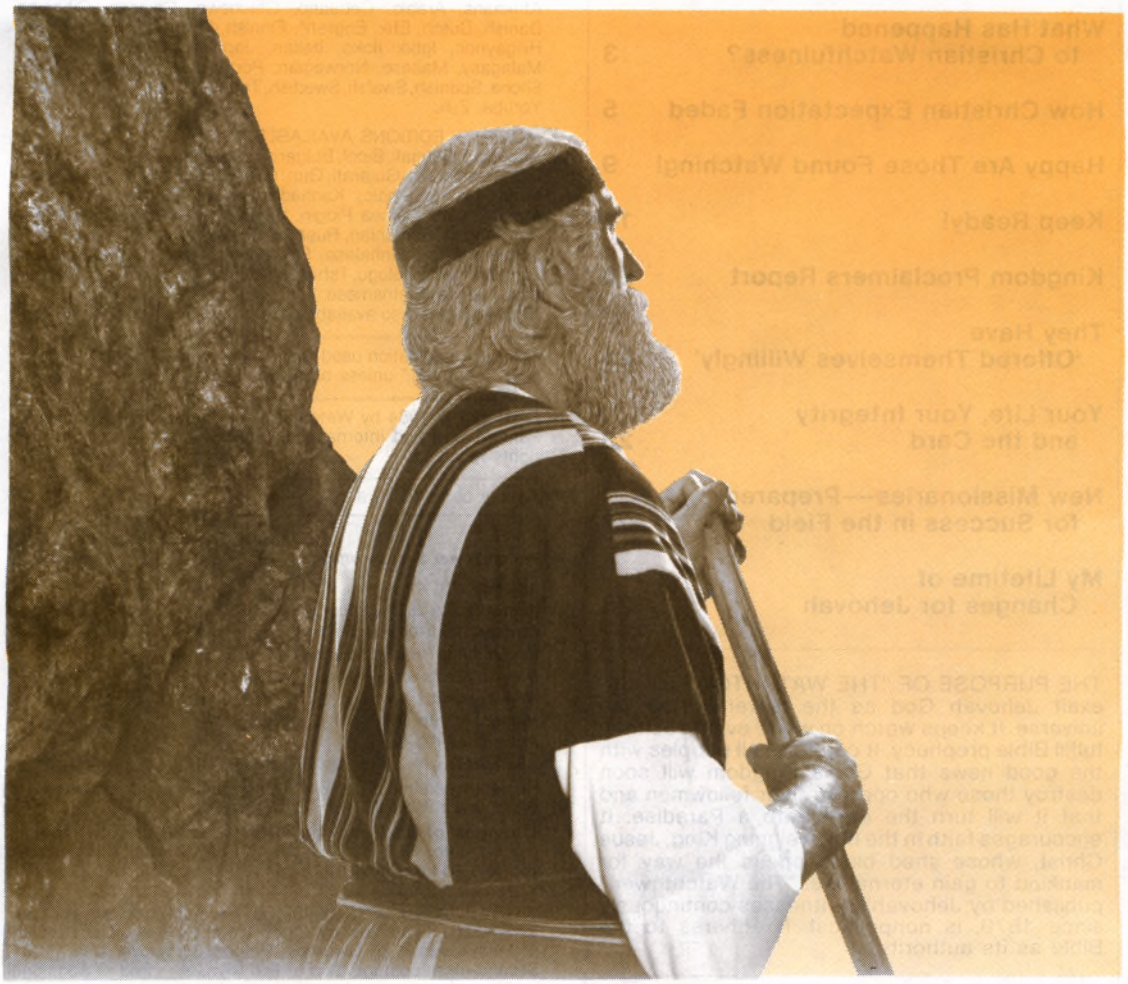
December 1, 1984

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



What Has Happened to Christian Watchfulness?

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

December 1, 1984
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What Has Happened to Christian Watchfulness?

"WHAT I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Those words of Jesus Christ have been ringing in the ears of sincere Christians down through the centuries. But how many members of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox or mainstream Protestant Churches still have that galvanizing warning ringing in their ears? —Mark 13:37, *King James Version.*

Why were Christians to keep on the watch? Jesus had just stated: "Keep on the watch, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, . . . in order that when he arrives suddenly, he does not find you sleeping." (Mark 13:35, 36) So Jesus' disciples were to keep on the watch for their Master's coming, that is, Christ's coming.

What was to be the purpose of Jesus' coming? His order for watchfulness was given as part of his answer to this pointed question put to him by his disciples: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things ["end of the world," *KJ*]?" (Matthew 24:3) According to a parallel account, after giving a many-featured sign, Christ stated: "Then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near. . . . When you

see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near."—Luke 21:27-31.

Good Reasons for Watchfulness

Thus, Jesus Christ gave his disciples good reasons for keeping spiritually alert to watch for the fulfillment of "the sign." This would mean that their Master was invisibly 'present,' for no sign would be necessary if his presence was to be physical, visible. But his spiritual presence would also mean that this wicked "world," or "system of things," had entered its "conclusion," or time of the end. And for Christians, it would mean that their 'deliverance was getting near.' Yes, it would mean that "the kingdom of God is near."

Is this not the very essence of the Christian's hope? Is it not the very thing for which all Christians were taught to pray, namely: "Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven"? (Matthew 6:9, 10, *The Jerusalem Bible*) To be logical, should not Catholics who repeat their Paternoster or members of other churches who say the Lord's Prayer be watchful to see that their prayers are fulfilled? Or could it be that the teachings of their churches have taken most of the meaning out of that prayer, so that there is little left for them to watch for?

Why Many Are No Longer Watchful

Christians were to watch for the sign of Christ's presence (Greek, *pa·rou·si'a,* translated "coming" in many versions of the Bible). Why? Because this would mean that the Kingdom of God, their own deliverance and the end of "the world," or present wicked "system of things," would be near. The various churches of Christendom should have helped their members to keep spiritually alert so that they might not be found sleeping when the Master arrived. Have the churches fulfilled their mission in this regard?

A scholarly reference work states: "As time went by without the *parousia* taking place it moved further and further into the future as far as the church was concerned, and eventually ran the risk of being abandoned altogether as an article of faith." —*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology.*

This, in fact, is what has occurred. Christendom's churches have abandoned the Christian watchfulness that Jesus ordered his disciples never to neglect. They are no longer on the alert for Christ's presence and the coming of God's Kingdom. They have rationalized away expectation of "the conclusion of the system of things," or "the end of the world."

The French one-volume encyclopedia *QUID 1984* gives an up-to-date definition of religious belief regarding the world's end. Under "Characteristics of the Catholic Religion," it says: "The Church currently appears to define the end of the World as being the individual test each person faces when he dies." Widening out the problem, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "The more established Christian churches excluded eschatology [the teaching on the "Last Things"] as meaningless or as an insignificant myth."

So, what is the surprising but inescapable answer to the question "What has happened to Christian watchfulness?" It has been killed by "the more established Christian churches," that is, the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and mainstream Protestant churches. Though the members of these churches are not to blame, many of them may wonder how and why their church rationalized away Christian expectation of Christ's presence, the coming of God's Kingdom and the end of the present wicked system of things. The historical facts that led to this will be examined in the following article.

How Christian Expectation Faded

JESUS told his disciples to "keep on the watch" for his presence and the coming of his Kingdom. (Mark 13:37) There is plenty of evidence in the Christian Greek Scriptures that first-century Christians did just that. In fact, some became quite impatient. (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2) On the other hand, to forestall any slackening in Christian expectation, Paul, James, Peter and John all wrote letters in which they exhorted their brothers to keep spiritually alert while patiently awaiting Christ's "presence" and "Jehovah's day."—Hebrews 10:25, 37; James 5:7, 8; 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Peter 3:1-15; 1 John 2:18, 28.

Reference works published by Christendom's historians and theologians recognize this fact. In its extensive *Supplément,* the authoritative French Catholic *Dictionnaire de la Bible* states: "It is futile to try at all costs to deny the state of expectation of the end that is manifest in most of the New Testament texts. . . . In early Christianity . . . expectation of the Parousia [presence] plays an essential part and continues from one end of the N[ew] T[estament] to the other."

But why is it that some of Christendom's theologians "try at all costs to deny the state of expectation of the end" that was manifest among the early Christians? Doubtless, to justify the state of spiritual lethargy that is manifest today among many so-called Christians and their spiritual leaders. How did this change come about?

How Expectation Faded

The slackening of Christian expectation was one of the consequences of the apostasy that had already begun to manifest itself even before the death of Christ's apostles. The apostle Paul warned that apostasy was "already at work" within the Christian congregation in his day. (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7) A few years later, the apostle Peter put his fellow Christians on their guard against "false teachers" and "ridiculers" who would say: "Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning." —2 Peter 2:1; 3:3, 4.

Interestingly, proper Christian expectation was maintained for a time by those who believed the Scriptural truth that Jesus' promised "presence" will herald the nearness of his Thousand Year Reign over the earth. Justin Martyr (died c. 165 C.E.), Irenaeus (died c. 202 C.E.) and Tertullian (died after 220 C.E.) all believed in Christ's Millennial Reign and

"It is futile to . . . deny the state of expectation of the end that is manifest in most of the New Testament texts"

Augustine held that the church on earth is the Kingdom of Christ

recommended eager expectation of the end of the present wicked system of things.

