

The

THE WATCHTOWER

**Where Can People Find
Freedom?**

**Was There Really a Virgin
Birth?**

The Tested Quality of Our Faith

MAY 1, 1976

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

May 1, 1976
Vol. 97, Number 9

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. One of Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's witnesses locally.

PUBLISHED BY
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
N. H. KNORR, President GRANT SUTTER, Secretary

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Average Printing Each Issue: 10,200,000

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Five cents a copy

| Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency | |
|---|--------|
| Watch Tower Society offices | \$1.50 |
| America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 | \$1.50 |
| Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135 | \$2.50 |
| Canada, 150 Bridgewater Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5 | \$1.50 |
| England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN | £1.50 |
| Hawaii, 1228 Pensacola St., Honolulu 96814 | \$1.50 |
| New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3 | \$1.50 |
| Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State | ₦1.10 |
| Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800 | ₱8 |
| South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, 1406 | R1.30 |

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, R.D. 1, Box 300, Wallkill, New York 12589, U.S.A. **POSTMASTER:** Send Form 3579 to same address.

The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated. Printed in U.S.A.

Where can people find **FREEDOM?**

HUMANS have a natural desire for freedom. They want to speak their beliefs freely without being muzzled or persecuted, and to worship according to their conscience. They desire to be allowed to pursue happiness, including freedom to earn a livelihood. Even then, however, if their employment is not work that they enjoy, or does not make use of their talents, they are unhappy.

Few are the people who have all of these freedoms today. Some have become discouraged, even embittered, and have struck out for self-determination. They want absolute freedom to act according to their desire. They want to practice things harmful to themselves, such as drug abuse, or to behave in a way detrimental to others. They feel that they should have the right to do anything they wish. Some even want freedom to do nothing.

But is this swing from a feeling of oppression under the present order of society to the other extreme—absolute independence—the way to freedom? The extent of anyone's freedom must logically be only in relation to the freedom enjoyed by others. If everybody did altogether according to his own selfish desire, no one would have any freedom. There would be no security in property rights, no personal safety, as everyone would be free to take whatever he wanted, to do whatever he wished. Goods and services would be almost impossible to obtain. No, there must be order, with everyone playing his reasonable part. And for order to exist, there

must be law. Proper laws and regulations work for happiness.

As an example, take the natural laws. We work within the framework of these laws and are happy that they exist. If the law of gravity were to be removed, humans could not stay on the surface of the earth. And no one can ignore the law of gravity with impunity.

MORAL LAWS

The same is true of the moral laws established by God. These are just as inexorable in their enforcement as are the natural laws, though not always as quickly enforced. Say, for instance, that a married man commits adultery. He may feel that extramarital sex is a "liberated" form of sex outlet and a beneficial experiment. But he has broken a moral law. In doing so he has damaged himself and violated the rights of others. (1 Thess. 4:3-6) He is in danger of contracting a loathsome venereal disease. His relationship with his wife will certainly suffer, no matter how "sophisticated" he may consider her, and a divorce may well result. If he has children, they also are harmed for life.

Some may say that this is antiquated thinking. But note what *Time* magazine, in its issue of November 25, 1974, reports about those who practice "open marriage"—an agreement to allow outside affairs for one's mate—actually adultery:

"Many counselors report severe and often unexpected problems of jealousy ('something whose power we all underestimated,' says

Novelist Robert Westbrook, whose open marriage broke up).

"... The pain of knowing about a partner's affairs is reviving an old middle-class strategy—hypocrisy, combining official faithfulness and unofficial freedom."

And what about those who take the "liberated" attitude toward sex—that anything goes, even between married partners? *Reader's Digest* of March 1975 cites the book *Divorced in America*, by editor and lecturer Joseph Epstein, which speaks of the fight that some prominent men have "won" against the former rigid code of sexual conduct and says: "But the triumph has issued not in greater freedom but only in greater license, which is not at all the same thing." Then, as to the emphasis on technique in sex, the book goes on to say: "In the process, tenderness is wrenched from sensuality, instead of the two flowing together; sex becomes fornication pure and simple; and we are more enslaved in our bodies than perhaps ever before."

Consequently, by the violation of a moral law a man (or a woman) may ruin his entire life. Not only does he imperil his family relationships. He loses the respect of others. Such a person may think that he is taking a "liberated" course, but afterward he cannot avoid loss of self-respect and the inner condemnation of a bad conscience.

GOD'S RIGHTS

While it is obvious that it is necessary to recognize the rights of others, the primary one whose rights we must recognize is God. Does God lose if we infringe on his rights? No, except that he feels "hurt at his heart" because he knows that we are taking a course against our best interests. (Gen. 6:6) We cannot add to or take away anything from God. The Bible says: "Who has first given to him, so that it must be repaid to him [the giver]?" (Rom. 11:35) But we can encroach upon

his rights, to the injury of ourselves and others.

What are the Creator's rights? They are to direct the things that he created to fulfill the purpose for which they were made. Right now all people are imperfect and have deviated from the course that they should be taking. Therefore, more than the usual attention should be given to what God says, in order that we might be brought back into the proper standing with him.

