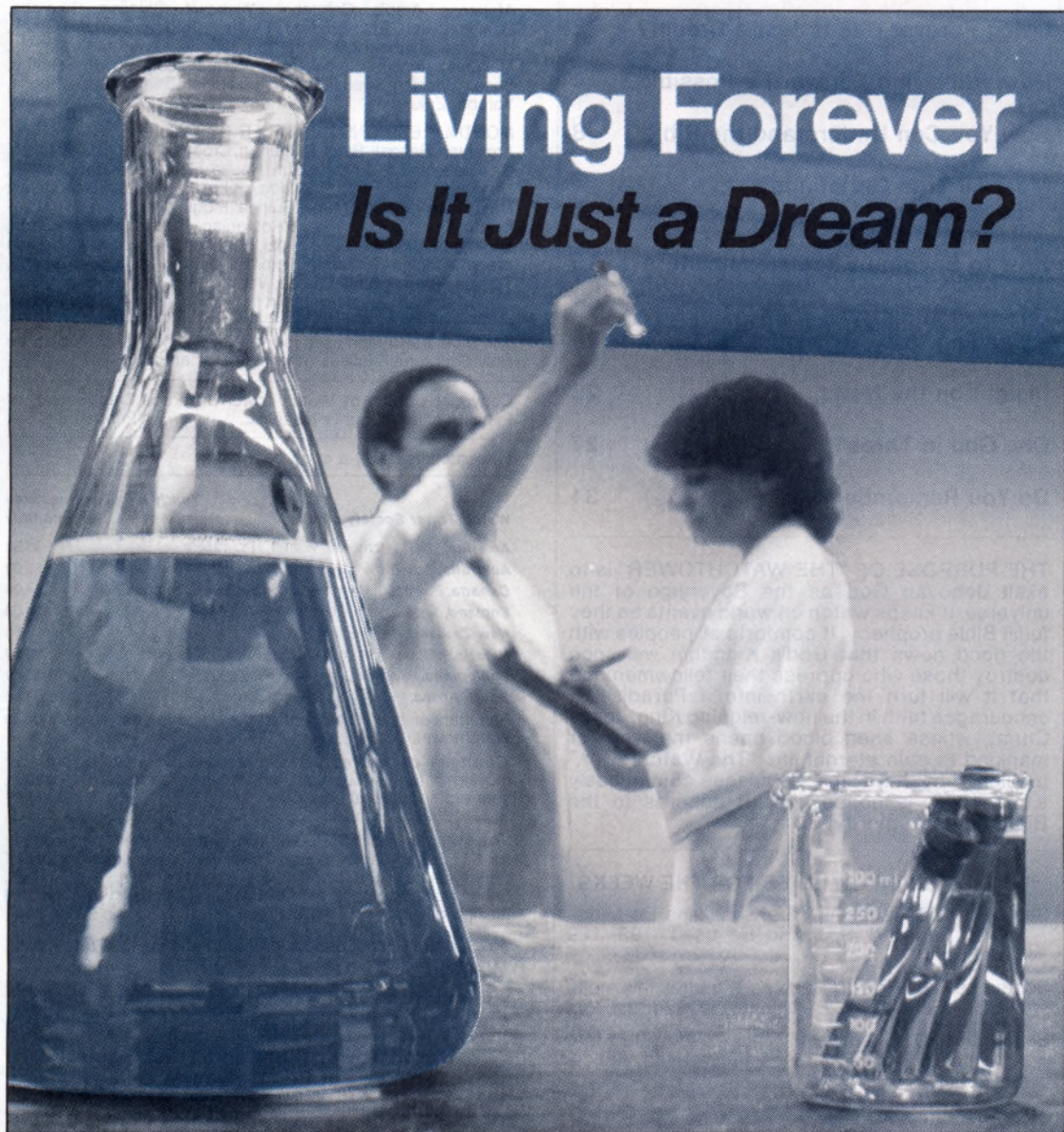


August 15, 1984

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Living Forever
Is It Just a Dream?



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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.

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September 16: Must All True Christians Be Ministers? Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 192, 129 (6, 66).

September 23: How to Become Effective Ministers. Page 15. Songs to Be Used: 209, 92 (33, 51).

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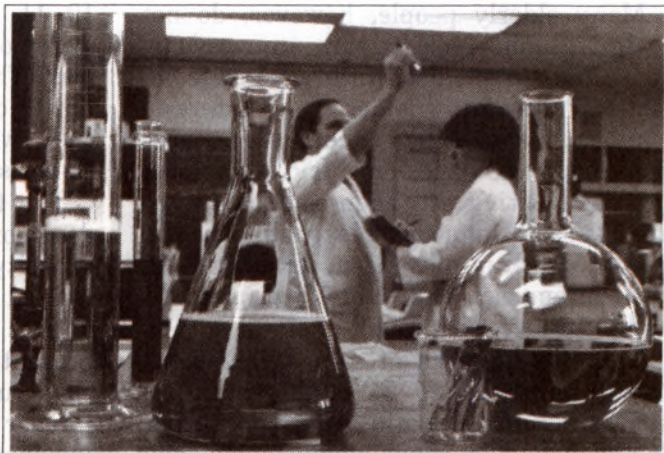
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Frederick W. Franz, President

Living Forever

Is It Just a Dream?



THE scene is a beautiful farm in southern Africa. A flock of guinea fowl is roaming over the hills. Suddenly they panic. Two black eagles sail over and swoop as the guinea fowl, cackling hysterically, scuttle for cover. One of the eagles makes a kill and begins to enjoy a meal. Some guinea fowl calm down and return to searching for food nearby—the death of their companion leaves them indifferent.

All animals instinctively try to avoid death, but they usually seem to be little affected when others die. The slaughter of an antelope by a lion or other predator causes only a mild reaction from the rest of the herd. It is a routine event of the present life-and-death cycle.

How different it is with most humans! To see a fellow human die is a traumatic experience—except to those few who have become hardened to death. Normally, the death of a loved one is one of the most stressful things humans experience. It can even trigger the suicide of the bereaved.

We live in a turbulent age when suicides are increasing and millions of people live miserably. Yet the vast majority do all they can to stave off what the Bible calls a great “enemy,” death.—1 Corinthians 15:26.

The Elixir of Life

For many centuries, men called alchemists tried hard to discover the elixir of life. This was a mysterious substance that was supposed to ensure people’s living forever. For a long time many dreamed of and searched for this elixir. But, obviously, the alchemists failed.

Recently, however, improved hygiene, medical science and other factors have raised life expectancy considerably. According to one report, “for humanity as a whole, life expectancy has more than doubled, from 30 years in 1900 to well into the sixties today.” Some may thus feel that modern scientists may discover the key or keys to extended—even endless—life. Do you?

Whatever people may hope in that regard, a truth stated millennia ago still applies:

“The days of our years are seventy years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things; for it must quickly pass by, and away we fly.”—Psalm 90:10.

As you undoubtedly have observed, only a small minority live beyond the 80’s.

Many elderly people, however, do not resign themselves to an approaching death but take a deep interest in life. In fact, as they grow older their interests may multiply. They accumulate vast knowledge and experience and participate in many activities. Then suddenly they are cut off. To normal, reasonably healthy people, death is unwanted, unnatural. As one centenarian said: "I don't want to die as I'm in love with life."

The Bible speaks of *animals* as being "born naturally to be caught and destroyed." But concerning *mankind* it says: "God . . . has even put eternity into their minds." (2 Peter 2:12; Ecclesiastes 3:

10, 11, *Byington*) In other words, animals were not purposed to live forever, but man was. The first human pair were created not to die but to live eternally—provided they were obedient to God.—Compare Genesis 2:15-17.

The fact is that your brain gives evidence of this. The human brain has a vast capacity for knowledge; only a small part is used in the present lifetime.

Does all of this not indicate that the present life-and-death cycle is not the way God purposed it to be and that living forever is not just a dream? What a thrilling thought! Is there, then, a real elixir of life? Is living forever for you?

How Will Living Forever Be Possible?

FROM where does life come? Atheists claim it came about by accident. A scientific work says: "Living organisms probably began in a very modest way when, in a world of lifeless rocks, certain chemical elements came together to form complex molecules. In due course collections of these came to be imbued with the ability to feed and reproduce."