As time passed and the apostasy developed, the millennial hope of the earth's being transformed into a global paradise under Christ's Kingdom was gradually replaced by an imaginary expectation based on the Greek philosophical concept of inherent human immortality. The hope of Paradise was transferred from being on the earth to being in heaven, attainable at death. Christian expectation of Christ's *parousia,* or presence, and the coming of his Kingdom thus slacked off. 'Why watch eagerly for the sign of Jesus' presence,' they reasoned 'when you can hope to join Christ in heaven at death?'

This fading of Christian watchfulness prompted apostate Christians to organize themselves into a well-structured church whose eyes were no longer fixed on the coming *parousia,* or presence, of Christ but, rather, on dominating its members and, if possible, the world. *The New Encyclopœdia Britannica* states: "The [apparent] delay of the Parousia resulted in a weakening of the imminent expectation in the early church. In this process of 'de-eschatologizing,' [weakening of the teaching on the "Last Things"] the institutional church increasingly replaced the expected Kingdom of God. The formation of the Catholic Church as a hierarchical institution is directly connected with the declining of the imminent expectation."

The Death Blow Is Struck

The church "father," or "doctor," that struck the death blow to Christian watchfulness was undoubtedly Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.). In his famous work *The City of God,* Augustine stated: "The church now on earth is both the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of heaven."

The New Bible Dictionary explains the effect this outlook had on Catholic theology, stating: "In Roman Catholic theology a distinctive feature is the identification of the kingdom of God and the Church in the earthly dispensation, an identification which is principally due to Augustine's influence. Through the ecclesiastical hierarchy Christ is actualized as King of the kingdom of God. The area of the kingdom is coterminous [having the same boundaries] with the frontiers of the Church's power and authority. The kingdom of heaven is extended by the mission and advance of the Church in the world."

This removed all necessity to "keep on the watch" for the sign that would show that God's Kingdom was near. Writing in *The New Encyclopœdia Britannica,* Professor E. W. Benz confirms this, saying: "He [Augustine] de-emphasized the original imminent expectation by declaring that the Kingdom of God has already begun in this world with the institution of the church; the church is the historical representative of the Kingdom of God on Earth. The first resurrection, according to Augustine, occurs constantly within the church in the form of the sacrament of Baptism, through which the faithful are introduced into the Kingdom of God."

Augustine was also the one who finalized Christendom's abandoning the Scrip-

Pope Leo X forbade any Catholic to predict when the Last Judgment would come

tural hope of Jesus Christ's Thousand Year Reign during which He will restore Paradise on earth. (Revelation 20:1-3, 6; 21:1-5) *The Catholic Encyclopedia* admits: "St. Augustine finally held to the conviction that there will be no millennium. . . . The sabbath of one thousand years after the six thousand years of history, is the whole of eternal life; or, in other words, the number one thousand is intended to express perfection." The *Britannica* Macropædia (1977) adds: "For him [Augustine] the millennium had become a spiritual state into which the church collectively had entered at Pentecost. . . . No imminent supernatural intervention in history was expected." Thus, for Catholics, the prayer "your kingdom come" became pointless.

Medieval Darkness

Augustine's interpretation, we are told, "became standard doctrine in the middle ages." Christian expectation, therefore, hit an all-time low. We read: "In medieval Christendom, the New Testament eschatology was given its place in a dogmatic system of which the philosophical foundations were at first Platonistic [from Greek philosopher Plato] and, later in the west, Aristotelian [from Greek philosopher Aristotle]. Traditional conceptions about the parousia, resurrection and the like were combined with Greek notions about the soul and its immortality. . . . Medieval Christianity . . . [left] little place for the eschatological passion. This passion, however, was not dead; it lived in certain heretical movements."—*Encyclopædia Britannica,* 1970 edition.

The Roman Catholic Church speaks slightingly of such "heretical movements," calling them "millennialist sects." Its historians speak disparagingly of the "Year-1000 Scare." But whose fault was it that many of the common people were afraid that the world would end in the year 1000? This "scare" was a direct result of Catholic "Saint" Augustine's theology. He claimed that Satan was bound at the time of Christ's first advent. Since Revelation 20:3, 7, 8 says that Satan would be bound for 1,000 years and then "released . . . to deceive all the nations" (*The Jerusalem Bible*), small wonder that some people in the tenth century were fearful of what might happen in the year 1000.

Naturally, the official Roman Catholic Church condemned this "scare," as it did Cistercian Abbot Joachim of Flora, who foretold the end of the Christian era for the year 1260. Finally, in 1516, at the Fifth Lateran Council, Pope Leo X formally forbade any Catholic to predict when Antichrist and the Last Judgment are due to come. Violation of such a law brought the sanction of excommunication!

Protestant Rationalizing

Theoretically, the 16th-century Reformation, with its supposed return to the Bible, should have witnessed a resurgence of Christian expectation. And it did for a time. But in this respect, as in many others, the Reformation did not fulfill its promises. It did not mark a return to

true Biblical Christianity. The Protestant churches born of the Reformation quickly lost their Christian watchfulness and came to terms with the present world.

We read: "The Reformation churches, however, soon became institutional territorial [national] churches, which in turn repressed the end-time expectation, and thus doctrine of the 'last things' became an appendix to dogmatics." "In the religious liberalism that emerged, especially among Protestants and Jews, toward the end of the 18th and through the 19th century, eschatology could find no place. It was regarded as part of the crude, primitive, outworn trappings of traditional religion which could no longer be accepted in an age of enlightenment. In most cases, eschatological ideas were abandoned altogether, and a simple post-mortem immortality of the soul was held forth as man's end. Other theologians reinterpreted the Kingdom of God expectation in ethical, quasi-mystical or social terms."—*Encyclopædia Britannica.*

Thus, instead of helping Christians to "keep on the watch" for Christ's presence and the coming of God's Kingdom, Protestant theologians have rationalized away true Christian expectation. For many of them, "the kingdom of God . . . came to be increasingly conceived in an individualistic sense; it is the sovereignty of grace and peace in the hearts of men." For others, "the coming of the kingdom consists in the forward march of social righteousness and communal development."—*The New Bible Dictionary* (Protestant).

Catholic Expectations

In theory, at least, Catholics should be spiritually on the watch for Christ's presence. In spite of Augustine's theology that put an end to Kingdom expectation and the millennial hope for Catholics, the Roman Church's dogma still includes the Christian duty to keep on the watch for Christ's return. For instance, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith sent to Catholic bishops throughout the world a letter, approved by Pope John Paul II and dated May 17, 1979, that stated: "In accordance with Scripture, the Church awaits 'the glorious manifestation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

Such is the Catholic Church's teaching in theory. But, in practice, how often does the average Catholic hear his priest preach about the need to keep on the watch for Christ's presence and the coming of God's Kingdom? Interestingly, the very purpose of the above-quoted letter from the Roman Curia was to "strengthen the faith of Christians on points that have been questioned." But why has Christ's return been questioned by so-called Christians? Could the answer be suggested in the following quotations from *The New Encyclopædia Britannica?* "The church has long neglected teachings about the entire area of the last things." "Since the Reformation, the Roman Church has been virtually immune to eschatological movements."

Christian Watchfulness Is Not Dead

Christian expectation faded within Christendom's churches because they abandoned the clear truths of the Bible and chose to follow Greek philosophy and "Saint" Augustine's theology. The following articles will show that God's true servants have always lived in expectation of Christ's presence, and that there exists today a people who have proved their Christian watchfulness over the years and who have rediscovered a wonderful hope that can be yours. Please read on, and then ask one of Jehovah's Witnesses to help you "keep on the watch" for the fulfillment of that Bible hope.

Happy Are Those Found Watching!

"Happy are those slaves whom the master on arriving finds watching!"—LUKE 12:37.

"JEHOVAH is a God of judgment. Happy are all those keeping in expectation of him." (Isaiah 30:18) Ever since Jehovah announced the ultimate defeat of the Serpent and deliverance through the Promised Seed, his faithful servants have lived in expectation of the fulfillment of that promise. (Genesis 3:15) But are Christendom's theologians helping the members of their churches to keep on the watch for that final deliverance from Satan and his seed?

[2] In his deathbed prophecy, Jacob foretold that the Seed of promise would come through the tribe of Judah. Giving the Seed the symbolic name Shiloh, Jacob stated that "to him the obedience of the peoples will belong." According to the Greek *Septuagint Version,* Shiloh "will be the expectation of nations." (Genesis 49:10) The "nations" should be all the more on the lookout for Shiloh because Jehovah told Jacob's grandfather Abraham: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Genesis 22:18) But first that Seed, Shiloh, or the Messiah, had to come to earth among Abraham's descendants and be born into the tribe of Judah.

1. Why have Jehovah's servants always 'kept in expectation of him,' but what question can be asked about Christendom's churches?
2. Why should the "nations" be in expectation of "Shiloh"?

A Watchful Jewish Remnant

[3] Jewish historian Luke states that "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar [29 C.E.]," "the people were in expectation and all were reasoning in their hearts about John [the Baptizer]: 'May he perhaps be the Christ [Hebrew, *Ma·shi'ach,* Messiah]?'" (Luke 3:1, 15) Does secular history bear out this statement by Luke? The new English edition of Emil Schürer's *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* asks: "Did this hope [Messianic expectation] remain constantly alive among the people?" In reply, it states: "In the last pre-Christian centuries, and especially in the first century A.D., it became once more very lively, as the Pseudepigrapha [Jewish apocalyptic literature], Qumran [Dead Sea community's writings], Josephus and the Gospels show so decisively. . . . The visions of the book of Daniel . . . exercised a profound influence on the formation of the messianic idea."

