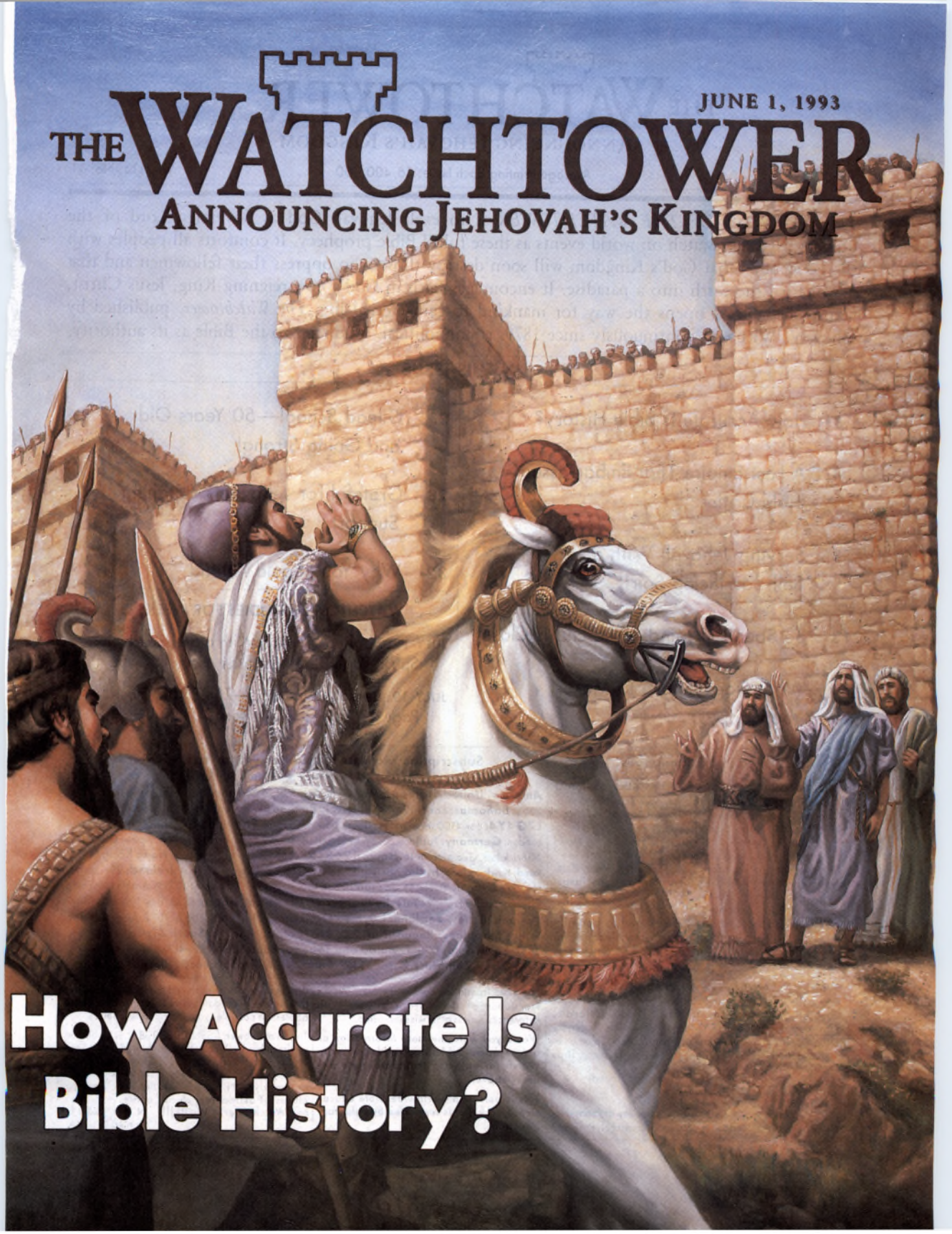
JUNE 1, 1993

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



How Accurate Is Bible History?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

June 1, 1993 | Average Printing Each Issue: 16,400,000 | Vol. 114, No. 11

THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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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Now published in 112 languages.

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America, United States of: Wallkill, N.Y. 12589. ***Australia:*** Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565. ***Bahamas:*** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. ***Barbados:*** Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown. ***Canada L7G 4Y4:*** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario. ***England NW7 1RN:*** The Ridgeway, London. ***Germany:*** Postfach 20, W-6251 Selters/Taunus 1. ***Ghana:*** Box 760, Accra. ***Guyana:*** 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. ***Hawaii 96819:*** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. ***Hong Kong:*** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. ***India:*** Post Bag 10, Lonavla, Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401. ***Ireland:*** 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11. ***Jamaica:*** Box 180, Kingston 10. ***Japan:*** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-04. ***Kenya:*** Box 47788, Nairobi. ***Liberia:*** P.O. Box 10-0380, 1000 Monrovia 10. ***New Zealand:*** P.O. Box 142, Manurewa. ***Nigeria:*** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State. ***Philippines, Republic of:*** P.O. Box 2044, 1099 Manila. ***South Africa:*** Private Bag 2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. ***Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:*** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. ***Zambia:*** P.O. Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. ***Zimbabwe:*** 35 Fife Avenue, Harare.

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The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, **Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.**

Printed in U.S.A.

How Accurate Is Bible History?

"I AM telling the truth, I am not lying," stated a Bible writer to his young friend. (1 Timothy 2:7) Expressions like that in Paul's letters present a challenge to Bible critics.* Over 1,900 years have passed since Paul's letters were penned. After all that time, no one has come forward and successfully proved a single point of inaccuracy in his letters.

The Bible writer Luke also expressed a concern for accuracy. He recorded an account of Jesus' life and ministry that was followed by his account named Acts of Apostles. "I have traced all things from the start with accuracy," wrote Luke.—Luke 1:3.

Testimonies of Accuracy

Bible critics of the early 19th century challenged Luke's accuracy as a historian. Moreover, they claimed that the history in Acts was invented in the middle of the second century C.E. The British archaeologist Sir William Mitchell Ramsay was one who believed this. But after investigating the names and places mentioned by Luke, he confessed: "It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvellous truth."

When Ramsay wrote the above, an issue concerning Luke's accuracy remained unsettled. It had to do with the closely related cities Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Luke implied that Iconium was distinct from Lystra and Derbe, describing the latter as "cities of Lycaonia." (Acts 14:6) Yet, as the accompanying map shows, Lystra was closer to Iconium than to Derbe. Some ancient historians described Iconium as a part of Lycaonia; hence, critics challenged Luke for not doing so also.

Then, in 1910, Ramsay discovered a monument in the ruins of Iconium showing that the language of that city was Phrygian and not Lycaonian. "Numbers of other inscriptions from Iconium and its environs substantiate the fact that racially the city could be described as Phrygian," says Dr. Merrill Unger in his book *Archaeology and the New Testament*. Indeed, the Iconium of Paul's day was Phrygian in culture and distinct from "the cities of Lycaonia," where people spoke "in the Lycaonian tongue."—Acts 14:6, 11.

Bible critics also questioned Luke's use of the word "politarchs" for rulers of the city of Thessalonica. (Acts 17:6, footnote) This expression was unknown in Greek literature. Then an arch was found in the ancient city containing the names of city rulers described as "politarchs"—exactly the word used by Luke. "The accuracy of Luke has been vindicated by the use of the term," explains W. E. Vine in his *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*.

* See also Romans 9:1; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Galatians 1:20.

Luke's Sea Voyage

Naval experts have examined the details of the shipwreck described in Acts chapter 27. According to Luke, the large ship in which he and Paul sailed was caught in a northeasterly gale near the small island of Cauda, and the sailors were afraid of being driven onto perilous sandbanks off the north coast of Africa. (Acts 27:14, 17, footnote) By skillful seamanship, they managed to direct the vessel away from Africa on a westerly course. The gale continued unabated, and eventually the ship ran aground off the island of Malta, having covered a distance of about 540 miles. Naval experts calculate that it would take a large ship sailing in a gale over 13 days to be driven that far. Their calculations agree with Luke's account, which states that the shipwreck occurred on the 14th day. (Acts 27:27, 33, 39, 41) After investigating all the details of Luke's sea voyage, yachtsman James Smith concluded: "It is a narrative of real events, written by one personally engaged in them . . . No man not a sailor could have written a narrative of a sea voyage so consistent in all its parts, unless from actual observation."

Because of such findings, some theologians are willing to defend the Christian Greek Scriptures as accurate history. But what about the earlier history found in the Hebrew Scriptures? Many clergymen bow to modern philosophy and declare that it contains myths. However, a number of details of the Bible's early history have also been verified, to the embarrassment of critics. Consider, for example, the discovery of the once-forgotten Assyrian Empire.

Courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum

A Lost Empire That Embarrassed Bible Critics

"Formerly the history of the Assyrian empire was one of the most obscure chapters in the world's annals." "All that was known of ancient Nineveh was comprised in the scattered allusions and prophecies alluding to it in the Bible, and the casual and fragmentary notices of Assyrian history in Diodorus Siculus . . . and others."

—*Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, Volumes 1 and 3, 1862.

THE Greek historian Diodorus Siculus lived 2,000 years ago. Nineveh, he claimed, was a quadrangular city; the four sides totaled 480 stadia in length. That is a circumference of 60 miles! The Bible gives a similar picture, describing Nineveh as a great city "with a walking distance of three days."—Jonah 3:3.

Bible critics of the 19th century refused to believe that an unknown city of the ancient world could have been that large. They also said that if Nineveh

ever existed, it must have been part of an ancient civilization that preceded Babylon.

This view was contrary to Genesis chapter 10, which states that the great-grandson of Noah, Nimrod, established the first political state in the region of Babel, or Babylon. "Out of that land," the Bible continues, "he went forth into Assyria and set himself to building Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: this is the great city." (Genesis 10:8-12) Notice, the scripture describes the four new Assyrian cities as being one "great city."

