The WATCHTOWER

What Will Armageddon Really Mean for Mankind?

Christian Love Based on Jehovah's Love

Is Mary Truly the "Mother of God"?

SEPTEMBER 1, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

September 1, 1975
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A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower,* published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

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

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WHAT WILL Armageddon REALLY MEAN FOR MANKIND?

THE word "Armageddon" keeps showing up in the news. "On to Armageddon" headlined the New York *Times* editorial page when India exploded her first nuclear device last year. "Oil Armageddon," "economic Armageddon," "the winter before Armageddon" and similar expressions have also appeared during recent months.

The ultimate disaster—that is what flashes through the minds of most persons who hear the word "Armageddon." Many of them envision in its wake a charred, radioactive cinder of an earth, with few, if any, survivors.

But is that what Armageddon really means? Does it spell only bad for the future? The answer may surprise you.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The source of the word "Armageddon" is the Bible book of Revelation. There it appears only once, in a description of a great gathering of all the "kings," or rulers, of the earth "for the war of the Great Day of God the Almighty." The prophecy includes these significant words: "They called the kings together at the place called, in Hebrew, Armageddon." —Chap. 16, vss. 13 to 16, *Jerusalem Bible.*

There is no actual geographical location, past or present, that is specifically named Armageddon. Hence, the Revelation must be depicting something far more significant than just a literal place. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1974) suggests that "the Palestinian city of Megiddo was probably used as a symbol" because of its strategic location as "a famous battlefield in Palestinian history." King Thutmose III of ancient Egypt reportedly declared that the "capture of Megiddo is the capture of 1,000 towns."

Therefore, the events associated with Megiddo point to Armageddon as symbolizing a confrontation far more significant than any that occurred there in Palestine in ancient times. The full Hebrew expression is *Har Me·ghiddohn,* meaning "mountain of rendezvous" or "mountain of assembly of troops." Armageddon, then, must refer to the situation to which all the kings or governments of the world "rendezvous" against a common adversary.

But what could present a threat to all the presently feuding nations so that they would join unitedly in order to oppose it?

WHY ARMAGEDDON?

Well, for what do governments usually fight? Is it not to maintain their own national sovereignties, the right to run their own affairs without outside interference? However divided the nations are otherwise, they hold this nationalistic stance in common. What else but nationalism could account for such a lack of international cooperation when such cooperation is ob-

viously so essential to human survival in the critical years ahead? Almost universal hostility greets any attempts to create a world authority with real power to act.

"The failure to create a genuine basis for world peace and justice," writes editor Norman Cousins in *Saturday Review* magazine, "is directly chargeable to the refusal of nations . . . to accept an authority that can tell them what to do in the international arena." What is the only way, then, to bring "world peace and justice"? Cousins declares:

> "This, then, is the basic challenge today—how to create a world authority to keep the peace that has behind it the confidence of the world's peoples."—May 3, 1975, p. 5.

Can you imagine the nations conceding any of their powers to such a "world authority"? In fact, are they even headed in that direction? Answers *Ceres* magazine of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization: "We are running in the wrong direction . . . we are very far from that utopian idea of decision-making on a worldwide level." Why? "National entities always looking after themselves" refuse to cooperate. It is a stalemate.

That is why the war at Armageddon is a must. Political nations are powerless to break the stalemate. Moreover, they stand now at Armageddon, aligned against and refusing to yield sovereignty to God, whose time has come to exercise his Kingdom rule for the common good of all mankind.

That is why the Bible says that God the Almighty will act decisively at Armageddon: "[His kingdom] will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." For those aligned against God's kingdom, Christ Jesus predicts that this will mean "great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again."—Dan. 2:44; Matt. 24:21; see also Jeremiah 25:31-33.

BENEFITS OF ARMAGEDDON

God's war *against the unyielding* rulers will no doubt result in loss of life and extreme hardships. This may sound shocking to you. But is not what the nations have already done, and yet would do to the earth if given the opportunity, far worse?

The shortsighted, self-centered policies of nationalistic rulers have truly ruined the earth. Growing pollution, crime and violence, nationalistic and racial hatreds, exploitation and cruel warfare demonstrate their failure to govern effectively. Clearly, the only sound basis for bringing true peace and justice to all of earth's people is first to eliminate the bad systems that have fostered these things, together with their supporters.

Those who recoil at the idea of such a terrible conflict should think about the gruesome wars of recent years, to which so many of mankind gave physical or moral support. Did the horrors of World Wars I and II, for example, clean up the bad system of things and provide the foundation for a righteous world? God's war at Armageddon is the best thing that could possibly happen to our globe, because it *will do just that!* Only Armageddon can clear the way for a righteous earthly state where man-made causes of sorrow, pain and death will be permanently removed. —Rev. 21:1-4.

The word "Armageddon," then, should not cause fear or dread to well up, but, rather, anticipation and hope, both for it and for what lies beyond it. Those who appreciate its real meaning and nearness will join those foreseen in Bible prophecy who gratefully say: "We thank you, Jehovah God, the Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and begun ruling as king. But the nations became wrathful, and your own wrath came, and the appointed time . . . to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." —Rev. 11:17, 18.

'JEHOVAH Remembers That We Are Dust'

HOW much all of us appreciate someone who is understanding, considerate and compassionate! Jehovah God is truly outstanding in this regard. Despite the weaknesses and failings of those seeking to do his will, he does not forsake them. Even when his servants become guilty of serious transgression, he does not deprive them of the opportunity to return to him repentantly.

Against the background of God's dealings with ancient Israel, the psalmist David said: "Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness. He will not for all time keep finding fault, neither will he to time indefinite keep resentful. He has not done to us even according to our sins; nor according to our errors has he brought upon us what we deserve." (Ps. 103:8-10) Neither the nature nor the extent of the sin, but primarily God's mercy and his purpose determined how Jehovah treated the wayward Israelites. His dominant spirit toward them was not one of continuing anger.—Ps. 30:5.

Whenever Jehovah God expresses his anger toward those who violate his commands, he does so with their best interests in mind. His purpose is to move them to repentance so they can regain an approved relationship with him. The discipline given serves that very purpose. This is called to our attention at Isaiah 28:24-29. There a farmer's plowing, harrowing, sowing and threshing are compared to God's purposeful dealings. We read: "Is it all day long that the plower plows in order to sow seed, that he loosens and harrows his ground? Does he not, when he has smoothed out its surface, then scatter black cummin and sprinkle the cummin, and must he not put in wheat, millet, and barley in the appointed place, and spelt as his boundary? And one corrects him according to what is right. His own God instructs him. For it is not with a threshing instrument that black cummin is given a treading; and upon cummin no wheel of a wagon is turned. For it is with a rod that black cummin is generally beaten out, and cummin with a staff. Is breadstuff itself generally crushed? For never does one incessantly keep treading it out. And he must set the roller of his wagon in motion, and his own steeds, but he will not crush it. This also is what has come forth from Jehovah of armies himself, who has been wonderful in counsel, who has done greatly in effectual working."

Clearly, a farmer's operations are orderly and purposeful. Plowing and harrowing are limited, being done to soften the ground and to prepare it to receive seed. Similarly, Jehovah God did not unendingly discipline and punish his disobedient people. He disciplined them for a time and with a view to making them more receptive to counsel and guidance. As the type of grain determines the instruments used for threshing, so God's treatment of individuals varied according to what best suited their case, to cleanse them.

On the individual level, Judean King Manasseh is a case in point. He practiced large-scale idolatry and shed much innocent blood. (2 Ki. 21:1-6, 16) The punishment that he deserved was death. However, Jehovah God did not bring upon Manasseh a judgment in proportion to his sin. Manasseh's discipline consisted of his being taken as a captive to Babylon by the Assyrians. Was that discipline purposeful? Yes, Manasseh repented and humbly prayed to Jehovah to be shown favor. In time Jehovah God gave favorable attention to his pleas and restored him to his kingship. That Manasseh had really changed on account of the discipline received is evident from what he did thereafter. He began a campaign against idolatry, prepared the altar of Jehovah and began sacrificing upon it. Manasseh also encouraged his subjects to serve Jehovah. —2 Chron. 33:12-17.

This example makes it clear that Jehovah God will deal like a merciful father toward those who repent and begin to fear him in a wholesome way. So, regardless of what wrongs a person may commit, he can regain God's favor if he is truly repentant. Recognizing the repentant wrongdoer's frailty and transitoriness, Jehovah God will deal compassionately with him. Said the psalmist regarding the Israelites: "As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust."—Ps. 103:13, 14.

READY TO HELP

On account of Jehovah's fatherly compassion and his understanding our weaknesses, we can rest assured of his help whenever we seek it. His aid is not restricted just to times when a person might sin due to inherited weaknesses and imperfections. Jehovah is willing and able to assist us with anything that might weigh heavily upon us. The psalmist gave this encouragement: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter." (Ps. 55:22) As a compassionate Father, he will not permit us to succumb to the weight of great problems or trials, without any way out. If we appeal to him for help, he will give us the wisdom needed to cope with our problems or trials. (1 Cor. 10:13; Jas. 1:2-5) Also, if need be, he can and will move others to come to our aid.—Jer. 38:8-13.

The Christian apostle Paul was one who often experienced Jehovah's help. In his second letter to the Corinthians, he wrote: "We are pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement; we are perplexed, but not absolutely with no way out; we are persecuted, but not left in the lurch; we are thrown down, but not destroyed." (2 Cor. 4:8, 9) When it seemed to Paul and his associates that they did not know what to do and every resource appeared to fail them, relief came in some unexpected way. In view of what he had experienced, Paul could say to the Philippians: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me." (Phil. 4:13) While it may have seemed humanly impossible to cope successfully with certain trying situations, the apostle Paul did so because of being sustained by Jehovah God.