3. What does Luke state about the Jewish people's expectation in 29 C.E., and does history bear this out?

[4] Commenting on Matthew 2:2, one scholar wrote: "There was, at this time, a prevalent expectation that some remarkable personage was about to appear in Judea. The Jews were anxiously looking for the coming of the Messiah. By computing the time mentioned by Daniel (chap. ix. 25-27), they knew that the period was approaching when the Messiah should appear." It can also be stated that Roman historians Suetonius and Tacitus, as well as Jewish historians Josephus and Philo, mention this state of expectation. The French *Manuel Biblique,* by Bacuez and Vigouroux (Volume 3, page 191), confirms this, and states: "People knew that the seventy weeks of years fixed by Daniel were drawing to a close; nobody was surprised to hear John the Baptist announce that the kingdom of God had drawn near."

[5] There is, therefore, historical evidence that the Jews were anticipating the coming of the Messiah, or Promised Seed, and that this expectation was due to their watching for the fulfillment of a time prophecy.* (Daniel 9:24-27) True, most first-century Jews belonging to the various sects of Judaism were hoping for a political Messiah who, as stated in *The Concise Jewish Encyclopedia,* "would destroy Israel's enemies and establish a perfect era of peace and perfection." But a remnant of faithful Jews were watching attentively for the true Messiah. Among these were Zechariah and Elizabeth, John the Baptizer's parents, as well as Simeon, Anna, Joseph and Mary. (Matthew 1: 18-21; Luke 1:5-17, 30, 31, 46, 54, 55; 2: 25, 26, 36-38) To these, but not to the religious leaders of Judaism, Jehovah confirmed what Daniel's time prophecy had enabled them to watch out for, namely, the coming of the Promised Seed, or Messiah, "when the full limit of the time arrived."—Galatians 4:4.

* For a full discussion of this time prophecy, see *"Let Your Kingdom Come,"* pages 58-66.

4, 5. (a) Why were the Jews expecting the Messiah at that time, and how is this confirmed? (b) What kind of Messiah were many Jews expecting, but to whom did Jehovah reveal the coming of the true Messiah?

Early Christian Watchfulness

[6] Joseph and Mary knew that the child Jesus they were raising was due to become the Messiah. Speaking of his upbringing, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "Jesus most likely grew up in the piety that was cultivated in the home and in the synagogue (including Bible study, obedience to the Law, prayer, and expectation of the final coming of the Messiah)." Other youngsters brought up in the homes of the faithful Jewish remnant were infused with the Messianic hope, and this proper expectation enabled at least some of them promptly to heed the call to become Jesus' disciples.—Mark 1:17-20; John 1:35-37, 43, 49.

[7] Toward the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus taught his disciples to keep on the watch for his future "presence" and the coming of his Kingdom. The *Britannica* states: "These traditional motifs of the end of the world, the Last Judgment, and the new world of God are not lacking in the sayings of Jesus preserved in the Gospel tradition. Thus, Jesus has not by any means changed the Kingdom of Heaven into a purely religious experience of the individual human soul or given the Jewish eschatological expectation the sense of an evolutionary process immanent in the world or of a goal attainable by human effort. . . . He neither shared nor encouraged the hope in a national messiah . . .

6. How were young Jews brought up, and how did this help some to become Jesus' disciples?

7. (a) Did Jesus teach that the Kingdom is within the individual Christian? (b) For what were Christians to keep on the watch?

nor did he support the efforts of the Zealots to accelerate the coming of the Kingdom of God." No, he gave Christians a many-featured sign whereby they would first be able to recognize the approach of Jerusalem's destruction, then, much later, discern the 'sign of his presence and the conclusion of the system of things.'—Matthew 24:3 to 25:46; Luke 21:20-22.

[8] Freethinkers and even some of Christendom's theologians claim that the early Christians believed that Christ's *parousia,* or presence, was due to occur in their day. Some even suggest that Jesus himself believed he would come into his Kingdom very soon. But in his illustrations of the talents and the minas, Jesus showed that it would be only "after a long time" that he would return in kingly power and settle accounts with his slaves to whom he had entrusted his belongings. (Matthew 25: 14, 19; Luke 19:11, 12, 15) And in his prophecy on the 'sign of his presence and of the conclusion of the system of things,' he admitted that "neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father" knew the "day and hour" when the end would come. He added: "Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." —Matthew 24:3, 14, 36, 42.

[9] As to the early Christians' belief in the imminence of Christ's presence, a scholarly reference work* states: "The case for assuming that Paul expected the parousia soon in 1 Thess. is far from water-tight. As early as 1 Thess. 5:10 Paul reckoned with the possibility that he might die. The possibility cannot be dismissed that in speaking of 'we' in 1 Thess. 4:15 and 17 Paul was identifying himself with the last generation without necessarily supposing that he himself belonged to it." In his second letter to Timothy, Paul clearly stated that he did not hope to receive his reward until "that day," the day of Christ's "manifestation" in his Kingdom, when He would "judge the living and the dead."—2 Timothy 4:1, 8.

[10] While awaiting Jesus Christ's presence and the coming of his Kingdom, Christians were to remain watchful. Proper Christian alertness enabled the Judean Christians to recognize the sign Jesus had given for the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. (Luke 21:20-24) When Cestius Gallus attacked Jerusalem in 66 C.E., vigilant Christians took advantage of his sudden, inexplicable withdrawal and fled from the city as well as from the surrounding territory of Judea. According to early church historians Hegesippus, Eusebius and Epiphanius, the Judean Christians took refuge across the Jordan at a place called Pella. Being spiritually wide awake saved them from death or captivity when the Roman armies returned in 70 C.E. under General Titus and destroyed Jerusalem. How happy these Christians must have been that they had kept on the watch!

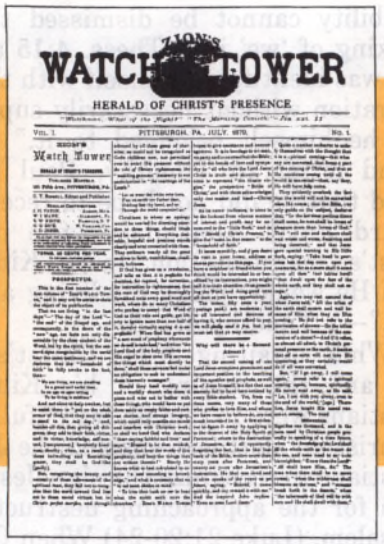
Christian Expectation After 70 C.E.

[11] Since Jesus' presence was due to occur only "after a long time," what was to be the proper attitude for Christians after Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E. and throughout the centuries until the time of the end? Was Christian expectation to be

* *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* Volume 2, page 923.

8. What shows that Jesus did not believe he would come into his Kingdom very shortly, so what counsel did he give to his followers?
9. Did the apostle Paul give the impression that he thought Christ's presence was imminent in his day? Explain.

10. How did proper Christian watchfulness prove to be lifesaving for first-century Judean Christians?
11, 12. What was to be the proper attitude for Christians after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., and how would this protect them?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Publishers of this journal have always been watchful

cooled down, "put on ice," as it were? No! The apostle John's three letters and the Revelation, or Apocalypse, were all written after 70 C.E. In his first letter, John warns against "antichrist," and tells Christians to remain in union with Christ while awaiting His "presence" and His manifestation. (1 John 2:18, 28; 3:2) In all three letters, John warns against apostates. As to the Revelation, from start to finish it is oriented toward Christ's coming in the glory of his Kingdom, its penultimate expression being: "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus."—Revelation 22:20.

12 Christians had to be *parousia* oriented. That is, day by day they had to live in expectation of Christ's "presence." Ernst Benz, a professor of church history, writes: "The 'last things' were the first things, in terms of urgency, for the faithful of the early church. The central content of their faith and their hope was the coming Kingdom of God." Even if the Kingdom were not to come during their lifetime, this proper attitude of expectation would protect Christians from becoming spiritually drowsy and getting involved with Satan's world.—1 John 2: 15-17.

13 Admittedly, as the apostasy developed after the death of the apostles, some got wrong ideas as to the nearness of Christ's coming in his Kingdom. In his work *The Early Church and the World,* C. J. Cadoux states: "Irenæus [second century C.E.] and Hippolytus [late second, early third century C.E.] both thought it was possible to calculate with some degree of accuracy the time when the end would come." Some, due to faulty chronology, thought that 6,000 years of human history had nearly elapsed and that the advent of the seventh millennium was near. They were wrong, of course. But at least they were endeavoring to keep spiritually awake.

14 On the other hand, most apostate Christians lost all sense of urgency and expectation of the Kingdom. The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* informs us: "Influenced by the metaphysics [philosophy] of Plato and the ethics of the Stoics, the Christian Apologists [second- and early third-century church "fathers"] make little use of the concept of the kingdom of God. In so far as they have an eschatology, it is dominated by the idea of the perfection of the individual Christian. . . . Greek concepts of immortality, eternal life and knowledge are more important than the biblical concept of the [Kingdom of God]. . . . Similarly in Origen [c. 185–c. 254 C.E.], . . . there is almost no place at all for the biblical message of the kingdom of God."

15 In the main, this was the attitude

13, 14. What two extremes existed among apostate Christians in the second and third centuries C.E.?

