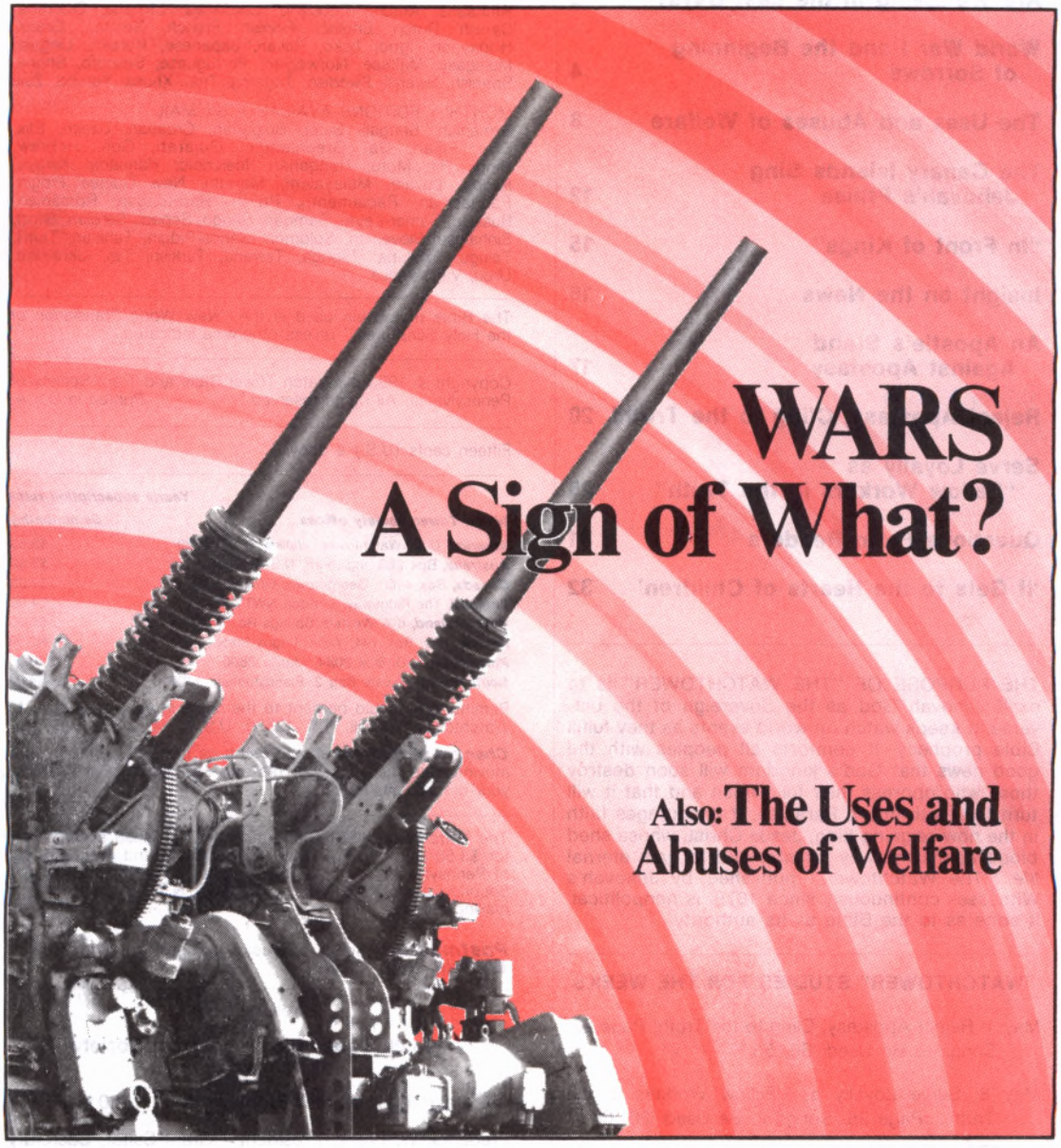
April 1, 1983

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



WARS
A Sign of What?

Also: The Uses and Abuses of Welfare

April 1, 1983
Vol. 104, No. 7

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a Paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning king, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

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Are We Living in the Last Days?

Beginning with this issue, *The Watchtower* is publishing an eight-part series about the last days

WHOSE life has not been touched by war? Who has not felt the aftermath of this century's two world wars —the era of violence, insecurity and fear imposed upon all mankind? Who has escaped the resultant economic hardships, the increasing financial burdens to cover the cost of military campaigns or war preparedness? Whose life is not now endangered by the ever greater threat of nuclear war?

Whether fought in aggression or for defense, for just or unjust causes, war has been the bane of civilization. The cost in human lives alone has been staggering. As calculated by the Norwegian Academy of Sciences in 1969, the world has known only 292 years of peace since 3600 B.C.E., whereas 14,531 wars have been fought.

Our century, particularly since the first world war in 1914, has been called the "age of violence." Concerning it, James Reston wrote in *The New York Times* of May 30, 1982: "This has been the bloodiest century in the history of the human race. It has suffered through 59 wars between nations with over 29 million combat dead, and 64 civil wars with almost six million casualties—not mentioning the tens of millions of civilians slaughtered on the side. This is the meaning of war."

So alarming are the possible consequences of another world war that repeated references have been made by the world's leaders and scientists to Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14, 16) They simply view it as a man-made holocaust, whereas the Bible associates Armageddon with "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." It is his war to rid the earth of wickedness and establish a righteous New Order for peace-loving mankind.

This God-given hope of a righteous New Order has sustained men of faith from ancient times. (Hebrews, chapter

11) These have looked forward eagerly to the time when God would remember them and raise them to everlasting life. (Job 14:13, 14; Psalm 37:29) Those righteous ones trusted in God's power to resurrect them to a cleansed globe where he will be "making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth."—Psalm 46:9.

But they did not know *when* these things would take place. The time when God would take action was simply referred to as "the time of the end" or "the final part of the days." (Daniel 11: 40; Isaiah 2:2) It is no wonder, then, that Jesus' disciples approached him privately to ask: "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"—Matthew 24:3.

The first thing Jesus mentioned that would be an indication of the approaching end was: "You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars." (Matthew 24:6) Could the fact that we are living in "the bloodiest century in the history of the human race" be the fulfillment of this sign that Jesus gave? Are we truly living in the last days?

World War I and the Beginning of Sorrows

FROM earliest times, mankind's history has been one of violence and wars. It was because "the earth became filled with violence" that God brought on the global Deluge in Noah's day. (Genesis 6: 11-13) Thereafter the Bible and secular history record hundreds of wars fought even prior to Jesus' day. So "wars and reports of wars" would not be something new to the world of mankind.

For these "wars and reports of wars" to have meaning for Jesus' disciples they would have to stand out as being different in some way. He went on to explain: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in [various] places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." (Matthew 24: 7, 8, *Authorized Version;* compare Luke 21:10, 11.) So it would not be a case of just hearing of an isolated war here and there. This feature of the sign would take in many nations and kingdoms. It would be total war!

Have we seen such war? Yes, we have, and that starting with the generation of 1914. In fact, we have seen *two* such globe-encircling wars within this century. That this type of warfare was indeed something new in the annals of human history is attested to by the titles given them by historians. The first was called the *Great* War. Later this was changed to the *first* world war, and its successor was named the *second* world war. World war became a feature starting from the year 1914.

Unparalleled Sorrows

True to Jesus' prediction, World War I marked a "beginning of sorrows." As

the publishers of the book *The End of Order* have stated on the book's jacket: "The first world war and the Versailles Treaty that followed produced the most serious upheaval in the long and stormy course of modern world history. . . . Far from restoring the world to order, the diplomats who met in 1919 at Paris and at Versailles plunged the world again, this time irretrievably, into the chaos of the twentieth century. It was the end of order."

Inside the book, author Charles L. Mee, Jr., goes on to explain: "At the end of the Great War, however, the diplomats confronted a world in fragments, a world that seemed to be in the midst of a massive psychic breakdown, of a breakdown of old combinations of states and of empires, of the disintegration of economic orders, of nineteenth-century capitalism, of the eruption of sudden disaster, of riots and assassinations, of tyranny and disorder, of frivolity and despair, exhilaration and dread on such an order of magnitude as to numb the mind. . . . Far from restoring order to the world, they took the chaos of the Great War, and . . . sealed it as the permanent condition of our century."

Those sorrows—the human death and suffering that began with the first world war—are unparalleled in human history. Modern mechanized warfare—tanks, machine guns, airplanes and submarines—as well as the invention and use of poison gases in warfare—wreaked havoc on the world. "A generation had been decimated on the battlefields of Europe," says the book *The End of Order*. "No one had seen the likes of such slaughter before: the deaths of soldiers per day were

"At least 10 per cent of deaths in modern civilization can be attributed directly or indirectly to war"

10 times greater than in the American Civil War, 24 times the deaths in the Napoleonic Wars, 550 times the deaths in the Boer War."

Yet, said Jesus, this would be but a "beginning of sorrows," or "of pangs of distress." Other translations render Jesus' words as "the beginning of the birth-pangs." (*Jerusalem Bible;* Phillips' *New Testament in Modern English*) A woman about to give birth experiences pains that occur with increasing severity, frequency and duration. World War I and its accompanying sorrows were but a start of pangs of distress.

World Distress Increases

Other and more intense pangs were soon to follow with the coming of World War II. "The total deaths from military action and war-distributed disease attributable to World War I have been estimated as over forty million and those attributable to World War II as over sixty million," writes Quincy Wright in the book *A Study of War*. "At least 10 per cent of deaths in modern civilization can be attributed directly or indirectly to war."

