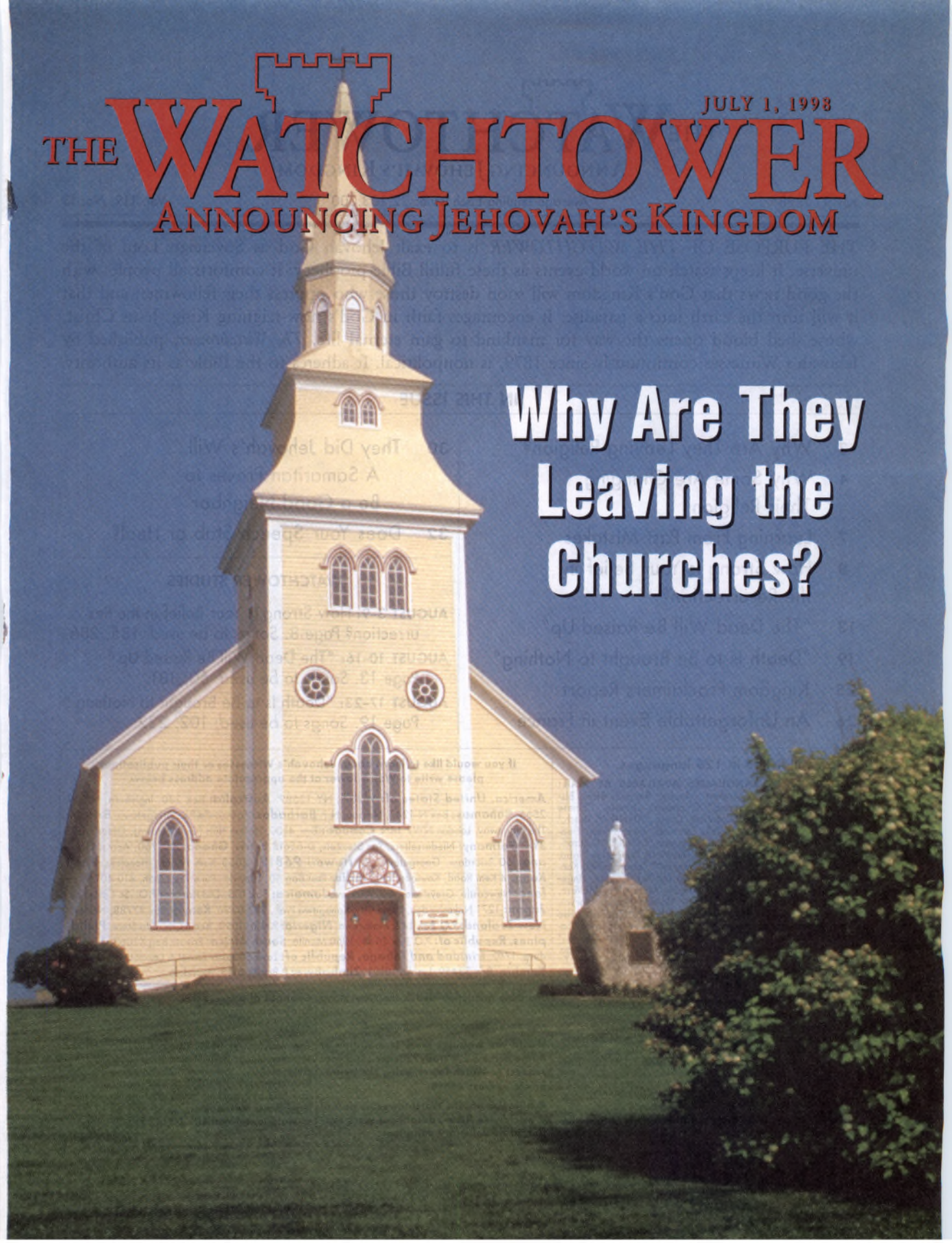
JULY 1, 1998

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Why Are They Leaving the Churches?



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

July 1, 1998 | Average Printing Each Issue: 22,103,000 | Vol. 119, No. 13

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

3 Why Are They Leaving Religion?

4 Why Some Are Changing Their Religion

7 Learning From Past Mistakes

8 How Strong Is Your Belief in the Resurrection?

13 "The Dead Will Be Raised Up"

19 "Death Is to Be Brought to Nothing"

25 Kingdom Proclaimers Report

26 An Unforgettable Event in France

30 They Did Jehovah's Will A Samaritan Proves to Be a Good Neighbor

32 Does Your Speech Stab or Heal?

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

AUGUST 3-9: How Strong Is Your Belief in the Resurrection? Page 8. *Songs to be used:* 185, 206.

AUGUST 10-16: "The Dead Will Be Raised Up." Page 13. *Songs to be used:* 60, 181.

AUGUST 17-23: "Death Is to Be Brought to Nothing." Page 19. *Songs to be used:* 102, 222.

Now published in 128 languages.

SEMIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,* Danish,*# Dutch,* Efik, English*# (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,*# French,*# Ga, Georgian, German,*# Greek,* Gujarati, Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian,* Igbo, Iloko,* Indonesian, Italian,*# Japanese*# (also Braille), Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Korean* (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian, Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish,* Portuguese* (also Braille), Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Slovak,* Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish,*# Sranantongo, Swahili, Swedish,*# Tagalog,* Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Armenian, Cambodian, Chitonga, East Armenian, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Hausa, Icelandic, Isoko, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Luvale, Marshallese, Monokutuba, Moore, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Punjabi, Sango, Silozi, Trukese, Tuvaluan, Urdu, Yapese

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.
\# Audiocassettes also available.

© 1998 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

Milton G. Henschel, President

If you would like to learn about Jehovah's Witnesses or their publications, please write to Watch Tower at the appropriate address below.

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. ***Australia:*** Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565. ***Bahamas:*** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. ***Barbados:*** Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown. ***Britain:*** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. ***Canada:*** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. ***Germany:*** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. ***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:*** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. ***Jamaica:*** Box 103, Old Harbour P.O., St. Catherine. ***Japan:*** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. ***Kenya:*** Box 47788, Nairobi. ***New Zealand:*** P.O. Box 142, Manurewa. ***Nigeria:*** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State. ***Philippines, Republic of:*** P.O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. ***South Africa:*** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. ***Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:*** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. ***Zambia:*** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. ***Zimbabwe:*** P. Bag A-6113, Avondale.

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References,* unless otherwise indicated.

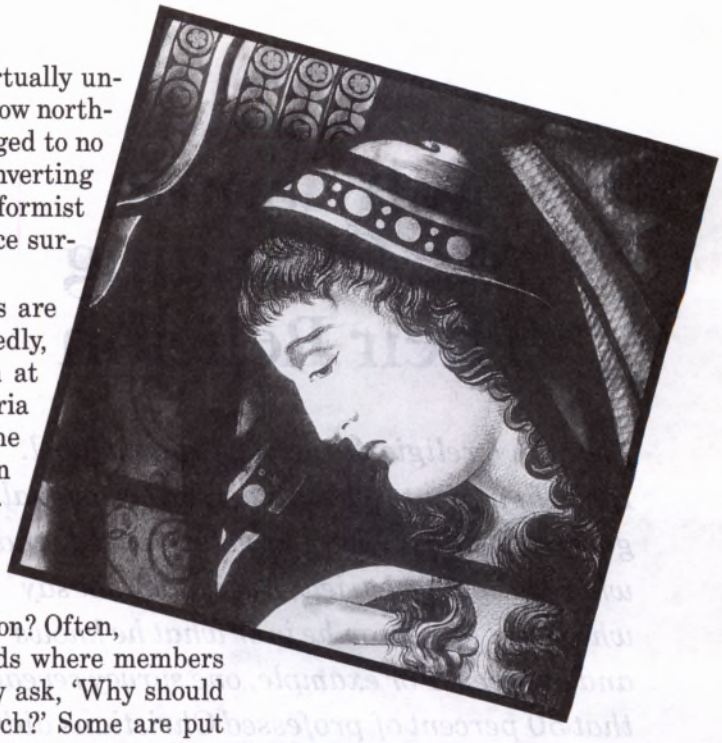
Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Watch Tower, using the appropriate address above.

Publication of "The Watchtower" is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, **Wallkill, NY 12589.**

Printed in U.S.A.



Why Are They Leaving Religion?

IN THE mid-19th century, it was virtually unheard of for a resident of Prussia (now northern Germany) to say that he belonged to no particular religion. In fact, simply converting from a mainstream religion to a nonconformist church could make him subject to police surveillance. How times have changed!

Today, a record number of Germans are resigning from the churches. Reportedly, 1 in 4 claims to belong to no religion at all. A similar trend is seen in Austria and Switzerland. If membership is the lifeblood of a religion, then, as German writer Reimer Gronemeyer put it, "Europe's churches are bleeding to death."

Why They Reject Religion

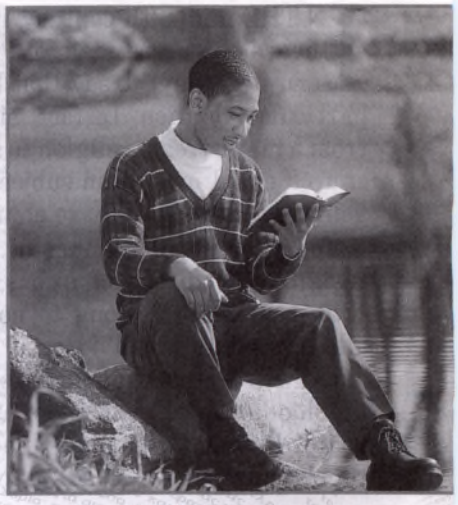
Why do many reject organized religion? Often, for financial reasons, especially in lands where members are required to pay a church tax. Many ask, 'Why should my hard-earned money go to the church?' Some are put off by the church's enormous wealth and power. They likely agree with Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne, Germany, who said that the church's wealth may have led it to give too much attention to material things and "not to take faith in Christ seriously enough."

A number are leaving their church because they find it dry, uninteresting, unable to satisfy their spiritual hunger. They suffer from the famine foretold by the prophet Amos, "a famine, not for bread, and a thirst, not for water, but for hearing the words of Jehovah." (Amos 8:11) Because they receive little sustenance from their religion, they give up on it.

While the problems encountered are genuine, is it the right response to give up on all religion? Imagine a hungry man who sees what looks like a loaf of bread. When he tries to eat it, however, he finds that it is made of sawdust. Would he give up on the idea of eating and satisfying his hunger? No, he would look for some real food. Similarly, if a religion does not satisfy the spiritual hunger of its members, should they give up on religion? Or would they be wiser to look for a way to have their spiritual hunger satisfied? That is what many have done, as the following article shows.

