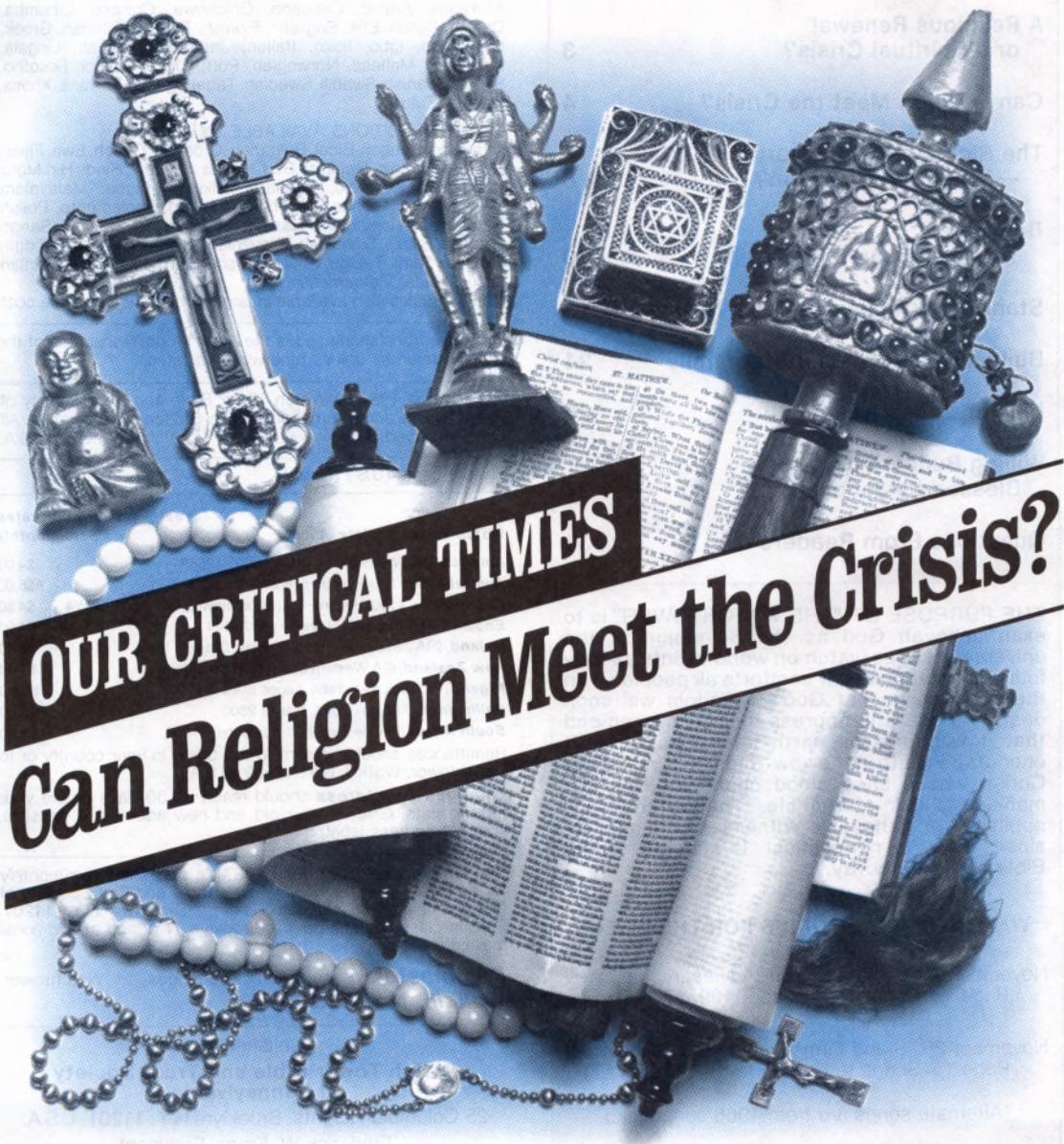


October 15, 1984



The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**OUR CRITICAL TIMES
Can Religion Meet the Crisis?**

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

October 15, 1984
Vol. 105, No. 20

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a Paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 18: Beware of Your Adversary, the Devil!
Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 189, 174 (11, 7).

November 25: Stand Firm Against Satan's Devices!
Page 15. Songs to Be Used: 10, 124 (74, 52).

(Alternate songs are from 1966 songbook.)

Average Printing Each Issue: 10,200,000

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Printed in U.S.A.

Twenty cents (U.S.) a copy

Yearly subscription rates

Semimonthly

<i>America</i> , U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589	\$4.00
<i>Australia</i> , Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	A\$5.00
<i>Canada</i> , Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4	\$4.50
<i>England</i> , The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£4.00
<i>Ireland</i> , 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11	£4.00
<i>New Zealand</i> , 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	\$7.00
<i>Nigeria</i> , P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	N\$3.50
<i>Philippines</i> , P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	P\$5.00
<i>South Africa</i> , Private Bag 2, Elandsfontein, 1406	R4.80

Remittances should be sent to the office in your country or to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589, U.S.A.

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 for \$4.00 per year by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 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.**

Published by
**Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania**

25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
Frederick W. Franz, President

A Religious Renewal or a Spiritual Crisis?

"Talk of prayer, meditation, worship and Bible study have replaced social crusades in many a church. . . . What these trends indicate, observers say, is a newfound determination by those of religious faith to 'search out the sacred' in a society that has increasingly moved away from its religious underpinnings."

—U.S. News & World Report.

"Across Eastern Europe, there are signs of a religious renewal. . . . In Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Poland, clergymen and scholars say growing numbers of people are turning to—or turning back to—churches. . . . Young people are asking, 'Why are we living?'" —The New York Times.

ARE we seeing a spiritual reawakening taking place, judging by reports such as these? Though growth in the churches has lagged behind the growth in population, small gains are in evidence here and there in the last few years. Some church officials see this as an indication that the decline of the churches since the 1960's is bottoming out, and things are looking up. Whether this is the case or not, we might ask: Why are these people turning to the churches?

Why the "Renewal"?

"There's an authentic hunger in people, a feeling that something is missing in their spiritual depths," says American Episcopal priest Tilden Edwards. In other words, it appears that more people are becoming disenchanted with the materialistic and secular way of life, and they are searching for life's meaning and purpose. Others, gripped by the fear of nuclear annihilation or of crime and vio-

lence, or simply touched by some personal tragedy, turn to religion for solace.

A tangible side effect of this trend is the establishment and growth of Eastern religions in the West. Temples, shrines, mosques, meditation centers, and so forth, are springing up in both cities and rural areas in Western countries. Very visible, too, are groups that practice such disciplines as Yoga, transcendental meditation, Zen and Hare Krishna. In the opinion of some religious authorities, these "exotic" faiths seem to offer just what many people in Western society are looking for: an authority figure to tell them what to believe, a cause to give direction to their lives, a sense of belonging in an intimate group and a state of inner peace or self-awareness.

Renewal or Crisis?

The fact that people turn to religion for answers when they are faced with critical

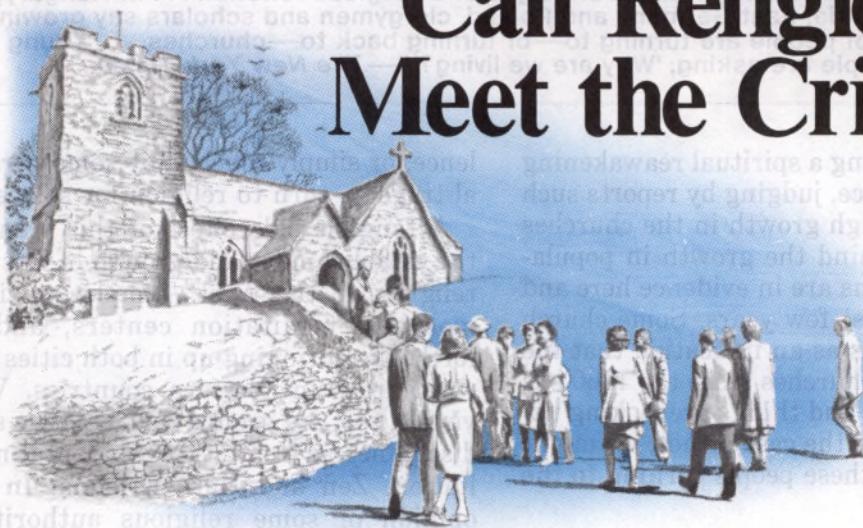
and dangerous times, or are troubled by the emptiness of their way of life, merely bears out the fundamental truth stated by Jesus Christ: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth." (Matthew 4:4) A purely materialistic way of life simply does not provide the strength and endurance needed to deal with many of today's problems.

In fact, some observers believe that this spiritual void is responsible, at least in part, for the many ills of modern-day

society. "The failings of human consciousness, deprived of its divine dimension, have been a determining factor in all the major crimes of this century," said the noted Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

In the face of this spiritual crisis, we must ask: Are the churches up to the task of satisfying the spiritual needs of those who turn to them? Can these people find the spiritual guidance and strength that they are looking for? Pointedly, can religion meet the present-day crisis?

Can Religion Meet the Crisis?



POPULAR and religious magazines and newspapers alike are quick to report on the "successes" some churches are having. They tell of prayer-and-praise meetings that are bringing people closer to God. They report that sermons in some churches are getting more spiritual rather than social or political. They talk about ministries to the poor, renewal weekends, Bible study groups, liturgical dance class-

es, and about willing lay people stepping in where there is a shortage of priests and nuns. All of this is taken to be a sign of a religious renewal.