Civilian deaths were exceptionally high in the second world war. As Professor Wright explains: "Starvation, bombardment, confiscation of property, and terrorization involving the destruction of entire cities were applied in World War II against the entire enemy population and territory. . . . The entire life of the enemy state came to be an object of attack. The doctrine of conquest was even extended by some states to the elimination of a population and its property rights in order to open the space it occupied for settlement."

The distress caused by the fire bombings of Dresden and Tokyo in 1945, which resulted in 235,000 deaths, was eclipsed by the horrors unleashed a few months later by the two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What used to take tens of thousands of bombs to accomplish, in terms of lives lost, could now be accomplished by only one bomb. But even more devastating were the deadly effects of the radiation poisoning, which continue until our day.

Writing about just the one atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, *World Press Review* of June 1982 states: "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse had been turned loose. The lucky ones were those who died in the first onslaught —about 100,000 men, women, schoolchildren, round-faced toddlers, and newborn babies. Most of the additional 100,000 casualties would die in agony from ruptured organs, horrendous burns, or the slow hell of radiation sickness." The pangs of distress were getting stronger.

Peace Taken From Earth

The reference to the "Horsemen of the Apocalypse" is interesting in that it is based on the Bible account given in the 6th chapter of the book of Revelation.

Over 130 international and civil wars have been fought since the end of World War II

Here, verse 4 reads: "And another came forth, a fiery-colored horse; and to the one seated upon it there was granted to take peace away from the earth so that they should slaughter one another; and a great sword was given him." How well this matches that feature of the sign Jesus gave of nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom!

Peace has indeed been taken away from the earth. While historians have recorded years of peace prior to 1914, there have been none since. Men hoped in vain that the last world war would usher in an era of peace. Says the book *The Violent Peace:* "The peace that came in 1945 did not mean, as we had hoped, the end of war. Men have fought since then in almost every corner of the globe —from Greece to South Vietnam, from Kashmir to the Congo—and insurrections sprout like mushrooms in the poor nations of the world."

The U.S. State Department reported recently that there have been at least 130 international and civil wars since the end of World War II. "About 701,600,000 of the world's people are involved in wars of one kind or another," reports the *Toronto Star* of June 13, 1982. "That's about one person in six across the face of the globe and a figure that falls not far short of the numbers directly involved in World War II. About 250,000 combatants and up to 2,000,000 civilians are dying in these [wars] every year."

"Wars and reports of wars" continue unabated. As the book *The Violent Peace* states: "Since [1945] men no longer declare war or make an end to war. They simply war. Ours is an era of mass violence that goes by the name of peace."

Will there be another global pang of distress in the form of a third world war? "We are living in a pre-war and not a post-war world," says Eugene Rostow, director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency of the United States. Surely the nations are prepared for such a conflict! Currently they are spending about $1,000,000 *each minute* on armaments. Of the $550 billion spent on war preparations in 1981, about $110 billion was spent on nuclear weapons. Stockpiles of nuclear weapons are now equivalent in destructive power to one million of the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima. Peace has certainly been taken away from the earth.—Revelation 6:4.

The evidence regarding war in our modern times points to this conclusion: We are indeed living in the "last days" of this present system of things.

Yet Jesus did not stop with just the mention of worldwide war. He mentioned a number of features of the sign that, occurring together, would prove conclusively that we are living at the time of his "presence and of the conclusion of the system of things."

These other features of the sign will be discussed in succeeding issues of this magazine.—Matthew 24:3-12; Luke 21: 7-11.

The Uses and Abuses of Welfare

IMAGINE a country where countless men, women and children die because of malnutrition; where multitudes wander from place to place without homes or work; where hundreds of thousands live in sprawling shantytowns, inhabiting "homes" made of boxes or rusty car bodies; where beggars stay alive by stealing or by foraging scraps from garbage cans.

No, this is not some poverty-stricken Asian or African land. This is the United States of America, 50 years ago during the Great Depression. At that time millions in both Europe and the United States were desperately poor, with little hope of improving their situation. It was to prevent the return of such poverty that many governments established public welfare.

Today, working people in many industrial lands experience relative financial security because of government programs for financial help. In some places they receive grants, such as allowances for each child. They may pay taxes that give them the right to claim benefits to help tide them over periods of unemployment, cover medical bills or give them pensions when they retire. In these lands, if citizens suffer hardship, public assistance is often available to help them survive.

All such programs are very humane. Nevertheless, they have led to problems. Some people are bitter because they suspect that their taxes are being used to support people who could work for a living if they so wanted. Others feel it is undignified to accept handouts. How should a Christian view welfare? Is it proper to accept it? Are there any dangers?

Guidance From the Bible

About 3,000 years ago two widows named Naomi and Ruth moved into the town of Bethlehem in Judah. They were destitute, but they did not starve. Why not? Because the law of that land made special provision for the sustenance of the poor, especially for widows and orphans.—Deuteronomy 26:12, 13.

In the days of the Christian apostles, the poor were often assisted through the Christian congregation. For example, the apostle Paul wrote the elder Timothy a letter that included instructions to give a regular allowance to elderly widows who had no family to look after them. —1 Timothy 5:3-16.

Today, that ancient Law of Israel and the letter the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy are both part of the Holy Bible. Hence, the Bible encourages the principle of giving help to the needy. In fact, Christians in a position to do so are *obligated* to help their poor brothers. —1 John 3:17.

What, though, when the state has programs for financially assisting its citizens? A Christian can cooperate with this. All Christians are obliged to pay "to him who calls for the tax, the tax; to him who calls for the tribute, the tribute." (Romans 13:7) This would include all the

taxes that are earmarked to be used for state benefits.

By the same token, it is proper to accept any of these benefits to which we are *legally* entitled because of present circumstances. The apostle Paul said that governments are "God's minister to you for your good." (Romans 13:4) So any grants, any help in the way of pension plans or medical insurance, even public assistance because of poverty, can all be properly accepted by a Christian who honestly qualifies. However, problems may arise.

A Conscientious Decision

Consider the situation of a young man who has chosen a career as a full-time preacher. Since this is unpaid, voluntary work, he takes a part-time job to support himself. It may happen that because the only available part-time employment gives him an income below a certain figure, he qualifies for government benefits. Should he apply for them?

Well, he is not avoiding work. He is making an effort to support himself in an honorable way. As long as the authorities fully understand his situation and agree that he qualifies, there may be no reason for his refusing to accept any supplementary benefits that are available. It is not shameful to accept such assistance. In the United States, even some who work in the military receive it.

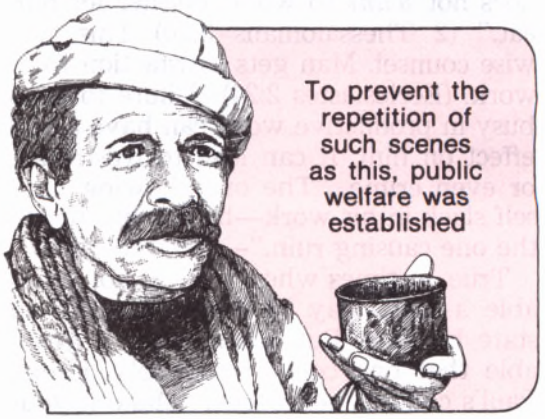
However, in some localities people are sensitive on the subject of government assistance. In such places a situation like this could offend the local community. Hence, the Christian will want to give careful thought to the situation.

Remember the apostle Paul. While he was in Corinth and in Thessalonica, he refused financial help from the congregations, even though he had a right to ask for it. Why? To avoid causing problems for his fellow Christians there. (2 Corinthians 11:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8, 9) However, in other places he evidently did accept help.—1 Corinthians 9:6, 9.

Other situations that some have taken offense at involve women who do not have husbands to help them rear their children. Should they go out to work or should they seek government benefits?

Surely, this is up to the individual woman to decide. After all, it is *her* children who are involved. In one case, a mother may feel fully justified in taking advantage of government financial assistance that enables her to be with her young children all the time. Another, with school-age children, may feel it would be unwise for her not to be home when they return from school each day.

On the other hand, another mother may feel justified in taking a job and leaving her children in someone else's care during the day. Each situation is different, and no one should criticize another for the course she decides to take. Running a home and rearing children are weighty and time-consuming responsibilities, especially for a lone woman. Such single-parent families were viewed as needing special help in the days of the Israelites. Today, each woman should



To prevent the repetition of such scenes as this, public welfare was established

weigh her own financial situation and other circumstances and decide how to handle the situation.—Deuteronomy 24: 19-21; James 1:27.

But sometimes people make decisions that are clearly wrong.

The Temptations of State Assistance

For example, in some lands, when a man loses his job, his unemployment compensation can be as high as 80 percent of what he was earning at work. A man receiving such benefits may wonder, What is the point of looking for another job? A Christian may even see advantages in not getting work. He does not have to listen to bad language and can avoid the bad associations that are often a problem in secular work.

Is such reasoning correct? Not really. First, it overlooks the fact that unemployment assistance is usually paid on the understanding that a man is looking for work. If he is not, then deceit may be involved. Then again, money for such benefits comes from other people's taxes. In other words, other people are working to support his family. Is this a situation an able-bodied Christian would be happy with?—Matthew 7:12.

When Paul wrote to the congregation in Thessalonica, he spoke of some who were not working and said: "If anyone does not *want* to work, neither let him eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10) This was wise counsel. Man gets satisfaction from work. (Ecclesiastes 2:24) Failure to keep busy in productive work can have a bad effect on him. It can lead to frustration or even crime. "The one showing himself slack in his work—he is a brother to the one causing ruin."—Proverbs 18:9.

True, at times when work is not available a man may be forced to rely on state benefits. But when work is available that one could reasonably accept, Paul's counsel holds true: "Make it your aim to live quietly and to mind your own business and *work with your hands,* just as we ordered you; so that you may be walking decently as regards people outside."—1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12.