In 1843 a French archaeologist, Paul-Émile Botta, discovered the ruins of a palace that proved to be part of an Assyrian city. When the news of this discovery reached the outside world, it caused great excitement. "Public interest rose higher," explains Alan Millard in his book *Treasures From Bible Times,* "when it was proved that the palace belonged to Sargon, the king of Assyria named in Isaiah 20:1, whose existence had been doubted because he was otherwise unknown."

Meanwhile, another archaeologist, Austen Henry Layard, started digging up ruins at a place called Nimrud about 26 miles southwest of Khorsabad. The ruins proved to be Calah—one of the four Assyrian cities mentioned at Genesis 10:11. Then, in 1849, Layard unearthed ruins of a massive palace at a place called Kuyunjik, between Calah and Khorsabad. The palace proved to be part of Nineveh. Between Khorsabad and Calah lie the ruins of other settlements, including a mound called Karamles. "If we take the four great mounds of Nimrúd [Calah], Koyunjik [Nineveh], Khorsabad, and Karamles, as the corners of a square," observed Layard, "it will be found that its four sides correspond pretty accurately with the 480 stadia or 60 miles of the geographer, which make the three days' journey of the prophet [Jonah]."

Evidently, then, Jonah included all these settlements as one "great city," calling them by the name of the city listed first at Genesis 10:11, namely, Nineveh. The same is done today. For example, there is a difference between the original city of London and its suburbs, which make up what is sometimes termed "Greater London."

An Arrogant Assyrian King

The palace at Nineveh contained over 70 rooms, having almost two miles of walls. On these walls were the burned remains of sculptures commemorating military victories and other achievements. Most were badly damaged. Toward the end of his stay, however, Layard discovered one chamber in a remarkable state of preservation. On the walls was a display showing the capture of a well-fortified city, with captives being marched before the invading king, who was seated upon a throne outside the city. Above the king is an inscription that experts in Assyrian writing translate as follows: "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, sat upon a *nimedu* -throne and passed in review the booty (taken) from Lachish (*La-ki-su*)."

Today this display and inscription can be viewed in the British Museum. It agrees with the historical event recorded in the Bible at 2 Kings 18:13, 14: "In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and proceeded to seize them. So Hezekiah the king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying: 'I have sinned. Turn back from against me. Whatever you may impose upon me I shall carry.' Accordingly the king of Assyria laid upon Hezekiah the king of Judah three hundred silver talents and thirty gold talents."

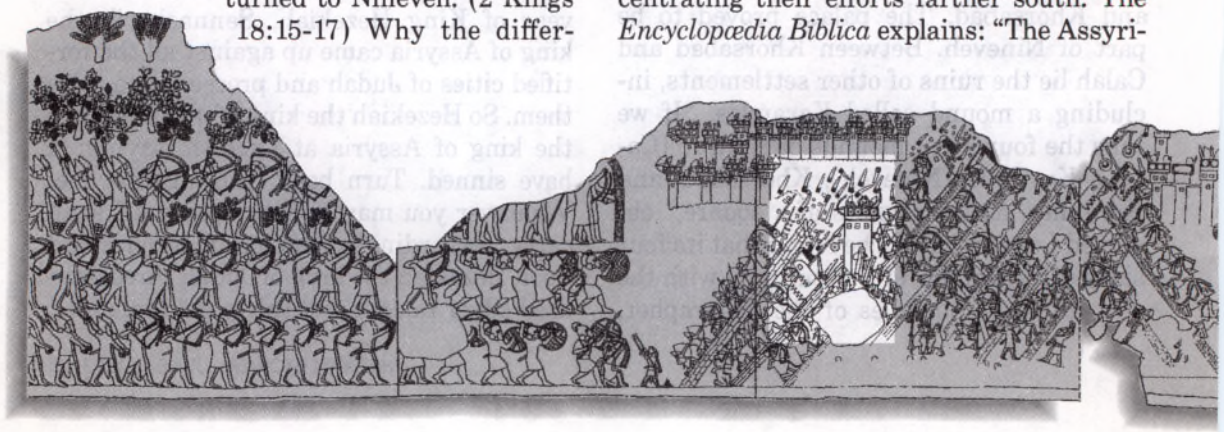
Other inscriptions were found among the ruins of Nineveh giving additional details of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and the tribute paid by Hezekiah. "Perhaps one of the most remarkable coincidences of historic testimony on record, the amount of the treasure in gold taken from Hezekiah, thirty talents, agrees in the two perfectly independent accounts," wrote Layard. Sir Henry Rawlinson, who helped decipher Assyrian writing, announced that these inscriptions "placed beyond the reach of dispute [Sennacherib's] historic identity." Furthermore, Layard asks in his book *Nineveh and Babylon:* "Who would have believed it probable or possible, before these discoveries were made, that beneath the heap of earth and rubbish which marked the site of Nineveh, there would be found the history of the wars between Hezekiah and Sennacherib, written at the very time when they took place by Sennacherib himself, and confirming even in minute details the Biblical record?"

Of course, some details of Sennacherib's record do not agree with the Bible. For example, archaeologist Alan Millard notes: "The most striking fact comes at the end [of Sennacherib's record]. Hezekiah sent his messenger, and all the tribute, to Sennacherib 'later, to Nineveh'. The Assyrian army did not carry them home in triumph in the usual way." The Bible states that the tribute was paid before the king of Assyria returned to Nineveh. (2 Kings 18:15-17) Why the difference? And why was Sennacherib unable to boast about conquering the Judean capital, Jerusalem, in the way he boasted of his conquest of the Judean fortress Lachish? Three Bible writers give the answer. One of them, an eyewitness, wrote: "The angel of Jehovah proceeded to go forth and strike down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When people rose up early in the morning, why, there all of them were dead carcasses. Hence Sennacherib the king of Assyria pulled away and went and returned and took up dwelling in Nineveh." —Isaiah 37:36, 37; 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:21.

In his book *Treasures From Bible Times,* Millard concludes: "There is no good reason to doubt this report . . . Understandably, Sennacherib would not record such a disaster for his successors to read, for it would discredit him." Instead, Sennacherib tried to create the impression that his Judean invasion had been a success and that Hezekiah continued in submission, sending the tribute to Nineveh.

Assyria's Origins Confirmed

Libraries containing tens of thousands of clay tablets were also discovered in Nineveh. These documents prove that the Assyrian Empire had its roots in the south in Babylon, just as Genesis 10:11 indicates. Following this lead, archaeologists began concentrating their efforts farther south. The *Encyclopœdia Biblica* explains: "The Assyri-



ans in all that they have left behind them betray their Babylonian origin. Their language and method of writing, their literature, their religion, and their science were taken over from their southern neighbours with but little modification."

Discoveries such as the above have forced Bible critics to moderate their views. Indeed, a sincere investigation of the Bible reveals that it was written by careful, honest writers. A former chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, Salmon P. Chase, said after his investigation of the Bible: "It was a long, serious, and profound study: and using the same principles of evidence in this religious matter as I always do in secular matters, I have come to the decision that the Bible is a supernatural book, that it has come from God."—*The Book of Books: An Introduction.*

Indeed, the Bible is much more than accurate history. It is God's inspired Word, a gift for the benefit of mankind. (2 Timothy 3:16) Proof of this can be seen by examining Bible geography. This will be discussed in the next issue.

Above: Three details taken from wall relief
(Courtesy of The British Museum)

Below: Drawing of Assyrian wall relief depicting siege of Lachish
(From *The Bible in the British Museum*, published by British Museum Press)

SERVING JEHOVAH WITH A SELF-SACRIFICING SPIRIT

"If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me."—MATTHEW 16:24.

IN THE shadow of snowcapped Mount Hermon, Jesus Christ reaches a major milestone in his life. He has less than one year to live. He knows it; his disciples do not. The time has now come for them to know. True, Jesus has alluded to his impending death before, but this is the first time he is explicit about it. (Matthew 9:15; 12:40) Matthew's account reads: "From that time forward Jesus Christ commenced showing his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the older men and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised up." —Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31, 32.

[2] Jesus' days are numbered. Peter, though, bristles at such a seemingly morbid thought. He cannot accept that the Messiah will really be killed. Therefore, Peter dares to rebuke his Master. Impelled by the best of intentions, he impetuously urges: "Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all." But Jesus immediately rejects Peter's misplaced kindness, as positively as one would crush the head of a poisonous snake. "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God's thoughts, but those of men."—Matthew 16:22, 23.

[3] Peter has unwittingly made himself an agent of Satan. Jesus' retort is as decisive as when he answered Satan in the wilderness. There the Devil tried to tempt Jesus with an easy life, a kingship without suffering. (Matthew 4:1-10) Now Peter encourages him to be easy on himself. Jesus knows that this is not his Father's will. His life must be one of self-sacrifice, not one of self-

1. How did Jesus inform his disciples about his impending death?
2. What was Peter's reaction to Jesus' words about His future suffering, and how did Jesus respond?

3. (a) How did Peter unwittingly make himself an agent of Satan? (b) How was Peter a stumbling block to a course of self-sacrifice?

gratification. (Matthew 20:28) Peter becomes a stumbling block to such a course; his well-meaning sympathy becomes a trap.* Jesus, though, sees clearly that if he entertained any idea of a life free from sacrifice, he would fall out of God's favor by being caught in the death grip of a satanic trap.

4 Peter's thinking, therefore, needed adjustment. His words to Jesus represented a man's idea, not God's. A life of self-indulgent comfort, an easy way out of suffering, was not for Jesus; neither was such a life to be for his followers, for Jesus next says to Peter and the rest of the disciples: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me."—Matthew 16:24.

