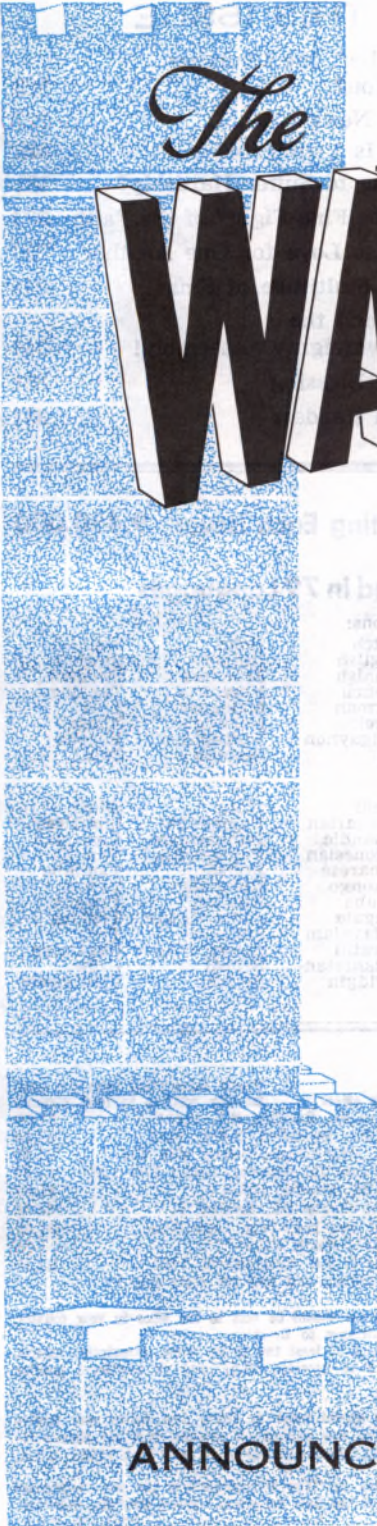




The **WATCHTOWER**

**Cultivate
INTENSE LOVE
FOR
ONE ANOTHER**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

MILLIONS HAVE LEFT THE CHURCHES

—Should You?

JUNE 1, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

June 1, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 11

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

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

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

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

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

IN THIS ISSUE

Millions Have Left the Churches —Should You?	323
Insight on the News	327
How Valuable Is Your Life?	328
Are You Willing to Suffer Hardship?	331
Rejoicing in "the Fine Fight" of the Faith	333
Cultivate Intense Love for One Another	336
Love Covers a Multitude of Sins	342
Be Sure to Attend the "Divine Sovereignty" Assembly!	349
An Unexpected Blessing	351
Questions from Readers	351

Average Printing Each Issue: 9,450,000

Now Published in 79 Languages

Semimonthly Editions:

Afrikaans	Dutch	Iloko	Spanish
Arabic	English	Italian	Swahili
Cebuano	Finnish	Japanese	Swedish
Chinese	French	Korean	Tagalog
Chishona	German	Malagasy	Thai
Cibemba	Greek	Norwegian	Xhosa
Cinyanja	Hiligaynon	Portuguese	Yoruba
Danish	Ibo	Sesotho	Zulu

Monthly Editions:

Armenian	Hindi	Motu	Siloz
Bengali	Hungarian	Pampango	Sinhalese
Bicol	Icelandic	Pangasinan	Slovenian
Bohemian	Indonesian	Papament	Tamil
Croatian	Kanarese	Polish	Tshiluba
Efik	Kikongo	Romanian	Tsonga
Ewe	Kiluba	Russian	Tswana
Fijian	Lingala	Samar-Leyte	Turkish
Ga	Malayalam	Samoan	Twi
Greenlandic	Marathi	Sango	Ukrainian
Gun	Melanesian-Pidgin	Sepedi	Urdu
Hebrew		Serbian	Vietnamese

Five cents a copy

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	\$1.50
Australia, 11 Berezford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	\$1.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5	\$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£1.80
Hawaii, 1228 Pensacola St., Honolulu 96814	\$1.50
New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	\$1.50
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	₦1.05
Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	P8
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, 1406	R1.10

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

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

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

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

MILLIONS HAVE LEFT THE CHURCHES

—Should You?



THE churches of Christendom involve nearly a thousand million persons. In recent years certain churches have grown rapidly. The publication *Religion in America 1975* shows that now 31 percent of the people think that religion is gaining in influence. In 1970 only 14 percent felt that way.

"At the same time, however, a majority (56 percent) currently say religion is *losing* influence," notes the same publication. A brief consideration of the attitudes and conduct of most members of Christendom's churches will reveal an interesting fact: Millions of church members do not take part in religious services or other church activities. Though their names may remain on church membership rolls, they have virtually, if not formally, left the churches. Consider:

MEMBERSHIP, ATTENDANCE DWINDLE

In the United States the United Methodist Church has lost some 150,000 members each year for the past five years. Certain other Protestant bodies in this country have lost from tens to hundreds of thousands of adherents during the

1970's. The same trend exists throughout the world. In some West German cities registrars report that they are kept busy by veritable lines of people who want to cancel their church membership. A comparison of figures in the 1975 *Britannica Book of the Year* with the volumes for 1974 and 1973 reveals a drop of 80,041,050 in the combined membership of Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant Churches throughout the world in just two years.

Besides direct losses, Christendom's churches have gained fewer and fewer new members in recent years. Church attendance, too, is very low. Polls taken in France show that, while more than 80 percent of French citizens are baptized Catholics, only about 20 percent attend church with any degree of regularity. A 1972 Canadian survey reveals that only 30 percent of Montreal's Catholics attend Mass and receive sacraments. In the United States the church attendance figure is just 40 percent for adult members.

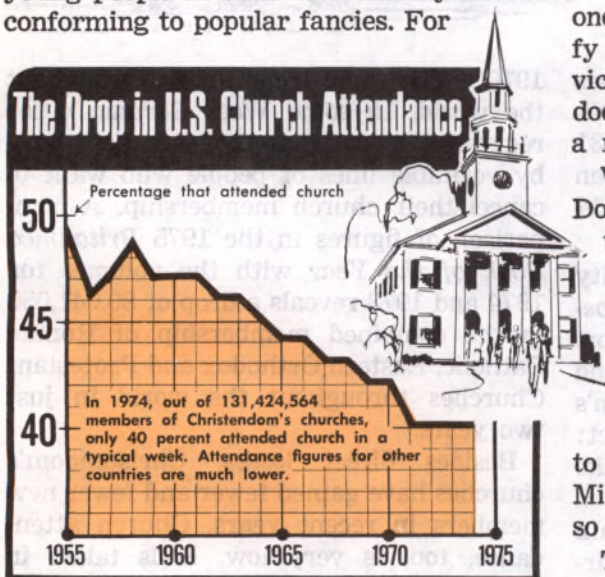
Why have so many millions of persons

turned their backs on the churches of Christendom?

WHY DO THEY LEAVE?

The reasons that people give for abandoning the churches are many and varied. Some in West Germany do it in order to be relieved of paying the church tax. More often, however, the reason involves changes in Roman Catholic teaching in recent years. These have confused many persons who thought that they had the true apostolic religion. As one Catholic priest in the United States put it: "If the things the Church has said in the last ten years are true, then everything it said for the last 2,000 years is false."

Some clergymen have tried to retain young people in their churches by conforming to popular fancies. For



example, folk and rock music were incorporated into religious services. But these efforts have been largely unsuccessful. "It doesn't seem to work," commented Catholic priest Andrew M. Greeley. "Somehow, the young are not attracted by clerics who act like drug freaks and churches that try to substitute for the local coffee shop or to do the Woodstock thing."

Open approval by many clergymen of the loose moral standards prevalent today has brought about further reverses for many churches. Even youths disapprove of this, as noted in the newspaper column "Youth Attitudes":

"There's an old saying that you don't pull yourself up by dragging the other person down. Just the opposite should be the case. That's why, in our opinion, the churches have erred in not standing firm behind high moral standards and in being equally firm in teaching what is morally right and wrong. Young people need and want guidance. . . . There is no compromise with what is morally wrong."

Catholic priest and psychologist Martin Pable cited another principal reason why people are discouraged with the churches. "People have real religious hungers, and one of the few chances they have to satisfy this hunger is during the Sunday service. And when the priest (or minister) doesn't nourish spiritual hungers, there's a real disappointment."

What are conditions like in your church? Do you receive sound, Bible-based counsel that builds spirituality? Or are you among the hundreds of thousands that have been disappointed when hearing repeated pleas for money, discussions of politics and approval from the pulpit of moral laxity? If that has been your experience, does it make sense to remain a member of such a church? Millions have decided that it does not, and so have left the churches. Should you?

This is a serious question for you to consider. While you are doing so, be sure to weigh carefully what God himself says in the Bible at 2 Corinthians 6:14-17: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? . . . 'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing.'"

If you decide to follow that Scriptural advice and leave your church, where can you turn to satisfy your spiritual need?

IS "PERSONAL" RELIGION THE ANSWER?

Most persons who have left the churches still believe in God and feel a need for spirituality. How do they seek to satisfy this? According to *U.S. News & World Report*, there has been "a renewed interest in the more personal and emotional aspects of religion."

A considerable number of persons in recent years have reported having "mystical" experiences. But this is really nothing new. In the recent article "Are We a Nation of Mystics?" priest Andrew M. Greeley and William C. McCready comment:

"Such extraordinary experiences . . . are recorded at every time in history and in every place on the globe. . . . Easterner and Westerner, saint and sinner, man and woman, young person and old, all seem to report a virtually identical experience—intense, overpowering joy which seemed literally to lift them out of themselves."

Have you ever had such a personal religious experience? If not, perhaps you know someone who has. Such experiences make a deep impression on people. But there is a need for caution. Why so? Because, as noted above, they have been widespread throughout history in pagandom as well as Christendom. Experiences of ecstasy do not in themselves help people to know the true God, his requirements for acceptable worship and his purpose for the earth and mankind. Ecstatic experiences may even hinder a person from seeking this important information. How so?

Interestingly, the above-mentioned survey by Greeley and McCready noted that 48 percent of six hundred persons who reported having such experiences felt "a certainty that all things would work out for the good." When asked what he thought about human survival after death, one person whom they interviewed stated:

"All I know is that, once you have experiences like I've had . . . , the question doesn't seem very important. You know things will be all right, and you don't bother yourself worrying about details."

The Scriptures, however, direct people to "keep seeking" knowledge of God as if digging for hidden treasures. (Prov. 2:3-5) Jesus urged his disciples to 'exert themselves vigorously' to gain eternal life. (Luke 13:24) And, although they had already been "sanctified in union with Christ Jesus, called to be holy ones," the apostle Paul cautioned certain Christians of the first century C.E.: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." (1 Cor. 1:2; 10:12; compare Philipians 2:12; Matthew 24:13.) Any experience, therefore, that would tend to make a person complacent and cocksure of salvation could not be from God.

But if neither the churches of Christendom nor personal religious experiences provide the foundation for worshiping God correctly, where can people turn?

THEY FOUND TRUE CHRISTIANITY

Jesus said of the way to distinguish his true followers from persons who merely profess Christianity: "Really, then, by their fruits you will recognize those men." (Matt. 7:20) By what "fruits"? Let us consider two of them.

The true Christian congregation, according to the Bible, would be "a people for [God's] name." (Acts 15:14) They would obviously use the name of God, the Father of Jesus Christ, in their worship. Does your church do that? Do you personally know and use the name of God in worship? A young man from West Germany explains how this very thing helped him to find true Christians:

"I had been living in a commune, taking drugs and stealing to get food. Soon, though, I realized how unreasonable such a life was and so I began to search for a meaning to life. But no goal seemed worth putting all

my efforts into. Usually I gave up trying before I had even begun.

"When I returned to the commune one evening, I noticed that the others were having a discussion about God. What I heard there stimulated my interest to read the Bible. I then began searching, for I was confident that somewhere there must be a true Christian congregation.

"Then my sister gave me a copy of the New World Translation of the Bible. For the first time in my life I was confronted with the name Jehovah. A few days later I asked one of Jehovah's witnesses: 'Why the name Jehovah?' His answer was precise, but I was skeptical and just let him talk, thinking that in this way I might catch him in his own words.

"I maintained this skeptical attitude during weeks of Bible discussions. But finally I realized that I had found the very thing for which I had so often prayed. Here was a truly Christian organization. Soon I began to make changes to harmonize my life with Bible principles. Now I have the privilege of spending a large part of my time in sharing Bible truth with others."