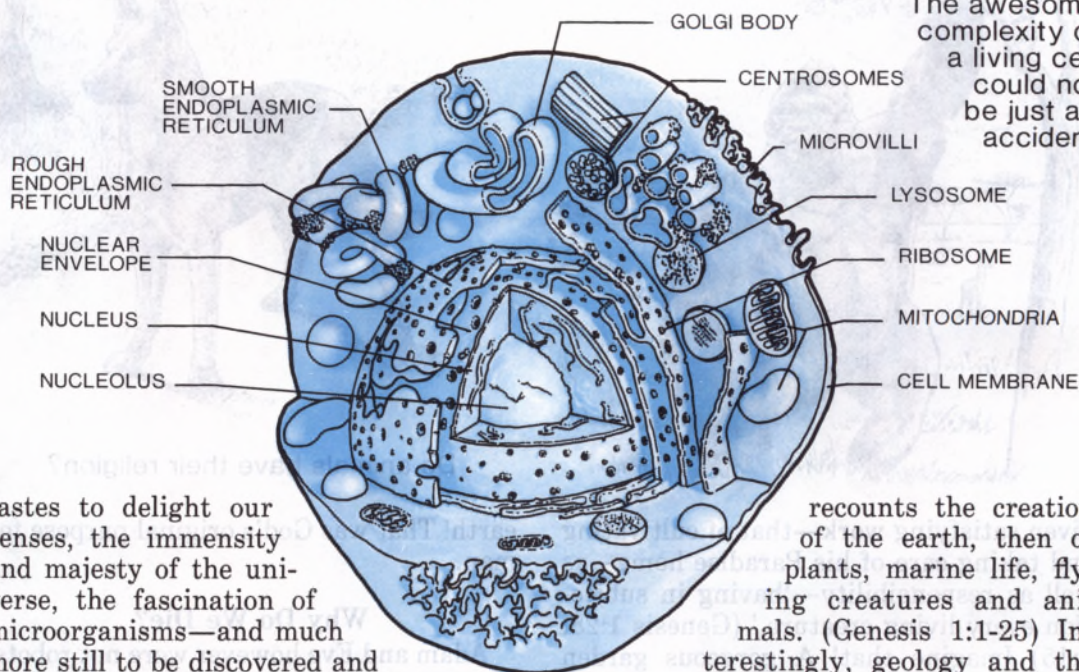
Does that sound convincing to you? The word "probably" shows that it is a guess. All living cells are extremely complex. If we set aside speculation and even educated guesses, we face the fact that "the ability to feed and reproduce" has not been observed just to happen. Rather, what we all can observe about the astonishing com-

plexity of creatures proves the existence of a Mastermind—One who can purpose and execute marvels beyond our ability and full comprehension. Many scientists agree that life has been shown to proceed only from preexisting life. Hence, there must be an original Source of life. As the Bible says: "How precious your loving-kindness is, O God! . . . For with you is the source of life."—Psalm 36:7, 9.

Science cannot satisfactorily explain life in all its forms, yet it has helped to reveal the amazing complexity and beauty of God's handiwork—the seemingly endless variety of insect, animal and plant life, the many-hued flowers and shrubs to enchant the eye, the countless aromas and

CUTAWAY VIEW OF CELL

The awesome complexity of a living cell could not be just an accident



tastes to delight our senses, the immensity and majesty of the universe, the fascination of microorganisms—and much more still to be discovered and enjoyed. A hundred years of life is barely enough to begin to know and appreciate all the enchanting and awe-inspiring creations of the Almighty.

Numerous people who have carefully studied this matter have concluded: Surely all this variety and beauty bespeak, not an impersonal remote force, but an all-wise Creator. Much of the life we see on earth points clearly to a loving Father, or Life-Giver. So many things have obviously been created to make us happy. As Revelation 15:3 states, "Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty." The Bible shows that Jehovah God, although he is to be feared when we rebel or disobey, is "the happy God" who delights in making others happy.—1 Timothy 1:11; Acts 20:35.

God's Original Purpose for Man

The Bible gives a simple but satisfying account of man's origin. Its first chapter

recounts the creation of the earth, then of plants, marine life, flying creatures and animals. (Genesis 1:1-25) Interestingly, geology and the fossil record reveal this same order.

Finally, God made man "out of dust [or elements] from the ground"—another scientifically sound statement. (Genesis 2:7) Man was also made "in God's image." Is that not true to life? Man was obviously made to think and reason on a plane far above animals. He has a moral sense and appreciation of spiritual values that animals lack. Even primitive tribes have their religion; but what is the religion of, say, a dog or an ape?—Genesis 1:27.

The ancient Biblical record provides reliable information about the earth and life forms on it. So let us open-mindedly see what it says about the earliest history of humankind.

Jehovah prepared a beautiful residence for man—"a garden in Eden" with "every tree desirable to one's sight and good for food." (Genesis 2:8, 9) The flora—trees, blossoms, fruit and flowers—could be a constant source of delight. Man was also



given satisfying work—that of cultivating and taking care of his Paradise home—as well as responsibility—‘having in subjection every living creature.’ (Genesis 1:28; 2:15) Imagine that! A gorgeous garden and a host of fascinating fauna to look after—without a need for man to worry about growing old and dying.

But still another fine gift was yet to come. Adam noticed that all these creatures had mates and could produce offspring. So where was *his* mate? As he awoke from a deep sleep—there she was! What a thrilling experience! Deeply moved, Adam expressed what was probably the first poetry:

“This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one will be called Woman, because from man this one was taken.”—Genesis 2:23.

The historical record preserved in the Bible informs us that “God blessed them and God said to them: ‘Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it.’” (Genesis 1:28) What a glorious privilege—to generate a perfect human race that would live forever on a paradise



Do animals have their religion?

earth! That was God’s original purpose for man.

Why Do We Die?

Adam and Eve however were not robots, programmed to do what God wanted. They were able to decide and plan for themselves. Hence, God provided a simple test of their loyalty: “From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die.”—Genesis 2:16, 17.

Furthermore, trouble was brewing behind the scenes. A mighty angel, or spirit creature, seeing the marvelous prospect of humans filling the earth, coveted their obedience and worship for himself. Using an intermediary, he told the first lie: “You positively will not die.” This rebel angel thus became “Satan” (opposer) and “Devil” (slanderer).—Genesis 3:1-5; John 8:44; Revelation 12:9.

The first pair failed in that simple test of loyalty to God. They turned traitors, and God cannot abide traitors. Expelled from Eden, they finally suffered the fore-

told penalty—death. Their children, born after their parents were condemned, could not inherit perfect health and everlasting life.—Romans 5:12.

It was a long time before imperfect Adam died—930 years—but God's sentence was inescapable! For some 2,000 years man's age remained remarkably high. Adam's son Seth lived to be 912, Enosh 905, Kenan 910, Methuselah (the oldest on record) 969 years. Noah lived to be 950. From then on, ages declined rapidly.—Genesis 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 27; 9:29; 11:10-25.

That interesting record illustrates the potential regenerative power of the human body. Even though we are far removed from Adam's original human perfection, our body cells renew themselves. Says the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "The potential immortality of all essential cellular elements of the [human] body either has been fully demonstrated, or has been carried far enough to make the probability very great." If men lived for almost a thousand years despite the burden of sin and death working in their bodies, think how long they could live without that terrible handicap.

Release From Sin and Death

The main point, however, is that whereas human projects, including scientific projects, often fail, God cannot fail: "My word . . . will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success." (Isaiah 55:11) We can be released from sin and death. How?

We are prisoners to sin and death. But Jesus, a second "Adam" in the sense of being a perfect man while on earth, died a sacrificial death to buy back what Adam lost—according to God's ancient law of "soul for soul." "For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made

sinners, so by one man's [Jesus'] obedience many will be made righteous." (1 Corinthians 15:45; Exodus 21:23; Romans 5:19, *Revised Standard Version*) Jehovah's love for the world of mankind made this possible.—John 3:16.

Everlasting life is one of the main teachings of the "New Testament." A minority group, 144,000 "called and chosen and faithful" will be granted the privilege of reigning as kings with Christ on his heavenly throne. (Revelation 17:14; 3:21) The Bible assures us, though, that a vast crowd of obedient humans will live forever in a restored earthly Paradise.—Revelation 7:9-17.

When? How?

Why not read Matthew chapter 24 and Luke chapter 21? They foretell world wars, food shortages, earthquakes in one place after another, false prophets, increasing lawlessness, pestilences, great fear of the future and much more. As Jesus said: "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near." Yes, the long-awaited switch from human rule to God's Kingdom is fast approaching.—Luke 21:31.

Just as surely as sunrise tomorrow will bring a new day, so the swift destruction of God's enemies will clear the way for "a new earth" in which "righteousness is to dwell." God promised this. He cannot lie. (2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17; Hebrews 6:18) To live forever in that new earth—what a privilege! Is it for you? Does that prospect not thrill you?

Jehovah has made provision for gaining life-giving knowledge—the real elixir of life. Why not start to partake of this knowledge by enjoying a Bible study in your home? Jehovah's Witnesses will gladly assist you with such a study—free! —John 17:3.

God's Word Is Alive

How You Can Understand the Bible

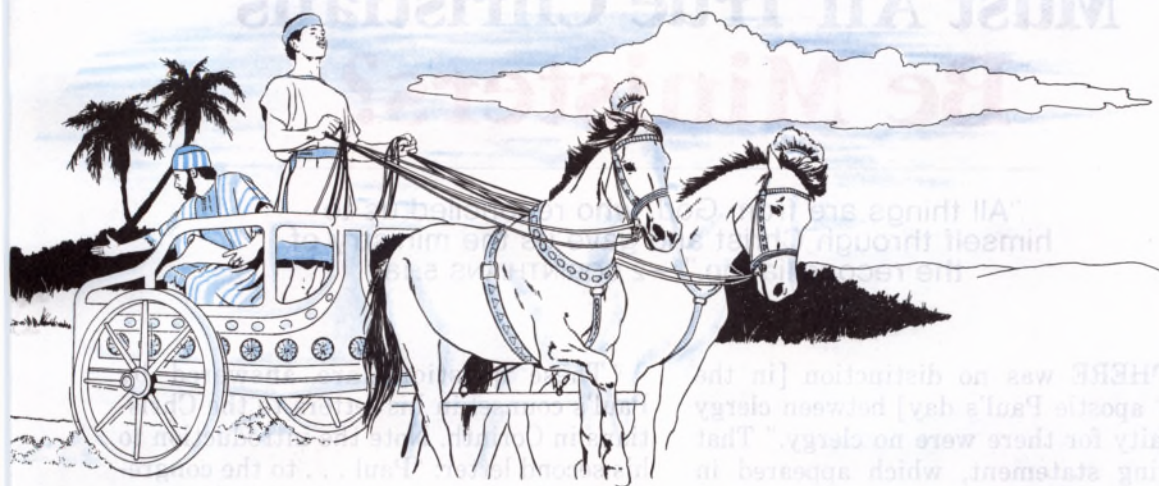


DO YOU read the Bible but find it hard to understand? Many people do. Do you know why? Something that happened in the first century near the present-day Gaza strip in Israel provides insight regarding what is needed to understand the Bible.

