June 15, 1983

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

DISOBEDIENCE TO PARENTS

A Sign of the Last Days?

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

June 15, 1983
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In This Issue

Whatever Happened to 'Honor Thy Parents'? 3

Disobedience to Parents —A Sign of the Last Days? 5

What Prayers Does God Hear? 8

Jehovah's Standards Help Us 10

Do Not 'Turn Back to Weak and Beggarly Things' 16

Genesis Inspires Faith, Hope and Courage 22

Insight on the News 26

Delighted to Serve as Jehovah Wills 27

An Excellent Education 31

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.

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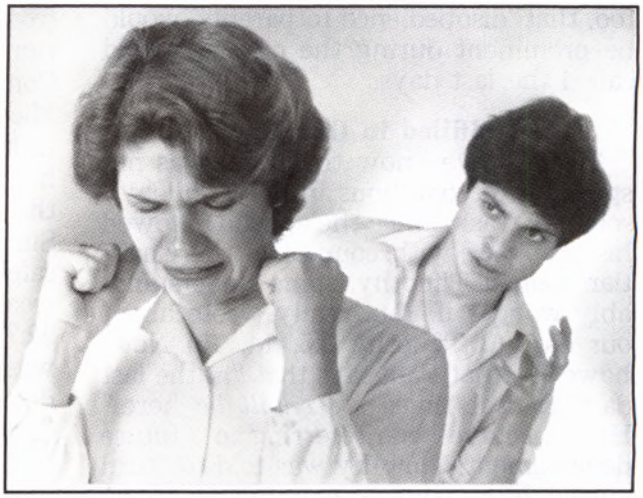


Whatever Happened to 'Honor Thy Parents'?

ONE father said concerning his two sons: "Whenever I express my opinions, they act as though they barely tolerate me. Whatever happened to 'Honor thy Parent'?" Similarly, the director of a family-service agency observed: "These days, young people don't just talk back to their parents, they regularly defy their authority."

Whether you are a youth or an adult, likely you have noted that many young people today disobey and disrespect their parents. This is a matter that should concern *you,* whether you are a youth or a parent. Why?

Because the parent-child conflicts you observe are part of a pattern, a mosaic of events, that marks these times as the last days. According to the Bible, the period called the "last days" comes before the final destruction of the worldwide system of things. (2 Timothy 3:1) There will, though, be survivors who will enjoy life under a real heavenly government. —Daniel 2:44; Revelation 21:1-4.

But how does disobedience to parents fit in with what the Bible says about the present and the future? In previous issues of *The Watchtower* we have reviewed Jesus Christ's prophecy at Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13. Jesus focused on world events that would mark "the conclusion of the system of things": wars, earthquakes and lawlessness, to name a few. Now, however, we focus on a related prophetic description of this time period, found at 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Instead of just dealing with the external forces affecting mankind, the Bible here highlights the attitudes of people experiencing these dramatic events. It says:

> "Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, . . . and from these turn away."

Note that these words of the apostle Paul are a commentary on how the last days would *affect people.* Observe,

too, that 'disobedience to parents' would be prominent during the critical period called the last days.

Fulfilled in Our Day?

'How do we know that Paul was not speaking of conditions in only *his* day?' some may ask. Since the apostle followed his prophecy with counsel to the Christian named Timothy, some understandably wonder if Paul really wrote about our day. (2 Timothy 3:5, 14, 15) Note, however, that Paul says that "in the last days critical times . . . *will be* here." He must have been referring to a future development. Timothy was told to "turn away" from persons manifesting undesirable traits, since some in the congregation *already* did so. But Paul's words show that in the future last days the situation would be more critical.—Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:6-12; 3:6-14.

You may have heard, though, that some researchers claim that most youths today are really getting along reasonably well with their parents. In view of 2 Timothy 3:1-5, what are you to think of such claims? Before reaching a conclusion, let us view Paul's prophecy against the backdrop of Bible history.

"Honor Your Father and Your Mother"

So said the fifth of the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:12) These words were impressed on the minds of Jewish youths. (Deuteronomy 5:16; 6:6, 7) Disobedience to one's parents was unthinkable—a capital offense in some instances! (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) The ancient way of life helped parents maintain this loving but strict control. The family structure was patriarchal. Parental roles were well defined. Children were viewed as an asset, a blessing, and chores in their agricultural society gave them plenty to do.—Compare Psalm 127:3.

However, as the nation veered away from Jehovah's ways, family life deteriorated. Some 800 years after the Ten Commandments were given, the prophet Micah observed: "A son is despising a father; a daughter is rising up against her mother . . . a man's enemies are the men of his household." (Micah 7:6) Similarly, Ezekiel said of the city Jerusalem: "Father and mother they have treated with contempt in you." (Ezekiel 22:7) Such gross disrespect for parents was symptomatic of widespread moral degradation. Therefore, God took severe disciplinary action against the entire nation.—Jeremiah 1:15, 16.

'Not all children are rebellious. But disobedience is significantly widespread and intense'

Viewed from this perspective, you likely agree that much of the conduct of 20th-century youths would have seemed shocking to Paul back in the first century. Present liberal views of childrearing were unheard of then. Hence, we need to bear in mind that studies painting a rosy picture of modern family life overlook God's standards for children. (Ephesians 6:1-3) When the attitudes and conduct common among today's youth are compared with God's standards, we can understand why the Bible calls the present generation "disobedient." Not that *all* children are necessarily rebellious. But disobedience is significantly widespread and *intense*—very noticeable.

Yet is 'disobedience to parents' really worldwide? Is there enough evidence of parent-child conflict to indicate that we are living in "the last days"?—2 Timothy 3:1, 2.

Disobedience to Parents –A Sign of the Last Days?

"THERE is a generation that calls down evil even upon its father and that does not bless even its mother." (Proverbs 30:11) This describes well the generation since 1914. But have youths since then really been unique in this respect? If so, why?

Our Changing World

In times past, the family was a haven of love and support. There was no question about the roles and responsibilities of family members. Men were the breadwinners. Most women stayed home and cared for children and household chores. Together they taught their children values and principles. Children were often too busy handling household chores to engage in serious mischief.

The events since the outbreak of World War I in 1914 have shattered this idyllic picture. Just as Jesus prophesied, ours has been a century of brutal wars, lawlessness and food shortages. (Matthew 24: 4-14) The effect? A drastic alteration of our way of life. This age of travel places immense distances between family members who make individual trips. Freed by technological advances from much of the drudgery of housework, many women trade homemaking for a place in the job market. Schoolteachers and day-care workers have become substitute parents. Children fight boredom as electrical appliances do the household chores.

These recent developments have greatly increased family tensions. Divorce rates have skyrocketed. So has the incidence of one-parent households. One single mother says about the difficulty of raising a child alone: "By the time I get home from the office, my children have been out of school for three hours. There's no way I can keep track of what they're doing. I'm sure my 16-year-old daughter is having sex with a boy in her class, and that my 13-year-old son hangs out regularly after school at the local pool hall."

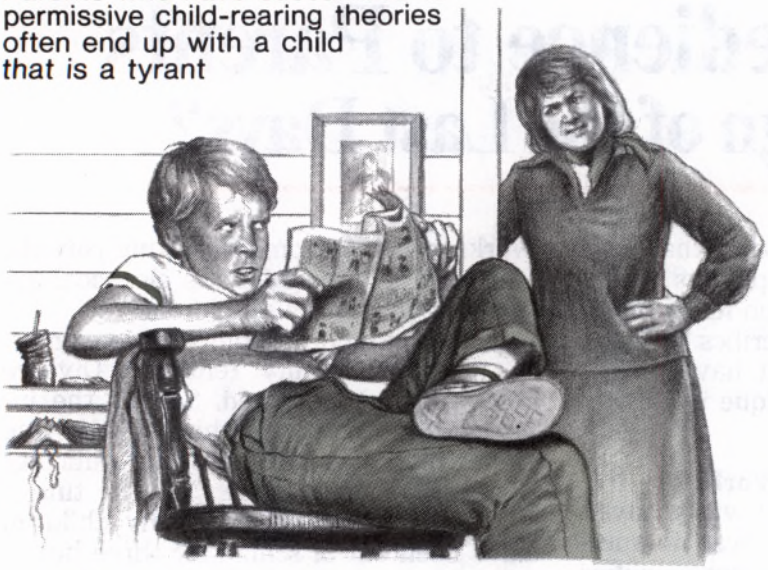
Casualties of the "Me" Generation

Perhaps no other generation has been so obsessed with personal "rights." As a result, according to one prominent psychologist, parents "have gradually begun to permit their children to argue with them, to assert their own feelings and ideas, even to be a bit disobedient." Is this healthy?

Pulitzer-prize-winning author Robert Coles said: "Many parents are afraid to bring up their children on their own —with their own convictions and their own moral faith. They're intimidated by

'Nearly 900,000 parents of adolescents were either punched, bit, kicked, beat up, or were threatened by or had a knife or a gun used on them'

Parents who have succumbed to permissive child-rearing theories often end up with a child that is a tyrant



all these experts who write books about child rearing and tell them what to do." As victims of permissive child-rearing theories, parents find themselves pandering to the whims of their children—only to be faced later with the truth of the Bible's statement: "If one is pampering one's servant from youth on, in his later life he will even become a thankless one."—Proverbs 29:21.

The Effects of Television

Recently the National Institute for Mental Health issued a comprehensive report entitled "Television and Behavior." The report showed that TV, besides bombarding minds with reckless violence and immorality, has other disturbing effects on family life. For example, "in a surprisingly large number of instances," the decision as to which show to watch is left to children, who "often have emerged as arbitrators of what the family will view; they have become family decisionmakers."

The book *Generation of Narcissus* claims there is another insidious side effect of TV. It states that because of television "children experience the so-called real world from a unique vantage point. It is a world which seemingly extends outward from their own bodies." Yes, it may be that the child addicted to television develops a view of life that is entirely self-centered.

All of these are factors that have upset the natural balance of family life. But are youths really reacting by rebelling against parental authority?