But could not a Christian receiving government assistance instead of having a full-time job engage in more Christian activity? Perhaps so. But what effect could this have on others? Paul associates "work with your hands" with "walking decently as regards people outside." Those who *avoid* work are not respected. Their bad reputation is likely to counteract any good they accomplish in other ways.—1 Timothy 3:7.

The lure of available state financial assistance can lead to other problems. Not long ago a man immigrated to a country with such benefits and applied for unemployment assistance. In his application he concealed the fact that he owned property in his home country—a fact that would have made him ineligible for benefits. Hence, he got money from the state by concealing the truth.

Deception may be practiced in many ways. To claim financial assistance a wife may tell the authorities that her husband has deserted her. But the husband may still be at home with her. A couple may get a divorce—but keep on living together—in order to get more benefits. Single women have been known to have children illegitimately in order to get increased help. Or it may be that a person is qualified to receive certain benefits, but the situation may change. He may get a job, for example. But by failing to report the change, he continues to draw financial help from the state.

These are typical abuses of the welfare system. By concealing facts, telling outright lies or in some other way violating Christian principles, it is sometimes possible to deceive the authorities and get extra money. But the Bible warns:

"The devious person is a detestable thing to Jehovah, but His intimacy is with the upright ones." It also states: "The getting of treasures by a false tongue is an exhalation driven away, in the case of those seeking death." (Proverbs 3:32; 21:6) No Christian would want to be detestable in Jehovah's eyes, just for financial gain.

But another danger in this matter has to be guarded against.

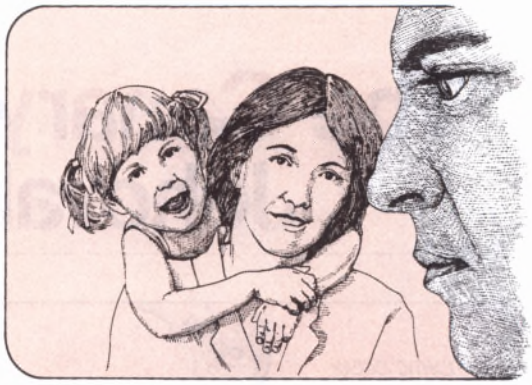
Welfare Oriented

People who know that state benefits are available can be irresponsible. They can come to rely on the state to shoulder responsibilities that the Bible says should be handled by individuals. In some cases they grew up under circumstances where such thinking prevailed. Perhaps several generations have been raised on public assistance, and it is difficult for them to imagine any other way of life.

However, a state's arrangements to give financial help do *not* relieve a Christian of his God-given responsibilities. Paul said: "If anyone does not provide for . . . those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." (1 Timothy 5:8) If, in some lands, the state helps the head of a household a little to care for his family—by means of pensions for the elderly, family allowances and similar provisions—he can be grateful for the provision. But caring for his family is still *his* responsibility.

Similarly, the apostle John said that it is a Christian's responsibility to help his poorer brothers. (1 John 3:17) True, in some lands the state may make some material provision for the poor. But the Christian obligation to help is still there. A Christian should continue to be alert to give material and spiritual aid to those who are truly in need.

Yes, such governmental arrangements to provide financial benefits are a humane provision of "Caesar." If they did not exist, Christian congregations would probably have to do far more in this regard than they do at present. Nevertheless, a Christian should not abuse the provisions. He should not lie, conceal the truth or in any other way compromise Christian standards. And he should not rely on the state to care for his God-given responsibilities.

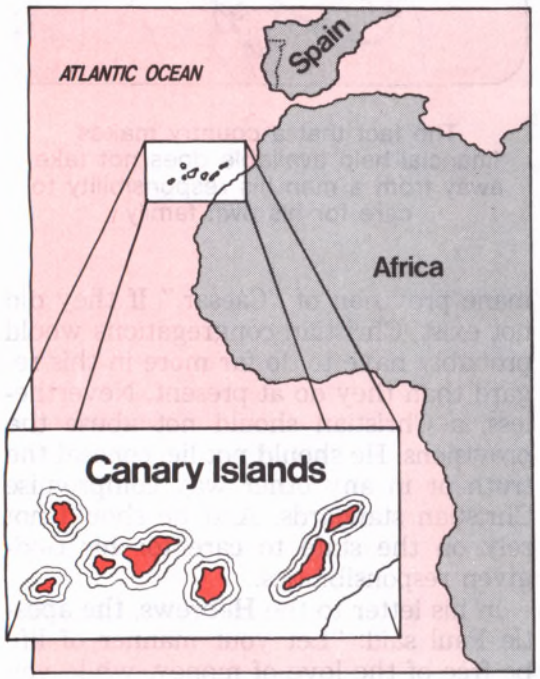


The fact that a country makes financial help available does not take away from a man his responsibility to care for his own family

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul said: "Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things. For [Jehovah] has said: 'I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5) He also encouraged the Corinthians to do "all things for God's glory."—1 Corinthians 10:31.

What fine principles are stressed there! Avoid the love of money. Rely on Jehovah for all things, while accepting from the state those benefits to which we may be lawfully entitled. In *everything* we do, consider the effect on God's name. If we keep these three principles well in mind, we will be helped to have a right view of welfare.

The Canary Islands Sing Jehovah's Praise



CAN you imagine a small group of islands capable of evoking in one visit the image of the planet Mars, a paradise and the Sahara Desert? Such are the Spanish Canary Islands that lie just off the Moroccan coast in northwest Africa.

Jehovah's Witnesses have been organized there since 1958, when the first Bible study meeting was held in the city of Las Palmas with an attendance of six. The waters of truth have flowed freely over the last 24 years, and congregations have sprung up everywhere. On April 8, 1982, the total attendance at the Memorial for these islands was 4,357.

Let us take you on a swift journey through this archipelago and see the fruitage that Jehovah has given.—1 Corinthians 3:6, 7.

Lanzarote—An Island From Outer Space?

As our jet plane brings the island into view an awesome sight meets us. Stretched out before us is a panorama of stark volcanic cones and collapsed craters. Red, black and ocher are the predominant colors. We begin to wonder whether we are going to land on our planet Earth or on Mars.

Once down on land, two facts strike us—the lack of trees and the utter barrenness of the terrain. It seldom rains, so water is in short supply. The local farmers struggle to eke out a living from the parched lava by burrowing out hundreds of hollows to protect single vines. Somehow these manage to produce a precious crop of grapes.

Jehovah's Witnesses on the island have shown the same tenacity in producing fruitage of praise to God. One such example is Juan Cabrera Medina and his wife, Benedicta. They had their first contact with the Witnesses in the early 1970's. Juan relates:

"I had always been a practicing Catholic, so much so that the local priest was a friend of the family. Then one day a friend of mine asked me to help him refute the Witnesses who were visiting

him. I thought that would be easy, but the first conversation soon put me right on that. With his Bible in his hand, Manuel Sosa, the special pioneer minister, discreetly exposed my ignorance. I did not even know God's name. The outcome was that I started to study the Bible with the Witnesses.

"A few days later my 'friend' the priest came around to see me. He visited me for eight consecutive nights in an attempt to dissuade me from studying the Bible. When that failed he resorted to applying coercion at my place of work. I was threatened with losing my job, but all to no avail. I stood my ground."

As a result of Juan's tenacious stand for the truth, five members of his family are now Witnesses. They associate with the Arrecife Congregation that had an attendance of 111 persons at the 1982 Memorial. For an island of 50,000 inhabitants, that is good fruitage.

Fuerteventura, the Island Sahara

If Lanzarote made us think of another planet, Fuerteventura reminds us of another continent—Africa and the Sahara Desert.

For the past six years Vicente Bueno, from Zaragoza, Spain, and his Puerto Rican wife, Abigail, have been serving as special pioneer ministers on this island. Vicente explains a special feature of their missionary field:

"Our territory includes thousands of soldiers that form the Spanish Legion. Back in 1977 we met Máximo López, a sergeant musician in the Legion. He asked for a Bible and the textbook *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. His wife was not too favorable, and on the next visit we expected problems from her. To our surprise we were invited in and got involved in a Bible discussion that lasted until four o'clock in the morning.

"As a result of the weekly Bible study we held with them, they decided they wanted to get baptized at the International Convention in Barcelona in August 1978. However, there was still one obstacle. Although he had requested his discharge from the army the order had not come through. Nevertheless, I went through the preparatory questions for baptism with them just in case the discharge should arrive in time. It came the day before the convention was due to start! They made it to Barcelona in time to be baptized.

"At present we have a small congregation of 19 publishers of the good news. It was a joy to share the Memorial celebration with a total of 69 persons. In this desertlike island we now have a solid spiritual oasis."

Grand Canary, a Continent in Miniature

From the air Grand Canary island seems to be divided into two distinct zones—the fertile green north, with its abundant banana plantations and lofty trees, and the rugged terrain of the arid south that tails off into the sand dunes of Maspalomas. Little wonder the island is often called a continent in miniature.

The preaching activity here has something of an ancient Middle Eastern flavor about it, especially in the rural areas where people are generally hospitable to strangers. They may not accept your religion, but they will kindly offer you some refreshment.

One day in 1978, Yajaira Arias, a pleasant-natured Venezuelan sister, called at a house and was met by the teenage daughter, Julia Rosa. Julia had recently been deeply disillusioned by the local parish priest who had failed to answer her questions. Yajaira's visit seemed like an answer to her prayers for help. Having her questions answered from the

Bible, Julia eagerly awaited the promised return visit to learn more. She says this about it:

"I was so impressed to receive a warm friendly greeting from Yajaira, since I was in need of genuine friendship. That same morning I learned God's name, Jehovah, for the first time. What a revelation for me after having prayed so many times 'Let your name be sanctified'! From then on I started to study the Bible carefully with the aid of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life.* In May 1979 I was baptized in symbol of my dedication to Jehovah. My search for the true God had been rewarded."