In a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals last March, President Reagan of the United States declared: "America has begun a spiritual reawakening. Faith and hope are being restored. Americans are turning back to God . . .

And I do believe that He has begun to heal our blessed land." Such show of confidence does much to bolster the impression that ultimately the many problems facing distressed humanity today will be solved by the spiritual reawakening.

All of this may sound very good, but what have the "spiritual reawakening" and "renewal" accomplished? People may feel better about themselves, but have they become better Christians? People may feel they are more spiritual, but are they more interested in spiritual things than in material pursuits? If godlessness has been seen as a major cause of today's crisis, then have they been helped to show godly devotion? The answers are crucial in determining whether religion can meet or cope with today's crisis or not.

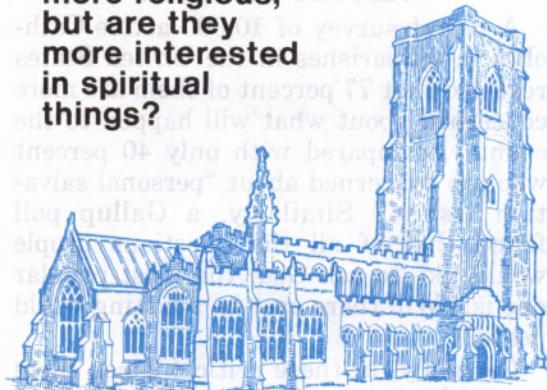
Godly Devotion—What Is It?

Godliness, or godly devotion, has been defined as devotion to God or being God-oriented. As such, it is much more than a mere show of outward piety or religiousness. One who possesses godly devotion is mainly concerned, not with satisfying some personal needs, but with knowing and doing God's will, having an intimate relationship with him. The result is that a person's life is changed for the better because "godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come."—1 Timothy 4:8.

Do the individuals who are turning to religion merely out of dissatisfaction with life's realities fit into this category? Or are they more like those whom the apostle Paul spoke of as "having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power"?—2 Timothy 3:5.

If an individual turns to God just for the satisfying of some personal need rather than for the purpose of learning God's will and serving him, his object of devo-

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tion is really himself rather than God, is it not? This kind of devotion is powerless as to changing the individual's life from one of selfish pursuit to one of true self-sacrificing service to God.

What Paul stated was in harmony with Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount. Pointing out that not all who claim to be his followers are acceptable to him, he added: "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matthew 7:22, 23.

Thus, it is not a show of religiousness that matters with God. For an individual to receive God's guidance and blessing, he must be willing to accept God's directions as contained in the Bible and to apply them in his life. As the psalmist put it: "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway." (Psalm 119:105) Are the people who are turning to religion

today being helped to learn and follow such directions?

What Are the Facts?

A recent survey of 10,000 active Catholics in 60 parishes in the United States revealed that 77 percent of them are more concerned about what will happen to the country, compared with only 40 percent who are concerned about "personal salvation issues." Similarly, a Gallup poll found that of all the questions people would like to ask God, the most popular one is: "Will there ever be a lasting world peace?"

Certainly, in these critical times there is nothing amiss with being concerned about our future. But how different such reactions are from what Jesus told his disciples: "As these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) What the survey results show is that in spite of all the talk of a spiritual reawakening, anxiety about the future dominates the hearts and minds of people today. Their form of religion has done little toward helping them to meet the crisis of our critical times.

—See Luke 21:26.

As far as making church members more spiritual, an editorial in the Seventh-Day Adventist magazine *Ministry* laments that "too often there is little in the actual life style of our members or of ourselves to distinguish us from our non-Christian neighbors next door." Rather, it goes on to say, the church is providing its members with "a theological rationale for incorporating the materialism and consumer life style" of the nonbelievers by portraying God as one "who wants the best for His people and who intends to see they get it."

Similarly, *The Economist* of London, after reporting that "there are some signs

of a continuing (even growing) interest in religious questions," asserts that "the problem for the Church of England is how to minister to those who want to know about belief when it is not sure itself what it believes."

What about the area of family and human values? Have the churches fortified their members against the corrupting influences and immoral ways of the world? Have they turned out better husbands, wives, parents and children? A recent survey of 8,000 youths and 10,000 parents of churchgoing families in 13 denominations provides at least a glimpse of the situation.

According to *Christianity Today*, the study found that 42 percent of the youths say their families never discuss religious matters, and 40 percent say they want more parental direction on sexual matters. Among those 15 years of age, 53 percent have used alcohol, 20 percent have used marijuana. An earlier study, reported on in *The Ann Arbor News*, found that 59 percent of the boys and 42 percent of the girls said they had had sexual intercourse by the time they were 18.

Finally, are the religions helping their followers to shun the violent spirit of the world? Indeed, if religion is to be a stabilizing force in today's critical times, would we not expect at least this much? But, sad to say, more and more people have come to recognize that religion has, directly or indirectly, contributed to most of the wars and conflicts that have afflict-

In spite of the pastoral letters and peace marches, are not major religions embroiled in some of the bloodiest conflicts today?



Today hundreds of thousands are heeding the warning to abandon false religion

ed mankind. Mention places such as Ireland, Lebanon and Iran, and what comes to mind? In spite of the pastoral letters and peace marches, are not major religions embroiled in some of the bloodiest conflicts today?

Hence, what can we say about the so-called religious reawakening? Perhaps there are indications of a *religious* renewal, but it could hardly be called a *spiritual* reawakening. Instead of being built up spiritually, strengthened to face the critical times, most of those who turn to religions of the world are being put into a comfortable 'holding pattern,' a formalistic kind of worship. It is "a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power," as the apostle Paul foretold. The superficial "reawakening" and "renewal" clearly fit in with the rest of the deteriorating conditions—moral decay, family breakdown, crime and violence, and so on—marking our critical times.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

What Will the Outcome Be?

Using the ancient religious city of Babylon as a symbol, the Bible points to total collapse as the fate of world religion. The book of Revelation foretells: "A strong angel lifted up a stone like a great millstone and hurled it into the sea, saying: 'Thus with a swift pitch will Babylon the great city be hurled down, and she will never be found again.'”—Revelation 18:21.

Before that swift end comes, however, there is opportunity to heed the divine warning of Revelation 18:4: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." Around the world, in 205 lands, Jehovah's Witnesses have heeded that warning and fled to God's Kingdom as the only hope for mankind. (Matthew 24:14) Will you be among the thousands who are joining them in that flight to safety? The decision is yours to make.

The Rich Man and Lazarus —What Is the Lesson?

JESUS CHRIST often taught a lesson by telling a story. Here is how Jesus began one famous story: "A certain man was rich, and he used to deck himself with purple and linen, enjoying himself from day to day with magnificence. But a certain beggar named Lazarus used to be put at his gate, full of ulcers and desiring to be filled with the

things dropping from the

table of the rich man. Yes,

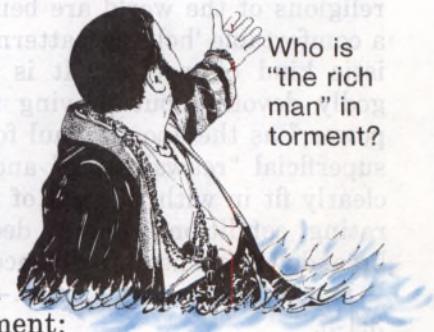
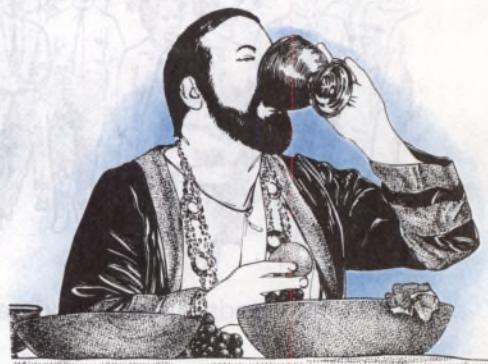
too, the dogs would come and lick his ulcers."

So Jesus simply said a certain man was rich, dressed expensively and ate well, while Lazarus was hungry, covered with ulcers and licked by dogs. Was this a story about real people? No. The Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* in a footnote explains that this is a "parable in story form without reference to any historical personage." Note why,

from what Jesus next says:

"Now in course of time the beggar died and he was carried off by the angels to the bosom position of Abraham. Also, the rich man died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, he existing in torments, and he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in the bosom position with him. So he called and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this blazing fire.'"—Luke 16:19-24.

As you can see, Jesus said nothing about the rich man's living a degraded life worthy of fiery punishment;

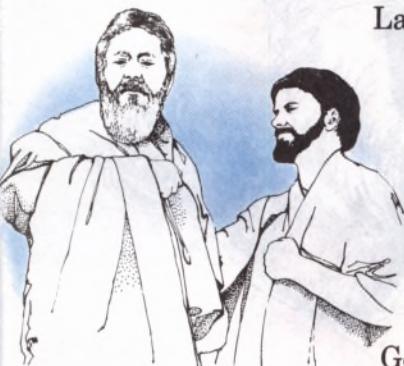


Who is
"the rich
man" in
torment?