Disobedience—Overt and Covert

'The increase of lawlessness' among youths is one of the more obvious signs that some youths *are* revolting against parental authority. (Matthew 24:12) For example, it is reported that "a quarter of all serious crimes in Greater London [England] are committed by schoolchildren." In the United States "juvenile arrests for violent crimes . . . increased 293% between 1960 and 1975; and the overall rate of juvenile arrests is growing 10% a year—*twice* the adult rate." Reports from China tell of juvenile "murder, fraud, theft, rape, drug trafficking and rackets."

Some of this brazen violence is even being directed toward parents. Sociologist Richard J. Gelles helped conduct a study that revealed that "more than 2-1/2 million adolescents [in the United States] were reported as having struck a parent at least once. Nearly 900,000 parents of adolescents . . . were either

punched, bit, kicked, hit with a hard object, beat up, or were threatened by or had a knife or a gun used on them." Such tragic acts underscore the Bible's prediction that during the last days people would have "no natural affection." (2 Timothy 3:3) Chilling, indeed, was the conclusion that "in all likelihood, both the rates and the projections *underestimate* the true extent of adolescent to parent violence." (Italics ours.)—*The Urban & Social Change Review,* Volume 15, Number 1, 1982.

Sexual promiscuity is another way in which youths go against their parents' wishes. In one survey of 160,000 American youths, 31 percent between the ages of 13 and 15 admitted to having had sexual relations. Between the ages of 16 and 18, *58 percent* have. Japan similarly reports that "the incidence of sexual intercourse involving teenage girls has risen conspicuously over the past seven years."

> Said one single mother: "By the time I get home from the office, my children have been out of school for three hours. There's no way I can keep track of what they're doing"

Some teenagers secretly use alcoholic beverages or addictive drugs. About 43 percent confessed to having smoked marijuana. The researchers concluded that marijuana smoking "is a regular pastime of many teenagers." Half admitted that they would lie to their parents if asked about smoking marijuana.

Other youths, frustrated by parents who demand achievement but give them little support, quietly rebel by deliberately failing in school. Still others disobey* by refusing to be persuaded to follow their parents' moral or religious standards. Only 53 percent of youths surveyed said they would follow their parents' religion. The rest either said they would not or they were not sure. How disappointing this is to parents! A mere 17 percent said they wanted their parents' advice on sex; fewer still would solicit their parents' advice on drugs. Such clashes of viewpoint turn homes into battlegrounds.

What You Can Do

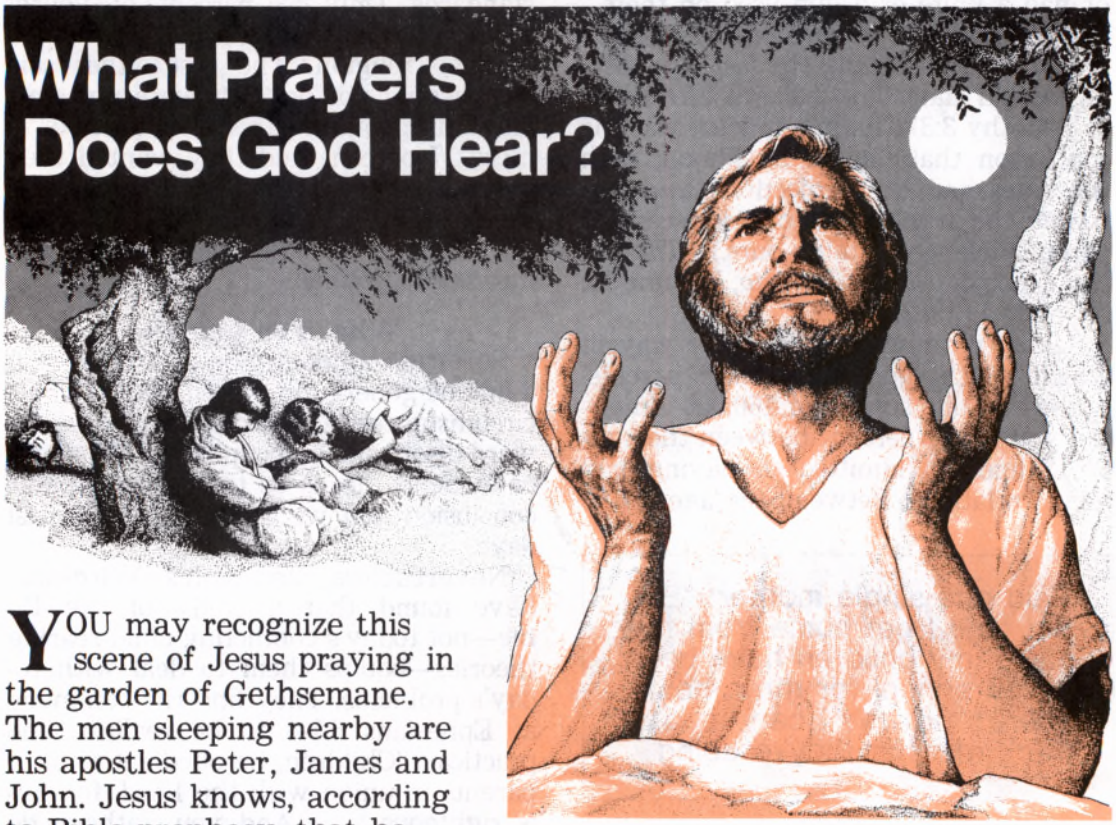
So it can confidently be said that ours is a unique generation, raised under unique circumstances. The worldwide trend toward disobedience, coupled with the other evidence, leads us to the inescapable conclusion that we are living in the last days.

Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses have found that a study of the Bible—not today's conflicting child-rearing theories—equips them to deal with today's problems. They find the command at Ephesians 6:1-4 to be realistic and practical: "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous . . . And you, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." The Witnesses would, therefore, be happy to help you begin a systematic study of the Bible.

Even if you are not a parent, a study of the Bible will greatly benefit you. Further delving into God's Word will help you to get acquainted with God and his purposes. This is the wise course, for the Bible urges: "Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zephaniah 2:3.

* The Greek word for "disobedience" literally means "the condition of being unpersuadable."

What Prayers Does God Hear?



YOU may recognize this scene of Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane. The men sleeping nearby are his apostles Peter, James and John. Jesus knows, according to Bible prophecy, that he will be put to death along with criminals. Yet he prays: "Father, if you wish, remove this cup [God's will for Jesus to suffer reproach and die] from me. Nevertheless, *let, not my will, but yours take place.*"—Luke 22:42; Isaiah 53:12.

That was a very difficult night for Jesus. The Bible says: "Getting into an agony he continued praying more earnestly; and his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:44) Were Jesus' prayers answered?

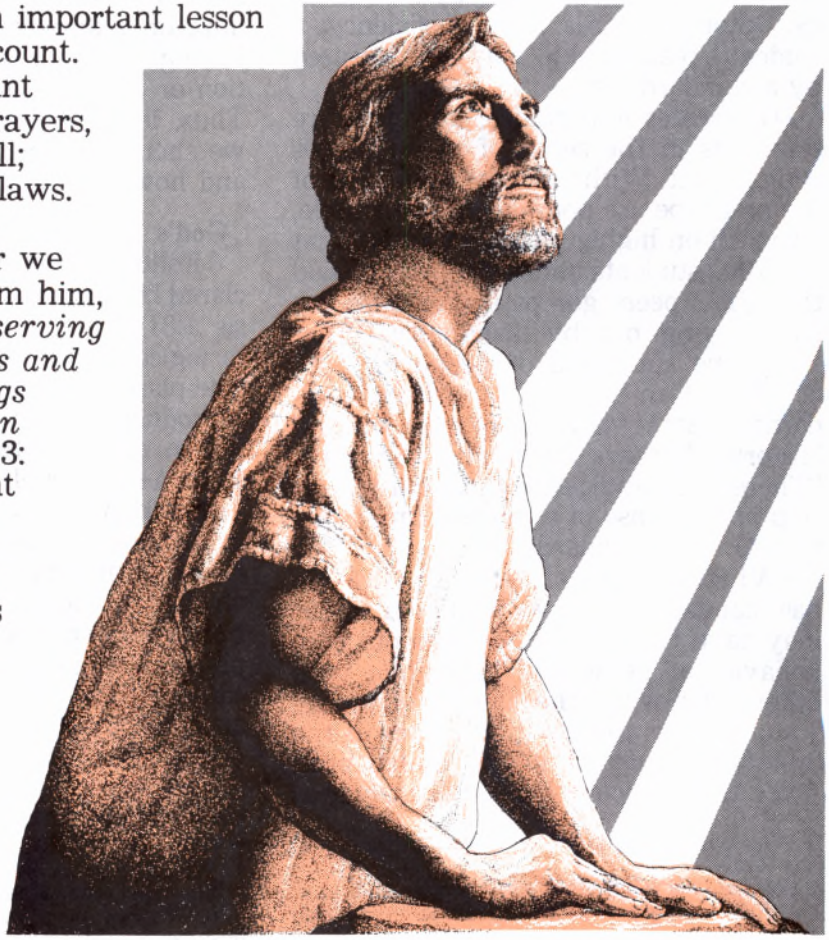
No doubt it was with this occasion in mind that the apostle Paul wrote: "Christ offered up supplications [sincere pleadings] and also petitions to the One who was able to save him out of death, with strong outcries and tears, *and he was favorably heard* for his godly fear."—Hebrews 5:7.

Yes, God heard Jesus' prayers. Notice the reason given: *"For his*

godly fear." Jesus had a wholesome fear or dread of displeasing God. "I always do the things pleasing to him," he said. (John 8:29) Yes, Jesus loved his heavenly Father, and always did his will. It is just as the Bible says, "No matter what it is that *we ask according to his will,* he hears us."—1 John 5:14.

How did God answer Jesus' prayers? Well, he did not take Jesus out of that situation. Jesus was arrested, treated as a low-down criminal and put to a terrible death. But look at the picture. It shows how Jesus was strengthened to face the situation. While he was praying, the Bible says, "an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him." —Luke 22:43; 1 Corinthians 10:13.

We can learn an important lesson from this Bible account. It is this: If we want God to hear our prayers, we must do his will; we must obey his laws. The Bible states it plainly: "Whatever we ask we receive from him, *because we are observing his commandments and are doing the things that are pleasing in his eyes."* (1 John 3: 22) This means that we must work at what we pray for. We need to show God by our actions that we really mean what we say. Do we?