SLAVERY TO SIN AND DEATH

Nearly all people have been talking for centuries about achieving freedom. Why? Because they do not have it. All are slaves, not necessarily to men, but to sin and death. This means that to be really free, a person would have to be relieved of sin, which would mean release from sickness and death, which are produced by sin. (Rom. 6:23) When Jesus Christ was on earth he said to the Jews: "Every doer of sin is a slave of sin." He told them how they could be free from this deadly plague, saying: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. ... If the Son sets you free, you will be actually free."—John 8:31-36.

CAN A GOVERNMENT BY GOD BRING FREEDOM?

Could people live under God's laws and yet enjoy complete freedom? Let us consider some of the laws that were in effect when God had a representative government on earth.

Under God's government over Israel, each man had his own land inheritance. He and his family could earn a good livelihood from it. But every seventh year was a sabbath year, during which the fields were not to be sown or reaped. (Leviticus 25:1-7) Much time was thereby allowed for the family to be together. They could

discuss God's laws and dealings, getting to know him better. If anyone had talents along certain lines, he could develop and pursue these. Many became skilled in trades and crafts of a wide variety. They (including women) could thereby contribute to the welfare of the community.

Then every fifty years there was a "Jubilee," a time of great freedom. If a man had, because of financial reverses, "sold" his inheritance or a part of it, this was now restored to him. All debts were canceled. If the man or members of his family had become slaves to pay off some indebtedness, they were free to return to their inheritance. ("Slavery" was not as it is usually pictured today. Under Israel's law a Hebrew "slave" was actually treated as a hired laborer.) How could a people become more free?—Lev. 25:8-22, 39, 40.

Well, greater freedom in every respect will be enjoyed soon by those who live under God's Messianic kingdom, which will rule from the heavens for a thousand years. Jesus Christ as its King will represent God's sovereign power. Under the Kingdom, complete freedom from man's greatest enslaver, sin, along with the death that is a result of sin, will be brought about. (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:3, 4) Through the administration of Christ as King and High Priest, humans, including many resurrected ones, will be lifted up to absolute perfection of mind and body.

—Rev. 20:11-13; Heb. 11:39, 40.

Then, when the thousand years reach

their end, Christ will turn perfected mankind over to Jehovah God himself. (1 Cor. 15:24) All who then love God's sovereignty and who do not have the desire for the ruinous course of self-determination will be declared 'sons of God.' The apostle Paul, referring to this purpose of God, says: "The creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Rom. 8:21.

Children of God! Men and women will be God's own sons and daughters, in his own family—clean, perfect and holy, as he is. Under his love for them as Father, what freedom they will have! They will enjoy perfect health, free from any destructive natural calamities. (Isa. 25:6-8) There will be no man-made governments, no dictators, no bosses. (Luke 22:25, 26) People will not regard the practice of immoral things as "freedom." They will be subject to laws for the orderly operation of affairs, but they will not need laws against immorality, theft, murder and the depraved things to which man is now subject. About this the apostle Paul wrote:

"Now we know that the [Mosaic] Law is fine provided one handles it lawfully in the knowledge of this fact, that law is promulgated, not for a righteous man, but for persons lawless and unruly, ungodly and sinners, lacking loving-kindness, and profane, murderers . . . fornicators, . . . liars."
—1 Tim. 1:8-10.

When Jesus Christ was on earth as a perfect man of flesh and blood, he had no tendency to do these degraded things. Keeping the Law was natural for him. He proved that sin is not a necessary or inherent thing for fleshly persons, as the apostle Paul explains: "God, by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin [he came to offer himself as an atonement sacrifice to do away with sin], condemned sin in the flesh."—Rom. 8:3.

IN COMING ISSUES

- Life and Light
Go Hand in Hand.
- Preaching Christ—
Through Envy or
Goodwill.
- Joy from Having
Spiritual Needs Filled.

Even now, those who come to a knowledge of Jehovah God and his purposes can, though not yet perfect, please God and enjoy great freedom, as the apostle continues: "that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk, not in accord with the flesh, but in accord with the spirit [of God]." (Rom. 8:4) They follow "the perfect law that belongs to freedom."—Jas. 1:25.

True Christians therefore exercise great

freeness of speech in telling others about the freedom that mankind can attain through God's arrangement. (Phil. 1:18-20) But they follow the apostle Peter's counsel: "Be as free people, and yet holding your freedom, not as a blind for badness, but as slaves of God." (1 Pet. 2:16) They experience great comfort, peace and security even in this world enslaved to sin. They have proved for themselves the truth of Jesus' words: "You will find refreshment."—Matt. 11:29.