Why Some Are Changing Their Religion

For many, religion is no more than a label. It might indicate where a person occasionally goes on Sunday, where he gets married, and where he will be buried. But it does not say what kind of person he is or what he knows and believes. For example, one survey revealed that 50 percent of professed Christians did not know who delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Why, even the famous Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi, a Hindu, knew that!



The Bible helps us to come to know and love God

IS IT surprising that people drift away from religion when so many of them know so little about their faith? No, it is not. However, it is also not inevitable. Those who have accepted help to learn about the Bible are often astonished to find how much it benefits them. The Bible itself says: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the *One teaching you to benefit yourself,* the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk." —Isaiah 48:17.

What should those with an unsatisfied spiritual hunger do? They should not give up on serving God! Rather, they should look into the Bible and see what God himself makes available to them.

Answers to Difficult Questions

At seven years of age, Bernd watched his mother die.* Through the rest of his childhood, he wondered, 'Where is my mother? Why do I have to grow up without her?' As a teenager, Bernd was an active church member. Concerned about the suffering of mankind, he hoped to become a foreign-aid worker. Still, he was bothered by questions to which his church had no satisfactory answers.

Then Bernd spoke to a schoolmate who happened to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses. This youth showed Bernd from the Bi-

* Some of the names in this article have been changed.

ble that his mother was unconscious, asleep in death. Bernd learned of many Bible verses that explain this, such as Ecclesiastes 9:5: "As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." So Bernd had no reason to worry about whether his mother was suffering in some kind of purgatory —or worse. Although the doctrine of the immortal soul is taught in most religions, Bernd saw in the Bible that a human soul is just a person. When the person dies, the soul dies. "The soul that is sinning —it itself will die."—Ezekiel 18:4.

Bernd also learned of the wonderful prospect for the dead. He read for himself in the Bible book of Acts: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24: 15) How thrilled he was to find out that this resurrection will take place here on earth, which God will restore to a paradise! —Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Soon Bernd's spiritual needs were satisfied by genuine Bible knowledge. Bernd did not give up on religion. Rather, he left the church that could not satisfy his hunger and adopted a form of worship solidly based on the Bible. He says: "That was 14 years ago, and I have never regretted the step. Now I know that the Creator does not cause suffering. Satan is the god of this system, and he is to blame for the conditions surrounding us. But God will shortly correct all the harm that has been done by Satan's world. My mother too will return in the resurrection. What a joy that will be!"

Incidentally, Bernd has reached his goal of working abroad to help others. He works in a foreign country helping others to learn about God's Kingdom, the real solution to their misery. Like Bernd, millions have learned that God will soon put an end to human suffering. They are thrilled to find that there is a religion that satisfies their spiritual need.—Matthew 5:3.

What Is the Purpose of Life?

As the Western world becomes more and more secularized, many ask, 'What is the purpose of life?' The answer is to be found in the Bible, as Michael discovered. In the mid-1970's, Michael wanted to join a terrorist group. He had only one aim in life—to target those people whom he viewed as responsible for the injustices of the capitalist system. "I never left home without my gun," he says. "My plan was to kill as many top politicians and capitalists as possible. I would have given my life for the cause."

Michael was a churchgoer, but no one in his church could explain the real purpose of life. So when Jehovah's Witnesses called at his home and showed him the Bible's answers to his questions, Michael listened carefully. He started to attend meetings for worship at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Michael's friends were curious about his newfound interest in the Bible. "Come to the meeting this Sunday," Michael urged them. "Stay for a while. If you do not like what you hear, then go home." Sure enough, after a 45-minute Bible-based talk, most of his friends left the hall. But one—Susan—remained. This young woman was fascinated by what she had heard. Michael and

Susan later married and were baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses. "Now I know why we are here on earth," Michael says. "We were created by Jehovah. Our real purpose in life is to get to know him and do his will. That is what brings true satisfaction!"

Millions share Michael's conviction. They take to heart the Bible's words: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man."—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Coping With Life's Problems

We all experience the fulfillment of the prophecy found at 2 Timothy 3:1: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here." No one can escape the problems of these "critical times." But the Bible helps us to cope with them.

Consider Steven and Olive, a married couple. When they began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, they, like so many others, had marital problems. "We were drifting apart," explains Steven. "We had different goals and interests." What helped them stay together? "Jehovah's Witnesses showed us how we could apply Bible principles in our lives," Steven continues. "For the first time, we learned what it means to be unselfish and caring. Applying Bible principles cemented us together. Now we enjoy a happy, stable marriage."

A Close Relationship With God

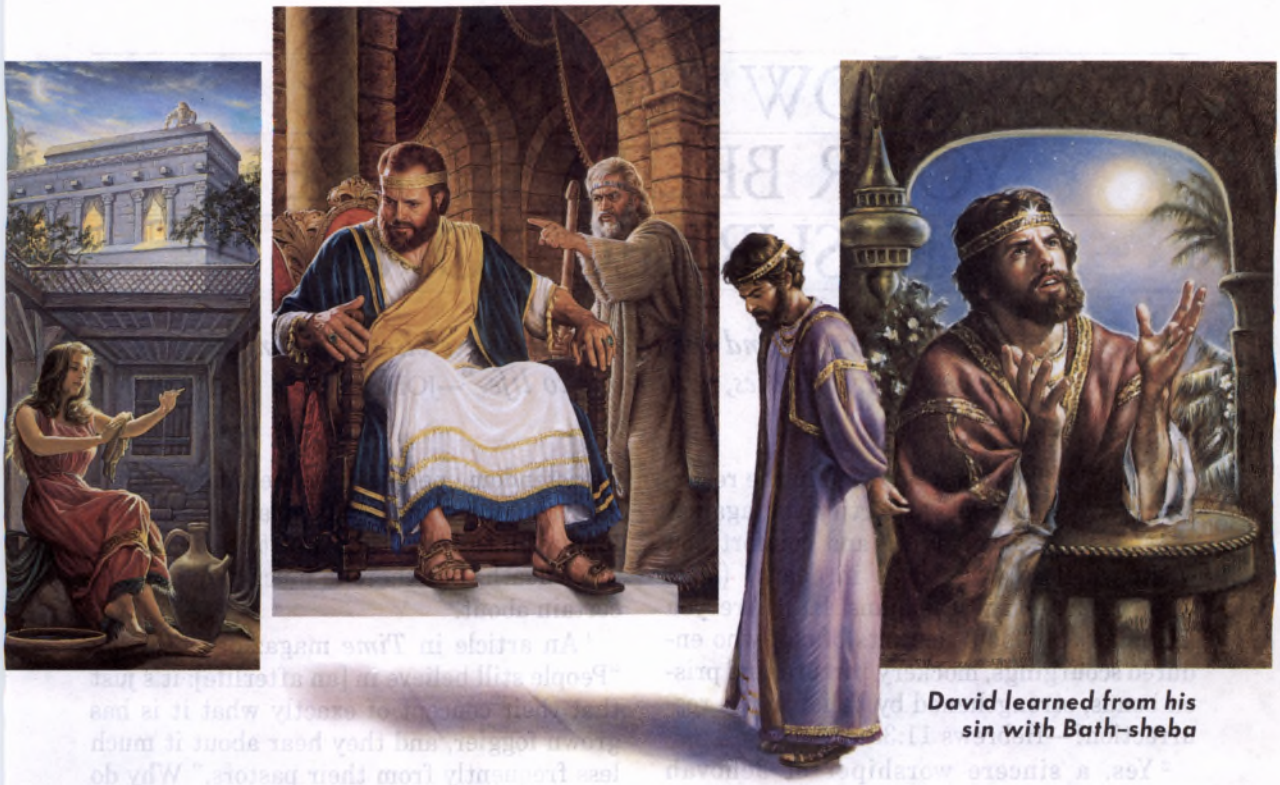
According to a recent Gallup poll, 96 percent of Americans believe in God, and most of these pray to him. Yet, a separate poll showed that church and synagogue attendance is now at its lowest in a half century. Some 58 percent of Americans say that they go to church once a month or less. Clearly, religion has not drawn them closer to God. And this problem is not limited to the United States.

Linda grew up in Bavaria. She was a practicing Catholic and prayed regularly. At the same time, she was afraid of the future. She knew nothing about God's purpose for man. When she was just 14 years old, Linda met Jehovah's Witnesses, and she reports: "What they said was interesting, so I accepted two Bible study aids and read them immediately." Two years later, Linda began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. "Everything I learned about God from the Bible made sense," she says. Linda resigned from her church and was baptized as a Witness of Jehovah at age 18.

What moved Linda to change her religion? She explains: "My church helped me to see that there is a God, and I learned to believe in him. But he was impersonal and remote. My study of the Bible not only confirmed my belief in God but also helped me to come to know and love him. I now have a precious personal relationship with God, something that is more valuable than anything else."

True Religion Is Worthwhile!

Does your religion give you spiritual guidance and show you how the Bible can help you cope with life's problems? Does it teach the Bible's hope for the future? Does it bring you to a close, personal relationship with the Creator, based on accurate Bible knowledge? If not, do not give up. Rather than abandon religion, search for the form of worship that is firmly based on the Bible. Then you will be like those prophesied about in the Bible book of Isaiah: "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said: 'Look! My own servants will eat . . . My own servants will drink . . . My own servants will rejoice . . . My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart.'" —Isaiah 65:13, 14.



David learned from his sin with Bath-sheba

LEARNING FROM PAST MISTAKES

OUR Creator's moral laws are eternal and unchangeable. For this reason the principle found at Galatians 6:7 applies today: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." True, an individual may deny accountability to God, but the divine rule remains constant. Ultimately, no human is exempt from the consequences of his actions.

What of a person who lives a wayward life and then changes, becoming a servant of God? He may still have to live with the consequences of his previous life-style. This does not mean, however, that God has not forgiven him. King David's adulterous relationship with Bath-sheba brought much calamity into his life. He could not escape this. But he did repent, and he did receive God's forgiveness.—2 Samuel 12:13-19; 13:1-31.

Have you ever felt disheartened when you suffer the consequences of mistakes you have made? If viewed in the right way, feeling regret can serve as a reminder to us to 'be on our guard that we do not turn to what is hurtful.' (Job 36:21) Yes, feeling regret can help us to avoid repeating a wrong. Better yet, David used the experience gained from the sin he committed to benefit not only himself but others too. He said: "I will teach transgressors your ways, that sinners themselves may turn right back to you."—Psalm 51:13.