God's Word Is Alive

the man's failing was that he did not feed the poor. Further, Jesus said nothing about Lazarus' doing good things, things that clearly would merit his going to heaven, which is what some churches claim is the meaning of his being taken to Abraham's bosom. Furthermore, Abraham, like David, was dead and in his grave, so angels literally could not carry Lazarus to his bosom. (Acts 2:29, 34; John 3:13) And if the rich man were in a literal fire, surely Lazarus could not benefit him with just a drop of water!

Who, then, was pictured by the rich man and who by Lazarus? What was represented by their deaths? The rich man pictured the self-important religious leaders who failed to feed the people spiritually, and Lazarus pictured the common people who accepted Jesus Christ. Their deaths represented a change in their condition.



This illustration shows two figures standing side-by-side. On the left is a bearded man with a long white robe, representing Lazarus. On the right is a younger man with a beard and a shorter white robe, representing Jesus. They appear to be engaged in a conversation or interaction.

This change, or death to the former condition of the rich man and of Lazarus, occurred when Jesus fed the neglected Lazaruslike people spiritually. Thus, they came into the favor of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God. At the same time, the self-important Jewish religious leaders "died" with respect to having God's favor and came to be tormented by the teachings of Christ and his followers. For example, when Stephen publicly exposed them, "they felt cut to their hearts and began to gnash their teeth . . . and put their hands over their ears." They felt torment.—Acts 7:51-57.

So rather than teaching a fiery-hell torment after death, Jesus' story describes the change of condition that his teachings accomplished among two classes of people.



This illustration depicts four men representing religious leaders. Three of them are shown from the side, covering their ears with their hands. The fourth man is shown from behind, also covering his ears. They appear to be in a state of distress or torment, likely representing the "self-important Jewish religious leaders" mentioned in the text.

Beware of Your Adversary, the Devil!

"Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone."

—1 PETER 5:8.



ARE you an unreservedly dedicated witness of Jehovah God? If so, you have a scheming adversary, a diabolical foe. Despite all he can do, however, that crafty enemy can be foiled. You can prove faithful to the Most High God, Jehovah. Without a doubt, you can thus share in vindicating your heavenly Father's matchless name. Indeed, you can make Jehovah's heart rejoice and can provide him with an answer to the Great Taunter. Yes, and you can gain the prize of eternal life in paradisean happiness.—Proverbs 27:11; Luke 23:43; Revelation 2:7.

² To remain faithful to God, you must beware of your chief adversary. Concerning him, the apostle Peter wrote: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion,

seeking to devour someone." Yet, defense against this enemy is possible, for the apostle continues: "But take your stand against him, solid in the faith . . . After you have suffered a little while, the God of all undeserved kindness . . . will make you firm, he will make you strong." (1 Peter 5: 8-10) Especially do those words bring comfort to anointed followers of Jesus Christ. Yet, they also have true meaning for Jehovah's servants who look forward to living eternally in an earthly paradise.

³ If we are to beware of our Adversary, we need help, as well as knowledge of his tactics. Ready and willing to help all of us to maintain integrity are Jehovah God,

1. What Adversary do Jehovah's Witnesses have, but can he be foiled?
2. What did the apostle Peter say about our chief adversary?

3. (a) Who stand ready to help us? (b) What foes does Satan use to accomplish his evil purposes?

Jesus Christ, the holy angels and the Christian congregation. On the other hand, we have our own imperfect flesh, this wicked system of things and Satan the Devil himself with which to contend. He is motivated by malice and is ever ready to enlist the aid of our other two foes to accomplish his evil purposes.—John 15:19; 1 Corinthians 9:27.

⁴ The very designations the Scriptures give our Adversary help us to understand his methods, his designs, better. He is referred to as Satan, Devil, serpent and dragon. (Revelation 12:4, 9, 10) His name Satan means "Resister," or "Adversary." (Job 1:6; 2:1) "Devil" means "Slanderer," "Accuser," or "Maligner." Satan is also called the "serpent" because he used a serpent to deceive Eve in the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:1-7) And he is termed the "dragon" because of his propensity to devour.

Satan's Motives and Purposes

⁵ Satan the Devil, originally one of God's heavenly sons, fell to opposing and slandering Jehovah. Satan's purpose was to turn humankind away from God, so as to serve Satan's selfish ends. The Devil's course of action makes it apparent that he called into question the truthfulness of God, as well as mankind's need to depend upon Jehovah and look to him for continued life and happiness. Implicit in Satan's course is his questioning God's right to rule and his manner of ruling. Jehovah is committed to the principle of ruling in righteousness and of having creatures serve him willingly out of love for him and for righteousness. On the other hand, Satan has taken the position that selfish

4. (a) By what four designations is Satan known? (b) Why does Satan deserve the titles "Devil," "serpent" and "dragon"?
5. Satan has taken what position regarding Jehovah?

gain is the more desirable motive. In other words, he contends that all intelligent creatures should be and are as selfish as he is.—Job, chapters 1 and 2.

⁶ For Satan to embark on such a course reveals that he let inordinate ambition become a consuming passion and motive. This is evident also from the apostle Paul's warning against appointing a newly converted man to the position of overseer, "for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil." (1 Timothy 3:6) Yes, it did indeed betray a colossal self-conceit for Satan to dare pit himself against the Almighty, the Most High, the Universal Sovereign, the King of eternity, Jehovah God. (Genesis 17:1; 2 Samuel 7:28; Psalm 83:18; 1 Timothy 1:17) That the Devil's overriding passion is self-exaltation, that he envied the worship that intelligent creatures were giving Jehovah God, was revealed by him when he offered Jesus Christ "all the kingdoms of the world" if Jesus would do an act of worship to him.—Matthew 4:8, 9.

⁷ Of course, Jehovah God could have executed Satan and the first human pair as soon as they transgressed. But because of the issues Satan had raised, and out of mercy for Adam's yet unborn offspring, God permitted the Devil to live and try to prove his boastful challenges. At the same time, Jehovah thereby gave those of mankind who wanted it the opportunity to try to rule themselves apart from God and his righteous principles.

Deception as to His Existence

⁸ Satan resorts to many and varied de-

6. What does Satan's course reveal as to his motives?
7. Why did not God at once execute the rebels Satan, Adam and Eve?
8. How has Satan deceived mankind as to his very existence?

signs to forward his purpose as Adversary of Jehovah God and, if possible, to turn all humans away from the rightful worship of their Creator. One of these designs is his getting people to believe that he does not even exist! This makes it possible for them to become his easy victims. Thus, today, in many religious circles it is fashionable to believe that there is no such person as Satan the Devil. For example, a poll taken by the Center for Policy Research in New York City reported that in 1974 more than half of Americans did not believe completely in the existence of a personal Devil. Even many clergymen do not believe in the Devil's existence as a person.

⁹ But the Scriptures leave us in no doubt that there is a personal Devil. They show that a person spoke through the serpent, deceiving and seducing the first woman, Eve. The book of Job further establishes the existence of Satan as a person, for it tells of his speaking with Jehovah God, impugning the integrity of God's servant Job. Moreover, the Gospel writers Matthew, Mark and Luke record that Jesus Christ was tempted by the Devil. That such temptations must have come to Jesus from an outside source is clear not only from what we know about Jesus' perfection and personality but also from the nature of Satan's third temptation. How could Jesus fall down and do an act of worship before an evil principle or idea? Significant, too, are Jesus' repeated references to Satan as a person and as "the ruler of this world."—John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 8:44; Matthew 4:1-10; 12:26; Luke 10:18.

¹⁰ Jesus' apostles also identified the Devil as a person. Paul indicated that true Christians are not ignorant of Satan's "designs" and the apostle warned them

9, 10. How do the Scriptures establish the fact that the Devil is a person?

against the "machinations of the Devil." (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11) As already noted, Peter urged fellow believers to beware of their Adversary, the Devil. And the apostle John testified that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one" and that "the Devil will keep on throwing some [Christians] into prison."—1 John 5:19; Revelation 2:10; 1 Peter 5:8.

Satan's Device of False Religion

¹¹ Satan's design to keep people blind involves his use of false religion. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Man was created by God with the need to keep in touch with his Creator by means of worship. Satan has deflected this instinct by appealing to selfishness and promoting ignorance of pure religion. To accomplish his purpose he "keeps transforming himself into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14) As a result of such deception, humans engage in thousands of different kinds of false religion.

¹² All false religion is actually a product of Satan, for Paul stated: "The things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God." Jesus said: "He that is not on my side is against me, and he that does not gather with me scatters." Furthermore, Christ allowed no room for interfaith, but said: "No one comes to the Father except through me."—1 Corinthians 10:20; Matthew 12:30; John 14:6.

¹³ Satan exploits man's curiosity regarding the occult and the condition of the dead. By such totally unscriptural devices as talking with the dead, or spiritism, fortune-telling, astrology and black mag-

11. What has Satan done with man's instinct to worship?
12. How should we view false religion and interfaith?
13. In what ways has Satan exploited man's curiosity regarding the occult?