How comforting it should be to us to know that, if we do not forsake Jehovah permanently, he will treat us with fatherly compassion! He knows our makeup—our weaknesses and frailties—and will not permit us to totter under impossible burdens. Though the circumstances may be difficult, he will give us the strength to endure and will mercifully pardon our transgressions. May we, therefore, continue to respond to his love and understanding by seeking to serve him with a complete heart.

Insight on the News

Building a Love for Reading

● Would you like your child to grow up with an appreciation of the value of reading? A report compiled by twenty prominent British educators gives a helpful suggestion. After a three-year investigation, they say: "The best way to prepare the very young child for reading is to hold him on your lap and read aloud to him stories he likes—over and over."

What makes this method effective? The feeling of physical comfort and security along with the sound of the parent's voice, they say, plus the fascination of the story coming from the printed page, all "combine in the child's mind to identify books as something which hold great pleasure."

Parents who want to aid their children to appreciate the Book of books, the Bible, have a wealth of interesting things they can read to their children, perhaps paraphrasing more difficult parts, while reading other portions, such as conversations, right from the printed page. Many find a great help in the book "Listening to the Great Teacher" (published by the Watch Tower Society), which contains 46 different Bible topics and has already passed the 23-million mark in copies printed. But it may be good to remember what the experience in Britain indicated: parental warmth and closeness can be as important a factor as the material that is read.

Transplant Problems

● It has long been known that heart-transplant patients have a higher-than-average amount of postoperative psychiatric problems. But it seems that the same is true with regard to some other vital organ transplants, such as kidney transplants. U.C.L.A. psychiatry professor Dr. Pietro Castelnuovo-Tedesco is quoted as saying: "An outstanding finding following transplantation is the not infrequent occurrence of serious emotional disturbance." One study of 292 kidney-transplant patients showed that nearly 20 percent experienced severe depression after the operation, a few even attempting suicide. By contrast, only about one out of every 1,500 general-surgery patients develops a severe emotional disturbance.

A peculiar factor sometimes noted is a so-called 'personality transplant.' That is, the recipient in some cases has seemed to adopt certain personality factors of the person from whom the organ came. One young promiscuous woman who received a kidney from her older, conservative, well-behaved sister, at first seemed very upset. Then she began imitating her sister in much of her conduct. Another patient claimed to receive a changed outlook on life after his kidney transplant. Following a transplant, one mild-tempered man became aggressive like the donor. The problem may be largely or wholly mental. But it is of interest, at least, that the Bible links the kidneys closely with human emotions. —Compare Jeremiah 17:10 and Revelation 2:23.

Sweet Charity—?

● People in the United States donated about $25.1 billion to charity last year, according to one source. How much of all this money actually serves a charitable purpose? Not as much as many think or most would like, according to an article in "The National Observer." Not infrequently as much as 40 to 50 percent, or even more, of the money raised goes—not to the ones in need —but to the ones promoting the charity. Administration salaries may take a sizable bite, as in the case of the vice-president of a prominent 'charitable' organization who draws a salary of $52,000 a year. Charitable organizations, including religious ones, often hire professional fund raisers, and their fees may run quite steep. One police organization hired such an agency, but, of some $220,000 raised, the police group received only about $25,000. The rest went for expenses and fees of the fund raisers. Besides all of this, there are many fraudulent organizations operating under the guise of charity and the most conservative of estimates places their "take" at $250 million a year in the United States alone.

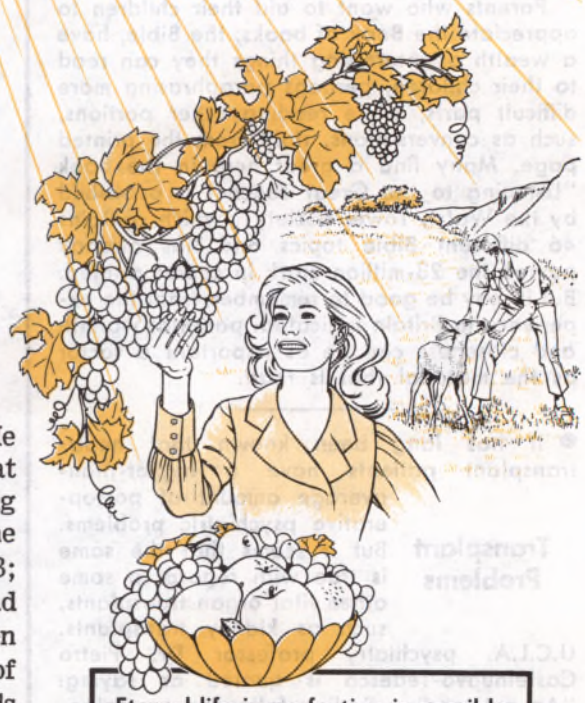
Giving as an expression of love of neighbor is a Christian quality. But prudence calls for the exercise of care if our giving is really to benefit those who need it.

Christian Love BASED ON Jehovah's Love

"I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves."
—John 13:34, 35.

THE Bible writer John, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, had much to say about the Christian quality of love. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and in his Gospel account he uses the words "love" and "loved" more than they are used in the other three Gospel accounts combined. John, of course, was writing primarily about *agápē* love, that is, love guided or governed by principle.

[2] John was in a good position to discuss love because he apparently was a special recipient of Jesus' love and affection. John was one of the three apostles more intimately associated with Jesus throughout his public ministry. He was the one who reclined next to Jesus at the last Passover, when the Lord's Evening Meal was instituted. He was known as the 'disciple that Jesus loved.' (John 13:23; 19:25-27; 21:7, 20) So the apostle John had a good background on which to draw when writing about this Christian quality of love, and he it was who recorded the words of Jesus when he told his disciples about the 'new commandment': "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one



Eternal life in perfection is possible because of God's gift of his Son

1, 2. (a) Why was the apostle John well qualified to write about love? (b) What was the "new commandment" given by Jesus to his disciples?

another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves."—John 13:34, 35.

[3] Jesus here showed that genuine love was to be the identifying mark of his true disciples. But why did Jesus say that this was to be a "new commandment"? Jesus was addressing his disciples, who were all part of the Jewish nation. Under the Mosaic law the Jews were to love their fellowman as themselves. For example, at Leviticus 19:18 the Law said: "You must not take vengeance nor have a grudge against the sons of your people; and you must love your fellow as yourself." In fact, in his teaching, Jesus called attention to this command in the Law when he said: "The second [commandment], like it, is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' "—Matt. 22:39.

[4] The Mosaic law called for neighbor love, not for *self-sacrificing* love based on principle. Jesus, however, when giving his followers a "new commandment," was pointing out that they were to be identified by self-sacrificing love, for he added: "Just as I have loved you, that you also love one another." Jesus' love was a self-sacrificing love based on principle, that is, *agápē* love. He was willing to go to the point of giving even his own life in behalf of his disciples. He spent the years of his public ministry doing good for his fellowman, especially in teaching and helping people in a spiritual way. Therefore his disciples should do the same, not holding back while waiting for an occasion to arise that might dictate the need to do good for one's fellowman. Rather, Christians should take the *initiative* and work actively for the good of their fellowman, especially following Jesus' example in teaching and preaching, thereby working for the spiritual good

3. Were the Jews under the Mosaic law commanded to love one another? Give reasons for your answer.
4. What kind of love did Jesus refer to at John 13:34, 35, and how was such love manifested?

and welfare of others. But, above all, Jesus' disciples were to have love for *one another*. So they were to be outstanding in their love among themselves. It should be something that would readily identify them as different from people of the world in general.

[5] The apostle John appreciated this identifying mark of Christianity so much that he highlighted it, not only in his Gospel account, but also in his letters. The first letter of John, for example, is really an expression of John's love for his Christian brothers. It was written to protect them from the false teachings of antichrists in his day. Also throughout the letter John emphasizes God's love, showing how Christians should copy this outstanding quality of Almighty God, Jehovah.

[6] In First John chapter 4, verse 8, John identifies God with this quality of love, saying: "He that does not love has not come to know God, because God is love." So John here points to Jehovah as the Source of love, truly a God of love. John, of course, does not here mean that God is just an abstract quality. No, not at all. John recognized that God is a *person,* and as a *person* Jehovah has many qualities, the most outstanding of which is love.

[7] God's Son, Jesus Christ, was also outstanding in having this quality of love, the self-sacrificing love, and he pointed out that this would be the mark of his true disciples. Today, therefore, Jehovah's Christian witnesses living in all parts of the earth are worshipers of Jehovah, the God of love, and are disciples or footstep followers of Jesus, his loving Son. So Jehovah's Christian witnesses today must express genuine self-sacrificing love in their daily lives in order to be identified as true Christians. John therefore recommends that the Christian imitate Jehovah God in love, saying: "As for us, we love, because he [God] first loved us."—1 John 4:19.

5, 6. (a) What does John discuss in his first letter? (b) How does John identify God with love?
7. How are true disciples of Jesus recognized today?

THE GREATEST EXPRESSION OF JEHOVAH'S LOVE

[8] How is it that Jehovah has "first loved us"? What has he done for us as human creatures to express his love, his unselfish interest in us? Well, there is a great variety of evidence of Jehovah's love for us. But what could we say is the greatest expression of Jehovah's love? Many would immediately think of life, since it is only because of Jehovah, the Source of all life, and because of his love in giving life, that we live. (Ps. 36:9) But Jehovah has also given life to other creatures here on earth, has he not? We marvel at the tremendous variety in animal creation, the fish and other sea life, the birds and the insects; and all these creatures obviously enjoy being alive although not appreciating the Source of life, Jehovah. So really the greatest expression of Jehovah's love would have to be more than just the gift of life itself.

[9] In connection with humankind Jehovah has arranged something better than the life we have here now, and that is the possibility of *everlasting life* for those who love and serve Him. But how has Jehovah done this? It was by the loving gift of his only-begotten, faithful Son, Jesus Christ. Sinful mankind did not ask for this loving provision for them to live forever, but Jehovah, expressing his love, took the initiative to provide this wonderful gift. So John writes: "The love is in this respect, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins."—1 John 4:10.