Jehovah's Standards Help Us

"May he give to you according to your heart, and all your counsel may he fulfill."—PSALM 20:4.

IN 1266 King Henry III of England decreed that a penny should be the weight of 32 wheat grains. He thus set a standard. Countless things around us similarly involve standards. We dial our radio or television to a set point (channel) for a broadcast on a standard frequency. Other standards show proficiency; a student's reading skill may be measured by a standard test.

[2] Of greater importance, however, are standards in the sense of moral values and conduct. Without these, standards of the first type are pointless. For example, a council on higher education found that of 25,000 students almost 50 percent said that their peers got passing grades not by studying but by dishonesty. What about the standards of people in public office? Can today's youth learn standards of moral values from most leaders? Historian Barbara Tuchman commented: "There is an abdication of moral leadership in the sense of a general unwillingness to state standards."

[3] What, though, of Jehovah God? He has standards, even as a human father may have values and requirements as to behavior at home and in dealing with others. Jehovah, the universal Judge, Statute-Giver and King, provides in the Bible laws, rules or clearly stated principles that indicate his moral standards and what he expects of humans—guidelines on how we should walk.—Psalm 25:4, 5; 86:10, 11; Isaiah 33:22.

[4] Who among us would deny the value of Jehovah's standards? Yet we might chafe at them when they conflict with some personal desire. We might minimize or take exception to his standards, feeling that our situation is an exception or demands a bending of the rules. Thus, let us review some reasons why we should accept God's moral standards and how we can benefit from them.

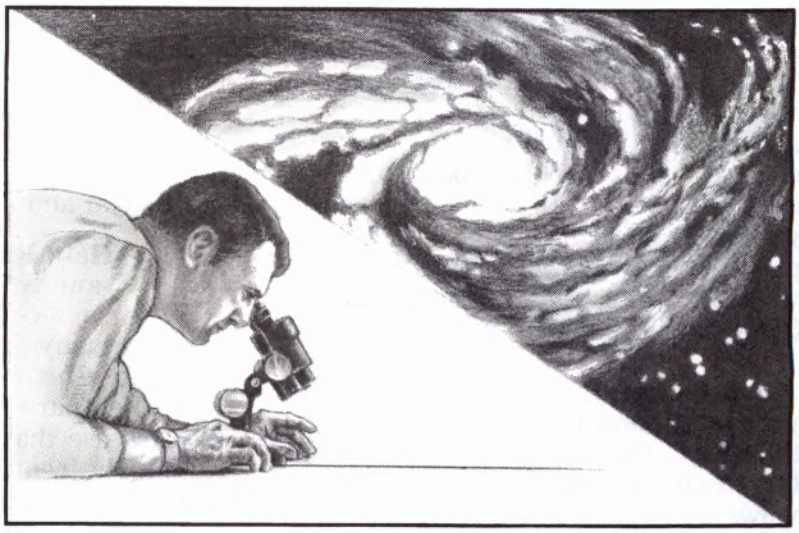
God's Standards Compared to Man's

[5] Following six creative days, God declared his work to be "very good." (Genesis 1:31) Everything had been created in logical order, with nothing defective. The plants and animals filled their niche, reproducing after their kind, not needing to evolve into new kinds. (Genesis 1:25) Ask yourself, Whom or what did Jehovah have to consult for directions in this creative work? Obviously he contained within himself the knowledge and wisdom to do it all. Not just to do it but to do it perfectly, in a way that set physical standards. (Isaiah 40:12-14) Because of God's standards we can classify and recognize the multitudinous kinds of plants, fish, birds and land animals.

[6] Jehovah once posed some questions that can help us to compare

1. What sort of standards are common? (Deuteronomy 25:15)
2. Standards of what other sort are rare, and why?
3. Why should we expect Jehovah to have moral standards?
4. Why should we be interested in reasons for accepting God's standards?
5, 6. We can learn what from Jehovah's accomplishments during the first six creative days?

Creation, from the very small to the extremely large, testifies to Jehovah's ability in providing standards



his knowledge, abilities and standards to those of man. God asked Job: "Where did you happen to be when I founded the earth? Tell me, if you do know understanding?" Scientists can offer only *estimates* of the age of the universe. Obviously, humans were not around to know when God created the earth or how. "Was it," God inquired, "from your days onward that you commanded the morning? Did you cause the dawn to know its place?" Physicists study the earth's rotation, try to imitate the fusion by which our sun produces life-sustaining energy, and labor with complicated formulas to explain the nature of something as common as light. How do their achievements compare with God's? Jehovah continued: 'Have you come to know the statutes of the heavens? Can you raise your voice even to the cloud, so that a heaving mass of water may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings?' Finally Job admitted: "Look! I have become of little account. What shall I reply to you?" "I have come to know that you are able to do all things, and there is no idea that is unattainable for you." Do you personally feel the same way?—Job 38:4, 12, 33-35; 40:4; 42:2.

[7] God's crowning earthly creation was man. The best modern camera is an inferior imitation of a higher standard, your eye. Your digestive system and metabolism excel anything that chemical engineers and biologists have ever produced. While we see variety among us, our marvelous bodies give evidence of vital standards. If a surgeon needed to operate on your appendix, would you have to worry about his finding in your abdomen your tonsils or brain? No, standardization (in God's creation) makes it possible for the surgeon to study anatomy so he can perform needed surgery.

[8] In your skull, not in your abdomen, you have a computer that is vastly superior in versatility and capacity to the most advanced electronic computer. Your brain allows you to wonder and marvel at God's creation, including the billions of suns in the millions of galaxies in the heavens. God established laws for the orderly, precise movement of the heavenly bodies so that we can use them as standards in our count of time, for day and night, for seasons and years.—Genesis 1:14; Psalm 8:3, 4.

7, 8. How do you as a human creature offer testimony about God's accomplishments?

[9] Compare God's accomplishments with what man has done. Despite governments establishing regulatory standards of all sorts, humans have polluted water and air, exterminated numerous kinds of wildlife, divided peoples politically, religiously and racially, and left mankind with cause to worry about whether war, pollution or starvation might completely wipe out human life on earth. Clearly, God was not exaggerating when he said of man: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9) Is it not fitting, then, that rather than relying on human views as to what standards should be met, we should be interested in Jehovah's directions or standards?—Proverbs 16:25; Isaiah 30:21.

[10] Material creation confirms that God is "perfect [in all] his activity." Yet Deuteronomy 32:4 goes on to mention Jehovah's moral attributes. In view of his accomplishments and standards in the physical realm—from the stars to atomic particles, from microorganisms to our human bodies—should we not look to him with confidence as to his moral standards? The fact is that he has provided excellent moral standards by which we can guide our relations with him and with fellow humans.—Micah 6:6-8.

[11] Jehovah does not limit his counsel to a narrow aspect of our life, such as certain doctrinal beliefs or ceremonial rites. His moral standards cover all aspects of life, including family affairs, business dealings, view and conduct respecting persons of the opposite sex, attitude toward fellow Christians and participation in worship. (Isaiah 48:17; James 1:25) At Isaiah 55:11 Jehovah said that 'the word that goes forth from his mouth will have certain success.' Just as surely, when we earnestly strive to apply his standards, we will have more success, accomplish more good and find more happiness.

9. By comparing God's accomplishments and standards with man's, what can we conclude?

10. Material creation indicates what about looking to God for moral standards?

11. In what areas might God's standards benefit you?

Help From God's Safe and Sure Guidelines

[12] We can receive help from God's standards in many direct, physical ways. For example, *The New York Times Magazine* (February 6, 1983) reported on a new disease that 'medical detectives are calling the century's most virulent epidemic.' It is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (acronym: AIDS). This disease brings on the collapse of a person's immune system, leaving him prey to rare forms of cancer (Kaposi's sarcoma), pneumonia and other bizarre illnesses. How deadly is AIDS? The two-year death rate is said to be over 65 percent.

[13] Scientists believe that AIDS is spread through bodily secretions (particularly semen) and blood. So far mostly homosexuals have contracted it by their promiscuous immorality, though it has spread to heterosexual partners. One "gay" confessed: "It's like being in wartime. We don't know when the bomb is going to fall. I've had 18 friends die in the last year and a half from AIDS. Another 12 are now seriously ill." The article said: "As they waste away, many AIDS patients begin to reflect on their lives, sometimes feeling they are being punished for their reckless, hedonistic ways." Unquestionably, God's moral standards, such as those mentioned at 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, help us. They protect us!

[14] There is more to it. AIDS has been

12, 13. How does a recent health development bear on God's standards of sexual morality?

14. In what other ways does the AIDS problem underscore God's standards? (Deuteronomy 12:23-25)

found in many persons from the Caribbean. Dr. Sheldon Landesman explained: 'We know that our patients often are involved in voodoo and spiritualism.' Apparently AIDS is transmitted in their rituals. The disease is also linked to blood transfusions and blood products. "AIDS has become the second leading cause of death—after uncontrollable bleeding—in hemophiliacs, and, most recently, a number of surgical patients who have received blood transfusions have contracted AIDS, raising fears among some observers about the nation's blood supply." The incubation period seems to range from six months to two years.

AIDS—Epidemic of the 1980's

"Almost three-fourths of the people who first got the disease are dead. Some researchers believe that no one survives it." The disease is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or AIDS.—*Science 83,* March.

One doctor observed: "It is like a machine. Once it starts, you know there is no stopping it. You can watch the immunity system deteriorating. You'll just be finishing up with one infection, and another will pop up. The patient will have pneumonia, then herpes, then fungus in the brain, then a virus attacking the colon." One of his patients was a semiprofessional boxer and tennis player who also lifted weights. This man "had a steady girlfriend and had had only one homosexual encounter six months before he was stricken." What happened to him? "The man died six weeks after the disease was diagnosed, of a perforated intestine, at the age of 30."