15. As the apostasy developed, what attitude did the established churches adopt toward the teaching on the "Last Things"?

that prevailed throughout the centuries among the so-called Christian churches. *The Encyclopædia Britannica* reveals: "Since the time of the Roman emperor Constantine (died 337) the political recognition of Christianity has been understood as a realized hope in the Kingdom of Christ. Futuristic eschatology continued to exist in the suppressed underground sects." "In the period before the 16th-century Reformation, heretical groups . . . accused the Roman Church of betraying the original eschatological imminent expectation."

'Happy Are Those Found Watching'

16 Since "the more established Christian churches" were no longer on the watch for Christ's presence and his receiving Kingdom power, it was left to what those churches called "heretical groups" to do so. In the 19th century, several such groups appeared in lands where the Bible and the means to study it were available to the common people. The mainstream churches, for whom any teaching on the "Last Things" had become meaningless, despisingly called such groups adventists or millennialists, because such groups were on the watch for Christ's second advent and believed that Christ was due to reign for a thousand years. Many of these groups expected Christ to return to earth to establish his millennial Kingdom. Some of them calculated Christ's second advent as due to occur in 1835 (the Irvingites, in England), 1836 (Bengel's followers, in Germany), 1843 (Miller's followers, in the United States) and 1889 (a Mennonite group in Russia).

17 Naturally, "the more established Christian churches" rejoiced when these predictions turned out to be erroneous. To be sure, the Catholic, Orthodox and principal Protestant Churches made no such mistakes. For them, the teaching on the "Last Things" was "meaningless." They had long since ceased to "keep on the watch."—Mark 13:37.

18 Yet, Jesus told his disciples: "Happy are those slaves whom the master on arriving finds watching! . . . Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time? Happy is that slave, if his master on arriving finds him doing so!"—Luke 12:37-43.

19 Among the so-called heretical groups who were watching for the sign of Christ's return in the latter third of the 19th century was a Bible-study class presided over

16. What groups appeared in the 19th century, and what did some of them believe?
17, 18. How did Christendom's established churches react, but what did Jesus say he would look for when he 'arrived'?

19, 20. (a) What group came on the scene in the 1870's, and why did they disassociate themselves from other groups? (b) What magazine became the official organ of this group, and how has this magazine helped an increasing number of true Christians?

Some Review Questions

- □ What proves first-century Jewish Messianic expectancy?
- □ How did watchfulness help Judean Christians?
- □ What effect did the apostasy have on Christian expectation?
- □ What kind of slave would Christ look for as the time of the end drew near?
- □ What group of Christians were meeting these requirements, and with the help of what magazine?

by Charles Russell in Pittsburgh, United States. Russell wrote: "From 1870 to 1875 was a time of constant growth in grace and knowledge and love of God and his Word. . . . However, we were then merely getting the general outline of God's plan, and unlearning many long-cherished errors. . . . We felt greatly grieved at the error of Second Adventists, who were expecting Christ in the flesh."

20 Russell and his associates quickly understood that Christ's presence would be invisible. They disassociated themselves from other groups and, in 1879, began publishing spiritual food in *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence.* From its first year of publication, this magazine pointed forward, by sound Scriptural reckoning, to the date 1914 as an epoch-making date in Bible chronology. So when Christ's invisible presence began in 1914, happy were these Christians to have been found watching! For over a century, this magazine, now called *The Watchtower—Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom,* has helped an ever-increasing number of true Christians to "keep looking" and "keep awake." (Mark 13:33) Just how this has been done will be considered in the following article.

Keep Ready!

"Keep ready, because at an hour that you do not think likely the Son of man is coming."
—LUKE 12:40.

JESUS Christ urged his followers to be watchful. For instance, he said: "You, then, watch out; I have told you all things beforehand. . . . And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. . . . Concerning that day or the hour nobody knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father. Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is. It is like a man traveling abroad that left his house and gave the authority to his slaves, to each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to keep on the watch. Therefore keep on the watch, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether late in the day or at midnight or at cockcrowing or early in the morning; in order that when he arrives suddenly, he does not find you sleeping. But what I say to you I say to all, Keep on the watch."—Mark 13:23-37.

2 The preceding articles have provided abundant evidence from neutral sources that Christendom's churches have not 'kept on the watch.' According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* they have devitalized Kingdom expectation by claiming that "the kingdom of God means . . . the ruling of God in our hearts," thereby taking all meaning out of the model prayer, or Lord's Prayer. Yet *The New Encyclopæ-*

1. What did Christ say about the need to keep on the watch?

2. Why does the model prayer imply watchfulness, but how have Christendom's churches devitalized Kingdom expectation?

dia Britannica states: "The petitions of the Lord's Prayer presuppose the deeply distressing circumstance that God's name and will are abused, that his Kingdom is not yet come." Yes, the model prayer presupposes watchfulness. Specifically, for what things were Christians to stay on the watch?

"On the Watch"—For What?

[3] A close examination of Bible prophecies about the "Last Things" reveals the precise things for which Christians were to "keep on the watch." First, they were not to lose sight of the time element, for Jesus Christ spoke of an "appointed time" known only to his Father. (Mark 13:32, 33) In addition, Jesus told his disciples that Jerusalem would be "trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations [Gentiles] are fulfilled." (Luke 21:24) Obviously, Jesus gave his followers this information in order to help them identify the time of the end, for it is a part of his answer to the question: "Teacher, *when* will these things actually be, and what will be the sign when these things are destined to occur?"—Luke 21:7.

[4] In addition to their paying attention to the time element, Christians were to watch out for the requested "sign," also mentioned in Matthew 24:3 and Mark 13:4. This many-featured sign—including international wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilences and persecution of true Christians—would tie in with the fulfillment of time prophecies to identify the "generation" that would "by no means pass away" until all the things due to occur in the time of the end actually took place.—Luke 21:10-12, 32.

3. Why could Christians not ignore the time element?
4. For what "sign" were Christians to keep on the watch?

[5] What important events related to "the conclusion of the system of things" would be heralded by this sign? Jesus' disciples asked him: "What will be the sign of your presence [Greek, *pa·rou·si'a*]?" (Matthew 24:3) What would Christ's "presence" mean? Much more than his being spiritually with his true followers when they met together or carried out their mission to make disciples. He would be supporting his followers in this way down through the centuries. (Matthew 18:20; 28:18-20) Even Christendom's theologians admit that the word "presence" took on a special meaning. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* states: "The idea of the *parousia* now becomes bound up with the church's expectation of Christ's appearing at the end of the age." From one end to the other, the Christian Greek Scriptures exhort Christians to live in expectation of Christ's presence.—Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, 39; James 5:7, 8; 2 Peter 3:3, 4; 1 John 2:28; Revelation 1:7; 22:7.

[6] Christ's presence would mean nothing less than "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:4) It would mean that the present wicked system of things had entered into its "time of the end," or "last days." (Daniel 12:4, 9; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) It would mean that Christ had received from his Father the order to exercise Kingdom rulership over the earth 'in the midst of his enemies.' (Psalm 110:2; 2:6-9; Revelation 11:15-18) Before judging the world in general, Christ would inspect his own congregation and resurrect anointed Christians

5. How would Christ be with his true followers throughout the centuries, but was this all he meant when he gave the sign of his "presence"?
6. (a) What would Christ's presence mean for this wicked system of things? (b) How would Christ's presence affect anointed Christians who had died faithful and those still alive on earth?

who had died faithful. (1 Corinthians 15: 21, 23; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4: 13-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:1) Those anointed Christians still alive on earth and faithfully acting as Christ's "slave" by keeping spiritually awake and supplying spiritual "food at the proper time" would be appointed by Christ "over all his belongings," or Kingdom interests on earth. (Matthew 24:45-47; Luke 12:42-44) This "faithful and discreet slave" would have to engage in and supervise a worldwide work of preaching "this good news of the kingdom," and 'then the end would come.' —Matthew 24:14.

7 True Christians were to "keep on the watch" for all these things that would prove they were living at the time of Christ's presence and "the conclusion of the system of things." But even during "the time of the end," they were to keep on the watch for "the sign of the Son of man," his "coming" to execute judgment against Satan's wicked system of things. (Matthew 24:30, 44; Mark 13:26, 35; Luke 12:40; 21:27; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10) Thus, although he would be 'present' and his Kingdom would already have been established, both he and his Kingdom would still have to "come" and "crush and put an end" to the nations and kingdoms of Satan's world. (Daniel 2:44) This explains why, after giving the elements of the "sign" of his presence, Christ added: "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near." (Luke 21:31) Yes, even during Christ's presence, Christians would still pray for God's Kingdom to come, and they would still need to "keep looking" and "keep awake" for the appointed time of "the end" and their "deliverance."—Mark 13:7, 29, 32-37; Luke 21:9, 28.

7. Even during Christ's presence, for what other sign were Christians to keep on the watch, and why would they continue to pray for God's Kingdom to "come"?

Who Has Proved 'Watchful'?

8 We have just seen that Christians were to live in expectation of the end of "the appointed times of the nations." They were to watch for 'the sign of Christ's presence and of the conclusion of the system of things.' They were to expect the resurrection of anointed Christians who had died faithful and a clear identification of "the faithful and discreet slave" class who would be appointed over the earthly interests of Christ's Kingdom. Finally, this "slave" would continue to supply spiritual food, while setting the lead in preaching "this good news of the kingdom . . . in all the inhabited earth" before "the end." "The sign of the Son of man" would appear by his "coming" to destroy Satan's wicked system of things.