HOW STRONG IS YOUR BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION?

"I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life."—JOHN 11:25.

HOW strong is your hope in the resurrection? Does it fortify you against the fear of dying and comfort you when you lose loved ones in death? (Matthew 10:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:13) Are you like many of God's servants of old, who endured scourgings, mockery, torture, and prison bonds, strengthened by belief in the resurrection?—Hebrews 11:35-38.

[2] Yes, a sincere worshiper of Jehovah should have no doubts at all that there will be a resurrection, and his confidence should affect the way he lives his life. It is wonderful to reflect on the fact that in God's due time, the sea, death, and Hades will give up the dead in them, and these resurrected ones will have the prospect of living forever on a paradise earth.—Revelation 20:13; 21:4, 5.

Doubts About a Future Life

[3] Christendom has long taught that there is life after death. An article in the magazine *U.S. Catholic* said: "Down through the ages, Christians have tried to make the best of the disappointments and sufferings of this life by looking forward to another life, one of peace and contentment, of fulfillment and happiness." Even though in a number of lands of Christendom, people have become secularized and somewhat cynical about religion, many still feel that there must be *something* after death. But there is much they are not certain about.

[4] An article in *Time* magazine observed: "People still believe in [an afterlife]: it's just that their concept of exactly what it is has grown foggier, and they hear about it much less frequently from their pastors." Why do religious ministers speak less about an afterlife than they used to? Religious scholar Jeffrey Burton Russell says: "I think [clerics] want to stay off the subject because they feel they're going to have to climb a wall of popular skepticism."

[5] In many churches, the afterlife includes a heaven and a fiery hell. And if clergymen are reluctant to speak about heaven, they are even more reluctant to speak about hell. One newspaper article said: "These days even churches that believe in eternal punishment in a physical hell . . . play down the concept." Indeed, most modern theologians no longer believe in hell as a literal place of torment, the way it was taught in the Middle Ages. Rather, they favor a more "humane" version of hell. According to many modernists, sinners in hell are not literally tortured, but

1, 2. Why does a worshiper of Jehovah need confidence in the resurrection hope?
3, 4. What belief do many still have about life after death?
5. How do many today view the hellfire doctrine?

they suffer because of their "spiritual separation from God."

[6] Softening church doctrine so as not to offend modern sensibilities may help some to avoid unpopularity, but it leaves millions of sincere churchgoers wondering what to believe. Hence, when face-to-face with death, these often find that their faith is lacking. Their attitude is like that of the woman who lost several family members in a tragic accident. When asked whether her religious faith had brought her comfort, she replied hesitatingly, "I suppose so." But even if she had replied confidently that her religious faith had helped her, of what long-term profit would it be if her beliefs were not well-founded? This is an important consideration because, in truth, what most churches teach about a future life is very different from what the Bible teaches.

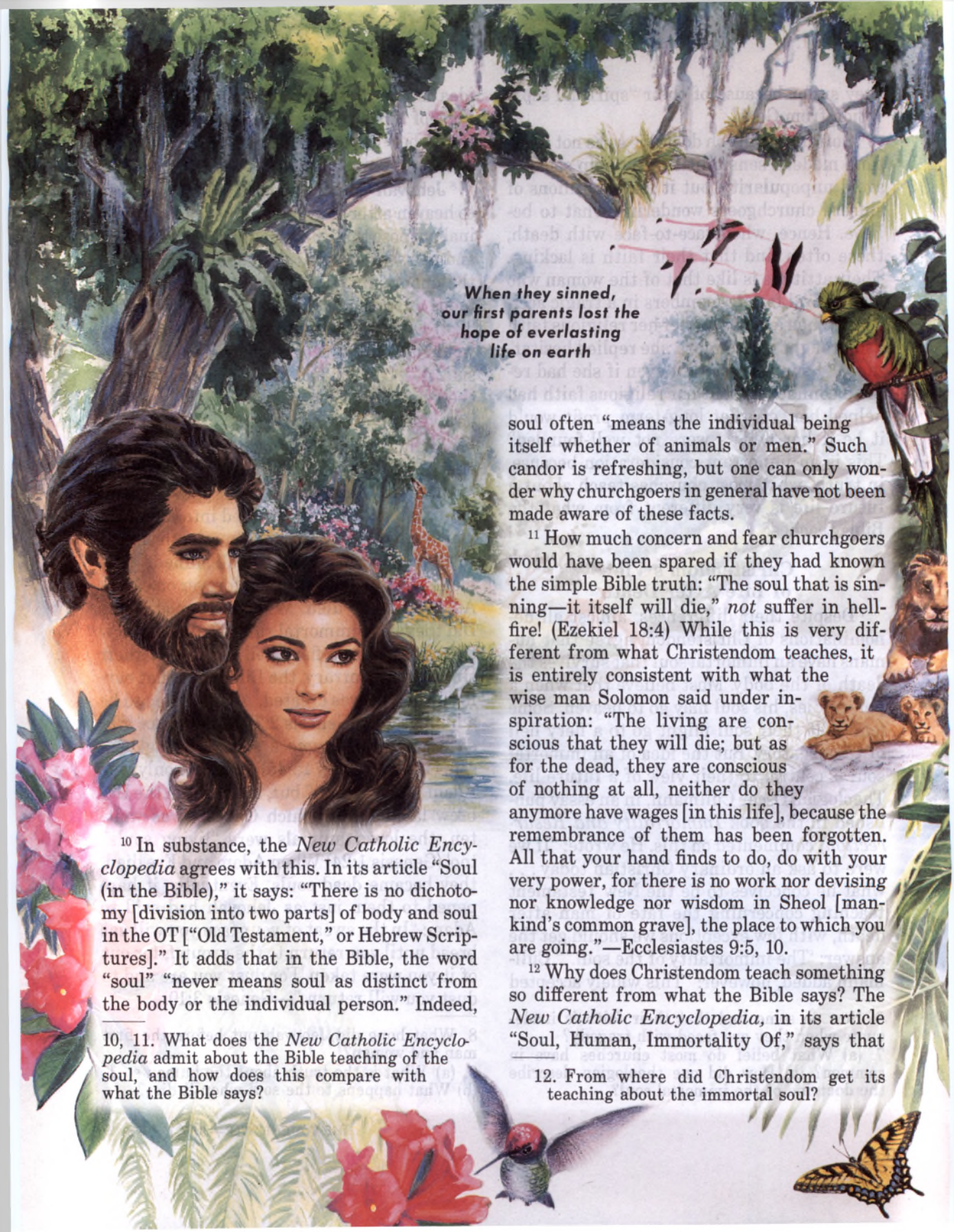
Christendom's View of Life After Death

[7] Despite their differences, almost all denominations of Christendom agree that humans have an immortal soul that survives the death of the body. Most believe that when a person dies, his soul may go to heaven. Some fear that their soul might go to a fiery hell or to purgatory. But the idea of an immortal soul is central to their view of a future life. Theologian Oscar Cullmann, in an essay published in the book *Immortality and Resurrection,* commented on this. He wrote: "If we were to ask an ordinary Christian today . . . what he conceives to be the New Testament teaching concerning the fate of man after death, with few exceptions we should get the answer: 'The immortality of the soul.'" Cullmann added, however: "This widely accepted idea is one of the greatest misunderstandings of Christianity." Cullmann remarked that when he first said this, he caused a furor. Yet, he was correct.

[8] Jehovah God did not create humans to go to heaven after they died. It was not his original purpose that they should die at all. Adam and Eve were created perfect and were given the opportunity to fill the earth with righteous offspring. (Genesis 1:28; Deuteronomy 32:4) Our first parents were told that they would die only if they disobeyed God. (Genesis 2:17) If they had remained obedient to their heavenly Father, they would have kept on living on earth forever.

[9] Sadly, though, Adam and Eve failed to obey God. (Genesis 3:6, 7) The tragic consequences are described by the apostle Paul: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Romans 5:12) Instead of living forever on earth, Adam and Eve died. What happened then? Did they have immortal souls that could now be consigned to a fiery hell because of their sin? On the contrary, the Bible says that earlier, when he was created, Adam "came to be a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) Man was not *given* a soul; he *became* a soul, a living person. (1 Corinthians 15:45) Why, not only was Adam "a living soul" but, as shown in the Hebrew language in which Genesis was written, the lower animals were "living souls" too! (Genesis 1:24) When Adam and Eve died, they became dead souls. Eventually, it happened to them just as Jehovah had said to Adam: "In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return."—Genesis 3:19.

6. How do some find that their faith is inadequate when they are faced with tragedy?
7. (a) What belief do most churches have in common? (b) How did one theologian describe the doctrine of the immortal soul?
8. What hope did Jehovah put before the first man and woman?
9. (a) What is the truth about the human soul? (b) What happens to the soul when it dies?



When they sinned, our first parents lost the hope of everlasting life on earth

[10] In substance, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* agrees with this. In its article "Soul (in the Bible)," it says: "There is no dichotomy [division into two parts] of body and soul in the OT ["Old Testament," or Hebrew Scriptures]." It adds that in the Bible, the word "soul" "never means soul as distinct from the body or the individual person." Indeed, soul often "means the individual being itself whether of animals or men." Such candor is refreshing, but one can only wonder why churchgoers in general have not been made aware of these facts.

[11] How much concern and fear churchgoers would have been spared if they had known the simple Bible truth: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die," *not* suffer in hellfire! (Ezekiel 18:4) While this is very different from what Christendom teaches, it is entirely consistent with what the wise man Solomon said under inspiration: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, neither do they anymore have wages [in this life], because the remembrance of them has been forgotten. All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power, for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol [mankind's common grave], the place to which you are going."—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

[12] Why does Christendom teach something so different from what the Bible says? The *New Catholic Encyclopedia,* in its article "Soul, Human, Immortality Of," says that

10, 11. What does the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* admit about the Bible teaching of the soul, and how does this compare with what the Bible says?

12. From where did Christendom get its teaching about the immortal soul?

early Church Fathers found support for belief in an immortal soul, not in the Bible, but in "the poets and philosophers and general tradition of Greek thought . . . Later, the scholastics preferred to make use of Plato or principles from Aristotle." It states that "the influence of Platonic and Neoplatonic thought"—including belief in the immortal soul—eventually was inserted "into the very core of Christian theology."

