

The WATCHTOWER

MANIFESTING

FAITH UNDER ATTACK

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CATHOLICS,

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AUGUST 1, 1976

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

August 1, 1976
Vol. 97, Number 15

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

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

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

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. One 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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"P **PRIDE** is before a crash," says an ancient Bible proverb. (Prov. 16:18) Not even angels have been exempt from the outworking of this truth. Yes, spirit creatures who once enjoyed a position of trust and favor in God's presence are today base and vicious personages. Among intelligent creatures who have experienced debasement, their crash has indeed been great.

That pride was involved in the fall of the chief one of this demonic horde is evident from the Scriptural reason barring novices from appointment as overseers in the Christian congregation. That reason is: "For fear that he [the newly converted man] might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil." (1 Tim. 3:6) Satan, of course, was no novice. How much greater, then, is the danger of feeding the pride of a newly converted man by entrusting him with weighty responsibility!

Before his fall, the spirit person who made himself a resister (Satan) and a slanderer (Devil) of God had the privilege of being in the very presence of his Life-Giver. He had the opportunity to come to know his Creator in a most intimate way and to develop ever greater love for him. There was good reason for him to do so, for everything he enjoyed he received

from his loving Maker.

But Satan permitted pride to become a dominant force in his life. He acted much like the "king of Tyre." That "king" or Tyrian dynasty was once on the best of terms with the kingdom of Israel, in the days of David and his son Solomon. But later the rulers of Tyre turned traitor. A dirge recorded in the book of Ezekiel describes this as follows: "You are sealing up a pattern, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. . . . You were faultless in your ways from the day of your being created until unrighteousness was found in you. . . . Your heart became haughty because of your beauty." —Ezek. 28:12-17.

As in the case of the traitorous "king of Tyre," Satan began to think too much of himself. He apparently envisioned himself as master over the first humans and eventually over the entire human race. To achieve his ends, he sacrificed his standing as a clean, perfect son of God and became a liar and a slanderer.

The adversary concealed his selfish ambitions to gain control over the human race by presenting himself as a benefactor to Eve. By means of a serpent, he portrayed disobedience to God as the course of gain. Instead of humbly consulting with her husband on this matter, Eve proudly asserted her independence and violated God's law. She thereafter persuaded Adam

THE GREATEST

CRASH

to join her in rebelling against Jehovah God. (Gen. 3:1-6) As a result, both Adam and Eve came under the sentence of death and so death spread to all their descendants. Having forfeited perfect human life, Adam could not pass it on to his offspring.—Rom. 5:12.

Being the one who set this calamitous chain of events in motion, Satan also became a murderer. Jesus Christ, who had witnessed these developments in his pre-human existence, could therefore say of the Devil: "That one was a manslayer when he began."—John 8:44.

Although a terrible calamity resulted for Adam and Eve, and, hence, for the entire human family, Satan did not abandon his corrupt scheming. Driven by insane pride, he used his influence also among God's angelic sons. Like Satan, some of them yielded to unnatural desire and to pride, deliberately stepping out of the proper boundaries that the Creator had established for them. They left their position in the heavens, materialized fleshly bodies and entered into marriage relationships with women on earth. The flood of Noah's day brought a violent end to those relationships, forcing the disobedient angels to dematerialize.—Gen. 6:1-7.

The Christian disciple Jude describes what happened thereafter: "The angels that did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place [God] has reserved with eternal bonds under dense darkness for the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6) Along with Satan the Devil, they were expelled from God's family of faithful sons and lost their positions of trust in the heavens. As outcasts, they are in a state of debasement and darkness, cut off from all divine enlightenment. They are awaiting the certain execution of God's judgment against them and they "shudder" at the prospect of their coming annihilation.—Jas. 2:19.

The apostle Peter referred to these dis-

obedient angels as "spirits in prison," indicating that they came under some form of restraint. (1 Pet. 3:19) There being no record, Scriptural or otherwise, of their again living as men on earth, evidently the restraint under which they came made it impossible for them ever again to take on flesh and live as husbands with women.

In their debased condition, the demons have not become less vicious. Rather, they have continued to degrade themselves by perpetrating acts of cruelty against humans.

This is well illustrated in the case of demon-possessed persons in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry. For example, there was the man whom the demons had driven insane. In his haunt among the tombs, he would walk about naked, crying out day and night and slashing himself with stones. This demon-possessed man and his companion were so fierce that people were afraid to pass the area where they had their dwelling. Efforts to bind him with chains and fetters proved useless. The demons evidently reveled in seeing this man undergoing such suffering.—Matt. 8:28; Mark 5:2-5; Luke 8:27.

Then, when Jesus commanded the demons to release their hold on these two men, the demons asked for permission to take possession of a herd of swine, perhaps intending to derive some unnatural sadistic pleasure therefrom. The demons seized control of the herd of some 2,000 pigs, driving them to their death in the Sea of Galilee.—Matt. 8:30-32; Mark 5:11-13.

Truly the case of Satan and the demons forcefully shows that yielding to pride leads to a terrible crash. It is hard to believe that these vicious, lying spirit creatures were once numbered among the perfect sons of God. This should impress upon us imperfect humans the need to combat pride so as not to experience a mighty fall ourselves, to our everlasting ruin.

IS RELIEF IN SIGHT?

WHEN you are traveling through a tunnel or a dangerous area of heavy forest, it is a great relief to see the light of open space ahead. It makes you feel like giving a happy outcry.

More welcome than this is the kind of relief that God is going to provide for mankind, and it can be seen ahead by those who sincerely want peace, justice and right conditions for themselves and their fellowmen. Right now humanity is walking through a dangerous area, and to have relief in sight would be a cause for a joyful shout. But it takes faith to see that relief is near. This faith is not hard to gain, however, if you look into what God has said and done.

To increase our faith and comfort, God has had recorded what he did for the nation that was once governed by a special law of his. (Rom. 15:4) In fact, he dealt with this nation as a pattern, showing what kind of God he is and what his administration of all the earth will be like under his Messianic kingdom. (1 Cor. 10:11) This law had "a shadow of the good things to come." (Heb. 10:1) "The reality [of what those shadows represented] belongs to the Christ," that is, under Christ's rulership these things will be permanent realities for the people of earth.—Col. 2:17.

THE JUBILEE YEAR

God gave the ancient nation of Israel a fine start when he settled them in the Promised Land. They had everything to make them prosperous and economically

balanced. But selfishness and other weaknesses of imperfect humanity brought them into hardships. The nation tended to drift toward the state that we often see today—where the wealth is in the hands of a few and there are great numbers of poor people. As today, the people back there brought undesirable conditions upon themselves.

How did God check this trend toward national deterioration? How did he help those people in a way that provided a pattern for us? Did he force the rich to give their wealth to the poor? No. This would not have been just. He established what was called the Jubilee, or Jubilee year.

We all know what a jubilee is, in modern terminology. It is a happy celebration, usually at the end of a fixed number of years. The Hebrew word for jubilee had a similar usage. Basically it means "a protracted sound." The Jubilee year's beginning was announced by a loud sound made by the blowing of rams' horns. So the Jubilee also connoted a joyful cry, for the Jubilee was a year of freedom.—Lev. 25:9, 10.

What took place on the Jubilee that made it such a happy occasion? Well, by reason of financial reverses, a man may have been obliged to sell his land inheritance in order to pay off debts. Or, because of indebtedness a family or some of its members may have sold themselves into slavery to a more prosperous neighbor. In Israel a Hebrew "slave" was treated as a hired laborer, yet freedom was much more desirable. So the Jubilee year was

a real time of rejoicing. Each man was restored to his own inheritance. His land was returned to him free, and all Hebrew slaves were released to be reestablished in their own God-given portion of land. —Lev. 25:28, 39-41.

Was this returning of the inheritances unjust to those who were prosperous by reason of their industriousness? Was this showing partiality to the poor? Not at all. There was a scale of land values according to the number of years left until the Jubilee. One's inheritance could not be sold in perpetuity. (Lev. 25:23) "Selling" land was actually more like our modern practice of leasing. The "buyer" was paying for the use of the land and the value of its crops until the Jubilee. (Lev. 25:15, 16) When the Jubilee came, his "lease" ran out and the land again became its original owner's. The "buyer" had not lost anything.

Think what fine benefits the nation received from this arrangement as long as Israel kept this law. The economy might get somewhat out of balance during the fifty-year period between the Jubilees, but at the Jubilee it was restored to its original state, with every man in possession of his own land. Property values were stable. There was no inflation, nor were there extremely rich and extremely poor classes. No family could remain in perpetual poverty. Every man (and every family) was accorded proper human dignity. Certainly, then, every fifty years the Jubilee was like daylight at the end of a tunnel. But what is there in this Jubilee arrangement that is a real basis for hope for people today? What did it foreshadow?

A BETTER "JUBILEE"

When God created man on earth he gave him a good start. He had everything for a perfectly happy life, everlast-

ingly. But by rebellion against God Adam brought trouble upon his entire family. For the selfish price of independence from God he sold his offspring into slavery to sin and death. (Rom. 7:14; 5:12) Now, God has shown that he will recover mankind and restore man to his original free state by a great "Jubilee."

For centuries humankind has been working under tremendous hardships. The economy of many cities and nations is now ruined and they see no way out. There is oppression, and, besides all of this, sickness and death are intolerable burdens. But that God purposes good for mankind the apostle Paul showed when he spoke about being subject to sin, saying: "The creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will but through him that subjected it, on the basis of hope that the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." —Rom. 8:20, 21.

Yes, God purposes a much larger and finer "Jubilee" for humankind. This "Jubilee," symbolically, is the thousand-year reign of his kingdom under Christ. The present oppressive system, with its alliance of false religion, politics and commerce will not be there. Why not? Because God will establish his rule earth wide. He says of this time: "*The tent of God is with mankind*, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." —Rev. 21:3, 4.