9 Who has proved to be "on the watch" for all these things? As early as 1876, Charles T. Russell of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had been attentively watching for the end of "the appointed times of the nations," or "times of the Gentiles." (*King James Version*) That year he published an article entitled "Gentile Times: When Do They End?" In it he stated that "the seven times will end in A.D. 1914." From 1880 on, that same information was published in the columns of *Zion's Watch Tower.* The March 1880 issue stated: " 'The Times of the Gentiles' extend to 1914, and the heavenly kingdom will not have full sway till then." True, the Bible students who wrote those articles did not, at that time, enjoy the precise Biblical and historical

8. Recapitulate the things for which Christians were to keep on the watch.

9. Who proved to be watching for the end of "the appointed times of the nations," and how did *Zion's Watch Tower* help Christians to keep spiritually alert?

understanding of what the end of those "appointed times of the nations" would actually mean, as we understand these things today.* But the important point is that they were "on the watch" and helped to keep fellow Christians spiritually alert.

10 That same group of Bible students associated with Charles Russell and the magazine *Zion's Watch Tower* also helped sincere Christians to understand that Christ's "presence" should be understood to be invisible, and that he would not return to earth to reign as a fleshly king. They continually drew the attention of the Master's "domestics" to world events in connection with "the sign" of Christ's presence and "the time of the end."

11 Admittedly, it was thought that the establishment of the Kingdom in the heavens would mean the immediate destruction of earthly kingdoms and that anointed Christians would be "caught away" to join deceased anointed Christians due to be resurrected at the time of Christ's presence. (2 Thessalonians 2:1) But who can blame them for not fully understanding at that time that a great ingathering work had to take place between the beginning and the end of the fulfillment of Daniel 2:44, or that the being "caught away" mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 refers to an immediate resurrection of the anointed who die after the beginning of the first resurrection?—1 Corinthians 15:36, 42-44; Romans 6:3.

* See the book "*Let Your Kingdom Come,*" chapter 14, and the well-documented appendix to that chapter at the end of the book.

10. How was the real meaning of Christ's "presence" made clear?

11. (a) What was not fully understood at that time with regard to earthly kingdoms and with regard to anointed Christians' being "caught away"? (b) What better understanding do we have today of Daniel 2:44 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17?

C. T. Russell and his associates kept on the watch

12 We understand these things today, thanks to the increasing light that has been shed on God's Word by means of "the faithful and discreet slave" class. (Proverbs 4:18) Concerning that "slave," Jesus stated: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings." (Matthew 24:45-47) When the enthroned Lord Jesus inspected his household in 1919, he found the group of Christians associated with the *Watchtower* magazine loyally striving to "keep on the watch" with the help of spiritual "food at the proper time." Until this very day, that "slave" class has faithfully continued to provide spiritual food to enable the Master's "domestics" and their companions to "keep looking, keep awake."—Mark 13:33.

12. (a) What did Christ expect to find his faithful "slave" doing when he arrived to inspect his household, and whom did he find so doing? (b) What has the faithful "slave" class continued to do since then?

Things for Which Christians Were to Keep on the Watch

The end of "the appointed times of the nations."—Luke 21:24.

"The sign" of Christ's presence "and of the conclusion of the system of things."—Matthew 24:3–25:46.

The clear identification of "the faithful and discreet slave" class. —Matthew 24:45-47.

The "sign of the Son of man," when he 'comes' to execute Jehovah's judgments.—Matthew 24:30.

Alertness or Sluggishness?

13 It is easy for the established churches of Christendom and other people to criticize Jehovah's Witnesses because their publications have, at times, stated that certain things could take place on certain dates. But is not such line of action in harmony with Christ's injunction to "keep on the watch"? (Mark 13:37) On the other hand, have Christendom's churches encouraged Christian watchfulness by teaching that the Kingdom is "the ruling of God in our hearts"? Have they not, rather, encouraged spiritual sluggishness by considering expectation of "the end" to be "meaningless" or "an insignificant myth"? Have apostates who claim that "the last days" began at Pentecost and cover the entire Christian Era promoted Christian alertness? Have they not, rather, induced spiritual sleepiness?

14 True, some expectations that appeared to be backed up by Bible chronology did not materialize at the anticipated time. But is it not far preferable to make some mistakes because of overeagerness to see God's purposes accomplished than to be spiritually asleep as to the fulfillment of Bible prophecy? Did not Moses make a 40-year miscalculation in trying to act ahead of time to remove Israel's affliction? (Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6, 17, 23, 25, 30, 34) Were not Christ's apostles overanxious to see the Kingdom established, not to speak of their complete misunderstanding as to what the Kingdom really is? (Acts 1:6; compare Luke 19:11; 24:21.) Were not the anointed Christians in Thessalonica impatient to see "the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the day of Jehovah"?—2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2.

15 There is nothing basically unscriptural in using chronology in efforts to learn "the appointed time" for the fulfillment of God's purposes. (Habakkuk 2:3) Daniel calculated when Jerusalem's devastation was due to end. (Daniel 9:1, 2) The first-century faithful Jewish remnant were in expectation of the coming of the Messiah because they calculated the end of a time, based on prophecy. (Daniel 9:25; Luke 3:15) Late 19th-century and early 20th-century Christians were enabled to live in expectation of God's Kingdom rule well before 1914 because they calculated when "the appointed times of the nations" were due to end. (Luke 21:24; Daniel 4:16, 17) It was, therefore, understandable why efforts were made to use other Biblical time indications to try to find out when the long-awaited hopes might become a reality. Faithful servants of Jehovah in

13. What questions should those who criticize Jehovah's Witnesses ask themselves?
14. What examples are there of faithful servants of Jehovah in the past who were overeager to see God's purposes fulfilled?
15. What examples show that it is not unscriptural to use chronology in trying to determine when God's purposes are about to be fulfilled, and what has been the cry of many of Jehovah's faithful servants, past and present?

the past cried out: "How long, O Jehovah?"—Isaiah 6:11; Psalm 74:10; 94:3.

Why "Keep Ready"?

16 Since Jesus clearly stated that no man could know "that day" or "the hour" when the Father will order his son to 'come' against Satan's wicked system of things, some may ask: 'Why is it so urgent to live in expectation of the end?' It is urgent because practically in the same breath, Jesus added: "Keep looking, keep awake . . . keep on the watch." (Mark 13: 32-35) The "sign" of Jesus' *parousia* has been in evidence since 1914. We now await "the sign of the Son of man," when he 'comes' as Jehovah's Executioner.

17 When Jesus gave the first-century Judean Christians a sign whereby they would know that the time had come to flee from Jerusalem, he insisted on the need to act immediately. (Luke 21:20-23) Why all the urgency, since nearly four years elapsed from the appearing of the sign in 66 C.E. and the actual destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.? Because Jesus knew that if they delayed, they would keep putting off their flight and eventually be caught by the Roman armies.

18 Similarly today, it would be highly dangerous for Christians to rationalize about the urgency of our times and adopt a "cruising speed" attitude that reflects doubt about the nearness of the end.

19 The *parousia,* or presence, of Christ has now run for 70 years, and his "coming" for "Jehovah's day" of execution against Satan's world is fast approaching. The apostle Peter says that this day "will come as a thief," and he adds that we should 'await and keep close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah.' (2 Peter 3:10-12) Jesus also warned us: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. . . . Keep awake."—Luke 21:34-36.

20 How happy and how thankful Jehovah's Witnesses should be to have been kept spiritually awake by the faithful and vigilant "slave" class! Proper Christian expectation will safeguard us during these perilous "last days" and will prompt us to take part zealously in preaching "this good news of the kingdom." Thereby we will be helping others to keep on the watch and survive into the new system of things wherein "righteousness is to dwell." —2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:14; 2 Peter 3:13.

16. (a) Should Mark 13:32 be understood to mean that we must show no interest as to when the end comes? (b) What "sign" is in evidence, but what other "sign" do we await?

17, 18. (a) Why did Jesus order first-century Christians to flee from Jerusalem as soon as they saw the sign of its impending destruction? (b) Why would it be dangerous to rationalize about the urgency of our times?

19. What warning did Peter and Jesus give?

20. For what should we be thankful, and how will proper Christian expectation safeguard us?

Can You Recall?

- ☐ Why should Christians not ignore the time element in Bible chronology?
- ☐ What special meaning did the word "presence" take on?
- ☐ Why is it still appropriate to pray for God's Kingdom to come?
- ☐ How would you answer those who criticize Jehovah's Witnesses on matters of chronology?
- ☐ Why is it dangerous to rationalize about the urgency of our times?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Out of the Mouth of Babes

JESUS said that "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have furnished praise." (Matthew 21:16) This proved to be true of a three-year-old girl in Guadeloupe whose mother is one of Jehovah's Witnesses. The little girl often was left with the grandmother when the child's mother was working, and the child witnessed to her grandmother.

The mother said: "My little daughter was always after grandmother, bothering her to study the book *My Book of Bible Stories* with her." The answer usually was: "Sorry, but you know I am in a hurry and I do not have time for that, as I have to do the work of your mother." But one day the three-year-old insisted on having the study, opened the book and began to explain its Bible-based pictures to her grandmother. Amazed at the knowledge of her granddaughter, the woman took the book and began reading it. She soon realized that what the little girl was telling her was correct. Her interest was aroused, and she read more and more.

Sometime afterward, the grandmother said to the child's mother: "In the past, I did not pay much attention to what you would tell me regarding the Word of God. But I cannot say that anymore, as I do read the Holy Scriptures now."