13 Should professed Christians have turned to pagan Greek philosophers to learn about something as basic as the hope of life after death? Of course not. When Paul wrote to Christians living in Corinth, Greece, he said: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written: 'He catches the wise in their own cunning.' And again: 'Jehovah knows that the reasonings of the wise men are futile.'" (1 Corinthians 3:19, 20) The ancient Greeks were idol worshipers. How, then, could they be a source of truth? Paul asked the Corinthians: "What agreement does God's temple have with idols? For we are a temple of a living God; just as God said: 'I shall reside among them and walk among them, and I shall be their God, and they will be my people.'"—2 Corinthians 6:16.

14 Revelation of sacred truths was initially given through the nation of Israel. (Romans 3:1, 2) After 33 C.E., it was given through the first-century anointed Christian congregation. Paul, speaking of first-century Christians, said: "It is to us God has revealed [the things prepared for those who love him] through his spirit." (1 Corinthians 2:10; see also Revelation 1:1, 2.) Christendom's doctrine of the immortality of the soul is derived from Greek philosophy. It was not revealed through God's revelations to Israel or through the first-century congregation of anointed Christians.

13, 14. Why is it unreasonable to hope to be enlightened by pagan Greek philosophers?

The Real Hope for the Dead

15 If there is no immortal soul, what is the real hope for the dead? It is, of course, the resurrection, a central Bible doctrine and a truly wonderful divine promise. Jesus held out the resurrection hope when he said to his friend Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life." (John 11:25) To believe in Jesus means to believe in the resurrection, not in an immortal soul.

16 Jesus had earlier spoken of the resurrection when he said to some Jews: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) What Jesus here describes is very different from an immortal soul surviving the death of the body and going straight to heaven. It is a future 'coming out' of people who have been in the grave, many for centuries or even for thousands of years. It is dead souls coming back to life. Impossible? Not to the God "who makes the dead alive and calls the things that are not as though they were." (Romans 4:17) Skeptics may mock at the idea of people coming back from the dead, but it harmonizes perfectly with the fact that "God is love" and that he is "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him."—1 John 4:16; Hebrews 11:6.

17 After all, how could God reward those who proved to be "faithful even to death" if he did not bring them back to life? (Revelation 2:10) The resurrection also makes it possible for God to accomplish what the apostle John wrote about: "For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest, namely, to break up the works of the Devil." (1 John 3:8) Back in the garden of Eden, Satan became the murderer of the whole human race

15. According to Jesus, what is the real hope for the dead?
16. Why is it reasonable to believe in a resurrection?
17. What will God accomplish by means of the resurrection?

when he led our first parents into sin and death. (Genesis 3:1-6; John 8:44) Jesus began to break up Satan's works when he gave his perfect life as a corresponding ransom, opening the way for mankind to be released from the inherited slavery to sin resulting from Adam's willful disobedience. (Romans 5:18) The resurrection of those who die because of this Adamic sin will be a further breaking up of the Devil's works.

Church scholars came to be influenced by Plato's belief in the immortality of the soul

Musei Capitolini, Roma

Body and Soul

18 When the apostle Paul was in Athens, he preached the good news to a crowd that included some Greek philosophers. They listened to his discussion about the one true God and his call to repentance. But what happened next? Paul concluded his speech, saying: "[God] has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead." Those words caused a stir. "When they heard of a resurrection of the dead, some began to mock." (Acts 17:22-32) Theologian Oscar Cullmann observes: "For the Greeks who believed in the immortality of the soul it may have been harder to accept the Christian preaching of the resurrection than it was for others. . . . The *teaching* of the great philosophers Socrates and Plato can in no way be brought into consonance [agreement] with that of the New Testament."

19 Even so, following the great apostasy after the death of the apostles, theologians labored to merge the Christian teaching of the resurrection with Plato's belief in the immortal soul. In time, some agreed on a novel solution: At death, the soul is separated ("liberated," as some put it) from the body. Then, according to *Outlines of the Doctrine of the Resurrection,* by R. J. Cooke, on Judgment Day "each body shall be again united to its own soul, and each soul to its own body." The future reuniting of the body with its immortal soul is said to be the resurrection.

20 This theory is still the official doctrine of mainstream churches. While such a notion may seem logical to a theologian, most churchgoers are unacquainted with it. They simply believe that they will go straight to heaven when they die. For this reason, in the May 5, 1995, issue of *Commonweal,* writer John Garvey charged: "The belief of

18. How did some Greek philosophers react to Paul's statement that Jesus had been resurrected, and why?
19. How did Christendom's theologians try to harmonize the teaching of the resurrection with the doctrine of the immortal soul?

20, 21. Who have consistently taught the truth about the resurrection, and how has this benefited them?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ Why should we cultivate firm confidence in the resurrection?
- ☐ What prospect did Jehovah place before Adam and Eve?
- ☐ Why is it illogical to seek truth in Greek philosophy?
- ☐ Why is the resurrection a reasonable hope?

most Christians [on the matter of life after death] seems to be much closer to Neoplatonism than to anything truly Christian, and it has no biblical basis." Indeed, by trading the Bible for Plato, Christendom's clergy extinguished the Biblical resurrection hope for their flocks.

[21] On the other hand, Jehovah's Witnesses reject pagan philosophy and adhere to the Bible's teaching of the resurrection. They find such teaching to be edifying, satisfying, and comforting. In the following articles, we will see just how well-founded and how logical the Bible's teaching of the resurrection is, both for those with an earthly hope and for those with the prospect of a resurrection to heavenly life. As a preparation for considering these articles, we recommend that you read carefully chapter 15 of the first letter to the Corinthians.

"THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED UP"

"For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up incorruptible, and we shall be changed."—1 CORINTHIANS 15:52.

HAVE you ever lost someone close to you in death? Then you know the pain that death can bring. Nevertheless, Christians take comfort in the promise that God gave by means of the prophet Hosea: "From the hand of Sheol I shall redeem them; from death I shall recover them. Where are your stings, O Death? Where is your destructiveness, O Sheol?" —Hosea 13:14.

[2] The idea of the dead returning to life seems preposterous to skeptics. But Almighty God surely has the power to perform such a miracle! The real issue is whether Jehovah is *disposed* to bring the dead back to life. The righteous man Job asked: "If an able-bodied man dies can he live again?" Then, he gave this reassuring answer: "You will call, and I myself shall answer you. For the work of your hands you will have a yearning." (Job 14:14, 15) The word "yearning" denotes an earnest longing or desire. (Compare Psalm 84:2.) Yes, Jehovah keenly anticipates the resurrection—he yearns to see once again departed faithful ones, who are alive in his memory.—Matthew 22:31, 32.

1, 2. (a) What comforting promise was given through the prophet Hosea? (b) How do we know that God is disposed to bringing the dead back to life?

Jesus Sheds Light on the Resurrection

[3] Ancient men of faith like Job had only a partial understanding of the resurrection. It was Jesus Christ who shed full light on this wonderful hope. He showed the key role that he himself plays when he said: "He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting

3, 4. (a) What light did Jesus shed on the resurrection hope? (b) Why was Jesus raised as a spirit, not in the flesh?

life." (John 3:36) Where will that life be enjoyed? For the vast majority of those who exercise faith, it will be on earth. (Psalm 37:11) However, Jesus told his disciples: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) God's Kingdom is heavenly. Hence, this promise means that a "little flock" would have to be with Jesus in heaven as spirit creatures. (John 14:2, 3; 1 Peter 1:3, 4) What a glorious prospect! Jesus further revealed to the apostle John that this "little flock" would number just 144,000.—Revelation 14:1.

[4] How, though, would the 144,000 enter heavenly glory? Jesus "shed light upon life and incorruption through the good news." By means of his blood, he inaugurated "a new and living way" into the heavens. (2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 10:19, 20) First, he died, as the Bible foretold he would. (Isaiah 53:12) Then, as the apostle Peter later proclaimed, "this Jesus God resurrected." (Acts 2:32) Jesus was not raised as a human though. He had said: "The bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world." (John 6:51) Taking his flesh back would nullify that sacrifice. So Jesus was "put to death in the flesh, but . . . made alive in the spirit." (1 Peter 3:18) Jesus thus "obtained an everlasting deliverance for us," meaning the "little flock." (Hebrews 9:12) He presented to God the value of his perfect human life as a ransom for sinful mankind, and the 144,000 were the first to benefit from this.

[5] Jesus would not be the only one resurrected to heavenly life. Paul told fellow Christians in Rome that they had been anointed with holy spirit to be sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ if they confirmed their anointing by enduring to the end. (Romans 8:16, 17) Paul also explained: "If we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall certainly also be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection."—Romans 6:5.

5. What hope was extended to Jesus' first-century followers?

In Defense of the Resurrection Hope

[6] The resurrection is part of the "primary doctrine" of Christianity. (Hebrews 6:1, 2) Nevertheless, the doctrine was under attack in Corinth. Some in the congregation, evidently influenced by Greek philosophy, were saying: "There is no resurrection of the dead." (1 Corinthians 15:12) When reports of this reached the apostle Paul, he came to the defense of the resurrection hope, especially the hope of anointed Christians. Let us examine Paul's words as recorded in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. You will find it helpful to have read the chapter in its entirety, as recommended in the preceding article.

[7] In the first two verses of 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Paul sets the theme of his discussion: "I make known to you, brothers, the good news which I declared to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, through which you are also being saved, . . . unless, in fact, you became believers to no purpose." If the Corinthians failed to stand fast in the good news, they had accepted the truth in vain. Paul continued: "I handed on to you, among the first things, that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, yes, that he has been raised up the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that he appeared to upward of five hundred brothers at one time, the most

6. Why did belief in the resurrection come under attack in Corinth, and how did the apostle Paul respond?

7. (a) On what key issue did Paul focus? (b) Who saw the resurrected Jesus?

Jairus' daughter became proof that the resurrection was possible

of whom remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep in death. After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles; but last of all he appeared also to me as if to one born prematurely."—1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

[8] For those who had accepted the good news, belief in the resurrection of Jesus was not optional. There were many eyewitnesses to confirm that "Christ died for our sins" and that he had been raised up. One was Cephas, or Peter, as he is better known. After Peter's denial of Jesus on the night of Jesus' betrayal and arrest, he must have been greatly comforted by Jesus' appearing to him. "The twelve," the apostles as a group, were also visited by the resurrected Jesus —an experience that no doubt helped them to overcome their fear and become bold witnesses to Jesus' resurrection.—John 20:19-23; Acts 2:32.

8, 9. (a) How important is belief in the resurrection? (b) Likely on what occasion did Jesus appear to "upward of five hundred brothers"?