A man in charge of the financial affairs of the queen of Ethiopia had learned about the God of the Jews, Jehovah. So he traveled all the way to Jerusalem to worship him. You can see the Ethiopian official returning to his African homeland by way of the desert road that runs down to Gaza. The scroll that he is holding is that of Isaiah, and he is reading aloud from it as he travels along.

That is the Christian disciple Philip running alongside the chariot. He was directed by God's spirit: "Approach and join yourself to this chariot." As Philip catches up with the chariot, he hears the Ethiopian man reading from what is now in our Bibles Isaiah chapter 53, verse 7, namely: "As a sheep he was brought to the slaughter, and as a lamb that is voiceless before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth." Philip is just now asking: "Do you actually know what you are reading?"

The Ethiopian is a humble man who wants to learn more about the true God and his purposes. So he acknowledges: "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?" With that he urges Philip to



get in the chariot, and asks: "I beg you, About whom does the prophet say this? About himself or about some other man?"

Philip explains that this passage in Isaiah is a prophecy about Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was recently killed like a sacrificial lamb, Philip explains, but he has risen from the dead. He is the Savior promised by God! Then Philip also uses other scriptures to prove in a convincing way that Jesus is that promised Savior. Now the things that the Ethiopian had read make sense! So as they continue traveling, he says: "Look! A body of water; what prevents me from getting baptized?" At that Philip baptizes this new disciple of Jesus.—Acts 8:26-39.

This Bible account shows how you, too, can receive help to understand the Bible. Philip was in close contact with the apostles in Jerusalem and was a member of Jehovah's visible congregation. He was not merely an independent Bible reader who gave his opinion on the Scriptures, so he could help the Ethiopian to benefit from the instruction that Jehovah God was making available through His organization. (Acts 6:5, 6; 8:5, 14, 15) To understand the Bible today, you also need to receive guidance from representatives of God's true congregation.



Must All True Christians Be Ministers?

"All things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of the reconciliation."—2 CORINTHIANS 5:18.

THERE was no distinction [in the apostle Paul's day] between clergy and laity for there were no clergy." That startling statement, which appeared in the London *Times*, expresses a basic truth regarding early Christianity. There was no clergy-laity division. Does that mean that the Christian congregation was without any visible leadership? And were there no ministers in any sense?

² Some time after Pentecost, 33 C.E., as the number of anointed Christians grew by the thousands, it became necessary to appoint qualified men in each congregation to serve as overseers and as ministerial servants. But they did not form a clergy class. Their appointment did not depend on a university or seminary career. They did not receive a salary for their services. They were humble men with spiritual qualifications, appointed by holy spirit to care for the flock. Were they, though, the only ones who preached the 'good news of the Kingdom'? Were they the only ministers in the congregation?—Matthew 24:14; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-10.

1. What was the situation as to a clergy class in the congregation in Paul's day?
2. What kind of leadership existed in the early congregation? (Philippians 1:1)

³ These questions are answered by Paul's counsel in his letters to the Christians in Corinth. Note the introduction to his second letter: "Paul . . . to the congregation of God that is in Corinth, *together with all the holy ones* who are in all of Achaia." There is no doubt about it—he wrote to the whole body of anointed Christians in Corinth and Achaia, not just to those taking the lead. Thus his comments on the Christian ministry are very pertinent to "all the holy ones." Based on his activity and Timothy's, he reasoned: "Since we have this ministry according to the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up." "But all things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of the reconciliation . . . We are therefore ambassadors substituting for Christ, as though God were making entreaty through us." He continues: "In no way are we giving any cause for stumbling, that our ministry might not be found fault with; but in every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers, by the endurance of much."—2 Corinthians 1:1; 4:1; 5:18-20; 6:3, 4.

- ⁴ These words imply that *every* anointed
- 3, 4. According to Paul, who had a part in the Christian ministry?



Was there a Christian clergy class
in apostolic times?

Christian has to be a minister and ambassador for Christ. For what reason? Because the world, by its sin, is "alienated from the life that belongs to God" and needs a ministry of reconciliation in order that obedient and loyal people from all nations may have a relationship through Christ with the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. —Ephesians 4:18; Romans 5:1, 2.

⁵ To the congregation in Rome, Paul wrote: "But what does it [God's Word] say? 'The word is near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart'; that is, the 'word' of faith, which we are preaching. For if you *publicly declare* that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises

5, 6. How did Paul confirm this view in his letter to the Romans?

faith for righteousness, but *with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation.*" —Romans 10:8-10.

⁶ Did Paul direct those words to a select few? His introduction shows otherwise, for he wrote: "*To all those who are in Rome as God's beloved ones.*" He added: "I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ *concerning all of you*, because your faith is talked about throughout the whole world." Clearly, Paul directed his counsel and encouragement, including chapter 10, to the whole congregation. The privilege of making public declaration was open to all. In fact, he strengthened his argument by adding: "However, how will they call on him in whom they have not put faith? How, in turn, will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard? How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach? How, in turn, will they preach unless they have been sent forth? Just as it is written: 'How comely are the feet of those who declare good news of good things!'" —Romans 1:7, 8; 10:14, 15.

⁷ How encouraging that is for every anointed Christian! It means that all of them should have the joy of spreading the Kingdom message of salvation to others. Yes, in God's sight, their feet can be and should be "comely" in a figurative sense. Why so? Because genuine Christianity is not an egocentric religion that leads to self-satisfaction, seclusion and vows of silence. On the contrary, it promotes an active Christian ministry expressed in word and deed! How conscious Paul was of that is seen by his exclamation: "Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!" —1 Corinthians 9:16; Isaiah 52:7.

⁸ But what about the millions of true Christians who do not have an anointing

7. How is genuine Christianity different from other religions? (Luke 19:36-40)

8. What vital questions now affect many?



In 1943 Gilead School opened in South Lansing, New York. The school moved in 1961 to Brooklyn, New York



by holy spirit because their hope is for everlasting life on earth, not in heaven? Must they also be ministers?—Psalm 37:29; 2 Peter 3:13.

Are Those of the “Great Crowd” Ministers?

⁹ The book of Revelation supplies a partial answer to those questions. For example, after having seen in vision the anointed congregation of 144,000, John says: “After these things I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: ‘Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” Certainly these, who are now being gathered to survive the great tribulation, are not hiding their Christian identity. They are de-

9. What activity do those of the “great crowd” share in?

claring with “a loud voice” the origin of their salvation. How do they do that today? Among other things, by aiding the small remnant of anointed ones in the fulfillment of other vital ministerial prophecies and commands.—Revelation 7:9, 10, 14.

¹⁰ For instance, this numberless crowd is playing an essential role in carrying out Jesus’ command to preach and teach, which he gave to his faithful disciples in Galilee. On that occasion Jesus said: “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. Go therefore and *make disciples* of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, *teaching them* to observe all the things I have commanded you.” That mandate was given to all Christians, not to a select clergy class.—Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 15:6.

¹¹ Jesus’ command is also closely related ———
10, 11. (a) What command did Jesus give his followers prior to his ascension to heaven? (b) What prophecy has to be fulfilled in our time?



Now in new facilities near the Brooklyn Bridge, Gilead School continues to prepare ministers for foreign service

to the prophecy that he gave regarding “the conclusion of the system of things.” He stated: “This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” How has this challenge to preach the Kingdom message worldwide in one generation been met? Certainly the dwindling thousands of anointed Christians could not have done this lifesaving work alone. It would have been an impossible task!—Matthew 24: 3, 14; Luke 21:32.

¹² The anointed “joint heirs with Christ” are happy to recognize the part played by the more than two million ministers of the “great crowd” who have spread the message of the Kingdom throughout the world in such a relatively short space of time. Even back in the 1930’s, many true Christians accepted the responsibility of the ministry in other lands and offered to serve where the need was greater. Thanks to the self-sacrificing

12. What do the anointed today happily recognize?

example of these brothers and sisters, whether of the anointed or of the “other sheep” class, the Kingdom work took stronger root in many countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.—Romans 8:17.

¹³ Prior to 1943 “the faithful and discreet slave” class of anointed Christians saw the need to establish a missionary school so that Christian ministers could receive additional training and preparation with a view to opening up and accelerating the preaching work in many other lands. From its inauguration in 1943 and up till March 4, 1984, that Gilead School (“Gilead” in Hebrew means “witness heap”) has trained some 6,100 graduates, most of whom have been sent to foreign assignments around the world. Only 292 (4.8 percent) of these Gilead graduates professed to be of the anointed class, so the majority of these specially trained

13. (a) How has Jehovah accelerated the work since 1943? (Isaiah 60:22) (b) What part have those of the “great crowd” played in missionary activity?

ministers have been of the "great crowd." Like the rest of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide they accepted the Christian ministry as an integral part of Christian life when they made their dedication to Jehovah through Christ Jesus.—Matthew 24:45-47; Hebrews 10:7.

Vocation Based on What?

¹⁴ Does that mean that Christians have a personal vocation, or calling from God, to the ministry? It is true that some in Christendom have depicted their "vocation" as an extremely emotional experience, as if God had called them directly to his service. But is the Christian ministry mainly based on something as transient as emotion?