The child urged her grandmother to attend the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, and the woman did so to please the child. She was deeply impressed by what she heard. Today, the grandmother is a dedicated, baptized Witness of Jehovah.

Truly, out of the mouth of babes Jehovah has furnished praise. How joyful are all three of them now as they serve Jehovah together!

□ Another experience of a young one comes from Nigeria.

A Bible study was conducted with a family consisting of a father, mother and two young girls. The father died, and the mother lost interest and returned to her former church. She pressured the young girls, 7 and 12, to go with her. The girls put up a hard fight for the faith, even arguing with church leaders, including the pastor. Being defeated by Bible truths, he stopped visiting their home. Because the seven-year-old would not accompany her mother to her church, the woman would not give the child any food to eat.

One day, the child went to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, but no one was there, as the Witnesses had gone to a convention. Nevertheless, the child sang, prayed and studied as if she were at a regular meeting.

At home that evening, the child was not disrespectful to her mother. This conduct impressed her mother and helped to revive her interest in the truth. She resumed her Bible study with the Witnesses, attended meetings and continued her progress in Bible knowledge. Today the mother is a dedicated, baptized servant of Jehovah and the seven-year-old is doing well in the truth.

Jehovah indeed blessed the integrity-keeping stand of this seven-year-old. What joy she now has in seeing her mother a baptized Witness! And how thankful the mother is that her child maintained integrity to Jehovah!

They Have 'Offered Themselves Willingly'

SURINAME is a tropical country, one of the more than 200 lands where Jehovah's Witnesses are active. Recently, a missionary couple in Suriname made a 200-mile (320-km) ride by jeep to visit some bauxite mines and talk to the workers there about God's purposes. They found great interest.

At their first stop, a camp manager said: "I'm really glad to have you here. We really need something like this." Then he pinned up in the cafeteria an announcement of a Bible talk and slide show to be held that night at 7:30. When the time came, 70 people turned up and listened intently to a talk on how to get to know God through creation and through the Bible, and then they watched some selected slides showing the worldwide preaching work.

Afterward, the missionaries introduced various publications that would help the audience to obtain more information. "I want a book," said an elderly man, walking to the front. That was a signal to the others. The missionaries' supply was soon exhausted, and the husband had to rush out to the jeep to get a new supply, while the wife was busy jotting down addresses of those who wanted to be visited.

That was only the first night of their tour. This missionary couple spent a week in the area, finding similar success everywhere they went. Their experience is a demonstration of the great desire that still exists in many hearts to hear the truth and learn about Jehovah's will. It is to satisfy that desire that thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses during these last days have made themselves available to be sent to countries such as Suriname to help the local Witnesses handle all this interest. Thus they have fulfilled the psalmist's promise: "Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force." (Psalm 110:3) And Jehovah is richly blessing them for it.

Would *you* like to have a share in the blessings they enjoy? Perhaps you will answer: 'But I could never be a missionary!' And that may be true. Nevertheless, it may be that you are one of many who have already played an important part in the wonderful experiences being enjoyed by missionaries around the world. In what way?

'Give It to the Missionaries'

In the same way that a young girl named April did. No, April is not a missionary, although probably she would like to be one someday. But at the moment she is too young to travel to a foreign land and have such exciting experiences. Nevertheless, she wanted to be a part of it all, so

she wrote a letter to the Watchtower Society's headquarters in Brooklyn: "Someone gave me a dollar at the circuit assembly. I want to give it to you to give to the missionaries to help them teach people about Jehovah." Hence, in a very important way, little April has played a part in the worldwide missionary work. She has contributed from her resources to help finance it.

Another letter came from someone a little older than April. She wrote: "I am enclosing a check for $100 to be used in Kingdom work. This is a gift which was just handed to me, so I am passing it on to you . . . Pioneering has been my way of life for 46 years. However, I will soon be 90 and have had to slow down." This sincere, long-time servant of Jehovah could not herself handle missionary service. But she wanted to have a part, and she did so by contributing financially.

These two letters highlight another way in which God's people have 'offered themselves willingly in the day of Jehovah's military force.' They have fulfilled the exhortation of the Biblical proverb: "Honor Jehovah with your valuable things and with the firstfruits of all your produce." (Proverbs 3:9) For one reason or another, they are unable to offer themselves physically to the same extent that some others can. Nevertheless, they have contributed "valuable things" and thus helped to make it possible for others to do so. In times past, such willing giving demonstrated some important principles. Let us see what those principles were, and whether they are still valid today.

Their "Hearts Impelled Them"

In the time of Moses there was a job to be done. A tabernacle had to be built to be the center of true worship in the nation of Israel. Qualified Israelites were invited to contribute their time and talents to the building work. (Exodus 35:10) And everyone was invited to contribute from his material possessions so as to finance it. The result: an enormous contribution, far more than was needed. And it was noteworthy that the contributions were made by willing-hearted ones. The record tells us that their "hearts impelled them," their "hearts incited them." Yes, their contributing was an expression of faith in Jehovah and a demonstration of support for the purpose of the tabernacle—true worship.—Exodus 35:20-29; 36:4-7.

In the days of Hezekiah, another work had to be accomplished. After years of neglect, the temple had to be cleansed and the people taught to respect Jehovah's law. The Israelites were informed of the need for material contributions "in order that [the priests and Levites] might adhere strictly to the law of Jehovah." (2 Chronicles 31:4) The people's response was so enthusiastic that high priest Azariah concluded: "Jehovah himself has blessed his people."—2 Chronicles 31:10.

Hence, the Israelites' willingness to give was a demonstration of their fine heart condition and of their support for true worship, as well as of Jehovah's blessing upon them. What about today?

Jehovah Has Blessed His People

Well, today there is another special work to be done. Jesus prophesied: "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." (Matthew 24:14) The Bible also foretold that this preaching work would be accompanied by a teaching work and a gathering together of true worshipers. (Isaiah 2:3, 4; 54:13; Zechariah 8:23; Matthew 28:19, 20; Revelation 7:9) Do contributions play a part in this work?

They do indeed. For example, to bring a missionary to the Watchtower Bible

Jehovah's people willingly support Kingdom increase

School of Gilead and maintain him there during the course, then send him to a country like Suriname and maintain him there for several years, costs thousands of dollars. Yet the Watchtower Society has sent out more than 6,000 such missionaries since Gilead School was first opened.

Of course, this is only part of the expenses related to preaching the good news. There are also the circuit and district overseers and their wives, and the workers in the Society's Bethel homes, whose privileges of service prevent them from supporting themselves with secular work. There are also the special pioneers who receive financial help to enable them to serve in difficult territories. But that is the support only for the workers!

Add to that the cost of new printing presses and bindery equipment, as well as the expense of new Bethel facilities being erected around the world, along with Assembly Halls and hundreds of new Kingdom Halls. Remember, too, the "hidden" costs, such as the regular mailing of letters written to the more than 46,000 congregations, and the printing of the many forms and documents necessary for theocratic organization. Now you begin to realize the enormous amount of money expended each year in preaching the "good news" and ensuring that the "sheep" have places to meet in and spiritual food to enjoy.

The wonderful thing is that Jehovah has made this possible. How? Largely, by moving the hearts of people to make voluntary contributions. Thus, individual Christians make cash donations—as well as donate their time and labor—to sup-

How Some Contribute to the Kingdom Work

Gifts: Some individuals make outright gifts and donations to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, or to the branch office in the country where they reside. Such gifts should always be accompanied by a short letter stating that the money is intended as a voluntary donation.

Gifts With Special Provisions: Under this arrangement, individuals donate money with the special arrangement that if they should need some or all of it during their lifetime, it will be returned to them. Or, in order to avoid the expense and uncertainty of probate, some people give the Society stocks, bonds or land properties. Others make such gifts, reserving life rights to themselves.

Insurance: Many have made the Watch Tower Society a beneficiary of their life insurance policy.

Wills: Others, with the help and advice of their lawyers, make the Society a beneficiary in their wills.

More information or advice regarding such matters may be obtained by writing to the Society's local branch office, or to the following address: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, Office of the Secretary and Treasurer, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

port local projects such as Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls. Many congregations send regular contributions to the Watchtower Society or, outside the United States, to the branch office located in their country. Individuals also make contributions in different ways directly to the Society. (See box.) The result? Even in these difficult economic times, Jehovah is moving the hearts of his people to provide what is needed to complete the task that he has assigned.

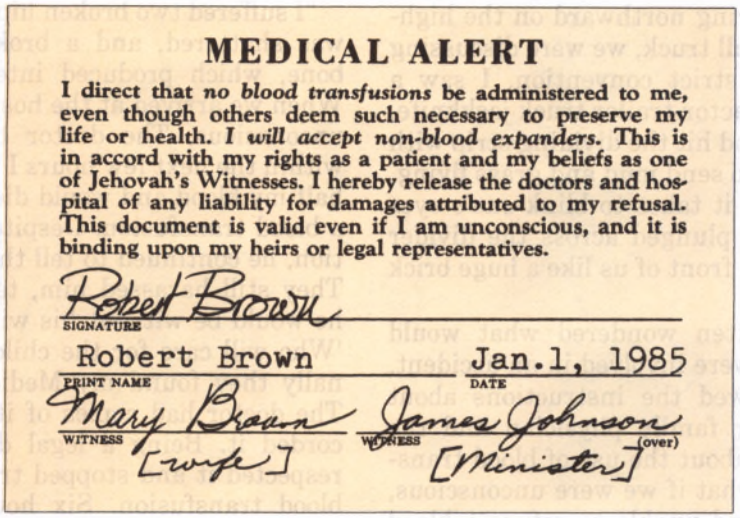
What conclusion can we draw from this? That, as in the days of Hezekiah, "Jehovah himself has blessed his people." He has shown his support in a wonderful way for the work they are doing. Also, as Jehovah's people backed His arrangement in Moses' day, we can see that today Jehovah's people are 100 percent behind the work of preaching the good news of God's Kingdom and the gathering of the interested ones. They have contributed, not because they were harangued by professional fund raisers, but because their hearts "incited them," yes, "impelled them."

