fine or serving a

prison sentence, it is all because of our insistence on 'obeying God as ruler rather than men.'—Read Acts 5:29, 32; Hebrews 10:34; Philipians 3:8, 9.

The granting of an option either of paying a fine or of being imprisoned generally reflects a measure of judicial mercy or clemency. Persons who are judged a genuine threat to the community usually are imprisoned, whereas fines are imposed as a less severe measure that allows the family life and employment of the individual to continue uninterrupted, the individual not being removed from family and community life by being confined to jail. There is nothing in the Scriptures that rules against a Christian's availing himself of this more lenient provision, nor do the Scriptures require us to take a course that will force authorities to show how deep their opposition to God's kingdom may go. (By contrast, compare the apostolic counsel at Romans 13:3, 4; Titus 3:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:13-16.) Where an option is presented of either paying a fine or undergoing imprisonment, then a Christian may feel that he can accomplish more for the advancement

of the good news by paying the fine and maintaining his freedom of action. It is a matter for individual decision according to one's conscience and careful judgment, and whether one decides to pay the fine or views it as better to endure imprisonment one's decision should not be subject to criticism by others in the congregation.

Fines may be imposed by others than governmental officials; for example, by trade unions in cases where a Christian's conscience will not allow him to engage in certain union activities that he finds contrary to Scriptural principles. Here, also, he may consider that his paying the fine is simply the suffering of an unjust penalty for being a Christian.—1 Pet. 2:19, 20; 3:17; compare Proverbs 17:26.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

May 11: The Voice of Conscience Within. Page 208. Songs to Be Used: 87, 70.

May 18: Are You Guided by a Sensitive Christian Conscience? Page 214. Songs to Be Used: 8, 24.