¹⁵ When the apostle Paul spoke of sacred service to God, what did he show to be the basis of it? He wrote: "Consequently I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service *with your power of reason* ["as an act of intelligent worship," *Philips*; "as rational creatures," *The New English Bible*, footnote]." Yes, sacred service to God is based on reason. How so? Because one's dedication and personal relationship to Jehovah are founded on knowledge of the true God. Thus the Christian's calling to the ministry, although a happy experience in itself, is not just the result of an emotional reaction. It has a solid motivation—love of God and love of neighbor.—Romans 12:1; John 17:3.

¹⁶ But you may ask, Were those early Christians also ministers even if they had full-time secular work or were housewives? Yes, they were. Maybe they could

spend only a small fraction of their time in the Christian ministry, preaching and teaching, but that was their prime purpose in life. They knew they had to 'let their light shine' as true disciples of Christ. In effect they were worker-ministers long before Christendom had its worker-priest movement.—Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:9.

Proof of Their Ministry

¹⁷ How do Jehovah's Witnesses prove that they are ministers if they have no diploma or university degree? Well, how did the early Christians establish that they were ministers? Christ himself provided this insight: "Every good tree produces fine fruit." Christian ministers should produce "fine fruit," which includes sharing in the disciple-making work.—Matthew 7:17.

¹⁸ The apostle Paul explained it this way: "Are we starting again to recommend ourselves? Or do we, perhaps, like some men, need letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, inscribed on our hearts and known and being read by all mankind. For you are shown to be a letter of Christ written by us as ministers, inscribed not with ink but with spirit of a living God, not on stone tablets, but on fleshly tablets, on hearts." How was that writing on hearts accomplished? By the preaching of the seedlike word of faith that became implanted in the heart. In turn this seed motivated the receiver also to preach the same message of salvation to others.—2 Corinthians 3:1-3.

¹⁹ Do Jehovah's Witnesses have proof of 'a letter of Christ written by them as

14, 15. On what is the Christian vocation to the ministry based? (Matthew 22:37-40)

16. Does full-time secular work exclude one from being a minister? (Acts 18:1-5)

17, 18. (a) What general principle did Christ lay down about true Christians? (b) What is the true recommendation of a minister?

19. What solid recommendation as ministers do Jehovah's Witnesses have?

ministers'? The facts speak for themselves. In 1931, when they first accepted their unique name, there were about 50,000 Witnesses preaching around the world. The report for 1983 shows a peak of over 2,652,000 ministers preaching the Kingdom good news in association with 46,235 congregations. Yes, there are nearly as many congregations now as there were Witnesses in 1931! The truth has indeed been written on millions of hearts over the last few decades—and that is irrefutable proof of the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses.—Isaiah 43:10-12.

²⁰ The need for Christian ministers today is more urgent than ever. The time is short and the harvest is great. All the more reason, then, for us to be qualified,

20. As Christian ministers, what do we need today? What questions remain to be answered?

How to Become Effective Ministers

"That is why I am sending Timothy to you, [for] he will put you in mind of my methods in connection with Christ Jesus, just as I am teaching everywhere in every congregation."

—1 CORINTHIANS 4:17.

WITH the outpouring of the holy spirit at Pentecost, 33 C.E., the Christian congregation grew and spread rapidly. (Acts 2:40-42; 4:4; 6:7; 11:19-21) What was the key to its success? Why did so many Jews and then Samaritans and Gen-

1, 2. For a person to be drawn to the truth, what is one necessary factor? (Acts 8:12)

Points for Review

- ☐ How do we know that all of Christ's anointed followers had to be ministers?
- ☐ What role has the "great crowd" played in the modern-day ministry?
- ☐ On what is the Christian vocation to the ministry based?
- ☐ What proof of their ministry do Jehovah's Witnesses have?

capable ministers who preach and teach in a productive way. How can we do that? How can we be more effective ministers? Are the examples of Christ and the apostles of practical value for us today? —Ephesians 5:15, 16; Matthew 9:37, 38.

tiles accept Christ and the message of God's Kingdom?—Acts 8:4-8; 10:44-48.

² For a person to accept the Christian good news, certain factors have to come into play. First, one must appreciate God's undeserved kindness toward mankind in having taken the initiative by sending his Son to the earth as a ransom sacrifice. As

the Bible writer John expressed it: "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. The love is in this respect, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins."—1 John 4:9, 10.

³ Another vital factor is each one's attitude toward spiritual values. Jesus said: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them. Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled." (Matthew 5:3, 6) A complacent, self-righteous person is usually not conscious of any spiritual need and is no longer open to truth. When offered the Kingdom message by Jehovah's Witnesses, such a one will often answer, 'I am not interested. I have my own religion.' Likewise, the person deeply immersed in material pursuits will not have time for spiritual matters.—Matthew 6:33, 34; 7:7, 8; Luke 12:16-21.

⁴ But what about those who are "conscious of their spiritual need" and are ready to seek God and his Kingdom? How can they be found and recognized? Is there anything we can do as ministers of God's Word to make our message more understandable? How can we be more effective ministers?

Whose Methods Should We Use?

⁵ When the apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Christians at Corinth, he told them he was sending Timothy, who would 'put them in mind of his [Paul's] methods in connection with Christ Jesus.' Instead

3. Why is it necessary to be conscious of one's spiritual need?

4. What questions will now be considered?

5. According to Paul, what would Timothy teach the Corinthians?

of "methods," some translations speak of "ways of living," "way of life" or "the way I live." However, Professor Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* offers as an interpretation for this text: "The methods which I as Christ's minister and apostle follow in the discharge of my office." Since Paul completes the sentence with, "just as I am teaching everywhere in every congregation," it is reasonable to conclude that his remarks embrace his active ministry and not just his personal Christian conduct.—1 Corinthians 4:17.

⁶ Jesus' ministry was not haphazard. He also used method in his preaching. To illustrate, he carefully taught his apostles, and later the 70 evangelists, how to preach effectively. His own constant use of illustrations, questions and Scripture quotations was an example for them. It is still the best method today.—Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-11.

⁷ Since the Christian ministry is a matter of everlasting life or death, how can we transmit the good news to the maximum number of people? Yes, how can we be "clean from the blood of *all* men"? By using every avenue of service, which includes, as the apostle Paul stated, the ministry "from house to house." One Spanish commentary on Acts 20:20 states: "Here we have the method of preaching that Paul followed in Ephesus."—Acts 20:20-27.

The First Hurdle

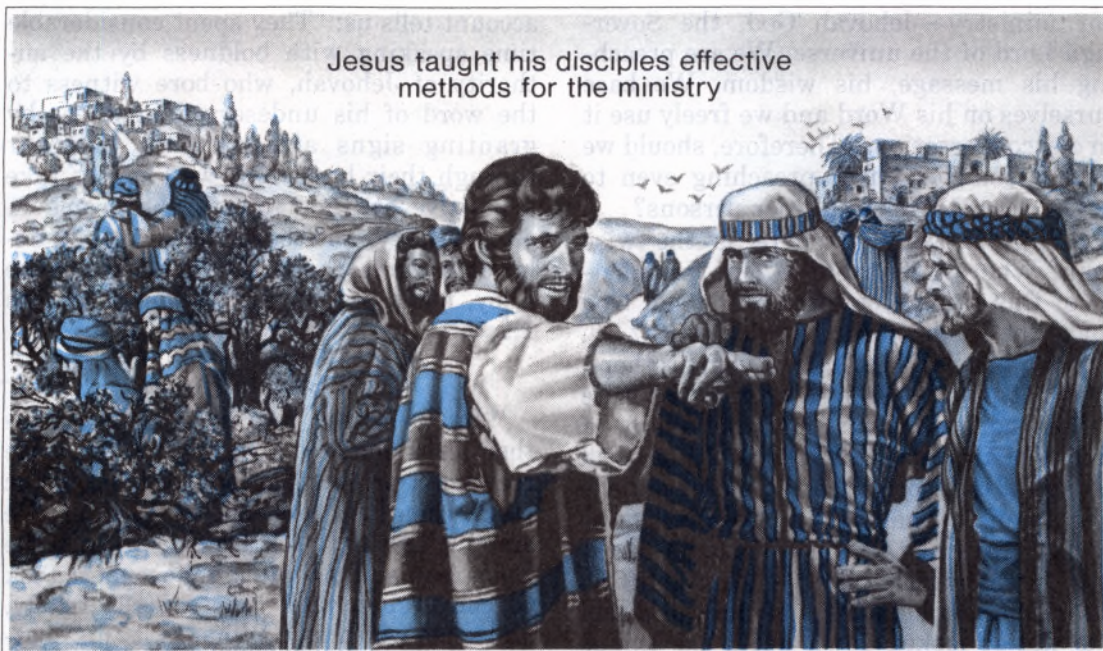
⁸ Very often the first hurdle we need to overcome in the ministry is ourselves. Some tend to feel self-conscious, inade-

6. Why was Jesus' ministry effective?

7. How can we transmit the good news to the maximum number of people?

8, 9. (a) What is often the first hurdle in the ministry? (b) Why could Jesus speak with boldness?

Jesus taught his disciples effective
methods for the ministry



quate and not sufficiently educated for the people they meet. But how did Jesus feel? Had he attended the rabbinic schools of learning? Did he have a higher education? Yet when he preached, how did his own people react? Matthew tells us: "They were astounded and said: 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these powerful works?'" True, Jesus was perfect, the Son of God. But his methods were also practical for his mainly "uneducated" disciples who were to imitate him. What reaction did they provoke, even among their religious enemies? "Now when they beheld the outspokenness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were men unlettered and ordinary, they got to wondering. And they began to recognize about them that they used to be with Jesus."—Matthew 13:54; Acts 4:13.