This "Jubilee" will not accomplish just a temporary freedom, leaving mankind to slip back into trouble, or needing repetition periodically as did the Hebrew Jubi-

lee. This is because Jesus Christ will be, not only King, but also humankind's High Priest. His atonement sacrifice will be applied to lift men and women up to perfection of mind and body. They will be saved 'to perfection.' Of Christ as High Priest, it is said: "He is able also to save *completely* those who are approaching God through him, because he is always alive to plead for them." (Heb. 7:25; 1 Cor. 15:26) Each person will be able to enjoy a portion of the earth to keep and to cultivate. He will not fear economic failure.

The symbolic "Jubilee" will provide a real rest for mankind. For the ancient Jubilee was a sabbath year, and "sabbath" means "rest." (Lev. 25:11, 12) Full relief and cure will come, even a resurrection of the dead, as Christ demonstrated in a miniature way when he was on earth, by healing people of all kinds of sicknesses, also raising the dead. (Matt. 15:30, 31; Luke 5:12-16; 7:12-15; John 11:38-44) The Bible description of this feature of the "Jubilee" reads: "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds [deeds performed during the 'Jubilee']"—Rev. 20:12, 13.

Evidences indicate that this glorious "Jubilee" rest is very near. Jesus Christ prophetically described the conditions that would mark the nearness of that great relief-bringing period. He spoke of the time when, world wide, there would be "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." He said that during this time the "good news of the kingdom" would be preached in all the inhabited earth as a witness to all the nations. This would include the good news

of relief by the symbolic "Jubilee" of Christ's thousand-year reign over earth. We see these things occurring today. —Luke 21:25, 26; Matt. 24:14.

Happily, this relief is in sight! Jesus went on to say that people now hearing this good news would see the "Jubilee." He told those listening to him: "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur."—Luke 21:31, 32.

Is there something that people need to do now, or is it merely a matter of 'wait and see'? Note the strong warning with which Jesus concluded his prophecy. He spoke of the "day" or time just preceding the "Jubilee" in which he would bring transfer of mankind from this present decadent society to his full Kingdom rule. He said: "But pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:34-36.

By concentrating on the anxieties of this world and its materialistic pursuits you can become 'fast asleep' spiritually. But you can "keep awake" by devoting yourself to getting a close relationship with God. This you can do by getting to know what the Bible says and making changes as it directs: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." —Rom. 12:2.

Good News Reaches

"THE MOST DISTANT PART OF THE EARTH"

JUST before Jesus ascended to heaven he told his disciples that they would be witnesses of him "to the most distant part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

Jesus meant, of course, that the good news of the Kingdom would be preached everywhere, even in lands farthest from Jerusalem. This is now being done. But in some areas there are obstacles greater than distance to overcome to get the good news to people. These are mountain fastnesses, jungles and places accessible only by one's undergoing dangers from snakes, insects, bandits, and even the elements.

One of these lands is Honduras. This largest of the Central American republics (43,277 square miles [111,687 square kilometers]) lies across the 15th parallel, north of the equator. It is bordered on the west by Guatemala and El Salvador and on the south by Nicaragua. Columbus "discovered" the country in 1502 and gave the land its name, which means "depths," apparently because of deep waters offshore. Most of its coastland is on the Caribbean Sea, with a small strip on the Pacific Ocean. The coastal plains are tropical, but the interior is very mountainous.

Honduras' forests are rich in mahogany trees, while the coastal plains support huge banana plantations. Three million people live in this beautiful country, nearly 70 percent of them in more than 10,000 small villages and in isolated dwellings.

The Roman Catholic religion has been predominant in Honduras since the sixteenth century. Some Protestant sects have since come in. Accordingly, the people of Honduras have been taught that there is a Christ, a heaven and a hell, and that they should pray to the "saints." But there has been very little knowledge of the Bible, and thousands could not read. It was a monumental task, therefore, that faced the first missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses, who arrived in 1946. To get the good news of God's Messianic kingdom to the people meant the missionaries would have to speak to the people in their own language.

These first missionaries landed in the capital city Tegucigalpa and accepted the challenge. It called for perseverance and the sacrifice of many comforts.

The missionaries began their work with the people in the more populated places, notably Tegucigalpa. They found many persons eager to hear the good news of the Kingdom. But the real problem to tackle was that of reaching the hundreds of thousands living in distant places.

BIBLE BROUGHT TO MANY WHO HAD NEVER READ IT

One of the primary needs was to get Bibles into the hands of the people. In

1967 the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in the Spanish language was released at a cost well within the reach of the Honduran public. In that year, nearly 3,000 of these Bibles were put into the hands of the people.

The power of the Word of God as the people began to understand it is demonstrated by the fact that by 1968 a thousand persons had taken up the proclaiming of the good news! Now the missionaries had help so that they could turn their eyes toward reaching the more than two million people in isolated places who had not heard the message of truth. One obstacle was that there were so many new and inexperienced, though zealous, ones. These had to be trained. So an intensive program of home Bible study was instituted. The book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, introduced in that year, enabled those studying to get a quicker and stronger grasp of the Bible's primary doctrines and principles.

At the conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world, the call was made for some years for persons who desired to serve "where the need is greater." Those whose circumstances permitted were invited to write to the branch headquarters for Jehovah's Witnesses in these lands for information as to housing, living conditions, possible jobs or occupations, and so forth. 'What will be the response?' was the question in the minds of the Honduran missionaries.

Their answer came, particularly in 1968. From June to September of that year, 450 persons wrote to Honduras from twenty-four countries. In the next two years more than sixty families had selected Honduras as their new home. At the present time there are one hundred people from other countries proclaiming the good news in Honduras. Twenty-three of these are in the full-time preaching work. The people who thus voluntarily

took up this work to help the people of Honduras to learn more about God and his Word had to have a real desire to serve God and a large share of love and patience, because taking this step meant learning a new language and bringing up their families in a new way of life.

OUTLYING ISOLATED PLACES REACHED

The real push to expand the spread of the message to outlying districts began in 1971. Congregations had by now been established in strategic places throughout the country. These were assigned wider territories. Rivers and mountains were used for boundary lines. Then, in 1972, at a series of small "circuit assemblies" in selected parts of the country, maps were provided for the congregations, and sections never before visited were assigned. The congregations organized carloads, even busloads of Witnesses for weekend sorties to call on every home in the territory, no matter how isolated.

The workers received a fine, warm reception from the people. Some offered mules and horses to transport the Witnesses to places difficult to reach. Others wanted to donate property, materials and labor to build Kingdom Halls in their communities, so that they could gather for Bible study. Often entire villages opened their homes and begged the Witnesses to stay and teach them. Several Catholic and Protestant lay leaders were among the first to accept the truth, despite opposition from their clergy.

It took endurance on the part of those who carried out this work of 'hunting out' the 'sheeplike' persons scattered in these untouched areas. Some spent days climbing mountains, exploring vast areas in search of homes. They slept where darkness found them. Almost every form of transportation was used, foremost being just plain walking. And distances, rivers, mountains, torrential rains and insects

were not the only problems. Illiteracy was a big obstacle. But by the Witnesses' patience, and due to a burning desire on the part of the people to understand the Bible, many learned to read and write. Then there was the moral problem. Couples were living together unmarried, in a mere consensual relationship. But the sincere seekers for truth saw the need to have a good conscience and to be clean in order to render acceptable worship to Jehovah, the God of the Bible, and these had their marriages legalized.

The quick response of these people is illustrated in the case of a Pentecostal lay preacher. He obtained the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* while visiting in the city. On another occasion one of Jehovah's Witnesses showed him how Bible studies are conducted with the help of this book. On returning to his isolated village the man began preaching from house to house, soon conducting several Bible studies. When, later on, a group of Jehovah's Witnesses visited the village to preach, they were very much surprised to have people welcome them with the greeting, "We are already studying with Jehovah's Witnesses and have been expecting you." Others would say, "Jehovah's Witnesses here have convinced us that your religion is the true one." When they located the source of all this preaching and teaching, they found the former Pentecostal lay minister, who had taken a strong stand for Bible truth, and consequently had stopped the former habit of heavy drinking and had effected a complete separation from the woman with whom he had been living immorally. In this village 320 persons attended a public talk.

Is the interest of these people in learning about God merely a superficial and passing emotion? The answer is clearly seen in the deep love they show for one another. When hurricane Fifi struck the Caribbean coast in September 1974 they

quickly came to the aid of their fellow Witnesses and interested persons, relatives and any others they could help during this tragic period. One family of twenty-three members lost their two homes, garage and workshop in the disaster. Only two of them were witnesses of Jehovah. Nevertheless, the Witnesses in the community took them all under their wing. They housed, fed and cared for this dispossessed family for five months, obtaining new land and building new homes for them. Nineteen other members of the family, seeing this evidence of Christian love, have since started to study the Bible.

So Jesus' words that the good news would be preached in all the inhabited earth are being fulfilled, and the work goes on apace in Honduras. Several of the Caribbean islands are also cared for by the Honduran branch office. Among the peoples there are English-speaking groups, a group of African descent that speaks the Moreno dialect, some Arabic- and Chinese-speaking people, and the Sambo Indian tribe living in a jungle area.

Much is yet to be done. But at present there are more than three thousand active proclaimers of God's kingdom in Honduras. Nearly fifty congregations own the Kingdom Halls in which they meet, and the prospects are bright for much further expansion in every way. The basis for such an outlook is in the fact that, on March 27, 1975, 12,092 persons attended the celebration of the Memorial of Christ's death. This is more than three times the number of active Witnesses in the country.

Certainly there is reason for the comment by those responsible for the work there that Honduras is breathtakingly beautiful, but its real beauty lies among its fine people, thousands of whom are zealously responding to the good news about the Kingdom rule of Jesus Christ that will soon make Honduras, and indeed all the earth, a paradise.—Rev. 21:3, 4.

Insight on the News

- In the days of King David and King Solomon of ancient Israel, a place called "Ophir"

Solomon's Mines Found?

was the source of fabulous amounts of gold. Much of the known gold supply of the ancient world is thought to have originated there. In the Bible book of First Chronicles, chapter 29, verse 4, King

David is spoken of as donating 3,000 talents of gold from Ophir to the temple at Jerusalem, an amount valued at hundreds of millions of dollars today. Solomon's trading fleets regularly brought back large amounts of gold from Ophir. (1 Ki. 9:26-28) There was so much gold then that silver was spoken of as being of relatively little value.—1 Ki. 10:21.)