What is being done to learn the who, what, when and where of AIDS? The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) is located in Atlanta, Georgia. On February 13, 1983, a leading Atlanta newspaper reported: "Never has the CDC assigned more workers—about 100 so far—for so long to a public health problem. The group's work is one of the most sustained, intense medical detective efforts in history . . . With the idea that they are looking for a virus—and not even that is certain—the CDC scientists are trying to grow the germ in animals or test tubes." But since AIDS may have an incubation period of from six months to two years, tests run now may not reveal anything before 1985. At present, CDC virologists and microbiologists "feel they are no closer to discovering the agent [causing AIDS] than when they started their search more than a year ago."

In January the CDC held a conference to discuss AIDS. As reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association,* Dr. D. Armstrong of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center told the conference: "I have absolutely no doubt that AIDS is transmitted by sex and blood products." *Science 83* expressed the general view: "Scientists think it is passed by 'intimate contact'—shared drug needles, for example, or sexual intercourse. Which points to something carried by the bloodstream. Which has a lot of health officials worried about the millions of people who give and receive blood."

Currently there are no tests to detect persons with AIDS, so blood banks cannot determine which donors have the disease. It has been suggested that donations not be accepted from high-risk groups, particularly homosexuals. But "gays" have reacted with cries of discrimination and violated rights. (Who worries about the rights of the persons given such blood?) Furthermore, a representative of the National Gay Task Force told the CDC meeting: "Many gays don't self-identify as such and won't respond to the questionnaire." Similar protests were heard in South Africa when screening was suggested after the death of two male crew members of South African Airways.

The latest evidence is that women who have had sexual relations with men having AIDS can contract the disease. Another new group of victims are children. Some infants evidently became victims after receiving blood transfusions and fractions given to treat an Rh problem after birth. Other babies may have contracted it in the womb or picked it up from intimate contact with a parent or other AIDS victim.

Since the number of reported cases has been doubling every six months, we surely will be hearing much more about this horrible epidemic of the 1980's.—Galatians 6:7, 8.

So by the time some realize that they have AIDS they "might have unknowingly infected hundreds more individuals —through sexual contact, through blood donations, or through some yet unimagined route." God's standards regarding sexual morality, avoiding spiritism and 'abstaining from blood' help us keep free of this and other diseases.—Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Proverbs 5:18-23; Acts 15: 29; 21:25.

[15] As another evidence of Jehovah's helpful standards, recall that he condemns drunkenness. He even disapproves of 'giving oneself to a lot of wine.' (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Romans 13:13) Many who ignore God's standard suffer diseases caused or aggravated by overdrinking. Ignoring Paul's advice to use only "a little wine," some Christians have got into a pattern of turning to heavy drinking to 'help them relax.' (1 Timothy 5: 23) Gradually the habitual disorder of alcoholism (with physical, emotional and moral aspects) can develop. The resulting problems are many, including loss of respect, family strains (if not breakup), wasted income and loss of work. Are not God's standards regarding the use of alcohol a protection in this area?

15. How does Jehovah's standard regarding alcohol prove helpful?

In Our Next Issue

- **Pleasure Put in God's Place —Why?**
- **When Dead Men Will Live Again!**
- **Does God Care About the Mentally Ill?**

[16] In economic matters, too, God's standards have proved to be practical. He urges Christians to be honest and to work hard. (Ephesians 4:28; Colossians 3: 23; compare Luke 16:10-12.) Reports from around the earth show that many of Jehovah's Witnesses have kept their jobs when others were laid off, or have even been promoted because of being honest and diligent. Do you know of examples of this? Of course, if a person is employed he has less difficulty during hard times. Financial benefits come also from a person's avoiding unscriptural habits and addictions. More information on this is found in the chapter "Money Problems —What Help?" of the book *Happiness —How to Find It.** No doubt you can think of other examples of the economic practicality of God's standards.

[17] Jehovah's standards with respect to the Christian congregation also prove wise and helpful. For instance, God directs that a Christian who practices sin and will not repent is to be expelled from the congregation. Others are "to quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man." While according to some persons' standards this might seem unloving, God knows better. It lovingly protects the clean congregation, for "a little leaven ferments the whole lump." (1 Corinthians 5:11, 6) A comment by Dr. A. L. McGinnis, author of *The Friendship Factor,* illustrates the wisdom of what God says about not eating with disfellowshipped persons:

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16. God's standards have provided what economic help for Jehovah's Witnesses?

17. What direction does God give about disfellowshipping, and why is this wise?

"One of the best ways to deepen a friendship is by eating together. There is something almost sacramental about breaking bread with another. Have you ever noticed, for instance, how difficult it is to have dinner with an enemy and remain enemies?"

18 Adhering to God's standard also helps to prevent the spreading of false teachings and views. In the first century, Hymenaeus and Philetus turned apostate and tried to subvert the faith of others. God's standard was: 'Shun such empty speeches that violate what is holy.' (2 Timothy 2:16-19) Christians holding to that standard would not have been interested in listening to apostates, nor in obtaining any poisonous writings that these might distribute "for the sake of dishonest gain." Why finance their wickedness by buying their literature? (Titus 1:11) As loyal Christians let us hold to God's standards, feeding our minds on what is true and righteous, and holding appreciatively and loyally to the channel from which we first learned Bible truth. —Compare 1 Timothy 4:16.

19 God's standards help Jehovah's Witnesses in ever so many other ways. In marriage they encourage love, respect and unity at a time when moral laxity and calls for liberation are leading to high divorce rates. Jehovah's standards help Christian children to accept parental direction, not being quick to rebel as is the case with many of their schoolmates. Rather than showing resentment for parental authority and leaving home early, youths who appreciate God's standards are pleased to benefit from the Bible-based counsel and help that Christian parents can provide.—Colossians 3: 18-21.

18. How may God's standard prove beneficial with regard to apostates?

19. In what other area might Jehovah's standards provide help?

Obediently Accept Jehovah's Standards

20 We could discuss numerous other ways in which God's standards can help us. You may have in mind some specific points as to how they have helped you personally. Fine! Those are good and encouraging things to include in your conversation with other Christians.

21 All of us, though, must bear in mind that it is so very easy to be led away from God's standards. But recall that Jehovah told the Israelites at Mount Sinai: "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples." They enthusiastically responded: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." Yet how contrary was the course they took in following years!—Exodus 19:5, 8; Numbers 14:1-4, 10.

22 Let us therefore accept and hold to Jehovah's standards! For truly the course of wisdom and happiness is to stick closely to the incomparable standards that Jehovah has provided to help us guide our lives.—Psalm 19:7-11.

20-22. What do you need to bear in mind as respects God's standards?

Do You Recall?

- Material creation provides what evidence as to Jehovah's being a source of standards?
- Why should we look to Jehovah for moral standards?
- What examples could you give to illustrate how Jehovah's standards could help you?
- How do you feel about applying God's standards?

Do Not 'Turn Back to Weak and Beggarly Things'

"Now that you have come to know God, . . . how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elementary things?"—GALATIANS 4:9.

NEWSPAPERS in June 1980 told of an amazing event involving Edwin Robinson, aged 62, who nine years before had been blinded in an automobile accident. The papers explained that during a storm he sought shelter under a tree. A lightning bolt struck the tree, knocking him unconscious. When he revived he could see. Imagine how he felt after so many years of blindness! Surely he did not want to return to the darkness.

[2] If you are a true witness of Jehovah, a marvelous change has occurred with you. The apostle Peter wrote that "chosen" Christians have been 'called out of darkness into his wonderful light.' (1 Peter 1:1; 2:9) To become a witness of Jehovah you may have abandoned unclean and disapproved practices that are linked with darkness. (Romans 13:12, 13; Job 24:14-16) Why? Because you wanted to live in the light of the truth and have God's approval.

[3] Before becoming a true Christian, did you have any meaningful purpose in your life? (1 Peter 4:15, 16) If someone asked you what your objectives were, would your answer be about earning a living, having a family, finding some entertainment or preparing for the "winter" of old age? Certainly those things are not wrong. Yet how would such a life differ from that of a squirrel, a sparrow or other animal that is born, grows up, eats, sleeps, mates and finally dies? (Ecclesiastes 3:18-20; James 4:14; Jude 10) However, after you have become a true Christian, your life has meaning; your goals center on serving the Creator.—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

[4] The contrast between your being in the light and your once being in the darkness is especially apparent in your knowledge and understanding. Previously you did not know why wickedness exists, why things are getting worse around us, what is the condition of the dead or what the immediate future holds. Now you have a Bible-based understanding of those matters. How true are the apostle Paul's words: "[Jehovah] has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God"!—2 Corinthians 4:6.

Not All Remain in the Light

[5] Not all who have been true worshipers of Jehovah have remained such.

1, 2. (a) A lightning bolt had what effect on a blind man? (b) What more significant change has occurred in your life? (Acts 26:18)

3. Becoming a witness of Jehovah has brought what alteration as to your purpose in life? (Ephesians 2:12)

4. What effect has Bible knowledge had on you? (Psalm 36:9; Proverbs 6:23)

5. What evidence is there that not all remain in the light?

A powerful spirit creature turned away and became Satan. Adam and Eve left the light. In view of such actions by perfect creatures, it is not surprising that some imperfect humans, such as we are, have also turned back. The Israelites came out of Egyptian slavery, yet before they reached the Promised Land they began to grumble longingly, 'How we remember the fish that we used to eat in Egypt, the cucumbers, watermelons, leeks, onions and garlic!' (Numbers 11:5) Though enjoying light and freedom, they longed for the Egyptian darkness and garlic.

[6] Christians, too, face the danger of turning away from the light. Paul warned that men would arise in the congregation and draw away disciples. (Acts 20: 29, 30) This happened even while he was on earth. (Philippians 3:18; 2 Timothy 2: 16-18) More to the point, do you know some in our time who, in one way or another, have turned away? Might that happen to us?

[7] Few Christians today would willingly choose darkness over light. So what sort of things might induce a brother or a sister (any one of us) to turn away? Some insight is provided in what Paul wrote at Galatians 4:9: "Now that you have come to know God, or rather now that you have come to be known by God, how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elementary things and want to slave for them over again?"