⁹ But, from where did Jesus get all those things that he taught? Why was he so successful in his ministry? Did he, like

modern TV preachers, use exaggerated emotion to sway his audience? No. Jesus' basis was simplicity itself—he spoke the language of the common people, he was aware of their spiritual needs and, most important of all, Jesus knew he had his Father's backing. He made this clear when he announced his ministerial commission in the synagogue at his hometown, Nazareth in Galilee. He read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah: "'Jehovah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor, he sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release, to preach Jehovah's acceptable year.' . . . Then he started to say to them: 'Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled.'"—Luke 4:16-21.

¹⁰ Today we have the same backing in

10, 11. (a) How should we feel about our ministry? (b) How does Paul answer?

our ministry—Jehovah God, the Sovereign Lord of the universe. We are preaching his message, his wisdom. We base ourselves on his Word and we freely use it in our conversations. Therefore, should we have a complex about preaching even to better educated or wealthier persons?

¹¹ Paul answers: "Where is the wise man? Where the scribe? Where the debater of this system of things? Did not God make the wisdom of the world foolish? . . . For you behold his calling of you, brothers, that not many wise in a fleshly way were called, not many powerful, not many of noble birth; but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put the wise men to shame; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put the strong things to shame; and God chose the ignoble things of the world and the things looked down upon, the things that are not, that he might bring to nothing the things that are, *in order that no flesh might boast in the sight of God.*" —1 Corinthians 1:18-29.

¹² Success in the ministry does not stem from our education or ancestry. It stems from the Kingdom message itself that strikes a responsive chord in the heart of the person who is conscious of a spiritual need. Another factor is Jehovah's goodwill toward that person, for as Jesus said: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him."—John 6:44.

¹³ Therefore, trusting in Jehovah's support, we can carry out our ministry with conviction even as did Paul and Barnabas in the first century. When they preached in Iconium, their ministry caused a sharp division of opinions and some opposition. Did that make them back down? Luke's

12. From what does success in our ministry stem? (James 4:8)

13. (a) How did Paul and Barnabas respond to opposition? (b) How can we always have joy in the ministry?

account tells us: "They spent considerable time speaking with boldness by the authority of Jehovah, who bore witness to the word of his undeserved kindness by granting signs and portents to occur through their hands." If we likewise take a positive attitude toward the people in our territory, and leave the results in Jehovah's hands, the ministry will always be a joy, not a burden.—Acts 14:1-3; James 1:2, 3.

How People React

¹⁴ In the course of their preaching, neither Jesus nor Paul always got a favorable reaction. For example, how did the public react when Paul preached in Athens? The account tells us: "Certain ones of both the Epicurean and the Stoic philosophers took to conversing with him controversially, and some would say: 'What is it this chatterer would like to tell?' Others: 'He seems to be a publisher of foreign deities.' This was because he was declaring the good news of Jesus and the resurrection. So they laid hold of him and led him to the Areopagus, saying: 'Can we get to know what this new teaching is which is spoken by you? For you are introducing some things that are strange to our ears.'" —Acts 17:18-20.

14. How did people react to Paul's preaching?

In Our Next Issue

■ That Amazing Organ
—Our Heart!

■ Would You Spread a Rumor?

■ "We Worship What We Know"



¹⁵ We have to recognize that our message and the version of it put out by the media and opposers may also sound strange to our modern public. As a result, many people, biased by hearsay, prejudge the matter and reject us without a hearing. Others, like those in Athens, accept more information before they make a decision. Of course, when they have listened they may still mock the Kingdom hope as something unbelievable. Remember, though, they reject Christ and his message, not you.—Acts 17:32-34; Matthew 12:30.

From Strangers to Friends

¹⁶ How do you feel when strangers come to your home? What questions might fly through your mind? Probably, Who are they? What do they want? Are they going to cause me trouble? When we present

15. How do people react to your ministry? But what should we remember?

16. (a) How might we react when strangers visit our home? (b) What should our introduction accomplish?

ourselves as ministers at someone else's door, we should remember that. Our introduction should therefore put their minds at rest on those questions. But how? Well, what did Jesus suggest as an introduction? He said: "When you are entering into the house, greet the household; and if the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it; but if it is not deserving, let the peace from you return upon you."—Matthew 10:12, 13.

¹⁷ "Let the peace you wish it come upon it." What does that signify? That in our ministry we wish our peace upon every person and household. Thus our opening words should show that we are peace-loving ministers of God. Even to this day Jews and Muslims use the greetings "Peace be with you" or "Peace" (*"Shalom aleichem"* or *"Shalom"* in Hebrew, and *"Assalām 'alaikum"* or *"Salām,"* in Arabic). Of course, our greeting will vary from country to country according to local

17. How can we put a person at ease in our introduction?

custom. But the aim is the same—to put the person at ease so that he or she will listen to the Kingdom message. Giving your name first, and even a reference to where you live, may help in that respect. It shows you have nothing to hide. Your purpose and honesty are evident for all to see. Then you are doing as Paul counseled: “See that your public behaviour is above criticism. As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone.”—Romans 12:17, 18, *Phillips*.

¹⁸ Whether we are in the ministry from house to house or are on the street, we are on public view. Our conversation and behavior should always be above reproach and inoffensive. However, while our presentation should be mild and peaceful, it should not be apologetic. We are not ashamed of being public ministers of God.—Mark 8:38.

¹⁹ In some nations people are more reserved and conservative. Some are embarrassed to be approached on the street by someone displaying magazines. If that is the case, why not use a more discreet method of approach? One can tactfully open a conversation with a person who is not in a hurry and then take out the Bible literature in a natural way.

²⁰ Jesus was certainly apt at a similar type of preaching. Since Samaritans and women were normally scorned by the Jews, Jesus was discreet in his approach to the immoral Samaritan woman at Jacob’s fountain. His conversation is a model for informal and street witnessing. It is also a fine example of compassionate and constructive teaching.—John 4:5-30.

18. What standard should we always meet in our ministry?

19, 20. (a) How can one approach more reserved people on the street? (b) Why was Jesus effective in the informal approach?

²¹ One other vital factor has to be taken into account as we introduce the good news of the Kingdom. Paul was a master at it. See if you can recognize it from some of his introductions found in Acts 13:16-20; 17:22 and 22:1-3. Notice that on each occasion he *sought common ground with his audience*. He identified with them and their background. The result is that they listened even if they did not agree with him. In like manner our introduction can capture the human touch, the point of identity between us and the householder. Maybe you notice there are children in the home, and you, too, are a parent. Then you have things in common, a friendly basis. You have a talking point that can lead into the Kingdom message!—Matthew 18:1-6.

²² But these suggestions are only the start. What further steps are needed to produce, finally, another disciple? Yes, what else is needed to help another have a relationship with God through Christ? What qualities will make your ministry more effective?

21. What other vital factor is illustrated in Paul’s ministry?

22. What questions now require an answer?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What are some of the factors involved in a person’s accepting the Kingdom message?
- ☐ How can timidity and self-consciousness be overcome in the ministry?
- ☐ What should be the aim in our introductions in field service?
- ☐ How can Jesus’ example and Paul’s help us in our approach to people?

Effective Ministry Leading to More Disciples

"These were his gifts: some to be . . . evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service."

—EPHESIANS 4:11, 12, *The New English Bible*.

CHRIST JESUS was no hermit. His ministry was totally oriented to people. In the four Gospel accounts Jesus is nearly always involved with people. During his travels he saw their true condition and he felt deep compassion for them. If you are a Christian minister, do you feel compassion toward the people you meet? —Matthew 9:35, 36.

² The Christian ministry today must also involve people. Being conscious of that fact, Jehovah's Witnesses have a flexible approach in their service to God. All around the world they can be seen talking to people—on the streets, at the doors, in busy shopping areas, around bus, subway and railway stations, in factory, office and business districts. Wherever people are to be found, the Witnesses are there serving as evangelizers. Why so? Because the word "evangel" comes from the Greek word *euaggelion*, which means "good news." Like Christ, every Christian witness of Jehovah must be a minister of the good news, an evangelizer. Therefore every witness must also be involved with people.—2 Timothy 4:5; Ephesians 4:11, 12.

1. How did Christ feel toward people?
2. How do Jehovah's Witnesses imitate Jesus' example?

³ How should this evangelizing work be effectively carried out? Is the radio-and-TV approach used by so many religions the real answer? Well, just ask yourself, Can the radio and TV answer your questions spontaneously? No—those, in a sense, are impersonal media of communication. The most effective ministry is still that which was practiced by Jesus and his disciples, face to face with the seekers of truth. But it takes time and effort, which Paul indicated with a simple illustration: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow; so that neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters, but God who makes it grow."—1 Corinthians 3:5-7.

⁴ These words imply three stages in the Christian ministry—planting, cultivating and reaping. How so? First there is the planting, the initial contact with the Kingdom good news. Then comes the cultivation, including watering what was planted. How is that done? By further conversations to answer questions and resolve doubts. This often leads to a regular Bible study that deeply implants Bible truth in the person's mind and heart; with

3. What is the most effective method of Christian ministry?
4. What three stages are involved in effective ministry?

God's blessing, growth occurs. The final result is another active disciple of Christ Jesus, another minister. Now how can all of us as ministers have that happy blessing of reaping a disciple?