Now geologists say that they may have found "King Solomon's Mine" in Saudi Arabia. Between Mecca and Medina is an area, located in a mountainous region, known as the "Cradle of Gold." There geologists found a vast abandoned gold mine. Among their finds are huge quantities of waste rock, an estimated million tons, left by the ancient miners, still containing traces of gold. Thousands of stone hammers and grindstones used to extract the gold from the ore litter the mine slopes. Said geologist Robert W. Luce: "Our investigations have now confirmed that the old mine could have been as rich as described in biblical accounts."

- Former presidential aide Patrick Buchanan stated that the overall balance of military power between the United States and the Soviet Union is in the process of shifting.

Shifting Power Balance

He said: "Over the past seven years, the U.S. Navy has been cut in half; it is now smaller in size than the U.S. Navy before Pearl Harbor. The new global Soviet Navy outnumbered the combined U.S. fleets two to one in major combat vessels and submarines."

Regarding land forces, he declared: "The Soviet Union fields 168 combat divisions to the Americans' 19. They have twice the number of armored personnel carriers, three times the number of heavy mortars and artillery pieces, four times the number of tanks."

In Bible prophecy the Communist powers are now included in what is called in symbolic language "the king of the north." In this "time of the end" where we now live, chapter 11 of the Bible book of Daniel says regarding this totalitarian "king of the north" that "to the god of fortresses . . . he will give glory. . . . And he will act effectively against the most fortified strongholds."

Thus, just as God's prophetic Word foretold, in our day this anti-God power has come to the fore, growing swiftly in scientific militarism. And, as Daniel foretold, he has kept "thrusting out his hand against the lands." But the Bible shows that this "king of the north" will be brought to an end along with all other political powers at God's war of Armageddon.—Dan. 11:36-12:1; Rev. 16:14-16.

- In many nations, especially the industrial societies, family life is breaking down. Also, there are fewer ties between neighbors and friends.

You Need Not Be Alone

The book "Lonely in America" says: "The tight boundaries of rural, neighborhood, family-centered America have burst. . . . Life in America has exploded, and loneliness is one main ingredient in the fallout." Added to this is the rising crime rate that has made people more distrustful of others. Loneliness has thus become an almost permanent condition for growing millions of people. This loneliness is especially tragic for many elderly and infirm people who are often neglected by others.

But this condition does not apply to those who have faith in Jehovah God and who listen to his Word. God's Word says that those who accept his Word must meet together for mutual encouragement. (Heb. 10:24, 25) That is why among Jehovah's Witnesses, the problem of loneliness is being conquered. Their wholesome association with one another at Christian meetings, and also socially; their learning from God's Word how to improve family life, including caring for the elderly among them; their preaching work that puts them in contact with many other sincere people, including neighbors; and their access to God by means of prayer, all powerfully counteract loneliness.

Catholics, Is Your Church "ON THE WATCH"?

CATHOLICS, what is your Church teaching you about Christ's coming? When did you last hear your parish priest give a homily or sermon explaining the need for all Christians to "be on the watch" for the Master's second coming?

Your answer to the first question will probably be: "Little or nothing," and to the second: "I don't remember his ever mentioning the matter." These answers would not be surprising. Concerning the return of Jesus, Catholic scholar William Marrin writes of the "opinion, still shared by most Catholics I think, that the whole thing has sort of a craziness about it. . . . In other words, we have a situation in which most Catholics may be willing to let the Second Coming go the way of Eve's apple and Jonah's whale."

Yet a Catholic Bible renders Jesus' words about his second coming as follows: "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to *be on the watch*. Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, . . . lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

—Mark 13:33-37, *Revised Standard Version (RS)*, Catholic edition.

If, therefore, so many Catholics are "asleep" as regards Christ's coming, is it not because their Church, that claims to be the infallible "doorkeeper" in matters of faith and morals, has not been "on the watch"?

IMPORTANCE OF SECOND COMING RECOGNIZED

This is all the more surprising as Catholic worship and dogma recognize the importance of Christ's return. During Mass itself, the assembled "faithful" are required to reply several times, "We proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, . . . we await your coming in glory. . . . Come, Lord Jesus!"

A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture states quite emphatically:

"That Jesus Christ . . . will come gloriously at the end of the world 'to judge the living and the dead' is as established a dogma of Catholic Theology as is the dogma that he

**"No Catholic can ignore the
Second Coming of Christ."**

**—A Catholic Commentary on
Holy Scripture, p. 838.**

has already come and has redeemed mankind."—Page 835.

A few pages farther on, this same Catholic reference work is even more categorical when it says: "No Catholic can ignore the Second Coming of Christ."—Page 838.

Catholic author Kevin O'Brien writes in his book *The Belief of Catholics*:

"It is the work of the Church to prepare the world for the majestic Second Coming of Christ. . . .

"The whole of history is a preparation for that day.

" . . . The Church has always yearned for the Second Coming of her Lord and Saviour. It is the confidence expressed in the very last words of the Bible and which the Church will echo until they become a reality: 'Surely I am coming soon. Amen.'"

Undeniably, Catholic dogma recognizes the importance of Christ's return. But has the Catholic Church kept "on the watch," and is it, in actual practice, 'preparing the world for the majestic Second Coming of Christ'?

CATHOLIC BIBLES SHOW THE NEED FOR VIGILANCE

Jesus stated in no uncertain terms that he, "the Son of man," would return. (Matt. 25:31-33) That is unquestionable. However, he did raise the following question: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8, *Jerusalem Bible* [Je]) That is the question! There is no doubt that Christ's return is taught in the Bible. But as things are now developing religionwise, will he find any Christian men and women of faith who are on the lookout for, or even *interested in*, his return?

Are *you* interested in Christ's second coming, and are you keeping spiritually awake, "on the watch," for it? Did you know that your own Catholic Bibles and Biblical reference works many times show the need for vigilance on your part in

this respect? Let us examine a few more passages:

"As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man comes. . . .

"So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed

**"The faithful . . . must hold themselves ready at all times, so that his coming might not take them by surprise."
—Catholic Pirot & Clamer Bible.**

anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."—Matt. 24:37-44, *Je*.

In a footnote on those verses, the French Catholic *Pirot and Clamer Bible* states: "Thus the faithful, who are sure of the Savior's parousia [presence] but uncertain as to the hour when it will occur, *must hold themselves ready at all times, so that his coming might not take them by surprise*. The parable forewarns us against the unpleasant surprise we would receive *if we did not remain vigilant*."—Italics ours.

The footnote on 1 Corinthians 1:7, 8 in the *Jerusalem Bible* has this to say:

"This 'day of the Lord' . . . called also the 'day of Christ' . . . or 'the last day' . . . is the fulfilment in the eschatological era [time of the end], ushered in by Christ, of the 'day of Yahweh' foretold by the prophets . . . and this final stage in the history of salvation . . . will be completed by the glorious second coming . . . of the Sovereign Judge . . . This day of light is coming . . . but exactly when is uncertain, . . . *meanwhile we must prepare*

for it.”—Italics ours; the ellipses represent some fifty Scripture references concerning Christ’s return.

Are you preparing for Christ’s coming? Your own Catholic Bibles require you to do so, even if your priests are failing to point out to you this essential fact.

HOW CHRIST RETURNS

It might be well at this point to state precisely what the Bible means by Christ’s return.

Nowhere does the Bible indicate that Christ will return physically to the earth. At his first coming, he “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself.” But at his resurrection, “God has highly exalted him.”—Phil. 2:5-11, RS, Catholic edition.

When he returns, he certainly does not abandon this “exalted” position. The Gospel according to Matthew states: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, es-

**‘It is necessary to be on the watch, and to use the time well that remains, for one’s own salvation and that of others.’
—Catholic Jerusalem Bible.**

corted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats.”—Matt. 25:31, 32, Je.

In line with this, the supplement to the renowned French Catholic *Dictionnaire de la Bible* states: “In patristic literature the word *parousia* [presence] very often refers to the coming of God’s Son to the earth. . . . This use of the word is foreign to the entire New Testament, which mentions only the glorious *Parousia*.” “[The

noun *parousia*] means first and foremost presence, either of persons or things, with often the idea of *active presence* in the case of persons.”—Volume 6, columns 1334, 1331.

So what is often called Christ’s return really refers to the time when, from his highly exalted position in heaven, he becomes *actively present* with regard to earth’s affairs.

SIGN OF CHRIST’S SPIRITUAL PRESENCE

That Christ’s presence in glory would be invisible is clearly proved by the fact that he saw the need to give his disciples a sign whereby they would know that he was actively present. Indeed, it was in connection with this sign that he told all Christians to keep on the watch. (Mark 13:33-37) We invite you to take any Catholic Bible and to read the details of this sign in Matthew chapters 24 and 25, Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21.

Commenting on these chapters, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* states:

“The Scriptures mention certain events which are to take place before the final judgment. These predictions were not intended to serve as indications of the exact time of the judgment, for that day and hour are known only to the Father, and will come when least expected. They were meant . . . to keep the end of the world present to the minds of Christians.”—Volume 8, page 552.

Identifying some of the foretold “events” that would precede the destruction of the ungodly world, the same Catholic reference work states:

“Christ had clearly stated that the Gospel was to be preached to all nations before the end (Matt., xxiv, 14). . . . Various other signs are spoken of as preceding or ushering in the end, as a great apostasy (II Thess., ii, 3sq.), or falling away from faith or charity (Luke xviii, 8; xvii, 26; Matt., xxiv, 12), the reign of Antichrist, and great social calamities and terrifying physical convulsions.”—Volume 5, page 533.