[8] Evidently some Jewish Christians were advocating that they should return to keeping the Mosaic Law, or at least parts of it. Paul, though, wrote that true worshipers have been set free from the Law. (Galatians 5:1-6) Since the Law could not produce righteousness, in a sense it was weak, to be replaced with a "better hope" or arrangement. (Hebrews 7:18, 19) Thus it could be said that those who returned to keeping the Law were 'turning back to a weak' thing and 'slaving for it over again.'

[9] It was fitting also to warn against turning back to "beggarly elementary things." The Greek expression involved here had the idea of alphabetic letters placed in a row, thus implying the ABC's of a matter. Certainly the pagan teachings prevailing then were "beggarly elementary things." Though the Greeks took pride in their philosophies, these were based on human concepts, misconceptions and myths. But even returning to the Mosaic Law would be 'turning back to the beggarly elementary things.' How so?

[10] Though the Law was of divine origin, much of it dealt with things in the human sphere, such as the tabernacle and related "legal requirements pertaining to the flesh." However, Christian worship centered on the spiritual things typified by those physical "typical representations." (Hebrews 9:6-10, 23) So why should Christians turn back to those elementary, rudimentary things? If you had studied mathematics to the point of being an expert in algebra or calculus, would you revert to counting on your fingers and toes?—Compare 2 Peter 2:20-22.

Weak and Beggarly Things Today

[11] Likely, few of us feel in danger of turning back to the "weak and beggarly elementary things" of Greek philosophy or of the Law. Yet that counsel

6. Why should we be concerned about persons who turn from the light?
7. Paul gave the Galatians what counsel in this regard?
8. Why was that counsel needed, and how did it apply to the Law?

9, 10. How could the warning about "beggarly elementary things" apply to (a) Greek teachings? (b) the Mosaic Law?
11. Galatians 4:9 might be applied to what danger today?

Many couples, by guarding against 'a showy display of their means of life,' have been helped to increase Christian activities

was put in the Bible for our benefit too. There is, for example, the possibility of turning back to what 1 John 2:16 terms "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life."

[12] Some think that a "showy display of one's means of life" implies flaunting designer-name clothing or excessive jewelry, such as wearing four or five rings at the same time. (James 2: 2, 3) And it may, for the Bible counsels against concentrating on adornments such as "gold ornaments." (1 Peter 3:3) But a "showy display of one's means" can be made in other ways. A Christian might envy the life-style of people without hope who live for material things. In some lands people strive to get and then show off what locally are luxuries, such as a color television or a small automobile. Elsewhere people take pride in or intend to impress others with a new videotape recorder or luxury automobile. Will the Christian, who has "left all things and followed" Christ, develop an interest in showing off such things? We can ask ourselves: Do material possessions absorb more of my time and thoughts than when I 'heard the word, accepted it with joy' and put it to work in my life?—Matthew 19:16-27; 13:20-22.

[13] Or a Christian might turn back to the beggarly elementary things over hous-

12. Illustrate how some Christians might succumb to a danger involving 1 John 2:16.

13. (a) How could Paul's counsel apply even to the matter of housing? (b) What should a Christian be careful about as to moving to a larger home? (Read Luke 12:16-21.)

ing. In some areas private homes are very costly. Hence, many worldly people will buy a house for the image it creates, even if it means a crushing financial burden for them. Or materialistic people who do not have a growing family to accommodate might move from an average home to a larger one, and later to a still larger and grander one. (See Luke 17:28.) Thus, if a Christian were thinking of purchasing a home or moving to a larger one he should examine his own motives and possible effects on his spirituality so that he would not be 'turning back to the elementary things' through a wrong motive. We certainly should resist any temptation to desire opulence that will impress others with our "means of life." (1 John 2:16) Without judging others in such matters, let us individually keep putting God's service first in *our* lives. How happy we can be to see many mature Christians, whose situation in any way allows for it, reducing their work hours to make room for full-time pioneering, certainly not a weak or beggarly matter!—Matthew 6: 31-34; 7:1-3; 9:36-38.

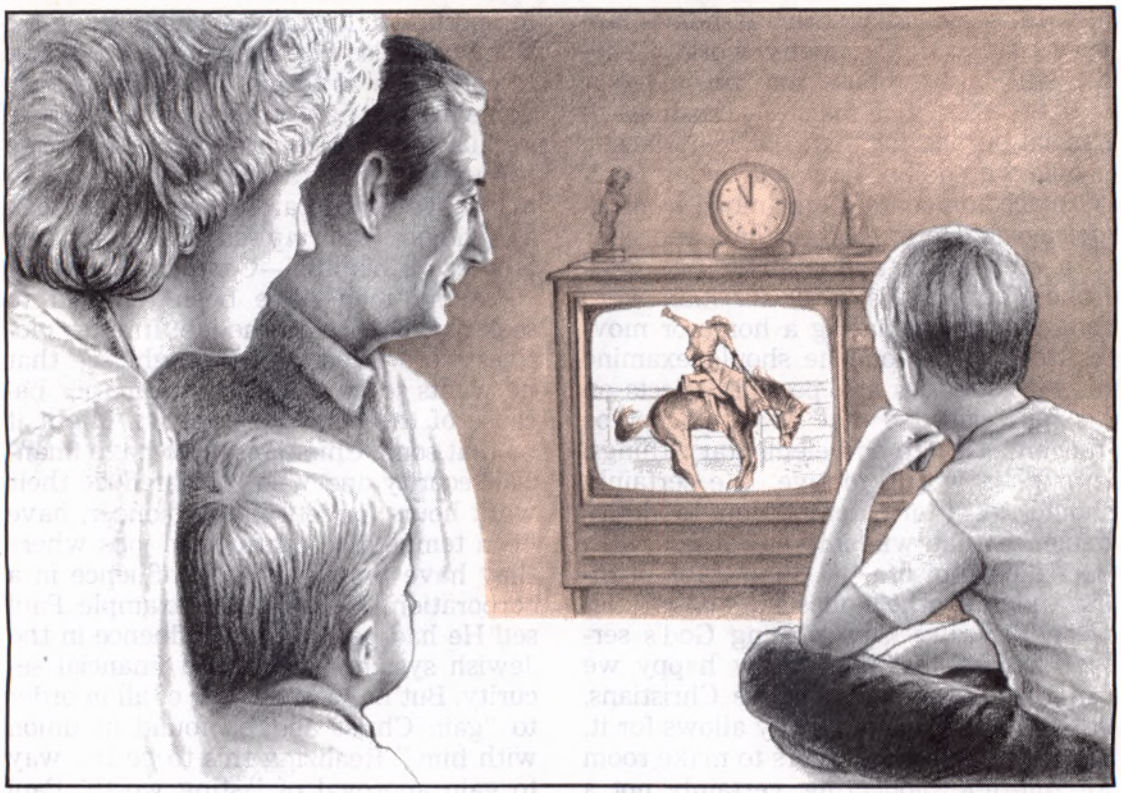
[14] Prominence in this system is another thing to which a Christian might "turn back." Admittedly, it is proper to want others to think well of us; Christian elders must "have a fine testimony from people on the outside." (1 Timothy 3:7) God's Word does advise, though, 'not to think more of ourselves than it is necessary to think.' (Romans 12:3) The world's emphasis on being *somebody* may make it difficult for a few to continue seeking Christian modesty and a good standing with God.

[15] Youths often face this, for teachers and students urge them to be prominent in sports, student government or clubs. They may also face pressure about going to college so as to get a prestigious job. Some parents have added to the pressure because of their own desire for prestige through a child's accomplishments. You may have heard parents say things such as, 'I do not want *my* son to be a common laborer all his life.'—Compare Mark 6:3.

[16] Many men have been tempted to seek prominence on the job. If inner motives were faced, a man might see that he wants to be a foreman primarily because of the prestige involved. Might it be that some Christians, who have financial security and who could reduce their work hours (or retire) and pioneer, have been tempted to continue in jobs where they have prominence or influence in a corporation? What a fine example Paul set! He had position and influence in the Jewish system, along with financial security. But he took the loss of all in order to "gain Christ and be found in union with him." Realizing this to be the way to gain approval of lasting worth, Paul never turned back to weak, elementary things.—Philippians 3:4-11.

[17] Few would deny that much of today's entertainment is "weak and beggarly." Selectivity is a must. Yet even with entertainment that does not clearly violate godly principles, care is needed because of the time and resources involved. Many games, electronic and other, can consume staggering amounts of time and money. Individually, or as a family, sit down and calculate realistically how much time and money you use on entertainment in an average week or month. In doing so, include television time. That is increasingly a problem as programmers offer more serials—even

14. How might someone 'turn back' in connection with prominence?
15. When could this be a problem for youths or parents?
16. Why might prominence be a danger for Christian men? Illustrate.
17. What danger about "turning back" is presented by entertainment?



How much time and money are you personally spending on entertainment?

of documentaries, historical presentations and sports play-offs—so that the viewer is drawn back repeatedly. Clearly, Christians must work to control how they use their limited time and resources so as not to be drawn back to weak and beggarly things.—Ephesians 2:2, 3.

[18] This is not to suggest that most of God's people turn back to such things. There are thousands, hundreds of thousands, yes millions of devoted witnesses of Jehovah who are adhering to true worship, and most have done so for years. You likely know many of them—Christians who could be described with words like Paul's: "We always thank God when we make mention concerning all of you in our prayers . . . You became imitators of . . . the Lord, seeing that you accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit, so that you came to be an example to all the believers." (1 Thessalonians 1:2, 6, 7) Each of us should be like that and resolve not to 'turn back again to the weak and beggarly elementary things.' Nor is there any reason why we should turn back.

18. Most Christians have followed what admirable course?

Seek Out the Spiritual Riches

[19] Genuine Christianity provides us with many powerful and rich things. Crucial

19, 20. Genuine Christianity has brought you what powerful and rich things?

to receiving many blessings is having a knowledge of the Scriptures. Even worldly scholars testify that the Bible consists of literature of the highest order. Yet we know that the Bible is much more; it is 'the Word of God, which is also at work in believers.' (1 Thessalonians 2:13) Yes, we know that it has the power to change lives, to impart valid hope and to show us what the future holds. By reading it we can receive messages provided by the Creator and can learn just what his Son said and did.—John 21:24, 25.