[9] Christ also appeared to a larger group, "upward of five hundred brothers." Since it was only in Galilee that he had followers in such large numbers, this may have been on the occasion described at Matthew 28:16-20, when Jesus gave the command to make disciples. What a powerful testimony these individuals could give! Some were still alive in 55 C.E. when Paul composed this first letter to the Corinthians. Note, though, that those who had died were spoken of as having "fallen asleep in death." They had not yet been resurrected to receive their heavenly reward.

[10] Another outstanding witness to Jesus' resurrection was James, the son of Joseph and Jesus' mother, Mary. Prior to the resurrection, James evidently had not been

10. (a) What was the effect of Jesus' last meeting with his disciples? (b) How did Jesus appear to Paul "as if to one born prematurely"?

a believer. (John 7:5) But after Jesus appeared to him, James became a believer and perhaps played a role in converting his other brothers. (Acts 1:13, 14) At his final meeting with his disciples, on the occasion when he ascended to heaven, Jesus commissioned them to "be witnesses . . . to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-11) Later, he appeared to Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of Christians. (Acts 22:6-8) Jesus appeared to Saul "as if to one born prematurely." It was as if Saul had already been resurrected to spirit life and was able to see the glorified Lord centuries before that resurrection was due to occur. This experience abruptly halted Saul in his course of murderous opposition to the Christian congregation and caused a remarkable change. (Acts 9:3-9, 17-19) Saul became the apostle Paul, one of the foremost defenders of the Christian faith. —1 Corinthians 15:9, 10.

Faith in the Resurrection Essential

[11] The resurrection of Jesus was therefore a well-attested fact. "Now if Christ is being preached that he has been raised up from the dead," argues Paul, "how is it some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Corinthians 15:12) Not only were such ones having personal doubts or questions about the resurrection but they were openly voicing disbelief in it. So Paul exposes the fallacy of their reasoning. He says that if Christ had not been raised up, the Christian message was a lie, and those who testified to Christ's resurrection were "false witnesses of God." If Christ

11. How did Paul expose the fallacy of saying, "There is no resurrection"?

Without the hope of a resurrection, the martyrdom of faithful Christians would be meaningless

had not been raised, no ransom had been paid to God; Christians were 'yet in their sins.' (1 Corinthians 15:13-19; Romans 3:23, 24; Hebrews 9:11-14) And Christians who had "fallen asleep in death," in some cases as martyrs, had perished without a genuine hope. What a pitiable state Christians would be in if this life were all they could expect! Their sufferings would be all for nothing.

12 That was not the case, however. Paul continues: "Christ has been raised up from the dead." What is more, he is "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in death." (1 Corinthians 15:20) When the Israelites obediently gave Jehovah the firstfruits of their produce, Jehovah blessed them with a large harvest. (Exodus 22:29, 30; 23:19; Proverbs 3:9, 10) By calling Christ "the firstfruits," Paul implies that a further harvest of individuals would be raised from death to heavenly life. "Since death is through a man," says Paul, "resurrection of the dead is also through a man. For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22) Jesus made the resurrection possible by giving his perfect human life as a ransom, opening the way for mankind to be released from slavery to sin and death.—Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:18, 19.*

13 Paul continues: "But each one in his own rank: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence." (1 Corinthians 15:23) Christ was resurrected in 33 C.E. However, his anointed followers—"those who belong to the Christ"—would have to wait until shortly after Jesus began his royal presence, which Bible prophecy shows occurred in 1914. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-16; Revelation 11:18) What of those who would be alive during that presence? Paul says: "Look! I tell you a sacred secret: We shall not all fall asleep in death, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, during the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15: 51, 52) Clearly, not all anointed ones sleep in the grave awaiting a resurrection. Those who die during Christ's presence are transformed instantaneously.—Revelation 14:13.

14 "Otherwise," asks Paul, "what will they do who are being baptized for the purpose of being dead ones? If the dead are not to be raised up at all, why are they also being baptized for the purpose of being such? Why are we also in peril every hour?" (1 Corinthians 15:29, 30) Paul did not mean that living individuals were baptized in behalf of dead ones, as some Bible translations make it appear. After all, baptism is related to Christian discipleship, and dead souls cannot be disciples. (John 4:1) Rather, Paul was discussing living Christians, many of whom, like Paul himself, were "in peril every hour." Anointed Christians were 'baptized into Christ's death.' (Romans 6:3) Since their anointing, they were being "baptized," as it were, into a course that would lead to a death like that of Christ. (Mark 10:35-40) They would die with the hope of a glorious heavenly resurrection.—1 Corinthians 6:14; Philippians 3:10, 11.

15 Paul now explains that he himself had

* See the February 15, 1991, issue of *The Watchtower* for a discussion of the ransom.

12. (a) What is implied by calling Christ "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in death"? (b) How did Christ make the resurrection possible?
13. (a) When does the heavenly resurrection take place? (b) How is it that some anointed ones do not "fall asleep in death"?
14. How are anointed ones "baptized for the purpose of being dead ones"?
15. What perils may Paul have experienced, and how did faith in the resurrection play a role in enduring them?

faced peril to such a degree that he could say: "Daily I face death." Lest some accuse him of exaggerating, Paul adds: "This I affirm by the exultation over you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord." *The Jerusalem Bible* renders this verse: "I face death every day, brothers, and I can swear it by the pride that I take in you in Christ Jesus our Lord." As an example of the dangers he faced, in verse 32, Paul speaks of 'fighting wild beasts at Ephesus.' The Romans often executed criminals by throwing them to wild beasts in the arenas. If Paul endured a battle with literal wild beasts, he could have survived only with Jehovah's help. Without the resurrection hope, choosing a life course that exposed him to such peril would have been foolhardy indeed. Without the hope of a future life, enduring the hardships and sacrifices that came with serving God would have little meaning. "If the dead are not to be raised up," says Paul, "'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die.'"—1 Corinthians 15:31, 32; see 2 Corinthians 1:8, 9; 11:23-27.

[16] Paul may have quoted Isaiah 22:13, which describes the fatalistic attitude of the disobedient inhabitants of Jerusalem. Or he may have had in mind the beliefs of the Epicureans, who disdained any hope of a life after death and believed that fleshly pleasure was the chief good in life. Whatever the case, the "eat and drink" philosophy was ungodly. Hence, Paul warns: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) Mixing with those who rejected the resurrection could be poisonous. Such association may have played a role in the problems that Paul had to handle in the Corinthian congregation, such as sexual immorality, divisions, lawsuits, and disrespect for the Lord's Evening Meal.—1 Corinthians 1:11; 5:1; 6:1; 11:20-22.

16. (a) Where may the expression "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die" have originated? (b) What were the dangers of embracing this sentiment?

[17] Paul thus gives the Corinthians this positive exhortation: "Wake up to soberness in a righteous way and do not practice sin, for some are without knowledge of God. I am speaking to move you to shame." (1 Corinthians 15:34) A negative view of the resurrection led some into a spiritual stupor, as though drunk. They needed to wake up, stay sober. Anointed Christians today likewise need to be spiritually awake, not being influenced by the world's skeptical views. They must cling tight to their hope of a heavenly resurrection. But questions still remained—for the Corinthians then and for us now. For example, in what form are the 144,000 raised to heaven? And what about the millions of others who are still in the grave and who do not have a heavenly hope? What will the resurrection mean for such ones? In our next article, we will examine the rest of Paul's discussion of the resurrection.

17. (a) What exhortation did Paul give the Corinthians? (b) What questions remain to be answered?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What light did Jesus shed on the resurrection?
- ☐ Who were some of the witnesses to Christ's resurrection?
- ☐ Why was the resurrection doctrine challenged, and what was Paul's response?
- ☐ Why was faith in the resurrection essential for anointed Christians?

"DEATH IS TO BE BROUGHT TO NOTHING"

"As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing."
—1 CORINTHIANS 15:26.

"I BELIEVE in . . . the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting." So says the Apostles' Creed. Catholics and Protestants alike dutifully recite it, little realizing that their beliefs are more akin to Greek philosophy than to anything the apostles ever believed. The apostle Paul, however, rejected Greek philosophy and did not believe in an immortal soul. Still, he firmly believed in a future life and wrote under inspiration: "As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." (1 Corinthians 15:26) Just what does that mean for dying mankind?

[2] In answer, let us return to Paul's discussion of the resurrection recorded in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. You will recall that in the opening verses, Paul established the resurrection as a vital part of Christian doctrine. Now he addresses a specific question: "Nevertheless, someone will say: 'How are the dead to be raised up? Yes, with what sort of body are they coming?'"—1 Corinthians 15:35.

What Kind of Body?

[3] In raising this question, Paul may well have intended to counteract the influence of Plato's philosophy. Plato taught that man has an immortal soul that survives the death of the body. To those raised with such an idea, the Christian teaching no doubt seemed unnecessary. If the soul survives death, what is the point of a resurrection? Further, the resurrection likely seemed illogical. Once the body has dissolved into dust, how can there be a resurrection? Bible commentator Heinrich Meyer says that the antagonism of some Corinthians was possibly based "on the philosophic ground that the restoration of the matter of the body was impossible."

[4] Paul exposes the emptiness of their reasoning: "You unreasonable person! What you sow is not made alive unless first it dies; and as for what you sow, you sow, not the body that will develop, but a bare grain, it may be, of wheat or any one of the rest; but God gives it a body just as it has pleased him, and to each of the seeds its own body." (1 Corinthians 15:36-38) God was not going to raise the bodies that people had while on earth. Rather, there would be a transformation.

[5] Paul compares the resurrection to the germinating of a seed. A tiny seed of wheat bears no resemblance to the plant that will grow from it. *The World Book Encyclopedia* says: "When a seed begins to germinate,

1, 2. (a) What hope did the apostle Paul hold out for dead ones? (b) What question about the resurrection did Paul address?
3. Why did some reject the resurrection?

4, 5. (a) Why were the objections of faithless ones unreasonable? (b) Explain Paul's illustration of the "bare grain." (c) What kind of bodies does God give resurrected anointed ones?

it absorbs large amounts of water. The water causes many chemical changes inside the seed. It also causes the seed's internal tissues to swell and break through the seed coat." In effect, the seed dies as a seed and becomes an emerging plant. "God gives it a body" in that he set in place the scientific laws governing its development, and each seed receives a body according to its kind. (Genesis 1:11) Similarly, anointed Christians first die as humans. Then, at God's appointed time, he brings them back to life in entirely new bodies. As Paul told the Philippians, "Jesus Christ . . . will refashion our humiliated body to be conformed to his glorious body." (Philippians 3:20, 21; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 2) They are resurrected in spirit bodies and live in the spirit realm. —1 John 3:2.