When, more than since 1914, has there been such a combination of "great social calamities" (wars, revolutions, famines, pestilences), "terrifying physical convulsions" (destructive earthquakes, tornadoes, freakish weather) and "a great apostasy," or "falling away from faith"? On the last point, writing in *The Catholic Herald Citizen* under the headline "Catholic Apostasy Rate Up," Catholic priest-sociologist Andrew Greeley admitted recently that the rate "is continuing to climb," and added: "People are leaving in droves." This is also true of the Protestant churches.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Everything that is happening around us indicates that Christ's presence, or *parousia*, has begun, in other words, that he is actively turning his attention to earth's affairs. Shortly, he will 'come' to execute God's judgments against the wicked, and also to usher his true disciples into a righteous new system of things. (Matt. 24:30; 2 Pet. 3:11-13) What, then, should you do?

May we again draw your attention to a footnote in the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible*? Commenting on 2 Corinthians 6:2, this Bible states: "There is an intermediary period between the time of Christ's coming and his return [to execute judgment]. This period is the "day of salvation", a time allowed for conversion; it is granted to the "remnant" [compare Romans 11:5], and to the pagans [the rest of redeemed mankind]. Though the duration is uncertain, this time of pilgrimage *must be regarded as being short*, and full of trials, and sufferings . . . *The end is at hand*, the day approaches, and *it is necessary to be on the watch*, and to use the time well that remains, for one's own salvation *and that of others*, leaving the final vindication to

IN COMING ISSUES

- **Approaching God in Prayer.**
- **Training Our Conscience to Do More for Us.**
- **Jehovah, a Helper Without Equal.**

God.'—Italics and bracketed comments ours.

You will have noticed that every scripture and every book quoted in this article comes from a Catholic source. If you are a Catholic, all we are doing, really, is telling you what your own Bible says and how these texts are commented upon in reference works approved by your own Church. We are simply drawing your attention to vital facts that your Church and its clergy have been obligated to teach you. But have they taught you these things?

If, after comparing the present world situation with Bible prophecies, you agree that the sign of Christ's presence is visible today, should you not be sharing in proclaiming "this Good News of the kingdom . . . to the whole world as a witness"? —Matt. 24:14, *Je.*

If you perceive that the Catholic Church is not doing this, then why remain within a church that has failed to keep "on the watch" for Christ's second coming and that is doing nothing to preach throughout the world God's kingdom as the only hope for mankind?

The magazine you are reading is proof that Jehovah's Witnesses have kept awake and that they are actively engaged in announcing publicly the good news of Christ's presence. Why not let them help you to do likewise?

What Will You Do

In The Face Of

SATAN'S ATTACK?

WHETHER you know it or not, you and all the rest of the human race have a vicious foe with whom to reckon. You may not have realized that such a hater of all mankind actually exists, but make no mistake about it. You are being stalked by a lying, premeditating murderer. Extra alertness on your part is required because of the fact that this one is invisible. No, you could not see him if he were standing right next to you. Yet through violent ways he has "the means to cause death." Who is he? Satan the Devil.—Heb. 2:14.

² But what does he want? Why are you personally in danger? Well, it must be remembered that he was once a worshiper of the true God, Jehovah, but "he did not stand fast in the truth." He became apostate, putting his own ambition and desire to be worshiped ahead of the interests of his Creator. To justify his actions and to secure worship for himself he made it his goal to break the integrity of all creatures in heaven and on earth. He wants to destroy *your* relationship with God. So you are under attack.—John 8:44; Matt. 4:9.*

* See *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, pp. 55-74.

1. Against whom must we all be on guard, and why?
2. Who is Satan, and what is his primary goal?

"Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil."—Eph. 6:11.

³ Devil worship may be the farthest thing from your mind, and yet the fact is that the majority of those who think they are worshipping the true God are actually on the side of Satan and the demonic angels who have gone over to the Devil's way of thinking. Some people may doubt this; yet Revelation 12:9 refers to "the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the *entire* inhabited earth." Additionally, 1 John 5:19 says: "The *whole* world is lying in the power of the wicked one." Elsewhere in the Scriptures he is called "the *god* of this system of things." (2 Cor. 4:4) These references should make it quite clear to us that from the viewpoint of the Creator the vast majority of mankind are under the influence and control of the Devil.

⁴ 'How,' you may ask, 'has it been possible for most of mankind to have come under the influence of Satan, apparently without their even knowing it?' It is because of the methods he uses, methods so effective that even perfect Adam and Eve were not immune. Having once been "in the truth" he knows very well how to transform "himself into an angel of light." (John 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:14) Just as poisonous food tastily prepared may be quite

3. What is the extent of the Devil's influence on earth?
4. How has Satan been able to achieve an apparent measure of 'success'?

appealing to an unsuspecting person, so Satan often takes things that appeal to normal natural desires but gives them a twist that certainly can be fatal. He wants to lead us to the point where, when we recognize what has happened, it is too late. Staying on this deadly course for a period of time soon sears our conscience so that eventually our perverted course becomes 'normal' to us, and we start thinking everyone else is wrong. Could it be that this is what has happened to "the entire inhabited earth," "the whole world"? According to God's own written Word, Yes!

⁵ This being Scripturally true, one might well wonder, 'Can anyone successfully resist Satan's insidious attack? Is there any way to know in advance exactly what his methods are?' Happily, the answer is, Yes! By a study of God's Word and the modern history of the Christian congregation we can learn the entire spectrum of his schemes. He has no really 'secret weapon.' It is true of him as stated in Ecclesiastes 1:9: "That which has come to be, that is what will come to be; and that which has been done, that is what will be done; and so there is nothing new under the sun." Satan is not a creator so that he could devise something totally new and take us completely by surprise. He is limited. So, let us consider some of the "crafty acts" that Satan has used in his all-out assault on mankind and see what we can do to have our defenses ready. —Eph. 6:11, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

METHODS OF ATTACK

⁶ In his warfare Satan often uses the frontal attack. This method is characterized by threats, imprisonments, bannings, and acts of violence, the flames of which

are often fanned by nationalism. Some have lost jobs, homes, family members and even their lives because of taking an uncompromising stand while under such assault. By such scare tactics our enemy hopes to overwhelm us and frighten us into capitulating. He knows that it is natural for humans to do something to relieve themselves of suffering and anxiety. If you have a headache, you try to do something to allay the pain. Satan figures that, if he can cause you enough suffering, you will compromise to gain relief, thus breaking your relationship with Jehovah God. In modern times, on all continents of the earth, Jehovah's Christian witnesses have had to endure these things. The threat of such things being applied keeps most people in line with what is 'normal,' but true Christians, who are not afraid to 'buck the tide,' have remained faithful.

⁷ Another 'crafty act' that affects especially those newly associated with the Christian congregation is Satan's playing on fear of what neighbors, friends and relatives may think. Close family members may turn away, and even our marriage mate may oppose us. Should this overtake us as a sudden surprise attack? No! Did not Jesus warn: "Do not think I came to put peace upon the earth; I came to put, not peace, but a sword. For I came to cause division, with a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a young wife against her mother-in-law. Indeed, a man's enemies will be persons of his own household." (Matt. 10: 34-36) As you try to conform to Bible principles you may find that such ones will bring pressure to bear against you. By this method Satan hopes that your normal desire to be accepted will cause you to give in. Have you been the target of such an attack?

5. Why can it be said that Satan has no really 'secret weapon'?

6. What is Satan's frontal attack, and how can Christians meet it?

7. How does Satan use fear?

⁸ Another area in which Satan tries to undermine us is in regard to our human desire for security. Christ Jesus counseled his hearers: "Stop being anxious," and, "So never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?'" Later the apostle Paul said: "Do not be anxious over anything." (Matt. 6:25, 31; Phil. 4:6) In other words, if we do our part, Jehovah God will take care to see that we have the necessities of life. However, Satan does not want us to rely on the Creator. Rather, with the aim of crowding out spiritual interests he wants us to feel that we have to use extraordinary personal initiative to protect ourselves against inflation as well as shortages of fuel, food and other items. Even people who have their personal necessities for the immediate future well cared for find themselves anxious about what is going to happen months and years into the future. Some feel they have to stockpile beyond what is normal to protect themselves against contrived or prophesied shortages. How few people follow the plain advice in God's Word: "So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things"! Many people have allowed this subtle attack of Satan to crowd out the spiritual solution to life's problems. So in these matters, how are you doing?—1 Tim. 6: 8; Rev. 6:5, 6.

⁹ Another natural desire we all have is the need for entertainment and relaxation. But subtle Satan can turn an innocent desire for a little change of pace into an all-out assault that can be just as devastating to our spirituality as anxiety, fear of man, and nationalism. Our interest in sports, music and other forms of entertainment can capture our attention to such an extent that the spending of time and money

in this way interferes with keeping up our spiritual obligations. How would you compare the time, interest and money you use for leisure-time pursuits to that spent in taking care of spiritual matters? Your answer is to some extent an indication of Satan's success in his attack on you.

¹⁰ Perhaps the Devil's most nefarious method of attack is in connection with the perfectly normal desire for marriage and the intimacies associated with it. For example, an engaged couple may begin to reason, 'Well, we are going to be married tomorrow, and we do love each other. After all, marriage itself is just a piece of paper and a few words. What really counts is the way we feel about each other. So what would be wrong with beginning now to enjoy some of the intimate privileges afforded married persons?' In the Garden of Eden there was nothing wrong with the forbidden fruit in itself, but Jehovah God said that it should not be eaten, and that made the eating of it wrong. The same is true with the relationship between a man and a woman. What would be all right tomorrow may be wrong today. Satan's subtle approach is to make us think that Jehovah is withholding something beneficial and pleasurable from us without just cause. He has fostered the idea that man has a "right" to decide for himself what is good and what is bad. Promiscuous sex is a by-product of such thinking and a snare against which we must guard. Christians must demonstrate unquestionable loyalty to the laws of God if they are to remain firm in the face of Satan's attack.

PREPARATION ALL-ESSENTIAL

¹¹ Basic to preparing ourselves for Satan's attack is that we recognize that our defense is not a physical one but is pri-

8. How can our desire for security be used against us?
9. Give an example of how Satan may use innocent desires as a means of attack.