[20] With the help of God's people, you have learned from the Bible about Jehovah and can agree: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!" (Romans 11: 33) Beyond knowledge, you have "the pattern of healthful words." (2 Timothy 1:13) Many people have read the Bible for years but still do not get the sense of it. You, though, understand basically what it means. You can speak with understanding and an assurance that eludes even theologians.—Acts 4:13.

[21] You also have association of the best kind. Oh, your brothers and sisters may be imperfect and cause occasional irritation. On the whole, though, it is a real blessing to be among people who love God, who strive to apply Bible principles and who try to 'work what is good toward all, especially toward those related to them in the faith,' including you. (Galatians 6:10) Recently a pediatrician at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City commented on his personal experience. He told a visiting minister of Jehovah's Witnesses: 'Whatever it is that you are doing, keep doing it. You are turning out a marvelous type of people. All of us who have contact with them note how different they are, how calm and pleasant. So, please, whatever you are doing, keep doing it.' That is the sort of association you have.

[22] Another rich, powerful thing that you can delight in having is your Bible-based hope, whether that be immortality in the heavens or everlasting life on a Paradise earth. What sane person would abandon that? Finally, do not overlook the assignment of work you now have from Jehovah and for which he has powerfully equipped you. (2 Corinthians 10:4; Philippians 4:13) Disciple making takes effort, yes, but it also produces deep satisfaction and joy, for it helps others on the way to life. This activity can fill your mind and heart.

[23] It is perfectly clear, then, that genuine Christianity provides us with many powerful and rich things. Let us think on and appreciate what we have and be determined never to 'turn back to the weak and beggarly elementary things in general, nor to slave for them over again.'

21, 22. What other rich things have you received because of being a witness of Jehovah?

23. In regard to Galatians 4:9, what should you resolve to do?

Do You Recall?

- How were the Galatians in danger of 'turning back to weak and beggarly elementary things'?
- How might we 'turn back' in connection with
  - Material possessions?
  - A home?
  - Prominence?
  - Entertainment?
- How has Christianity provided you with powerful and rich things?

GENESIS
Inspires Faith, Hope and Courage

JEHOVAH is pleased only with those exercising implicit faith in him. And they surely have reason to trust him, for he is "the God who gives hope" and his grand promises never fail. True, as they await their fulfillment, hardship and trial may be encountered. But all who 'wait for Jehovah' can have undying courage because he always safeguards those serving him faithfully.—Romans 15:13; Psalm 31:23, 24; Hebrews 11:6.

All of this is well demonstrated in the Bible book of Genesis. Written by Moses in the wilderness of Sinai in 1513 B.C.E., this valued portion of God's Word inspires faith, hope and courage.

The Book in Brief

Reaching back billions of years, Genesis opens with the words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—things celestial and terrestrial. The earth is prepared for human habitation, and finally mankind stands before the Creator in perfection. Although Paradise is lost because of sin, Jehovah gives hope by foretelling a "seed" that would bruise the serpent's head. In faith, righteous Abel offers an acceptable sacrifice to God but suffers death at his brother's hand as the first martyred witness of Jehovah.—Genesis 1:1–4:26.

Enoch 'walks with God,' acting in harmony with the divine will. But conditions deteriorate as disobedient angelic 'sons of God' take women as wives and produce the Nephilim. Yet, with faith, hope and courage, Noah builds the ark, warns of the impending Deluge and ultimately escapes its devastation with his family. The pre-Flood world gone, mankind enters a new era. But in time Babel's tower builders seek to make a name for themselves, only to be thwarted when Jehovah confuses their language and scatters them earth wide.—Genesis 5:1–11:9.

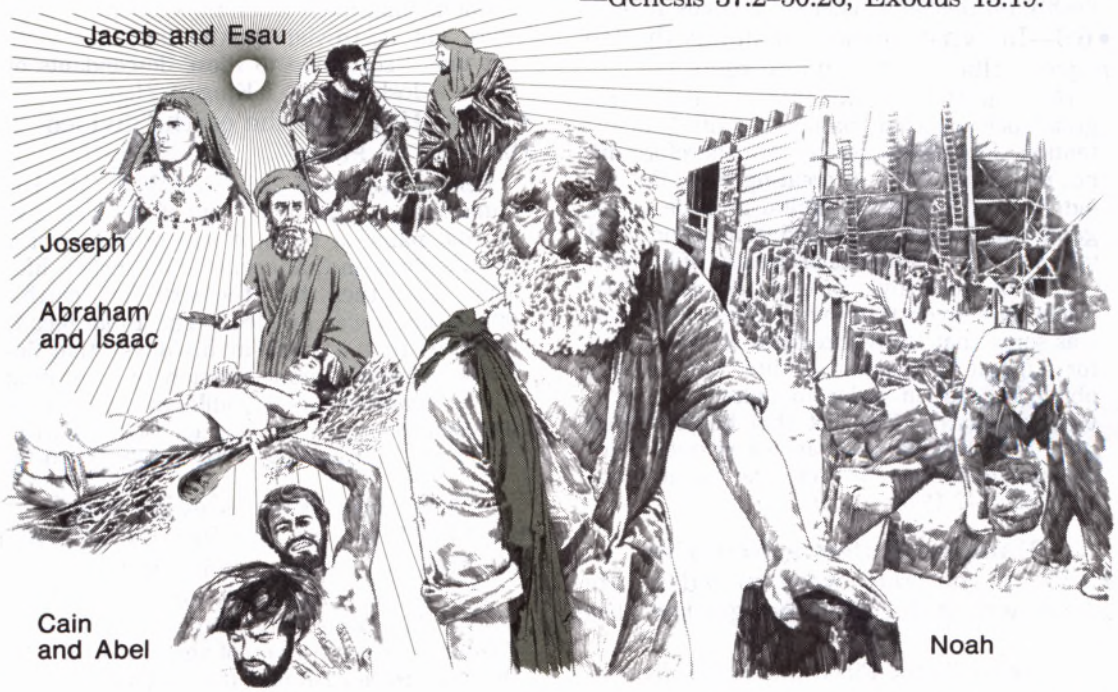
Acting in faith as God directs, Abram leaves Ur of the Chaldeans and becomes a tent dweller in a land Jehovah promises to give him and his descendants. Divine action is taken against the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and nearby cities. In time a promise of God is fulfilled in the birth of Isaac. However, years later Abraham is greatly tested when Jehovah instructs him to offer this son as a sacrifice. Stopped by an angel, the aging patriarch does not have to carry out this act. But now there is no doubt that he is a man of faith, and he is

During the month of June, Jehovah's Witnesses will begin a study of the Bible book of Genesis. For some time this stirring account will be considered in their weekly Theocratic Ministry School. As an aid to understanding, this article is now published, and we trust that it will answer questions you may have regarding Genesis, a truly absorbing, faith-building portion of the Holy Scriptures.

assured that by means of his seed all nations will bless themselves. The death of Abraham's beloved wife Sarah brings sorrow, but he can look ahead with assured hope in the resurrection.—Genesis 11:10–23:20; Hebrews 11:8-19.

Through his servant, Abraham arranges for Isaac's marriage to Rebekah, a woman having faith in Jehovah. In time she gives birth to the twins Esau and Jacob. Esau despises the birthright and sells it to Jacob, who later receives his father's blessing. Jacob flees to Paddan-aram, where he marries Leah and Rachel and tends the flocks of their father, Laban, for some 20 years before departing with his family. Later, Jacob grapples with an angel, is blessed and has his name changed to Israel. As a man of faith having an assured hope, Israel continues to dwell as an alien in Canaan, the land of promise.—Genesis 24:1–37:1.

Jealousy moves Jacob's sons to sell their brother Joseph as a slave. In Egypt, Joseph's faithful and courageous adherence to God's high moral standards results in his imprisonment. But in time he is brought forth from prison to interpret, with Jehovah's help, Pharaoh's dreams that foretell seven years of plenty followed by seven of famine. He is made Egypt's food administrator. Joseph's brothers seek food in Egypt but do not recognize him. He tests them first, then finally reveals his true identity. Faithful Jacob is reunited with his long-lost son, and the patriarch's family is settled in the fertile land of Goshen. On his deathbed Jacob blesses his sons and is moved to foretell that the scepter and the commander's staff will not depart from Judah until the coming of Shiloh—a prophecy that gives sure hope of great blessings in centuries to come. Jacob's remains are taken to Canaan for burial, and when Joseph dies at the age of 110 his body is embalmed, one day to be transported to the Promised Land. —Genesis 37:2–50:26; Exodus 13:19.



By reading Genesis carefully you will derive great benefit from this stirring account of faith, hope and courage. In doing this, however, you may have questions. Some of those queries may be answered as we take a closer look at the Bible's opening book.

The Pre-Flood World

• 1:26—How was man made in the image and likeness of God?

God's form is unknown to man. (Deuteronomy 4:15-20) But man was made in Jehovah's image and likeness in that he was created with such attributes of God as justice, wisdom, power and love. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 12:13; Isaiah 40:26; 1 John 4:8) Since these qualities are also possessed by God's Son, the Word, Jehovah appropriately said to him: "Let *us* make man in *our* image, according to *our* likeness."—John 1:1-3, 14.

• 4:17—Where did Cain get his wife?

Adam "became father to sons and *daughters.*" (Genesis 5:4) So Cain took one of his sisters as a wife. Later, God's Law to the Israelites did not permit the marriage of a fleshly brother and sister.—Leviticus 18:9.

• 6:6—In what sense did Jehovah 'feel regrets' that he had made men?

Here the Hebrew word translated "felt regrets" pertains to a change of attitude or intention. Jehovah is perfect and therefore did not make a mistake in creating man. But He did have a change of mental attitude as regards the wicked pre-Flood generation. God turned from the attitude of Creator of humans to that of a destroyer of them because of his displeasure over their wickedness. Jehovah was sorry that the wickedness of man called for a great destruction of life, but he was obliged to act in order to uphold his righteous standards. The fact that he preserved some humans shows that his regrets were confined to those who had gone bad in word and deed.—2 Peter 2:5, 9.

Mankind Enters a New Era

• 8:11—If the trees were ruined by the Flood, where did the dove get the olive leaf?