By 1970, when the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was given legal recognition in Spain, there were some 175 Witnesses preaching on Grand Canary. Now they have grown to 839, in 14 congregations.

Tenerife, the Island Paradise

As we sweep in to land at the Reina Sofia airport our gaze is caught by the lofty Teide Mountain, its white volcanic head poking up through the clouds. At 3,717 meters (12,195 ft), it is Spain's highest peak.

On the north coast of Tenerife, beyond the lush banana plantations of Orotava, lies the town of Icod de los Vinos. José Ramírez and his wife, Antonia, have preached in this area for several years. He says this of the reaction to the Witnesses' preaching work among the island's inhabitants:

"Although these folk are basically kind and peaceful, if the clergy sow hatred we sometimes get trouble. For example, a few years ago, preaching from house to house in the San Pedro Daute area, we came across Ester Alonso, who showed interest in the Bible. Eventually her husband also started to study the Bible. This only served to provoke worse opposition from their family and friends. The neighbors who had always supplied them with water now refused to do so. That meant that Ester had to go down to the local public fountain to do her washing.

"One day she had to leave her washing unattended. When she returned she found that someone had deliberately soiled it. Why this unchristian attitude? Because the local priest had distributed booklets against the Witnesses and had criticized them in his sermons.

"Ester was not easily beaten and she courageously kept up her fight for true worship. Now five baptized persons have resulted from that small area and various relatives are also studying the Bible."

In the capital city of Santa Cruz there are now four congregations. The island is covered by a total of 774 active Witnesses, in 15 congregations.

La Gomera, La Palma and Hierro —Island Outposts of Truth

Columbus used La Gomera as his last point for taking on supplies before heading across the Atlantic for unknown shores. The first time that Jehovah's Witnesses landed on this mountainous isle was in 1972, with the arrival of Gary Nelson from the United States and Hasse Stenberg from Sweden. They quickly sought cheap lodging, explaining to the family that they were missionaries.

"What kind of missionaries?" they were asked.

"Jehovah's Witnesses."

With that, one of the daughters entered the house and returned with several Watch Tower publications. "We have these, but we do not understand them. Can you help us?" Gary and Hasse did not need a second invitation! Gary eventually married that daughter and they are both in full-time service in Tenerife.

La Palma, *la isla bonita,* the pretty island, is endowed with an abundant wa-

ter supply. The overall impression is that of a mountainous but fertile and verdant paradise. There are two congregations of Witnesses, one on the west coast at Los Llanos de Aridane and the other on the east at Santa Cruz de la Palma. Between them they cover a population of 66,000 inhabitants. For the Memorial this year they had an attendance of 113.

Our last port of call is Hierro, the most westerly of the islands. For centuries navigators considered it to be the edge of the world. Blighted by water shortage, it supports a sparse population of 7,000 persons, isolated from the problems of modern civilization. Back in 1973 the previously mentioned Gary and Hasse were the first Witnesses to set foot there. Now the preaching work is cared for by 70-year-old Trinidad Vidal, who moved there from Malaga, Spain, four years ago.

Just in case you are wondering—the Canary Islands were not named after the wild canaries but after the wild dogs that were found there 2,000 years ago. Thus Pliny the Elder wrote of "Canaria [from Latin *canis,* dog], so called from the multitude of dogs of great size." Regardless of dogs or birds, however, Jehovah's praises are being sung throughout the Canary Islands by Jehovah's Witnesses who are urgently announcing God's Kingdom by Christ.—Matthew 6:9; 24:14.

"In Front of Kings"

"I will also speak about your reminders in front of kings," sang the inspired psalmist. (Psalm 119:46) Since the "good news of the kingdom" concerns a heavenly government, today, too, "kings" or rulers should hear God's reminders. (Matthew 24:14) Do they? Yes. The following report from an English ex-missionary shows how one world statesman heard:

"One day in the late 1940's, I was preaching from house to house in Kent. I was speaking with a man in a farm cottage when a visitor arrived. It was Sir Winston Churchill. My conversation was interrupted, but Sir Winston took note of *The Watchtower* and commended me for my work.

"Several days later I was again out preaching when I rang the doorbell of a large house. A butler opened the door and, when I requested to speak to the man of the house, asked if I knew who that was. I had no idea. 'This is Chartwell,' he said, 'the home of Sir Winston Churchill.' At that moment, Sir Winston appeared. He remembered our previous meeting and invited me in. We spoke a little, he accepted three books and invited me to return.

"Two weeks later, on a warm afternoon, I returned and was invited in again. Sir Winston offered me some lemonade and, after a brief greeting, said: 'I will give you half an hour to tell me what you think God's Kingdom is, but then you must let me tell you what I believe it to be.' That is what we did. He felt God's Kingdom would be established through God-fearing statesmen, and that until men learned to live at peace it would never come. I was able to explain the Bible's view of God's Kingdom and the blessings it would bring. Sir Winston was very cordial and indicated he respected our work.

"Unfortunately, I was never again able to contact him. But it was a blessing for a young man of 17 to be used to witness to him even that one time."

Insight on the News

Justice for the Victim

"One of our biggest problems in criminal law is restitution for the victims," said Judge Michael Beal of North Carolina, U.S.A. As anyone who has ever been burglarized, mugged, robbed or otherwise vandalized knows, not only is the victim seldom repaid for his losses but he, in effect, has to pay through taxes for the maintenance of the criminals if they are sent to jail. Such is the state of criminal justice.

Now, according to *The New York Times,* a program to redress this problem is being tried in North Carolina. Rather than being sent to jail or reform school, juvenile offenders are sent on Saturdays and holidays to work on farms, plowing fields or chopping wood. The major part of the offender's wage goes to the victim, but a small portion is set aside in a contingency fund, which he receives after the victim has been repaid in full. In its first year, the program took in 34 boys, 10 to 15 years of age. All but one, who moved away, repaid their victims in full. Justice for the victim, at last!

Such justice, however, was a built-in part of the Law that God gave to the nation of Israel. In cases of theft or property damage, the Law required that if the offender could not repay the victim the stipulated amount, he could be sold as a slave, thus reimbursing the victim and making the criminal work for his own upkeep. (Exodus 22:1-6) These laws reflect the justice and wisdom of the perfect "Judge," "Statute-Giver" and "King," Jehovah God.—Isaiah 33:22.

Science or Fiction?

Interest in extraterrestrial life has gained a tremendous popular following in recent years owing, in no small measure, to space travel, science fiction and the movie industry. Indeed, the two most popular motion pictures in history —*Star Wars* and *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*—are both on this subject. At the same time, costly scientific projects are going on in real earnest to find life and/or intelligence in outer space. The result is that for many people, especially the young, it is becoming increasingly harder to tell where science ends and where fiction begins. The existence of extraterrestrials and the possibility of communicating with and being influenced by them have crept into people's consciousness subtly through the back door, as it were.

Commenting on this phenomenon, Jack Catran, a scientist in the space industry, writes in a *Newsweek* magazine article entitled "E.A. = Enough Already": "Writers and moviemakers have the right to speculate on any scientific subject, but let's call it what it is: science fiction, not science. And let's label their objectives what they are: exploitation and sales, not education." Surely, the Bible's advice to distinguish between facts and what is "falsely called 'knowledge' " is the course of wisdom. —1 Timothy 6:20.

Today's Evangelizers

Last December the NCCB (National Conference of Catholic Bishops) voted to terminate its five-year-old program and committee for promoting evangelizing work. "Spreading the 'good news' is no longer a national priority for the bishops' conference," says the *National Catholic Reporter.* "It has been fobbed off to the local level and to happenstance."

But why has the NCCB abandoned its evangelization effort? "The time is not yet when most Catholics accept they are called upon to evangelize as a natural component of their faith," says the *Reporter,* adding that "there was no great awareness that evangelizing was the one great overriding activity into which everything the church was doing should fit."

What a contrast this is to the burning evangelizing spirit of the first-century Christians! Even opposers were moved to say: "Look! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." (Acts 5:28) Rather than leaving it "to happenstance," the apostle Paul declared: "For a necessity lieth upon me: for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."—1 Corinthians 9:16, Catholic *Douay Version.*

Today, in response to Jesus' words at Matthew 24:14 and 28: 19, 20, Jehovah's Witnesses have indeed made preaching the good news of God's Kingdom "the one great overriding activity" in their life. Theirs is a worldwide evangelizing organization.

An Apostle's Stand Against Apostasy

To derive the maximum benefit from this article, we recommend that you read the Bible book known as *The First of John*. It is just a few pages.

TOWARD the close of the first century of our Common Era, a grave and insidious danger threatened the early Christian congregation. Was it persecution from those outside the Christian community? No, the principal danger came from within. The lurking enemy was apostasy.

By the year 98 C.E. one apostle remained to act as a final bulwark against what would later prove to be a tidal flood of false teachings and religious and political compromise. He was the elderly apostle John, son of Zebedee and brother of the apostle James, martyred some 54 years earlier. As a young man, John had served alongside Jesus during that one's brief earthly ministry. Perhaps due to John's dynamic personality Jesus called him a 'Son of Thunder.' Now a very old man, he put himself to writing a vigorous letter of warning and counsel to the Christian congregations. What he says is still vital for us today.—Mark 3: 17; Luke 9:51-56.

John was well aware that apostasy was creeping in among his fellow believers. The apostle Paul had previously foretold such a falling away. (Acts 20:29, 30) In no uncertain terms John unmasked the deceivers, saying: "Even now there have come to be many antichrists; from which fact we gain the knowledge that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us." The fact that John speaks of "antichrists" in the plural shows that the apostasy was not limited to one person, but it involved many who denied the view of Christ that is presented in Scripture.—1 John 2:18, 19.