10. What is one of Satan's most nefarious methods of attack? Explain.

11. What can we do to prepare for Satan's attack?

marily a spiritual one. This is made clear for us in Ephesians 6:11-13: "Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil; because we have a wrestling, not against blood and flesh, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked *spirit* forces in the heavenly places. On this account take up the complete suit of armor from God, that you may be able to resist in the wicked day and, after you have done all things thoroughly, to stand firm." So in defending ourselves it makes no difference whether we are young or old, muscular or frail, in good health or infirm. As David did with Goliath, we can come up against an enemy who to all outward appearances has the advantage, yet we can still come off the victor. It is going to come, not due to our own expertness, but, rather, by keeping ourselves in a condition of spiritual readiness. Indeed, this is our only means of defense.

¹² It is one thing to read and hear about others remaining faithful under strenuous tests of loyalty to God. But what will we individually do when the issue meets us head on, when it is our own life and integrity that hang in the balance? To meet such opposition personally and remain firm, it is all-important for us to know for ourselves why Jehovah permits the attack. We must remember that we are undergoing a test of loyalty, and that those not serving because of love of God will be sifted out. Additionally, our maintaining integrity proves the Devil to be a liar and upholds the rightfulness of Jehovah's sovereignty. If we lose sight of this reason for our suffering, we could easily succumb to self-pity, which would lead to compromise and a breach in our defenses. It is of great benefit for all of God's people to

review from time to time the part they personally play in the universal issue involving God's sovereignty.—Luke 22:31.

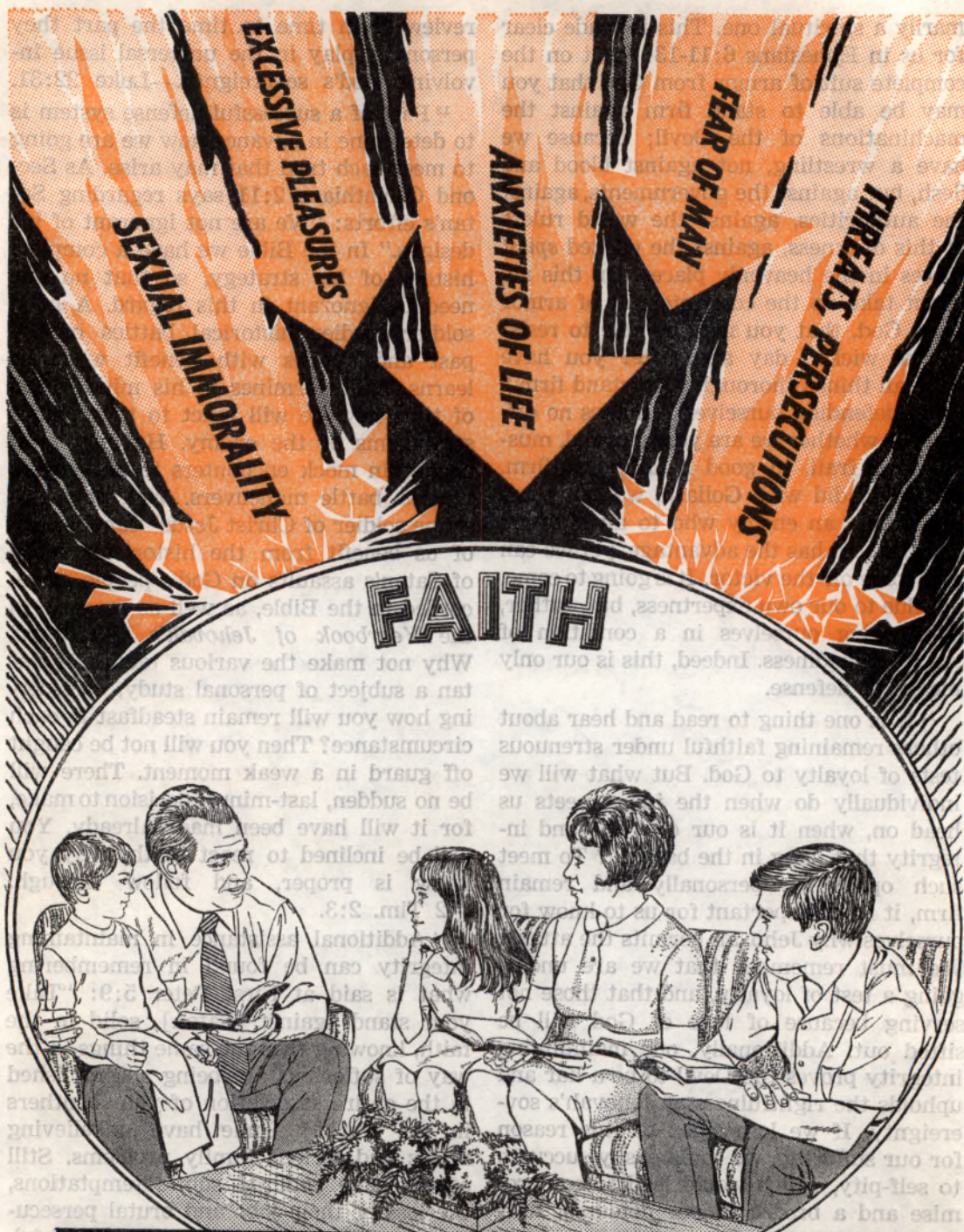
¹³ Part of a successful defense system is to determine in advance how we are going to meet each trial that may arise. As Second Corinthians 2:11 says regarding Satan's efforts: "We are not ignorant of his designs." In the Bible we have a complete history of his strategy, so that no one need be ignorant in this regard. A good soldier studies historical battles of the past and applies with benefit what he learns. He determines in his mind ahead of time how he will react to the various stratagems of the enemy. He may even engage in mock encounters to perfect his various battle maneuvers. Well now, "as a fine soldier of Christ Jesus" cannot each of us benefit from the historical record of Satan's assaults on God's people as recorded in the Bible, as well as recently in the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*? Why not make the various tactics of Satan a subject of personal study, considering how you will remain steadfast in each circumstance? Then you will not be caught off guard in a weak moment. There will be no sudden, last-minute decision to make, for it will have been made already. You will be inclined to react in the way you know is proper, and follow through.—2 Tim. 2:3.

¹⁴ Additional assistance in maintaining integrity can be found in remembering what is said at First Peter 5:9: "Take your stand against [Satan], solid in the faith, knowing that the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world." Some have unbelieving mates and serious family problems. Still others have endured subtle temptations, the loss of their jobs and brutal persecutions, and yet they have remained faithful.

12. What issue must we understand in order to remain firm?

13. What historical study will help us?

14. What proves it is possible to resist Satan's attack?



Bible study will help you to "take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the wicked one's burning missiles."—Eph. 6:16.

'Ordinary' people with weaknesses common to all of us have 'taken their stand' and come off the victors. If they did it, you too can ward off Satan's attack. Remember, "oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you."—Jas. 4:7.

¹⁵ Through the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses around the world, assistance is available to help people to shore up their defenses. Jehovah expects all of his people to avail themselves, to the extent possible, of the various provisions made to build themselves up spiritually. Just as we find a way to shop for food, visit a doctor and take care of other vital matters in life, we must, likewise, avail ourselves of the congregational arrangement to get the necessary spiritual food, association and activity in order to be strengthened for the day of attack.

¹⁶ Since Satan likes to attack when we least expect it, our loving Father has given us a means of instant defense for any occasion. It is called prayer. Those who have endured for many years under Satan's attack invariably refer to prayer as being a primary source of strength. You will notice that in describing the various means we have of protecting ourselves in this fight against Satan, as outlined in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, the following point is made: "Carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit." Though you may feel weak in yourself, prayer can turn you into a tower of strength.—Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:13.

¹⁷ But in what way does prayer help? Is prayer's main benefit just some psychologi-

15. Where may help be found, and how should we strengthen ourselves?

16. How can prayer help in the fight against Satan?

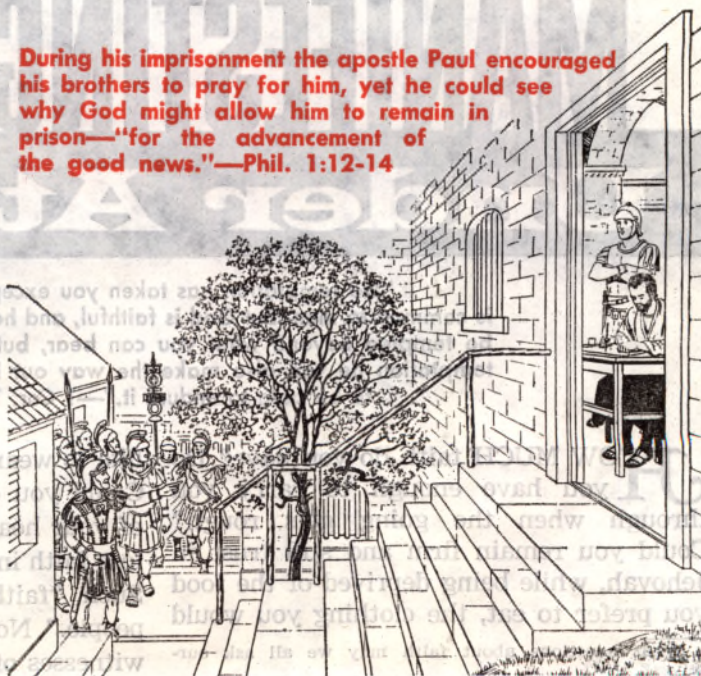
17. Is the main benefit of persistent prayer psychological, or what?

cal effect it may have on us? No! According to James 5:16, "A righteous man's supplication, when it is at work, has much force." So prayer really accomplishes something. True, the general pattern of world events may not be altered, but prayer can make a difference in how the details will be worked out. For example, how did Paul view matters when he was in prison? Do you think he said, 'Well brothers, I am in prison. This must be God's will for me and there is nothing any of us can do about it'? By no means! Rather, he encouraged his brothers to pray for him. Why? Notice: "But I exhort you more especially to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner." Their persistence in prayer could make the difference as to *when* he would be released. Prayer gets results.—Heb. 13:19; compare Philemon 22.