⁵ As our previous article stated, Jesus taught his disciples the practical way to perform their ministry. And Paul spoke of his "methods in connection with Christ Jesus." (1 Corinthians 4:17) The string of congregations that he helped to establish around Asia Minor and Greece are eloquent testimony to his success. We have already covered some of his (and Jesus') methods, but are there more that can be used effectively today?

What Is the Basis? And the Message?

⁶ On what must the Christian message be based? On human wisdom and philosophy? Paul's letter to Timothy gives a clear answer: "You, however, continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe, knowing . . . that from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching." Clearly, the Bible, the Word of God, has to be the cornerstone of our ministry.—2 Timothy 3:14-17.

⁷ In this respect Christ Jesus set the lead—he constantly quoted the Scriptures; the apostle Paul did likewise. For instance, did he turn up in Thessalonica teaching Greek philosophy? No, for as the account tells us: "So according to Paul's custom he went inside to them, and for three sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving by

5. What will help us to be effective ministers?

6. What must be the cornerstone of our ministry?

7, 8. How did Jesus and Paul set an example in the use of scriptures?

references that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead."—Acts 17:1-3.

⁸ What was the result? "Some of them became believers." Therefore, following Paul's method, our preaching today must be based on God's Word. That is why we have a suggested Bible theme for conversation in our ministry. In that way the truth of God's Word can strike a responsive chord in those who are conscious of their spiritual need.—Acts 17:4.

⁹ Now the next question is, What message should we preach? Well, what was

9, 10. (a) What must be the theme of our preaching today? (b) Give examples from Paul's ministry.

Jehovah's Witnesses
preach wherever
people are to
be found



the theme of Christ's ministry? Jesus was well aware of his commission, for he said: "Also to other cities I must declare the *good news of the kingdom of God*, because for this I was sent forth." Referring to the last days of our present system, he said: "This *good news of the kingdom* will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Luke 4:43; Matthew 24:14.

¹⁰ This same emphasis is found in Paul's preaching. For example, to the Jews in a synagogue "he spoke with boldness for three months, giving talks and using persuasion *concerning the kingdom of God*." To those in Rome, "he explained the matter by bearing thorough witness *concerning the kingdom of God*." Therefore "the kingdom of God" must be the thrust of our Christian ministry today.—Acts 19:8; 28:23, 31.

Do You Attack or Attract?

¹¹ In the first century, people were divided by religion, race and nationality just as they are today. (Acts 2:7-11) That means that most people have their own preconceived ideas when it comes to matters of religion. Often they feel threatened and go on the defensive when they meet a Witness. How can we change that? By the use of kindness, tact and adaptability.

¹² Notice how Paul handled such a situation in idol-worshipping Athens. His first reaction at seeing so many idols was one of irritation. When he stood up to speak in the Areopagus, did he immediately attack their idol worship? His introduction was: "Men of Athens, I behold that in all things you seem to be more given to the

11. How do people often react when faced by a Witness, and how can we counteract that? (Acts 17:17, 18)

12, 13. How did Paul speak to idol worshippers in Athens? How did they react?

fear of the deities than others are. For instance, while passing along and carefully observing your objects of veneration I also found an altar on which had been inscribed 'To an Unknown God.' Therefore what you are unknowingly giving godly devotion to, this I am publishing to you."—Acts 17:16-23.

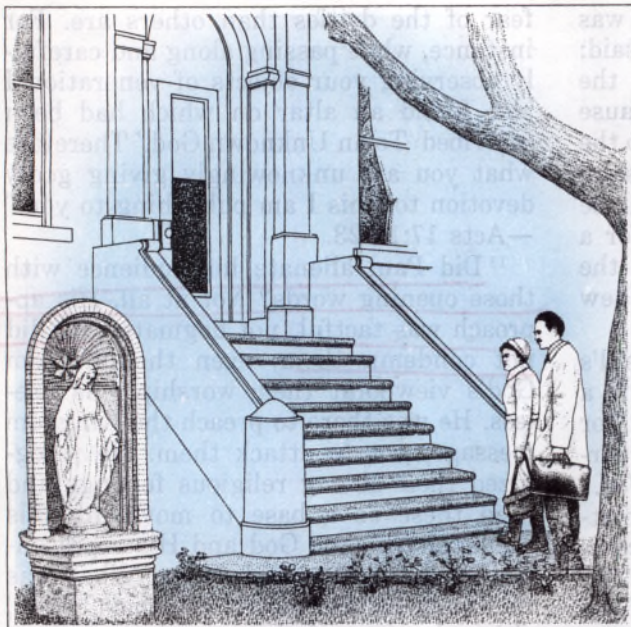
¹³ Did Paul alienate his audience with those opening words? Not at all. His approach was tactful, not dogmatic. He did not condemn them, even though from God's viewpoint their worship was useless. He was there to preach the Kingdom message, not to attack them. He recognized their strong religious feelings and used these as a base to move into his theme of the true God and His representative, the resurrected Jesus. What was the result of this tactful approach? Well, although some of them mocked, "others said: 'We will hear you about this even another time.'" Yes, he had an invitation for a return visit!—Acts 17:22-32.

¹⁴ How can we apply this method to our ministry today? In the first place, we should be alert to observe the telltale signs of a person's religious outlook—maybe by some religious item he is wearing or that is on view on the door or in the lobby of the home. Thus, just as Paul did, we can often have a good idea of the other person's religious viewpoint. This gives us a lead for a friendly, interest-arousing but noncontroversial introduction. Remember we are visiting the person primarily to talk about God's Kingdom—not to get involved right away in doctrinal discussion. We want to win people, not just arguments.—Compare 2 Timothy 2:23-26.

¹⁵ What else can we learn from Christ's example? When we examine his ministry

14. How can we apply Paul's example in our ministry?

15. What other fine lessons can we learn from Jesus' ministry? (Luke 10:38-42)



When witnessing, we should observe indications of a person's religion

we are bound to recognize his conviction and simplicity. He was not fazed by any situation but spoke up on behalf of the Kingdom of God in all kinds of circumstances, whether favorable or unfavorable. He could preach in the intimacy of a home or stand up before a crowd and deliver a sermon—without notes, Bible or sound equipment! He also had the common touch. The lowly people felt they could approach him. He spoke their language of fields and crops, of nets and fishing. His illustrations were down to earth even though their meaning was deep. Do we manifest those same fine qualities in our ministry?—Matthew 4:18-25; 13:1-33; Luke 5:1-3.

How to Reach the Heart

¹⁶ Normally it takes time and careful

16. Why must we be qualified teachers?

study for a person to become convinced of the Bible's message about God's Kingdom. That is why we have the arrangement of regular home Bible studies, free of charge or obligation, with any person who wishes to investigate God's promises through Christ. Such studies extend over quite a period and they cover many subjects and questions. This certainly means we have to be qualified teachers. But what really is the essence of teaching?—1 Timothy 4:16.

¹⁷ Once again we turn to Jesus for the answer. How did he teach? Just examine, please, the following texts and see if you recognize Jesus' simple system for teaching others: Luke 6:9, 32-34, 39-42. What was it? He asked discerning questions. Why did he do that? To help his audience to reason and to

examine themselves in the light of his teachings. With his questions he tactfully reached their hearts. They had to show whether they genuinely wanted to be his followers or whether their motives in listening were superficial.—Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 8:34-38.

¹⁸ Nearly all the Bible study aids that Jehovah's Witnesses use in their ministry have questions for each paragraph of text explanation. This is a teaching aid that helps those studying the Bible to express themselves in their own words. Then it becomes clear whether the person understands the material or not. However, although Jesus asked questions on many

17. What was one method Jesus used to reach the heart?

18. (a) Why do Jehovah's Witnesses use questions so often in their publications? (b) What pattern should we *not* use extensively while teaching others?

occasions, he never turned it into a mere guessing game by supplying the first word or syllable of an answer. Have you sometimes found yourself falling into that pattern with some Bible students? Why is it not a good method to use with regularity? Because knowledge of God and Christ that leads to salvation should be based on reason and logic, not trivial guesswork.—John 17:3; 1 John 5:20.

Whose Disciples?

¹⁹ A word of caution is necessary at this point. If we preach and teach effectively in fruitful territory, eventually we produce disciples. But whose disciples are they? Should we think they are "my sheep"? And should we allow ourselves as ministers to be placed on a pedestal of adulation? Note how Paul and Barnabas reacted when the people of Lystra wanted to treat them like gods. They cried out to the crowd: "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are humans having the same infirmities as you do, and are declaring the good news to you, for you to turn from these vain things to the living God."—Acts 14:14, 15.

²⁰ Paul and Barnabas did not try to draw attention to themselves. Even though Paul counseled Christians to imitate him, as he imitated Christ, he did not want them to be his followers. The ministry we perform must always be to the glory of God, not men.—1 Corinthians 3:6, 7; 11:1.

²¹ In time, disciples become ministers. Why does that come about? Well, what happens when we have some really good news to tell? Can we keep it to ourselves? To the contrary, we are bursting to tell someone else. As Jesus said: "A good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart. . . . for out of the heart's

abundance his mouth speaks." That is how it is with the good news of the Kingdom. The disciple whose heart is touched wants to teach others and join in the ministry on a regular and voluntary basis. Dedication to God and baptism follow. Thus the self-repeating chain of ministers continues, in line with the principle of Paul's counsel to Timothy: "These things commit to faithful men, who, in turn, will be adequately qualified to teach others."—Luke 6:45; 2 Timothy 2:2.