Undoubtedly the Flood waters did adversely affect many trees. However, the olive is quite a hardy tree. So an olive tree might have remained alive under water for some months during the Deluge. With the abating of the Flood waters, an olive tree that had been submerged would again be on dry ground and could put forth leaves, one of which could easily be obtained by the dove. On the other hand, the olive leaf carried to Noah by the dove could have been taken from a fairly young sprout that had come up after the Flood waters had abated.

• 9:24, 25—Why did Noah curse Canaan when Ham was the offender?

Very likely Canaan was guilty of some abuse or perversion against the person of his grandfather Noah, and Ham witnessed this without interfering. Instead, Noah's son Ham appears to have spread the story, whereas Shem and Japheth acted to cover their father. Therefore, they were blessed, the likely perpetrator Canaan was cursed, and the bystander and talebearer Ham suffered through the shame brought upon his offspring. Although the Scriptures do not provide all the details, the important point is that Jehovah caused Noah to utter the prophecy and God brought about its fulfillment when the Canaanites who were not destroyed by the Israelites were put under servitude to those descendants of Shem.—Joshua 9:23; 1 Kings 9:21.

• 10:25—How was the earth "divided" in the days of Peleg?

Peleg lived from 2269 to 2030 B.C.E. His name meant "division," and if he was given that name at birth, it was prophetic of a notable division that occurred during his lifetime. It was then that "the earth [or, "earth's population"] was divided." The Bible record indicates that it was "in his days" that Jehovah caused a great division by confusing the language of Babel's builders and 'scattering them over all the surface of the earth.' —Genesis 11:9; see also 10:1, 6, 8-10; 11:10-17.

Patriarchs With Abiding Faith

• 15:13—How was the foretold 400-year affliction of Abram's offspring fulfilled?

This period of affliction ran from 1913 to 1513 B.C.E. When Abraham's son Isaac was weaned at about 5 years of age in 1913 B.C.E., his half brother Ishmael (then about 19 years

old) 'poked fun' at him. The seriousness of this mocking of Abraham's heir is clear from Sarah's reaction and Jehovah's approval of her insistence that Hagar and her son Ishmael be sent away. (Genesis 21:8-14; Galatians 4: 29) This 400-year period of affliction ended with the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage in 1513 B.C.E.

• 19:30-38—Did Jehovah condone Lot's getting drunk and fathering sons by his two daughters?

Jehovah condones neither incest nor drunkenness. (Leviticus 18:6, 7, 29; 1 Corinthians 6: 9, 10) Moreover, Abraham's nephew Lot deplored the "lawless deeds" of Sodom's inhabitants and evidently grieved over the wrong conduct in which he himself got involved, for the Examiner of hearts viewed him as "righteous." (2 Peter 2:8) The very fact that Lot's daughters got him intoxicated suggests that they realized he would not consent to having sexual relations with them while he was sober. But as aliens in the land, his daughters felt that this was the only way to prevent the extinction of Lot's family. The account is in the Bible not to arouse erotic thoughts but to reveal the relationship of the Moabites and the Ammonites to Abraham's descendants, the Israelites.

• 28:12, 13—What was the significance of Jacob's dream involving a "ladder"?

This "ladder" (which may have looked like a rising flight of stones) indicated that there is communication between earth and heaven. It showed that angels minister between Jehovah and humans having his approval. —Compare John 1:51.

• 31:19—What were the teraphim that Rachel stole from Laban?

The teraphim were family gods or idols. Archaeological findings in Mesopotamia indicate that possession of such images had a bearing on who would receive the family inheritance. Possibly Rachel had this in mind and reasoned that she was justified in taking the teraphim because of her father Laban's deceptive dealings with her husband Jacob. (Genesis 31:14-16) But there is no indication that Jacob ever tried to use the teraphim to gain the family inheritance. At the latest, these idols were disposed of when Jacob buried all the foreign gods turned over to him by his household.—Genesis 35:1-4.

• 44:5—Did Joseph actually use a cup to read omens?

Joseph was determined to test his brothers, who did not recognize him. So he commanded his servant to fill their bags with food, place each one's money in the mouth of his bag and put Joseph's silver cup in the mouth of Benjamin's bag. In all of this, Joseph was representing himself as an administrator of a pagan land. Hence, the cup and what was said about it evidently were part of a subterfuge. As a faithful worshiper of Jehovah, Joseph did not really use the cup to read omens, even as Benjamin did not actually steal it.

• 49:10—Is there a difference between a scepter and a commander's staff?

Yes. A scepter is a baton carried by a ruler as a symbol of royal authority. The commander's staff is a long rod serving as a token of power to command. Jacob's reference to both of them evidently indicated that significant authority and power would reside with the tribe of Judah until the coming of Shiloh. This descendant of Judah is Jesus Christ, the one upon whom Jehovah has bestowed heavenly rulership. Christ holds royal authority and possesses the power to command.—Psalm 2: 8, 9; Isaiah 55:4; Daniel 7:13, 14.

Basis for Faith, Hope and Courage

Genesis clearly gives us a basis for faith, hope and courage. It inspires faith in Jehovah and hope in the promised "seed" of blessing. (Genesis 3:15; 22:18) This book also helps us to face the future with courage, as did early witnesses of Jehovah.

Those servants of God were "reaching out for a better place, . . . one belonging to heaven," and Jehovah "has made a city ready for them." (Hebrews 11:15, 16) As they looked ahead to the Kingdom arrangement, may we, too, place our confidence in it. And, like those witnesses of Jehovah, may we have true faith, hope and courage.

Insight on the News

"Whore of Babylon"

A feature column in the Canadian newsmagazine *Maclean's* recently declared: "It may be time for all good men, Christian or otherwise, to take the offensive against those elements in churches of all denominations that have crossed the line separating legitimate critics of society from enemies of the state." Putting the matter in "historical perspective," columnist Barbara Amiel went on to say:

"An observer might be forgiven for suggesting that the church, in this century, seems to have found its Whore of Babylon in the persona of whoever happened to be the strongest dictator of the moment. The actions of the Vatican, for example, have ranged from common cause with Franco in Spain to détente with Hitler and Mussolini." Then, like a prostitute, "when the Nazis finally were ground into the dust, elements within all major churches . . . started the same flirtation" with communism.

But are those with whom these clerical activists 'flirt' actually the "Whore of Babylon," or is it the other way around? Clearly, the real "great whore," called "Babylon the great" in the Bible, is the one with whom "the kings of the earth have committed fornication"—politically promiscuous religion. The Bible goes on to show that, ultimately, irritation (such as that voiced by the *Maclean's* columnist) on the part of these "kings" will turn to a "hate" that will kindle destruction of the "Whore of Babylon" —"burn her to ashes."—Revelation 17:1-5, 12, 16, *The New English Bible.*

Loving the Lie

"Neighbors Urge Release of Reputed Mobster," proclaimed a recent headline in *The New York Times.* The report described two and a half days of testimony by more than 30 neighbors on behalf of a "reputed member of the Mafia [underworld]." He was portrayed as "a stabilizing influence and peacemaker in a tough, working-class area." Said one man: "He's very well liked, a law-abiding citizen." Yet FBI wiretap tapes of the man's telephone conversations were said to be "filled with obscenities and references to Mafia business."

This situation illustrates how today's world is so readily subject to behind-the-scenes manipulation. Though the Bible clearly states that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," most are duped by Satan's use of seemingly benevolent religious and political fronts. (1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 11: 13-15) Even when presented with such facts as the FBI tapes, many people choose to maintain their comfortable relationship with this camouflaged evil. They love it that way!

A strikingly similar situation in ancient Israel moved God himself to grieve: "Monstrous, horrible things are happening in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, the priests teach whatever they please. And my people love it!" Then Jehovah left them with something to think about: "But when the end comes, what will you do?"—Jeremiah 5:30, 31, *The Jerusalem Bible.*

Excommunication Passé?

"Excommunication . . . no longer invokes the dread and stigma of times past," wrote columnist Charles W. Bell of the *New York Sunday News,* noting that "the Lutheran Church in America, . . . dropped the word 'excommunication' from its Approved Constitution for Congregations." "It's a quaint relic," says Wolfe Kelman of the Rabbinical Assembly of Conservative rabbis. Priest Edwin F. O'Brien, director of communications for the archdiocese of New York, notes that it "is used rarely and sparely." So, says Bell, "the great age of excommunication is past, with the possible exceptions of Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, where it is fairly common and is taken seriously."

Modern religious leaders continue to water down Biblical directives so as to retain paying membership. Today's church "lump" finds itself fermented by the "leaven" that is allowed to remain. That is why the apostle Paul demanded that Christians "remove the wicked man" from the Corinthian congregation, "not even eating with such a man." Jehovah's Witnesses take seriously the matter of disfellowshipping those who are unrepentant in spite of kindly help.—1 Corinthians 5:6, 9-13.

Delighted to Serve as Jehovah Wills

As told by Emil H. Van Daalen

AFTEREFFECTS of World War I were being felt in all the earth. The financial crash of 1929 caused many to commit suicide due to the loss of their savings. This was followed by widespread drought, blinding dust storms, plagues of grasshoppers, low crop yields, rock-bottom prices for livestock and grains and soaring unemployment. To top it all off, the threat of another war loomed on the horizon. Yes, as foretold in the Bible, 'men were becoming faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth.'—Luke 21:26.

At that time our family was living on a farm in eastern South Dakota—my parents, their seven sons and one daughter. Mother and Father had already experienced World War I, had lost a farm and were trying to make a comeback on another. With so many sons the fear of another war caused them great distress.

Learning to Do Jehovah's Will

Little did I then know that a certain expression of the Biblical psalmist would largely govern most of my life. These were David's inspired words: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted." (Psalm 40:8) It all started back in 1932.

In that year Edward Larson, a traveling salesman, came displaying his spices, soaps and the like. But he had something more important—a message. He told us that the churches were not teaching the truth, that Jesus Christ was ruling as heavenly King, that the good news of the Kingdom had to be preached and that after God's war of Armageddon the righteous would enjoy eternal life.—Revelation 16:14, 16; 21:1-4.

My mother, in particular, was greatly impressed. A nearby family also became interested. Hence, soon there were three families, including the Larsons, that "received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures."—Acts 17:11.