¹⁸ But what if Satan's attack continues despite persistent prayer? Does this mean

18. In what various ways does God answer prayer?

During his imprisonment the apostle Paul encouraged his brothers to pray for him, yet he could see why God might allow him to remain in prison—"for the advancement of the good news."—Phil. 1:12-14



that God has turned his back on you? No! Be assured that Jehovah is answering your prayers even though he may not bring about a legal victory, lift a governmental ban, or remove some obstacle or temptation. He may have some other way of bringing relief, or it may serve his righteous purpose to allow the opposition to continue. In this regard we are reminded of what Paul said about his own imprisonment in Rome. No doubt he would have liked to have been set free, yet he could see why Jehovah might allow him to remain in prison. He said: "Now I desire you to know, brothers, that my affairs have turned out for the advancement of the good news rather than otherwise, so that my bonds have become public knowledge in association with Christ among all the Praetorian Guard and all the rest; and most of the brothers in the Lord, feeling confidence by reason of my prison bonds, are showing all the more courage to speak

the word of God fearlessly."—Phil. 1:12-14; compare 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

19 God has allowed prolonged brutal persecution of some of Jehovah's Witnesses in such places as Nazi Germany, Korea and Malawi. But has not their faithfulness been inspiring to us? Have they not provided a public record for anyone to read, showing that as an organization they will not bend in their allegiance to God? When you face trials in your family, difficulties with your health or opposition from the world, remember the fine effect your faithful example can have in building up your Christian brothers. What a privilege to be used by God in this way! Prayer can give you the strength to endure persecution and loss of former "friends." It will aid you to resist materialistic pressures and immoral enticements. How happy we are to have a strong spiritual defense in the face of Satan's attack!

19. How will your remaining firm help others?

MANIFESTING FAITH

Under Attack

"No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it."—1 Cor. 10:13.

HOW MUCH faith do you have? Do you have enough to carry you through when the going gets rough? Could you remain firm and still trust in Jehovah, while being deprived of the food you prefer to eat, the clothing you would

like to wear, the house you love so much? Could you endure imprisonment, the loss of your health, and even your life and not lose faith in God's promises for the future? Such "faith is not a possession of all people." No doubt, the faithful Christian witnesses of Jehovah feel like the apostles

1. What questions about faith may we all ask ourselves?

who said to Jesus: "Give us more faith."
—2 Thess. 3:2; Luke 17:5.

² Some may feel, 'It will never happen to me.' Jesus forewarned true Christians: "But before all these things people will lay their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, you being haled before kings and governors for the sake of my name. Moreover, you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death; and you will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name." (Luke 21:12, 16, 17) The apostles who heard these words knew that just as surely as the sun would rise the next day, this prophecy would be fulfilled on them and all of Christ's followers. Of course, Jesus did not say that each individual Christian would have to endure every type of persecution. These things were to fall upon God's people as a group. But regardless of the method of attack used, we can be certain that Satan will see to it that "all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted."—2 Tim. 3:12.

³ Today we have more than prophetic utterances; we have a historical record outlining persecution upon the Christian witnesses of Jehovah dating from the first century of our Common Era down to this year 1976. Students of Roman history are well acquainted with the horrible record of Christians being torn apart by wild animals while thousands of Rome's blood-thirsty citizenry cheered from the grandstands. In this twentieth century, the pressure is still on God's people. Why, even today the Christian work of Jehovah's Witnesses is banned in a number of countries. Many true Christians are in prison, and some have lost their lives. In

one form or another all of God's people are being subjected to forces designed to break down their integrity. We need faith to stand firm.

⁴ There is no need to doubt that God's people in our day do have the faith to meet the test. Did it not take faith for a handful of men and women around the turn of the century to break away from traditional religious thinking and denounce as false the teachings that had been followed as truth for centuries? And did it not call for faith for just a few thousand of them to respond to the call sent forth at the Cedar Point Convention in 1922: "Advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom"? No one at that time could have foreseen the vast increases enjoyed by God's organization today with millions now associating. And during the years of World War II when nationalism was rampant, and one who did not line up politically was viewed as a hater of mankind, who were the ones to hold faithfully to the Word of God and remain neutral? Jehovah's Christian witnesses! From their early beginnings in the first century down throughout their modern history they have been "walking by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7) Faith caused them to believe what God's Word says, when everyone else scorned its message. This believing by the faithful ones has been rewarded. Their confidence was not in vain, and millions today now recognize this.

⁵ But the future still holds challenges that will require faith in order for Jehovah's Witnesses to come off victorious in the face of Satan's attack. Today we are on the brink of the destruction of this system of things. At this point it is not clear just how far Jehovah will permit the enemy to go in his endeavor to break

2. With regard to Satan's opposition, of what can we be certain?

3. Why is faith still needed today?

4. In what way have God's people in modern times demonstrated great faith?

5. What will occur in the future that will require faith?

down the faith of His people. Nor is it clear just what his means of salvation will be for us individually.—Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21.

FAITH NEEDED WHEN THE WAY OUT IS NOT CLEAR

⁶ As this “time of the end” moves rapidly to its climax, God’s people could be placed in situations where the way out is not clear. In fact, emergencies could arise in our lives so that it might seem from a human viewpoint that there is no means of escape. Some today are quite concerned about their welfare next month and next year, but things might reach a crisis where provisions for food, clothing and shelter, and our freedom and life for the next day are in question. How will we react if it seems there is no way to turn? On whom will we depend to take us through? Our faith could be put to the ultimate test.

⁷ From a Roman prison Paul wrote a letter to a congregation of fellow believers in Philippi. In this letter he tells about a “secret” he had learned from some twenty-five years of Christian experience. He said: “Not that I am speaking with regard to being in want, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be self-sufficient. I know indeed how to be low on provisions, I know indeed how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the *secret* of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want. For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me.”—Phil. 4:11-13.

⁸ For many of Jehovah’s people, the way He provides for them in time of need is something that they have yet to experience. Regarding this secret the apostle Paul’s life gives us insight. Read, for ex-

ample, Second Corinthians 4:8-11 where the apostle says we may be oppressed, perplexed, persecuted and thrown down, but never “left in the lurch . . . not destroyed.” Also read Second Corinthians 11:24-27: “By Jews I five times received forty strokes less one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I experienced shipwreck, a night and a day I have spent in the deep; in journeys often, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from highwaymen, in dangers from my own race, in dangers from the nations, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers among false brothers, in labor and toil, in sleepless nights often, in hunger and thirst, in abstinence from food many times, in cold and nakedness.” Surely, here was a man who often had good cause to wonder how he was going to make it through to the next day. But through his Christian experience he learned lessons from which we also can benefit.

⁹ One who quits when the going gets rough or when the way out is not clear may never see for himself just how God strengthens and provides in time of need and makes the way out of a seemingly hopeless situation. The human reaction is to hold back unless we can see just what is going to happen. Here is where faith comes in. It is belief so strong and powerful that in the mind of the one having faith the thing undetected by human senses is a reality. He has a sure guarantee, and that guarantee is his faith. Paul defined faith in this way: “Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld.”—Heb. 11:1.

¹⁰ A good example of how Jehovah God expects our faith to work is found in connection with the Israelites’ moving into

6. What conditions could develop to test our faith?

7. Paul learned what “secret” that strengthened him?

8. Through what experiences did Paul learn valuable lessons?

9. How can we learn the same “secret” Paul learned?

10. (a) The Israelites were faced with what obstacle in 1473 B.C.E.? (b) Yet what did God command them to do?

the Promised Land, as recorded in Joshua chapters 3 and 4. It is springtime of the year 1473 B.C.E. The Israelites are encamped on the eastern side of the Jordan River just to the north of the Salt Sea. For forty years they have been wandering in the wilderness and now at last it is God's time for them to move in and capture from their enemies a land that rightfully belongs to them. But how are some three million men, women and children, along with animals and supplies, going to cross the Jordan at the time when melting snows and spring rain turn the Jordan into a flooding torrent? And yet Jehovah's direction is that they march right into the river with the priests in the lead. The command is given with this assurance: "It must occur that at the instant that the soles of the feet of the priests carrying the ark of Jehovah, the Lord of the whole earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, the waters descending from above, and they will stand still as one dam."—Josh. 3:13.

¹¹ What will the Israelites do? Will they take the attitude: 'It is impossible to ford that raging torrent now. We should wait a few weeks until the water level goes down. We would hate to see some of our tents, animals or young ones swept downstream trying to cross under these "impossible" conditions. In the meantime, if Jehovah opens a path through the water as he did at the Red Sea, then of course we will be happy to cross over'? Let us read what happened: "And it came about that when the people pulled away from their tents just before passing over the Jordan, with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, and at the instant that the carriers of the Ark came as far as the Jordan and the feet of the priests carrying the Ark were dipped

in the edge of the waters (now the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), then the waters descending from above began to stand still. They rose up as one dam very far away at Adam, the city at the side of Zarethan, while those descending toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were exhausted. They were cut off, and the people passed over in front of Jericho. Meanwhile the priests carrying the ark of Jehovah's covenant kept standing immovable on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan as all Israel were passing over on dry ground, until the whole nation had completed passing over the Jordan." —Josh. 3:14-17.

¹² What a marvelous demonstration of faith, and a good lesson for all of God's people as they may face uncertainties in the future! If Jehovah spelled out all the details of what he is going to do and how he is going to do it, what need would there be for faith? Faith means heading in the direction God leads regardless of how impossible the course may seem from a human standpoint. Jehovah God wants to see if we have enough faith to 'get our feet wet.' Then, if we act in faith, we will observe how he can and will bring us through. No wonder the Bible speaks of the "tested quality of your faith."—Jas. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:7.

NO BREAKING POINT

¹³ Some wonder about this: 'I am confident that Jehovah will be faithful and back up his people, but sometimes I worry about myself and how I will react to certain trials and pressures. Will I have the strength to endure? Do I have a weak spot that can be used to bring me to the "breaking point"?' Others may feel, 'I can endure anything myself, but I am a parent and I could not bear to see anything hap-

11. (a) What attitude might the Israelites have taken?
(b) In what way did they demonstrate faith?

12. The Israelites' example teaches us what lesson?
13. When it comes to trials, what are some questions about which we may wonder?

pen to my children. I do not think I could endure it if they were threatened with harm.'