Jesus set forth another identifying mark of true Christians when he said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) A young woman found that this helped her to identify true Christianity. She relates:

"I left home at eighteen, began using drugs and living in a commune. There were often as many as twenty people living in the two rooms, so it looked like a garbage dump. There I gained experience at how bad and mentally cruel people can be.

"I was convinced that somewhere there must be people who truly practice love. Then I came in contact with the 'Jesus People' and joined them. Soon, however, I realized that this was not for me. The day's routine was taken up merely with singing, praying and dancing. While these young persons did not take drugs, I noticed that a person could 'get high' in their presence.

"I read the Bible daily and prayed that God would lead me to a group of real Christians. Then [a friend] visited me and told me that God's name was Jehovah and other things that he had learned from Jehovah's witnesses. But this did not interest me at the time. I said that I was seeking Christ. 'If it's Christians you want to see,' [he] replied, 'then come with me.'"

This young woman attended a meeting at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. Here she was surprised to meet people who truly demonstrate love for one another and for strangers. She relates: "I was very much impressed by the people I met there." Six months later she was baptized as one of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. She married the individual who had introduced her to Jehovah's witnesses and now spends her full time sharing Bible truth with her neighbors. Summing up her feelings, she said: "I am thankful to Jehovah from the bottom of my heart that he saved me from this crooked world system and has brought me into his wonderful light."

Have you been troubled by the failure of your church to meet the spiritual needs of its members? Has your church replaced sound Bible instruction with "social action" and involvement in politics? Then you have an important choice to make. Does church membership mean more to you than does having an approved relationship with God? Will you continue to be part of an organization that is Christian in name only? Or will you leave it?

If you would like to learn more about the Word of God without any obligation to join a church, Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to help you. They will conduct a free Bible study with you in your home or at any other convenient location. Acting on this invitation will aid you to learn the form of worship taught by the Bible itself. Is not that what you have been looking for?

Insight on the News

- "The era of the general church magazine . . . has passed," says an editorial in "The Christian Century" magazine.

End of an Era?

This expression was prompted by the announcement that "United Methodists Today" would cease its publication in June 1975. Beginning back in 1956 under the name of "Together," this general church magazine reached a peak circulation in 1959 of one million (there are some 10 million Methodists). But then it began to slide, and since its beginning it has run up a sustained net loss of over \$6,000,000.

It was not just the demise of this one publication, however, that led to "The Christian Century's" gloomy statement. This is but one portion of the overall picture. In 1968 U.S. Protestant and Orthodox Church publications claimed a combined circulation of 23,008,185. By 1975 the figure had dropped to little more than 16,000,000. Commenting on the cause, "The Christian Century" says: "Possibly it is wrong to assume that the average reader . . . is a deeply committed Christian longing for in-depth information about the church. Then, too, there is the lingering suspicion that church periodicals reflect the establishment and are inclined to use public relations gimmicks to push programs."

Back in 1956 when "Together" magazine began, "The Watchtower" had a worldwide circulation of 2,550,000. Why not look on the inside cover of this issue and see what it is today?

- Medical evidence has linked the smoking of tobacco with a long list of ailments—lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease and numerous others.

Smoking and Teeth

Now yet another ailment comes into focus. Dr. Edward R. Loftus, a dental professor at Harvard University, says that "smoking is one of the biggest factors in teeth loss." In a research survey of "259 smokers and 376 nonsmokers [results showed] that the smokers suffered a greater incidence of bone loss and loose teeth," he said. "They also had a greater buildup of plaque and tartar, which collect on the teeth and contribute to gum disease and decay. The incidence of all these conditions in the nonsmokers was significantly lower." Dr.

Richard C. Graves, of the University of Michigan, found similar evidence and offers this explanation: "Smoking causes constriction of the blood vessels in the gum tissue, thus reducing the circulation and speeding up the disease process."

Some years ago Jehovah's witnesses who had anything to do with the production and promotion of tobacco, separated themselves from such employment, often at a considerable financial loss to themselves.

- In contrast with the above stand of Jehovah's witnesses is an article in the Louisville "Times" under the headline "The Evil Eye?" It reports on a large Indiana television-manufacturing plant employing 5,000 workers. A large portion of these are members

of the Pentecostal religion. When interviewed, many said that their religion views television as 'the work of the devil.' "I am certain God would condemn me if I had a television set in my home," said one woman employee. Asked why she produced the sets, one young Pentecostal answered that "they pay good," and added, "The Lord doesn't care if we make TV sets. He just doesn't want us to watch television." Few would deny that, along with some harmless and even worthwhile programs, there is much that is bad and undesirable on today's television. Yet one wonders how anyone who rejects it totally could still conscientiously contribute to its use.

- The Bible foretold a lack of "natural affection" as one of the conditions marking the "last days" of the present system. In sad illustration of this, the London "Daily Mail" reports that, on the average, "two children die every day in Britain as a result of savage assaults by their parents." The more than 64,000 cases reported in one year of small children with blackened eyes and battered bodies does not make pleasant reading. But what a comfort to know that a new order nears in which "righteousness is to dwell," with none being allowed to "do any harm or cause any ruin"—2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 11:9.

Lack of Natural Affection

HOW VALUABLE IS Your Life?

TO MOST people life is a treasure. Without it, there is nothing. To others, life is not so important. They are willing to take great risks for fleeting fame or for pleasure. Yet most of these people who appear to count life cheap try to pack all the pleasure or fame that they can into a short time. They reveal by their course that they would actually love long life if they felt that it could be lived under proper conditions. But because of the present bad circumstances they do not see any possibility that life can be a long and happy one.

How does the Creator regard the life that he has given humans? He views it as most precious, a treasure. He has life in the fullest sense and knows what it is and what it can be. Therefore he holds out, through his Son Jesus Christ, the opportunity for everlasting life to mankind, and does not want anyone to lose out on this marvelous gift.—John 6:51.

How valuable is your life to you? Do you want to prolong it? To those who take hold of his provision for obtaining life he gives assurance of deliverance from extinction. Oh, they may die now from sickness or other causes, but they can be fully confident of receiving a resurrection back to this earth during the coming thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. (John 5:28, 29) God is going to deliver and preserve many, even millions of people, into that righteous

“new earth,” for it is near at hand.—2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 20:4, 6; 7:9-17.

It cannot be said that every individual among those serving God has the guarantee of being carried alive down to and through the destruction of this system of things, which has to precede Christ’s thousand-year reign of peace. (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 19:19-21; 20:1-4) But God assures us in his written Word (and God cannot lie) that, as a *body*, his people will be protected and delivered into that righteous “new earth.” (Titus 1:2) He wants them to LIVE, not die, and to enjoy fullness of life forever.—Ezek. 18:23, 32.

TAKING UP “THE CUP OF GRAND SALVATION”

The God who has such love for his people inspired one of his psalmists to write about his experience. (Actually, the psalmist seemed to be writing of himself as representing the entire nation of Israel.) He underwent a situation in which his life was on the verge of extinction at the hands of the enemies of God and His people. Then God delivered him from death. The apostle Paul quoted the psalmist’s words at Psalm 116:10 and applied the words to himself and fellow Christians. (2 Cor. 4:13) In appreciation the psalmist said, exultingly:

“What shall I repay to Jehovah for all his benefits to me? The cup of grand salvation I shall take up, and on the name of Jehovah

I shall call. My vows I shall pay to Jehovah, yes, in front of all his people."—Ps. 116:12-14.

This beautiful psalm, Psalm 116, applies in modern times to the remnant of anointed disciples of Christ from 1919 onward, after they emerged from the hardships and dangers of World War I. But there is a greater deliverance ahead for them and also for the "great crowd" of Christ's "other sheep," at the "great tribulation." And so, when they are delivered from danger by God's ridding the earth of wicked ones in the "great tribulation," they will have peace. (Prov. 21:18) There can then follow a preservation of loyal ones all during the thousand years of God's Messianic kingdom, the loyal ones of the "great crowd" of Revelation 7:9-17 being the ones that will forever keep living upon the cleansed earth.

The psalmist spoke of a "cup." A cup contains something to drink or even to pour out as a "drink offering" to Jehovah, as was done in the psalmist's day. (Num. 28:7; Phil. 2:17) Jehovah offers to his people "the cup of grand salvation" by preserving them through the "great tribulation." (Rev. 7:14) During the thousand years of earth-wide rule by the Messiah they will drink the "grand salvation" provided to them, enjoying life "in the lands of those living." (Ps. 116:9) As they do so, they will call upon the name of Jehovah through his Messiah to bless and guide them in all their efforts.

PAYING VOWS TO JEHOVAH

What are the "vows" that the delivered ones have to pay to Jehovah? During their danger of imminent death at the hands of God's enemies, did they make any vows, any solemn promises to God in desire for deliverance on God's part? If so, then they will pay such "vows" to Jehovah because he acted in harmony with their vows and preserved them. They will do what they

vowed to do "in front of all his people," thereby praising his name publicly.

Continuing to speak in appreciation of Jehovah's preservation, the psalmist emphasizes the value that Jehovah places on the lives of those who live according to his righteous principles: "Precious in the eyes of Jehovah is the death of his loyal ones. Ah, now, O Jehovah, for I am your servant. I am your servant, the son of your slave girl. You have loosened my bands." (Ps. 116:15, 16) The psalmist appreciatively knew that Jehovah had considered him loyal by preserving him. He had been in dire danger of death, but Jehovah had loosened the bands with which he appeared to be tied to death. He called himself "the son of [Jehovah's] slave girl," which would simply indicate that he was one of Jehovah's people. He recognized that Jehovah considered him one of His loyal servants.

DEATH OF LOYAL ONES "PRECIOUS"

How is the death of his loyal ones "precious in the eyes of Jehovah"? Well, just as the psalmist was, they are precious slaves to Jehovah. God's loving-kindness toward his servant moved him to preserve his servant's life. A person's life is particularly valuable in Jehovah's eyes if the person uses it in the right way, as a true worshiper of Him. Jehovah counts the death of the entire body of his loyal ones too costly to let occur. Of course, the loyal ones will express appreciation and thanksgiving for this, because life is exceedingly precious to them. It is a marvelous quality on Jehovah's part that he is deeply concerned with his servants' lives. He considers their death as being too high a price to pay, and so does not let the death occur.—Rom. 8:35-39.

Not only is Jehovah's great love here manifested, but also his regard for justice and righteousness in the universe is shown, for the benefit of all his creatures. For him to let his enemies triumph over his loyal

people and wipe all of them from the face of the earth would be a blot upon his universal sovereignty, his rulership over heaven and earth. He is the Creator of the earth and he created it for those loyal to him. (Isa. 45:18) If he cannot preserve his group of loyal ones on earth even under the heaviest, most dastardly attack by anti-God enemies, it would be as if his enemies were more powerful than he is and had the right to say who shall live permanently on earth. He will not have his rulership of earth, in fact, his whole universal sovereignty as well as his name reproached, impugned by such a thing.

Furthermore, if Jehovah let his whole body of loyal ones be effaced from the earth, there would be no one left in the courtyards of his great spiritual temple, which are located here on earth. There would be on earth no basis or foundation for the "new earth" or righteous human society to dwell under the "new heaven." (Rev. 21:1) How, then, could the thousand-year reign of the Messiah begin, with no earthly subjects? No! The death of the entire group of God's loyal ones on earth would be too precious, too costly, for Jehovah. Out of respect for Himself, it is too costly to allow.

SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING

For Jehovah's saving the "great crowd" of "other sheep" to live on earth, for maintaining his purpose and his promises to have the earth a place where righteousness dwells, the "tribulation" survivors render heartfelt praise and appreciation. Jehovah wants them to live as much as they themselves want to live and enjoy life. They, in addition to the remnant of spiritual Israelites, will say, as did the psalmist:

"To you I shall offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and on the name of Jehovah I shall call. My vows I shall pay to Jehovah, yes, in front of all his people, in the court-

yards of the house of Jehovah, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise Jah, you people!"—Ps. 116:17-19.

The survivors of the "great tribulation," the anointed remnant and the "great crowd," will offer up sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise to Jehovah for their deliverance, in the same spirit that Noah and his family offered a grand sacrifice of thanksgiving after being preserved through the global deluge. (Gen. 8:20, 21) Then the "great crowd" on earth will experience even greater delight in seeing billions of persons resurrected on earth for opportunity to take hold upon the desirable prize of life also.—Rev. 20:11-15.

How do you value your own life? Do you think it worth while to live on a peaceful, beautified earth, in perfection of health and with no fear of death, ever? Life, in some instances, may be difficult now, but Jehovah, who knows how marvelous life can be under good circumstances, purposes to provide these circumstances. He desires you and all others to grasp hold of the opportunity he offers through his Word the Bible.