Jehovah 'Carries It to Completion'

In the first century the apostle Paul engaged in missionary work and had wonderful experiences—rather like those that the missionary couple in Suriname had. He, too, was often supported by the contributions of his fellow believers. One congregation that was particularly helpful was the one in Philippi. Hence, when writing to them, Paul was moved to utter these words: "I thank my God always upon every remembrance of you in every supplication of mine for all of you, as I offer my supplication with joy, because of the contribution you have made to the good news from the first day until this moment. For I am confident of this very thing, that he who started a good work in you will carry it to completion until the day of Jesus Christ."—Philippians 1:3-6; 4:16.

Christians, today, feel similarly encouraged. True to Jehovah's promise, he has moved his people to "offer themselves willingly" in many different ways in his service. Jehovah's Witnesses thus 'thank their God always' and are confident that Jehovah, who developed such a fine spirit in his modern-day people, will carry his work to completion.

Your Life, Your Integrity and the Card



MEDICAL ALERT

I direct that *no blood transfusions* be administered to me, even though others deem such necessary to preserve my life or health. *I will accept non-blood expanders.* This is in accord with my rights as a patient and my beliefs as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I hereby release the doctors and hospital of any liability for damages attributed to my refusal. This document is valid even if I am unconscious, and it is binding upon my heirs or legal representatives.

Robert Brown
SIGNATURE

Robert Brown — Jan.1, 1985
PRINT NAME — DATE

Mary Brown [wife] — James Johnson [Minister]
WITNESS — WITNESS (over)

"WHEN ills approach, a prudent man is hidden: but the simple pass on to their sorrow."—Proverbs 27:12, *Septuagint,* by Charles Thomson.

That inspired proverb bears out the value of forethought. One 'ill,' or calamity, that God's servants want to avoid is a violation of their integrity. For some years Jehovah's Witnesses have diligently been doing that as regards God's command that Christians 'abstain from blood.'—Acts 15: 28, 29.

Christians realize that after an accident they might be unconscious or unable to give a detailed explanation of why they cannot accept blood transfusions. Even if an injured Witness could speak and say that—in line with the principle of informed consent—he did not want blood administered, doctors or hospital personnel might worry that a lawsuit could result if they did not follow standard treatment. So for some years Jehovah's Witnesses have carried a Medical Alert card. This is a signed, witnessed document that relieves physicians and hospital officials of liability for any complications that might seem to result from knowing about the refusal of blood. A new card is signed and dated each year; thus, the document is always current and valid.

If you want to obey God's law on blood, do you regularly carry one of these documents? Do you make sure that it is current and, if possible, is signed by your next of kin? Note from the following letter why you should do so:

"My husband and I want to thank you so much for providing us with spiritual food at the proper time and instructional mate-

rial to help us. I would like to relate how that material saved our lives.

"It was June 6, 1983, and a rather rainy evening as we headed home from work. We had been working as contractors in a new housing development 30 miles from home and had just picked up our three small children from school. As my husband, John, was driving northward on the highway in our small truck, we were discussing the coming district convention. I saw a southbound tractor-trailer truck jackknife, turn around and hit the dividing strip with such force as to send mud and grass flying. In the instant it takes to blink one's eyes the truck had plunged across the divider and stopped in front of us like a huge brick wall.

"We had often wondered what would happen if we were involved in an accident. We had followed the instructions about talking to our family physician and the local hospital about the use of blood transfusions. But what if we were unconscious, out of town and unable to refuse a blood transfusion? This is where one of those aids you [the Watchtower Society] have so lovingly provided really paid off: the Medical Alert card. We carry ours with us at all times. They are properly filled out, dated and signed.

"While I was unconscious in the twisted wreckage, a lady who was a registered nurse stopped. She wanted to take the two children who could be reached, for one of them was bleeding badly from a scalp wound, and John gave his permission. The other little girl was pinned in the truck with me until the door could be pried open.

"When the Emergency Medical Service arrived, John asked the attendant to radio ahead to the hospital and tell them that under no circumstances were they to give the children blood. The attendant refused, until John had him read the Medical Alert card. It convinced him to radio the message to the hospital.

"John was in bad shape, with severe head lacerations, a broken left wrist and multiple bruises. But he kept praying that he would stay conscious long enough to be able to see that the needs and wishes of his family were cared for.

"I suffered two broken hips, one of which was shattered, and a broken left thighbone, which produced internal bleeding. When we arrived at the hospital I was still unconscious. The doctor told John that within the next few hours I would lose over half my blood and would die if I didn't get a blood transfusion. Despite John's condition, he continued to tell them, 'No blood.' They still harassed him, telling him that he would be without his wife, and saying, 'Who will care for the children then?' Finally they found my Medical Alert card. The doctor had copies of it made and recorded it. Being a legal document, they respected it and stopped trying to force a blood transfusion. Six hours later I regained full consciousness and was able to speak for myself. But the wonderful —though some would think, insignificant —little card saved me from having a blood transfusion forced on me while I was unconscious.

"I was in the hospital for almost seven weeks, but I feel the recovery was rather speedy due, in part, to not having had foreign blood, with its complications, given to me. We are all united as a family and recovering nicely. Thanks be to Jehovah for providing us with such wonderful aids as the Medical Alert card. It really works!"

Jehovah's Witnesses obtain these valuable documents from the elders in their congregations. The above experience illustrates why you and your family should be "prudent" and regularly carry a completed and current Medical Alert card.—Proverbs 22:3.

New Missionaries
—Prepared for Success in the Field

THE air seemed charged with electricity, so exuberant were the 2,121 people that assembled Sunday morning, September 9, 1984, at the Queens, New York, Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. What was the occasion? It was graduation day for 37 students making up the 77th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Why the excitement? Because these graduation ceremonies always offer attenders the opportunity to hear inspiring talks from responsible members of the Watchtower Society's headquarters staff, to see an exciting Bible drama and other upbuilding presentations, and to share in the joy of the students over their prospective missionary assignments. No one in the audience was disappointed.

To start the morning's round of talks, A. D. Schroeder, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, reminisced by saying, "My dad used to say, 'If you have a job to do, get the right tools and then finish the job right —don't leave it half done.'" He explained that the students now have the tools, which include the Society's helpful Bible literature in addition to the background gained from their five-month course of ministerial training. Then he related examples of fruitful missionaries who today are making a success of their assignments.

Jack Redford, one of the Gilead instructors, had this to say: "Successful missionaries use their brains." Referring to the command at Matthew 22:37 to 'love God with your whole mind,' he showed how missionaries could do so. As an example, Redford pointed out the well-thought-out health precautions a missionary couple took in one part of Africa. He also praised a longtime missionary in Chile who used her wits to preach despite losing her hearing. "You students may also face challenges of some kind," said Redford. "But each challenge can be very rewarding, depending on how you handle it." "Think," was Redford's advice.

The other Gilead instructor, U. V. Glass, was just as practical in his counsel. Likening the students to seedlings in a hothouse, he explained that now they were about to be transplanted to a new environment, but they should "keep their roots embedded in theocratic soil." He warned the students not to be thin-skinned, or blow up, when pressures build. And then he offered suggestions as to how they could ease the pressures sometimes found in missionary life.

John E. Barr, a Governing Body member, reminded the students that one of the most precious things they would be taking to their assignments was "the joy of Jehovah." (Nehemiah 8:10) "May it spill over into the hearts of hundreds of others," he said. Leon Weaver admonished the students to become examples in love and faith, in harmony with 1 Timothy 4:12. And Eldor Timm encouraged them to have the same "I want to" attitude that Jesus displayed when he came to people's aid.—Mark 1:40, 41.

The last speaker of the morning was F. W. Franz, president of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, who spoke on the theme "Cultivating the Finest Friendship in All the Universe." Explaining that according to their root meanings, the Hebrew and Greek words for "friend" can be translated "lover," Franz pointed out that the students will gain real friends by showing genuine love for those they minister to in their new assignments. But never, emphasized Franz, should they neglect cultivating the finest friendship of all, that of Jehovah God.

To conclude the morning session, the chairman of the program, L. K. Greenlees, passed out the diplomas. The audience was delighted to hear that these graduates from 7 countries were being sent to 13 different lands in Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and the islands of the sea.

Then came the afternoon program. Donald Krebs supervised the week's *Watchtower* lesson, the students making the comments. The students then put on a series of lively skits to describe some of the interesting features of their five-month course. Then followed the highlight of the afternoon—a first-rate Bible drama depicting the trials and blessing of Job. Yes, the graduation program was truly a spiritually stimulating experience for all in attendance.

The Watchtower Society had invested much time and training in these prospective missionaries—but not without purpose. "Gilead School has prepared you to be a success," one of the speakers told the class. Indeed, we feel confident that the 77th class of Gilead will have Jehovah's blessing as they take up their new missionary assignments.