¹⁴ With such questions in mind what an encouraging answer we have from the apostle Paul! Writing to a congregation of fellow believers he reviewed things that proved to be a downfall to many of the Israelites. At First Corinthians 10:7-10 we read: "Neither become idolaters, as some of them did; just as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and they got up to have a good time.' Neither let us practice fornication, as some of them committed fornication, only to fall, twenty-three thousand of them in one day. Neither let us put Jehovah to the test, as some of them put him to the test, only to perish by the serpents. Neither be murmurers, just as some of them murmured, only to perish by the destroyer." He said that those things happened as an example to Christians, and he warned against the folly of thinking that 'it could never happen to me.' He then made a statement that was to prove to be one of the most encouraging, faith-strengthening thoughts in the Bible. He said: "No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." —1 Cor. 10:13.

¹⁵ Do you know what this verse means for faithful Christians who are sincerely trying to do God's will? If you are such a person it means that as far as your integrity to God is concerned, you do not have a 'breaking point.' There is no power, force, contrivance, or 'secret weapon' visible or invisible that can be brought to

bear against you with the certainty that you will break your integrity to God. You do not have any so-called 'weak spot' that your adversaries can use against you with sure success. If you will go as far as your human flesh will take you in being faithful to God, then you can know for a certainty that, when you think you cannot hold out any longer in your own strength, Jehovah God will step in with his help and "make the way out." This does not mean necessarily that he will remove the temptation. Rather, the purpose of this divine intervention will be "in order for you to be able to endure it."

¹⁶ This proper understanding of matters from the Scriptures will help us to have the right view of things no matter how extreme they become. For example, the parents who might have their child taken from them by persecutors will be able to endure even this, but only with God's help. They will know they have done what they could and that, if Jehovah is going to allow such a thing to occur, they can confidently leave the matter in his hands. Who is more qualified to look after your child? You or Jehovah God and his army of angels? The situation may seem utterly hopeless, and we may not see immediately how Jehovah is going to work things out, but here is where faith and childlike trust in Jehovah must come in. We could not endure without it.—Heb. 11:6.

BE FAITHFUL IN LITTLE THINGS NOW

¹⁷ God's people are not certain what trials await them in the future, but, whatever these may be, we are confident that the principle stated by Jesus will hold true: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much."—Luke 16:10.

14. (a) Are we to undergo trials never before experienced by God's people? How do we know? (b) What assurance does the Bible give concerning temptation?
15. (a) Does Christian integrity have a 'breaking point'? (b) How does Jehovah "make the way out"?

16. Faith plays what part in endurance? Illustrate.—
17. Confidence in what principle will help us to face the trials ahead?

¹⁸ This being true, Jehovah's Christian witnesses endeavor each day to handle successfully the tests of faith that come along. There are many things that may loom up as an obstacle in our daily living and in serving Jehovah, but if we successfully meet these tests "in what is least"

18. How will faithfulness "in what is least" now help us in the days ahead?

or what is basic to Christianity, we will be strengthened to face with faith whatever the future may bring. Then let the Devil do his worst. Let him put into operation whatever schemes he may have in mind. They are nothing new. They have been met and will be met successfully by those manifesting faith under Satan's attack.

Charismatic Movement Fails to Measure Up

IN RECENT times the "Charismatic" movement, sometimes labeled "neo-Pentecostal," has attracted a good many churchgoers. This has been particularly noticeable in the Catholic Church, where some reports estimate the movement as having anywhere from 50,000 up to 400,000 followers. There have been upsets also in the Baptist Church.

The Charismatics (from the Greek word meaning 'a gift of divine favor') stress the importance of "spiritual gifts," including divine healing, speaking in tongues (foreign to the hearer), discernment of spirits and prophecy. What appears to have disturbed the Catholic Church is the practice some Charismatics have called "discipling," wherein the believers are grouped into units of about ten persons under the direction of a "shepherd," who teaches and guides them. The disciples are committed to obey their shepherd. It especially bothers the Church that sometimes this shepherd is someone other than the disciples' own minister. Clergymen, including those of other religions, fear that divisions in the church might thereby come about. Some charismatic leaders, however, oppose the practice of discipling. These say that, for the most part, they have taught members to remain within their denominations.

A further cause of concern to many per-

sons is the fact that the charismatic "healers" claim, when their healing efforts are ineffective, that the failure is due to "lack of faith" on the part of the ailing person. This produces a guilt complex in the sick person, which, incidentally, complicates the job of any medical doctor treating the individual.

Of course, when Jesus and the apostles healed the sick, their healing was not dependent on the degree of faith of the healed person. Of Jesus, it is recorded: "All those who had people sick with various diseases brought them to him. By laying his hands upon each one of them he would cure them."—Luke 4:40; compare Luke 6:19; 9:6, 11.

The charismatic movement is doubtless a result of the churches' failure to fill the need of church members for spiritual food. But while it has attracted many, particularly young persons, it has failed to measure up to the Bible's standard for true Christianity. The Bible strongly counsels Christians not to follow human leaders, thereby having divided allegiances, but to follow Christ. The Bible therefore also commands: "Get out of her [Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, with its multitude of sects], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues."—Rev. 18:4.

THESSALONIANS

learn about

CHRIST'S
PRESENCE

and JEHOVAH'S DAY

THE mid-nineteen seventies have seen the completion of six thousand years of human history. In connection with this, many sincere servants of Jehovah had great expectations as to the nearness of the "great tribulation" mentioned at Matthew 24:21, 22, and the final phase of Jehovah's day. In this respect they might be likened to the first-century Christians at Thessalonica, whose congregation the apostle Paul established on his second missionary tour in 49 C.E. As we shall see, the matters of Christ's *parousia* or presence and Jehovah's day loomed up very prominently in the minds of those early Christians.

How long Paul and his companion Silas stayed at Thessalonica the inspired records do not state. But it was at least long enough for him to establish a congregation there and for him to receive help on a number of occasions from the congregation at Philippi. In Thessalonica they found many hearing ears, 'some Jews, a great multitude of Greek proselytes, some principal women,' as well as a number who left their idols to become believers.—Acts 17:4; 1 Thess. 1:9.

Becoming jealous of Paul's success, the local Jews created an uproar, which resulted in some of the newly converted ones being treated roughly. Because of this the local brothers thought it best to send Paul and Silas off to Beroea lest they get still worse treatment. His having to leave them suddenly caused him great anxiety for their spiritual welfare. How were his spiri-

tual children faring? Were they standing firm or had all his efforts on their behalf been in vain? Twice Paul himself endeavored to visit them and each time 'Satan cut across his path.' So he did the next best thing and sent his companion Timothy. And when that one returned with the good news that they were standing firm, Paul not only greatly rejoiced but at once wrote them a most encouraging letter. The contents of this letter suggest that Timothy also brought Paul some other information about the Thessalonians. This letter and the one that shortly followed it, written about 50 and 51 C.E., most likely were, aside from Matthew's Gospel, the first parts of the Christian Greek Scriptures to be written. At the time Paul wrote these letters he apparently was in Corinth.

PAUL'S EXAMPLE IMITATED

What a fine example Paul and his companions gave the Thessalonian believers to imitate! There was never error or uncleanness or deceit in their exhortation. Neither did they turn up with flattering speech or present a false front for the sake of selfish gain, nor seek glory for themselves. Though they were apostles, they paid their own way, working night and day not to be an expensive burden to those whom they served spiritually. At all times

they proved themselves "loyal and righteous and unblamable."—1 Thess. 2:5, 6, 10.

They preached the good news not only with speech but with power and with holy spirit and with strong conviction. More than that, Paul and his companions had a deep love for those Thessalonians, being gentle among them as a nursing mother cherishing her own children, imparting to them not only the good news but their very own souls. And just like a wise and loving father, they exhorted the Thessalonians to walk worthily as Christians.

—1 Thess. 2:7, 8, 11.

The principle that "whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap" may be applied to Paul's efforts. (Gal. 6:7) His fine example resulted in fine imitators. Paul could therefore commend them for having accepted the Word of God as being what it actually is, not of human but of divine origin, and for letting it become active in their lives. Yes, Paul could write, "you became imitators of us and of the Lord," for they accepted the word in spite of persecution. This caused them to become examples to still others, both by their endurance and by their zeal in preaching.—1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14.

Due to their imitating the fine example that Paul set in unselfish love, he could commend them for 'their faithful work, their loving labor and their endurance.' Yes, "with reference to brotherly love, you do not need us to be writing you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and, in fact, you are doing it to all the brothers." (1 Thess. 1:3; 4:9, 10) And in his second letter he similarly commends them: "We are obligated to give God thanks always for you, brothers, as it is fitting, because your faith is growing exceedingly and the love of each and all of you is increasing one toward the other." No wonder Paul took "pride" in them because of their strong faith in spite

of all the persecution they had to bear.

—2 Thess. 1:3, 4.

"KEEP ON DOING IT MORE FULLY"

Fine as the Thessalonians were doing, Paul knew that there was room for improvement and so he wrote them: "We request you and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, . . . on how you ought to walk and please God, just as you are in fact walking, that you would keep on doing it *more fully*." Which included what? Zealous activity in preaching and teaching; abstaining from moral uncleanness such as is practiced by those not knowing God; each one being careful not to encroach on the rights of his brother, for "God called us, not with allowance for uncleanness, but in connection with sanctification."—1 Thess. 4:1-7.

True, they were showing love toward one another, but Paul urged them "to go on doing it in fuller measure." Evidently some were lazy and so Paul urged them to mind their own business, to work hard with their hands so as not to be needing anything. In fact, Paul found it necessary to make this point still stronger in his second letter, writing: "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat." Obviously, some were walking disorderly, not working at all. Pointing to his own example of working night and day, Paul exhorts these to work with their hands so as to eat the food they themselves earned.—1 Thess. 4:10-12; 2 Thess. 3:10-12.