Who were those antichrists? And how were they trying to deceive their fellow believers? John minces no words in exposing the antichrist apostates. He attacks them on three scores: (1) denying that Christ came in the flesh, (2) denying that Jesus was the Christ and the Son of God and (3) denying that they themselves were sinners.

Did Christ Come in the Flesh?

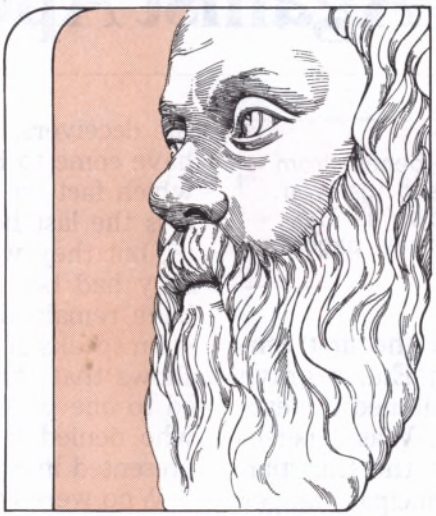
But you might ask, 'How could some believers deny that Jesus had come in the flesh?' Evidently by the end of the first century some Christians had been affected by Greek philosophy, including early Gnosticism. These apostates held the view that all material things were evil, including the fleshly body. Thus, to the apostate antichrists, Jesus had not come in evil flesh but, rather, as a spirit. John clearly shows that he is no party to such theological reasonings that denied the efficacy of Christ's ransom sacrifice. Thus he writes of "Jesus Christ, a righteous one" who was "a propitiatory

sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's." —1 John 2:1, 2.

Later, with a simple and categorical definition, John clarifies the issue even further, saying: "Every inspired expression that confesses Jesus Christ *as having come in the flesh* originates with God, but every inspired expression that does not confess Jesus does not originate with God." —1 John 4:2, 3.

Jesus Not the Christ?

It appears that some other professing Christians of Jewish origin had begun to deny that Jesus was the Christ and the Son of God. John decries such lack of faith, saying: "Who is the liar if it is not the one that denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one that denies the Father and the Son." (1 John 2:22) John's forthright expressions leave no room for doubters.



Greek philosophy led to apostasy

John later raises another question to buttress his reasoning: "Who is the one that conquers the world but he who has faith that *Jesus is the Son of God?* . . . I write you these things that you may know that you have life everlasting, you who put your faith in the name of the Son of God."—1 John 5:5, 13.

Are We Sinners?

Incredible as it may seem, some of the antichrists were saying that they were without sin or perhaps (since they considered themselves saved) thought they were incapable of sinning. Therefore John hammers away at this fallacy throughout his letter. For instance, he says: "If we make the statement: 'We have no sin,' we are misleading ourselves and the truth is not in us. . . . If we make the statement: 'We have not sinned,' we are making him [God] a liar, and his word is not in us."—1 John 1:8-10.

'But what is sin?' you might ask. The Greek word *ha·mar·ti'a* literally means a "missing of the target." But under inspiration John gives a broader definition: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, and so sin is lawlessness [Greek, *anomia,* denoting contempt for and violation of the law, iniquity, wickedness] . . . He who carries on sin originates with the Devil . . . Everyone who has been born from God does not carry on sin."—1 John 3:4, 8, 9.

True, we are all sinners. But John is interested in denouncing the *deliberate* sinner or violator of law, the one "who carries on sin," who *practices* it. Later, he exposes the gravity of the situation for the practicer of sin by stating: "The children of God and the children of the Devil are evident by this fact: Everyone who does not carry on righteousness does not originate with God, neither does he who does not love his brother." (1 John 3:10; 5:18) May we, therefore, avoid the unchristian practicing of sin.

What Motivated the Apostasy?

What was perhaps the underlying motivation behind these different apostate teachings? One possibility is supplied by William Barclay, a 20th-century Greek scholar, who writes that the trouble John seeks to combat came from men "whose aim was to make Christianity intellectually respectable . . . , who knew the intellectual tendencies and currents of the day, and who wished to express Christianity in terms of these current philosophical ideas. It came from men who felt that the time had come for Christianity to come to terms with secular philosophy and with contemporary thought."

A similar viewpoint, attacking the true faith at its foundations, has been sustained by some in modern times. These disputers want to dilute Christian teaching and make it more acceptable to the respected and intellectual elements of this system. If such views held by some in recent years had been implemented, Jehovah's Witnesses would certainly have lost their unique "primitive Christian" qualities and vitality.

Therefore, John's counsel is so timely even today: "For this is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." Those commandments include preaching the good news of God's Kingdom and keeping separate from the world and neutral in its conflicts, while doing our utmost to sanctify Jehovah's name and practice true love. —1 John 5:3; Mark 13:10; John 17:16; Matthew 6:9; 1 John 3:23.

Antidotes for Sin and Apostasy

Is there a restraining brake against practicing sin? John's answer is: "He that does not love has not come to know God, BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE." Thus, with striking simplicity, John drives home his point. Love is the key. And God's love expressed through his Son is the antidote for sin's effects. "By this the love of God was made manifest in our case, because God sent forth his only-begotten Son into the world that we might gain life through him." How should this knowledge affect us? John answers: "Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another."—1 John 4:8-11.

If we truly love God and neighbor, then we will resist the inroads of sin and apostasy. Love does not willfully go against God's laws and principles. Nevertheless, John warns: "There is a sin that does incur death." Unrepentant apostates would certainly be in the category of those who merit destruction. —1 John 5:16, 17; Matthew 12:31; Luke 12:10; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:23-27.

If sin and apostasy are the dark thread running through John's letter, genuine love is a string of pearls that covers it. Even though his letter carries a somber warning, it is nevertheless clearly illuminated by three recurring themes—love, light and life. John is saying, 'Avoid the liars, the antichrists, the apostates. Cast off darkness, walk in the light. Reject hatred and practice love. Resist sin, knowing that if you do commit a sin you have a helper or advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.' Yes, "this is the witness given, that God gave us everlasting life, and this life is in his Son." —1 John 5:11; 2:1, 2.

In his final counsel John warns: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21) In the world of ancient Rome such counsel was very apt. And to those today who wish to practice true Christianity and avoid apostasy it is still as vital. May we, therefore, heed John's inspired counsel. It will help us to resist sin, practice genuine Christian love, walk in the path of truth and maintain an unflinching stand against apostasy.

Reject Apostasy, Cling to the Truth!

"Everyone that pushes ahead and does not remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God. He that does remain in this teaching is the one that has both the Father and the Son."—2 JOHN 9.

JEHOVAH GOD is the Source of spiritual truth. To him, therefore, the psalmist appropriately prayed: "Send out your light and your truth." (Psalm 43:3) Accordingly, truth is an identifying mark of Jehovah's worshipers.—John 8:31, 32; 17:17.

[2] In an effort to extinguish the light of truth among Jehovah's people, Satan the Devil has at times sought to corrupt the Christian congregation by means of apostate teachings. (2 Corinthians 4:1-6; Jude 3, 4) But he has failed in these attempts because faithful witnesses of Jehovah reject apostasy and cling to spiritual truth. In fact, doing so is vital if we are to maintain a close relationship with Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, for the Christian apostle John was divinely inspired to write: "Everyone that pushes ahead and does not remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God. He that does remain in this teaching is the one that has both the Father and the Son."—2 John 9.

[3] But what should Jehovah's Witnesses do to resist apostasy? And how can they promote Christian interests as "fellow workers in the truth"? (3 John 8) For answers, we will consider the apostle John's second and third inspired letters, written in or near Ephesus, Asia Minor, about 98 C.E.

1, 2. (a) How has Satan at times tried to extinguish the light of truth among Jehovah's people? (b) Why is it vital that Jehovah's Witnesses reject apostasy?

3. What questions will be answered as we consider Second and Third John?

Truth and Love Essential

[4] John opened his second letter with these words:

"The older man to the chosen lady and to her children, whom I truly love, and not I alone, but all those also who have come to know the truth, because of the truth that remains in us, and it will be with us forever."—2 John 1, 2.

[5] By the end of the first century C.E. the apostle John was indeed "the older man," being about 100 years old and also an elder of very ripe spiritual growth or age. (Compare Galatians 2:9.) In addressing "the chosen lady," he may have been referring to a particular congregation in some undisclosed location, and this wording may have been used to confuse persecutors. In that case, her "children" were spiritual children, members of that congregation and spirit-begotten Christians "chosen" by God for the heavenly calling. (Romans 8:16, 17; Philippians 3:12-14) On the other hand, *Kyria* (Greek

4, 5. (a) Why could the apostle John appropriately refer to himself as "the older man"? (b) Who were "the chosen lady" and her "children"?

for "Lady") may have been the name of an individual Christian woman.

[6] In any event, this 'chosen lady and her children' were truly loved by John and all other witnesses of Jehovah who had come to know "the truth." That "truth" was the whole body of teaching that centered on Jesus Christ. Firmly clinging to it was essential for salvation. (John 4:24; Ephesians 1:13, 14; 1 John 3:23) One basic reason why past and present witnesses of Jehovah have love among themselves is that they have a common love for "the truth." It "remains in" them in that it keeps residing in their hearts. This truth will stay with such genuine Christians "forever," as a constant companion. It is, indeed, a cherished possession of Jehovah's Witnesses today, and they thank their heavenly Father for it.

[7] Divine blessings are assured for those who adhere faithfully to "the truth." Pointing this out, the apostle added:

> "There will be with us undeserved kindness, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, with truth and love." (2 John 3)

Undeserved kindness comes from both Jehovah and Jesus in that sinful humans "are being declared righteous by [God's] undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:23, 24) Similarly, the heavenly Father is the Source of *mercy,* but it comes to imperfect humans through Christ. (Hebrews 4:14-16; Jude 20, 21) Additionally, to have *peace* with Jehovah, sinners need to have their transgressions atoned for, and this has been made possible through Jesus' death as a ransom sacrifice.—Colossians 1:18-20.