Knowing what Jehovah purposes for us, we can come to know and love him and become his loyal subjects, with the happiest prospects in view. He is the only source of life, real life that can be enjoyed as he created mankind to enjoy it. For this reason the psalmist's exclamation, "Praise Jah, you people!" can be recognized by us as wholly appropriate. This expression, in Hebrew, is "Hallelujah!" and appears many times in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Greek form it is found toward the closing part of the Bible's last book, Revelation or Apocalypse. (Rev. 19:1-6) Those proclaiming God's name are witnesses to Jehovah's majesty, loving-kindness and magnificence.

Christians today render up this praise through their great High Priest, Jesus Christ, at Jehovah's spiritual temple. This

is no earthly building. However, they meet for Bible study and worship in buildings that they call "Kingdom Halls." They also conduct free home Bible studies with interested persons. All those who love life

can now join them in searching into God's Word, learning more about his purpose and his promises, and can unite with them in true worship. Grand prospects of survival and life forever will be their happy lot!

ARE YOU WILLING TO

SUFFER HARDSHIP?

IT IS a delightful thing to come to appreciate the majesty of God, his love, his mercy and his fine way of dealing with his people. It is also a heartwarming pleasure to become acquainted with God's people.

But in this world Christianity is not the easy way. After realizing this, if you have set out on a course of serving Jehovah God, you may find it profitable to examine yourself by asking certain questions, such as: What is my attitude when I encounter unpleasant things? Do I persevere when there is hardship? Am I determined to remain true to God if severe persecution strikes? How do I feel about facing opposition, economic difficulties, sickness, prison or other trials?

We have to be honest with ourselves: Nobody wants to suffer hardships. Suffering 'goes against the grain' for anyone. It is normal to have some fear. And Christians are certainly not looking for trouble or seeking to be persecuted or put to death.

Nevertheless, persecutions and other hardships will come. Jesus Christ foretold this. But he also foretold that, along with hardships, God would give his servants so much more in good things that the trouble

would be light in comparison. He said to his disciples:

"Everyone that has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive many times more and will inherit everlasting life."—Matt. 19:29.

The apostle Paul, who personally experienced much hardship, expressed agreement, writing to fellow Christians:

"Though the tribulation is momentary and light, it works out for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing weight and is everlasting; while we keep our eyes, not on the things seen, but on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting."—2 Cor. 4:17, 18.

It may be that you possess many material things. Do you count these as assets only as they can help you to render better service to God? Would you be willing to give them up without regret if an issue of integrity arose? Again, the apostle Paul wrote:

"On account of him [Jesus Christ] I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ."—Phil. 3:8; Luke 14:26.

True Christians in Germany during Hitler's regime and, in more recent times, in Malawi, demonstrated this fine attitude,

sacrificing everything to maintain their loyalty to God.

DEVELOPING THE QUALITY

Obedience to God is the key to developing endurance. How quick are you to obey the things God's Word commands? As you carry out God's will, there are obstacles that you are overcoming practically every day. Do you willingly obey, nevertheless? This can be of great aid to you in meeting situations that require more than the usual endurance. Jesus' half brother James counseled:

"Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality [or proof] of your faith works out endurance. But let endurance have its work complete, that you may be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything."—Jas. 1:2-4; *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

Therefore, if you have started on the course of obedience to God you will certainly want to avoid giving in to any trial now, however small. Temptations due to desires of the flesh can bring great pressure upon Christians, both from within themselves and from the bad "atmosphere" and associations in this world. Sexual immorality, excessive drinking and the use of drugs, including tobacco, are among these things. Persecution can also bring strong pressure to sin by compromising and breaking integrity. The apostle Peter expressed the attitude and determination that the Christian should have when he wrote:

"Therefore since Christ suffered in the flesh, you too arm yourselves with the same mental disposition; because the person that has suffered in the flesh has desisted from sins, to the end that he may live the remainder of his time in the flesh, no more for the desires of men, but for God's will." —1 Pet. 4:1, 2.

So, if you have accepted the Christian way of life, which you know includes suffering for the truth's sake, and perhaps have al-

ready suffered to an extent for righteousness' sake, now is no time to turn back. —Luke 9:62.

TESTING YOURSELF

To test yourself as to whether you are developing endurance, look at what you are doing *at the present time*. Are you maintaining faithfulness *now*? Are you regularly studying God's Word *now*? Do you get, not merely the "milk" of the word, the primary doctrines, but also "accurate knowledge and full discernment; that you may make sure of the more important things"?—Phil. 1:9, 10; Eph. 5:16.

Are you at the present time 'putting yourself out' to help others? Or do you hesitate to inconvenience yourself? (Gal. 6:10) One who is willing to undergo some difficulty in behalf of others in the interests of true Christianity is developing the quality of endurance.—Jas. 1:27.

Another essential factor is emphasized by this question, Do you recognize that your success in enduring trials is due, not to any good in yourself, but to the strength that God supplies? (1 Pet. 4:11) Do you confidently look to God for wisdom and ability, and do you recognize that all you have comes from him?—Phil. 4:13; Jas. 1:5.

THINGS TO AVOID

In our obedience to God, and in things that we have endured, we should not relax, feeling that we have reached our goal. Neither should we develop a boastful spirit, feeling that, when we have endured some trial, we are "heroes," entitled to special consideration, or that we are more advanced toward the goal than our brothers are. It is 'he that endures to the *end* that will be saved.' (Matt. 24:13) To avoid a wrong attitude, call to mind that some of those who had endured years of suffering in Nazi concentration camps later fell prey to materialism or immorality. There is

only one cause for boasting, and that is in knowing Jehovah.—Jer. 9:23, 24.

Some persons worry about specific physical abuse that they may have to endure. This is unwise. We do not know what hardships we, individually, may encounter. Not all will meet the same trials. The vital thing is to trust in Jehovah. "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with

the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it."—1 Cor. 10:13.

Jehovah wants his people to be happy. He takes no pleasure in seeing his people suffer. But he does make even those enduring hardship happy because they have the opportunity now to make an everlasting record of integrity to the Universal Sovereign Jehovah God.—Matt. 5:11, 12.

Rejoicing

in **"THE FINE FIGHT"** OF **THE FAITH**

As told by Väinö Pallari

I GREW up in Finland, a land that is 92 percent Lutheran. When I became one of Jehovah's Christian witnesses in 1930, my employment as a schoolteacher was threatened.

This was because the Bible Students, as the Witnesses were then known, were viewed as being Communists and were told that they would be sent to Russia. The school board threatened me with this if I did not leave the school district voluntarily.

But I refused to leave my job. The school board then tried to get me to promise not to go from house to house, preaching a "new doctrine" that the community could not tolerate. I could not, of course, give such a promise; in fact, it was my goal someday to preach the good news of God's kingdom full time.

Next, the school board evidently worked on the parents of my pupils. They tried to get the pupils to go on strike. But not one stayed away from school.

Finally, frustrated in their attempts to get me removed, the school board simply abolished the position I held. However, the outcome of such a procedure was that I would be entitled to a considerable income. I did not raise any objection, as the financial assistance would simply help me to get started in the full-time preaching work—my ultimate goal. The opportunity that I had

waited for presented itself, and I seized it, rejoicing that at last I could devote all my energies to "the fine fight" of the faith, as the apostle Paul did.—2 Tim. 4:7.

Also, about that time I received a letter from the Watch Tower Society, asking me to help to organize the house-to-house preaching work. This was a very happy time. I was in the preaching work with my Christian brothers every day and held meetings in the evening—yet it did not seem too tiring.

THE WAR YEARS

In 1939 the threatening clouds of war gathered on the horizon. The people in Finland were in a very anxious frame of mind. As Jehovah's Christian witnesses were neutral in political affairs, they were looked on with disfavor and were no longer

able to work freely. The first court case against the Witnesses began before the war actually broke out. On one occasion, while I was distributing the Bible booklet *Government and Peace* in Turku, I was surrounded by the police and charged with "unlawful peddling," which resulted in legal proceedings.

During the war we had continual court cases and our preaching work was officially banned. We were viewed as Communists, which, at that time, was considered to be the worst thing imaginable. Since the Watch Tower Society had been banned, it could not arrange meetings, but they were held, nonetheless, in the name of a private Christian. This was possible because the law on freedom of religion was still in force, in spite of the war.

I have always had poor health and because of this I was exempted from military service. So I was able to continue my full-time preaching work, for which I was profoundly grateful to Jehovah.

Working as a circuit overseer during the war was not without its anxious moments. Since *The Watchtower* and *Consolation* (now *Awake!*) were banned, we had to take all the mimeographed spiritual food along in a suitcase. This was dangerous, since the military police often examined bags of travelers to see if they had butter (all food was rationed) or other "forbidden luggage."

On one occasion I had many mimeographed *Watchtower* magazines in my bag, and a military policeman asked what they were. I replied that it was Bible literature that is given to people to read. Fortunately he was in a hurry, so he did not take the time to look further into the matter. If he had examined the literature I was carrying, he would surely have arrested me.

The bombing raids on the cities were an experience. Often we had to interrupt a meeting to go to a bomb shelter. When

we emerged from these bomb shelters, we would see fires blazing all around us, but the homes of the Witnesses were rarely damaged.

The most frightening event of my life occurred during the height of the war. I was returning home very late at night on the tram. Two slightly drunk soldiers happened to get on the same tram, and, seeing me in civilian clothes, they became very bitter. They talked about me between themselves and said that I should be in uniform. We got off at the same place, and the men ordered me to stop.

One of them asked me why I had stirred up a fuss on the tram, which, of course, I had not done. All of a sudden the other one took out a knife and said: "What would you say if we let the wind out of you?" I tried to explain the disagreeable consequences to them if they did it, but they replied that they had suffered so much at the front that they did not care anymore what happened to them. All of a sudden the soldier raised his knife, intending to strike me. Then, with my heart fluttering, I grabbed his hand, although I could not actually stand up against them.

I felt helpless in this situation, and I breathed a prayer to Jehovah, as I had been doing during this whole episode. As though by a miracle, the soldier loosened his grip and let me go. I continued on my way, weeping for joy and thanking Jehovah for saving my life. The Bible's assurance came into my mind: "A hiding place is the God of ancient time, and underneath are the indefinitely lasting arms." —Deut. 33:27.

REJOICING IN "THE FINE FIGHT" AT BETHEL

In 1942 I received an invitation to serve at Bethel, the Watch Tower Society's branch office, where I have since had many privileges of service. During the war I had the task of procuring food for the

Bethel family, which was really quite difficult as there was a serious shortage of everything. On many occasions we got what we needed in almost miraculous ways. It was as though manna fell from heaven to help us through the trying time of war.

I also had the privilege of handling legal affairs. For example, many Witnesses who had no close heirs wanted all their financial assets used to advance Jehovah's work after their death. But in Finland there is a law requiring that after the death of the testator the beneficiary of the will has to contact all the deceased's relatives. This necessitated my contacting all relatives of deceased Christian brothers who had made such wills, and this is no easy task.

We have also had a continual battle with the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation. Just about all the religious denominations have been allowed to broadcast over the radio, but we have not been allowed to do so. And not only that, but from time to time attacks have been made on our preaching work.

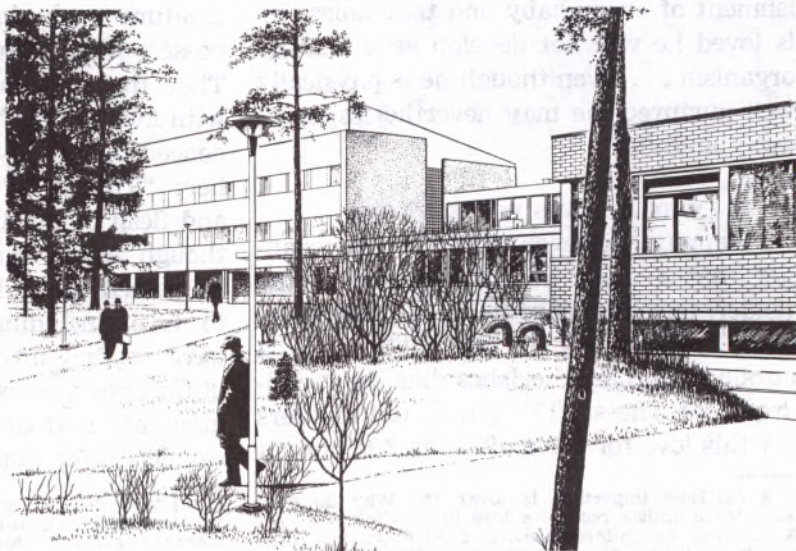
One commentator made up an unfavorable program about the Witnesses, and in it very coarse Finnish words were banded back and forth. The program was taped in advance and we were permitted to hear it before the actual presentation. Another Witness and I wrestled with this problem for about a week, and we were successful in getting the producer to remove the worst insults, but it was still very bad. Right after this, as a result of the nervous tension, I had a stroke. I partially lost my eyesight and power of speech and

completely lost the ability to read and count.