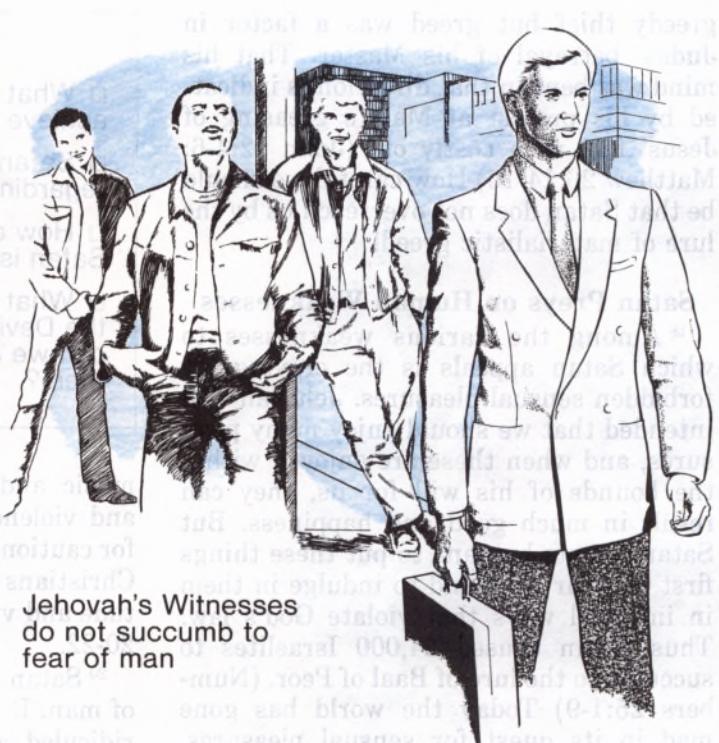
ic, he has ensnared countless numbers. In fact, today there is an ever-increasing interest in such things. This has gone to such an extreme that some are actually worshiping the Devil himself.—Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:26; 20:6; Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

Satan's Appeal to Pride

¹⁴ Satan succumbed to the temptation of pride. Accordingly, he awakened in Eve a proud, selfish desire to be like the Most High God, and thus he succeeded in turning our first parents away from the worship of Jehovah God. Satan doubtless used a similar approach with Cain. Noticing how chagrined Cain was because his brother Abel received divine approval, the Devil could fan that chagrin into murderous envy.—Genesis 4:3-8; 1 John 3:11, 12.

¹⁵ Throughout the history of mankind, Satan has been able to use as tools those who are proud—such men as Nimrod, the Pharaoh of Egypt in Moses' day and Assyrian King Sennacherib. (Genesis 10:8-12; Exodus 5:2; Isaiah 36:7-10, 16-20) Today Satan holds multitudes in his grasp through pride: pride of race, pride of nationality, pride of education, pride of social status, and so forth. All of this serves the Devil's purpose by causing people to turn a deaf ear to God's message.

14, 15. (a) What means did Satan use to get Eve and Cain to serve his purpose? (b) What further examples does the Bible give along these lines?



Jehovah's Witnesses
do not succumb to
fear of man

The Lure of Materialistic Greed

¹⁶ Another device Satan uses to ensnare humans is materialism, greed, love of money, pride of possession. Thereby he ensnared the clergy of Jesus' day who were greedy money lovers. (Luke 16:14) Using the lure of materialistic greed, "Satan emboldened [Ananias] to play false to the holy spirit." (Acts 5:1-11) And no doubt the Devil used a love for material things and worldly pleasures to deflect Demas and other Christians from Jehovah's service.—2 Timothy 4:10.

¹⁷ An especially notorious example of Satan's using greed to ensnare is that of Judas Iscariot. Not only did he become a

16. What success has Satan had in using materialistic greed?

17. We have what especially notorious example of a person who succumbed to Satan's use of greed as a snare?

greedy thief but greed was a factor in Judas' betrayal of his Master. That his mind was bent in that direction is indicated by his protest at Mary's greasing of Jesus' feet with costly oil. (John 12:4-6; Matthew 26:14-16) How careful we should be that Satan does not overreach us by the lure of materialistic greed!

Satan Preys on Human Weaknesses

¹⁸ Among the various weaknesses to which Satan appeals is the craving for forbidden sensual pleasures. Jehovah God intended that we should enjoy many pleasures, and when these are enjoyed within the bounds of his will for us, they can result in much good and happiness. But Satan tempts humans to put these things first in their lives and to indulge in them in immoral ways that violate God's law. Thus Satan caused 24,000 Israelites to succumb to the lure of Baal of Peor. (Numbers 25:1-9) Today the world has gone mad in its quest for sensual pleasures. Magazines, newspapers, motion pictures and television programs are ever more explicitly appealing to prurient interests. As Christians guided by God's spirit, however, we must shun such temptations.

—1 Corinthians 14:20.

¹⁹ Another device of Satan is his appealing to the craving for pleasurable excitement. Young Christians are particularly vulnerable to this snare. Often, they go *all out* for various kinds of sports, both as observers and as participants. But this could cause them to become "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:4) With other youths the craving for excitement turns to forms of

18. (a) What provisions did God make for man to derive pleasure from living? (b) How has Satan exploited these to man's harm?

19. (a) To what snare of Satan are young Christians particularly vulnerable? (b) Of what should young Christians be aware?

Can You Recall?

- What foes does the Devil use to achieve his wicked purposes?
- Satan has taken what position regarding Jehovah?
- How does the Bible prove that Satan is a person?
- What are some means used by the Devil to ensnare us, and how can we avoid being overcome by them?

music and song that foster immorality and violence. Surely, there is great need for caution, for such things can lure young Christians away from the path of rectitude and virtue.—Psalm 16:11; 2 Peter 2:20-22.

²⁰ Satan also uses the snare of the fear of man. It is natural to shrink from being ridiculed and to try to avoid suffering. Such fear has caused not a few to compromise in times of stress. (Proverbs 29:25; Hebrews 2:14, 15) With God's help we will never permit that to happen in our case.

²¹ Another of Satan's designs is his trying to discourage God's servants so that they give up. The Devil certainly tried to do this with Job, causing him to wish he were dead or had never been born. Satan also tried this with Moses. (Job 3:1-13; 14:13; Numbers 11:10-15) Neither of these faithful men was swallowed up by discouragement. Rather, they conformed to the divine will. Like them, we need not be overwhelmed by any circumstances, for Jehovah can sustain us and will never permit the righteous to totter.—Psalm 55:22.

20. How does Satan use fear?
21. Why need we not be overcome by discouragement?

Stand Firm!

²² In view of Satan's success in estranging the vast majority of humankind from Jehovah God, what must we do? As valiant witnesses of Jehovah, we must "stand firm against the machinations of the Devil," against his devices, his strategems and his tactics. (Ephesians 6:11) Thereby we

22, 23. To be able to stand firm against the "machinations" of Satan and not serve his designs, what must we do?

can prove him to be the base, boasting liar that he really is.

²³ However, we cannot stand firm against Satan in our own strength, for he has greater powers, wider knowledge and far more experience than we have. To be able to stand firm against him, therefore, we need to take full advantage of all the aids that Jehovah God has provided for his people. Then we shall foil that crafty enemy!

Stand Firm Against Satan's Devices!

DEDICATED witnesses of Jehovah who live up to their privileges enjoy a spiritual paradise. Prophetically describing their present-day condition, God's prophet Isaiah wrote: "In the wilderness justice will certainly reside, and in the orchard righteousness itself will dwell. And the work of the true righteousness must become peace; and the service of the true righteousness, quietness and security to time indefinite."—Isaiah 32:16, 17.

² To maintain this happy condition, we must ever be on guard, for Satan the Devil envies our happy and prosperous spiritual estate. As Gog of Magog he will soon launch an all-out attack against Jehovah's people. (Ezekiel 38:8-12) But by

1. What is the lot of Christians who live up to their privileges?
2. Why must we ever be on guard?

no means is he idle right now. In fact, knowing that he has only a short period of time left, he is more angry at Jehovah's servants now than ever before.—Revelation 12:12, 17.

³ Satan controls this world of unrighteous humans. (Ephesians 2:1, 2; 1 John 5:19) All of these are on his side of the great issue of universal sovereignty. They are giving a positive answer to Satan's putting in doubt whether any humans can maintain their integrity to Jehovah God. (Proverbs 27:11) That even a few Christians are proving the Devil to be a vain boaster and base liar enrages him. So he uses every device, every crafty artifice, at his disposal to overcome these faithful servants of Jehovah. Hence, "we have a wrestling . . . against the wicked spirit

3. Why is Satan enraged at servants of Jehovah?

forces in the heavenly places."—Ephesians 6:12.

⁴ Therefore, you do well to ask yourself, 'How can I stand firm against this powerful Adversary?' As we have seen, he uses the weaknesses of the fallen flesh to entrap Christians. Personally, we may not have the weakness of laziness, but we may be proud. We may not be self-indulgent as regards physical pleasures, but we may be greedy for material gain. Thus we need to work hard to overcome our weaknesses, opposing the Devil so that he will flee from us.—James 4:7.

Our Spiritual Armor

⁵ Our Adversary keeps using the same devices over and over again. So by studying God's Word we can be alerted to the devices that Satan has been using since Bible times, and we can learn how to stand firm against him. The apostle Paul wrote: "Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil." He also urged: "Take up the complete suit of armor from God, that you may be able to resist in the wicked day and, after you have done all things thoroughly, to stand firm." Note that Paul stresses putting on "the *complete* suit of armor from God." It would be dangerous to lack even one piece of this divinely provided armor, for Satan would notice it and could well level an attack at that vulnerable point. This could prove fatal to us spiritually.

—Ephesians 6:11, 13.