5 Again and again, Jesus returns to this key theme: the challenge of living the Christian life. In order to be Jesus' followers, Christians, like their Leader, must serve Jehovah with the spirit of self-sacrifice. (Matthew 10:37-39) Thus, he lists three necessary things a Christian must be prepared to do: (1) disown himself, (2) pick up his torture stake, and (3) continually follow Him.

"If Anyone Wants to Come After Me"

6 What does it mean to disown oneself? It means that a person has to deny himself absolutely, a kind of death to self. The basic meaning of the Greek word translated "disown" is "to say no"; it means "to deny utterly." Therefore, if you accept the challenge of the Christian life, you willingly surrender your own ambitions, comfort, desires, happiness, pleasure. In essence, you give your whole life and everything that it involves to Jehovah God for all time. To disown oneself means more than denying oneself certain pleasures now and then. Rather, it means that a person must relinquish ownership of himself to Jehovah. (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20) A person who has disowned himself lives to please, not self, but God. (Romans 14:8; 15:3) It means that every moment of his life, he says no to selfish desires and yes to Jehovah.

7 To pick up your torture stake, therefore, has serious implications. Carrying a stake is a burden and a symbol of death. The Christian is willing to suffer if need be, or be shamed or tortured or even put to death because of being a follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus said: "Whoever does not accept his torture stake and follow after me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:38) Not all who suffer are carrying the torture stake. The wicked have many "pains" but no torture stake. (Psalm 32:10) However, the Christian's life is a life of carrying the torture stake of sacrificial service to Jehovah.

8 The last condition Jesus mentioned is that we continually follow him. Jesus requires not only that we accept and believe in what he taught but also that, for our entire life, we continually follow the pattern he set. And what are some of the dominant features seen in his pattern of life? When

* In Greek, "stumbling block" (*σκάνδαλον, skan'dalon*) was originally "the name of the part of a trap to which the bait is attached, hence, the trap or snare itself."—*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words.*

4. Why was a life of self-indulgent comfort not for Jesus and his followers?
5. (a) What is the challenge of living the Christian life? (b) For what three necessary things must a Christian be prepared?
6. (a) How does a person disown himself? (b) Whom must we please above self?
7. What is the Christian's torture stake, and how does he carry it?
8. What pattern of life did Jesus set for his followers?

Are you willing to disown yourself, pick up your torture stake, and continually follow Jesus?

he gave his followers their final commission, he said: "Go therefore and make disciples . . . , teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19, 20) Jesus preached and taught the good news of the Kingdom. So did his immediate disciples and, indeed, the entire early Christian congregation. This zealous activity in addition to their being no part of the world brought upon them the hatred and opposition of the world, which resulted in their torture stake being even heavier to carry.—John 15:19, 20; Acts 8:4.

[9] Another prominent pattern seen in Jesus' life was the way he treated other people. He was kind and "mild-tempered and lowly in heart." Thus, his listeners felt renewed in spirit and were encouraged by his presence. (Matthew 11:29) He did not browbeat them into following him or lay down rule after rule as to how they were to do so; nor did he induce feelings of guilt to force them to be his disciples. Despite their life of self-sacrifice, they radiated genuine joy. What a sharp contrast with those having the worldly spirit of self-indulgence that marks "the last days"!—2 Timothy 3:1-4.

Develop and Maintain the Self-Sacrificing Spirit of Jesus

[10] Jesus set the example in disowning self. He picked up his torture stake and continually carried it by doing his Father's will. Paul wrote to Christians in Philippi: "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake." (Philippians 2:5-8) Who could disown himself more com-

9. How did Jesus treat other people?
10. (a) According to Philippians 2:5-8, how did Christ disown himself? (b) If we are followers of Christ, what mental attitude must we display?

pletely than that? If you belong to Christ Jesus and you are one of his followers, you must keep this same mental attitude.

[11] Another apostle, Peter, tells us that since Jesus suffered and died for us, Christians are to arm themselves, like well-prepared soldiers, with the same spirit that Christ had. He writes: "Therefore since Christ suffered in the flesh, you too arm yourselves with the same mental disposition; because the person that has suffered in the flesh has desisted from sins, to the end that he may live the remainder of his time in the flesh, no more for the desires of men, but for God's will." (1 Peter 3:18; 4: 1, 2) Jesus' self-sacrificing course clearly showed how he felt about it. He was single-minded in his devotion, always putting his Father's will above his own, even to the point of an ignominious death.—Matthew 6:10; Luke 22:42.

[12] Although Jesus' life of self-sacrifice was an arduous and challenging path for him to follow, he did not find it distasteful. Rather, Jesus took pleasure in submitting himself to the divine will. To him, doing his Father's work was like food. He received real satisfaction from it, just as one would from a good meal. (Matthew 4:4; John 4:34) Thus, if you want to feel truly fulfilled in your life, you can do nothing better than follow the example of Jesus by cultivating his mental disposition.

[13] Really, what is the driving force behind the spirit of self-sacrifice? In a word, love. Jesus said: "'You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. The second, like it, is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37-39) A Christian cannot be self-seeking and, at the same time, obey those words. His own happiness and interest must be governed first and foremost by his love of Jehovah and then by his love of neighbor. That is how Jesus lived his life, and that is what he expects of his followers.

[14] The apostle Paul understood this law of love. He wrote: "Through him let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name. Moreover, do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:15, 16) Christians do not offer to Jehovah sacrifices of animals or the like; hence, they do not need human priests at a material temple to officiate in their worship. It is through Christ Jesus that our sacrifice of praise is offered. And it is principally by means of that sacrifice of praise, that public declaration to his name, that we show our love of God. In particular our unselfish spirit rooted in love spurs us on to preach the good news with zeal, striving to be ever at the ready to offer to God the fruit of our lips. In this way we show love of neighbor too.

Self-Sacrifice Brings Rich Blessings

[15] Pause for a moment and reflect on the following questions: Does the present pattern of my life exhibit a course of self-sacrifice? Do my goals point to such a life? Are the members of my family reaping spiritual dividends from my example? (Compare 1 Timothy 5:8.) What about orphans

11. Living a life of self-sacrifice means living for whose will?
12. Was a life of self-sacrifice distasteful to Jesus? Explain.
13. How is love the driving force behind the spirit of self-sacrifice?
14. (a) What responsibilities are explained at Hebrews 13:15, 16? (b) What spurs us on to preach the good news with zeal?
15. What probing questions regarding self-sacrifice can we ask ourselves?

and widows? Do they too benefit from my self-sacrificing spirit? (James 1:27) Can I expand the time I spend in my public sacrifice of praise? Am I able to reach out for the privilege of pioneer, Bethel, or missionary service, or can I move to serve in an area where there is a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers?

16 Sometimes it takes just a little ingenuity to reach our full potential in serving Jehovah with a self-sacrificing spirit. For example, Janet, a regular pioneer in Ecuador, worked full-time secularly. Before long, her schedule made it difficult for her to meet the regular-pioneer hour requirements with a cheerful spirit. She decided to explain the problem to her employer and requested a cut in hours of work. Since he was not willing to reduce her work time, she next took along Maria, who was looking for part-time work so that she could pioneer. Each of them offered to work a half day, sharing a full day's work. The employer agreed to the proposal. Now both sisters are regular pioneers. Upon seeing this wonderful result, Kaffa, who was also exhausted from working full-time for the same company and struggling to keep up with her pioneer time, took along Magali and made the same offer. It too was accepted. Thus, four sisters are able to pioneer, instead of two who were at the point of leaving the full-time service. Ingenuity and initiative paid off.

17 Further, consider the path of self-sacrifice followed by Evonne during the past ten years. She wrote the following to the Watch Tower Society in May 1991:

18 "In October 1982, my family and I toured Brooklyn Bethel. Seeing it made me want to volunteer to work there. I read an application, and there was one striking question, 'What are your average hours in field service for the past six months? If average hours are below ten, explain why.' I could think of no valid reason, so I set a goal and reached it for five months.

19 "Even though I could think of a few excuses for not pioneering, when I read the *1983 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses,* I was convinced that others had overcome bigger obstacles than mine in order to pioneer. So, on April 1, 1983, I quit my lucrative full-time job and became an auxiliary pioneer, and I entered the regular pioneer ranks on September 1, 1983.

20 "It was my pleasure to marry a fine ministerial servant in April 1985. Three years later, a district convention talk regarding pioneering moved my husband to lean over and ask, 'Do you see any reason why I should not begin pioneering by September 1?' He joined me in this work for the next two years.

21 "My husband also volunteered to do construction work at Brooklyn Bethel for two weeks and applied for the International

16. How might ingenuity help us to lead a life of self-sacrifice?
17-21. How did one married couple reevaluate their purpose in life, and with what result?

What Are Your Thoughts?

- ☐ How did Peter unwittingly become a stumbling block to a course of self-sacrifice?
- ☐ What does it mean to disown oneself?
- ☐ How does a Christian carry his torture stake?
- ☐ How do we develop and maintain a self-sacrificing spirit?
- ☐ What is the driving force behind the spirit of self-sacrifice?

Program. So in May 1989 we were off to Nigeria for one month to help in branch construction. Tomorrow we will be traveling to Germany, where visas will be arranged for our entry into Poland. We are thrilled to be involved in such a history-making building project and to be part of this new avenue of full-time service."

[22] If you are not able to pioneer yourself, can you encourage those who are in the full-time service to hold on to their privilege and perhaps even help them to do so? Or will you be like some well-meaning family members or friends who, like Peter, may tell a full-time servant to take it easy, be kind to himself, not realizing how that may be a stumbling block? True, if a pioneer's health is in serious jeopardy or if he is neglecting Christian obligations, he may have to leave the full-time service for a while. Serving Jehovah with a self-sacrificing spirit is not contingent on a label, such as pioneer, Bethelite, or other. Rather, it is contingent on what we are as persons—how we think, what we do, how we treat others, how we live our life.