[10] The apostle Paul confirms this point,

8. To what would many persons point as evidence that Jehovah "first loved us"?
9. How has Jehovah "first loved us," and how does John confirm this at 1 John 4:10?
10. (a) How does Paul confirm this expression of God's love? (b) Was it an impulsive act on God's part?

showing that Jehovah recommends his own love to us by this loving gift of his Son. Paul wrote, at Romans 5:7, 8: "For hardly will anyone die for a righteous man; indeed, for the good man, perhaps, someone even dares to die. But God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The granting of this loving gift was not impulsive, either, but something that Jehovah purposed centuries before at the time of judging Adam and Eve back in Eden. (Gen. 3:15) Truly, we must say that Jehovah is the Source of love, and, as John wrote, "he first loved us," thereby recommending love as the outstanding quality to be found among his worshipers.

MATERIAL EVIDENCE OF JEHOVAH'S LOVE

[11] In addition to the loving gift of his Son for the salvation and deliverance of mankind, and in addition to life itself with the possibility of its becoming everlasting life, there are many other evidences of Jehovah's love throughout creation. Certainly Jehovah has manifested his love by making life so interesting and enjoyable. For example, daily we enjoy eating, usually several times a day. This is seldom a boring thing, is it? Jehovah has provided us with so many delicious foods and in such marvelous variety. Our foods come in many delightful colors and shapes, as well as with so many subtle flavors and aromas. In affluent countries we can enjoy our meals for days on end with hardly ever eating the same kind of food twice. We must eat daily in order to live, but how lovingly Jehovah has made it delightful and enjoyable for us to eat!

[12] We also find evidence of Jehovah's love in his creative works, the physical creation. (Rom. 1:20) No matter where man lives on this earth he finds beauty, whether it be in the great tropical forests or perhaps in the majestic snow-covered mountains in different areas on earth. Then there are the beautiful clear-blue waters and white-sand beaches of the tropics and subtropics, as well as the great plains covered by flowing golden grain. Or there are deep-blue lakes and beautiful green pine forests. Yes, even the barren deserts have their own peculiar beauty and charm. And we all delight in seeing the starry heavens on a clear night, do we not? Not only are the stars magnificent to behold, but they also provide guides for man in his travels. So they have a practical value too. They are another evidence of Jehovah's love in creation.

[13] Throughout all parts of the earth we find other evidences of Jehovah's love for mankind, such as in the great variety of animal and bird life, providing beauty and color for man's enjoyment, as well as companionship. What a tremendous variety of life Jehovah has created for the benefit and interest of mankind here on the earth! Some men spend a lifetime studying this particular evidence of Jehovah's loving handiwork.

[14] Even more importantly, Jehovah has created humankind higher than the animals. He has displayed his love in making man in his own image and likeness. (Gen. 1:26, 27) Thus, as creatures in Jehovah's likeness, we have the capacity to love, and we also have the capacity to appreciate spiritual things. We have the ability to know, to love and to worship our loving Creator. An animal cannot do this. A person may have a pet dog or a cat and he may talk to this pet, but we never find him discussing spiritual things with his dog or his cat, do we? A lower animal just does not have the capacity to appreciate spiritual things. But humankind can and should

11. What is another evidence of Jehovah's love that we enjoy daily?
12, 13. How do Jehovah's creative works, heavenly and earthly, testify to his love for mankind?
14. (a) In what way has Jehovah created man higher than the animals? (b) The ability to appreciate spiritual things makes it possible for mankind to do what, in harmony with John 4:24?

do so. We may not see Jehovah God, but we do see so much evidence of his love in all of his creative works. And as we come to know him, gaining knowledge of him, then we are able to love and worship him. As Jesus said, we are able to worship him in "spirit and truth." (John 4:24) Yes, Jehovah has done so much for mankind out of his love for them. Certainly, then, we should agree with what John wrote, that "we love, because he first loved us."—1 John 4:19.

[15] As we review the evidence of Jehovah's love we can appreciate that he is a loving Father to all of us on earth. As a loving Father he looks out for the good of his children. He looks out for our welfare and our needs. Jesus taught us that, if we are really putting Jehovah's worship first in our lives, we should not be overly concerned about what we are going to eat or drink or what we are going to wear. Showing how loving our Father is, Jesus said: "Stop being anxious about your souls as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear. . . . For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matt. 6: 25, 32, 33) So as a loving Father, Jehovah is interested in his children, and if we are serving him and doing his will, then he will see that we get the necessary things for life.

[16] Hence, servants of God today should have a close relationship to Jehovah, recognizing him, not just as a deity, but as a Father, a loving Father. So our relationship to him should be that of a child to his father. Therefore we should seek to communicate with our Father regularly and tell him of our needs and our desires and our problems, as well as thanking him for the many blessings he provides. Paul wrote: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God." (Phil. 4:6) In teaching his disciples how to pray, Jesus did not teach them to address Jehovah as "our God" but to address him as "our Father" in the heavens. (Matt. 6:9) So it is good to keep a close personal relationship with Jehovah as a loving Father and to communicate with him regularly.

15. How does Jesus confirm that Jehovah is a loving Father to his servants?
16. Our prayers to Jehovah should indicate what relationship with him?

GOD'S RULE OF LOVE—SO DIFFERENT FROM THE DEVIL'S MISRULE OF HATE

[17] Jehovah has such love for his creatures that he expresses it even toward those not loving him. Remember that Jesus taught his followers: "Continue to love your enemies." (Matt. 5:44) But on what basis could Jesus teach this? Well, the basis was the fine example of his loving Father, Jehovah, for Matthew 5:45 says: "That you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens, since he makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." So Jehovah blesses all with sunshine, rain and things needed to sustain life. Even those not serving him or knowing him receive these blessings. In addition, we have already learned how Jehovah established the principle of loving one's enemies by sending his Son to earth in order to deliver mankind while people were all sinners and alienated from God. (Rom. 5:8-10) On the basis of the principle already established by Jehovah, his loving Father, Jesus therefore could teach that our love should even extend to our enemies. Truly Jehovah's love extends to all and surpasses all other things. What

17. (a) How far should a Christian's love extend? (b) What principle has Jehovah demonstrated in this connection?

a wonderful example he is as the Source of principled love (*agápē*)!

[18] As the Supreme One and Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah does not rule by means of an improper fear or hatred. He is a God of love, as John wrote, and his sovereignty is therefore based on love. Consequently those who serve Jehovah and uphold his sovereignty do so because of their deep love and respect for him, not because of slavish fear. Those upholding Jehovah's sovereignty recognize his superior love, wisdom, power and justice, and they personally choose to worship and serve him, thus upholding his sovereignty. Their feelings are well summarized by the psalmist who said: "For a day in your courtyards is better than a thousand elsewhere. I have chosen to stand at the threshold in the house of my God rather than to move around in the tents of wickedness. For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; favor and glory are what he gives. Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness."—Ps. 84:10, 11.

[19] Satan, of course, has challenged Jehovah's rule of love and has removed himself from Jehovah's love, saying, in effect, that Jehovah is an unloving God. But such a lying challenge does not alter God's love for his creatures. Many have followed Satan in turning away from Jehovah, but this does not stop Jehovah from extending his love nor does it prevent others from supporting Jehovah's sovereignty by expressing their love for him. Jehovah God lovingly sent his Son from heaven to vindicate God's name and His confidence in those who do love Him. His Son Jesus proved that his Father's confidence in him was not misplaced. He also proved his love for his Father and his love for humankind to the extent of giving his life and dying as a common criminal on a torture stake. Through this loving expression by God and his Son, mankind can hope to be delivered from sin and death and gain everlasting life. As John 3:16 says: "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."

18. (a) On what basis does Jehovah rule as the Supreme One and Sovereign? (b) How does Psalm 84:10, 11 well express the feeling of those who support Jehovah's sovereignty?

19. (a) In sending his firstborn son to earth, how was Jehovah extending his love to mankind? (b) How did this, in turn, prove Satan to be a liar?

AN ORGANIZATION REFLECTING GOD'S LOVE

[20] By means of Jesus' active ministry on earth for three and a half years, a new organization was started on earth, an organization of preachers and teachers who follow the example of Jesus. Thus, through Jesus' loving and helpful training, men of humble position and education like the apostles Peter and John became effective, forceful speakers and teachers. (Acts 4:4, 13) A unified international congregation of people from all races and tribes and nations was drawn together in worship of Jehovah God out of its love for him, recognizing, of course, that Jehovah 'loved first.' (1 John 4:19) The early Christians were bound together by *agápē* love, love based on and guided by godly principles. As Paul said: "Love . . . is a perfect bond of union."—Col. 3:14.

[21] This organization of Christian worshipers of the loving God Jehovah still exists today in all parts of the earth. It is separate from an unloving world, as Jesus said his followers should be. So in prayer to Jehovah, he said: "I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one. They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:

20. What new organization was started by Jesus, and what was it that unified this organization?

21. Who today are the true worshipers of Jehovah, and how do they identify themselves as such?

15, 16) Today this organization is known as the Christian witnesses of Jehovah, and they have a worldwide reputation for having love for one another and for their fellowman. What a wonderful thing it is for those who are a part of this organization today to worship and serve Jehovah as united people, with individuals from all races and nationalities bound together in the "perfect bond of union"—godlike love! Yes, Jehovah's Christian witnesses today have the distinguishing mark, the reputation of being outstanding in their love for their God Jehovah and for one another. Thus they prove themselves imitators of their loving God and true disciples of his Son, Jesus Christ.—Eph. 5:1; John 13:34, 35.