After a few weeks in the hospital, I recovered fairly well, but I have felt cold ever since. The doctor ordered me to "retire" and forbade me to put forth too much effort in anything. I had to get into a lower gear in order to continue my service, but I can assure you that I have not lost what the Finns call *sisu* or fortitude.

Thus at times I have worked perhaps harder than I should, but I have enjoyed it. Recently, I had another stroke, which was worse than the previous one. My speech, which returned quite soon, now seems to be at a standstill. Again I have had to slow down, but I still want to do my best to fight "the fine fight" of the faith.

Looking back on the forty-four years that I have spent my full time in the service of God, I can say that I could not have used my life in a better way. Such full-time service, which one learns to love more and more as the years go by, is so rich in blessings that no other work can compare with it. Although the work in Bethel, as well as in the field service, requires strength, it is a source of great joy.



The Watch Tower Society's branch office in Finland

LOVE is vital to the enjoyment of peace, happiness and contentment. Indeed, life is not worth living without love—a fact that even materialistic scientists recognize. “I want to affirm the unique importance of love . . . Love is indispensable,” wrote the well-known scientist Sir Julian Huxley.

² Why do even those who refuse to acknowledge the existence of a Creator stress the importance of love? For one reason, scientific studies have documented our need for love. These studies indicate that, as hunger must be satisfied for a person to survive, so humans also need to love and to be loved. Scientist Ashley Montagu wrote: “We now know from the observations of a number of physicians and investigators that love is an essential part of the nourishment of every baby and that unless he is loved he will not develop as a healthy organism . . . Even though he is physically well nurtured, he may nevertheless waste away and die.”

WHY HUMANS POSSESS LOVE

³ Happily, however, there is little danger that a child will fail to receive the tender, unselfish care it needs. This is because instinctively, as the Bible says, “a nursing mother cherishes her own children.” (1 Thess. 2:7) Where did mothers get this love for their offspring? It did not

1, 2. (a) How important is love? (b) Why do even atheistic scientists recognize love to be vital?
3. (a) Why do children usually receive the love they need? (b) Where did humans receive this capacity and ability to love?

Cultivate INTENSE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

“Love one another intensely from the heart.”—1 Pet. 1:22.

develop by chance. Is it not evident that it was implanted in them by a loving Creator? All of us have the ability and capacity to love and, with cultivation, this quality can be expressed in the most beautiful, heartwarming ways.

⁴ Jehovah God bestowed this gift of love at the creation of the first human pair. We know this because Adam was created “in God’s image.” And since “God is love”—love being his dominant quality—the creature made in his image would also possess love. (Gen. 1:26, 27; 1 John 4:8) That the first man Adam was endowed with love for his beautiful new wife is evidenced by his joyful expression at seeing her: “This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” (Gen. 2:23) Even though Adam sinned and lost perfection, he passed on to his offspring the ability to love, including the capacity humans have to find intriguing delight with one of the opposite sex. Indeed, an ancient wise man said that one of the four things too wonderful for him to understand was “the

4. (a) Why do we know that Adam was endowed at creation with the quality of love? (b) What evidence is there that Adam had love for Eve, and that this capacity to love one of the opposite sex was passed on to his offspring?

way of an able-bodied man with a maiden.”
—Prov. 30:19; Gen. 24:67; 26:8.

LOVE IS EXPANSIVE

⁵ But in addition to this romantic love that can exist between men and women, humans ordinarily have a natural, deep feeling of affection for their fleshly relatives. Thus when Joseph, after many years of separation, saw Benjamin, “his inward emotions were excited toward his brother.” Later, “he fell upon the neck of Benjamin his brother and gave way to weeping, and Benjamin wept upon his neck.” (Gen. 43:30; 45:14) This family love also moved Andrew, when he had found the Messiah, to look for his brother Peter to tell him this grand news.—John 1:40-42.

⁶ Yet this quality of love is capable of reaching out and including persons other than one’s fleshly relatives. Jonathan, the Benjamite son of Israel’s King Saul, was so moved by the good qualities of David, a descendant of Judah, that his “very soul became bound up with the soul of David, and Jonathan began to love him as his own soul.” Later, when Jonathan was killed, David was moved to call him “brother,” and to say: “My brother Jonathan, very pleasant you were to me. More wonderful was your love to me than the love from women.” The Moabite Ruth’s love for her mother-in-law Naomi is another example of how love can include persons other than natural fleshly relatives.—1 Sam. 18:1; 2 Sam. 1:26; Ruth 1:16, 17.

⁷ Those who become true Christians must also have warm brotherly love for one another, regardless of the race, nationality, social position or economic status of their Christian brothers and sisters. Jesus showed this, saying: “By this all will

know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.” (John 13:35) And yet, a true Christian’s love cannot be limited to just fellow servants of God. It must reach out to include still others. In fact, Jesus commanded: “Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you; that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens.”—Matt. 5:44, 45.

THE LOVE THAT WE NEED TO CULTIVATE

⁸ Clearly, this quality of love with which God endowed humans can be expressed in various degrees and senses. How so? Because obviously the love a Christian has for an enemy who is persecuting him is not the same tender affection that a nursing mother has for her baby, that Joseph had for Benjamin, that Jonathan felt for David, or that a Christian feels for a fellow believer. God does not expect us to be fond of an enemy, or even necessarily to like him. Yet we are obligated to *love* him. Is this contradictory?

8. Explain how love can be expressed in various degrees and senses.



Genuine love for David moved Jonathan to give him some gifts as a token of his affection

5. Besides romantic love between men and women, what evidence is there of love existing between fleshly relatives?

6. What Bible examples show that a person’s love can include others besides fleshly relatives?

7. How inclusive must a Christian’s love be?

⁹ No, it is not, when once we understand the meaning of the principal Greek word translated "love" in the Christian Greek Scriptures, or so-called New Testament. The noun form of that word is *agápē*. Regarding God's *agápē* for mankind, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W. E. Vine says: "This is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects." And it is a fact: Humankind as a whole are not a very lovable lot. But this is not really their fault.—Eph. 4:17-19; Titus 3:3.

¹⁰ Due to inheritance from Adam, all humans were conceived in sin and brought forth with an inclination toward wrongdoing. (Ps. 51:5) God knows this. So he is moved to love mankind, not because of any merit or excellency on their part, but particularly because he realizes that, in time, many humans will respond to his love and bring their lives into harmony with his will. (Rom. 5:8-11) *Agápē*, therefore, carries the meaning of love that is distinguished by respect for principle. So, then, if we copy the example of our heavenly Father we will love even those who give no evidence of deserving our love. They may be cynical, selfish and even immoral or criminal. We will hate what they do and say, yet, at the same time, we will be concerned for their personal welfare. We will do all we can to encourage them to respond to God's love. Are you cultivating such a love for humankind in general, one that is guided by principle?

¹¹ But it is not love guided only by principle, and lacking affection and warmth, that the apostle Peter had in mind when he wrote fellow Christians: "Love one another intensely from the heart." (1 Pet.

1:22) While respect for principle is a distinctive feature of *agápē*, this love can also include affection and fondness. Thus we read: "Husbands ought to be *loving* [verb form *agapáo*] their wives." (Eph. 5:28) Obviously this does not mean that Christian husbands should love their wives simply as they love their enemies! No; but, rather, the admonition "to be loving their wives" means that husbands should also have feelings of warmth, tenderness and affection for their wives, as the Creator purposed.

¹² That the Greek word *agápē* may include very deep feelings of affection and fondness is also indicated in other Bible examples. For instance, we are told: "The Father loves the Son." (John 3:35) The love of God for his Son, Jesus Christ, is not simply governed by respect for principle. Jehovah has tender affection and compassion for Jesus, as the Bible says: "The Father has affection for the Son and shows him all the things he himself does." Jehovah God said: "This is my son, *my beloved*, whom I myself have approved." —John 5:20; 2 Pet. 1:17.

¹³ So, then, this is the degree of love that Christians need to cultivate for one another. It is not a halfhearted love, or love shown simply out of duty for persons whom they may not even like. But it is a warm, tender affection for others, comparable to the tender love that one has for a cherished relative, and which Jehovah has for his dearly beloved Son. The apostle Peter stressed that our love for one another should be of this kind or degree when he encouraged: "Love one another *intensely*," or, as other translations put it, "*fervently*," "*with all your strength*." (1 Pet. 1:22; *New American Standard Bible*, *The New English Bible*) The original Greek word rendered "intensely" means,

9, 10. (a) How does knowing the meaning of *agápē*, and Jehovah's exercise of it, help us to appreciate that persons might be loved but not necessarily liked? (b) How can we show love for evil, immoral persons?

11, 12. (a) Should a Christian's love for his brothers be guided only by principle? (b) How does marital love and Jehovah's love for his Son indicate that *agápē* includes more than just love guided by principle?

13. (a) What degree of love should Christians have for one another? (b) How does the basic meaning of the Greek word for "intensely" indicate the proper degree of our love?

literally, "outstretchedly." (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation*) Our love, therefore, must be exerting itself to the limit with intensity. Are you cultivating this kind of love?

¹⁴ We all need to work on doing so. This is because Adam's disobedience about 6,000 years ago has sunk the human family deep into sin and imperfection, adversely affecting our capacity to reflect Jehovah's dominant quality of love. Even the instinctive feelings of love that close relatives naturally have for one another are sometimes twisted and perverted, as in the ancient cases of Cain, Esau and Joseph's half brothers. The Bible foretold that this would also be evident "in the last days" when people would have "no natural affection." (2 Tim. 3:1-3) How vital it is, therefore, that we cultivate love so as to keep it alive in our hearts! But how can we who are living in this critical period of the "last days" learn to love one another? The apostle Paul explains: "With reference to brotherly love, you do not need us to be writing you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another." (1 Thess. 4:9) How does God teach us this?

HOW TAUGHT BY GOD TO LOVE

¹⁵ He does so in a number of ways. We might say that by creating man in his image, endowing mankind with the capacity and ability to love, God has, in effect, inclined us, even though now sinful, to be loving. Then, too, God has taught us to love one another by repeatedly making the exercise of love a command. According to Jesus Christ, one of the two principal commandments of God's law to Israel was: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." The disciple James called this

"the kingly law." (Matt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18; Jas. 2:8) However, speaking as God's representative, Jesus revealed that Christians must have even superior love, loving one another just as he had loved his disciples. (John 13:34; 1 John 3:16) But in another especially appealing way Jehovah God has taught humankind to love one another.

¹⁶ This is by example. The apostle Paul spoke to a crowd in the ancient Roman province of Galatia, Asia Minor, saying about God: "He did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:17) Thus God not only commands us to love one another, but shows by example how we should do it. (Matt. 5:44, 45) His finest example of showing love is the provision of his most precious possession for our benefit. The Bible explains: "God sent forth his only-begotten Son into the world that we might gain life through him. . . . Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another."—1 John 4:9-11.

¹⁷ So, as we consider the marvelous things Jehovah has done—providing us with bountiful material blessings, but especially with the gift of his Son that makes possible everlasting life in a new system of righteousness—we learn the truth about what a fine God and Creator Jehovah is. What should be the result of our acceptance of this grand truth regarding Jehovah's provisions and then living in harmony with it? The apostle Peter spoke of "unhypocritical brotherly love as the result," yes, a beautiful family relationship of brotherhood and love! And so in our appreciation, what is it vital that we

14. (a) Why do we need to work on cultivating love? (b) How can we learn to love one another?

15. (a) In what way might it be said that Jehovah teaches us to love one another? (b) How much are Christians obligated to love one another?

16. (a) In what particularly fine way does Jehovah teach us to love one another? (b) What is the greatest manifestation of God's love?

17. What should be the result of our learning the truth about Jehovah and his grand provisions for us?

do? Peter added: "Love one another *intensely* from the heart."—1 Pet. 1:22.

WHY INTENSE LOVE VITAL THEN

¹⁸ To appreciate why intense love was vital in Peter's day, we need to examine the circumstances then. Peter explains: "*The end of all things has drawn close.* Be sound in mind, therefore, and be vigilant with a view to prayers. Above all things, have intense love for one another." (1 Pet. 4:7, 8) It is true, the end was then near. Peter wrote sometime between 62 to 64 C.E., and it was shortly after that, in the year 70, that the end finally came to the Jewish system of things. The Roman armies devastated the whole area of Judea, and especially Jerusalem. A prophecy of Jesus helps us to appreciate why Christians then needed "*intense*" love for one another.