[8] John added the words *"with* [or, *"in"*] truth and love." (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation*) He may thus have been saying that 'along with truth and love' genuine Christians enjoy undeserved kindness, mercy and peace. Or John could have meant that Jehovah's servants would experience these blessings if they remained in the truth and continued to display love.

'Walking in Truth and Love'

[9] The apostle cited a reason for personal joy and also gave sound admonition when he added:

> "I rejoice very much because I have found certain ones of your children walking in the truth, just as we received commandment from the Father. So now I request you, lady, as a person writing you, not a new commandment, but one which we had from the beginning, that we love one another."—2 John 4, 5.

[10] John had cause for great joy because "certain ones" were "walking in the truth." They had faith in the name of Jesus Christ, had love for one another and were striving to conform to the pattern furnished by God's Son. (Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 John 3:23) If John was writing to a woman named Kyria, then some of her natural children were in the truth. But if he was using "children" and "chosen lady" figuratively, he could rejoice that some members of the congregation at that unrevealed location had resisted apostasy and were clinging to the truth and pursuing a life of faithfulness to Jehovah. Indeed, loyal Christian witnesses of Jehovah have always considered adhering to the truth, or "walking in" it, to be their obligation. To them, this is their heavenly Father's commandment, the keeping of which they do not con-

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6. (a) What is "the truth" to which John made reference? (b) How does "the truth" remain in genuine Christians and stay with them "forever"?
7. How do undeserved kindness, mercy and peace all come from both God and Christ?
8. At 2 John 3, what may have been meant by the words "with truth and love"?
9, 10. (a) Why did John have reason to "rejoice very much"? (b) As regards the truth, what were "certain ones" doing?

sider burdensome.—Compare 1 John 5:3.

[11] The apostle asked the "lady" to observe the commandment "that we love one another." (Compare 1 John 3:11.) Expressing Jehovah's will for godly persons, Jesus had commanded his disciples to 'love one another, just as he loved them.' That commandment required not only neighbor love but also a self-sacrificing love, even to the point of giving one's life in behalf of another. (Leviticus 19: 18; Matthew 22:39; John 10:14, 15; 13:34; 15:13) It had been binding on Christ's followers "from the beginning" of their dedicated relationship with God—in fact, since Jesus first gave it and certainly from the inception of the Christian congregation at Pentecost of 33 C.E. In that sense, therefore, it was "not a new commandment," as John said.

[12] Referring to love, John added:

> "And this is what love means, that we go on walking according to his commandments. This is the commandment, just as you people have heard from the beginning, that you should go on walking in it." (2 John 6)

True worshipers gladly obey Jehovah because they love him with their whole heart, soul, strength and mind. (Luke 10: 27) "From the beginning," that is, from the time of Jesus' ministry or from their dedication to God, the "people" to whom John wrote had had the commandment on love. But what did the apostle mean when he said, "This is the commandment . . . that you should go on walking in *it*"? While "it" could refer to the "commandment" regarding love (*The New English Bible*), the probable reference is to "love" itself. Viewed either way, to "go on walking in it" meant to continue displaying love toward one another. —1 John 3:18; compare Romans 13:8-10.

11. (a) Observing the commandment to "love one another" called for what? (b) Why could John say that this was "not a new commandment"?

12. What did John mean when saying: "This is the commandment . . . that you should go on walking in it"?

Beware of Apostates

[13] Effort would be required to continue walking in love and truth. Explaining why, John wrote:

> "For many deceivers have gone forth into the world, persons not confessing Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist." (2 John 7)

Evidently, some false teachers had been traveling about trying to gain converts among true Christians. (Compare Acts 20: 30.) Though professing to be Christians themselves, these misleading "deceivers" would not acknowledge that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh as a human. Such false teachings would undercut Jesus' role as Messiah and ransomer, including his exalted heavenly position.—Mark 1: 9-11; John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5-11.

[14] John called these apostates "the deceiver and the antichrist" because their teachings were deceptive and they themselves were opposed to Christ. The apostle's reference to "many antichrists" indicates that there were numerous individual enemies of Christ, though all together they may form a composite person designated "antichrist." (1 John 2: 18) Denial of Jesus as the Christ and as God's Son embraces the denying of any or all of the Scriptural teachings concerning him. Faithful witnesses of Jehovah totally reject the views of such false teachers.

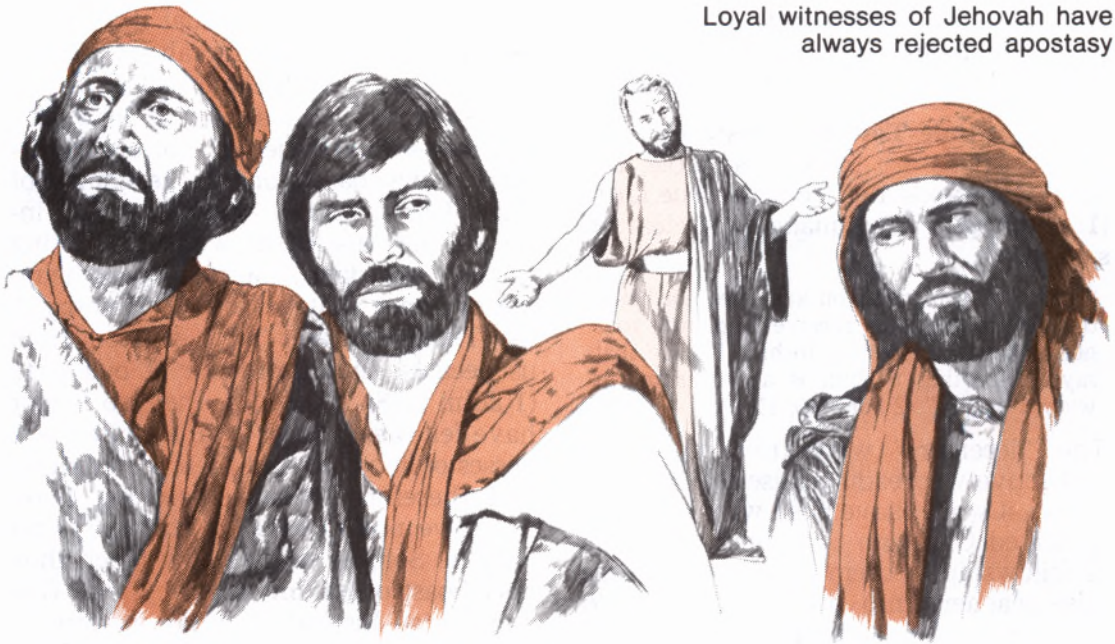
[15] Since there was danger of being

13. (a) Among whom were the "deceivers" trying to gain converts? (b) What false teaching was being spread by the "deceivers"?

14. Why did John call the apostates "the deceiver and the antichrist"?

15. (a) By 'looking out' for themselves, what "full reward" would spirit-anointed Christians obtain? (b) Why should every witness of Jehovah guard against apostate doctrine?

Loyal witnesses of Jehovah have always rejected apostasy



turned aside from the truth to apostasy, John urged:

> "Look out for yourselves, that you do not lose the things we have worked to produce, but that you may obtain a full reward. Everyone that pushes ahead and does not remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God. He that does remain in this teaching is the one that has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 8, 9)

By such labors as preaching the "good news," John and others had 'produced' fruitage resulting in the conversion of this letter's original recipients. But only by 'looking out' for themselves spiritually would they not "lose" undeserved kindness, mercy and peace from Jehovah and his Son, as well as lasting fellowship with all those bound together in truth and love. If faithful, John's spirit-anointed fellow believers would continue to enjoy rewarding service to Jehovah. By speaking of a "full reward," John evidently meant to include the heavenly "crown" received by loyal anointed Christians. (Revelation 2:10; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8; James 1: 12) Of course, every witness of Jehovah should reject apostate doctrine because it can rob him of eternal life either in heaven or on earth.

16 The apostate "deceivers" were 'pushing ahead' and did not "remain in the teaching of the Christ" because they did not stick to the truth taught by Jesus and his faithful apostles. Hence, the heretics did not "have God," for they were not in union with Jehovah and had no relationship with him. (1 John 1:5, 6; 2: 22-25) However, faithful witnesses of Jehovah 'confess that Christ came in the flesh,' for they exercise faith in his ransom sacrifice and stick to what he and his loyal apostles taught. (Matthew 20: 28; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6; 2 John 7) These genuine Christians cling to the truth and therefore have "both the Father and the

16. (a) How were the apostates 'pushing ahead'? (b) How is it that faithful witnesses of Jehovah have "both the Father and the Son"?

Son" because of knowing them, appreciating their qualities and continuing to enjoy an intimate relationship with them.

Attitude Toward Apostates

[17] Christians are to be hospitable, but not toward apostates from the true faith. (1 Peter 4:9) John made this clear in saying:

> "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, never receive him into your homes or say a greeting to him. For he that says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works." (2 John 10, 11)

The "deceivers" were traveling about and actively spreading false teaching. Of course, it would have been wrong for any dedicated Christian to extend the hand of fellowship to them by allowing these false teachers into his home. It would also have been improper to give the apostates any kind of greeting, whether it was welcome on their arrival or "God speed" at their departure. (*Authorized Version*) No loyal Christian would wish a deliberate promoter of false doctrine success in his work. Certainly, then, no faithful witness of Jehovah would socialize with such an individual.—1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

[18] Moreover, if a dedicated servant of Jehovah were to entertain such a deceptive teacher in his home, he would become "an accomplice" in the "wicked deeds" of that person. (*The New English Bible*) Therefore, no loyal modern-day witness of Jehovah would greet a disfellowshipped or disassociated apostate or allow that one to use his Christian home as a place from which to spread doctrinal error. Surely, there would be grave accountability before God if a believer extended hospitality to an apostate and this resulted in the spiritual death of a fellow worshiper of Jehovah.—Compare Romans 16:17, 18; 2 Timothy 3:6, 7.