Have Intense Love FOR ONE ANOTHER

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

IN HIS first letter to fellow Christians the apostle John refers to God's love in sending his Son to deliver mankind and he shows that Christians are to imitate this expression of love. This is not a matter of choice but is really an obligation that we have, to love one another. He says: "Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another." (1 John 4:11) So here John emphasizes the importance of Jesus' "new" commandment. (John 13:34, 35) Christians should be exemplary in showing love to one another. Jehovah himself has set the example in showing principled love (*agápē*) to his earthly children. So, as obedient children, and as God's servants, we should follow that example and show love, not only for Jehovah God, but for one another.

[2] John again confirms this obligation and shows the seriousness of the matter, at 1 John 4:20 and 21, where he writes: "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." So this matter of showing *agápē* love, self-sacrificing love, for one's Christian brother or sister is a very serious thing, because thereby we show that we love Jehovah God himself.

[3] Who is our visible brother whom we are to love? Well, we cannot limit him to someone of the same race, the same color or the same nationality, can we? Rather, our brother is our fellow servant of Jehovah in the local Christian congregation, or in any other congregation of Jehovah's Christian witnesses throughout the earth. He is our brother in the faith. (Gal. 3:26-28) So we are obligated by Jehovah's love to have intense love for our Christian brothers, thereby proving we are true Christians.

1, 2. How does the Bible writer John confirm the importance of displaying *agápē* love in our lives?

3. Who is our visible brother whom we are to love?

[4] As an organization today, Jehovah's Christian witnesses show such love for one another. There is no fighting between national groups; there is no racial bias or hatred. And this is as it should be. The mark of true Christianity is definitely there in the organization. But the question is: How are we as *individuals* doing in this matter of showing love for our Christian brothers? Are we *individually* displaying true *agápē* love for one another? Do we *individually* have intense love for one another? In this respect it is good for each one to examine himself according to the standard set out in Jehovah's Word. Yes, as Paul said: "Keep testing whether you are in the faith, keep proving what you yourselves are."—2 Cor. 13:5.

[5] We have learned from the words of Jesus, and also from John, that love for our brothers is a necessary Christian quality. It is not something we could call optional; love is not something we can practice only when it is convenient. Rather, the command from Jesus for his disciples to love one another is really a royal law, one that should influence all our actions. Neither can we limit our love to just a few close associates in the congregation, but, rather, our love should reach out to include the entire association of brothers in all parts of the earth. Just as Peter wrote: "Have love for the whole association of brothers." (1 Pet. 2:17) How important it is, then, that we do not limit our love but that we reach out to include the *entire* association of brothers.

HOW IS CHRISTIAN LOVE FOR BROTHERS ACQUIRED?

[6] Since love is so important in the life of a Christian, how, then, does the Christian acquire such love? Today there are many in the Christian congregation who are very new in their worship of Jehovah, and it is only proper that they should want to carry out a royal law, the 'new command' that Jesus laid down for his followers. Well, first we appreciate that *agápē* love is really a fruit of God's spirit, as Paul points out in Galatians 5:22. So the Christian must seek and follow the leading of God's holy spirit in union with the organization that Jehovah is using on the earth today.

[7] In addition, knowledge of Jehovah God and his wonderful attributes is all important. In this connection, the Christian must learn just what love is and how it acts toward his brother and fellowman. This knowledge, of course, comes from a study of God's Word, privately and in association with God's people on earth today. So the Christian must develop a deep appreciation of *all* the truths found *in* God's Word and become a diligent student of the Bible. As Peter said, we should develop "a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word."—1 Pet. 2:2.

[8] Then, of course, one's heart comes into the picture, because love is primarily a quality of the heart. That is why Peter wrote: "Love one another intensely from the *heart.*" (1 Pet. 1:22) With proper knowledge of what *agápē* love is and how it acts, one's heart can be guided and directed in the right way in showing love, first of all to Jehovah, the God of love, and then to one's brothers and fellowman. The Christian's having developed such love in his heart makes it possible for him eventually to dedicate himself to Jehovah, the God of love, and then to follow through on this dedication by carrying out Jehovah's laws and conducting his life daily in harmony with God's principles found in his Word.—1 John 5:3.

4. What does Paul recommend at 2 Corinthians 13:5, and so what questions should here be considered by all?
5. (a) Is love optional as a quality for Christians? (b) How far should a Christian's love reach out?
6. How can a Christian begin to acquire the ability to display *agápē* love?
7. Why is knowledge of God's Word important to one cultivating the quality of love?
8. Does the heart come into the picture, and why?

[9] Some Christians may find it not very difficult to fill their minds with knowledge of Jehovah and his laws and requirements, and they may enjoy going out and preaching the good news of God's kingdom to others. However, sometimes *living* the truth and learning to "love one another intensely from the heart" is more difficult for these same individuals than just acquiring knowledge of commands, laws and principles, or preaching publicly. Here is where the Christian must learn to conform to principles regarding his attitudes, his conduct, his relationship with each one in the congregation, and it is here that *agápē* love is very, very important. This means that the Christian must learn to live *all* of the truth obediently from the heart.

[10] If we love our brothers, then we must eliminate anything that would tend to divide us off from any of them. We must be careful that we do not start loving the wrong things. That is why John, out of love for his Christian brothers, warned them not to be loving the world. He said: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world." (1 John 2:15, 16) So if a person were to start loving the world or the things in the world, his love would be misdirected. He would be dividing himself off from his brothers who are not lovers of the world or of worldly things. Soon he would not be found with his brothers in the congregation meetings or in the Christian field service, but he would be seeking out worldly associates or worldly interests rather than his Christian brothers. How careful we must be, then, to keep our love properly directed and to seek out always the association of those who worship Jehovah as we do!

[11] Real principled love should make us think of others, not just of ourselves and our own interests, insisting that we have a right to do things regardless of how others may be affected. So we should be thinking of our personal appearance and our personal interests, in order that we do not, in those respects, upset someone in the congregation or stumble such a one. (2 Cor. 6:3, 6) We should watch our conduct, our speech and our associations, having in mind not just our own wishes or interests but the interests of our brothers, thinking of how they could be affected by what we do or say. (Phil. 2:4) It is good to keep in mind that if *agápē* love is not properly developing in us, then really our relationship with Jehovah is affected. Remember John's words: "For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen."—1 John 4:20.

IN IMITATION OF JEHOVAH'S LOVE

[12] It is also good to consider that Jehovah loves *all* of us, and we are *all* imperfect. So Jehovah does not restrict his love to just a few in the congregation, but through his loving arrangement he is willing to forgive our mistakes and errors and accept our loving service. So intense heartfelt love for our brothers is based on the truth and a genuine appreciation of the worth of our brothers in Jehovah's eyes. Peter advised: "Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. In pro-

9. (a) What is sometimes more difficult than gaining knowledge of the Bible or than preaching? (b) How important is *agápē* love to a Christian when it comes to his relationships with his brothers?
10. What warning does John give about love, and so how should the Christian properly direct his love?
11. (a) Real *agápē* love for others should prevent us from thinking in what way? (b) What is affected if we do not display real love for our brothers?
12. What example does Jehovah set for us in this matter of love, and what does Peter therefore advise us to do?

portion as each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness expressed in various ways." (1 Pet. 4:8-10) So Jehovah gives to each one a gift to use in the divine service and he accepts our service in spite of our imperfections, weaknesses and shortcomings. If we love our brothers as Jehovah loves us, then we should be able to look *beyond* their errors and mistakes and learn to work closely with ALL in the congregation, covering over the mistakes of others with love.

[13] This would be especially true with the official elders in the Christian congregations. Some elders should not feel that they are superior to other elders because they have been in God's organization longer or because they have been appointed as elders for a much longer period of time. Rather, they should appreciate their fellow elders and esteem their value and human dignity in the sight of *God,* respecting their opinions and thoughts, as these are based on God's Word. Jehovah does not make any distinction as to how long one has been serving or how long one has been an elder. So those who may be longer in Jehovah's service should not try to force their ideas or opinions on other elders but should learn to work along with them in love, giving them due respect for their ministerial "gift" and the use of it as appointed elders.

[14] The same point really applies to all in the congregation of God with respect to working with the elders. Not one of the elders is perfect, so we must be careful that we do not magnify the faults or human imperfections of an elder and tend to regard lightly his counsel or points of instruction based on God's Word. We cannot disregard counsel just because there may be some peculiarities that we dislike about a certain elder. No, but we must overlook faults and imperfections and, rather, look at an elder's love for Jehovah and zeal for His service, learning to respect *all* the elders and cooperating with all of them in the congregation. Paul emphasizes this point in Hebrews 13:17, where he says: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." How good it is for brothers to work closely with the elders and show heartfelt love for them and for the fine work they perform!

[15] Yes, love for all our brothers should be out of a clean heart, and it should be wholehearted. Remember what Paul told Timothy: "Really the objective of this mandate is love out of a clean heart and out of a good conscience and out of faith without hypocrisy." (1 Tim. 1:5) This means that our heart is cleaned up by the truth, and if we see ourselves lacking in some respect in love for our brothers, then we should allow the truth to purify our lives through more frequent use of God's Word. A clean heart should impel us to have a wholesome, honest and helpful relationship with all the brothers in the congregation. Our conscience will then be a good conscience because it will be at rest. We will be sure that we are doing right. Our love will be easily observable by others, for it will not be a hypocritical display or something contrived just for the sake of appearance. True love is a godly quality, a pure inner quality that is real and that issues from a good, clean heart.

[16] Those who are elders in a congrega-

13. How can elders show love for their fellow elders in the congregation?
14. What counsel does Paul give about cooperating with the elders, and how can this be applied by all in the congregation?
15. How would you apply 1 Timothy 1:5 to this matter of loving one another intensely from the heart?
16. In what way should elders give counsel if they have real love for their brothers?

tion can show this heartfelt love for their brothers by being considerate in how they speak to them. In this case humility is certainly essential. An elder should not be filled with pride, thinking he is better than others in the congregation. Each one in the congregation is valuable property, one of Jehovah's "sheep." (John 10:16) So the elders, when speaking to others and giving counsel, must think of how their words or actions will affect others. Their counsel should be given in a humble and kind way. Galatians chapter six, verse one, shows that a "spirit of mildness" is essential when one is seeking to help a brother spiritually. This, then, is the loving way; one is sincerely trying to help another and not setting oneself up as higher than others or more important because of a position.