²² Today, around the earth, Jehovah God has the best trained organization of educators, evangelizers, ministers of the 20th century. More than 2,600,000 of them are participating in the final witness that is being given before the end comes upon this evil system. But this growing band is being prepared for an even greater challenge—the education of billions who will come back in the resurrection. Are you prepared to participate in such a marvelous privilege? Is your ministry productive now? Let it be our prayer that our light may shine to God's glory, as we serve as effective ministers.—Matthew 5:16; John 5:28, 29.

22. (a) Why has Jehovah produced an organization of teachers and evangelizers? (b) What future work must yet be accomplished?

Points You Have Covered

- ☐ What is the most effective way of preaching the good news?
- ☐ On what must our teaching be based? What is the message?
- ☐ What qualities are needed to make people listen to us?
- ☐ How did Jesus reach the heart of his listeners?
- ☐ What caution is needed in our teaching others?

19, 20. What word of caution is necessary here? Why?

21. Why do disciples also become ministers?

Insight on the News

"Untroubled by War, Babylon Sleeps"

Under that title *The New York Times* recently discussed the ruins of ancient Babylon in modern-day Iraq. While a relentless Iraq/Iran war rages nearby, "all is quiet in Babylon . . . There are no guides, no guards, hardly a visitor." Since some ancient cities—Rome, Athens, Alexandria—are still bustling, why is Babylon only a heap of ruins without inhabitants? And what lesson can you learn from this?

Bible students call to mind Jeremiah 50:38 and 51:64 where Babylon's fall into everlasting ruin was foretold. We read: "There is a devastation upon her waters, and they must be dried up. For it is a land of graven images." "Babylon will sink down and never rise up because of the calamity that I [Jehovah] am bringing in upon her."

Babylon had been the center of man's first political empire, being founded by Nimrod. Later it became a world power, from 632 B.C.E. to 539 B.C.E. Not long before its end Nebuchadnezzar II boasted of the city's glory: "Is not this Babylon the Great, that I myself have built?" (Daniel 4:30) Its hanging gardens are considered to have been one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was a very religious city, having at least 53 temples. Though its walls were considered impregnable, neither they nor its false gods and temples could save it from conquest by the Medes and the Persians in 539 B.C.E. In time it fell into complete ruin, as foretold in God's Word and as it remains today.

Many false religious teachings that originated in Babylon have

been carried over into religions of Christendom and of non-Christian nations. All these religions are appropriately termed "Babylon the Great," which Revelation 18:21 says will be "hurled down, and she will never be found again." Thus, even though the actual city of ancient Babylon is in ruins, we do well to heed the command regarding the religious empire of modern Babylon the Great: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues."—Revelation 18:2-4.

Surrogate Mothers

A case of human artificial insemination was recorded as long ago as 1799. But in recent years this has come to be more widely practiced. According to *The New York Times*, a woman who is artificially inseminated and bears a child for another woman, as a substitute for her, is called a surrogate mother. The infertile wife and her husband agree to this arrangement, and when the surrogate mother gives birth the baby is adopted by the couple. The sperm in this case could be from the husband of the couple or from another donor.

Although such an arrangement may be approved by many in the world, the Christian rightfully asks whether it is in harmony with God's laws. The Bible, at Leviticus 18:20, is clear on this point when it says: "You must not give your emission as semen to the wife of your associate to become unclean by it." Artificial insemination of a woman by a donor other than her legal husband, makes her guilty of adultery, a sin against God. (Deuteronomy 5:18) The sperm donor and the surrogate woman have not been

yoked together by God in matrimony.—Matthew 19:4-6.

Blind Religious Faith

"The chief motivation of war is no longer greed but religion," said columnist H. Gordon Green, writing in *The Toronto Star*. Green went on to cite what is behind the wars in Iran, Ireland and the Middle East. He holds that the gutters run with blood "because men are everlastingly convinced that the faith one has inherited from one's forefathers is the one true faith and all else is error and the work of Satan."

This religious concept drives men to kill others who believe differently, says Green. In some cases, young men who do much of the killing are taught by their religious leaders that such killing is God's will, and their reward for doing so will be eternal happiness in heaven. Ayatollah Khomeini, says Green, describes the young martyrs who fight for their faith as "warriors of God," and to each one of them he "has given a small metal key to take into the fray—a key which will surely unlock the portals of that heaven."

However, is such "faith" the kind that will lead men in the way to everlasting blessings from God? Remember, Jesus said to religious leaders of his day: "Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." Jesus warned: "Let them be." (Matthew 15:14) Accurate Bible knowledge helps us to avoid blind religious faith and to serve Jehovah God with clean hands and a pure heart.—Psalm 24:3, 4.

One God in Three?

THE Trinity—you undoubtedly know of it, for this doctrine is taught throughout Christendom. How important is it to the teaching of the churches? More significantly, what does God's Word, the Bible, reveal about there being one god in three persons?

"The Trinity is the term employed to signify the central doctrine of the Christian religion—the truth that in the unity of the Godhead there are Three Persons. . . . Thus, in the words of the Athanasian Creed: 'the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God.' . . . This, the Church teaches, is the revelation regarding God's nature which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came upon earth to deliver to the world: and which she proposes to man as the foundation of her whole dogmatic system."—*The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

Not only is the Trinity dogma "the foundation" of the "whole dogmatic system" of the Roman Catholic Church but it also figures prominently in the basis for membership of the World Council of Churches. Truly, the Trinity can be termed "the central doctrine" of Christendom's religions—Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. But is this doctrine "the truth," as *The Catholic Encyclopedia* claims?

Theology, Not Scripture

In its article "Trinity," a Protestant work (*The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*) states: "The word Trinity is not found in



the Bible . . . It did not find a place formally in the theology of the church till the 4th century

. . . Although Scripture does not give us a formulated doctrine of the Trinity, it contains all the elements out of which theology has constructed the doctrine."

Who were the first theologians to coin the word "trinity" as they "constructed the doctrine"? *The Catholic Encyclopedia* informs

us: "In Scripture there is as yet no single term by which the Three Divine Persons are denoted together. The word *trias* (of which the Latin *trinitas* is a translation) is first found in Theophilus of Antioch about A. D. 180. . . . Shortly afterwards it appears in its Latin form of *trinitas* in Tertullian." However, Theophilus' triad was made up of "God, and His Word, and His wisdom"—hardly Christendom's Trinity! As to Tertullian, the encyclopedia admits that "his Trinitarian teaching is inconsistent," among other things because he held that "there was a time when there was no Son." So the least that can be said is that these two men had in mind something quite different from Christendom's coeternal Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But the word "trinity" stuck, and later theologians gradually "constructed the doctrine" as we know it today. Did they, however, build it on the foundation of Scripture? No, but on theology or philosophy. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "Christian theology took the Neoplatonic metaphysics [philosophy] of substance as

well as its doctrine of hypostases [essence, or nature] as the departure point for interpreting the relationship of the 'Father' to the 'Son.'" Their problem was to make "God the Father," "God the Son" and "God the Holy Spirit" not three Gods but one. For years, they quarreled over whether the persons of the Trinity were of *similar* substance (Greek, *homoiousia*) or of the *same* substance (*homooousia*). This controversy was settled in favor of *homooousia* at the Councils of Nicaea in 325 C.E. and Constantinople in 381 C.E.

The *Britannica* adds: "From the outset, the controversy between both parties [at Nicaea] took place upon the common basis of the Neoplatonic concept of substance, which was foreign to the New Testament itself. It is no wonder that the continuation of the dispute on the basis of the metaphysics of substance likewise led to concepts that have no foundation in the New Testament." Thus, the very concept of a God in three persons of one substance is founded on theology or philosophy, but not on the Scriptures.

You can see evidence of this by examining the two sections of the Bible commonly called the Old and New Testaments.

No Trinity in the "Old Testament"

The 15-volume *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* declares: "It seems unquestionable that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity was not made to the Jews." Similarly *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* states: "It must be remembered that the O[ld] T[estament] was written before the revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity was clearly given." How ridiculous, though, to maintain that true worshipers of pre-Christian times were in fundamental ignorance of the true God and worshiped only one third of the so-called Godhead! Can you believe that? Hardly. They knew whom they were worshiping.—Psalm 95:6, 7.

Some Trinitarians still try to use the Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures, to support their concept of a three-in-one God. One of their arguments is that the Hebrew word translated "God" is often in the plural form ('*Elo-him*'). They seem to ignore that this word is used in the same way for individual pagan divinities, such as Dagon (1 Samuel 5:7) and Marduk (Daniel 1:2), who were not triune gods. Commenting on this, Oxford scholar R. B. Girdlestone writes in his *Synonyms of the Old Testament*: "Many critics, however, of unimpeachable [Trinitarian] orthodoxy, think it wiser to rest where such divines as Cajetan [a theologian] in the Church of Rome and Calvin among Protestants were content to stand, and to take the plural form as a *plural of majesty*." Such Trinitarian theologians doubtless realized that if they took '*Elo-him*' as a numerical plural (gods), they would become polytheists!

Two other arguments that some Trinitarians draw from the Hebrew Scriptures are (1) that Christ is prophetically called Immanuel in Isaiah 7:14 and (2) that "Mighty God" is one of the names applied to him in Isaiah 9:6.