22. (a) How might we, like Peter, unwittingly become a stumbling block? (b) Serving Jehovah with a self-sacrificing spirit is not contingent on what?

[23] If we truly have a self-sacrificing spirit, we will have the joy of being fellow workers with God. (1 Corinthians 3:9) We will have the satisfaction of knowing that we are making Jehovah's heart rejoice. (Proverbs 27:11) And we have the assurance that Jehovah will never forget us or abandon us as long as we remain faithful to him.—Hebrews 6:10-12.

23. (a) How can we continue to have the joy of being a fellow worker with God? (b) What assurance do we find at Hebrews 6:10-12?

BE SOUND IN MIND —THE END IS CLOSE

"The end of all things has drawn close. Be sound in mind, therefore, and be vigilant with a view to prayers."—1 PETER 4:7.

"I RECEIVED a calling from God during tonight's final prayer. He said 116,000 persons would ascend to heaven and the graves of 3.7 million dead believers will open up toward the sky." So said a leader of the Mission for the Coming Days on the eve of October 28, 1992, their prophesied day of reckoning. However, as October 29 rolled around, not one person had ascended to heaven, and no tombs of the dead had been opened. Instead of being whisked away in a heavenly rapture, those doomsday believers in Korea saw just another day dawn. Doomsday deadlines have come and gone, but doomsayers remain undaunted. What are Christians to do? Should they stop believing that the end is fast approaching?

1. (a) What disappointment did one religious leader and his followers experience? (b) Because certain expectations have not been fulfilled, what questions may be asked?

[2] To answer, let us recall the occasion when Jesus was in private conversation with his disciples. There, in the district of Caesarea Philippi, northeast of the Sea of Galilee, with majestic Mount Hermon providing a dramatic backdrop, they heard him say bluntly that he would be killed. (Matthew 16:21) Other sobering words were to follow. After explaining to them that discipleship means living a life of continual self-sacrifice, Jesus warned: "The Son of man is destined to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will recompense each one according to his behavior." (Matthew 16:27) Jesus spoke of a future coming. On this occasion, however, he would be a Judge. At that time everything would rest on whether he would find a person faithfully following him or not. Jesus' judgment would be based on behavior, no matter how much that person might or might not have in worldly goods. This fact his disciples had to keep firmly in mind. (Matthew 16:25, 26) Hence, it is Jesus Christ himself who tells his followers to look for his glorious coming, with its judgment.

[3] What Jesus next says illustrates the certainty of his future coming. Authoritatively he states: "Truly I say to you that there are some of those standing here that will not taste death at all until first they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matthew 16:28) These words are fulfilled six days later. A brilliant vision of Jesus transfigured amazes his intimate disciples. They actually see Jesus' face shining as the sun and his clothing glitteringly white. The transfiguration was a foreview of Christ's glory and Kingdom. What a strengthening confirmation of the Kingdom prophecies! What a powerful incentive for the disciples to be sound in mind!—2 Peter 1:16-19.

2. Who spoke to the apostles of a future day of judgment, and under what circumstances did they learn of this?
3. How did Jesus illustrate the certainty of his future coming?

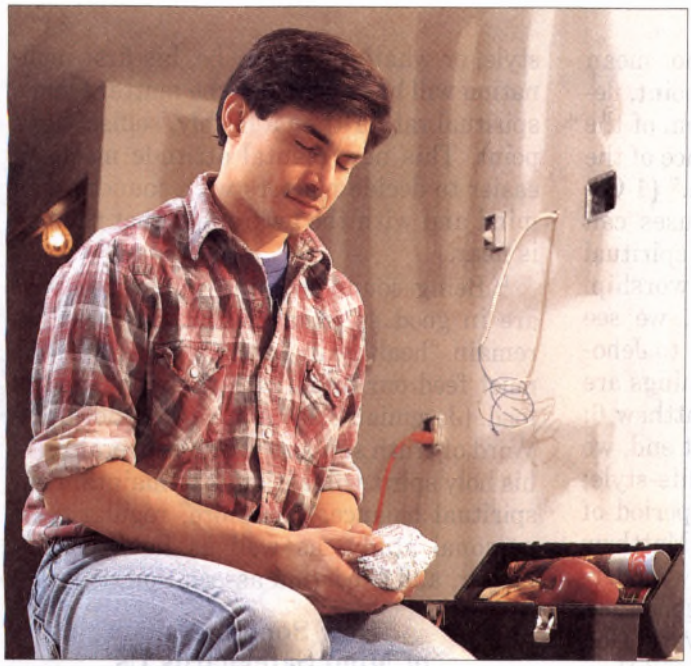
Why It Is Urgent to Be Sound in Mind

[4] Less than one year later, we find Jesus sitting upon the Mount of Olives, again in private conversation with his disciples. As they gaze over the city of Jerusalem, he explains what the sign of his future presence will be and then warns: "Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." His followers must be constantly alert because the time of his coming is unknown. They must be ever ready for it.—Matthew 24:42.

[5] In the manner of his coming, the Lord resembles a thief. He goes on to say: "But know one thing, that if the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into." (Matthew 24:43) A burglar does not make an announcement informing the householder when he will strike; his main weapon is surprise. Therefore, the householder must be on constant guard. However, for the faithful Christian, unflagging vigilance is not due to any fearful apprehension. Rather, it is motivated by an eager expectation of Christ's coming in glory to usher in a Millennium of peace.

[6] Despite all the watching, no one will ever figure out in advance the exact day he is due to come. Jesus says: "On this account you too prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming." (Matthew 24:44) Hence the need for soundness of mind. If a

4. Why must Christians be spiritually alert to his coming?
5. How can the need for vigilance be illustrated?
6. Why must we be sound in mind?



Drawing close to God in prayer helps us maintain soundness of mind

Christian were to think that on a certain day, Christ would not come, perhaps that would be the very day that he did come! Of course, well-meaning, faithful Christians in the past have sincerely tried to predict when the end would come. Yet, Jesus' caution has been proved true time and time again: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father." —Matthew 24:36.

[7] What, therefore, should we conclude? That to be followers of Christ, we have to live always believing that the end of this wicked system is imminent.

[8] Such an attitude has always been an earmark of Christians, as secular historians and Bible scholars recognize. For example, the editors of *The Translator's New Testament,* under the word "Day" in their glossary, state: "Christians of N[ew] T[estament] times lived in expectation of the Day (that is the time) when the present world with all its evil and wickedness would be brought to an end and Jesus would return to earth to judge all mankind, inaugurate a new age of peace and enter upon his Lordship over the whole world." *Encyclopædia Britannica* notes: "The unique global expansion of Christianity is directly related to the Christian expectation of the end time, in the form of an imminent expectation of the return of Christ. The Christian expectation of the end time never consisted simply of a passive yearning for the coming Kingdom of God."

7. To be followers of Christ, how must we live our lives?
8. What has been an earmark of Christians since the earliest days of Christianity?

What It Means to Be Sound in Mind

[9] The apostle Peter, some 30 years after those intimate conversations that Jesus had with his closest disciples, did not tire out waiting for the end to come. Even though his and his fellow disciples' initial expectations about the Messiah were incorrect, he remained confident that Jehovah's love and power guaranteed the realization of their hope. (Luke 19:11; 24:21; Acts 1:6; 2 Peter 3:9, 10) He strikes a note heard consistently through the Greek Scriptures when he says: "The end of all things has drawn close." Then he urges fellow Christians: "Be sound in mind, therefore, and be vigilant with a view to prayers."—1 Peter 4:7.

9. Even though some of Peter's expectations about the Messiah were incorrect, why could he remain confident?

[10] Being "sound in mind" does not mean being smart from a worldly standpoint. Jehovah says: "I will make the wisdom of the wise men perish, and the intelligence of the intellectual men I will shove aside." (1 Corinthians 1:19) The word Peter uses can mean "to be sober-minded." This spiritual sobriety is connected with our worship. Therefore, being steady in mind, we see things in their proper relationship to Jehovah's will; we understand which things are important and which are not. (Matthew 6:33, 34) In the face of the imminent end, we are not swept away in a frenzied life-style; neither are we indifferent to the period of time we are living in. (Compare Matthew 24:37-39.) Rather, we are ruled by moderation and balance in thought, disposition, and conduct, expressed first toward God ("vigilant with a view to prayers") and then toward our neighbor ("have intense love for one another").—1 Peter 4:7, 8.

[11] Being sound in mind involves our having been "made new in the force actuating [our] mind." (Ephesians 4:23) Why made new? Since we have inherited imperfection and live in sinful surroundings, our mind is dominated by a tendency that is opposed to spirituality. That force constantly pushes thoughts and inclinations in a materialistic, selfish direction. Hence, when someone becomes a Christian, he needs a new force, or dominant mental attitude, that will push his thoughts in the right direction, the spiritual direction, toward a readiness for self-sacrifice. Thus, when a choice is presented, for example, in education, career, employment, entertainment, recreation, clothing style, or whatever it may be, his first inclination will be to consider the matter from a spiritual rather than a fleshly, selfish viewpoint. This new mental attitude makes it easier to decide matters with soundness of mind and with the awareness that the end is near.