¹⁹ Jesus foretold: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near." (Luke 21:20; Matt. 24:15) It was in November 66 C.E. that the Roman armies under Cestius Gallus did surround Jerusalem. They pushed right into the city, a place considered "holy" to the Jews, and made an attack on the temple wall, undermining it. Easily the Romans could have captured the entire city, but suddenly, without any apparent reason for doing so, General Gallus withdrew and retreated. This gave Christians opportunity to heed Jesus' next admonition: "Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains." (Luke 21:21-24) Later the Roman armies under General Titus returned and ravaged the land, resulting in 1,100,000 reported deaths in Jerusalem alone, indeed a "great tribulation"!

18. When did Peter write his first letter, and what was then near?

19. (a) What sign did Jesus give so that Christians would know that the end was near, and how was this sign fulfilled? (b) How were Christians able to heed Jesus' command to flee, and was it wise that they obey?

²⁰ But what about the Christians? The third-century historian Eusebius Pamphilus notes: "The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella."* Yes, the Christians apparently heeded Christ's instructions and, after Cestius Gallus and his armies withdrew, fled to the mountainous region around Pella, thus escaping with their lives. But they did not have it easy.

²¹ Knowing that developments in connection with the return of the Roman soldiers—under General Titus—would soon make it nearly impossible to get out of the doomed city, Jesus had long before urged: "Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment." (Matt. 24:17, 18) As a result, hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of obedient Christians left in haste as soon as Gallus and his armies withdrew, taking few possessions with them. It was good that they were not loaded down, for the journey was long, the terrain rugged and the weather conditions no doubt oppressive at that time of the year. Under such circumstances, arguments and other troubles between the fugitives could easily have occurred. Then, too, there was the question of where they would all live.

²² They may have eventually set up makeshift shelters around Pella, possibly establishing some sort of mountain refugee

* *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, translated from the Greek, by C. F. Crusé (1894), page 75.

20. What evidence is there that Christians heeded Jesus' command?

21. (a) Why did Jesus stress the urgency of immediate flight? (b) What circumstances may have been experienced by fleeing Christians?

22. (a) What conditions then existed throughout the area? (b) Why was it vital that Christians then apply Peter's admonition?

camp there. We do not know. But whatever the case, it was difficult for them. It was a time of shortages and hardship throughout the whole area. The end of that entire Jewish system was near! How appropriate, therefore, Peter's inspired encouragement to readers of his letter, who were "temporary residents": "The end of all things has drawn close. . . . Above all things, have intense love for one another." (1 Pet. 1:1; 4:7, 8) With such love, Christians would not be selfish and exasperating to one another, but would share with one another and build up and strengthen one another to endure the trialsome circumstances they faced.

WHY INTENSE LOVE IS VITAL NOW

²³ We do not want just to look back at that time, however. For Jesus' prophecy regarding "the conclusion of the system of things" has application today; in fact, its major application is now. And so, too, does Peter's similar warning that "the end of all things has drawn close." God's purpose is to wipe out this entire wicked system and usher in his 'new heavens and new earth' in the immediate future! (Matt. 24: 3-22; 2 Pet. 3:13) So we are living at a time when the horrible destruction of Jerusalem and its environs will pale into insignificance in comparison with the "great tribulation" now so near! The trials that most Christians will have to face during the "great tribulation" ahead may be similar to those endured on two recent occasions.

²⁴ The first of these involved Jehovah's witnesses in Malawi. Beneath the headline "Jehovah's Witnesses—Fleeing For Their Lives," the New York *Times* of Oc-

tober 22, 1972, reported: "Last week from the tiny East African country of Malawi came reports of massive harassment . . . the raping of women members of the group, the burning of Witnesses' homes and what amounted to the forcible expulsion of most of the 23,000 adherents in the country." Because of their faithfulness to God's law, the Malawi Witnesses were driven across the border and forced into a huge refugee camp where, at first, there were severe shortages of life's necessities. Many died due to the hardships. How important, under those distressful circumstances, to heed the inspired counsel: "Above all things, have intense love for one another."

²⁵ The majority of Malawi Witnesses came through their experience faithful to God and spiritually strong, and what surely helped was their obedience to the above Bible counsel. But what about ourselves? Are we preparing for the trials ahead? Are we cultivating an intense feeling of tender affection for one another, as Joseph felt for his brother, as Jonathan felt for David, and as Jehovah God feels for his beloved Son Jesus Christ? Exercising such love is truly vital in these "last days."

²⁶ The difficulties that lie ahead may also have been previewed by a disaster reported in the March 8, 1973, *Awake!*, which said: "The sign is still standing. In mute testimony it declares: MANAGUA, 404,700 INHABITANTS. And in the center of the city another silent sentinel bears witness. The clock on the main entrance of the National Palace stands at 12:35. At that early morning hour, Saturday, December 23, 1972, during the darkness, the capital of Nicaragua died in a terrifying earthquake." Yes, the city simply ceased to function—the plumbing did not work, the

23. Do the Bible warnings about the nearness of the end have meaning for us today?

24, 25. (a) What experience did Malawi Witnesses endure, and why was obedience to Peter's admonition important to them? (b) What self-examination would it be wise for us to make?

26, 27. (a) What occurred in December 1972 in Managua, Nicaragua, and of what could it be a small-scale preview? (b) How did Jehovah's witnesses show love for one another during that disaster in Managua?

electricity went off, practically everything stopped. Soon this will happen, not to just one city, but city after city after city will break down—the *entire* system of things will die! Under such circumstances, what is it vital that we exercise?

²⁷ Many hundreds of Jehovah's witnesses in Nicaragua and in nearby countries demonstrated their intense love, as *Awake!* reported: "At once efforts were under way to care for these Witnesses [affected by the earthquake] and their families. The genuine love that exists among God's people certainly manifested itself. By Saturday afternoon a Witness arrived with a truck and 300 gallons of water from a congregation sixteen miles away. . . . Then at 10 p.m. the first two truckloads of supplies arrived from Jehovah's witnesses in Liberia, Costa Rica. A short time later, two more trucks arrived from Witnesses in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Thus food, clothing, medicines, water and gasoline were on hand within twenty-four hours or so after the disaster!"

²⁸ We can learn from that experience. When great troubles and disasters are everywhere occurring, what we need most, above all things, is intense love for one another. And when we think about it, have we not, as Jehovah's witnesses, been receiving training to face such circumstances? Regularly we meet together in assemblies, large and small, where we receive fine instruction and encouragement to love one another. Also, we have had cafeterias for feeding one another, and we have hospitably provided accommodations for fellow Christians in our homes. Really, what fine training in love and care for one another! But we must continue to express this marvelous quality of love with which God endowed humans, but which has been so distorted and perverted by about 6,000 years of sin and imperfection. It is vital that we continue to cultivate intense love for one another *now*, because the end of all things has drawn close.

28. (a) What can we learn from that Managuan experience? (b) In what other ways have Jehovah's witnesses been receiving training in showing love for one another?

Love Covers

"Have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."—1 Pet. 4:8.

A MULTITUDE OF SINS

HAVE you ever spoken sharply to someone, and immediately wished you had not? Or have you ever acted unkindly in some other way, and then felt sorry about it? No doubt all of us have. And as the pressures and hardships on us increase as the end of this system of things draws closer, the times when we hurt or offend one another may grow more

frequent. So what should we do when problems occur?

² In seeking an answer it is helpful to take a closer look at what is said at 1 Peter 4:7, 8. There it mentions that, since the end of all things has drawn close, we should "be sound in mind," "vigilant with a view to prayers," but especially we should "have intense love for one another." Now notice the reason given as to why this love is so important. The account says: "Be-

1, 2. (a) What wrongs do we all commit, and why might we even commit them with greater frequency? (b) What will help us to overcome problems that occur?

cause love covers a multitude of sins." This is a very important aspect to consider.

³ We have to face the fact that, due to the disobedience and imperfection of our original parents Adam and Eve, we have all inherited an inclination toward wrongdoing or sin. (Rom. 5:12) All of us frequently miss the mark of what is righteous. Within us is a proneness to be envious, to become provoked, to brag, to be unforgiving, and so forth. And do we not get angry with ourselves when we at times give in to these sinful inclinations? Yet these bad tendencies exist, and we simply have to realize that, on occasion, they are going to be expressed in words and actions. The disciple James, writing under God's inspiration, correctly observed: "We all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man." But none are perfect. "There is no man that does not sin," the Bible says.—Jas. 3:2; 1 Ki. 8:46.

⁴ So it is vital that we be realistic about our relations with one another. Sinful inclinations are going to find expression among Christians, regardless of how hard they try to prevent this from occurring. (Rom. 7:15-20) We should not be terribly shocked and upset, perhaps concluding that these wrongs are an indication that we are not associated with the true Christian congregation. No; rather, we should look for evidence that love has covered over these sins. It is, therefore, vital that we exercise love to prove that we are part of the true Christian congregation. However, it is not always easy to do the right and loving thing. The Bible helps us to *appreciate* this. It gives us insight into goings-on within the first-century Christian congregation that can assist us to examine things realistically, so that we

3. (a) What fact do we all have to face? (b) What correct observation does the Bible make about us?

4. (a) What should not be our reaction when sins occur, but what should we do? (b) What will help us to examine things realistically when problems arise?

can maintain balance should problems arise.

PHILIPPIAN WOMEN WITH A PROBLEM

⁵ First, let us consider a circumstance that developed within the Christian congregation in Philippi, the principal city of the district of Macedonia. The apostle Paul established this congregation in 50 C.E. on his visit during his second missionary tour. (Acts 16:11-40) A few years later, in the course of his third missionary tour, Paul was evidently able to visit the Philippian congregation again. (Acts 20:1-6) Then, about ten years after first establishing the congregation, Paul was moved by the Philippians' extraordinary deeds of Christian kindness and zeal to write them a moving letter of love and encouragement. He highly commended them throughout, with only one short hint of correction toward the end of his letter.

⁶ Paul wrote: "Consequently, my brothers beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand firm in this way in the Lord, beloved ones." But now notice his next statement: "Euodia I exhort and Syntyche I exhort to be of the same mind in the Lord." (Phil. 4:1, 2) Why did Paul say this? Why did he give encouragement for the congregation to "stand firm in this way in the Lord," and then pick out these two women, Euodia and Syntyche, and exhort them to be of the same mind in the Lord?

⁷ Clearly, there was some problem between these two women; they were evidently not united in the same mind. Now the Bible does not tell us what their difficulty was, or what had led to the trouble between them. Perhaps they were in some way jealous of each other. Both of them

5. (a) Describe some of the background of the Philippian congregation. (b) What kind of letter did the apostle Paul write to the congregation?

6. What did Paul write concerning Euodia and Syntyche, and what questions does this raise?

7. (a) Why might these two women not have been of the same mind in the Lord? (b) What does the fact that Paul knew about their attitude perhaps indicate?

may have had strong personalities, and they may have simply gotten on each other's nerves to the point that they were no longer speaking to each other. But whatever the problem, there was some friction involved, because they were not "of the same mind in the Lord." And Paul knew about it hundreds of miles away in Rome, from where he was writing, which indicates that the difficulty may have been of long standing and fairly well known among the brothers.

⁸ Yet, at the same time, these were basically good Christian women. Both of them were serving Jehovah God with their brothers and sisters. For Paul goes on to write the congregation: "Keep assisting these women who have striven side by side with me in the good news." (Phil. 4:3) Thus Euodia and Syntyche had been Christians for some time, having worked earlier with Paul in the furtherance of the preaching work. But now they were having a problem. So, then, if troubles like this existed in the first-century congregation, should it upset us excessively if similar ones occur today? But not only women had such problems.

TROUBLES BETWEEN CHRISTIAN ELDERS

⁹ Christian elders, too, had problems, even prominent elders. Consider the apostle Paul and his early traveling companion Barnabas, for example. They had completed a first missionary tour, establishing a number of Christian congregations, and now they were considering a second tour, as the Bible explains: "After some days Paul said to Barnabas: 'Above all things, let us return and visit the brothers in every one of the cities in which we published the word of Jehovah to see how they

are.' " (Acts 15:36) On that first journey John Mark had accompanied them, but for some undisclosed reason, the account says, "John withdrew from them and returned to Jerusalem," where his mother Mary lived.—Acts 13:13.