The name Immanuel means "with us is God," but this does not mean that Christ is God, any more than Elihu was God simply because his name means "God is he." (Job 32:1, 2) As to Christ's being called "Mighty God," if puny human judges can be called "gods" in the Scriptures (Psalm 82:1-7), is it not appropriate that God's Son should be called "Mighty God" (Hebrew, '*El Gib-bohr*')? Notice, however, that he is not called "God Almighty" (Hebrew, '*El Shad-dai*'), a term used exclusively for Jehovah. Referring to these two arguments, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* admits: "Even these exalted titles did not lead the Jews to recognize that the Saviour to come was to be none other than

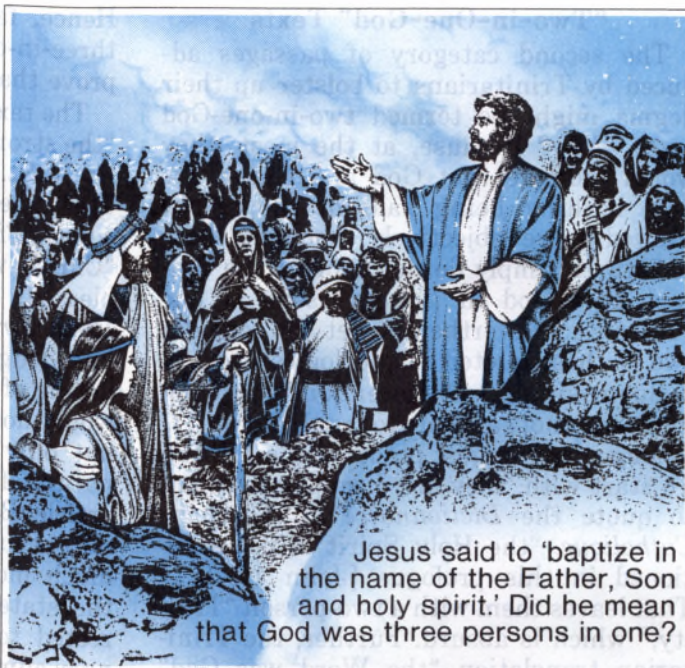
God Himself." Neither do they lead us to do so. Summing up on so-called Old Testament proofs of the Trinity, the Protestant *Cyclopædia* by M'Clintock and Strong states: "Thus it appears that none of the passages cited from the Old Test[ament] in proof of the Trinity are conclusive . . . We do not find in the Old Test[ament] clear or decided proof upon this subject."

What About the "New Testament"?

We have already seen that a Greek philosophical concept permitted theologians to 'construct' the doctrine of a God in three persons of one substance, but the Swiss *Vocabulaire Biblique* says: "No New Testament writings supply explicit assurance of a triune God." *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* also admits: "The N[ew] T[estament] does not contain the developed doctrine of the Trinity." This being the case, Trinitarians have been obliged to resort to strained reasonings to give a few verses in the Christian Greek Scriptures a Trinitarian twist. Let us examine a few.

They can be grouped into two categories: (1) Texts in which God, his Son and the holy spirit are mentioned in the same verse or verses and (2) texts in which any two of them are mentioned.

The first group includes the texts that are supposed to contain the so-called triadic formula. These are Matthew 28:19 (Father, Son, holy spirit), 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (spirit, Lord, God), 2 Corinthians 13:14 ([13 in some Bibles] Christ, God, holy spirit), Galatians 4:4-6 (God, Son,



Jesus said to 'baptize in the name of the Father, Son and holy spirit.' Did he mean that God was three persons in one?

spirit of his Son), Ephesians 4:4-6 (spirit, Lord, God) and 1 Peter 1:2 (God, spirit, Jesus Christ).

Does the fact that God, his Son and the holy spirit are mentioned together prove that they share divinity, eternity and equality, as the Trinity dogma claims? If so, then it might equally be asserted that the Trinitarian "Godhead" is made up of God, Christ and the angels! (See Mark 13:32; 1 Timothy 5:21.) Even the M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopædia* concedes, with regard to the so-called Trinitarian baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19: "The connection of these three subjects does not prove their *personality* or *equality*." Neither this text nor any of the other so-called triadic-formula texts are proof of the Trinity doctrine. Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states plainly: "The N[ew] T[estament] does not actually speak of triunity. We seek this in vain in the triadic formulae of the NT."

"Two-in-One-God" Texts

The second category of passages adduced by Trinitarians to bolster up their dogma might be termed two-in-one-God texts. Why? Because, at the most, they would indicate that God and Christ are one, nothing being said of the spirit. Viewed more objectively, though, these scriptures simply do not support the concept of a God in *three* persons of one substance. Nevertheless, let us consider two of those quoted in theological works.

Surprisingly, Christendom's theologians do not appear to rank John 1:1 among the strongest proofs of the Trinity. To start with, they are disappointed that, to quote the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, "the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this prologue [John 1:1-18]." That leaves them with a two-person "Trinity," which is absurd. Further, the Trinitarian translation "the Word was God" gives the reader the impression that the Word was one and the same person with God. But this is impossible, because the same verse says "the Word was with God," and "this preposition ["with," literally "toward"] implies intercourse and therefore separate personality."* So professor B. F. Westcott hastens to state that the phrase rendered "the Word was God" describes "the nature of the Word and does not identify His Person." Well and good. But this true meaning of the original Greek is certainly not the thought conveyed by most Bibles. Still, some scholars, less supportive of Trinitarian ideas, have translated it "the Word was a divine being" or "the Word was divine." In the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (Volume 92, 1973), Philip P. Harner writes: "Perhaps the clause could be translated, 'the Word had the same nature as God.'"

* *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll, 1967 reprint, Volume 1, page 684.

Hence, far from proving that there is a three-in-one God, John 1:1 does not even prove that there is a two-in-one God!

The text that *A Catholic Dictionary* calls "the strongest statement of Christ's divinity in St. Paul, and, indeed, in the N[ew] T[estament]" is Romans 9:5. In *The Jerusalem Bible*, this verse reads, in part: "Christ who is above all, God for ever blessed! Amen." *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* acknowledges that even if a Trinitarian rendering of the Greek were accurate, "Christ would not be equated absolutely with God, but only described as a being of divine nature, for the word *theos* [God] has no article. But this ascription of majesty does not occur anywhere else in Paul. The much more probable explanation is that the statement is a doxology [praise] directed to God." Even *A Catholic Dictionary* admits: "There is no reason in grammar or in the context which forbids us to translate 'God, who is over all, be blessed for ever, Amen.'" So much for "the strongest statement of Christ's divinity"! —Compare Romans 9:5 in the Catholic *New American Bible* and the Protestant *New English Bible*.

One God or Three?

There are other scriptures quoted by Trinitarians in their efforts to back up the so-called "central doctrine of the Christian religion." After having examined several of these, Professor Johannes Schneider concludes his article on "God" in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* by stating: "All this underlines the point that primitive Christianity did not have an explicit doctrine of the Trinity such as was subsequently elaborated in the creeds of the early church."

One God or three? For the early Christians, the answer was plain. It was clearly stated by the apostle Paul:

"We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even though there are those who are called 'gods,' whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and many 'lords,' there is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things

are, and we through him."—1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

The Bible speaks of "the Father," "the Son" and also "the holy spirit." But it does not present them as a triune God. Just what the "one God and Father of all persons," the "one Lord," and the "one spirit" are, according to the Bible, will be examined in our next issue.—Ephesians 4:4-6.

Do You Remember?

Have you enjoyed the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? Now see if you can recall:

□ Of what value is the book of Numbers to Christians today?

It provides a valuable link in the divine record leading to the establishment of God's Kingdom. The animal sacrifices point to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (Numbers 19:2-9; Hebrews 9:13, 14) Also, the book helps Christians to avoid idolatry and sexual immorality, and it alerts them to the danger of murmuring against God, his appointees and his provisions.—4/15, page 30.

□ What is the importance of the date 1914?

In the year 1914 events were set in motion that will result in a complete change in the world scene. Jesus began to rule in his heavenly Kingdom, Satan was thereafter cast out of heaven. Soon God's Kingdom will crush the ruling systems. (Daniel 2:44)—5/1, pages 5-7.

□ What are some key factors in maintaining spiritual balance?

(1) Staying spiritually healthy; (2) avoiding dangerous spiritual areas (such as subtle materialism); (3) knowing of and working on weak areas; (4) keeping busy in the ministry; (5) humbly accepting dis-

cipline through God's organization, and (6) never isolating oneself from the congregation.—5/15, pages 8-11.

□ Do the Scriptures classify marrow with blood?

Although red blood cells originate in the marrow, the Scriptures do not classify marrow with blood. Marrow is spoken of like any other flesh that could be eaten. (Isaiah 25:6)—5/15, page 31.

□ What demonstrates that a person is seeking the truth?

If a person is willing to apply God's Word in his life, he will find true faith. (Matthew 5:6; John 10:14, 27; 18:37) Also, faith is a fruit produced by God's spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) So if one prays for faith, making a real effort to acquire it and live by it, then God will help that one. (Matthew 7:7)—6/1, pages 5, 6.

□ How can Jehovah's reminders benefit us today?

Divine reminders move us to search for Jehovah with all our heart. This brings much happiness, preventing us from going astray or pursuing some shameful course in God's eyes. (Psalm 119:2, 31)—6/15, pages 21-5.

□ What is the source of greediness?

Because of man's inherited imperfection, greed is a wild outgrowth of the normal desire for material possessions and financial security. (Romans 5:12) It can spring from an excessive or insatiable desire for possessions, fame or wealth.—7/1, pages 24-5.

□ In making disciples, what are some points to keep in mind if the heart of the listener is to be reached?

First, the right example must be set. (Luke 6:40) Second, ask questions to get the student to think and reason. (Matthew 17:24-27) Third, help the student to see the wisdom of obeying God's laws. (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13) Fourth, assist the student to know Jehovah intimately. (John 17:3)—8/1, pages 13-17.

□ What new monthly feature was introduced in the July 1, 1984, issue of this magazine?

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