[19] Some who once served as Jehovah's Witnesses have rejected various Scriptural views based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles. For instance, they insist that we are not living in the "last days," despite overwhelming evidence that we are. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) These apostates 'have gone out from us because they were not of our sort.' (1 John 2:18, 19) Hence, they no longer have fellowship with loyal anointed witnesses of Jehovah and their companions, and therefore these self-seeking heretics have no "sharing" with the Father and the Son, no matter how much they may boast of having intimacy with God and Christ. Instead, they are in spiritual darkness. (1 John 1:3, 6) Lovers of light and truth must take a firm stand against these promoters of false teaching. In no way do loyal witnesses of Jehovah want to be accomplices in the "wicked deeds" of such unfaithful persons by supporting their ungodly words and activities in any manner. Rather, may we "put up a hard fight for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the holy ones." —Jude 3, 4, 19.

17. According to 2 John 10, 11, how were loyal Christians to treat the "deceivers"?

18. Why would no loyal witness of Jehovah even greet an apostate?

19. What stand do loyal witnesses of Jehovah take with regard to modern-day apostates?

Can You Answer?

- What does it mean to 'walk in the truth'?
- The "deceivers" were spreading what false teaching?
- According to 2 John 10, 11, how should Jehovah's Witnesses view apostates?

Cling to the Truth

[20] Having urged fellow believers to reject apostasy and cling to the truth, John concluded his second inspired letter with the words:

> "Although I have many things to write you, I do not desire to do so with paper and ink, but I am hoping to come to you and to speak with you face to face, that your joy may be in full measure. The children of your sister, the chosen one, send you their greetings." (2 John 12, 13)

What the apostle still had in his heart he preferred not to commit to writing. So he put aside the papyrus paper, his reed pen and the ink (likely, a black mixture of gum, soot and water). Despite his advanced age he hoped to visit and talk "face to face," or, literally, "mouth toward mouth," thus enjoying intimate communication. (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation;* compare Numbers 12:6-8.) The aged apostle's visit surely would result in a spiritually rewarding interchange of encouragement, along with abundant delight.—Compare Romans 1: 11, 12.

20. Rather than writing further, what did John hope to do?

[21] The Christian love that binds Jehovah's worshipers together was evident in the greetings John conveyed. If he was writing to an individual named Kyria, she apparently had a fleshly sister whose natural children sent their best wishes. But if the apostle was alluding to another congregation (perhaps at Ephesus), the "sister" he mentioned was that congregation as a whole and the "children" were its individual members.

[22] In his second inspired letter, John had been forthright in giving loving counsel that would help fellow believers to reject apostasy and cling to the truth. With God's help, this is just what Jehovah's Witnesses of today are determined to do. But we must also promote Christian interests as cooperative "fellow workers in the truth." (3 John 8) How is this possible?

21. What was evident in the concluding words of Second John?

22. (a) John's second inspired letter helps Jehovah's Witnesses to do what? (b) What matter *still* requires discussion?

Serve Loyally as "Fellow Workers in the Truth"

"You are doing a faithful work in whatever you do for the brothers . . . We . . . are under obligation to receive such persons hospitably, that we may become fellow workers in the truth."—3 JOHN 5-8.

JEHOVAH is looking for those who will worship him "with spirit and truth." (John 4:23, 24) To meet with his approval, their worship must be consistent with what God has revealed about himself and his purposes. They must also adhere to the entire body of Christian teaching emphasizing Jesus Christ. Continuing to

1. To please Jehovah, what kind of worship must we render to him?

walk in this truth is essential for salvation.—Ephesians 1:13, 14; 1 John 3:23.

[2] Witnesses of Jehovah must continue to walk in the truth. In fact, they must cooperate fully in "sacred service" by loyally promoting Kingdom interests as "fellow workers in the truth." (Romans 12:1; 3 John 5-8; Matthew 6:33) But how can this be done? Very helpful guidance on this appears in the third inspired letter of the apostle John.

Continue Walking in the Truth

[3] The bond of Christian love is evident in the apostle's opening words. He wrote:

> "The older man to Gaius, the beloved, whom I truly love." (3 John 1)

John identified himself as "the older man," apparently because of his advanced age and degree of spiritual growth. Gaius was his cherished Christian friend living at an undisclosed location. John calls him "the beloved," using an affectionate term common among early Christians. —Romans 16:5; 2 Peter 3:1; Jude 3.

[4] John had good reason to love Gaius, for we read:

> "Beloved one, I pray that in all things you may be prospering and having good health, just as your soul is prospering. For I rejoiced very much when brothers came and bore witness to the truth you hold, just as you go on walking in the truth. No greater cause for thankfulness do I have than these things, that I should be hearing that my children go on walking in the truth."—3 John 2-4.

[5] The apostle prayed that Gaius might 'prosper in all things,' both spiritually and materially. John also prayed that his friend might have "good health." This fairly common wish did not necessarily mean that Gaius was then ill. (Compare Acts 15:29.) Here John's use of the word "soul" denotes present life as an intelligent person. And how was Gaius using his life? Faithfully in God's "sacred service."

[6] From spiritual brothers who had come to Ephesus, John had received heartening news that caused him to 'rejoice very much.' The apostle could be joyful because his friend Gaius was faring well spiritually and holding to the truth. (Proverbs 15:30; 25:25) The "brothers" may have been part of the congregation with which Gaius was associated or those who may have gone from Ephesus to visit that congregation, perhaps even carrying an earlier letter the apostle had written to it.—3 John 9.

[7] These brothers 'bore witness to the truth Gaius held.' He had fully accepted the truth as it related to Christ and was abiding by Jehovah's requirements. Gaius was "walking in the truth," *loyally* holding to the entire body of Christian teachings. Indeed, every faithful witness of Jehovah must not only be 'in the truth' but must also walk in it as a way of life. Loyal Christians always conform to "the truth," rejecting apostasy and

2. What question arises, and where will we find helpful guidance?
3. How is the bond of Christian love made evident in the opening words of Third John?
4, 5. (a) What was John's prayerful wish for Gaius? (b) How was Gaius using his life?
6, 7. (a) What reason did John have to 'rejoice very much'? (b) Like Gaius, what must all faithful witnesses of Jehovah do as regards "the truth"?

In Our Next Issue

- **Famine—What Does It Mean?**
- **Where Is the Truth That Can Set Us Free?**
- **How I Cope With Poverty**
- **Drinking—Do You Share the Bible's View?**

Gaius did "a faithful work" in receiving his visiting brothers hospitably

actively serving God "with a complete heart."—2 John 1-4; Isaiah 38:2, 3.

[8] John said he had no greater cause for thankfulness than to hear that his "children" continued "walking in the truth," or, "living by the truth." (*The New English Bible*) The apostle may have become a spiritual father to Gaius by helping him to gain accurate knowledge of the Scriptures. (Compare 1 Corinthians 4:14-17.) But even if John had not introduced this beloved friend to the truth, the apostle's advanced age, degree of Christian growth and fatherly affection for Gaius made it appropriate for the apostle to consider this apparently younger man to be one of his "children."

"Fellow Workers in the Truth"

[9] Gaius had been fulfilling his Christian responsibilities well, and John commended him, saying:

> "Beloved one, you are doing a faithful work in whatever you do for the brothers, and strangers at that, who have borne witness to your love before the congregation. These you will please send on their way in a manner worthy of God. For it was in behalf of his name that they went forth, not taking anything from the people of the nations. We, therefore, are under obligation to receive such persons hospitably, that we may become fellow workers in the truth."—3 John 5-8.

[10] Gaius was doing "a faithful work," or, "a loyal thing," in receiving visiting brothers hospitably. (*Revised Standard Version*) This was especially noteworthy since they were "strangers at that" —individuals formerly unknown to their Christian host. Jehovah's Witnesses today do similar "faithful work" when they extend hospitality to such fellow believers as traveling overseers sent out

8. Why could John consider Gaius to be one of his "children"?

9. According to 3 John 5-8, what was Gaius encouraged to do in behalf of certain brothers?

10. What "faithful work" was Gaius doing, and how do Jehovah's Witnesses act similarly today?

by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.—Romans 12:13.

[11] Beloved Gaius surely was displaying principled love, and the traveling brothers bore witness to this "before the congregation," perhaps during a Christian meeting in Ephesus. (Compare Acts 14: 27.) They could testify that Gaius had been hospitable. He had manifested a love of strangers, thus displaying an age-old trait of godly individuals.—Genesis 18:1-8; Matthew 25:34, 35, 40.

[12] The apostle urged Gaius to send the traveling Christians on their way "in a manner worthy of God," in whose service they were exerting themselves. They should be furnished with such things as food and funds for their journey. (Titus 3:13) These brothers should be assisted because they had gone forth in behalf of *"the* name," according to the Greek text. Here John apparently meant God's peerless name, Jehovah, since he urged that they be sent on their way "in a manner worthy of *God."* (Compare *New World Translation; Kingdom Interlinear Translation; RS.*) Although traveling apostate teachers were not to be received hospitably, these faithful visiting brothers deserved to be treated as loyal witnesses of Jehovah God and his Son.—Isaiah 43:10-12; Acts 1:6-8; 2 John 9-11.