Paul shows concern for the burdens of those taking the lead, presiding, and so admonishes the Thessalonian congregation to "give them more than extraordinary consideration in love because of their work." And ever conscious of the need of God's help, Paul counsels them to "pray incessantly." In fact, even as in all the letters that followed, Paul stresses the subject of prayer. He repeatedly tells of his praying for them and also keeps asking

them to pray for him.—1 Thess. 1:2; 2:13; 5:13, 17, 18, 25; 2 Thess. 1:11; 3:1.

CHRIST'S PRESENCE AND JEHOVAH'S DAY

That encouraging news that Paul preached about Christ's return and Jehovah's day seems to have appealed especially to the persecuted Thessalonians. This is indicated by his frequent references to these subjects in his letters. Six times he mentions Christ's *parousia*, whereas in all his other letters he mentions it only once. And only in these letters does he speak of Jehovah's day or the day of Jehovah. Paul looks forward to the presence of his Lord Jesus when he will be able to glory in those Thessalonian believers, to whom he had first spoken the "good news." (1 Thess. 2:2, 19) And he prays for them that they might be found "unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the presence of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones."—1 Thess. 3:13.

In comforting the bereaved ones Paul gives us further insight into Christ's presence. At that time those Christians who have fallen asleep in death are to be raised to heavenly glory and then afterward those living will be caught up to meet their Lord, receiving their heavenly reward. (1 Thess. 4:13-17) Paul closes his first letter with a prayer that they may be found blameless at Christ's presence.—1 Thess. 5:23.

SECOND LETTER

In his second letter, after commending the Thessalonian Christians for their love and steadfastness, Paul goes on to assure them that it is righteous on God's part, at the revelation or *apokalypsis* of Jesus Christ, to repay tribulation to those who are making tribulation for them. That is when Christ from heaven takes vengeance on all the wicked, causing sudden "ever-

lasting destruction" to come upon them. Such revealing of Christ coincides with Jehovah's day.—2 Thess. 1:6-9.

Paul in his first letter had warned that Jehovah's day would come as a thief in the night and that when men of the world would be saying "Peace and security!" sudden destruction would come upon them. Apparently because of that, some jumped to the conclusion that Jehovah's day, as well as Christ's presence, had already taken place. So Paul in his second letter proceeds to show that before Jehovah's day comes there would be a great apostasy and that a composite or organizational "man of lawlessness" and "son of destruction" would be revealed. His being revealed was being held back because of "the thing that acts as a restraint," namely, the presence of Paul and other apostles. As long as all of these were with the early Christian congregation this great apostasy could not come to full flower. This man of lawlessness would in God's due time, at Christ's manifestation, be brought to nothing.—2 Thess. 2:1-12.

We can be happy that Paul witnessed to the Christians in Thessalonica about Christ's presence and Jehovah's day. Were it not for their keen absorption with these subjects, Christians since might have been without some very valuable information about these two Christian teachings or doctrines.

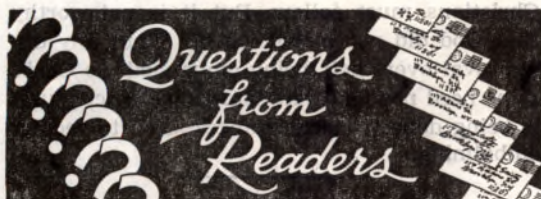
Like those Christians in Thessalonica, Jehovah's people are most interested in Christ's *parousia* or presence at his second coming.* Also, they are deeply interested in the day of Jehovah or Jehovah's day. They know that at the time when world rulers are crying out "Peace and security!"

* Luke, at Acts 17:11, tells that those at Berea were "more noble-minded" than those at Thessalonica because of "carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things"—told them by Paul—"were so." Had the Thessalonians been equally studious, it is possible that they might not have drawn wrong conclusions about Christ's presence and Jehovah's day.

there will follow immediately the tribulation that Jesus mentioned in his great prophecy.—Matt. 24:21, 22; Rev. 7:14.

There is fine admonition for all of us, too, in Paul's words found at 1 Thessalonians 5:13-22: "Be peaceable with one another. . . . Admonish the disorderly, speak

consoling to the depressed souls, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. . . . Always be rejoicing. Pray incessantly. In connection with everything give thanks. . . . Make sure of all things; hold fast to what is fine." May we always be found doing these things!



● Is the embalming of Jacob to be viewed as setting a precedent for Christians to follow, or why was it done?

There is no evidence that Jacob's being embalmed was to be a pattern for true worshipers. Rather, it seems that it was done out of confidence in God's promise to give Abraham's seed a land.

When Jacob died in Egypt his son Joseph had the body embalmed by Egyptian physicians. (Gen. 50:2, 3) Among the ancient Egyptians embalming was customary. They evidently did it because of their belief that the preserved body was necessary so the person's soul could eventually be reunited with it. Of course, neither Jacob nor Joseph accepted the pagan teaching of the immortality of the soul. Both correctly understood that the dead within God's provision go to Sheol, mankind's common grave, from which God will resurrect them in time. (Gen. 37:35; 42:38; Heb. 11:21, 39, 40) Why, then, did Joseph have Jacob embalmed?

Jehovah God had covenanted with Abraham to give his seed or descendants the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. (Gen. 15:16-21) Even before that seed inherited the land Abraham and Isaac were buried there in a family burial cave. But when Jacob neared death he and his family were living in Egypt. Had he lost faith in God's promise, concluding that the Hebrews would reside permanently in Egypt? Not at all. He made Joseph promise to bury him with his fathers in Canaan. Jacob thus

manifested his confidence that God would give Abraham's descendants that land.—Gen. 49:29-33.

To fulfill Jacob's request, Joseph would have to take the body to the land of Canaan. But unless preventative steps were taken, the body would decompose before the long, hot trip was over. However, by drawing on the embalming skills readily available in Egypt, Joseph could preserve the body until his father was buried in the land that Jacob's descendants would inherit.—Gen. 50:2, 3, 7-14.

About fifty-five years later Joseph himself asked that his bones be taken along when God eventually brought the Israelites out of Egypt. Thus Joseph showed that he too was convinced that God would fulfill His promise about giving Abraham's seed a land. Accordingly, Joseph also was embalmed in Egypt, and during the exodus his remains were taken out of that land.—Gen. 50:25, 26; Josh. 24:32; Heb. 11:22.

While Hebrews in later generations considered the burial of a person to be an important act, there is no evidence that they embalmed their dead. (1 Ki. 2:31; 2 Ki. 13:21; Ps. 79:1-3; Jer. 16:4) Rather than employing Egyptian embalming techniques that involved treating the body for weeks,* the Hebrews buried their dead soon after death, even on the same day.—Deut. 21:23; Gen. 50:2, 3.

That is what occurred with Jesus. He was buried on the day he died. What was done to his body before burial? We read: "They took the body of Jesus and bound it up with bandages with the spices, just the way the Jews have the custom of preparing for burial." (John 19:40) And though some disciples came

* Over a period of weeks the Egyptians would use special drugs and soak the body in natron (sodium carbonate) so that the corpse might resist decomposition for years, even centuries.

to his tomb after the sabbath in order to apply externally some more spices to his body, there clearly was no attempt to embalm his body by a long treatment with preservatives as was done in Egypt. That the 'customary preparing for burial' used on Jesus was not a preserving type of embalming can be seen in the case of Lazarus. Though his body likely would have been dealt with in the normal way, his family expected that by the fourth day after death his body would already be decomposing and smelling.—John 11:39.

The early Christians seem to have generally followed the Jewish burial practices. That meant rapid burial without resorting to elaborate embalming procedures. (Acts 5:5-10; 9:37) So there is nothing to indicate that Jacob's descendants or the first Christians looked on the embalming of Jacob or Joseph as setting a precedent for them.

In most parts of the earth today embalming is not part of the normal treatment of the dead. But it may be legally required in certain cases, such as if the body will not be buried

for some days or if it will be transported a long distance. In the United States morticians normally embalm a body even if it is to be buried right away or will be cremated. However, where the law does not require that, the family of the deceased, in order to avoid needless expense or for other personal reasons, may have embalming omitted.

The embalming of Jacob and Joseph, then, need not be looked upon as a pattern that Christians must follow. But it is noteworthy that God did not include in his Word any disapproval over their being embalmed. So Christians need not feel that something unscriptural is being done if circumstances seem to require embalming.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

August 29: What Will You Do in the Face of Satan's Attack? Page 464. Songs to Be Used: 76, 91.

September 5: Manifesting Faith Under Attack. Page 470. Songs to Be Used: 44, 80.

While Hebrews in later generations considered the burial of a person to be an important act, there is no evidence that they embalmed their dead (1 Ki. 2:31; 2 Ki. 13:21; Ps. 79:1-3; Jer. 18:4). Rather than employing Egyptian embalming techniques that involved treating the body for weeks*, the Hebrews buried their dead soon after death, even on the same day.—Deut. 21:23; Gen. 50:2, 3.

That is what occurred with Jesus. He was buried on the day he died. What was done to his body before burial? We read: "They took the body of Jesus and bound it up with bandages with the spices, just the way the Jews have the custom of preparing for burial" (John 19:40). And though some disciples came

When Jacob died in Egypt his son Joseph had the body embalmed by Egyptian physicians. (Gen. 50:2, 3) Among the ancient Egyptians embalming was customary. They evidently did it because of their belief that the preserved body was necessary so the person's soul could eventually be reunited with it. Of course, neither Jacob nor Joseph accepted the pagan teaching of the immortality of the soul. Both correctly understood that the dead within God's provision go to Sheol, mankind's common grave, from which God will resurrect them in time. (Gen. 37:35; 42:38; Heb. 11:31, 39, 40) Why, then, did Joseph have Jacob embalmed? Jehovah God had covenanted with Abraham to give his seed or descendants the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. (Gen. 15:18-21) Even before that seed inherited the land Abraham and Isaac were buried there in a family burial cave. But when Jacob neared death he and his family were living in Egypt. Had he lost faith in God's promise, concluding that the Hebrews would reside permanently in Egypt? Not at all. He made Joseph promise to bury him with his fathers in Canaan. Jacob thus

* Over a period of weeks the Egyptians would use special drugs and soak the body in natron (sodium carbonate) so that the corpse might resist decomposition for years, even centuries.