About this same time Ralph Vittum, a pioneer (a full-time Kingdom proclaimer) traveling in an old Model-T Ford, came to our door. My parents invited him to room with us while he was witnessing to the people in the area. We would stay up until twelve or one o'clock at night while he explained the truth about the Kingdom and exposed the churches' teachings on hell, the Trinity, immortality of the soul and other false doctrines. Although we did not have a formal Bible study, we were beginning to understand God's purpose for mankind and how we could

do the divine will. What a relief and joy that was, especially for my parents!

In time we met more Witnesses. Thus we were absorbed into the congregation of Jehovah's servants.

A New Purpose in Life

This all began when I was a senior in high school. In 1934 I started in the field ministry and was baptized two years later. During that difficult period of drought and dust storms, I spent two weeks witnessing in isolated territory. We cooked our own meals and slept on the ground or in the car, wherever we happened to be at the end of the day. But we were happy, knowing that we were doing Jehovah's will.

On that particular trip, we met a woman who had obtained the booklet *Dividing the People*. On reading it, she recognized the message as truth, ordered a large number of these booklets from the Watch Tower Society and was distributing them among her neighbors and friends. She became a very zealous witness of Jehovah.

In October 1938 my brother Arthur and I started pioneering. We worked mostly rural territory in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. Later we were joined by another fleshly brother, Homer, and Brother Carrol Tompkins. By then we had a house trailer and two cars. We worked territory in Missouri, Louisiana and Iowa. While in Sioux City during 1941, we received special pioneer assignments to Watertown, South Dakota.

Serving During the Early War Years

World War II was in progress, and the young men were being called for military service. But none of us had to go because of our ministerial status as full-time Kingdom preachers. It upset the farmers around Watertown to see four young men of military age 'wasting their time going from door to door with Bible literature' while their sons were involved in the war. One Saturday night we were on the street offering our Bible journals when officers of the law came and took us to the police station. They told us that we had to leave town within two weeks or we would be arrested. Naturally, we considered this our assignment from Jehovah and so felt as the apostles did when ordered to stop preaching: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

Two weeks later, as we were leaving our cottage for the field ministry, the police came, put us under arrest and took us to jail. That night the city attorney—the prime mover behind it all—questioned us one by one, and the interrogation continued until the early hours of the morning. We spent four days in jail. They charged us with many things, but the charge that was used all the way through to the State Supreme Court was that we were to collect a one-cent sales tax for each 25-cent publication we placed and were to remit it to the government. The Supreme Court ruled that due to the nature of our work such tax would be illegal. Thus Jehovah blessed us with a victory, and today there is a flourishing congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Watertown.

Training for Future Service

It was now 1942. The war was raging, but it seemed clear that there was much work yet to be done in fulfillment of Jesus' words: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them . . . , teaching them." —Matthew 28:19, 20.

My two brothers and I received applications to attend the first class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Imagine our surprise and joy! Who were we to be blessed with such a grand privilege? We were advised that we might

never return to our homes again this side of Armageddon. It was a time of decision. But there was only one answer: To do Jehovah's will was our delight. (Psalm 40:8) Besides, our cup was full and running over when we learned that our fleshly brother Leo and his wife Eunice would be fellow students. This would make six of us of the same family in that first class.

After splendid months of instruction, I had the privilege of receiving special training at Brooklyn Bethel, together with two of my brothers. Thereafter, we were sent out as circuit overseers. I was privileged to visit most of the congregations in the states of Iowa and Nebraska. Finally, my missionary assignment was received. It was Puerto Rico, with my brother Leo, his wife Eunice and my cousin Donald. What a blessing! Jehovah's loving-kindness truly was evident.

Pursuing Jehovah's Will in New Fields

We arrived in Puerto Rico on March 13, 1944. Now came the big test. We felt small and alone in a population of about 2,000,000. Our ability to understand and speak Spanish was so limited! Could we stick it out? Was our faith sufficiently well grounded? Did we truly believe it was Jehovah's will that we be there? Time would tell.

The second day after arriving we ventured out to witness to our neighbors in our halting Spanish. Soon we lost our timidity as the people showed great kindness and patience. We met the two pioneer sisters already there and the few spiritual brothers and sisters in Santurce and Arecibo. They were overjoyed to know that they were going to receive help. The placement of literature was phenomenal. We found so much interest that it was impossible to study with all those desiring to learn the truth. In a letter, shortly after our arrival, I asked the Watch Tower Society to send more missionaries, and soon we were joined by my fleshly brothers Arthur and Homer. Later, many more missionaries were sent.

I was sent to several cities, this giving me opportunity to help a number of individuals learn the truth and dedicate themselves to Jehovah. One experience distinctly remembered is that involving Susana Mangual, who was in her 60's. She lived in a house built about eight feet (2.5 m) off the ground. Steps led up to the porch. She was a heavy smoker, already having a bad cough, and she had not been down off the porch in a long time. When I called, she quickly showed interest, and soon a Bible study was in progress. She progressed rapidly in the truth. On the way to a Christian assembly, on the other side of the island, she decided to quit smoking and get baptized. Returning home, Susana no longer stayed in the house but was out in the field service with the brothers. After a period of time she became a regular pioneer.

The work continued to expand in Puer-

to Rico until it was necessary to have a full-time circuit overseer. It appeared to be Jehovah's will for me to enjoy this privilege, and soon I was visiting the congregations, missionary homes and isolated groups throughout Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. But with the progress of the work another change was to take place.

In November 1951 I received a letter from the Society inviting me to be the branch overseer in Cuba. This was too much for me to believe. How could I handle the work in a branch that had oversight of nearly 10,000 publishers of the Kingdom? Although I felt very inadequate for the responsibility, it appeared to be Jehovah's will, and so I would try.

Besides my receiving Jehovah's help, the four brothers in the office patiently worked along with me. I spent two wonderful years there and became acquainted with hundreds of spiritual brothers and sisters. Many are very close to my heart, and I think of them often.

Yet another change was about to take place. For Scriptural reasons I asked for a transfer back to Puerto Rico, and the request was granted. Upon returning, I was asked by the Society to look after the branch work there, which would mean long hours of work. But, again, if this was Jehovah's will, that was sufficient reason for me to accept. It was good to be back among the missionaries and the Puerto Rican brothers and sisters. Before long one of the missionary sisters and I decided that we could serve Jehovah as a married couple. So in March 1959 Bettyjane Rapp became Bettyjane Van Daalen. We have been happily married ever since.

The preaching and teaching work was advancing and Jehovah's blessing was apparent. Nevertheless, another change was shaping up.

Joyfully Continuing to Do the Divine Will

Early in 1963 I was invited to attend a 10-month Gilead School course for branch overseers and their assistants. Ronald Parkin, who had been in the previous class, would look after the branch in my absence. At the end of the course, Jehovah had another responsibility for me, that of caring for the Kingdom-preaching activity in the Bahama Islands.

Serving in the Bahamas proved to be a wonderful experience. My wife and I found that the people there are friendly, religiously inclined and tolerant. They are willing to spend time discussing the Bible. Experiences with the publication *My Book of Bible Stories* will prove the point.

When Jehovah's Witnesses were offering this book in their door-to-door activity, a 76-year-old sister, while auxiliary pioneering, placed over 100 copies. Another sister, living isolated on an out island received 60 copies and placed these before the month had passed. Yes, the Bahamian people hold the Bible in high esteem.

During the 18 years that my wife and I were in the Bahamas, the Kingdom-preaching work made fine progress because of our heavenly Father's blessing. Jehovah's Witnesses are well known in the islands, and many fine brothers and sisters are expending themselves to search out the humble sheeplike ones while there is yet time.

Now that we are serving in Florida in the full-time preaching work, we can look back on many happy years of praising God on Caribbean islands. We have found that rich blessings always result from yielding to the direction of God's spirit. Indeed, the greatest happiness—true delight—comes from serving as Jehovah wills.

An Excellent Education

IT HAS been said that by reading the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, along with other publications of Jehovah's Witnesses, a person will receive, over a period of years, a considerable and broad education. To illustrate, one of Jehovah's Witnesses wrote the following letter:

"I quit school in the 9th grade about twenty-five years ago. I have had no secular schooling since then. I should have, by all rights, stagnated mentally. Due to economic circumstances—I had to go to work full time to support my family—I found it necessary to go back to school for a high school diploma. I began school two days ago and the teacher decided to give me a test like the one I will have to pass to get my diploma. The test covered such subjects as science, law, social studies and reading comprehension. I told the teacher I didn't want to take it because I knew I wouldn't do well. But she insisted.

"The result was that I scored one of the highest grades. The test grade needed to obtain the diploma is 35, which is the average score. I scored in the 55 range, or 4th year college level. Why am I telling this? Because the main source of my reading in the last eight years has been the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses. I am an avid reader of them and do quite a bit of research.

"In the test that I took, I recognized that many of the answers were found in recent issues of our publications. For example, on science there were questions about fluorocarbons, a subject that had been discussed in *Awake!* It was similar with questions regarding physics, law and other subjects, including recent news events. Such events had been covered in the 'Watching the World' section of *Awake!* Also, my reading comprehension was exceptionally good. This is due to the fact that I read so much, which is necessary in order to keep up with the large volume of publications of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"The credit goes to Jehovah God for educating his people in every way. I still can't believe the results of the test, and so I had to share this experience with you. You should know just how valuable our magazines and books really are, and the work that you do in providing them is really benefiting us in every way. I thank both you and Jehovah for giving me an education I never realized I even had until it was put to the test. It has given me quite a bit of confidence in myself, which is something I needed at a time when the financial burden is going to fall on my shoulders."

Would you like to grow in knowledge, obtaining an education of even much greater value than can be received in any college? You can do so by reading regularly this magazine and its companion, *Awake!* Not only will these journals help you to keep up with world events but they will also help you to see how these events fulfill the Bible prophecies regarding the time of the end of this entire system of things. Yes, regularly reading these publications not only will improve your knowledge of secular matters but will also provide you with knowledge that will put you in line to live forever in God's righteous new system.—John 17:3; 2 Peter 3:13.