[6] Is this too difficult to believe? No. Paul reasons that animals come in many different types of bodies. In addition, he contrasts heavenly angels with flesh-and-blood humans, saying: "There are heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies." There is also great diversity in the inanimate creation. "Star differs from star in glory," said Paul, long before science discovered such celestial bodies as blue stars, red giants, and white dwarfs. In view of this, is it not reasonable that God can provide appropriate spirit bodies for resurrected anointed ones?—1 Corinthians 15:39-41.

[7] Paul then says: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised up in incorruption." (1 Corinthians 15:42) A human body, even when perfect, is corruptible. It can be killed. For example, Paul said that the resurrected Jesus

6. Why is it reasonable to believe that God can supply resurrected ones with appropriate spirit bodies?

7. What is the meaning of incorruption? of immortality?

A seed "dies" by undergoing a dramatic change

was "destined no more to return to corruption." (Acts 13:34) He would never return to life in a corruptible, even though perfect, human body. The bodies that God gives to resurrected anointed ones are incorruptible —beyond death or decay. Paul continues: "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised up in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised up in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised up a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:43, 44) Further, Paul says: "This which is mortal must put on immortality." Immortality means endless, indestructible life. (1 Corinthians 15:53; Hebrews 7:16) In this way, the resurrected ones bear "the image of the heavenly one," Jesus, who made their resurrection possible.—1 Corinthians 15:45-49.

[8] In spite of this transformation, the resurrected ones are still the same individuals they were before they died. They will be raised with the same memories and the same sterling Christian qualities. (Malachi 3:3; Revelation 21:10, 18) In this they resemble Jesus Christ. He changed from spirit to human form. Then he died and was resurrected as a spirit. Yet, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and for-

8. (a) How do we know that resurrected ones are the same individuals they were while alive on earth? (b) What prophecies are fulfilled when the resurrection takes place?

ever." (Hebrews 13:8) What a glorious privilege anointed ones have! Says Paul: "But when this which is corruptible puts on incorruption and this which is mortal puts on immortality, then the saying will take place that is written: 'Death is swallowed up forever.' 'Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?'"—1 Corinthians 15:54, 55; Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14.

An Earthly Resurrection?

9 Is there any future for the millions who do not have the hope of immortal spirit life in heaven? Indeed there is! After explaining that the heavenly resurrection takes place during Christ's presence, Paul outlines subsequent events, saying: "Next, the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power." —1 Corinthians 15:23, 24.

10 "The end" is the end of the Thousand Year Reign of Christ, when Jesus humbly and loyally hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father. (Revelation 20:4) God's purpose "to gather all things together again in the Christ" will have been fulfilled. (Ephesians 1:9, 10) First, though, Christ will have destroyed "all government and all authority and power" opposed to God's Sovereign will. This involves more than the destruction wrought at Armageddon. (Revelation 16:16; 19:11-21) Paul says: "[Christ] must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." (1 Corinthians 15: 25, 26) Yes, all traces of Adamic sin and death will have been removed. Of necessity, then, God will have emptied the "memorial tombs" by bringing the dead back to life. —John 5:28.

9, 10. (a) In the context of 1 Corinthians 15:24, what is "the end," and what events take place in connection with it? (b) What must take place for death to be brought to nothing?

In Our Next Issue

How Can You Protect Your Children?

Beware of a Lack of Faith

Do You Have "an Obedient Heart"?

11 This means re-creating human souls. Impossible? No, for Psalm 104:29, 30 assures us that God can do so: "If you take away their spirit, they expire, and back to their dust they go. If you send forth your spirit, they are created." While resurrected ones will be the same individuals they were before their death, they will not need to have the same bodies. As with those raised to heaven, God will give them a body just as it pleases him. No doubt their new bodies will be physically sound and reasonably similar to their original body so that they will be recognized by their loved ones.

12 When will the earthly resurrection take place? Martha said of her dead brother, Lazarus: "I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." (John 11:24) How did she know that? The resurrection was a subject of controversy in her day, since the Pharisees believed in it but the Sadducees did not. (Acts 23:8) Still, Martha must have known of pre-Christian witnesses who hoped in the resurrection. (Hebrews 11:35) Too, she could have discerned from Daniel 12:13 that the resurrection will occur on the last

11. (a) How do we know that God can re-create dead souls? (b) With what kind of bodies will those resurrected to the earth be supplied?
12. When does the earthly resurrection take place?

day. She might even have learned this from Jesus himself. (John 6:39) That "last day" coincides with the Thousand Year Reign of Christ. (Revelation 20:6) Imagine the excitement during that "day" when this grand event begins!—Compare Luke 24:41.

Who Is Coming Back?

13 At Revelation 20:12-14 is recorded John's vision of the earthly resurrection: "I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. And the sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds. And death and Hades were hurled into the lake of fire. This means the second death, the lake of fire."

14 The resurrection will encompass "the great and the small," both prominent and inconspicuous humans who have lived and died. Why, even infants will be among that number! (Jeremiah 31:15, 16) At Acts 24:15, another important detail is revealed: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." Prominent among "the righteous" will be faithful men and women of old, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, and Rahab. (Hebrews 11:1-40) Imagine being able to converse with such ones and obtain eyewitness details of Bible events of long ago! "The righteous" will also include the thousands of God-fearing individuals who have died in more recent times and who did not have a heavenly hope. Do you have a family member or a loved one who might be among these? How comforting it is to know that you can see them again! Who, though, are the "unrighteous" individuals that will also come back? They include millions, perhaps billions, who died without having an opportunity to come to learn and apply Bible truth.

15 How will returning ones be "judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds"? These scrolls are not the record of their past deeds; when they died, they were acquitted of the sins they committed during their lifetime. (Romans 6:7, 23) However, resurrected humans will still be under Adamic sin. It must be, then, that these scrolls will set forth divine instructions that all must follow in order to benefit fully from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As the last trace of Adamic sin is eliminated, 'death will be brought to nothing' in the fullest sense. By the end of the thousand years, God will "be all things to everyone." (1 Corinthians 15:28) No longer will man need the intervention of a High Priest or Ransomer. All mankind will be restored to the perfect state Adam originally enjoyed.

An Orderly Resurrection

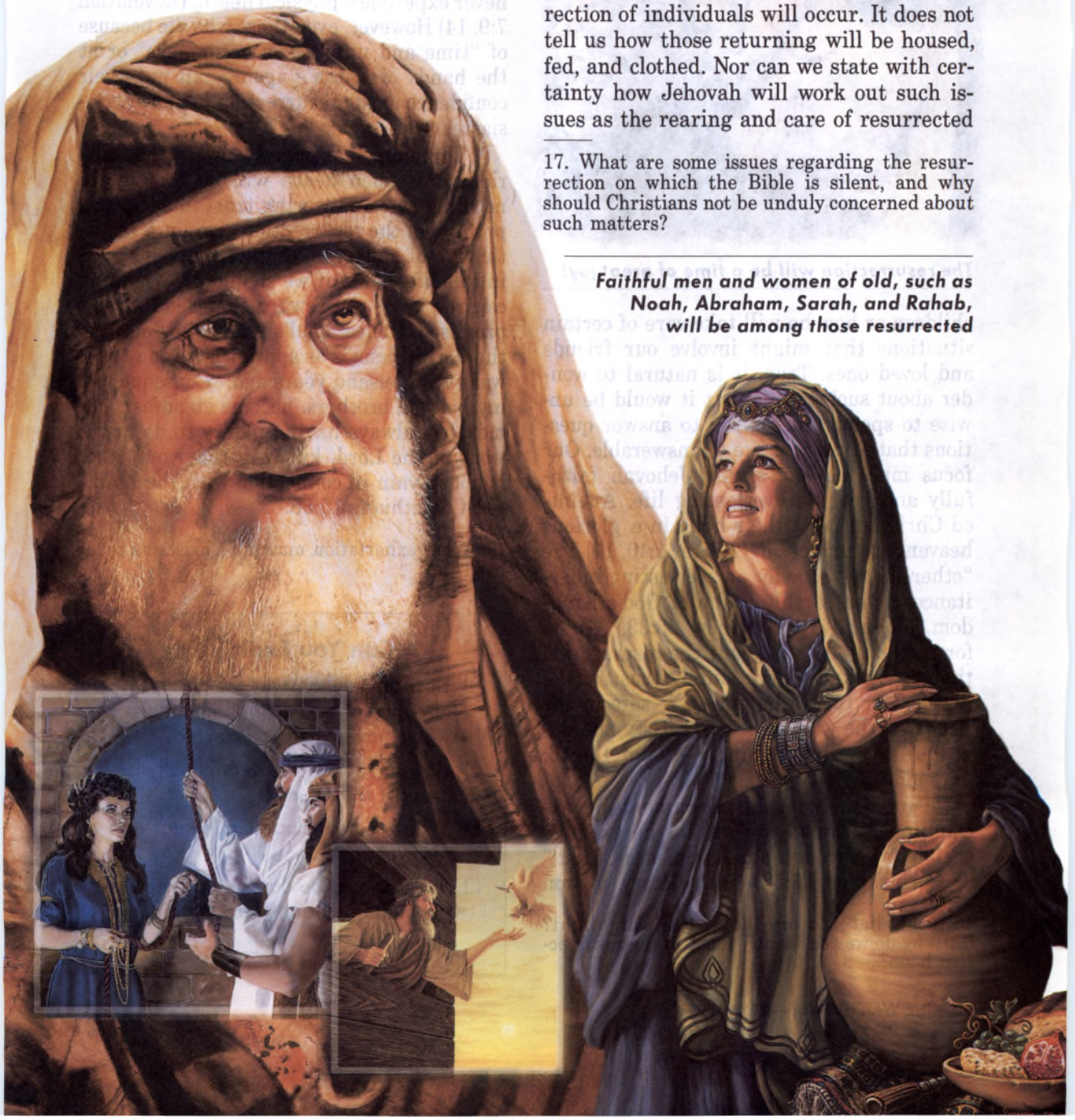
16 Since the heavenly resurrection is orderly, "each one in his own rank," it is evident that the earthly resurrection will not create a chaotic population explosion. (1 Corinthians 15:23) Understandably, the newly resurrected ones will need to be looked after. (Compare Luke 8:55.) They will need physical sustenance and—more important—spiritual assistance in gaining life-giving knowledge of Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) If all

13. What vision of the resurrection is recorded at Revelation 20:12-14?
14. Who will be among those resurrected?
15. What does it mean that returning ones will be "judged out of those things written in the scrolls"?
16. (a) Why is it reasonable to believe that the resurrection will be an orderly process? (b) Who will likely be among the first to return from the dead?

were to return to life simultaneously, it would be impossible to care for them adequately. It is reasonable to assume that the resurrection will take place progressively. Faithful Christians who died shortly before the end of Satan's system will likely be among the first ones raised. We can also expect an early resurrection for the faithful men of old who will serve as "princes."—Psalm 45:16.