INTENSE "AGAPE" LOVE SHOWN BY ALL

17 At 1 Thessalonians 5:14, the apostle Paul gave good counsel on how ALL of us in each congregation can widen out to include the needs of our brothers, thus widening out in our love for one another: "We exhort you, brothers, admonish the disorderly." He was here speaking, not just to the elders in the congregation, but to ALL in the congregation. On occasion we may see someone in the congregation who perhaps is on the verge of misconduct, and this would be an appropriate time to follow Paul's counsel to "admonish the disorderly." This does not mean that we would severely reprimand a brother or perhaps start gossiping about what he is doing. No, we should, rather, lovingly and tactfully try to assist our brother in a personal way and point him in the right direction, encouraging him to right works and to forsake wrong works. Of course, if we see something that is very serious, then it would be good to discuss the matter with one of the elders who can give needed counsel to one who is disorderly.

18 Paul also wrote that we should "speak consolingly to the depressed souls." (1 Thess. 5:14) In many congregations there are those who are elderly, perhaps infirm, who may be depressed because they are not able to carry on the field service as they once did. They may feel somewhat helpless and limited in their ability. We can assist such ones spiritually where needed and show them how much all in the congregation appreciate their good example in meeting attendance and service, even though limited, and encourage them in any way we can.

19 In this same text Paul also counseled that we "support the weak." Perhaps you have observed some who are weak in the preaching work or in attending meetings. You could lovingly talk to such brothers and try to encourage them and, in some cases, make practical arrangements to help them. Or we may find someone who is getting weak in faith, perhaps because of speculating about the future. There are some who are always asking questions that have no Scriptural answers, and, when elders or others in the congregation cannot answer their questions, they begin to doubt the fulfillment of prophecies or even to doubt that Jehovah is using his organization today. How can we help such weak ones? Certainly we can encourage them to recognize the value of the congregation, can we not? See how Jehovah is using his organization today to get the good news preached! This is the work Jesus said must be done, and what other organization is there doing it? (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Jesus also said that there would be a "faithful and discreet slave" class that would supply spiritual food to God's people, and today

17, 18. How can we follow Paul's counsel (a) to "admonish the disorderly," and (b) to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls"?

19. Why might a brother be weak in some respects, and how could we "support the weak"?

Jehovah's people are the only ones well fed spiritually, because of association with this "slave." (Matt. 24:45, 46) Through it we have come into close association with Jehovah, his Son and his people on the earth. Where could we turn if we would leave God's organization today? There is nowhere else! (John 6:66-69) This is the *one* organization he is using, and, if we ourselves are convinced of this, we should be able to assist others who are weak in faith.

[20] "Be long-suffering toward all," Paul also wrote. (1 Thess. 5:14) So our kindness and brotherly love should include *everyone* in the congregation. We should be willing to overlook the weaknesses and imperfections of everyone and be long-suffering toward *all,* not just toward *some* when we find it easy. We must learn to be patient and not be a faultfinder, demanding or critical of others. In harmony with 1 Thessalonians 5:15, we want to "see that no one renders injury for injury to anyone else, but always pursue what is good toward one another and to all others." In verse 13 of the same chapter, Paul said: "Be peaceable with one another." So we should always seek to be at peace with our brothers.

[21] Our love for our brothers should be expressive, not dormant. It should include being considerate of our brothers. For example, when we go to our congregation meetings, it is good not only to speak to those we know well, but also to look for the new ones and the timid or withdrawn ones and include them in our greetings and conversations. Thereby we encourage them and help them to relax and enjoy the association of the brothers. We would not want to overlook the children either. Our love should direct us to converse with them also, and to commend them for their fine efforts in serving Jehovah God. We should let them know how much we appreciate the good example they set in the field work and their good conduct at school and at home. Thereby we lovingly encourage them to continue in the right way of serving Jehovah God.

20. What did Paul mean when he said to "be long-suffering toward all"?
21. How should our love be expressed at Christian meetings?

SHOWING LOVE IN A MATERIAL WAY

[22] As we get farther along in the "time of the end" of this old system we realize that there is a need to draw closer to one another at all times in the bond of love, showing intense love for one another. Occasions may arise when we see that our brothers need assistance, and how good it is that we know them well and love them! At times it may mean more than just spiritual help, for there may be a need for material aid. John wrote of this need at 1 John 3:17 and 18: "But whoever has this world's means for supporting life and beholds his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him? Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth." If we show love for our brothers in a material way, again we are copying the good example Jesus set. We recall that, at times, he fed multitudes with material food as well as spiritual nourishment so that they could return safely to their homes and not give out along the way. (Matt. 14:14-21; 15:32-38) So at times we may be able to show love in a material way too. Our Christian brothers or sisters may become ill. Then we can show intense love by doing such things as bringing them food, helping to clean their home or running errands for them. There may be others who need assistance to get to the meetings and we may have a car

22. (a) On occasions our love may have to be expressed in what ways, and how did Jesus set the right example? (b) What are some ways whereby we could show love in a material way?

available. We could show love in a practical way by taking them to the meetings with us. Yes, there are so many ways in which practical love can be shown now and in the future, by providing needed assistance in a material way.

[23] Problems face all of God's servants today, and indications are that these problems will increase. So it is wise to become well acquainted with our brothers, always showing intense love for one another. We know we are living in the "last days" and Satan knows this too. Realizing that his time is short, he is bringing many problems upon the peoples of the earth. All of us may have to face situations where our very lives are endangered. Then we may be called upon to show the kind of love Jesus showed, to the extent of laying down our lives for our brothers. The *1974 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* gives good examples of how our brothers in Nazi Germany lovingly assisted one another in the face of terrible persecution. Truly they had intense love for one another and their expression of this love was both spiritual and material, aiding one another to continue faithful in Jehovah's service and protecting one another at all cost. Will you do the same? Will you lovingly protect your brothers and never, never betray them? In the near future, our very lives may depend on such love for one another.

[24] Right now we can all build one another up in the spirit of *agápē* love. We do not need rules and regulations telling us when we should love one another. Remember that Jesus' command to love indicated we should not hold back but take the initiative in showing love for our brothers at all times. If we have intense love for our brothers, then our hearts will impel us to provide all *possible help whenever and* wherever it is needed. Thus, as true Christians, we will be outstanding in showing love for one another, and the world will recognize the identifying mark of love.

[25] At 1 Corinthians 13:4 to 7, Paul provides an excellent description of how true Christian love should act. He says: "Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up, does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury. It does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." And then in verse 8 the apostle adds: "Love never fails." Such love is required, not just from the elders and the ministerial servants, but from all Christians who are called Jehovah's witnesses today.

[26] Yes, as Paul said, "love never fails." The Christian should never stop loving and there is no limit to love or law that can slow it down. True love can be practiced at any time and at any place. Paul said, at Romans 13:8, that love is the only debt that Christians should have one toward the other. Today the end of this system is fast approaching. So, of all times, THIS is the time to have "intense love for one another." (1 Pet. 4:8) Is it not true that, as God's servants, we hope to *live* with one another forever? That means we *should* also want to *love* one another forever. So now is the time to strengthen our close bonds as Christians and to cultivate the ability to love one another intensely from the heart, thus imitating our loving God, Jehovah.

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23. What may be required of us someday if we have intense love for our brothers?

24. Why does the Christian not need detailed rules covering every situation when it comes to expressing love toward his brothers?

25, 26. (a) How does true love act, according to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7? (b) Why is it so important to love one another intensely from the heart?

UPHOLDING GOD'S TRUTH AND KINGDOM

As told by Oskar Hoffmann

GERMANY, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Liechtenstein—these are countries in which I have had the privilege of upholding God's truth and kingdom. My life of serving God in various lands began in 1930, when I was twenty-six years old. I then decided to devote my time and strength to upholding God's kingdom, and never for a moment did I doubt Jehovah's word that he would care for me if I put his Kingdom interests first in my life.—Matt. 6:33.

After the convention of Jehovah's people in Berlin, in 1931, I decided to enter the full-time preaching work, under the direction of the Watch Tower Society. After about three months of preaching in Germany, I was given a new assignment.

It was my privilege to move to Prague, Czechoslovakia, there to share God's truth with meek ones. Though I did not know the language of the country, I daily called on people in their homes. To help them to understand why I was calling, I asked them to read a "testimony card," which contained a short printed sermon in their language. By this means thousands of Bible publications were placed in the hands of the Czech people.

After a year in Prague, I was transferred to Bohemian-Budweis, a district in which, to some extent, German was still spoken. I covered this territory on bicycle. It was not difficult to find a place to sleep, as the Czechs were hospitable and many enjoyed hearing the Kingdom message.

But our Bible educational work was not without opposition. One day I was arrested and falsely charged with espionage. I was put in solitary confinement. On one occasion, when I was permitted to take a shower, there was another prisoner within speaking distance. He asked me why I was in prison. I answered: "Do you know Jehovah's witnesses?" "Yes," he replied, "they'll never wipe out those people!" That was all he said, but how true it was!

After a court trial I was acquitted. However, not long afterward I was arrested again, along with another Witness, and we were put into an evidently long-unused cell. While we were sitting on our plank beds in our prison suits, suddenly our clothing was darkened with a mass of fleas clinging to us. We banged on the cell door, and when the guard saw our plight, he brought us out.

By now my residence permit in Czechoslovakia was expiring, so I was taken to the German border. That was in February 1934.

UPHOLDING GOD'S KINGDOM IN HUNGARY

My heartfelt desire was to preach God's truth wherever I could. So I wrote to the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Magdeburg and received word to go to Budapest, Hungary, and join Jehovah's praisers there. That was really good news.