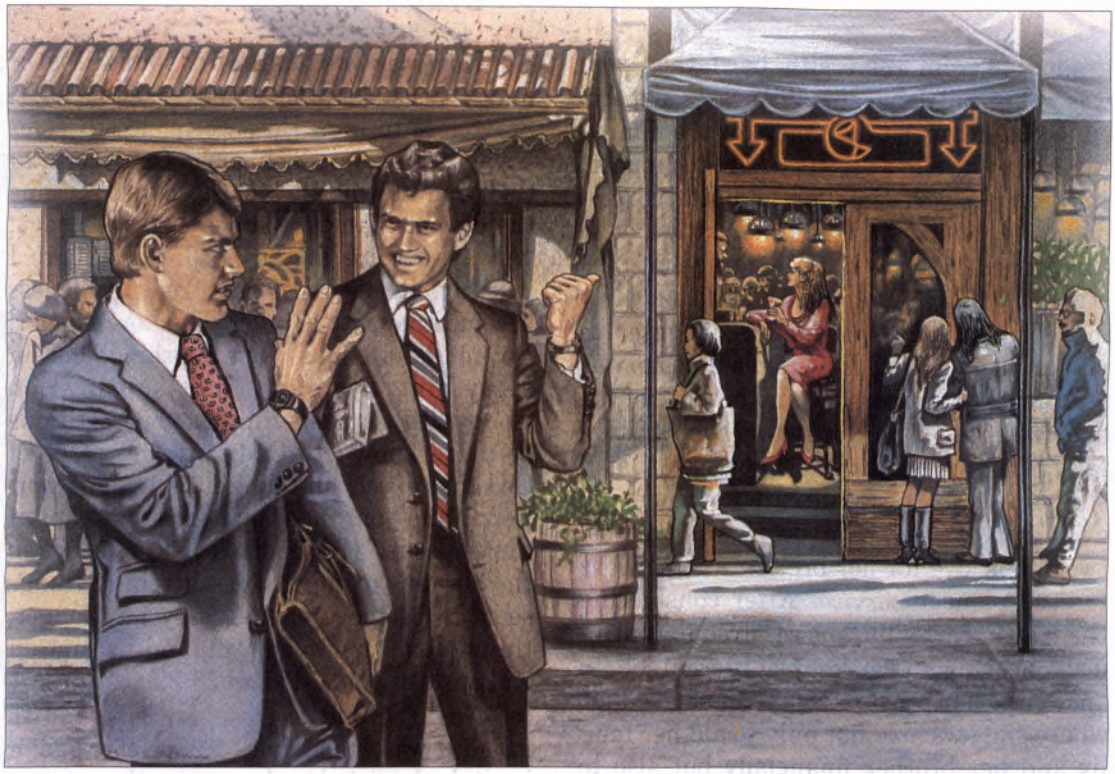
[12] Being sound in mind implies that we are in good spiritual health. How can we remain "healthy in faith"? (Titus 2:2) We must feed our mind with the right kind of food. (Jeremiah 3:15) A steady diet of God's Word of truth supported by the operation of his holy spirit will assist us to maintain our spiritual balance. Therefore, regularity in personal study, as well as field service, prayer, and Christian association, is vital.

How Soundness of Mind Safeguards Us

[13] Soundness of mind can safeguard us from committing a foolish mistake that could cost us our everlasting life. How is this possible? The apostle Paul speaks of "the law of [the] mind." For a person healthy in faith, that law of the mind is governed by something he delights in, namely "the law of God." True, "sin's law" wars against the law of the mind. However, the Christian can be victorious with Jehovah's help.—Romans 7:21-25.

[14] Paul continues by drawing a sharp contrast between the mind dominated by the sinful flesh, whose focus is on a life of self-indulgence, and the mind dominated by God's spirit, whose focus is on a life of self-sacrifice in service to Jehovah. Paul writes at Romans 8:5-7: "Those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things

10. (a) What does it mean to be sound in mind? (b) What is involved in seeing matters in their proper relationship to God's will?
11. (a) What does it mean to be "made new in the force actuating [our] mind"? (b) How does a new mental force help us to make good decisions?
12. How can we remain "healthy in faith"?
13. How does soundness of mind safeguard us from committing foolish mistakes?
14, 15. (a) Which two influences struggle to control the mind? (b) How can we win the battle of the mind?



Being sound in mind, we will not be seduced by the enticements of this world

of the flesh, but those in accord with the spirit on the things of the spirit. For the minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace; because the minding of the flesh means enmity with God, for it is not under subjection to the law of God, nor, in fact, can it be."

15 Paul, in verse 11, then explains how the mind that cooperates with holy spirit wins the battle: "If, now, the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his spirit that resides in you."

16 Therefore, by being sound in mind, we will not be seduced by the omnipresent enticements of this world, which is characterized by immeasurable self-indulgence in all kinds of pleasures, material things, and sexual misconduct. Our sound mind will tell us to "flee from fornication" and escape its disastrous consequences. (1 Corinthians 6:18) Our sound mental attitude will impel us to put Kingdom interests first and will guard our thinking when we are tempted with offers of a secular career that may weaken our relationship with Jehovah.

17 For example, in a tropical country in Southeast Asia, there is a young sister who kept Kingdom interests foremost in mind. She had cultivated a love for full-time service. In that country most jobs require six or seven days of full-time work. After she

16. Soundness of mind protects us from what enticements?

17. How did a pioneer sister show soundness of mind when faced with financial obligations?

graduated from university, her father, who was not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, expected her to earn a lot of money for the family. But since she had a strong desire to pioneer, she found a part-time job and started pioneer service. This angered her father, who threatened to throw her belongings into the street. Because of gambling, he was heavily in debt, and he expected his daughter to pay off his debts. Her younger brother was studying at a university, and because of the debts, there was no money to pay his tuition fees. The younger brother promised that if she helped him, he would care for the family when he got a job. Her heart was torn between her love for her brother and her love for the pioneer service. After considering the matter carefully, she resolved to continue pioneering and look for a different job. In answer to her prayers, she found a good job where she was able not only to aid her family and her brother financially but also to continue with her first love, the pioneer service.

Seek Jehovah's Help in Maintaining Soundness of Mind

18 Some followers of Christ may be finding it difficult to maintain their soundness of mind. Their patience may be wearing thin because this present wicked system of things is lasting longer than they expected. They may feel sick at heart about it. However, the end will come. Jehovah promises that. (Titus 1:2) And so will his promised earthly Paradise. Jehovah guarantees it. (Revelation 21:1-5) When the new world does come, there will be "a tree of life" for all those who maintained their soundness of mind.—Proverbs 13:12.

18. (a) Why may some people feel sick at heart? (b) What scriptures may comfort those sick at heart?

19 How can we maintain soundness of mind? Seek Jehovah's help. (Psalm 54:4) Stay close to him. How we rejoice that Jehovah desires our intimacy! "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you," writes the disciple James. (James 4:8) Paul says: "Always rejoice in the Lord. Once more I will say, Rejoice! Let your reasonableness become known to all men. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:4-7) And when the burdens of this dying system of things seem to be too great to carry any longer, throw them upon Jehovah, and he himself will sustain you.—Psalm 55:22.

20 Yes, the end *is* close, so be sound in mind! It was good advice 1,900 years ago; it is vital advice today. Let us continue to use our sound mental faculties to praise Jehovah as he continues to guide us safely into his new world.—1 Timothy 4:10.

19. How can soundness of mind be maintained?
20. In what course should we continue, according to 1 Timothy 4:10?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What is soundness of mind?
- ☐ Why is it so urgent to be sound in mind?
- ☐ How can we be made new in the force actuating our mind?
- ☐ What constant battle must we fight in our minds?
- ☐ How do we maintain soundness of mind?

What Does It Take to Make You Happy?

POLITICIANS elected by the people try hard to make such people happy. After all, their jobs depend upon it. But a newsmagazine speaks about "a disillusioned and alienated electorate" in Poland. A journalist explains that the United States is a society "filled with distrust of formal politics." Another writer tells us about "growing political apathy in France." Such widespread apathy and discontent—by no means confined to these three countries—suggests that politicians are failing in their endeavor to make people happy.

Religious leaders also promise happiness, if not in this life, then at least in a future one. They base this on the premise that humans have an immortal or transmigrating soul, an idea that many people for various reasons reject and that the Bible clearly refutes. Empty churches and shrinking membership rolls show that millions no longer consider religion vital to happiness. —Compare Genesis 2:7, 17; Ezekiel 18: 4, 20.

Dissatisfied Lovers of Silver

If not in politics or in religion, where is happiness to be found? Perhaps in the realm of commerce? It too claims to be able to provide happiness. It presents its case through the medium of advertising, saying in so many words: Happiness comes from having all the material goods and services that money can buy.

The number of people seeking happiness in this way appears to be increasing. It was reported several years ago that every second household in Germany was seriously in debt. No wonder, then, that the prestigious German newspaper *Die Zeit* predicted that "many [of these] stand not the slightest chance of ever getting out of debt." It explained: "It is so easy to overdraw to the limit the bank constantly offers you—and so hard to get your neck out of the noose."

The situation in other highly industrialized nations is similar. A few years ago, David Caplovitz, a sociologist at the City University of New York, estimated that in the United States, between 20 million and 25 million households were seriously in debt. "People are in over their heads," he said, "and it is ruining their lives."

That hardly sounds like happiness! But should we expect the world of commerce to be able to accomplish what the other two (politics and religion) obviously cannot? Wealthy King Solomon once wrote: "A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with income. This too is vanity."—Ecclesiastes 5:10.

Seeking happiness in material possessions is like building castles in the air. It may be exciting to build them, but you will have problems if you try to live in them.

Happiness Is Attainable but How?

The apostle Paul calls Jehovah "the happy God." (1 Timothy 1:11) By creating humans in his own image, the happy God gave them also the capacity for being happy. (Genesis

Material things alone can never bring lasting happiness

1:26) But their happiness was to be dependent upon their serving God, as the psalmist showed: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!" (Psalm 144:15b) What our service to God includes and how our serving him leads to true happiness can be better understood if we consider a few of the 110 places in the *New World Translation* where the words "happy" and "happiness" occur.