17 Nevertheless, we should not be dogmatic on such matters. On many issues the Bible is silent. It does not spell out the details of how, when, or at what locations the resurrection of individuals will occur. It does not tell us how those returning will be housed, fed, and clothed. Nor can we state with certainty how Jehovah will work out such issues as the rearing and care of resurrected

17. What are some issues regarding the resurrection on which the Bible is silent, and why should Christians not be unduly concerned about such matters?



Faithful men and women of old, such as Noah, Abraham, Sarah, and Rahab, will be among those resurrected

The resurrection will be a time of great joy!

children or how he will take care of certain situations that might involve our friends and loved ones. True, it is natural to wonder about such things; but it would be unwise to spend time trying to answer questions that at present are unanswerable. Our focus must be on serving Jehovah faithfully and gaining everlasting life. Anointed Christians rest their hope in a glorious heavenly resurrection. (2 Peter 1:10, 11) The "other sheep" hope for an everlasting inheritance in the earthly realm of God's Kingdom. (John 10:16; Matthew 25:33, 34) As for the many details about the resurrection that are unknown, we simply trust in Jehovah. Our future happiness is safe in the hands of the One who can 'satisfy the desire of every living thing.'—Psalm 145:16; Jeremiah 17:7.

18 Paul concludes his argument by exclaiming: "Thanks to God, for he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Corinthians 15:57) Yes, victory is won over Adamic death through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and both anointed and "other sheep" share in that victory. Of course, "other sheep" alive today have a hope that is unique to this generation. As part of an ever-increasing "great crowd," they may survive the coming "great tribulation" and never experience physical death! (Revelation 7:9, 14) However, even those who die because of "time and unforeseen occurrence" or at the hands of Satan's agents can put their confidence in the resurrection hope.—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

19 Therefore, we eagerly await that glorious day when death will be brought to nothing. Our unwavering trust in Jehovah's promise of the resurrection gives us a realistic view of matters. Whatever happens to us in this life—even if we should die—nothing can rob us of the reward that Jehovah has promised. Hence, Paul's final exhortation to the Corinthians is as appropriate today as it was two thousand years ago: "Consequently, my beloved brothers, become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord." —1 Corinthians 15:58.

18. (a) What victory does Paul highlight? (b) Why do we confidently trust in the resurrection hope?

19. What exhortation must all Christians today heed?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ How did Paul answer the question about what bodies the anointed would have when resurrected?
- ☐ How and when will death finally be brought to nothing?
- ☐ Who will be included in the earthly resurrection?
- ☐ What should be our attitude regarding matters about which the Bible is silent?

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

"Every Day in the Marketplace"

THE apostle Paul used every opportunity to spread the Kingdom message. In order to search out deserving ones, he reasoned "in the synagogue with the Jews . . . and every day in the marketplace with those who happened to be on hand."—Acts 17:17.

Such zeal has been a hallmark of true worshipers of Jehovah since the first century C.E. (Matthew 28:19, 20) Today, Jehovah's Witnesses likewise use a variety of methods as they zealously help honesthearted ones come to an accurate knowledge of truth. (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) The following experience from Australia illustrates this.

Five days each week, Sid and Harold take turns tending a small display of Bible literature by a railway station in Sydney. They have been sharing the good news of God's Kingdom in this way for about five years now. Sid, who is 95 years old, explains: "When I turned 87, I was unable to drive a car any longer. That disappointed me because I enjoyed the public witnessing activity. One day while near a popular tourist spot called Echo Point in Katoomba, I saw an artist selling landscape paintings. I studied the paintings and thought to myself, 'I have better pictures than that in my witnessing bag—and for a fraction of the cost!' So I decided to make up a small display stand, set it up at a popular spot, and offer to passersby the beautifully illustrated Bible literature distributed by Jehovah's Witnesses.

"Four years ago, I moved the stand to Sydney, and Harold joined me. We take turns tending the stand and working with our local congregations." Harold, now 83, says: "Monday through Friday very few people are at home. So sharing the Kingdom message this way puts us where the people are. Naturally, we get better results. Our literature placements are quite outstanding for this country."

"Though we've set ourselves up in four or five different places over the years," says Sid, "it's not long before we are known. Some people come to us for literature. Others have questions they want answered. And some just want to talk a few minutes. This is the only time my return visits come to me," he chuckles.

"Many people truly are interested in the Bible," adds Harold. "In one month four persons started to study the Bible with the Witnesses as a result of the literature they received from us and because of the questions we were able to answer from the Bible. Experiences like that encourage us greatly."

Like Sid and Harold—and like the apostle Paul—Jehovah's Witnesses everywhere use every means possible to spread their vital message. Thus, the "good news" continues to be preached "in all the inhabited earth."—Matthew 24:14.

Lloyd Barry

Daniel Sydlik

AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENT IN FRANCE

"NO TO JEHOVAH CITY!" declared the posters displayed throughout the town. "All Together Against the Jehovah Project" exhorted one opposition group. Literally hundreds of articles in the press thrust the matter into the public eye. Petitions were signed, and a deluge of over half a million tracts mentioning the project flooded local mailboxes. What was this project that disturbed the slumber of the otherwise tranquil town of Louviers, northwest France? The proposed construction of a new branch office and residence of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jehovah Makes It Grow

The activity of Jehovah's Witnesses in France dates back to the end of the 19th century. The first depot for Bible literature was opened in 1905 in Beauvène, southern

95,888 attended the special program at the Villepinte Exhibition Center

France, and as of 1919, a small office was operating in Paris. A branch office was officially opened in the city in 1930, and the following year the office staff took up residence in a Bethel home located in Enghien-les-Bains, north of Paris. After World War II, the Bethel family moved back to Paris, and in 1959 the branch was transferred to a five-story building in Boulogne-Billancourt, on the western outskirts of the capital.

Because of expansion of the Kingdom preaching work, in 1973 the printery and shipping facilities were transferred to Louviers, 65 miles west of Paris, while the offices remained in Boulogne-Billancourt. However, the increase in the number of publishers in France rendered the facilities in Louviers inadequate, despite extensions in 1978 and 1985. So it was decided to expand and bring the whole Bethel family together in one location. This project was not to the liking of all, as mentioned at the outset. Despite such opposition, a site was found just one mile from the printery. Six years of hard work ensued, and finally, after 23 years of separation, the entire Bethel family was united in Louviers in August 1996.

It was thus with great joy that a happy throng of 1,187, including the 300 members of the France Bethel family, and 329 delegates from 42 other branches, gathered on Saturday, November 15, 1997, to listen to the dedication talk given by Brother Lloyd Barry, member of the Governing Body. However, in view of the fact that this dedication was taking place in the face of hostility and a prolonged, slanderous media campaign against Jehovah's Witnesses throughout France, it was felt that *all* French Witnesses should be able to share in celebrating this victory. In consequence, on Sunday, November 16, a special meeting with the theme "Remain in the Love of Christ" was organized at the Villepinte Exhibition Center, just north of Paris. All of Jehovah's Witnesses in France together with French-speaking Witnesses in Belgium and Switzerland were invited, as well as congregations in Britain, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

A Landmark Gathering

Preparations for the gathering began six months beforehand. Then, just two weeks before the dedication, French truck drivers went on strike, barricading major roads and fuel supplies. Would the chairs and other equipment get through in time? Would the roadblocks prevent the brothers from coming? To the relief of all, within a week the strike was over, and the roads were again open to traffic. On the Friday evening before the dedication weekend, 38 trucks delivered 84,000 chairs to the two spacious halls rented for the occasion. More than 800 brothers and sisters toiled through the night until half past nine Saturday morning to install the seats, platform, sound equipment, and nine giant video screens.

At 6:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, the doors were opened, and the crowds began to pour in. A total of 17 specially chartered trains brought more than 13,000 Witnesses to the capital. Over two hundred local brothers and sisters were on hand in the railway stations to greet the travelers and to accompany them in groups to the convention site. One sister said that this loving arrangement gave them "a feeling of security and well-being."

Others came to Paris by plane or by car. The majority, however, came in 953 buses, while Witnesses from the Paris area used public transportation to travel to the Exhibition Center. Many had been traveling all night or had left their homes very early in the morning, but their excitement at attending this meeting was palpable. Cries of delight and warm embraces marked reunions of friends who had not seen one

another for years. Colorful national costumes gave the cheerful crowd an international flavor. Undoubtedly, something extraordinary was afoot.

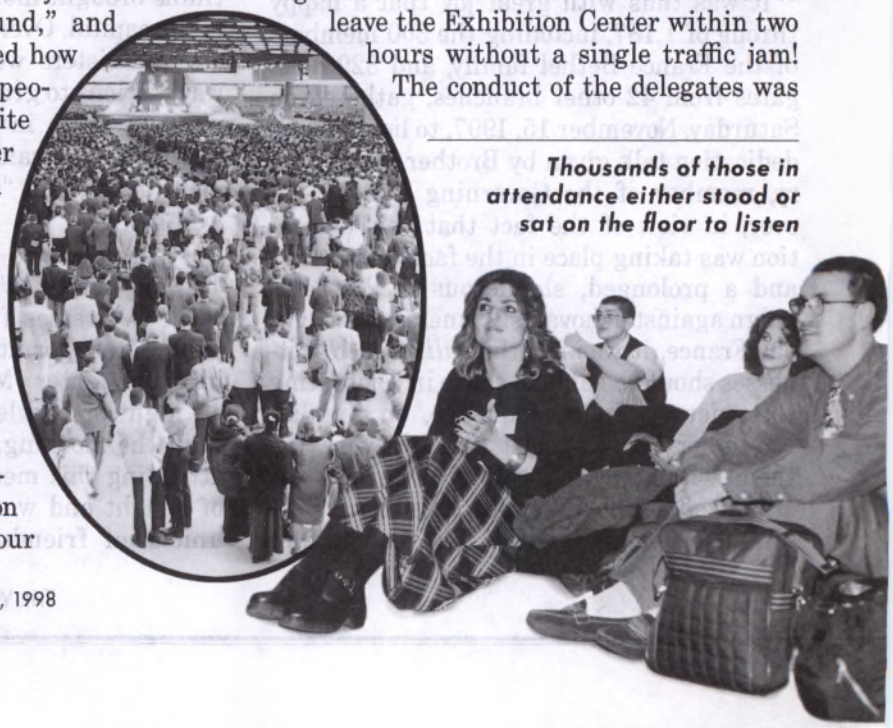
By the time the program started, at 10:00 a.m., there were no more seats left, yet hundreds of people were arriving every minute. Wherever one looked, a mass of smiling faces met the eye. Thousands either remained standing or sat on the concrete floor. In the spirit of the assembly theme, many young ones lovingly stood to enable the elderly to sit. "How happy we were to give up our seats to brothers and sisters that we did not know, but who are so dear to us!" wrote one couple. Many displayed a fine self-sacrificing attitude: "We stood all day next to the chairs that we had helped to set up throughout Friday night. But just being present caused us to be filled with gratitude to Jehovah."