Though I had never in my life heard the Hungarian language, I called on householders with a testimony card. In addition to booklets and magazines on Scriptural themes, I left the Bible study aids *Cre-*

ation, Reconciliation and *Jehovah* with many interested people. As a foreigner, I could stay in the country only a limited time. Then I had to cross the border and reenter for a further period of time. And so I preached two years in this lovely city through which the river Danube flows. It was here that I married a Christian sister who was in the full-time preaching work, and she became my faithful wife and companion in upholding God's truth.

SHARING GOD'S TRUTH IN YUGOSLAVIA

Just before World War II, I was privileged to go to Yugoslavia. My wife and I traveled freely throughout Yugoslavia, bicycles being our means of transport. Again we used testimony cards to explain to people why we called at their homes. The people were poor, and often we gave them Bible literature in exchange for food. Frequently we shared their own hard sleeping quarters—the floor—or we slept on hay or straw. Priests sometimes tried to turn the people against us, but, on the whole, the people liked to hear about God's kingdom.

In the town of Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, a gymnastics teacher accepted God's truth and wanted to be baptized. Another Witness and I immersed her in a bathtub. When I attended our Christian assembly in Graz, Austria, in 1971—thirty-three years later—what a joy it was to meet her again!

In time the Yugoslav authorities decided that they did not want us preaching God's kingdom in their land, and so we were deported. On we went to Switzerland.

SPREADING SEEDS OF TRUTH IN SWITZERLAND

World War II was now at its height, and I received a summons from the German Embassy in Geneva to join the Nazi army. I informed them that I could not take part in this war because of my Christian conscience, and therefore I would not appear for recruiting. The Nazis responded to this by taking away my German citizenship.

After World War II, the Swiss authorities encouraged me to try to get valid German documents again. The application to the German authorities was approved, and my German citizenship was restored.

In December 1949 we arrived in Interlaken to serve as special pioneers, or full-time preachers, of God's Word. There was only a small group of Witnesses here; they met in a room in Hotel Gotthard. We appreciated very much preaching the good news of God's kingdom in this beautiful alpine territory.

The bicycle again was our means of reaching mountain villages. Busily we scattered the seeds of Bible truth in such places as Grindelwald, Lauterbrunnen, Stechelberg, all the way to the end of the lake of Brienz. In addition to innumerable magazines and booklets, we placed more than 1,500 bound books with people, during a period of about four and a half years.

A change came when the Watch Tower Society's branch office suggested that we go to the Rhine valley in the canton of Saint Gall, where there were no Witnesses. We accepted the assignment.

Our new territory on the Rhine was near Lake Constance. At this point the Rhine River separates Switzerland from Austria and Liechtenstein. As we reached the brow of the mountain pass and surveyed this wide Rhine valley spread out before us, we were deeply impressed by Jehovah's glorious creation. It was breathtaking! Below us lay a panorama of the territory in which we had been sent to scatter the seed of God's kingdom.

Marbach was the place where we settled, and from here we continued our preaching activity over a period of thirteen years. In

time a small congregation of Witnesses was established in this Catholic territory.

A Catholic family of six persons accepted God's truth despite severe opposition on the part of their relatives, among them priests and nuns. Letters of abuse and personal visits in an attempt to bring them back to the fold failed. God's truth triumphed.

Another woman regularly attended Mass, and she would make a wide detour to avoid anyone on the street with the *Watchtower* magazine. But she did love the Bible. In time I studied God's Word with her, using only the Bible. As she progressed in knowledge, she withdrew from the Church and became a zealous preacher of God's truth.

KINGDOM PREACHING IN LIECHTENSTEIN

It was a pleasant surprise when the Swiss branch asked me if we would be willing to move to Liechtenstein, and we gladly accepted. That was seven years ago, in my sixty-fourth year. This time we needed to move only 30 kilometers up the Rhine. Liechtenstein, a small country of eleven communities (population now about 23,000), had just a few Witnesses. Now they received help, and it must have seemed to the Liechtensteiner as if an army had moved in. We expected opposition, and the clergy did stir up trouble.

For example, our meetings were disturbed by young people throwing stones at the windows. One day a Witness engaged six of the youths in conversation. They were invited to come to a public talk at the Kingdom Hall, and several came. The purpose of our meetings was explained to them and, after that, we had no trouble for some time.

People were warned against us in church, in religious magazines, in the schools and in newspapers. To answer the false charges, we arranged for a newspaper to publish an article entitled Who Are Jehovah's Witnesses?, after which things calmed down.

As people in Liechtenstein get to know us better, many see that our preaching work is in their best interest. Some now express themselves with words such as, "If all thought the way you do, we would have world peace."

Between the two of us, my wife and I have now had the privilege of preaching God's truth full time for eighty-three years. Over the years, willingness to accept assignments in foreign lands has brought us much joy and happiness, and through this preaching work we have come to love and appreciate Jehovah more and more.

ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER 1, 1975

The annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania on October 1, 1975, will be held at Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, Buckingham, Pennsylvania, which was the site of the annual meeting on October 1, 1971. The meeting will be at 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon of Wednesday, October 1, 1975, at the assembly hall in Buckingham.

It will be appreciated if the members of the corporation will now see to it that the Secretary's Office has their present mailing addresses so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after September 1.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 15. As each member knows, he should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not, and the information given on each proxy will be relied upon in determining in advance those who will actually be personally present. So this information should be given definitely on the proxy.

GENUINE CHRISTIANITY
—Can It Be Found?

THERE is widespread dislike of Christianity among people in the non-Christian nations. One reason for this is that missionaries of Christendom's religions have often spearheaded the commercial and political exploitation of these nations. In one island there is a saying: 'The missionaries taught us to say grace, and while we had our heads bowed they stole the land.'

Even in the so-called Christian nations many persons have lost respect for Christianity because the clergy, as a class, have brought reproach upon God and the Bible by failing to practice what they preach. Also, people have found that what the clergy teach is often contrary to good sense, justice and righteousness.

Consequently, many persons seriously doubt that there is a genuine Christianity. They ask, Can genuine Christianity be found? If so, where and how?

A BASIS FOR IDENTIFICATION

Jesus Christ, when on earth, practiced righteousness and turned people toward the pure worship of God. (John 4:23, 24) He pointed out how true worship can be identified. He said, when speaking about false teachers that would arise:

"By their fruits you will recognize them. Never do people gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles, do they? Likewise every good tree produces fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit; a good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, neither can a rotten tree produce fine fruit. Every tree not producing fine fruit gets cut down and thrown into the fire. Really, then, by their fruits you will recognize those men."—Matt. 7:15-20.

God's judgment will indeed fall on hypocritical teachers of falsehood that defame his name. But if we see good fruitage, then we know that the source is good. We can recognize true worship.

A Bible prophecy given many years ago illustrates that in this very time in which we live thousands of persons would identify true Christianity and would come into an approved relationship with God. They would become his true people, with a hope of living on earth under a righteous government, the kingdom of God. This is a prophecy given about the ancient city of Jerusalem after a small remnant of about 50,000 Jews had been repatriated from exile in Babylon. For seventy years prior to that time, Jerusalem had lain desolate. Now its population was small compared to what it had once been, but God said, encouragingly:

"This is what Jehovah of armies has said, 'It will yet be that peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will come; and the inhabitants of one city will certainly go to those of another, saying: "Let us earnestly go to soften the face of Jeho-

vah and to seek Jehovah of armies. I myself will go also." And many peoples and mighty nations will actually come to seek Jehovah of armies in Jerusalem and to soften the face of Jehovah.' "—Zech. 8: 20-22.

It is true that Jerusalem did flourish and was still an important city for more than five hundred years after that. But the more significant fulfillment of the prophecy comes in our time, because, as the apostle Paul says, the things that occurred with Israel were examples for "us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived." (1 Cor. 10:11) And the same apostle tells us: "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope."—Rom. 15:4.

Furthermore, the Bible's last book, Revelation, describes "a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" who would appear in this world's time of the end, and who would worship God sincerely as believers in the "Lamb of God," Jesus Christ.—Rev. 7:9, 10; John 1:29.

TEN COME TO JOIN ONE

Accordingly, we today can expect to find people living according to true Christianity, producing good fruits of righteousness, justice, love and peace. The prophet Zechariah goes on to say: "It will be in those days that ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold, yes, they will actually take hold of the skirt of a man who is a Jew, saying: 'We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you.' "—Zech. 8:23.

Who is the "man who is a Jew"? In this connection, the words of the apostle Paul are of interest: "He is not a Jew who is one on the outside, nor is circumcision that which is on the outside upon the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that of the heart by spirit."—Rom. 2:28, 29.

Now, when we look around today, who are really making an effort to preach Bible truth and to practice true Christian living? Who, as a group, are working hard to help others to understand God's provision of a cleaner, happier life now and of everlasting life on earth under his Kingdom rule by Christ? Who have been joined by a figurative "ten men," that is, have had even literally a tenfold increase in numbers of those going along with them because 'they see that God is with them'? Certainly the organized religions of Christendom do not see such a tenfold increase. There are now more than 900 million professed Christians belonging to the churches of Christendom. If such a tenfold influx came into their ranks, it would amount to more than twice the earth's population.

No, the religious sects of Christendom are not enjoying spiritual prosperity. But consider the anointed remnant of spiritual Jews. They make every effort to help as many people as possible to learn the Bible's truth. More important than the number of people associating with them is the fact that those people have cleaned up their lives and made great changes to live by Christian principles. This fact is quite widely acknowledged. In recent years, the remnant have also enjoyed much more than a tenfold addition to their ranks.

Those who say to the anointed remnant of spiritual Jews, "We will go with you people," do it for what reason? Because, as they say to the remnant: "We have heard that God is with you people." (Zech. 8:23) They have heard—from friends, neighbors, workmates—of the happiness of the spiritual "Jew" class, of the unified families of those going along with that class and of their knowledge of the Bible with its answers to the problems of life. Furthermore, they have particularly ob-

served one of the "fruits" that Jesus said would characterize his followers. He told these: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have *love* among yourselves."—John 13:35.