Recognizing Spiritual Needs

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, said in his famous Sermon on the Mount: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need." (Matthew 5:3) The world of commerce tries to mislead us into thinking that the purchase of luxuries is sufficient for happiness. It tells us that happiness is having a home computer, a video camera, a telephone, a car, the latest sports equipment, stylish clothing. What it does not tell us is that tens of millions of people in the world lack these things and yet are not necessarily unhappy. While possibly making life more comfortable and convenient, these things are not vital to happiness.

As did Paul, those conscious of their spiritual need say: "Having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." (1 Timothy 6:8) Why? Because the satisfying of spiritual needs is what leads to eternal life.—John 17:3.

Is there anything wrong with enjoying good things if we have the money to buy them? Possibly not. Still, it strengthens our spirituality to learn not to indulge every whim or to buy something just because we can afford it. We thus learn contentment and maintain happiness, as did Jesus, even though his economic situation was not the best according to worldly standards. (Matthew 8:20) And Paul was not expressing unhappiness when he wrote: "I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be self-sufficient. I know indeed how to be low on provisions, I know indeed how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want."—Philippians 4:11, 12.

Trusting in Jehovah

Consciousness of one's spiritual need indicates a willingness to trust in God. This makes for happiness, as King Solomon explained: "Happy is he that is trusting in Jehovah."—Proverbs 16:20.

Is it not a fact, though, that many people put greater trust in money and possessions than they do in God? Viewed from this standpoint, there could hardly be a more inappropriate place to display the motto "In God We Trust" than upon money, although that expression does appear on U.S. currency.

King Solomon, who lacked none of the good things that money could buy, recognized that trusting in material possessions does not lead to lasting happiness. (Ecclesiastes 5:12-15) Money in the bank

can be lost through bank failure or by inflation. Real estate can be destroyed by severe storms. Insurance policies, while partially replacing material losses, can never make up for emotional losses. Stocks and bonds can become worthless overnight in a sudden market crash. Even a well-paying job can —for any number of reasons—be here today and gone tomorrow.

For these reasons he that is trusting in Jehovah sees the wisdom of listening to Jesus' warning: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal."—Matthew 6:19, 20.

What greater sense of security and feeling of happiness could there be than to know that one has placed one's trust in Almighty God, who always provides?—Psalm 94:14; Hebrews 13:5, 6.

Accepting Divine Reproof

Counsel, even reproof, is welcome when given in a spirit of love by a true friend. A professed friend of God's servant Job once self-righteously told him: "Happy is the man whom God reproves." Although the statement is true, what Eliphaz implied by these words—that Job was guilty of serious wrongdoing—was not true. What a 'troublesome comforter'! When, though, Jehovah later reproved Job in a loving way, Job humbly accepted the reproof and put himself in the way of greater happiness.—Job 5:17; 16:2; 42:6, 10-17.

Today, God does not speak to his servants directly as he did to Job. Instead, he reproves them by means of his Word and his spirit-directed organization. Christians who pursue materialistic interests, however, often have neither the time, the strength, nor the inclination to study the Bible regularly and attend all the meetings Jehovah's organization provides.

The man whom God reproves, in accordance with Proverbs 3:11-18, recognizes the wisdom of accepting such reproof: "Happy is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment, for having it as gain is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself. It is more precious than corals, and all other delights of yours cannot be made equal to it. Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand there are riches and glory. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its roadways are peace. It is a tree of life to those taking hold of it, and those keeping fast hold of it are to be called happy."

Being Pure and Peace-Loving

Jesus described happy people as being "pure in heart" and "peaceable." (Matthew 5:8, 9) But in a world that encourages a materialistic life-style, how easy for selfish, possibly even impure, desires to take root in our hearts! If not guided by divine wisdom, how easy for us even to be misled into seeking financial well-being by questionable means that would destroy peaceful relationships with others! Not without reason, the Bible warns: "The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains." —1 Timothy 6:10.

The love of money promotes an egotistical view that fosters dissatisfaction, ungratefulness, and greed. To prevent such a wrong spirit from developing, some Christians before making major financial decisions ask

The Bible says: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need"

themselves such questions as: Do I really need it? Do I need this expensive purchase or this well-paying, time-consuming job more than the millions of other people who must live without it? Could I perhaps better spend my money or my time in expanding my share in true worship, in supporting the worldwide preaching work, or in helping people less fortunate than I am?

Showing Endurance

One of the trials that Job was forced to endure was economic deprivation. (Job 1:14-17) As his example shows, endurance is called for in every aspect of life. Some Christians must endure persecution; others, temptation; still others, less-than-ideal economic conditions. But endurance of every kind will be rewarded by Jehovah, as the Christian disciple James wrote in reference to Job: "We pronounce happy those who have endured." —James 5:11.

Neglecting spiritual interests in order to better our economic situation may bring temporary economic relief, but will it help to keep bright our vision of permanent economic relief under God's Kingdom? Is it a risk worth taking?—2 Corinthians 4:18.

Finding Happiness Now and Forever

Some people obviously dispute Jehovah's view of what it takes to make humans happy. Overlooking the more important long-term benefits, they see no immediate personal advantage in doing what God counsels. They fail to realize that trusting in material things is vanity and leads to frustration. The Bible writer correctly asks: "When good things become many, those eating them certainly become many. And what advantage is there to the grand owner of them, except looking at them with his eyes?" (Ecclesiastes 5:11; see also Ecclesiastes 2:4-11; 7:12.) How quickly interest fades and things we thought we just had to have end up on a shelf doing little more than taking up space and collecting dust!

A true Christian will never let himself be pressured into 'keeping up with the Joneses' in a material way. He knows that true worth is measured, not in what one has, but in what one is. There is no doubt in his mind about what it takes to make a person happy —truly happy: enjoying a fine relationship with Jehovah and keeping busy in His service.

Gilead School
50 Years Old and Going Strong!

"THERE are many places where the witness concerning the Kingdom has not been given to a great extent," stated N. H. Knorr to the first class of Gilead on February 1, 1943, the opening day of the school. He added: "There must be hundreds and thousands more that could be reached if there were more laborers in the field. By the Lord's grace, there will be more."

And there have been more laborers—*millions* more! The ranks of Kingdom publishers have swelled from 129,070 in 54 lands in 1943 to 4,472,787 in 229 lands in 1992! Gilead School has greatly contributed to the witness that resulted in that increase. After 50 years it continues to play a key role in training missionary laborers to serve wherever they are needed in the world field.

On March 7, 1993, there were 4,798 invited guests and members of the U.S. Bethel family who gathered at the Jersey City Assembly Hall, in New Jersey, for the graduation of the 94th class. This truly special occasion also provided an opportunity to look back on 50 years of Gilead School. Would you like to know a little about the program?

After an opening song, George D. Gangas of the Governing Body offered a fervent prayer. Then, after introductory remarks by the chairman, Carey W. Barber, the graduates—and all in attendance—listened carefully to a series of short talks.

Robert W. Wallen spoke first, on the theme "You Are Never Alone." In a warm tone, he said: 'In the days ahead, occasions are going to arise in your life when you will feel O so alone, so very far away from family and friends.' How, then, can it be said, "You are never alone?" He explained: 'Because available to every one of you will be the possibility of instantaneous communication with Jehovah God.' He urged the graduates to cherish the privilege of prayer and to use it daily. Then, like Jesus, they will be able to say, "I am not alone." (John 16:32) How encouraging those words were to the graduates!

Developing the theme "Hold Fast to Your Hope" (based on the daily text of March 7), Lyman A. Swingle of the Governing Body spoke next on the need for two qualities —endurance and hope. 'Reproach, hostility, hatred, imprisonment, even death, are reasons why endurance on the part of Christians is needed,' he said. 'There is no limit to the strength beyond what is normal upon which faithful Witnesses of Jehovah can draw in times of need. This is certainly reassuring, especially for you graduates.' What about hope? 'Hope is indispensable,' he explained. 'As a helmet protects the head of the wearer, so the hope of salvation guards and protects the mental powers of the Christian, enabling him to maintain integrity.'—1 Thessalonians 5:8.

The next speaker, Ralph E. Walls, selected an intriguing theme, "How Can We Escape to the Security of a 'Roomy Place'?" What is this "roomy place"? (Psalm 18:19) "A state of deliverance that brings peace of

mind and security of heart," the speaker explained. What do we need deliverance from? 'Yourself—your own shortcomings.' He added: 'Also, external circumstances fueled by Satan.' (Psalm 118:5) How can we escape to the security of a roomy place? 'By searching for Jehovah's orders in all we do and by supplicating Jehovah in faith with all our concerns.'

"What Lies Ahead?" was the theme chosen by Don A. Adams. And what did lie ahead for the new missionaries? A period of adjustment, he explained. "There are also many blessings before you." As an example, he told of two new missionaries who after getting settled in their assignment wrote: "Think of the best day you have ever had in service, and that is what every day is like. We cannot carry enough literature with us, and people keep asking us for studies." The speaker directed some comments to the family and friends of the graduates: 'There is no need for you to be anxious about these graduates. You can help them by writing words of encouragement to them.'—Proverbs 25:25.

The school's instructors spoke next. Jack D. Redford chose the theme "Do Not Expect Anything From Anybody." One of the challenges the graduates will face is getting along with people, he explained. What can help? "Overlook their faults. Do not expect too much of other people. Do not always expect the full measure of what you consider your due. Make allowances for imperfection in other people, and this kindness will help you to get along. Your ability to get along with other people will be a measure of your maturity." (Proverbs 17:9) Surely, applying this wise counsel will help the graduates to make a successful adjustment to being missionaries in a foreign land!