In spite of fatigue or discomfort, delegates listened with rapt attention to the reports from other countries and to talks by Lloyd Barry and Daniel Sydlik, who is also a member of the Governing Body. Brother Barry developed the subject "Jehovah Makes Full Might Abound," and he graphically highlighted how Jehovah has blessed his people with increase in spite of various trials. Brother Sydlik's talk was entitled "Happy Is the People Whose God Is Jehovah!" Both talks were particularly timely in view of the opposition that Jehovah's Witnesses are presently encountering in France. Brother Sydlik showed that true happiness is not dependent on external factors but on our relationship with Jehovah and our attitude toward life. His question to the audience, "Are you happy?" was answered with thunderous applause.

One sister who had "lost her joy" wrote afterward: "Suddenly I realized that happiness was within my reach. I had been misdirecting my efforts, and through this talk, Jehovah showed me how I needed to change." Another brother declared: "Now I want to fight to make Jehovah's heart rejoice. I do not want to let anything remove the joy that I have begun to feel deep inside."

As the meeting drew to a close, it was with great enthusiasm that the chairman announced the attendance: 95,888—the biggest gathering ever of Jehovah's Witnesses in France!

After the closing song, which many sang with tears of joy in their eyes, and the final prayer, the brothers set off for the journey home with mixed emotions. The warm, friendly atmosphere of the gathering did not go unnoticed. Many positive comments on the attitude of the delegates were made by bus drivers. They were also impressed by the organization that enabled all 953 buses to leave the Exhibition Center within two hours without a single traffic jam! The conduct of the delegates was



Thousands of those in attendance either stood or sat on the floor to listen

also much appreciated by railway and public transport employees. Many fine discussions ensued, and a good witness was given.

"An Oasis in the Desert"

The apostle Paul urged fellow Christians: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, . . . encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10: 24, 25) Certainly, this special meeting was a source of great encouragement to all, "an oasis in the desert" as one sister described it. "We went away invigorated, encouraged, fortified, and more determined than ever to rejoice in Jehovah's service," wrote brothers from the Togo branch. "Those that were downcast went home happy," said one circuit overseer. "The brothers were galvanized and strengthened," declared another. "Never before have we felt so close to Jehovah's organization," one couple was moved to write.

"My own foot will certainly stand on a level place; among the congregated throngs I shall bless Jehovah," declared the psalmist. (Psalm 26:12) Such Christian gatherings enable all to regain a sure spiritual footing in the face of obstacles. "Whatever the tribulations," confirmed one sister, "these extraordinary moments are inscribed deep in our hearts and will always be there to comfort us." In a similar vein, a traveling overseer wrote: "When difficult times arise, the memory of this foretaste of Paradise will help us to cope with them."

"Ascribe to Jehovah, O you families of the peoples, ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength," exhorts Psalm 96:7. Undoubtedly, the dedication of new branch facilities in France is a resounding victory for Jehovah. Only he could have brought about the realization of the project in the face of such determined and widespread opposition. Jehovah's Witnesses in France are more determined than ever to 'remain in the love of Christ' and to 'let their light shine.' (John 15:9; Matthew 5:16) All who attended the dedication program unreservedly share the feeling of the psalmist: "This has come to be from Jehovah himself; it is wonderful in our eyes."—Psalm 118:23.

ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 3, 1998

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 3, 1998, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:15 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the Corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them during July.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than August 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other auditoriums.

A Samaritan Proves to Be a Good Neighbor

IN JESUS' day, a palpable animosity existed between Jews and Gentiles. In time, the Jewish Mishnah even included a law that forbade Israelite women to assist non-Jews during childbirth, since this would only help bring another Gentile into the world.—Abodah Zarah 2:1.

The Samaritans were more closely related to the Jews than were the Gentiles, both religiously and racially. Yet, they too were viewed as outcasts. "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans," wrote the apostle John. (John 4:9) Indeed, the Talmud taught that "a piece of bread given by a Samaritan is more unclean than swine's flesh." Some Jews even used the term "Samaritan" as an expression of contempt and reproach.—John 8:48.

In view of this situation, Jesus' words to a man who was versed in Jewish law are very instructive. The man approached Jesus and asked: "Teacher, by doing what shall I inherit everlasting life?" In reply, Jesus called his attention to the Mosaic Law, which commands to 'love Jehovah with your whole heart, soul, strength, and mind,' and to 'love your neighbor as yourself.' The lawyer then asked Jesus: "Who really is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:25-29; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5) According to the Pharisees, the term "neighbor" applied only to those who kept the Jewish traditions—certainly not to Gentiles or Samaritans. If this inquisitive lawyer thought that Jesus would support that view, he was in for a surprise.

A Compassionate Samaritan

Jesus answered the man's question by relating a parable.* "A certain man," he said, "was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho." The distance between Jerusalem and Jericho was about 14 miles. The road connecting these two cities had sharp turns and projecting spurs of rock, making it easy for thieves to hide, attack, and escape. As it turned out, the traveler in Jesus' parable "fell among robbers, who both stripped him and inflicted blows, and went off, leaving him half-dead." —Luke 10:30.

"By coincidence," Jesus continued, "a certain priest was going down over that road, but, when he saw him, he went by on the opposite side. Likewise, a Levite also, when he got down to the place and saw him, went by on the opposite side." (Luke 10:31, 32) The priests and Levites were teachers of the Law—including the law of neighbor love. (Leviticus 10:8-11; Deuteronomy 33:1, 10) Surely, they of all people should have felt compelled to help the injured traveler.

Jesus went on: "A certain Samaritan traveling the road came upon him." The mention of a Samaritan no doubt heightened the lawyer's curiosity. Would Jesus endorse the negative view of this race? On the contrary, upon seeing the unfortunate traveler, the Samaritan "was moved with pity." Jesus said: "So he approached him and bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine upon them. Then he mounted him upon his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him.* And the next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him, and whatever you spend besides this, I will repay you when I come back here.' "—Luke 10:33-35.

Jesus now asked his inquirer: "Who of these three seems to you to have made himself neighbor to the man that fell among the robbers?" The lawyer knew the answer, yet he seemed reluctant to

* A parable is a short, usually fictitious narrative from which a moral or spiritual truth is drawn.

* Some inns in Jesus' day evidently provided not only shelter but also food and other services. This may be the type of accommodations Jesus had in mind, for the Greek word used here is different from that rendered "lodging room" at Luke 2:7.

say "the Samaritan." Instead, he simply replied: "The one that acted mercifully toward him." Jesus then said: "Go your way and be doing the same yourself."—Luke 10:36, 37.

Lesson for Us

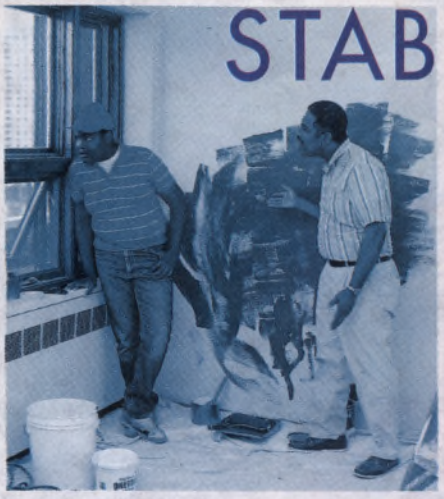
The man who questioned Jesus did so in an effort "to prove himself righteous." (Luke 10:29) Perhaps he thought that Jesus would praise his fastidious adherence to the Mosaic Law. But this self-assuming individual needed to learn the truth of the Bible proverb: "Every way of a man is upright in his own eyes, but Jehovah is making an estimate of hearts."—Proverbs 21:2.

Jesus' parable shows that a truly upright person is one who not only obeys God's laws but also imitates his qualities. (Ephesians 5:1) For example, the Bible tells us that "God is not partial." (Acts 10:34) Do we imitate God in this regard? Jesus' stirring parable shows that our neighborliness should transcend national, cultural, and religious barriers. Really, Christians are instructed to "work what is good toward *all*"—not just toward people of the same social class, race, or nation and not just toward fellow believers.—Galatians 6:10.

Jehovah's Witnesses strive to follow this Scriptural admonition. For example, when natural disasters strike, they extend humanitarian aid to fellow believers as well as to non-Witnesses.* In addition, they collectively spend over a billion hours each year helping people to come to a better knowledge of the Bible. They strive to reach everyone with the Kingdom message, for God's will is that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth."—1 Timothy 2:4; Acts 10:35.

* For examples, see *The Watchtower*, December 1, 1996, pages 3-8, and January 15, 1998, pages 3-7.

DOES YOUR SPEECH STAB OR HEAL?



DURING these difficult times, it is hardly surprising that many are "broken at heart" and "crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18) Thus, in the words of the apostle Paul, there is a constant need to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls" and to "support the weak." (1 Thessalonians 5:14) But what if our fellowman offends us or does something seriously wrong? In such a situation, we might feel justified in simply chastising the individual. However, a caution is in order. Counsel, even when valid, can be harmful if it is delivered in a harsh manner. Proverbs 12:18 states: "There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword."

Therefore, when we set out to offer correction or handle a misunderstanding, it is vital to remember the second part of Proverbs 12:18: "The tongue of the wise ones is a healing." Always ask yourself, 'If I needed correction, how would *I* want to be dealt with?' Most of us are more responsive to encouragement than to criticism. So be generous with commendation. This will often give the offender the incentive to improve, and he will more likely be grateful for any help offered.

How vital it is always to temper our words with mildness! Healing words will leave the listener feeling as did the psalmist, who wrote: "Should the righteous one strike me, it would be a loving-kindness; and should he reprove me, it would be oil upon the head, which my head would not want to refuse."—Psalm 141:5.