¹⁰ So, as Paul and Barnabas were discussing their second missionary tour, Mark's name came up. The Bible tells us what occurred: "For his part, Barnabas was determined to take along also John, who was called Mark. But Paul did not think it proper to be taking this one along with them, seeing that he had departed from them from Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work." (Acts 15:37, 38) So here was a difference of opinion. Barnabas may have felt that Mark had a good excuse for returning to Jerusalem during the first tour; possibly his mother was sick and he returned to be with her. We do not know. But, on the other hand, if Mark's leaving was indeed a rash, inexcusable move, Barnabas evidently felt that Mark had learned a lesson and would this time stick to the work. But Paul did not think so. He did not want Mark along. Now, would you not think that these two mature Christian elders could settle such a difference in an amiable way? Yet what happened?

¹¹ The Bible says: "At this there occurred a sharp burst of anger, so that they separated from each other; and Barnabas took Mark along and sailed away to Cyprus. Paul selected Silas and went off." (Acts 15:39, 40) Can you imagine that! Here two prominent elders had, not just a minor altercation, but "a sharp burst of anger" between them, and over such a seemingly small matter. So they parted company, evidently not having the best of feelings toward each other. If you had been there and seen this, would you have

8. (a) Basically, what kind of women were Euodia and Syntyche, and what indicates this? (b) What lesson can we draw from that first-century experience?

9, 10. (a) What had happened to John Mark during the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas? (b) Why might Barnabas have wanted to take Mark along on the second missionary trip, yet what were Paul's thoughts?

11. (a) What was the result of this disagreement of Paul and Barnabas over Mark? (b) Did this trouble between Christian elders prove that they were not servants of the true God?

concluded that surely this must not be God's organization, because of the way these prominent elders had acted?

¹² Or consider another, somewhat different type of experience that occurred in Antioch. When the apostle Peter visited this city in Syria, he associated with the whole congregation, fearlessly eating and socializing freely in the homes of the Gentile believers. He knew that this was proper, since, years before, he had been divinely directed to preach to Cornelius, who became the first uncircumcised Gentile convert to Christianity. However, when some Jewish Christians, who came from Jesus' half brother James in Jerusalem, visited Antioch, Peter, out of fear of criticism from "those of the circumcised class," began withdrawing and separating himself from the Gentile Christians. Other circumcised Jewish Christians there began doing likewise. This clearly was not right. It was a sin on Peter's part to cause such a division in the Christian congregation.

¹³ About this time the apostle Paul also was in Antioch, and he was incensed by what he saw occurring. In his letter to the Galatians, he explained: "When I saw they were not walking straight according to the truth of the good news, I said to Cephas [Peter] before them all: 'If you, though you are a Jew, live as the nations do, and not as Jews do, how is it that you are compelling people of the nations to live according to Jewish practice?'" (Gal. 2: 11-14) Peter knew that the Mosaic law was no longer in force, and had shown this earlier by freely associating with Gentiles. (Acts 10:28, 29) Yet now, because of fear, he was reinstituting the divisions provided for under the Mosaic law, but which Law he knew no longer applied to Jewish Christians. (Eph. 2:13-18) So his "withdrawing

and separating" from the Gentile Christians was clearly a hypocritical act prompted by fear of what certain Jewish Christians, especially those of Jerusalem, might think of him. And so Paul, before the whole congregation, exposed Peter's hypocrisy. How would you have felt if you were Peter?—Heb. 12:11.

LETTING LOVE COVER SINS

¹⁴ Think how Peter could have felt. He was prominent among the apostles, having earlier been entrusted with special privileges of service by Jesus Christ himself. (Matt. 16:18, 19; Acts 2:14-41; 10:34-48) Paul was newer in the Christian organization, and now here he was before the whole congregation resisting Peter to his face. 'How dare Paul speak to me that way before the congregation,' Peter could have indignantly felt. But no, Peter was humble. He accepted the correction, and he did not allow it to cause his love for Paul to cool off. For note how Peter later referred to Paul in a letter of encouragement to fellow Christians: "Consider the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as *our beloved brother Paul* according to the wisdom given him also wrote you." (2 Pet. 3:15) Yes, Peter allowed love to cover over the problem, which in this case had resulted from his own sin. Surely Peter demonstrated the quality that distinguishes the true Christian congregation!

¹⁵ What about the problem between Paul and Barnabas that occurred in connection with the taking of Mark along with them? Was this problem, which reached a climax in a sharp burst of anger, also covered over in time by love? Yes, it apparently was. For later when Paul wrote to the Corinthian congregation while he was doing mis-

12. What sin did Peter commit during a visit to Antioch, and what caused him to act in this way?

13. (a) What was Paul's reaction when he was in Antioch and saw what was occurring? (b) Why was Peter hypocritical in his actions, yet what was it like to be corrected before the whole congregation?

14. (a) How could Peter have felt about receiving this correction from Paul? (b) However, what later attitude toward Paul indicates that Peter let love cover over this sin of his?

15. (a) Was the difficulty between Paul and Barnabas straightened out, and what indicates whether it was? (b) What evidence is there that Paul may have acknowledged any misjudgment of Mark?

sionary work in Ephesus, he spoke of Barnabas, along with Peter and the other apostles, as a close fellow worker. (1 Cor. 9:5, 6) Paul evidently acknowledged any misjudgment by him of Mark, and may well have humbly apologized to both Mark and Barnabas. For later Paul speaks highly of Mark. In fact, in one of his letters to Timothy, he wrote: "Luke alone is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministering." —2 Tim. 4:11; Col. 4:10.

¹⁶ Well, what about Euodia and Syntyche? Did they settle their differences, allowing love to cover over whatever sins they may have committed against each other? The Bible does not tell us what finally happened to them. But being good women who had striven side by side with Paul in his Christian ministry, we might reasonably assume that they humbly accepted the counsel given. When Paul's letter was read, we can just imagine their going to each other after the meeting and straightening out their problem in a spirit of love. On the other hand, they could have been hardened by the counsel given. They could have taken the attitude: 'What right does Paul have to write about our problem to the whole congregation?' And so their differences could have been unresolved, and even grown worse. What if this occurred?

¹⁷ Well, this letter to the Philippians was written about 60 C.E. A few years later, in 64 C.E., the Roman emperor Nero reportedly set fire to Rome and blamed the Christians for doing it. Soon afterward great persecution broke out against Christians. What if this persecution also spread

to Philippi, and Euodia and Syntyche were thrown into prison, even as Paul and Silas, years before, had been imprisoned there? (Acts 16:19-34) What if they were put in the same prison, and in the very same cell together? Now, if they were not of the same mind, and if their differences had grown into hate for each other, what could have happened? They could have torn down each other spiritually, perhaps ruining each other's relationship with Jehovah God. How sad that would have been! And how sad it will be today if we do not have intense love for one another when the "great tribulation" comes upon this system of things!—Matt. 24:21.

LOVE VITAL AS THE END DRAWS CLOSE

¹⁸ This is something for us to think seriously about. The end of all things has drawn close, and we need to cultivate intense love to cover the "multitude of sins" that we all have. (Jas. 3:2) We need to learn to love our brothers and sisters despite their personality flaws, their irksome habits, or other features about them which may be distasteful to us. For think about it: As this system nears its total collapse at the "great tribulation," and communications no doubt break down and modern means of travel become impossible, with whom will we be able to get in touch to offer help to them and to receive help from them? Not our brothers in a congregation a thousand miles away, a hundred miles away, or perhaps even twenty or ten miles away. No, but Jehovah God has provided fellow Christians in our own congregation to strengthen and help us. It is particularly these persons near us, our close Christian associates, that we need to love and be loved by. How important this close relationship will prove to be in the troublous times ahead!

16. (a) Is it reasonable to assume that Euodia and Syntyche settled their differences? (b) Yet, possibly, what wrong attitude could they have manifested?

17. (a) If Euodia and Syntyche did not settle their differences, what possible developments could have occurred? (b) Can we learn something today from such a possible development?

18. (a) What do we need to learn to do? (b) As the end approaches, what possible world situation emphasizes the need to love the brothers and sisters in our own congregation?

¹⁹ If we do not have intense love for those in our own congregation, the consequences can be very bad. The apostle Paul showed this when writing to Christians in Galatia, who were apparently having some trouble in getting along together. He urged: "Through love slave for one another. For the entire Law stands fulfilled in one saying, namely: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' If, though, you keep on biting and devouring one another, look out that you do not get annihilated by one another." (Gal. 5:13-15) Yes, if we do not have love for one another, we may tear down and even ruin one another's relationship with Jehovah. This could result in our failure to survive the "great tribulation" so near at hand!

²⁰ So, then, we really do need to work on cultivating love for one another. We simply cannot be practicing the truth, and at the same time be holding grudges against our brothers, or in other ways treating them in an unloving way. The Bible is very clear on this matter, saying: "If anyone makes the statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that the one who loves God should be loving his brother also." There is no question about it, we are under obligation to love one another.—1 John 4:20, 21; 3:14-16.

LEARN FROM THE BEST TEACHERS

²¹ But someone may say: "You do not understand. Certain ones in our congregation do not act like true Christians. They are so exasperating and obnoxious in their

19. What may be the consequences if we fail to have intense love for one another?

20. How does the Bible show that love for God must be accompanied by love for our brothers?

21. (a) How might some feel about their Christian brothers? (b) Yet what example in showing love does Jehovah God provide?

IN COMING ISSUES

- What the Churches Do Not Tell You.
- Jerusalem in the Days of the Apostles.
- Looking to the Future with Confidence.

ways." It may well be that some persons have a long way to go in developing true Christian qualities. Yet Jehovah God, our perfect Creator, loves them. He does not wait until we are nearly perfect, or even until we begin to make over our personality to conform to his ways, before he loves us. No, but the Bible says: "God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) Yes, while we were yet deep in a course of wrongdoing and had obnoxious, selfish dispositions, Jehovah loved us. This is the example in showing love that we are invited to follow.—Eph. 5:1, 2.

²² Jesus Christ, too, set a wonderful example for us in this matter. He gathered around himself disciples who were basically good men. Yet, they had bad traits. For example, on the road coming toward Capernaum, they got in an argument. The Bible account says: "They came into Capernaum. Now when [Jesus] was inside the house he put the question to them: 'What were you arguing over on the road?' They kept silent, for on the road they had argued among themselves who is greater." So Jesus brought a young child into their midst, put his arms around it, and told his disciples that they needed to humble them-

22, 23. (a) What bad trait manifested itself among Jesus' apostles near Capernaum? (b) How did this trait again manifest itself, and what counsel did Jesus give?

selves like young children, and not seek prominence.—Mark 9:33-37; Matt. 18:1-6.

²³ However, it was not long afterward, when they were approaching Jerusalem, that the apostles James and John came to Jesus and asked for the two most prominent positions in his kingdom, one at his right hand and the other at his left. The Bible says: "Well, when the ten others heard about it, they started to be indignant at James and John." So Jesus gave them another talking to about this bad trait then existing in them. He told them: "You know that those who appear to be ruling the nations lord it over them and their great ones wield authority over them. This is not the way among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all."—Mark 10:35-45.

²⁴ It was probably a little over a week later that Jesus met to eat his final Passover meal with his disciples. He knew the

24. (a) What humble example did Jesus set for his apostles at their last Passover together, yet what were they soon afterward arguing about? (b) How did Jesus continue to show love to his apostles, and with what result?



To help his disciples to overcome a bad trait, Jesus brought a child into their midst and told them that they needed to humble themselves like young children

problem that existed among them; so apparently near the outset of that last meal together, what did Jesus do? He took a basin, filled it with water, and went around to each one of the apostles and washed their feet! (John 13:4-17) What a fine example of humility for them to follow! Yet what happened later, during that same evening? The Bible tells us: "However, there also arose a heated dispute among them over which one of them seemed to be greatest." (Luke 22:24) Can you imagine that! Yet Jesus did not throw up his hands in disgust, and say, 'You people are hopeless. I give up on you. You'll never learn to be my true followers.' No, but while they yet manifested such sinful traits, Jesus loved them. He continued to admonish and counsel them. (Luke 22:25-27) And they finally did learn, and later worked together in unity, with none of them ambitiously seeking prominence and prestige.

²⁵ Love indeed will cover "a multitude of sins." In fact, by exercising it—by being forgiving, and by helping and admonishing one another—we will prevent sins from causing any lasting harm or trouble. Never forget what the apostle Peter wrote about the importance of love at this critical time in history: "The end of all things has drawn close," he said. "Be sound in mind, therefore, and be vigilant with a view to prayers. Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." Surely we need to exercise intense love now. Our very survival into God's righteous new system is dependent upon our doing so.—1 Pet. 4:7, 8.