My Lifetime of Changes for Jehovah

As told by Smith Bell

"THE path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." —Proverbs 4:18.

This scripture indicates change and advancement, and as I reflect on the hundred years of my life, I can see how Jehovah has indeed continually brightened the pathway of truth. This has required a willingness to accept such change and advancement on the part of those endeavoring to serve him.

Bible Study Aid Banned

The first major change in the course of my life came during World War I. I can still see the words printed in the local newspapers of rural Saskatchewan, Canada, in 1918: "BANNED: THE FINISHED MYSTERY, BY C. T. RUSSELL." I probably would not have been so impressed except for the fact that this was the same author whose Bible sermons my father used to read when I was growing up near White Water, Manitoba. I particularly remembered how he agreed with Mr. Russell's sermons that pointed out from the Bible that there was no hellfire.

Now everyone seemed to be talking about this book, and my curiosity was greatly aroused. Why should a commentary on the Bible, of all things, be withheld from the general public? On the other hand, had not the article said it was alleged to contain seditious and antiwar statements? At any rate, I had to have that book! But try as I did, none was to be found. Instead, I was given another in the same series entitled *The Divine Plan of the Ages*. When I had finished reading it and comparing it with my Bible, I was ecstatic. This was the truth!

Prior to this time my interest in religion was quite casual, though I had managed to read the Bible once. In fact it had been tucked into my belongings by my mother when I left Manitoba to come west to Saskatchewan to begin farming my own homestead at the age of 22. In 1905 as my reading material diminished during that first winter, I began to look seriously at the

Bible and the truth that it contained. My conclusion was that nothing in the world was going to improve until Satan was bound and abyssed as stated in Revelation 20:1-3.

I Knew I Must Preach

The next few years went by quickly as I married and began raising a family. But now, after having read the *Divine Plan,* I found I could not sit by idly and wait for these things to happen and hope to reap all the benefits myself. I must tell others about the wonderful things Jehovah had promised.

My neighbors would be the logical place to start, I thought, and they would surely be as happy as I had been to hear the good news. I began to arrange for a Bible study in my home and invited my friends from the neighboring farms to join me. However, instead of the expected response, it became quite evident they thought I had taken leave of my senses! They suggested I could better serve the community if I would accept the position of superintendent of the local interdenominational Sunday school. I agreed to go the next Sunday and then make my decision.

Upon arrival I was informed the discussion for the day would be on the subject "Who Are More Religious—Men or Women?" Without waiting for the sermon, I made my way to the door, never to return. How could I be satisfied with such nonsense when my eyes had been opened to really meaningful truths that freed me from the fear of eternal torment and explained the sleeplike condition of the dead, not to mention the grand hope of living forever? The Bible's teaching of a resurrection was of great comfort to my wife and me, as two of our young daughters had died. Our bitterness disappeared when we realized that God did not take them to populate heaven with more angels.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Isaiah 25:8; John 5:29; Revelation 21:3-5.

About this time, I contacted other interested Bible Students in the Wilkie area, which was the nearest town, and a congregation of a dozen or so was formed. Almost immediately I was assigned to conduct our weekly discussion of *The Watch Tower* on Sundays. This responsibility was given to me before I was even baptized!

Changes in My Point of View

In 1922 I was baptized. This was followed by my wife's baptism a short time later and so another change was in order. I resigned from the municipal council. I saw that my loyalties could not be divided. I could not go out to the people of the surrounding area and talk about how God's Kingdom was going to relieve us of the injustices in the world while continuing to try to aid in human efforts. Especially when the Bible clearly states they are doomed to failure.—Revelation 19:11-18.

With much slower transportation in those days, our preaching activity was carried out somewhat differently from today. We would pick a certain school district and call at the homes of everyone belonging to it. We would spend the day inviting them to come to the schoolhouse on Sunday to hear a Bible talk. I remember one Sunday when a brother and I were going from farm to farm inviting people to the school that evening and also showing them six Bible aids for $3. We knocked at one door where a lady appeared and made it quite clear that she could never read all those books. The brother responded, "Lady, not only are you going to have to read these books but you'll have to learn *everything* in them if you want to live!" We now have a more tactful approach to people, but at least our sincerity was clearly visible through our unpolished exterior.

During the next few years several in our congregation became uneasy as to our proper place in Jehovah's arrangement. How happy we were when, in 1935, the light brightened so as to show us who make up the "great crowd" mentioned in Revelation 7:9-17. They were not a secondary heavenly class and so would not partake of the emblematic wine and unleavened bread at the annual Memorial of Christ's death. It was such a relief to be able to look forward with confidence to living on a paradise earth forever, as part of "the meek" ones that Jesus said would inherit the earth, his "other sheep."—Matthew 5:5, *King James Version;* John 10:16; Isaiah 65:17-25.

Bible Literature Banned Again!

In 1940, during World War II, religious opposers, working through political channels, once again saw their opportunity to have our activities banned. This was all done with no warning. At the time it happened, my family and I were visiting in Manitoba. When we returned home and proceeded to feed the horses, more than oats flowed from the bin! It seems the brothers had had enough time to remove the congregation's literature from our meeting place and hide it in our feed bin so that it would not be confiscated. The authorities locked up that building and seized our bank account. Thus we had to make secret arrangements to hold meetings in a different home each week.

In 1941 my wife, my daughter and I came to British Columbia, leaving our son on the farm. We had planned to spend the winter on the coast. Since our work was still under ban, we carefully packed as much literature as possible into our pickup truck. When we got to White Rock, I immediately obtained work as a carpenter and, since there was no congregation, I set about making casual inquiries to find others of like faith in the area. Conversations would go something like this: I would say, "What do you think of this ban on Jehovah's Witnesses?" Their reply might be, "I don't know much about it, but I think so-and-so who lives over there is in sympathy with them." I would then contact that person and soon a group of six or seven of us began holding a weekly *Watchtower* Study.

Since White Rock is situated on the American border and the ban did not extend into the United States, different ones used to walk across the border and come back with the latest copies of *The Watchtower.* There was less likelihood of being searched without a car, and we were thus able to keep up with the latest spiritual food. While our activities and literature were banned, those really responsible, namely the clergy, could not also ban the Bible. So we went to people's homes using only God's Word.

At one point we planned a blitz on White Rock, a town of about 1,500 people at that time. We gathered up all the booklets that brothers had hidden and buried and added them to what I had brought from Saskatchewan. We wrapped about three in cellophane with a rubber band around them, and one evening after midnight we deposited them on people's doorsteps.

In Our Next Issue

- **Christmas —Delightful or Dangerous?**
- **"Fully Accomplish Your Ministry"**
- **'Michael the Great Prince' —Who Is He?**

The next morning I went to work as usual, and conversations seemed to center on our previous night's activity. Everyone seemed convinced that there must be a great many of those "Witnesses" around since they had all received booklets no matter what part of town they lived in.

Religious Pride and Prejudice

Shortly after the ban was lifted in 1943 a congregation was officially established in White Rock and my family and I decided to remain there. We rented a building to use as a meeting place, but opposers invariably made so much noise that it was impossible to concentrate. We heard drums, tin pans and auto horns from the street, as well as crashing and pounding from next door. All of this made us feel rather unwelcome.

We moved to another rented building outside of town where quietness prevailed, and by this time our congregation had grown to about 50 publishers. A short time later we were able to build a new Kingdom Hall in town, but after about seven years we began needing more room. Happily, we were able to sell the hall for a reasonable sum of money and with it we were able to purchase property in the center of town. Thus we built our new Kingdom Hall without having to borrow any funds.

Big Personal Changes

The 1950's brought another major change in my life that, with Jehovah's help, I was at last able to make. This was giving up the tobacco habit. For many years I had been sort of a "part-time" smoker, never allowing it to interfere with my service to Jehovah but never completely quitting either. This bothered my conscience from time to time, but since the past information on the seriousness of this unhealthy practice was somewhat tactfully stated, I continued.

It was not until the Watchtower publications stated that 'no one would be allowed on the speaker's platform if he smoked,' that I reread the scriptures in 2 Corinthians 7:1, Romans 12:1, 2 and Proverbs 3:5. I knew my smoking habit must be abandoned. When I finally approached Jehovah in prayer with the proper attitude, he provided "help at the right time," and I was able to quit once and for all. What is more, my desire for another cigarette has never returned.—Hebrews 4:16.

Jehovah continued to bless the efforts of our group of disciple makers, and by 1967 our congregation in White Rock had grown to some hundred publishers. At this time it became apparent that my eyesight was not going to permit me to drive a car any longer so our daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren encouraged us to move to Whidbey Island, Washington, to be near them. We found it sad leaving all our friends, but everyone in our new congregation made us feel so welcome, and we quickly made more friends. My wife has been gone since 1973; we enjoyed a wonderful marriage of almost 67 years, and I look forward to the day when she will again be full of life and in good health.

Meanwhile, I have so much to thank Jehovah for, part of which is the privilege he has granted me of seeing 'the little one become a thousand and the small one a mighty nation.' Also, despite my advanced years I find much joy in serving my brothers as an elder in the local congregation. And I still join my family in going from door to door to find even more people who are interested in something better than what this ailing system of things has to offer. Jehovah has surely speeded up his work "in its own time," just as he promised, and he has indeed blessed me for following his loving lead.—Isaiah 60:22.