[13] The hardworking Christian travelers were "not taking anything from the people of the nations." Like the apostle Paul, they evidently wanted to "furnish the good news without cost" by not placing a financial burden on those to whom they were preaching the truth. (1 Corinthians 9:18; 2 Corinthians 11:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:9) Since these brothers had gone forth in behalf of Jehovah's name and were declaring the "good news" to the Gentiles without accepting material support from them, fellow Christians were "under obligation to receive such [evangelizers] hospitably." By assisting them, these hospitable worshipers of Jehovah were playing a vital role in furthering the interests of Christianity. They thus proved to be "fellow workers in the truth." A similar spirit motivates Jehovah's Witnesses today.

11. Concerning what could the traveling brothers bear witness regarding Gaius?

12. (a) In what manner were the traveling Christians to be sent on their way? (b) In behalf of whose name had these brothers gone forth? (c) What contrast is there between the way the faithful brothers and the apostates should be treated?

13. (a) The fact that the Christian travelers were "not taking anything from the people of the nations" meant what? (b) So how could others become "fellow workers in the truth"?

Loyal Support Despite Opposition

[14] Gaius was serving loyally as a 'fellow worker in the truth.' But opposition was being encountered, for John stated:

> "I wrote something to the congregation, but Diotrephes, who likes to have the first place among them, does not receive anything from us with respect. That is why, if I come, I will call to remembrance his works which he goes on doing, chattering about us with wicked words. Also, not being content with these things, neither does he himself receive the brothers with respect, and those who are wanting to receive them he tries to hinder and to throw out of the congregation." —3 John 9, 10.

[15] John had previously written "something to the congregation," but arrogant Diotrephes received nothing from the apostle with respect. Actually, presumptuous Diotrephes 'liked to have the first place' among fellow believers; he wanted "to be their leader." (*An American Translation*) So this proud man was out of harmony with Jesus Christ, who told His disciples: "All you are broth-

14. What opposition had arisen within the congregation with which Gaius was associated?

15. What attitude did Diotrephes have, and what if a professing Christian happened to be like him today?

ers. . . . Neither be called 'leaders,' for your Leader is one, the Christ." (Matthew 23:8-12) Of course, since "haughty eyes and an arrogant heart . . . are sin" and 'Jehovah knows the lofty one only from a distance,' any professing Christian who is like Diotrephes today has no intimate relationship with God.—Proverbs 21:4; Psalm 138:6.

[16] By not receiving anything from John with respect, Diotrephes was rebelling against God-given authority. Hence, if the aging apostle came to the congregation, he would "call to remembrance" the evil deeds of Diotrephes, as well as what he was saying. Diotrephes was "chattering about" John with "wicked words," thus maligning one of the apostolic foundation stones of heavenly New Jerusalem. (Revelation 21:2, 14) Surely, he could not do that with impunity! Nor can professing Christians today expect to escape God's adverse judgment if they unrepentantly slander fellow believers and disregard divinely constituted authority.—Leviticus 19:16; Jude 8-13.

[17] Diotrephes also refused to receive the diligent traveling brothers hospitably. In fact, he was trying to hinder others who desired to extend hospitality to the visiting evangelizers. Worse still, Diotrephes was attempting to throw hospitable and loving individuals out of the congregation by having them disfellowshipped wrongly. But in the face of all this opposition loyal Christians were undeterred in supporting Kingdom-preaching activity.

16. (a) How did Diotrephes act toward the apostle John? (b) In this, what lesson is there for 20th-century Christians?

17. Of what other wrongdoing was Diotrephes guilty?

Jehovah's Witnesses, like their first-century counterparts, serve together loyally as "fellow workers in the truth"

Imitate What Is Good

[18] If Diotrephes did not change, he himself might eventually be expelled from the congregation. However, the faithful should do what John told Gaius:

> "Beloved one, be an imitator, not of what is bad, but of what is good. He that does good originates with God. He that does bad has not seen God. Demetrius has had witness borne to him by them all and by the truth itself. In fact, we, also, are bearing witness, and you know that the witness we give is true."—3 John 11, 12.

[19] Gaius was being admonished to 'imitate not what is bad but what is good.' The pursuit of goodness calls for hating what is wicked and actively clinging to what is good. (Psalm 97:10; Romans 12:9)

18. According to 3 John 11, 12, what did John tell Gaius, and why?

19. 'Imitating what is good' calls for what?

And how important this is, for "he that does good originates with God"!—1 John 3:4-12.

[20] Making an impressive point, the apostle added: "He that does bad has not seen God." Upon being resurrected to spirit life in heaven, faithful spirit-anointed Christians could expect to see God and Christ. But on earth Jehovah's worshipers 'see' him by observing his acts in their behalf. Those 'seeing God' do so with 'the eyes of the heart.' (Ephesians 1:18; Exodus 33:20; Job 19:26) With perception that involves both mind and heart, these individuals really come to know Jehovah as his worshipers who appreciate his qualities, such as his boundless love in giving his only-begotten Son for mankind.—John 3:16.

[21] Gaius was urged to 'imitate what is good,' and Demetrius was a doer of good. Likely, Demetrius was traveling with the visiting brothers, perhaps overseeing that group of preachers, or missionaries. (Compare 2 Corinthians 8:16-24.) Gaius may not have known Demetrius very well, if at all, but other Christians spoke well of him, and he had "witness borne to him . . . by the truth itself." What fellow believers were saying about Demetrius was supported by his godly conduct, for he had harmonized his life with Jehovah's requirements and was 'living the truth.' Hence, "the truth," in effect, spoke well of Demetrius. So did the apostle John, and Gaius knew that he was truthful. (Compare John 19:35; 21:24.) Despite the opposition of Diotrephes, therefore, the traveling Kingdom proclaimers must have been received hospitably by Gaius and other loyal "fellow workers in the truth."

20. On earth, how do Jehovah's worshipers 'see' him?

21. (a) Who was Demetrius? (b) How did Demetrius have "witness borne to him . . . by the truth itself"?

Love Evident Among Fellow Workers

[22] John's concluding words to Gaius give abundant evidence of the love existing among "fellow workers in the truth." He said:

> "I had many things to write you, yet I do not wish to go on writing you with ink and pen. But I am hoping to see you directly, and we shall speak face to face. May you have peace. The friends send you their greetings. Give my greetings to the friends by name." (3 John 13, 14)

Yes, John had much to say to Gaius, but he did not wish to put it all in writing. Instead, the apostle was "hoping to see [Gaius] directly," or, "immediately." (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation*) Then they could "speak face to face," enjoying "heart-to-heart" discussion.—*Phillips.*

[23] In the meantime, John earnestly desired that Gaius might have peace—the calmness that results from an intimate relationship with Jehovah, the tranquillity that removes undue anxiety and puts the mind and heart at rest. (Philippians 4:6, 7) Finally, in closing, the apostle sent Gaius the greetings of "the friends," thus referring to beloved fellow believers in

22. Instead of writing more to Gaius, what did John hope to do?

23. (a) In wishing Gaius peace, John desired that his friend enjoy what? (b) In concluding Third John, how did the apostle refer to beloved fellow believers?

Can You Answer?

- What "faithful work" was Gaius doing in behalf of fellow believers?
- The bad course of Diotrephes can teach us what?
- How can we, like Gaius, serve loyally as "fellow workers in the truth"?

a way that Jehovah's Witnesses often do today. (Compare John 15:13, 14.) And how appropriate that John should know members of the local congregation so well that he could ask Gaius to convey his greetings to them *"by name"!*

Keep on Serving Loyally as Fellow Workers

24 Surely, the second and third inspired letters of John impress modern-day Christians with the need to love one another, reject apostasy, cling to the truth and promote the interests of true worship. Hence, we, as Jehovah's Witnesses, are determined to remain loyal to Scriptural truth as we sing our Father's praises, declare the good news of the Kingdom and point to Jesus Christ's vital role in God's arrangement for blessing mankind.

25 As Jehovah's Witnesses, we face many tests of faith in these critical "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) But the apostle John's sound counsel will help us to continue "walking in the truth" as our way of life. May we, therefore, imitate what is good, do all we can to promote Kingdom interests and go on serving together loyally as "fellow workers in the truth" —all to the praise of the marvelous God of truth, Jehovah.

24, 25. Second and Third John should impress Jehovah's Witnesses with what need, and how should these letters motivate us?

Questions from Readers

■ **Why, in recent years, has *The Watchtower* not made use of the translation by the former Catholic priest, Johannes Greber?**

This translation was used occasionally in support of renderings of Matthew 27:52, 53 and John 1:1, as given in the *New World Translation* and other authoritative Bible versions. But as indicated in a foreword to the 1980 edition of *The New Testament* by Johannes Greber, this translator relied on "God's Spirit World" to clarify for him how he should translate difficult passages. It is stated: "His wife, a medium of God's Spiritworld was often instrumental in conveying the correct answers from God's Messengers to Pastor Greber." *The Watchtower* has deemed it improper to make use of a translation that has such a close rapport with spiritism. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) The scholarship that forms the basis for the rendering of the above-cited texts in the *New World Translation* is sound and for this reason does not depend at all on Greber's translation for authority. Nothing is lost, therefore, by ceasing to use his *New Testament.*

■ **What does Hebrews 1:7 mean when it says that God "makes his angels spirits, and his public servants a flame of fire"?**

The apostle Paul, contrasting the angels with God's Son, made this statement in Hebrews 1:7. He was quoting Psalm 104:4.

Since all angels are spirit creatures without fleshly bodies, it seems that when the verses say that God "makes his angels spirits" they are not referring to the type of organism that angels have. Rather, the understanding involves the underlying meaning of "spirit." The original words rendered "spirit" (Hebrew, *ruahh;* Greek, *pneuma*) have the basic meaning of "to breathe or blow." Depending on the context, they can be rendered "wind" or "active force." Hence, the point of Hebrews 1:7 and Psalm 104:4 evidently is that God makes his invisible angels to be spirit forces or powerful forces in his service. He also can use them as "a flame of fire," or, "a devouring fire," when employing them to carry out his fiery judgments.