25. (a) What good will result from letting love cover over sins? (b) Why is it so vital that we have intense love for one another now?

Be Sure To Attend THE "DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY" ASSEMBLY!

1975 will, no doubt, go down in history as a year of very significant and interesting events, among them being the four-day "Divine Sovereignty" District Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Especially will this assembly be long remembered by those able to attend. We, therefore, trust that you will be among the throngs that are now making preparations to be there. Last year, 2,043,185 attended similar assemblies throughout the world.

Let us tell you something about the program that has been planned for this year's assembly. The talks will cover a large range of important aspects of Christian living. Speakers will deal with such matters as love, mercy, kindness, patience, long-suffering and humility, and, by demonstrations and examples, they will show how valuable and practical these things are in everyday life. Other talks will stimulate you to keep spiritually awake and busy, to be confident and courageous, as well as to keep spiritually healthy and strong, in order that you may survive the perils and pressures of both the present and the future.

Bible prophecies and their fulfillment, and what they mean to us in this present generation, will be discussed. Other talks will take up the special problems that parents, children and young people are having. Questions that elders and others in the Christian congregation have been asking will be answered.

In recent years one of the special features at district assemblies has been the presentation of outstanding Bible dramas. This year will be no exception. In fact, it has been arranged for you to see four of the most moving and timely dramas yet staged.

There will be an opportunity for those desiring to symbolize their dedication to Jehovah to be baptized in water—at most assemblies, on Friday. Would it not be grand if the number getting baptized at this year's assemblies should even surpass last year's figure of 67,759?

The climax of the assembly will be the last day, when the widely advertised public discourse "One World, One Government, Under

God's Sovereignty" will be given. What an important message this should prove to be for mankind living in this troubled world of confusion and disunity!

These, then, are just a few of the reasons why we urge you to begin now to make arrangements to attend the 1975 district assembly at one of the locations listed below.

BRITISH ISLES

July 10-13: **Bolton, Lancashire**, Bolton Wanderers Football Ground, Burnden Park. Rooming: St. Peter St., Blackburn, Lancs. **Dublin, Irish Republic**, R.D.S. Industries Hall, Ballsbridge. Rooming: 86 Lindsay Rd., Dublin 9. **Sheffield, South Yorkshire**, Sheffield Wednesday Football Ground, Hillsborough. Rooming: 205 Gibraltar St., Sheffield, S3 8UA.

July 24-27: **Cardiff, Wales**, Cardiff Arms Park. Rooming: 112 Brunswick St., Cardiff, CF5 1LN. **Edinburgh, Scotland**, Murrayfield Rugby Ground, Murrayfield. Rooming: Murrayfield Rugby Ground, Murrayfield, Edinburgh, EH12 5PJ. **London**, Rugby Union Ground, Twickenham. Rooming: 70 High St., West Molesey, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 0LY.

July 31–August 3: **London**, Rugby Union Ground, Twickenham. Rooming: 70 High St., West Molesey, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 0LY.

CANADA

July 3-6: **Prince George, B.C.**, The Coliseum, 1100 Patricia Blvd. Rooming: 1804 Central St., Prince George, B.C. V2M 3C3.

July 10-13: **Kamloops, B.C.**, McArthur Island, Sports Centre. Rooming: 260 Leigh Rd., Kamloops, B.C. V2B 2M1. **Moncton, N.B.**, Moncton Coliseum, Killam Dr. Rooming: 15 Granville Dr., Moncton, N.B. E1C 3G5. **Ottawa, Ont.**, Civic Centre Stadium, Lansdowne Park, Bank St. Rooming: 150 Donald St., Ottawa, Ont. K1K 1M9. **Winnipeg, Man.**, Winnipeg Arena, 1430 Maroons Rd. Rooming: Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1296 Main St., Winnipeg, Man. R2W 3T5.

July 17-20: **Montréal, P.Q.** (French only), Blue Bonnets Raceway, 7440, boul. Decarie. Rooming: 7200, av. Louis-Hébert, Montréal, P.Q. H2E 2X4. **St. John's, Nfld.**, Feildian Gardens, Pennywell Rd. Rooming: 49 Morris Ave., St. John's, Nfld. **Vancouver, B.C.**, Pacific Coliseum, Exhibition Park. Rooming: 3280 Grandview Hwy., Vancouver, B.C. V5M 2G2. **Victoria, B.C.**, Memorial Arena, 1925 Blanshard St. Rooming: 1095 Joan Cres., Victoria, B.C. V8S 3L3.

July 24-27: **Calgary, Alta.**, Grandstand, Stampede Park. Rooming: 804 McDonald Ave. SE, Calgary, Alta. T2G 4M2. **Saskatoon, Sask.**, Exhibition Grandstand, Exhibition Grounds. Rooming: 536 2nd Ave. N., Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 2C5. **Toronto, Ont.** (English, Spanish and Portuguese), Woodbine Race Track, Hwy. 27 & Rexdale Blvd., Rexdale, Ont. Rooming: 124 5th St., New Toronto, Ont. M8V 2Z3.

July 31–August 3: **Toronto, Ont.** (English and Greek), Woodbine Race Track, Hwy. 27 & Rexdale Blvd., Rexdale, Ont. Rooming: 124 5th St., New Toronto, Ont. M8V 2Z3. **Toronto, Ont.** (Italian only), Markham Centennial Centre, 8172 McCowan Rd., Markham. Rooming: 402 Oakwood Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6E 2W3.

August 7-10: **St. Catharines, Ont.**, Garden City Raceway, Glendale Ave. Rooming: 134 Louth St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2S 2T4.

UNITED STATES

June 12-15: **Laurel, Md.**, Laurel Race Course, Rte. 1. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, Sunrise Beach Rd., Crownsville, Md. 21032.

June 19-22: **El Paso, Tex.** (Spanish only), El Paso County Coliseum, 4000 E. Paisano Dr. Rooming: 1408 N. Cebada, El Paso, Tex. 79903. **Jacksonville, Fla.**, Memorial Coliseum, Gator Bowl Sports Complex. Rooming: 5135 College St., Jacksonville, Fla. 32205. **Laurel, Md.**, Laurel Race Course, Rte. 1. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, Sunrise Beach Rd., Crownsville, Md. 21032. **Pendleton, Ore.** (Spanish also), Round-Up Stadium, 1205 SW. Court Ave. Rooming: 704 SW. 23rd St., Pendleton, Ore. 97801. **Puyallup, Wash.**, Fairgrounds Grandstand, Cor. Meridian St. & 9th Ave. SW. Rooming: 11317 78th Ave. E., Puyallup, Wash. 98371. **Roanoke, Va.**, Roanoke Civic Center, 710 Williamson Rd. NE. Rooming: 823 Whitney Ave. NW., Roanoke, Va. 24012.

June 26-29: **Alexandria, La.**, Rapides Parish Coliseum, Leesville Hwy., Rte. 28 W. Rooming: P.O. Box 1492, Alexandria, La. 71301. **Allentown, Pa.**, Fairgrounds Grandstand, 17th & Chew Sts. Rooming: 1642 Ehrets Ln., Allentown, Pa. 18103. **Amarillo, Tex.**, Civic Center Coliseum, 3rd & Buchanan Sts. Rooming: 2900 I-40 E. at Manhattan St., Amarillo, Tex. 79103. **Bismarck, N.D.**, Civic Center, 6th St. & Sweet Ave. Rooming: 1731 N. 13th St., Bismarck, N.D. 58501. **Buffalo, N.Y.**, Memorial Auditorium, 140 Main St. Rooming: 6710 Main St., Williamsport, N.Y. 14221. **Cicero, Ill.**, Hawthorne Race Course, 35th & Cicero Ave. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 7859 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60620. **Cleveland, Ohio**, Cleveland Stadium, 1085 W. 3rd St. Rooming: 3030 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44115. **Denver, Colo.**, Denver Coliseum, E. 46th & Humboldt St. Rooming: 2606 S. Josephine, Denver, Colo. 80210. **Des Moines, Iowa**, Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 833 5th Ave. Rooming: 1115 Walnut St., West Des Moines, Iowa 50265. **El Paso, Tex.** (Spanish only), El Paso County Coliseum, 4000 E. Paisano Dr. Rooming: 1408 N. Cebada, El Paso, Tex. 79903. **Green Bay, Wis.**, Memorial Arena, 1901 S. Onelda St. Rooming: 2036 S. Ridge Rd., Green Bay, Wis. 54304. **Houston, Tex.**, Sam Houston Coliseum, 810 Bagby St. Rooming: 2029 Harold St., Houston, Tex. 77006. **Laurel, Md.**, Laurel Race Course, Rte. 1. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, Sunrise Beach Rd., Crownsville, Md. 21032. **Little Rock, Ark.**, Barton Coliseum, Arkansas Livestock Show Grounds, Roosevelt Rd. Rooming: 5709 W. 51st St., Little Rock, Ark. 72209. **Los Angeles, Calif.**, Dodger Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Ave. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 4310 S. Degan Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90008. **Mobile, Ala.**, Municipal Auditorium, 401 Auditorium Dr. Rooming: 4059 Halls Mill Rd., Mobile, Ala. 36609. **Phoenix, Ariz.**, Arizona Coliseum, Grand Ave. & W. McDowell Rd. Rooming: 5235 N. 19th Ave., Phoenix, Ariz. 85015. **Puyallup, Wash.**, Fairgrounds Grandstand, Cor. Meridian St. & 9th Ave. SW. Rooming: 11317 78th Ave. E., Puyallup, Wash. 98371. **Taunton, Mass.**, Taunton Race Track, Rte. 44 W. Rooming: Taunton Race Track, General Delivery, Taunton, Mass. 02780.

July 3-6: **Allentown, Pa.**, Fairgrounds Grandstand, 17th & Chew Sts. Rooming: 1642 Ehrets Ln., Allentown, Pa. 18103. **Amarillo, Tex.**, Civic Center Coliseum, 3rd & Buchanan Sts. Rooming: 2900 I-40 E. at Manhattan St., Amarillo, Tex. 79103. **Asheville, N.C.**, Asheville Civic Center, 87 Haywood St. Rooming: 68 Orange St., Asheville, N.C. 28801. **Binghamton, N.Y.**, Broome County Memorial Arena, Stuart Pl. Rooming: 126 S. Washington St., Binghamton, N.Y. 13903. **Cicero, Ill.**, Hawthorne Race Course, 35th & Cicero Ave. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 7859 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60620. **Columbia, S.C.**, Carolina Coliseum, 600 Assembly St. Rooming: 2005 Memorial Dr., Cayce, S.C. 29033. **Corvallis, Ore.**, Gill Coliseum, 2600 SW. Washington St. Rooming: 987 NW. Circle Blvd., Corvallis, Ore. 97330. **Denver, Colo.**, Denver Coliseum, E. 46th & Humboldt St. Rooming: 2606 S. Josephine, Denver, Colo. 80210. **Huntsville, Ala.**, Von Braun Civic Center, 700 Monroe St. SW. Rooming: 308 Lilly Flagg Rd. SE., Huntsville, Ala. 35802. **Laramie, Wyo.**, Field House, University of Wyoming Campus. Rooming: 507 E. Clark, Laramie, Wyo. 82070. **Louisville, Ky.**, Coliseum, Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center. Rooming: 733 S. 18th St., Louisville, Ky. 40210. **Madison, Wis.**, Dane County Exposition Center, Fairgrounds Dr. Rooming: 5205 Turner Ave., Madison, Wis. 53716. **Milwaukee, Wis.**, Milwaukee Arena, 500 W. Kilbourn St. Rooming: 4909 N. 110th St., Milwaukee, Wis. 53225. **Puyallup, Wash.**, Fairgrounds Grandstand, Cor. Meridian St. & 9th Ave. SW. Rooming: 11317 78th Ave. E., Puyallup, Wash. 98371. **St. Paul, Minn.**, Civic Center, 143 W. 4th St. Rooming: 1545 Christensen Ave., West St. Paul, Minn. 55118. **Spokane, Wash.**, Spokane Coliseum, N. 1101 Howard St. Rooming: W. 2903 Government Way, Spokane, Wash.

99204. **Springfield, Ill.**, Fairgrounds Grandstand, Illinois State Fairgrounds. Rooming: Illinois State Fairgrounds, P.O. Box 3691, Springfield, Ill. 62708. **Taunton, Mass.**, Taunton Race Track, Rte. 44 W. Rooming: Taunton Race Track, General Delivery, Taunton, Mass. 02780. **Tucson, Ariz.**, Tucson Community Center, 260 S. Church. Rooming: 207 W. Flores, Tucson, Ariz. 85705.