This love is not the inherent possession of those who have long served as Jehovah's Christian witnesses. The spiritual Jews, like the "ten men" now associating with them, first required help from earlier spiritual Jews, just as the newly converted Christians of the first century at Jerusalem "continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles." (Acts 2:42) Those first-century anointed Christians knew that they needed to study the Bible to come closer to God, to establish a relationship with him. They needed to 'make their minds over' and to "put on the new personality" that the Bible describes. —Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24.

So today the figurative "ten men out of all the languages of the nations" now "go with" God's spiritual 'Jews' because they are seeking to come into favorable relations with God. They "go with" these anointed ones by giving them wholehearted support. Has the prophecy really been true as to a tenfold number of these being added to the spiritual remnant? Yes. In the year 1918 there were some thousands of dedicated Bible Students actively proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, world wide. In 1947, 207,552 witnesses of Jehovah reported activity—manifold times as many. And in 1974 there were more than two million of the international "ten men" class who were saying: "We will go with you people." This last tenfold increase took place in just twenty-seven years.

"WE HAVE HEARD THAT GOD IS WITH YOU"

An example of the attitude of these figurative "ten men" and what attracts them to "take hold of the skirt of a man who is a [spiritual] Jew" is seen in the experience of a young woman in the state of Virginia, United States of America.

This young woman was impressed by a discussion of the Bible that she had with one of Jehovah's witnesses. Though she felt guilty because of a wrong way of life that she was pursuing at the time, the things that she learned and the patience of the Witness who was helping her moved her to continue her discussions. She was introduced to others of Jehovah's witnesses who had formerly experienced similar doubts and feelings of guilt. Their love and patience in helping her convinced her that God was truly with these people. The changes she made in her life attracted others, as she relates:

> The man I work for is physically disabled. He was a 'tough cookie,' having developed an independent attitude while young. He had found his religion to be hypocritical. The change in my personality was so apparent to him that he began to listen to what I was saying about the Bible to a girl workmate. I answered many of his questions. Finally he came to a meeting of the Witnesses. He developed enough knowledge and appreciation to try to change what he thought was wrong, including the smoking habit. He became a milder-tempered man. Now he and his wife are studying the Bible, attending the meetings of the Witnesses and are trying to restore harmony to the family.

These people have found and identified true Christianity in a world where the question is often asked, Can genuine Christianity be found? If you are a seeker for right principles and for "promise of the life now and that which is to come" —a better life in a peaceful paradise earth —then look for the identifying marks of Christ's disciples and, having found them, say, "We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people." —1 Tim. 4:8; Zech. 8:23.

Is Mary Truly The "Mother of God"?

FOR many centuries before the birth of Jesus, Hebrew prophets were pointing forward to that unique event. The birth was to be the only one of its kind—a virgin birth. (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:20-23) The extraordinary role that Jesus would thereafter play in the outworking of his Father's purpose required that he be born a perfect human.

More than seven centuries before Jesus was born to the virgin Jewess Mary, the prophecy of Isaiah called attention to the important position he would have. We read: "For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace."—Isa. 9:6, Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* (*JB*).

Does Jesus' being prophetically designated as "Mighty-God" truly make Mary the "mother of God"? To answer that question, we would need to know just what is meant by the expression "mother of God." Then only can we determine whether this is a Biblical designation.

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* observes: "If Mary is not truly the mother of God, then Christ is not true God as well as true man . . . Mary is truly the mother of God if two conditions are fulfilled: that she is really the mother of Jesus and that Jesus is really God." (Vol. 10, p. 21) Accordingly, one's calling Mary the "mother of God" is based on the belief that Jesus Christ is actually God. This is further shown in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia:* "In denying . . . that the Incarnate Word is the uncreated Son of the Father, coequal to the Father, the Arians refused to accept Christ's divinity and as a consequence Mary's divine motherhood." (Vol. 10, p. 21) Hence, only if it can be established that Jesus Christ is "true God" and "coequal to the Father" can Mary rightly be called the "mother of God." But is Jesus Christ indeed "true God" and "coequal to the Father"?

The Bible does not use the expression "true God" with reference to Jesus Christ. Jesus himself limited this designation to his Father. Addressing his Father in prayer, Jesus said: "Eternal life is this: to know you, *the only true God,* and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17:3, *JB*) Never did Jesus speak of himself as his Father's equal. Instead, he acknowledged his Father as his God, saying to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." (John 20:17, *JB*) Even after he had ascended to the heavens, Jesus continued to speak of his Father as "my God," four times in the same verse.—Rev. 3:12, *JB*.

That Jesus could not be his Father's equal is also shown by what is foretold to happen at the end of Christ's thousand-year reign. The apostle Paul wrote of this: "When,

finally, all has been subjected to the Son, he will then subject himself to the One who made all things subject to him, so that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15:28, Catholic *New American Bible* [*NAB*]) Clearly, Jesus could not be "coequal to the Father" and yet subject himself to the Father, acknowledging him as God.

Noteworthy, too, is Mary's own attitude. In due humility, she spoke of herself as the "handmaid of the Lord." (Luke 1:38, *JB*) Because of her being favored to bear the Son of God, Mary said to her relative Elizabeth: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour; because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid." (Luke 1:46-48, *JB*) So Mary viewed herself, not as the "mother of God," but as God's "lowly handmaid."

Similarly, Jesus Christ did not put the emphasis on any fleshly relationship to Mary. Once a woman exclaimed: "Happy the womb that bore you and the breasts you sucked!" Answering that exclamation, Jesus said: "Still happier those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:27, 28, *JB*) Great though the privilege was of bearing God's Son, Mary's greatest happiness therefore would lie in being God's humble servant, 'hearing his word and keeping it.' Note, too, that when told that his mother and brothers wanted to see him, Jesus extended his hand toward his disciples and said: "There are my *mother* and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is brother and sister *and mother* to me." (Matt. 12:47-50, *NAB*) Again, the words emphasized the spiritual relationship as being more important than the physical relationship.

Of course, as the "Son of God" Jesus Christ could be spoken of prophetically as "Mighty-God." That expression (in the original Hebrew) means a "strong, mighty one." In the capacity of "King of kings and Lord of lords," Jesus Christ is indeed a mighty one or "god." (Rev. 19:16, *NAB*) But as the Son he remains ever submissive to his Father, "the only true God."

In the Bible, Jesus Christ is never called "God the Son" but the "Son of God." He proved to be exactly what the angel Gabriel told Mary: "You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. . . . The Holy Spirit will come upon you . . . and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God."—Luke 1:31, 32, 35, *JB*.

Scriptural evidence thus makes it clear that designating Mary as the "mother of God" distorts the facts about the true God and his Son as well as Mary. The designation "mother of God" rests on the unscriptural teaching that the Son is "coequal to the Father." This distortion of truth is not something to be treated lightly. For worship to be acceptable to God it must harmonize with truth. As Jesus Christ told a Samaritan woman: "True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and *truth:* that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship *must worship in spirit and truth.*" —John 4:23, 24, *JB*.

If you desire to worship God "in spirit and truth," make sure that what you believe rests on a factual, Scriptural basis.

IN COMING ISSUES

- **The Blessing of Freedom of Assembly in Greece!**
- **Do You Appreciate Your Blessings?**
- **Have You 'Stopped Storing Up Treasures on Earth'?**

The Majestic Cedars of Lebanon

THE cedars of Lebanon, *cedrus libani*, are evergreens. They belong to the same family as the popular deodars, natives of the Himalayas, and the Atlas cedars, natives of Africa. They are also related to the sequoias of California.

The cedar is given more prominence in the Scriptures than any other tree of the forest, being mentioned some seventy times. The cedars of Lebanon still grow on the slopes of the mountains of Lebanon as they did in Bible times, as high as some 6,000 feet above sea level. Kings David and Solomon sent to Lebanon for cedar timber, and centuries later so did the "sons of the exile" for rebuilding the temple of Jehovah after their return from Babylon. Phoenicians and Egyptians used cedar for the masts of their ships as well as for the ships themselves.—2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Ki. 5:8; Ezra 3:7; Ezek. 27:5.

In ancient times these cedars blanketed the mountains of Lebanon, but today only a few small groves remain, consisting of upward of four hundred trees, ranging from 200 to 1,000 years of age. Helping to decimate them were the ravages of war, ancient and modern, the Turkish rule and also goats. To protect cedar seedlings from the harm that goats inflict on cedar groves, the Lebanese government built a protecting stone wall.—Isa. 14:5-8.

According to *American Forests*, January 1969, the cedar of Lebanon is the crowning glory of the plant world as to beauty, stateliness and strength. "Choice" and "majestic" are the terms used in the Scriptures to describe them.—Song of Sol. 5:15; Ezek. 17:23.

The Hebrew word for cedar, *'e'rez*, comes from a root meaning "to be firm," which name is most fitting in view of its massive trunk and root system. A cedar may grow as high as 120 feet and have a trunk with a circumference as much as 47 feet. Its branches reach out quite horizontally in tiers and extend from the tree as much as fifty feet, so that the branches of a tree may have a circumference of some 300 feet. It bears tan-colored cones about four inches in length and needles upward of a half inch long. It also bears fuzzy catkins about two inches long.

Cedarwood is fragrant, has a warm red tone, is remarkably free from knots and takes a high polish. It is ideal for fine furniture. Due to its high resin content, it does not easily decay and is left alone by insects. The strength of the cedarwood apparently is due to these cedars' growing at such a rugged high altitude. This seems borne out by the fact that cedar seedlings transplanted in parks of England have a far inferior wood. Because of its strength and beauty, ancient builders used it for beams, pillars, panels and veneer as well as for ship masts.—1 Ki. 6:9-20; 7:2-12.