⁶ The apostle begins by urging us: "Stand firm, therefore, with your loins girded about with truth." (Ephesians

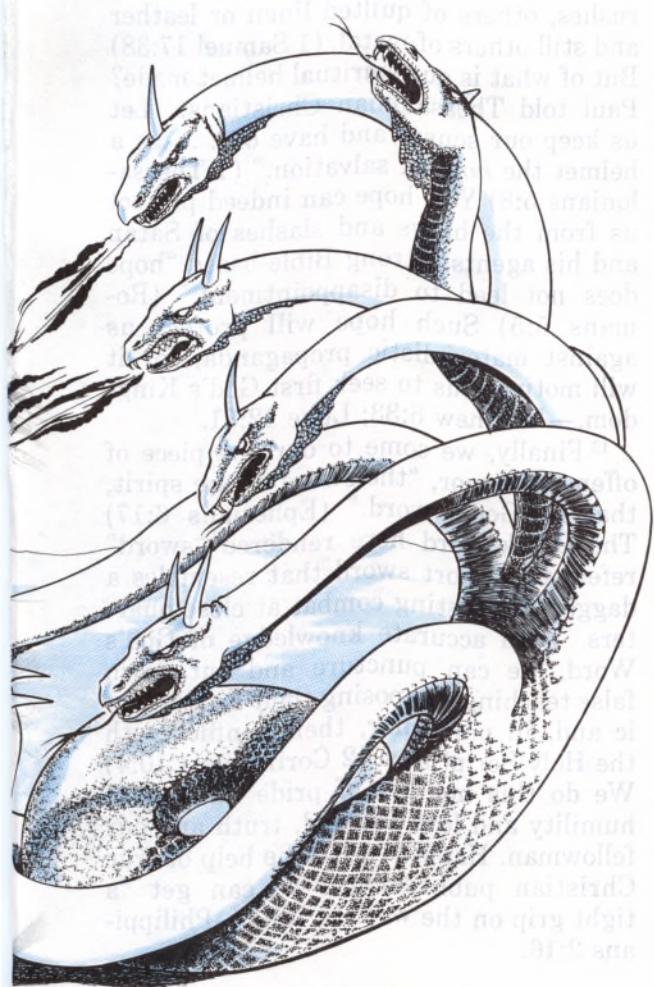
4. Why must we work hard to overcome our weaknesses?
5. For what reason do we need to put on the complete suit of armor from God?
6. What does 'having our loins girded with truth' require of us?

"Put on all the armour which God provides, so that you may be able to stand firm against the devices of the devil."

—EPHESIANS 6:11,
The New English Bible.



6:14) The military girdle of ancient times was a leather belt worn around the waist or hips. Often it was studded with small plates of metal, providing added protection. It also served as a support for a warrior's sword or dagger. What does it mean for a Christian to have his loins



girded about with truth? To be girded about with the truth of God's Word means having it very tight, so we are able to use the Scriptures to resolve questions. As the military girdle was a means of protection, so the truth will give us confidence to bear our burdens and will protect

us. Surely, then, keeping our minds occupied with God's truths will help us to stand firm against Satan.

⁷ Next the apostle tells us to 'have on the breastplate of righteousness.' (Ephesians 6:14) In Bible times a breastplate consisted of scales, chain links or solid metal and served to protect particularly the heart. To have on this breastplate of righteousness we must, above all, 'safeguard our hearts.' (Proverbs 4:23) Only then can we stand firm against Satan by being motivated to serve Jehovah and to lead clean lives that will prevent our becoming a morally contaminating influence among Jehovah's people.—1 Peter 1:14-16.

⁸ Paul then mentions having our "feet shod with the equipment of the good news of peace." (Ephesians 6:15) What is implied here? That we keep very active in preaching the Kingdom message in a peaceful manner, even as Jesus instructed the 70 evangelizers: "Wherever you enter into a house say first, 'May this house have peace.'" (Luke 10:5) We do not come to argue with people. Rather, we come to bring them comfort, joy, peace of mind and hope. Satan will try to stir up opposition and combativeness in some listeners to cause us to respond in kind. Therefore, to stand firm against Satan's designs, we need to be tactful and patient, becoming "all things to people of all sorts."—1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

⁹ Continuing, the apostle counsels: "Take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the wicked one's burning missiles." (Ephesians 6:16) The Greek word here rendered

7. What does it mean to have on "the breastplate of righteousness"?
8. What is involved in having our "feet shod with the equipment of the good news of peace"?
9. What were ancient shields and burning missiles like?

"large shield" denotes one big enough to protect most of the body. As regards the "burning missiles," the Romans at times made darts of hollow reeds having tiny receptacles filled with burning naphtha. Paul may have been alluding to such fiery darts.

¹⁰ Satan shoots various kinds of "burning missiles" at Christians. Among these "missiles" are ridicule, reproach and slander aimed at God's people by their enemies. These "missiles" can also be efforts on the part of some to discourage Christian warriors because of supposedly meager results of their activity in the ministry or lack of progress in overcoming fleshly weaknesses. Also included are bitter words, sarcasm and misstatements. At times, Satan has wounded Christians by arousing their curiosity about worldly wisdom as it relates to occultism or philosophizing on the origin and destiny of man. You should diligently avoid such "deep things of Satan." Do you?—Revelation 2:24.

¹¹ To protect our hearts against Satan's "burning missiles," we need a large, strong shield of faith. Just how big and impenetrable it will be depends largely on us. We will have the needed protection to the extent that we buy out the opportune time for personal Bible study, meditation on God's Word and association with fellow witnesses of Jehovah. Of course, we need to apply what we learn, for "faith without works is dead." (James 2:26) Thus, one of the best ways to enlarge and strengthen our faith, and so be able to stand firm, is to put forth earnest efforts toward inculcating faith in others.

¹² Paul goes on to say: "Also, accept the

10. Satan uses what as "burning missiles"?
11. On what do the size and effectiveness of our spiritual shield depend?
12. What is our spiritual helmet, and of what value is it to us?

helmet of salvation." (Ephesians 6:17) In ancient times, some helmets were made of rushes, others of quilted linen or leather and still others of metal. (1 Samuel 17:38) But of what is our spiritual helmet made? Paul told Thessalonian Christians: "Let us keep our senses and have on . . . as a helmet the *hope* of salvation." (1 Thessalonians 5:8) Yes, hope can indeed protect us from the blows and slashes of Satan and his agents. Strong Bible-based "hope does not lead to disappointment." (Romans 5:5) Such hope will protect us against materialistic propaganda, for it will motivate us to seek first God's Kingdom.—Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31.

¹³ Finally, we come to our one piece of offensive armor, "the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word." (Ephesians 6:17) The Greek word here rendered "sword" refers to a short sword that resembles a dagger, suggesting combat at close quarters. With accurate knowledge of God's Word, we can puncture and cut down false teachings, exposing their lack of logic and, in particular, their conflict with the Holy Scriptures. (2 Corinthians 10:4) We do this not out of pride but out of humility and love for God, truth and our fellowman. Happily, with the help of true Christian publications, we can get "a tight grip on the word of life."—Philippians 2:16.

Christian Qualities as Aids

¹⁴ In addition to our spiritual armor, Christian qualities will also help us to stand firm against the Devil. Since Satan appeals to pride, our having **humility** and the spirit of a sound mind will help us in our fight against him. Indeed, no Chris-

13. What is "the sword of the spirit," and what is its value?
14. (a) Why do we have no reason to be proud?
(b) Why do we need to be humble to stand firm against Satan?

tian should "think more of himself than it is necessary to think." When we have done everything assigned to us, we should be able to say: "We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done." Besides, we need God's undeserved kindness to stand firm against Satan and to have that we must be humble, for "God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones."—Romans 12:3; Luke 17:10; James 4:6.

¹⁵ Self-control is another Christian quality that will help us to stand firm against Satan. Failing to control our emotions, such as anger, or overindulgence in food, drink or sex will leave us open to the attacks and manipulations of the Devil. When we "conducted ourselves in harmony with the desires of our flesh," we actually were walking "according to the system of things of this world, according to the ruler [Satan the Devil] of the au-

15. In standing firm, of what value is self-control?



Regular prayer will help a family resist Satan's attacks

thority of the air, the spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:1-3) If we let selfish, unclean thoughts and feelings take over, we are in danger of being ensnared by the Devil for the doing of his will. (2 Timothy 2:26) To stand firm against him, we must exercise firm control of our thoughts and emotions as well as of our words and actions. We must discipline our minds to think on things virtuous, righteous, chaste and lovable.—Philippians 4:8.

¹⁶ In particular will unselfish love help us to stand firm against Satan the Devil. He is quick to appeal to any selfish trait he may detect in us. To the extent that unselfish love keeps us busy in the service and worship of Jehovah, to that extent we will be impervious to Satan's attacks. What chance does he have with us if we love Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength? Love also makes us concerned about the salvation of others,

16. Why can unselfish love help us to stand firm?

and this will help us to make our own salvation sure. (Mark 12:30, 31; 1 Timothy 4:16) As long as we display love in its various manifestations, neither Satan nor any of his agents, visible or invisible, will be able to weaken our stand against them.—1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

¹⁷ To be able to stand firm against Satan's devices, we must also make full use of prayer. Why? Because we simply cannot come off victorious in our own strength. We need help from on high. After describing spiritual armor, Paul urged fellow believers to use 'every form of prayer and supplication, carrying on prayer on every occasion in spirit.' To that end they were to "keep awake with all constancy and with supplication in behalf of all the holy ones," including the apostle.—Ephesians 6:18, 19.