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels," says 2 Corinthians 4:7. Ulysses V. Glass, the registrar of Gilead School, commented on this text as he developed the theme "Trust Your Proved, Faithful Brothers." What are the "earthen vessels"? "These must refer to us as imperfect humans," he noted. What is the "treasure"? "It is our Christian ministry," he explained. (2 Corinthians 4:1) And what should be done with this treasure? "The treasure that Jehovah has entrusted to us is not to be hoarded. So, you dear prospective missionaries, distribute that treasure wherever you go, and teach many others how to distribute it."

It was a nostalgic moment when Albert D. Schroeder took the stage, for he was the registrar of Gilead School when it began. "Half a Century of Theocratic Training" was his theme. "Jehovah knows how to offer effective training, and this he has done," he stated. How? Brother Schroeder referred to the training received through two schools established 50 years ago—the Theocratic Ministry School and Gilead School. He pointed out that a valuable tool in providing accurate knowledge has been the *New World Translation*. He assured the gradu-

In Our Next Issue

Bible Geography—Is It Accurate?

Know Jehovah Through His Word

Do You Respect Your Place of Worship?

94th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row. (1) De La Garza, C.; Borg, E.; Arriaga, E.; Chooh, E.; Purves, D.; Fosberry, A.; Delgado, A.; Drescher, L. (2) Scott, V.; Fridlund, L.; Kettula, S.; Copeland, D.; Arriaga, J.; Thidé, J.; Olsson, E.; Widegren, S. (3) Delgado, F.; Keegan, S.; Leinonen, A.; Finnigan, E.; Fosberry, F.; Halbrook, J.; Berglund, A.; Jones, P. (4) Watson, B.; Frias, C.; Chooh, B.; Halbrook, J.; Purves, J.; Finnigan, S.; Jones, A.; Cuccia, M. (5) Scott, G.; Copeland, D.; Drescher, B.; De La Garza, R.; Leinonen, I.; Keegan, D.; Watson, T.; Kettula, M. (6) Widegren, J.; Borg, S.; Cuccia, L.; Berglund, A.; Olsson, B.; Frias, J.; Fridlund, T.; Thidé, P.

ates: "You can go to your foreign assignments with great confidence that the Society will keep you well supplied with accurate knowledge of Jehovah's purposes."

Milton G. Henschel, president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, spoke on the theme "More Than Conquerors." Brother Henschel drew his theme from the yeartext for 1943: "More than conquerors through him that loved us." (Romans 8:37, *King James Version*) It was an appropriate yeartext, he explained, because in the midst of World War II, our brothers in many countries were experiencing much persecution. Brother Henschel read some excerpts from the *Watchtower* issue that discussed that yeartext and then explained: "This *Watchtower* article [January 15, 1943] was studied in the month of

Class Statistics

Total number of students: 48
Number of countries represented: 5
Number of countries assigned to: 17
Average age: 32
Average years in truth: 15.3
Average years in full-time ministry: 9.6

REVIEWING 50 YEARS OF GILEAD SCHOOL

What better way to look back on Gilead's history than through the experiences of those who lived it—the early graduates, the instructors, and others who helped to organize it? The audience was delighted as they listened to the part "Reviewing 50 Years of Gilead School," conducted by Theodore Jaracz.

What were the circumstances that led up to the establishment of the school? Brother Schroeder explained that he and two other instructors were given just four months to get the school organized. "But by Monday, February 1, 1943, we were ready for the dedication."

What was it like for the first missionaries who were sent out? Brother Henschel recalled: "We had the Society's shipping department crate up all the possessions they wanted to take with them. When the crates arrived, they carefully opened them and took out their belongings. But then they used the crates to make furniture." Eventually, he noted, the Society arranged for modestly equipped missionary homes.

Next on the program, some graduates of Gilead's early classes who are now members of the U.S. Bethel family shared their memories, their feelings, and their experiences. Their comments truly touched the hearts of all in attendance.

"After I received the invitation to attend the first class, I learned that my mother had cancer. But since she had pioneered from the age of 16 onward, she strongly advised me to accept the invitation. So with mixed emotions and trust in Jehovah, I traveled to South Lansing. I completely enjoyed and deeply appreciated the Gilead training. My mother finished her earthly course some time after my graduation."—Charlotte Schroeder, served in Mexico and El Salvador.

"Since Jehovah had already taken care of me in the part of the earth I was in, I figured that anywhere I went was still his earth, and he would care for me. So I was quite happy to accept the invitation to the first class."—Julia Wildman, served in Mexico and El Salvador.

"It was wonderful! We could talk at every door. In the first month, I placed 107 books and conducted 19 Bible studies. The second month I had 28 Bible studies. Of course, there were some things we had to get used to—heat, humidity, bugs. But

February by the first Gilead class, and it prepared them for what lay ahead." Many of the graduates over the last 50 years have already proved themselves conquerors, he explained. What about the 94th class? "Stay close to Jehovah, stay close to his love, and your victory is ensured."

Following the morning's talks, the chairman shared some greetings received from various lands. Then the moment arrived that the 24 married couples had been keenly awaiting—the distribution of diplomas. Why, the Gilead *students* were now officially Gilead *graduates!* They had come from 5 countries, but their assignments were taking them to 17 lands, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mozambique, and parts of Eastern Europe.

After an intermission, the afternoon program got under way with an abbreviated *Watchtower* Study, conducted by Robert L. Butler. Then the graduates reenacted some of the outstanding experiences they had enjoyed while witnessing near Wallkill, New York. The program reflected one of the things that no doubt brought them to Gilead—their deep love for the field ministry.

Following the student program, many in the audience were wondering whether the program would feature something special to

it was a wonderful privilege to be there. It is something I will always cherish."—Mary Adams, second class, regarding her assignment in Cuba.

"Weather was one of the big obstacles we had to contend with in Alaska. In the north it was very, very cold, with temperatures dropping to 60 degrees below zero Fahrenheit and colder. The Indian villages and small isolated places in southeastern Alaska were reached either by boat or by airplane."—John Errichetti, third class.

"To me Gilead was an invitation from Jehovah through his earthly organization to strengthen us spiritually and show us a wonderful way of life."—Mildred Barr, 11th class, served in Ireland.

More delightful interviews followed—Lucille Henschel (14th class, served in Venezuela), Margareta Klein (20th class, served in Bolivia), Lucille Coultrup (24th class, served in Peru), Lorraine Wallen (27th class, served in Brazil), William and Sandra Malenfant (34th class, served in Morocco), Gerrit Lösch (41st class, served in Austria), and David Splane (42nd class, served in Senegal).

What about the brothers who served as instructors? A number of them were also interviewed—Russell Kurzen, Karl Adams, Harold Jackson, Fred Rusk, Harry Peloyan, Jack Redford, and Ulysses Glass. They reflected on their privilege, expressing how it has affected them to this day.

Thrilling testimony to the effectiveness of the Gilead-trained missionaries was offered by Lloyd Barry, who served in Japan. In 1949, when 15 missionaries were sent there, there were fewer than 10 publishers in all of Japan. But 44 years later, there are upwards of 175,000 Kingdom proclaimers in that land! Robert Wallen then told of the outstanding success that some missionaries have had in helping people into the truth, including one missionary sister who has been in Panama for over 45 years and who has helped 125 persons to the point of dedication and baptism.

The climax of the entire program was reached when all in the audience who were Gilead graduates were invited to come up on the stage. It was truly a touching moment. A steady stream of brothers and sisters—89 in the Bethel family in addition to visiting graduates—filed down the aisles and up the stairs to the stage. They were joined by the brothers who have served as instructors over the years, and then by the 94th class —about 160 in all!

"Has the work of Gilead School in training missionaries for foreign lands had certain success?" asked Brother Jaracz. "The evidence of the past 50 years is a thundering yes!"

commemorate 50 years of Gilead School. They were not disappointed! —See the accompanying box, "Reviewing 50 Years of Gilead School."

Fifty years ago, Brother Knorr demonstrated that he was a man of faith and vision. His conviction that Gilead School would succeed was expressed in his opening address to the first class, when he stated: "We believe that, true to its name, a 'heap of witness' will go forth from this place to all parts of the world and that such witness will stand as a monument to the glory of God that can never be destroyed. You as ordained ministers will put your full trust in the Most High, knowing that he will guide and direct you in every time of need, and you will know too that he is also the God of blessing."*

Fifty years later, Gilead School is still going strong! The graduates of the 94th class now have the privilege of following the more than 6,500 graduates who have preceded them. May they put their full trust in the Most High as they do their part in piling up a "heap of witness" that will stand as a monument to the glory of Jehovah God.

* In Hebrew the term "Gilead" means "Witness Heap."—Genesis 31:47, 48.

GRATEFUL FOR JEHOVAH'S UNFAILING SUPPORT

AS TOLD BY SHARON GASKINS

PARADISE on earth! I saw myself romping about the meadows, chasing butterflies, playing with lion cubs. It sounded so good! But there were doubts. How often my hope had ended in despair!

For as long as I can recall, the wheelchair has been my constant companion. From birth on, cerebral palsy robbed me of childhood joys. Other children had fun on skates and bicycles, but I sat alone, unable even to walk. So when Mother took me to one faith healer after another, we were earnestly hoping for a miracle. Time after time, though, she would just wheel me away. Disappointing for me but how heartbreaking for her!

Longing for a true hope, my mother began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses early in 1964. I was then about six and a half years old.

It was wonderful to learn that there had once been a beautiful paradise on this earth. Sadly, the first man, Adam, had thrown it all away, but I desired the closeness to God that he had once enjoyed. What would it have been like to enjoy a relationship with God? Or to live when his own Son walked the earth? My daydreams also carried me along to the future Paradise. Even at that early age, it was clear to me that we had found the truth.

Mother began taking the family to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. Their meetings were so different from what we had seen in the churches! The people and the surroundings touched me deeply.