Of particular interest to Christians is the figurative use of the cedars of Lebanon in the Bible. Because of their height these cedars are used as symbols of the haughty, high and mighty ones of this world who are to be brought low by Jehovah God. (Isa. 2:13; Jer. 22:23; Ezek. 31:2, 3; Amos 2:9; Zech. 11:1, 2) The strength of the cedars of Lebanon is underscored by their being used to show how powerful the voice of Jehovah is: "The voice of Jehovah is powerful; the voice of Jehovah is splendid. The voice of Jehovah is breaking the cedars; yes, Jehovah breaks the cedars of Lebanon in pieces, and he makes them skip about like a calf."—Ps. 29:4-6.

Then, again, the result of the blessing of Jehovah upon the righteous one causes him to be compared to the firmly rooted cedar: "The righteous himself will blossom forth as a palm tree does; as a cedar in Lebanon does, he will grow big." (Ps. 92:12) When the spirit of God came upon Balaam so that he blessed Israel, he declared: "How good-looking are your tents, O Jacob, your tabernacles, O Israel! . . . like cedars by the waters." (Num. 24:5, 6) The Messiah, the Son of God, is also pictured as a cedar planted by God himself.—Ezek. 17:22.

The cedars growing in Lebanon today underscore the accuracy of the Bible record concerning these trees. And that record assures us that the rulers of this world, although majestic, high and mighty as the cedars, will be brought low by the mighty voice of Jehovah God. These references also are an assurance that by following a course of righteousness God's servants will be like the cedar, strong, enduring, majestic, resisting the strains of their environment. Yes, just as the cedars' having to endure a rugged high altitude helps to account for their strength, so Christians by enduring tribulation become strong in acquiring an "approved condition" and a firm hope. —Rom. 5:3-5.

Do You Remember?

Have you read the recent issues of *The Watchtower* carefully? If so, you will doubtless recall these points:

● Why is it good that Jehovah God has not revealed the "day and hour" for executing his judgment?

This has served to test people's motivations. Those who do not really want to obey God's commands will pursue their own selfish desires, thinking that his time for judgment will not catch up with them. Also, there is no possibility for false religious organizations to put on a hypocritical display of piety just before that day, making it more difficult for sincere persons to identify God's true servants. —P. 280.

● How is food "sanctified through God's word and prayer over it"?—1 Tim. 4:5.

God's word has "sanctified" or 'set apart' all things usable for food as acceptable. The person who prays over his food accepts it appreciatively as something 'set apart' for him by his heavenly Father.—P. 301.

● What might a person ask himself to determine whether he has Christian endurance?

He might ask himself: Am I faithful now? Do I regularly study the Bible and press beyond primary doctrine? Am I willing to undergo difficulties in behalf of others and the interests of true worship? Do I rely on God to strengthen me when facing trials?—P. 332.

● At Hebrews 12:25-29, what are the "things that have been made" that are shaken, and what does not experience any shaking?

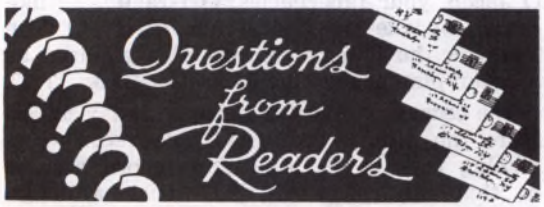
The 'things made' are those made by hands other than God's—the system of things with its false religion, greedy commercialism and corrupt politics. The things making up the ungodly system will be shaken into destruction, whereas God's kingdom will remain standing.—P. 363.

● If the wife of one being considered for the position of an elder is rebellious toward his headship, what should the body of elders keep in mind when determining whether the man qualifies to serve in that capacity?

The body of elders should analyze to what extent he shares responsibility for her rebelliousness and also consider the congregation's view of the situation.—P. 469.

● What point was Jesus making when he said to a rich young ruler who addressed him as "Good Teacher," "Nobody is good, except one, God"?—Mark 10:17, 18.

In thus refusing to accept "Good" as part of a title, Jesus Christ glorified his Father as the real standard of goodness, the standard to which he himself conformed as the Son of God.—P. 476.



● How many years of secular education are advisable for children in Christian households?

Many Christian households have found it advisable for their children to avail themselves of the standard basic education provided in their country. The parents involved are the ones responsible for deciding on the nature and extent of this secular training.—Prov. 1:8; 6:20-22; Eph. 6:4.

Christian parents, together with the children, are required to "be obedient to governments and authorities." (Titus 3:1) This would include their obeying the regulations of the state concerning secular education. In most countries the state requires students to remain in school until a certain age, which may vary from thirteen to eighteen years. In some lands only a few years of education are available, and then it is left up to the family to arrange for the child's future. In many cases this means that the child is left to fend for himself. But whenever the law stipulates that children are to attend school for a given number of years, Christian children should do this, since it does not conflict with any other Bible command. —Matt. 22:21.

The Scriptures charge parents with the responsibility of training their children, and children are required to be obedient to their parents "in everything" that is not in conflict

with God's clearly stated requirements. (Col. 3:20; Prov. 4:1; see also Acts 4:18, 19.) Thus, as long as children are minors, legally under the control of their parents, or are living in the family household and accepting their support, they are obligated to abide by the decisions of their parents as to the amount of education that it is considered well for them to receive. The same principle applies when parents, one of them or both, are unbelievers. This does not mean that children cannot discuss matters with their parents and make requests of them, but they are under obligation to respect the decisions of the father, or, in those cases where there is no father in the home, of the mother.

Another Scriptural principle to consider is that Christians ought to be equipped to support themselves, and, in the case of married men, their families as well. (Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:8) For this reason, in some communities, where high costs are involved in securing the necessities of life, more secular education may be an important factor in making a living. Generally, Christian parents and youths in such areas have found it advisable to make use of the standard secular training offered; in America, this is equivalent to what is known as a high-school education.

Another factor to consider is the emphasis that Jehovah places on his written Word, as well as the assignment he has given to his servants to be preachers and teachers of "all Scripture." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Matt. 28:19, 20) This strongly indicates that Jehovah desires all of his witnesses, young and old, to become literate. They should be able to read the Bible well in their native language and to express its message fluently and correctly, both by word of mouth and in writing. They can make good use of secular education in order to attain to such spiritual goals.—1 Cor. 2:13; Eccl. 12:10.

In addition, the basic education offered by the secular state generally includes practical instruction in mathematics, history and health care. Many secular schools also offer additional training, such as in the use of tools and machinery, carpentry, installing of electrical equipment, car repairing, printing, local crafts, science studies, typing, music and languages. And for girls, they offer domestic studies and training in child care. In view of this wide range of studies available in many countries, teen-age boys and girls, under the direction of their parents, can work out a program of subjects to be learned that will benefit them later. Some few parents have thought it advisable to arrange for their youths to enroll for short courses of technical training in specialized schools to acquire skills in trades, or other technical know-how, such as in the field of electronics and computers. This has been for the practical purpose of providing a means of supporting themselves in Jehovah's service.

Today, there are many teen-age baptized servants of Jehovah. Their personal study, preparation for meetings and sharing in the Theocratic Ministry School have given them a basic knowledge of Bible truth for Christian preaching. They have also benefited by education in the public schools. But how far should they go with a secular education? It would hardly be consistent for such a youth, of his own choice, to pursue extensive secular studies beyond what is required by the law and by his parents. According to First Timothy 6:20 it would be unwise to fill one's mind with philosophies of imperfect men: "O Timothy, guard what is laid up in trust with you, turning away from the empty speeches that violate what is holy and from the contradictions of the falsely called 'knowledge.'" For this reason additional years of college education may present snares. One may become "brainwashed" by human philosophies so that faith in God and the Bible is destroyed. (Col. 2:8) Many college and university courses are based on false theories, such as evolution, that bolster the old system of things, which will soon pass away forever. (1 John 2:17) A goodly number of the professors have no faith in God or in the Bible and actively teach their godless beliefs. Moreover, there is the corrupting influence that the college atmosphere often has on morals, including the danger of drug addiction.

In most countries secular schools, public and private, are more filled with lawlessness, violence and corruption (and also drugs) than they were years ago. Admittedly, some schools are very bad. But has the point been reached where Christian youths find it impossible to attend the schools in their communities? This is a question that parents themselves must answer. However, it seems there have been a number of Christian youths who, in agitating for early quitting of school, have used the scare of violence and immorality to pressure their parents into allowing them to drop out.

They have prevailed upon their parents, who have become overly protective in sympathy, to agree to take them out of these basic schools. In many cases this has worked to the detriment of the children.

Experience shows that earnest, serious-minded Christian youths, who are well trained domestically and well taught spiritually in Bible principles, can usually avoid problems. If they are careful to mind their own business, they find that they can attend school regularly with comparative safety. Especially is this so if they watch to keep out of trouble, and do not get involved with sports and other extra-curricular group activities. It also works for their protection if they let their Christian light shine, considering their classmates as their field for preaching the good news of the Kingdom. But how much witnessing is actually done by those youths who quit school early? Often they get engulfed in the struggle to make a living, or get married early and find themselves with a family to support.

In many congregations of Jehovah's witnesses it has been found that those few who did not complete their basic secular education found it more difficult later to meet life's problems, to make a success of pioneer service or to bear marriage responsibilities properly when these came along.

It is not our purpose here to set out rules for Christian households. Rather, suggestions are offered as guidelines. Let parents and youths plan together for an adequate secular education that will enable the young people to meet their life interests and goals in a wholesome, honorable way. The well-trained youths of today will become tomorrow's mature, hardworking servants of Jehovah. A balanced view of education now can help to make their enjoyment of God's spiritual paradise complete.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

October 5: Christian Love Based on Jehovah's Love. Page 520. Songs to Be Used: 56, 61.

October 12: Have Intense Love for One Another. Page 526. Songs to Be Used: 36, 115.