¹⁸ "Every form of prayer" includes what? One form of prayer is praise. Certainly in view of who Jehovah is, his qualities and his position in the universe, he merits our praise. (Psalm 33:1) Another form of prayer is thanksgiving. And what reasons we have to give thanks to the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect present"! (James 1:17) Most fittingly, we are counseled to "give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness and for his wonderful works to the sons of men." (Psalm 107:31) Our having appreciative hearts and minds will indeed help us to stand firm against Satan.

¹⁹ Petition is another form of prayer. We can appropriately ask for such things as wisdom (James 1:5), holy spirit (Luke 11:13), forgiveness of sins (1 John 1:9; 2:1, 2) and God's blessing upon our efforts (Psalm 90:17). There is also supplication.

17. Why is prayer so important to our standing firm?

18, 19. (a) How can praise and thanksgiving help us? (b) Of what value are petition and supplication?

It refers to imploring Jehovah God earnestly, as in times of great stress or peril. Thus when Paul was imprisoned he asked that supplication be made for him. (Ephesians 6:18-20) These forms of prayer surely will help us to stand firm against Satan.

Be Determined to Stand Firm

²⁰ Today Jehovah's people as a group truly are enjoying the blessings of a spiritual paradise. But for us individually to keep on sharing this blessedness we cannot take it for granted. We must ever be on guard, standing firm against our Adversary, Satan the Devil.—1 Peter 5:8, 9.

²¹ The Devil has many devices, as we have seen, and his design is to break our integrity and cause us to quit serving Jehovah God. But Satan will not overreach us if we keep on our spiritual armor from God, continue cultivating such fruits of his spirit as love and self-control, and persevere in prayer. Thus, with loving help from our God, Jehovah, we will be fully equipped to stand firm against Satan's devices.

20, 21. How can we come off completely victorious?

Do You Remember

- Why is Satan enraged against Jehovah's servants?
- Of what does the Christian's spiritual armor consist?
- What are some of Satan's "burning missiles," but what protection do we have against them?
- Why must we be humble in order to stand firm against the Devil?
- In our standing firm, why is prayer so important?

Building a Successful Stepfamily

ON HIS wedding day Felix instantly became a parent. His wife had a seven-year-old daughter from her previous marriage. While walking alone with his new stepdaughter later that day, he was shocked to hear her use some foul language and he kindly corrected the girl. Her bitter retort stunned him: "Look, you are *not* my father!" As a Christian, Felix wanted to build a family that would glorify the One 'to whom every family owes its name.' He now, however, had a glimmer of the intense emotions with which his new stepfamily would have to deal.—Ephesians 3:15.

While in the past the remarriage of those whose mate had died was the chief cause of blended families, skyrocketing divorce rates during these "last days" have now led to record numbers of stepfamilies. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Why? Because approximately 80 percent of divorced persons—many with children—remarry. In addition, there are the marriages of those who have children born out of wedlock. According to the Stepfamily Foundation, by 1990 more people in the United States will be part of a second marriage than a first—making the stepfamily one of the



most prevalent types of households! But a stepfamily has unique problems.

A Different Situation

While in first marriages the immaturity of a mate is often cited as the chief source of difficulty, in remarriages the chief source is considered to be child rearing. For the new parent, earning the love and respect of children with whom you have no natural bond—who may view you as an intruder—is a formidable task. The natural parent must learn to show love for the new mate without alienating his or her own children. And when the stepfamily brings together children of different sexes or when the husband takes on a stepdaughter, there is further potential for strain: the danger of sexual immorality. Reportedly, 25 percent of stepfamilies have immoral household sexual relationships.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

Stepchildren, too, often struggle with a gamut of emotions—rejection, jealousy,

resentment and loyalty conflicts. The trauma of divorce or a parent's death makes this further adjustment even more difficult. Sadly, records show that more than four out of every ten blended families end in divorce *within the first five years*. Yet, a successful stepfamily can be built. How?

Basis for Handling Problems

"Unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it." (Psalm 127:1) Letting Jehovah 'build' a stepfamily means directing efforts so as to have his blessing by putting his commands, principles and counsel first. "The only thing that made the difference for us," confided Felix, "was the putting of Jehovah's Word ahead of the feelings of others in the family. I avoided telling my stepdaughter my opinion on matters, but by my using the Bible a *mutual ground* was created where two minds could meet." He used the Bible to 'set things straight' and to be the household standard. (2 Timothy 3:16) When children see that even the parents obey "the counsel of Jehovah," they sense that his stable principles, not merely the whims of a stepparent, govern the home.

—Proverbs 19:21; 20:7.

One couple who each brought three chil-

dren into a stepfamily found success because "the children really tried to apply the Bible." After growing up, one of these children wrote: "When there is a melding of two families, the paramount issue can easily become social in nature rather than spiritual in that the focus is shifted just to getting along rather than to serving Jehovah as a family unit." Many successful Christian stepfamilies agree that the key is *striving for a good personal relationship with God by trying hard to follow his Word*.

The Need of Discernment

Shortly after her mother remarried, 12-year-old Marla became rebellious and even ran away several times. Her parents rightly required obedience but overlooked the emotional root of the problem. "My mom and I were so close," explained Marla, "that we felt like sisters. We even slept in the same bed. But when my stepfather moved in, I lost this intimacy. I soon felt that I had no place." Yes, frequently a stepparent will not realize just how he or she has apparently displaced the stepchild in the affections of its natural parent and will overlook the emotional turmoil this causes. What is needed?

"By discernment," says Proverbs 24:3, a household "will prove firmly established." Discernment looks beyond actions or words to see the reasons for such. For instance, a stepchild may seem aloof. But why? Might it not be because of loyalty conflicts involving his or her feelings for the departed parent? Researcher Elizabeth Einstein, herself a stepmother, wrote in her book *The Stepfamily*: "The biological parent can never be replaced—*never*. Even a parent who is dead or one who has abandoned the children retains an important place in the children's lives. As I learned only recently, the secret in being a stepparent is, do not cajole or claim."

In Our Next Issue

■ Violence!

—A Growing Threat to You

■ "You Ought to Be Teachers"

■ The Struggle for a More Accurate Bible Text

She says "that is the most likely route into your stepchildren's hearts." Discerning this, a Christian step-parent tries not to expect "instant love" nor feel personally rejected when it is not forthcoming. But this is not easy.

"I am immune to rejection except from my husband's daughter," moaned one stepmother. "Rejection from Amy turns a sunny day black, a full heart empty." She added: "Amy matters to me. My success as a stepparent matters." Understandably, such rejection hurts. Yet the Bible counsels: "Do not hurry yourself in your spirit to become offended, for the taking of offense is what rests in the bosom of the stupid ones." (Ecclesiastes 7:9) If one is thin-skinned—easily offended—and nurtures resentment "in the bosom," it likely will produce rash words and actions.

How, though, does discernment work in practice? When Felix's new stepdaughter lashed out, he recalled that she had been especially close to her deceased father. "You are right, I am not your father, but I would like to be a friend, as well as your spiritual brother," was his discerning reply. So, be "wise in heart"—but at the same time cultivate 'tough skin'!—Proverbs 16:21; 14:1.

The lack of familiarity in a stepfamily often leads to what the Bible calls "presumptuousness," that is, "headstrong conduct" or 'making claims that are totally unjustified and pressing these uncompromisingly,' as one Hebrew dictionary puts it. Such self-centeredness causes a struggle. (Proverbs 13:10) "Though it was so



Parents who consult together often avoid problems regarding stepchildren

hard to do, I tried to stop thinking about just my own emotions," confessed one stepdaughter. "When I did, I could see another's feelings and have empathy. You still have feelings, but you are developing feelings that include another person."

To develop fellow feeling a stepfamily must communicate! Proverbs 13:10 adds: "With those consulting together there is wisdom." Regular family discussions—"consulting together"—can iron out problems and create family unity. The parents, however, must be united in their thinking during such discussions. In time, *persistence* with such discussions usually brings good results. Note other helpful suggestions on page 25.—1 Peter 3:8.

By "consulting together" even the potential of sexual error can be wisely handled. Some parents have frankly talked with their children before remarriage and considered such things as how the girls should dress or comport themselves around the stepfather and any stepbro-

ers. As the children grow, ongoing discussions are often needed, with the parents taking the initiative, because children may bashfully hesitate.

When Discipline Is Needed

Undoubtedly the touchiest matter in building a stepfamily is the way discipline is handled. Since "foolishness is tied up with the heart" of a child—including a stepchild—consistent discipline is vital. (Proverbs 22:15; 13:1) One Christian found that her new stepdaughter had lived an unrestricted life. "I was very careful to uphold the headship arrangement," reported Pat, whose stepdaughter eventually became one of her best friends. "I was always willing to explain to her why, to talk and go over things, but I would not bend it for her if she didn't like it. I was very staunch for Jehovah's arrangements."

"Basically, discipline works," state stepfamily counselors Drs. Emily and John Visher, "only when the person receiving the discipline cares about the reactions of and the relationship with the person doing the disciplining." Until this bond develops, some have let the natural parent be the prime disciplinarian. Of course, a stepfather remains head of the household, but communicating clearly to his wife the reasons for the discipline, he might let her actually implement it. Scripturally, both parents can make disciplinary 'laws.' (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; 31:1) Since each stepfamily is different, there are no hard rules about *how* to discipline. Yet the stepparent should 'correct according to what is right,' not overreacting and exasperating the child by expecting too many changes too soon. (Isaiah 28:26-29; Colossians 3:21) On the other hand, stepchildren should accept discipline. Esther of Bible times was appreciatively obedient to her guardian or foster father Mordecai who

reared her after her parents died. His discipline helped her become an excellent woman.—Esther 2:7, 15, 20.