Getting us to the Kingdom Hall was an ordeal for my mother. Besides me, there were three younger children, and we had no car. We took a cab when she could afford it. I still recall how she struggled one Sunday. There was no cab in sight. Then, seemingly from out of nowhere, a man drove up in his truck and gave us a ride. We were late for the meeting, but we got there. How thankful we were to Jehovah!

Before long our dear spiritual brothers and sisters who owned cars lovingly took turns transporting us. Mother's encouragement never to miss meetings unless we were really sick impressed on my young mind the importance of 'gathering ourselves together.' (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Moved by what she had learned, my mother dedicated her life to Jehovah and was baptized in 1965.

By then I was old enough to appreciate meetings more fully. In the Cypress Hills Congregation in Brooklyn, New York, there were Europeans, blacks, Hispanics, and others worshiping side by side. It seemed so right that God-fearing people should live in such true brotherhood. —Psalm 133:1.

My mother taught me how to prepare for meetings. This was no problem mentally, but it was physically. Cerebral palsy turns simple tasks into major projects. It was, and still is, impossible for me to draw a straight line in order to mark answers in our Bible literature. With practice, however, my underlining improved.

My mind was brimming with things to say. But on their way out of my mouth, the words became jumbled. Relaxation was essential so that my muscles would not become tense. I also had to concentrate on pronouncing each word as clearly as possible. Frustration would well up inside me if the comment did not come out as it should have or when I knew that people did not understand my words. Once they got to know me, though, the brothers and sisters in the congregation were better able to comprehend my speech. However, I still have good days and bad days with this problem.

Six Upsetting Months

At eight years of age, I had a six-month experience that has affected me to this day. Despite all the physical, occupational, and speech therapy already given me, the doctors sent me to a rehabilitation hospital in West Haverstraw, New York. My mother and I were heartbroken. Years earlier, when doctors wrongly diagnosed me as mentally retarded, she told them that she would never put me away. So even a temporary separation was hard for her. However, she saw that my leading a productive life independent of her and my father meant being as physically self-sufficient as possible.

The facility was nice, but I felt abandoned. Crying jags and temper tantrums made clear my feelings about the place. My parents could seldom make the three-hour bus trip to visit me, especially since Mother was pregnant with her fifth child. When they had to leave, it upset me so much that the doctor said the visits must be less frequent. I was allowed to go home only twice.

Therapists taught me how to walk with the aid of braces and lead-weighted crutches. They seemed to weigh a ton. However, the weight helped me to maintain balance and kept me from falling over. This was the first step toward walking alone without braces.

Cutting up food, fastening buttons—any task requiring use of the fingers—had been difficult if not impossible for me. But to some extent I learned how to feed and dress myself. This later helped in my service to God.

My training over, it was back home again. Mother put me to work using my new skills. Doing so was an emotional battle, for though I wanted to do things for myself, accomplishing them was frustrating, time-consuming, and exhausting. Why, dressing myself for the meetings was a two-hour project!

When we moved directly across the street from the Kingdom Hall, I actually made the walk on my own. No small victory!

The Happiest Day of My Life

My mother made sure that the family had a balanced spiritual diet. She studied with me and expected me to read every issue of our journals, *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* There were meetings to prepare for and attend. Although my mind and heart eagerly absorbed this knowledge, serious thoughts of dedicating my life to Jehovah and symbolizing this by water baptism were in the background. Mother helped me to see that despite my disability, God held me spiritually responsible for myself. I could not expect to enter the new world on her merits, to ride into it on her apron strings.

I loved God, but my condition set me apart as different from others—a painful realization for a teenager. It was hard to accept my limitations. Anger would often overtake me, and this had to be controlled before baptism.

(Galatians 5:19, 20) And what if I couldn't live up to my dedication to Jehovah?

At my mother's request, a congregation elder spoke with me. He cited the prophet Elijah's question to the Israelites: "How long will you be limping upon two different opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21) Clearly, Jehovah wasn't pleased with my indecision.

I woke up spiritually and prayed earnestly for Jehovah's help and for the determination to dedicate my life to him. A sister in the congregation studied with me. She was younger than I was and had lost her mother at an early age. Nevertheless, she had made a dedication to God while quite young.

At the age of 17, my mind was made up. I wanted to serve Jehovah to the best of my ability. August 9, 1974—when I was baptized—was the happiest day of my life.

Joy in the Ministry

Participation in the ministry presented some mountainlike obstacles. The greatest challenge was to make myself understood. I would speak as clearly as possible. Then, whenever necessary, my partner in the field ministry would repeat my remarks to the householder. Some reacted negatively, viewing me as a victim of exploitation by the Witnesses. But preaching is my right and my heartfelt desire.

Walking from door to door for even one block can be completely draining. Many houses in our witnessing territory have stairs, putting them beyond my reach. In winter, icy streets make house-to-house work virtually impossible for me. (Acts 20:20) However, spiritual brothers have helped tremendously, and Jehovah has now blessed me with a motorized wheelchair, which makes the ministry much easier.

In time I began to witness by mail. Writing letters by hand wouldn't do because my penmanship is illegible to most people. So the electric typewriter became my scribe. My typing is very slow because of poor hand coordination. About half the time, I aim for one letter and hit another key. It may take an hour or more to type just one page.

Despite a lack of stamina, from time to time I serve as an auxiliary pioneer, devoting 60 hours or more to the ministry in a month. This calls for a good schedule, extra effort, and the support of fellow believers. Their pioneer spirit encourages me. Mother has also set a fine example by serving as a regular or an auxiliary pioneer while facing hardships, poor health, and the challenge of raising seven children in a religiously divided household.

On My Own

At the age of 24, I decided to move out on my own. My move to the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn proved to be a blessing. The Marlboro Congregation was like a close-knit family. How faith-strengthening it was to be with them! Even with only two or three cars available in the congregation, spiritual brothers took me to all the meetings. Yet I did not live there long.

Feeling like an utter failure, I returned to my family and plunged into a three-year period of deep depression. Fits of anger recurred. Then came thoughts of suicide and several attempts to carry them out. Death loomed like a dark cloud. But I leaned on God and promised to show appreciation for his gift of life. Comfort and counsel came from the elders. This, along with prayer, personal study, patience on the part of my family, and some professional help, straightened out my thinking.

Through *The Watchtower,* Jehovah tenderly provided insight into severe depression. Yes, he does care for his people and understands our feelings. (1 Peter 5:6, 7) In time the deep depression subsided. Ten years later, Jehovah still helps me to deal with frustration and depression. At times feelings

of worthlessness almost swallow me up. Nonetheless, prayer, Bible study, and my spiritual family are wonderful survival aids.

After a futile search for another apartment, I had reluctantly resolved to live with my family for the rest of my life. Then Jehovah answered my prayers. A place became available in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. By late summer of 1984, I moved in, and I have been there ever since.

Members of the very loving Lafayette Congregation kindly transported me to the meetings. Still fresh in my mind is the first Congregation Book Study I attended. It was held on the fourth floor—and no elevator! Only with Jehovah's help did I make it up and down those stairs. In time a more accessible location was provided. And now Jehovah has blessed me with the privilege of having a Congregation Book Study in my home.

A splendid pioneer spirit permeates this congregation. When I came, there were about 30 pioneers, and some took me under their wing. The zealous atmosphere motivated me to be an auxiliary pioneer more often.

In April 1989 the Lafayette and Pratt Congregations built a new Kingdom Hall right down the street from my apartment. It was just in time too, for because of further physical deterioration, walking has again become a problem. With my motorized scooter and with spiritual brothers and sisters at my side, however, trips to and from the meetings are delightful. How deeply I appreciate such loving assistance!

Grateful for God's Support

Though my legs are unsteady, my heart is steadfast. A good education made life a little easier, yet God has sustained me. At times I did not know where the next meal was coming from, but Jehovah has supported me and has been a faithful Provider. Dear to me, indeed, are David's words: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread."—Psalm 37:23-25.

Several times Jehovah enabled me to maintain a Scriptural stand by helping me to refuse to accept blood during surgery. (Acts 15:28, 29) Recently, my father died. Losing someone so close was truly a hard blow. Only strength from Jehovah has pulled me through this and other trials.

My health may continue to fail, but my trust in God and my relationship with him are my lifelines. How happy I am to be among Jehovah's people and to have his unfailing support!

Why You Should Attend

YOU will receive four rewarding days of spiritual instruction at the "Divine Teaching" District Convention, which will be in progress this summer in cities around the world. In the United States alone, over 150 of these gatherings will be held during June, July, and August. Generally, the program will begin on Thursday at 1:20 p.m. and conclude on Sunday at 4:15 p.m. A highlight at some conventions will be reports by missionaries, who have been helped to return to their home country for this happy occasion.

Whether you are old or young—a husband, wife, father, mother, teenager, or child—you will receive teaching presented in a clear, appealing way that will benefit you. For example, many today ask, What is the purpose of life? On Friday morning, you will enjoy hearing this question discussed and will be delighted with what you receive to help others understand the subject.

Friday afternoon the program will feature the parts "Making Marriage a Lasting Union," "Work Hard for the Salvation of Your Household," and "Parents—Your Children Need Specialized Attention." Immediately following these, specific attention will be focused on the problems young people face and how they can deal with them. They should be encouraged by the modern-day drama entitled *Youths Who Remember Their Creator Now.*

On Saturday the program will feature Jesus' prophecy on the last days and especially his words: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened." (Matthew 24:29) You will want to hear the discussion regarding when that tribulation occurs. The Saturday program will also review the record of Jehovah's Witnesses in modern times and show what they have accomplished.

On Sunday another drama, entitled *Do Not Be Misled or Mock God,* will address the challenge to one's Christian integrity because of today's popular videos and music. The public discourse in the afternoon will feature the theme "Helpful Teaching for Our Critical Times." The program will conclude with the admonition "Keep Holding Fast to Divine Teaching."