July 10-13: **Baton Rouge, La.**, L.S.U. Assembly Center, Louisiana State University. Rooming: 4405 Hatcher Ave., Baton Rouge, La. 70806. **Bozeman, Mont.**, Field House, Montana State University Campus. Rooming: 425 N. Ida, Bozeman, Mont. 59715. **Cherry Hill, N.J.**, Garden State Park Race Track, Rte. 70 & Haddonfield Rd. Rooming: Garden State Park Race Track, General Delivery, Cherry Hill, N.J. 08002. **Cicero, Ill.**, Hawthorne Race Course, 35th & Cicero Ave. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 7859 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60620. **Corvallis, Ore.**, Gill Coliseum, 2600 SW. Washington St. Rooming: 987 NW. Circle Blvd., Corvallis, Ore. 97330. **Fort Worth, Tex.**, Will Rogers Memorial Center, 1 Amos Carter Sq. Rooming: 3417 Sydney St., Fort Worth, Tex. 76119. **Fresno, Calif.** (Spanish only), Fresno Convention Center, 700 "M" St. Rooming: 5025 S. Cherry Ave., Fresno, Calif. 93706. **Hallandale, Fla.**, Gulfstream Park Race Track, 901 S. Hwy. 1. Rooming: c/o Gulfstream Park Race Track, 901 S. Hwy. 1, Hallandale, Fla. 33009. **Hampton, Va.**, Hampton Roads Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr. Rooming: 2811 Victoria Blvd., Hampton, Va. 23661. **Huntsville, Ala.**, Von Braun Civic Center, 700 Monroe St. SW. Rooming: 308 Lilly Flagg Rd. SE., Huntsville, Ala. 35802. **Lakeland, Fla.**, Lakeland Civic Center, 700 W. Lemon St. Rooming: 1040 N. Brunnell Ave., Lakeland, Fla. 33801. **Los Angeles, Calif.**, Dodger Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Ave. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 4310 S. Degan Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90008. **Louisville, Ky.**, Coliseum, Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center. Rooming: 733 S. 18th St., Louisville, Ky. 40210. **Macon, Ga.**, Macon Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr. Rooming: Cor. Joycliff Rd. & Joe Lynn Dr., Macon, Ga. 31201. **Memphis, Tenn.**, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South Fairgrounds. Rooming: 3849 Elliston Rd., Memphis, Tenn. 38111. **Reno, Nev.**, Centennial Coliseum, 4590 S. Virginia St. Rooming: 601 Spokane St., Reno, Nev. 89502. **Syracuse, N.Y.**, Onondaga Memorial Auditorium, 515 Montgomery St. Rooming: 135 Walter Dr., Syracuse, N.Y. 13206. **Taunton, Mass.**, Taunton Race Track, Rte. 44 W. Rooming: Taunton Race Track, General Delivery, Taunton, Mass. 02780.

July 17-20: **Cherry Hill, N.J.**, Garden State Park Race Track, Rte. 70 & Haddonfield Rd. Rooming: Garden State Park Race Track, General Delivery, Cherry Hill, N.J. 08002. **Cicero, Ill.** (Spanish only), Hawthorne Race Course, 35th & Cicero Ave. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 7859 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60620. **Fort Worth, Tex.**, Will Rogers Memorial Center, 1 Amos Carter Sq. Rooming: 3417 Sydney St., Fort Worth, Tex. 76119. **Greensboro, N.C.**, Greensboro Coliseum, 1921 W. Lee St. Rooming: 4619 Mercury Dr., Greensboro, N.C. 27410. **Greenville, S.C.**, Greenville Memorial Auditorium, 300 E. North St. Rooming: 1000 Rutherford Rd., Greenville, S.C. 29609. **Hampton, Va.**, Hampton Roads Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr. Rooming: 2811 Victoria Blvd., Hampton, Va. 23661. **Kansas City, Mo.**, Kemper Memorial Arena, 1700 Wyoming St. Rooming: 2885 S. Hardy, Independence, Mo. 64052. **Lakeland, Fla.**, Lakeland Civic Center, 700 W. Lemon St. Rooming: 1040 N. Brunnell Ave., Lakeland, Fla. 33801. **Macon, Ga.**, Macon Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr. Rooming: Cor. Joycliff Rd. & Joe Lynn Dr., Macon, Ga. 31201. **Oakland, Calif.**, Oakland-Alameda County Stadium, Nimitz Fwy. & Hegenberger Rd. Rooming: 1739 8th Ave., Oakland, Calif. 94606. **Reno, Nev.**, Centennial Coliseum, 4590 S. Virginia St. Rooming: 601 Spokane St., Reno, Nev. 89502. **St. Petersburg, Fla.**, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S. Rooming: 4340 78th Ave. N., Pinellas Park, Fla. 33565. **San Antonio, Tex.**, Convention Center Arena, S. Alamo & Market Sts. Rooming: 1603 W. Lullwood Ave., San Antonio, Tex. 78201. **Springfield, Mass.**, Springfield Civic Center, Civic Center Plaza. Rooming: 1984 Westfield St., West Springfield, Mass. 01089. **Tulsa, Okla.**, Tulsa Assembly Center, 100 Civic Center. Rooming: 120 S. Rosedale, Tulsa, Okla. 74127.

July 24-27: **Las Vegas, Nev.**, Convention Center, 3150 S. Paradise Rd. Rooming: 100 Shiloh Dr., Las Vegas, Nev. 89110. **Long Island City, N.Y.** (French only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave., Long Island City, N.Y. 11104. **San Antonio, Tex.** (Spanish only), Convention Center Arena, S. Alamo & Market Sts. Rooming: 3023 Monterey St., San Antonio, Tex. 78207. **Springfield, Mass.**, Springfield Civic Center, Civic Center Plaza. Rooming: 1984 Westfield St., West Springfield, Mass. 01089. **Tulsa, Okla.**, Tulsa Assembly Center, 100 Civic Center. Rooming: 120 S. Rosedale, Tulsa, Okla. 74127.

July 31-August 3: **Elmont, N.Y.** (Spanish only), Belmont Park Race Track, Hempstead Tpk. at Cross Island Pkwy. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave., Long Island City, N.Y. 11104. **San Antonio, Tex.** (Spanish only), Convention Center Arena, S. Alamo & Market Sts. Rooming: 3023 Monterey St., San Antonio, Tex. 78207. **Springfield, Mass.** Springfield Civic Center, Civic Center Plaza. Rooming: 1984 Westfield St., West Springfield, Mass. 01089. **West Palm Beach, Fla.** (Spanish only), West Palm Beach Auditorium, 1610 Palm

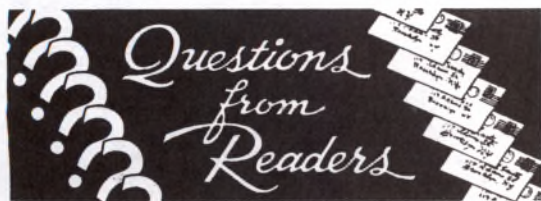
Beach Lakes Blvd. Rooming: 6620 N. Miami Ave., Miami, Fla. 33150.

August 7-10: **Elmont, N.Y.**, Belmont Park Race Track, Hempstead Tpk. at Cross Island Pkwy. Rooming: 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. **Inglewood, Calif.** (Spanish only), The Forum, Manchester & Prairie. Rooming: Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 4306 S. Degnan Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90008.

August 14-17: **Elmont, N.Y.**, Belmont Park Race Track, Hempstead Tpk. at Cross Island Pkwy. Rooming: 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

An Unexpected Blessing

✓ In an African country, violence erupted on the day that a district assembly of Jehovah's witnesses ended. On returning home, a new Witness, who had formerly belonged to the political party that started the uprising, found soldiers and the local court waiting for him. The question was, What had he been doing during the rebellion? He told them that he had attended the assembly of Jehovah's witnesses. But that was not enough. They wanted proof. With soldiers accompanying him, the Witness was permitted to get his assembly program. After the entire program was read, the chief declared the Witness innocent and even encouraged him to continue his preaching activity. The villagers marveled at this, saying: "The God to whom you are praying is the living God!" How grateful this Witness was for having attended the assembly!



● What is meant by Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 7:29, "Let those who have wives be as though they had none"?

The apostle Paul's inspired admonition is part of a discussion recommending singleness as the better course, for the reason that it permits the Christian to be in "constant attendance upon the Lord without distraction." (1 Cor. 7:32-35) The advice for husbands to be 'as though they had no wives' therefore must relate to serving Jehovah God with full devotion.

Many married people conduct their affairs as if their marriage were the only important thing in life. They are so concerned about pleasing their mates that spiritual things, if not ignored completely, are at least neglected. The Christian husband, though, appreciates that his relationship with God must come first in his life. He must live wholeheartedly to Jehovah. (Rom. 14:8) His love for God must be no less exclusive than that of those who are single.

Regardless of what might develop, he should not permit his marriage to interfere with his rightful service to God as a devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. This would be in harmony with Jesus' words: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate [love to a lesser degree] his father and mother and *wife* and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own soul, he cannot be my disciple." —Luke 14:26; compare Matthew 10:37.

Paul's counsel should not be understood to mean that Christian husbands are to ignore their wives, treating them as if they did not exist. To the contrary, Paul instructed Christians at Ephesus: "Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it." (Eph. 5:28, 29) So a Christian husband should not neglect his marital responsibilities. At all times, however, he ought to follow Paul's counsel by building his whole life around his relationship with God. He should not make his marriage his whole life but should see to it that, as far as possible, his marriage contributes to his relationship with God.

The admonition given by the apostle Paul should also be viewed in the light of the hope entertained by those to whom he wrote. The

ones addressed (husbands, wives, as well as single persons) were spirit-anointed Christians who had set before them the prospect of being united with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavens following their death and resurrection. Hence, all earthly bonds and attachments, including marital ties, would eventually come to a complete end, never to be resumed. No earthly sorrows, joys or possessions would accompany them to heaven. Since they would have to leave everything of an earthly nature behind, they should not permit such things to take on undue importance in their life.

Then, too, even during the time of their life on earth, things would not necessarily remain the same. As the apostle Paul pointed out: "The scene of this world is changing." So it was unwise for Christians to become unduly attached to relationships and possessions that were not permanent. Were they to do so, their losing a wife, a friend or even material possessions could lead to their becoming so discouraged as to giving up their precious relationship with God.—1 Cor. 7:30, 31.

Today servants of Jehovah God who hope to gain life on earth can also benefit from Paul's inspired admonition. In their case, too, earthly possessions and relationships are not permanent. Time and unforeseen occurrences befall all people, at times depriving them of possessions, friends and marriage mates. As for material possessions, no one should expect Jehovah to preserve these through the "great tribulation." Jehovah has promised to preserve life, not material possessions. So the thing of supreme importance in the life of every Christian should be, not marriage, possessions or any other earthly thing, but his good relationship with God. Our life depends upon maintaining that relationship.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

July 6: Cultivate Intense Love for One Another.

Page 336. Songs to Be Used: 49, 45.

July 13: Love Covers a Multitude of Sins. Page

342. Songs to Be Used: 15, 108.

Reverence of what might develop, he should not permit his ignorance to interfere with his right to know the truth. The Lord Jesus Christ, who would be in harmony with Jesus' words: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate [love to a lesser degree] his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own soul, he cannot be my disciple." —Luke 14:26; compare Matthew 10:27.

Paul's counsel should not be misunderstood to mean that Christian husbands are to ignore their wives, treating them as if they did not exist. To the contrary, Paul instructed Christians at Ephesus: "Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh, but he feeds and cherishes it." (Eph. 5:28, 29) So a Christian husband should not neglect his marital responsibilities. At all times, however, he ought to follow Paul's counsel by building his whole life around his relationship with God. He should not make his marriage his whole life but should see to it that, as far as possible, his marriage contributes to his relationship with God.

The admonition given by the apostle Paul should also be viewed in the light of the hope entertained by those to whom he wrote. The



What is meant by Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 7:29? Let those who have wives be as though they had none?

The apostle Paul's inspired admonition is part of a discussion recommending singleness as the better course for the reason that it permits the Christian to be in "constant attendance upon the Lord without distraction." (1 Cor. 7:32-35) The advice for husbands to be as though they had no wives, therefore, must relate to serving Jehovah God with full devotion.

Many married people conduct their affairs as if their marriage were the only important thing in life. They are so concerned about pleasing their mates that spiritual things, if not ignored completely, are at least neglected. The Christian husband, though, appreciates that his relationship with God must come first in his life. He must live wholeheartedly to Jehovah. (Rom. 12:8) His love for God must be no less exclusive than that of those who are single.