At times a stepparent's discipline is undermined by the spouse's favoring his or her natural child and not enforcing such discipline. One Christian mother of three, who remarried, explained: "You feel as if you are squeezed between two persons that you love so much." Never forget that your relationship with your mate is primary. Though at times it may be painful, strive to prevent natural affection from coming between the two of you. Abraham wisely prevented any other household member from damaging his relationship with his wife Sarah or hindering the carrying out of the divine will.—Genesis 16:1-6; 21:8-14.

Though one may not be able to *feel* the same about a stepchild as a natural one, both should be *treated* fairly. A basic principle in rendering decisions is: "Have no favourites." (1 Timothy 5:21, *Phillips*) It is easy to excuse the faults of one's natural child and magnify those of a stepchild. Better it is for husband and wife to discuss any disagreements regarding discipline in private, reach a conclusion and then present a united front to the children. After she grew up in a successful stepfamily with two sets of children, Aleisia, now 19, recalls: "An important thing was my parents' being consistent with discipline. We knew that no matter whose son or daughter we were we would be disciplined for our wrongs. Their standards or expectations were always the same."

Be Patient—It Takes Time

"Better is the end afterward of a matter than its beginning. Better is one who is patient than one who is haughty in spirit." (Ecclesiastes 7:8) While many quit during the awkward beginning stages,

those who persevere usually find that the family starts resolving problems. "Researchers say it takes four to seven years for a new stepfamily to become stable, to work out a sense of 'we,'" stated authority Elizabeth Einstein. The application of Bible principles may shorten this adjustment period; nevertheless, being 'patient in spirit' is a must!

An arrogant or "self-important man [or woman]" who may think that he or she knows exactly how the family should function, and who expects instant changes, "provokes quarrels." Different patterns of family life and strong opinions reinforced by years of habit are not quickly changed. Wisely do not 'trust in your own wits' or immediate impulses, but modestly rely on Jehovah's direction and help.—Proverbs 28:25, 26, *The New English Bible*.

The Rewards of Success

The knowledge, skills and experience of those in a stepfamily can be enriched by the blending of different family backgrounds. One Christian mother said of her stepdaughter: "Valerie added a dimension to our family. She had another way of looking at things that at times expanded our views." To be bonded to a child that is yours biologically is one thing, but to create a closeness where there is no natural affection—when that child may have lashed out at you—is described by many happy stepparents as a "special gift."

While the problems are formidable, being able to work them out warms the heart. Such a crucible can forge important spiritual qualities, such as patience, understanding, empathy and self-sacrifice. "I learned how to handle situations as far as I could and leave the rest to Jehovah," reflected Louise after rearing three stepchildren. "This was a very important lesson. It helped me to be a better spiritual person. You realize that if you're serving

FOR FAMILY COMMUNICATION

- (1) Find an appropriate time and place for regularly talking about feelings.
- (2) All should try to talk from the heart and express any resentment or emotional hurt. Make clear that the feelings of every member count.—Job 33:3.
- (3) Try to present statements as expressions of feelings rather than as accusations. For instance, "When I came home I felt hurt and angry to see that no one had washed the dishes," rather than, "Nobody cares around here. You are all really selfish and irresponsible."—Colossians 4:6.
- (4) Be kind to one another and try to empathize with one another's feelings.—Ephesians 4:31, 32.
- (5) Work out practical and reasonable solutions, considering any Bible principles involved.
- (6) End a discussion with positive, encouraging comments that help develop family warmth and that give each member a sense of self-worth.—Ephesians 4:29.

Jehovah you are not carrying anything alone."

The reward of seeing your family give glory to God makes the effort worth it. When King David told his son how to construct a temple to Jehovah's praise, he also gave what might be said to be the key to building a successful stepfamily. He said: "May Jehovah prove to be with you, . . . may Jehovah give you discretion and understanding, and . . . keep the law of Jehovah your God. *In that case you will prove successful.*"—1 Chronicles 22:11-13.

Insight on the News

Satanism Spreading

"A rise in Satanic rituals and fascination with heavy metal music bands . . . have pointed to a surge of devil worship by adolescents." So says *The Press Democrat* of Santa Rosa, California. Among the things officials have tied in with Satan worship are grave robberies, animal mutilations and even a number of murders. Satanic messages and symbols, including the number 666, have become prominent on covers of phonograph record albums and in graffiti. What has exerted the greatest pull in enticing youths into Satanism? "The kids are getting all kinds of messages in the [heavy metal] music," says detective Dave Gaerin of the juvenile division of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. "We had a concert down here where the band had 15,000 kids chanting 'Natas'"—that is Satan spelled backward.

The allure of independence is also an attraction. "I often think of Satan as a cool dude," explained one high school student about his fascination with the Devil. "Since he controls one part of the supernatural, he tends to let you be on your own, to do what you want, whereas God has his own rules on how you're supposed to live."

It was this ploy—the lure of independent action without restraint by the beneficial law of God—that led our first parents into disobedience and plunged the human race into 6,000 years of untold suffering. (Genesis 3:4, 5, 13) This same deception is being fostered by Satan today, es-

pecially since he knows his time is short. (Revelation 12:12; 2 Corinthians 2:11) Those who resist his enticements can look forward to enjoying "the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Romans 8:21.

Avoiding Truth

When on trial before Roman Governor Pilate, Jesus told him: "For this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is on the side of the truth listens to my voice." Truth to Jesus was precious, not to be compromised. —John 18:37.

How do people today react to the idea of religious truth? Writing in London's *The Times*, Roman Catholic author Christopher Derrick observed: "Any mention of religious 'truth' implies some kind of claim to *know*; and however distantly, however tactfully, it hints at the possibility of other people being mistaken." He added: "The horrid fact is that if you make a religious statement that actually *means* something, you imply that somebody else may possibly be wrong; and that would not do at all."

Why not? Because the overriding call today is for ecumenism, described by Derrick as "an absolute value," and religious leaders find it desirable to avoid all divisiveness. Each person is thus left free to believe in what is "right" for him. What then of truth? Jesus said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Those who listened to what he said were grateful that he did not water down the truth—the essential to free them from

the traditions and false teachings of their religious leaders that kept them from attaining life. —John 8:32; Matthew 23:13, 15.

Space Search Continues

Is there intelligent life in space? The search that began 25 years ago is now being stepped up. "The awesome task, which involves scanning hundreds of billions of stars," reports *The New York Times*, "has so far yielded no clear evidence that life exists beyond Earth." However, two observatories work full time in the search, as new and vastly more sensitive detectors are being put in operation. Proceeding on the theories that "life originated on other worlds" and that "other civilizations might be trying to establish communication with one another," a systematic search is being undertaken—even though no firm evidence exists of inhabited planets orbiting any star other than our sun.

Such prodigious effort in the face of such scanty evidence highlights the deliberate inclination to ignore the fact that extraterrestrial life of the highest order *does* exist. God and his angelic creation exist in the spirit realm. Not only do the visible heavens testify to his existence and godship but so does the written guide for information and instruction that he has given mankind. Men need look no further than the Bible to learn of mankind's origin, purpose in life and future.—Psalm 14:1; 19:1; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Willing Builders in Norway Blessed by Jehovah



YOUR people will offer themselves willingly." These words of the psalmist David very appropriately can be used in connection with the construction of the buildings located at Ytre Enebakk, near Oslo in Norway. The buildings make up the new branch headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Norway. On May 19, 1984, this fine new complex was dedicated to Jehovah God.—Psalm 110:3.

The new facilities were built entirely by Jehovah's Witnesses on a voluntary basis. The willingness and enthusiasm of the builders was followed with keen interest by their brothers throughout the land, as well as by many outside the ranks of Jehovah's Witnesses. The headlines of some local newspapers were: "Greatest voluntary work in the history of Norway!" "Gigantic voluntary work in Ytre Enebakk." "Impressive voluntary work."

Certainly, it was impressive! Within three years the workers constructed beautiful and spacious buildings of nearly 51,700 square feet (4,800 sq m). The buildings contain offices for administration and

translation work, a printery, shipping department, Kingdom Hall and living quarters able to accommodate 54 people. All who have seen the buildings are sure that they are going to be a very fine instrument for advancing the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in Norway.

Why So Necessary?

When the good news of God's Kingdom came to Norway shortly before the turn of the century, it soon reached the hearts of some interested people, who immediately started to preach to others. The great distances involved, huge mountain regions, extensive forests and fjords going deep into the country made travel at that time difficult. Still, the good news soon was preached and accepted even beyond the Arctic Circle. By 1904 the first office to coordinate the preaching was established in a private home in Oslo. By 1925 the work had increased to such a degree that more office and shipping space was needed. Willingly Jehovah's people made it possible to purchase a three-story build-

ing near the center of Oslo. For the next 58 years this building served as the Norwegian branch office and Bethel home. But after all these years it had become too small. Why?

The number of Kingdom proclaimers had grown from 165 in 1925 to about 7,000, and the congregations had increased from 20 to nearly 200. Furthermore, a larger number of Bible aids were being translated, necessitating more workers at Bethel. Though additional space for offices and living quarters was clearly needed, there was no more room in the building for extensions. The decision was thus made to do as Jehovah's Witnesses were doing in many other parts of the world—find a piece of land and build new facilities.

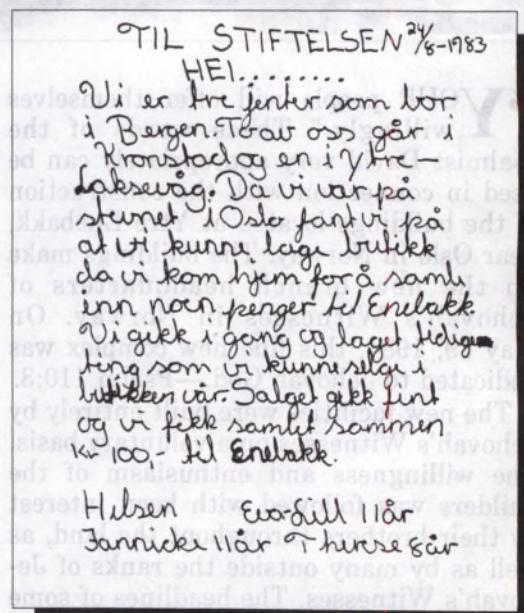
This might sound easy, since Norway has an average of only 13 persons for each square kilometer (about 34 persons a square mile). But nearly 97 percent of the country consists of mountains and forests, making these areas almost uninhabitable. So the search had to go on mainly in the southern part of the country, where most of the people live, and where transportation and communications facilities are better. As you can imagine, there is very limited land available in this part of the country. After one and a half years of intense searching, a very nice piece of land was located, only 30 kilometers (19 mi) from the center of Oslo.

What a Response!

When the Witnesses in Norway heard of the Society's plans, they responded wonderfully. They 'offered themselves willingly,' really proving that they belong to Jehovah's blessed people. Within three weeks the large sum needed to purchase the land was received. Since then the flow of contributions and interest-free loans has not stopped. Thus there has never

been any worry about how to pay the construction costs. Even children shared in giving. Three young girls sent a gift to the Society, with the letter you see below.

This fine, willing spirit was shown during the entire construction period. After the contract for the land was signed, a series of preparatory steps for the building project had to be taken. It was faith strengthening to see how Jehovah's spirit operated on his willing servants. A brother who owned a forest offered to let us cut down as many trees as needed for our lumber. Brothers experienced in logging traveled long distances on many weekends to cut down the 4,000 trees required. Oth-



Partial translation:

"At the assembly in Oslo we got the idea that when we got home we could open a stand in order to make some money for the building project. We started to make some pleasant things that we could sell at our stand. The sale went fine and we sold 100 kroner's worth (\$13). Greetings,
Eva-Lill 11 years, Jannicke 11 years and Therese 8 years."

At the sawmill donated trees were converted into useful lumber

ers repaired an old sawmill, which was installed on the newly purchased land. Within a month after the contract was signed, the first lumber was produced—at a very great saving.

Other Witnesses offered equipment and materials, helping considerably to keep down expenses. For example, a brother who installs elevators came in contact with the owner of a commercial building. In it was an elevator that the owner wanted dismantled and sold because the space was needed for other purposes. The brother explained about the building project and asked how much was wanted for the elevator. The answer was: "If you dismantle and take it away this week, you can have it for a layer cake." That elevator is now installed in the new branch. Other brothers brought carloads of foodstuffs—potatoes, vegetables, fish, meat and bread. Yes, Jehovah's spirit was operating on his willing servants to make it financially possible to build.

Workers From Where?

There was such great interest in this building project that more than 2,000 people made themselves available for the construction, for varying periods. They used their vacation or gave up well-paid jobs and lived in cramped construction quarters even in the very cold winter periods when the temperature was far below zero. Why? The workers' answer to these ques-



tions is: "Our love for Jehovah and our interest in the proclamation of the good news." In fact, all of them displayed the attitude that has always moved Jehovah's people in Norway, as elsewhere, to offer themselves willingly. You will enjoy knowing some of the background details.

A letter had been sent out about the need for workers. The response was enthusiastic. Brothers and sisters of all professions offered their skills, time and energy. Some retired people made their experience in the building trade available. Brothers from Denmark and Sweden wanted to share in the work, too, and they contributed much to the fine result. It was heartwarming to see how the brothers worked diligently in all kinds of weather.

Young people, often on their own initiative, went back out to the project after the ordinary workday was finished, in order to get some important work done in time. Thus the roofs were put on the buildings nearly two months ahead of schedule, and before the long Norwegian winter arrived. The interior work then could be done in heated structures without hindrances. The fine progress in the construction work also made it possible for the Bethel family



The attractive lobby
of the new branch
office

to move into their new home half a year before expected. That was especially helpful because a buyer offered a good price for the old premises if he could get them on a certain date.

In this way it came about that the Bethel family moved to their new home and workplace October 21, 1983, exactly three years after the land had been located.

Dedicated Buildings

It was announced that the dedication of the new branch complex would take place on May 19, 1984. The building workers and the Bethel family worked hard in order to get everything ready in time. The last big effort was performed the week before the dedication. Some brothers cleaned the rocky ground and prepared the soil while others paved the roads with paving stones and cleaned up a fountain. On the day before the dedication, many trees and bushes were planted. Before the day had ended, all of this had made the surroundings look like a nice park, a place well suited to receive the guests who were invited for the dedication. Truly a beautiful demonstration of Jehovah's people 'offering themselves willingly.'

The guests invited included those who had worked more than seven months at the construction site, some old-timers who had shared in the preaching work as far back as the 1920's, all circuit and district overseers, and the local congregation, which had been formed as a result of the building project.

Those invited included also representatives from the branch offices in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. All of them could tell of building projects that had been completed or were under way in their respective countries, showing that the Norwegian building project fits well into the pattern of expansion going on in Jehovah's worldwide organization.

One guest from a distant land was Milton G. Henschel of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York. He and his wife had arrived earlier in the week and had noted the diligent work of the brothers. In his dedication address Brother Henschel mentioned the willing spirit shown by the Norwegian brothers. He said: "It is marvelous to see how you have provided all the things needed and how you have worked together in order to have these buildings made." He reminded those using the buildings of the responsibility now placed upon them, saying: "When these buildings are used according to Jehovah's will, his blessing will be upon the work in this country, and that

is why the brothers in Norway have given their support to this building project."

Yes, Jehovah blesses those who willingly submit themselves to do his will. Jehovah's Witnesses in Norway are determined to do their assigned work in the

new buildings as well as out in the field, preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. They say: "In willingness I will sacrifice to you. I shall laud your name, O Jehovah, for it is good."—Psalm 54:6; Matthew 24:14.

Questions From Readers

■ Do Jehovah's Witnesses regard alcoholism as a disease?

Many people speak of addiction to alcohol as a disease, according to a broad definition of that word. Researchers, physicians and people assisting alcoholics are among these, for many of them use terms such as "disease," "sickness" or "illness" in describing or defining alcoholism. For instance, *Science Digest* of May 1984 states:

"Alcoholism is still a disease in search of an explanation. Once considered a disorder of the mind alone, it is now thought to have genetic and biochemical components as well . . . Recent findings support earlier evidence from Sweden that alcohol abuse often 'travels' within families." —Page 16.

There is, though, reason for caution about viewing alcoholism as a disease. Some alcoholics, and others, have been inclined to excuse their addiction to drinking or overdrinking, claiming that they really cannot help it, for it is a disease. Others seem to feel that if an alcoholic has a biological predisposition toward the problem, or his body has an impaired biochemical response to alcohol, then he cannot be viewed as morally reprehensible.

Christians, however, are concerned primarily with God's view

of matters. His view is righteous, balanced and permanent, in contrast to medical and psychological positions that may come into vogue for a time, only to be altered or abandoned later. Jehovah's perfect Word forthrightly condemns drunkenness, listing it among the things that can keep someone out of God's Kingdom. (Galatians 5:19-21) Romans 13:12, 13 advises: "The night is well along; the day has drawn near. Let us therefore put off the works belonging to darkness and let us put on the weapons of the light. As in the daytime let us walk decently, *not in revelries and drunken bouts*, not in illicit intercourse and loose conduct, not in strife and jealousy." Even if there may be a biological predisposition in certain cases, leading some to view it as a medical problem or disease, Christians recognize the moral aspects of it.

The apostle Peter wrote to Christians: "For the time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches, and illegal idolatries. Because you do not continue running with them in this course to the same low sink of

debauchery, they are puzzled and go on speaking abusively of you." (1 Peter 4:3, 4) Peter was imperfect himself and understood the human condition. Yet he did not say that all Christians had turned from excesses with wine except those who had some genetic or biological predisposition to problems with alcohol. In fact, the apostle Paul said that some Christians formerly had been fornicators, thieves, drunkards and extortioners. But no matter what had led them to such moral problems, they could and did change. Paul said: "You have been washed clean, you have been declared righteous in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God." —1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

So whether alcoholism is spoken of as a disease or not, we must hold to the high and good standard set in God's Word. Anyone who has developed an addiction to alcohol—whether through lack of self-control, ethnic or family influence, or even due to a biological quirk—should work to put it behind him, perhaps availing himself of sympathetic help. (See *Awake!* of July 8, 1982, pages 4-12.) Thus "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 4:2.