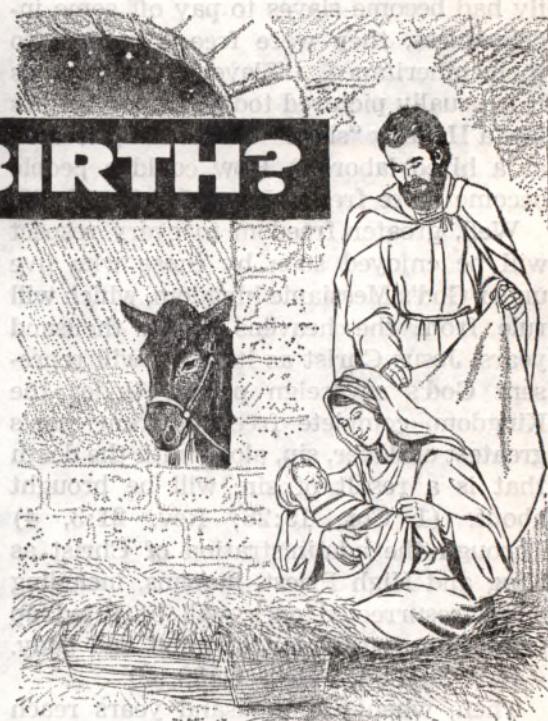
Was There Really

AVIRGIN BIRTH?

TO MANY, the belief that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin is a legend. They view it as no different from ancient myths of the Greeks and others that tell of humans being fathered by gods.

Is there a valid basis for this opinion? What about such ancient myths? Greek gods are depicted as lusting after women and producing "demigods" through them. Reasonably, then, after discussing legendary "virgin births," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Vol. 4, p. 791) concludes: "The yawning chasm between these pagan myths of polytheistic promiscuity and the lofty monotheism of the virgin birth of Jesus is too wide for careful research to cross." Regarding the assertion that the idea of Jesus' virgin birth finds its roots in an Oriental myth, the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (Vol. XII, p. 625) observes that "there is no evidence whatever" for the existence of such a legend. So, then, belief in Jesus' virgin birth can in no way be linked to any mythological supernatural births.

But does the Bible really teach that



Jesus was born of a virgin? Many people maintain that it does not, but that it presents Jesus as the *actual* son of Joseph. They point to the following: Inhabitants of Nazareth referred to Jesus as "the carpenter's son" and as "a son of Joseph." (Matt. 13:55; Luke 4:22) Philip told Nathanael: "We have found the one of whom Moses, in the Law, and the Prophets wrote, Jesus, the son of Joseph." (John

1:45) On one occasion persons who stumbled at Jesus remarked: "Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?"—John 6:42.

Do these quotations from the Bible really mean that Jesus was actually the son of Joseph? No. In each case those speaking were simply expressing an opinion or common view. As Jesus was raised by Joseph and Mary at Nazareth, he was rightly regarded as their son. There was no reason for people in general to think otherwise. That Jesus' being called the "son of Joseph" was simply current opinion is confirmed at Luke 3:23, where we read: "Jesus himself, when he commenced his work, was about thirty years old, being the son, as the opinion was, of Joseph."

An examination of what the Bible says about Jesus' being conceived reveals clearly that Mary was indeed a virgin. Told by the angel Gabriel that she would bear a son, Mary was amazed. "How is this to be," she asked, "since I am having no intercourse with a man?" Answering that question, Gabriel explained: "Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God's Son." Obviously it was to be a birth requiring divine intervention, a miracle. This explains Gabriel's adding the assurance: "With God no declaration will be an impossibility."—Luke 1:34-37.

From Gabriel's words we can also see that the holy spirit was to be the means by which Jehovah God would bring about something humanly impossible. Just what did God do? The Bible does not provide the details but does say enough to give us some idea as to what was involved.

Long before he was born as a man, Jesus had enjoyed a heavenly existence with his Father. He himself said: "I have come down from heaven to do, not my will, but the will of him that sent me. What, therefore, if you should behold the Son of

man ascending to where he was before?"—John 6:38, 62.

It Jesus' coming down from the heavenly realm required that he give up his existence as a spirit person. Of this, the Bible tells us: "He emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men."—Phil. 2:7.

After thus emptying himself of heavenly glory, Jesus had to have his life, with its distinctive personality traits, transferred to the womb of the virgin Mary. This was accomplished through the agency of God's holy spirit. It posed no problem for the Most High God. As the Creator, he fully understands the makeup of all his intelligent creatures. Nothing about human conception and the development of a baby in the womb is a mystery to him.—Job 31:15; Ps. 139:16; Eccl. 11:5.

It really should not be difficult to grasp that a transferal of life and personality traits could be and was accomplished invisibly by means of God's spirit. In the case of humans, the cell that results from the uniting of the sperm and the egg is smaller than the period at the end of this sentence. Yet just a tiny fraction of that cell contains the complete code for producing a boy or a girl with distinctive physical features and personality makeup. Accordingly, no more than a microscopic particle would have been needed to make Mary pregnant with the perfect Son of God.

When Mary actually did become pregnant by holy spirit, her betrothed Joseph was in a quandary as to what he should do. This was because he had not yet had sexual intercourse with her. His concerns about Mary's pregnancy were allayed when Jehovah's angel revealed to him the facts, saying: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife home, for that which has been begotten in her is by holy spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you must call his name Jesus." (Matt.

1:18-21) Thereafter Joseph and Mary were united in marriage. "But he," says the Bible, "had no intercourse with her until she gave birth to a son; and he called his name Jesus."—Matt. 1:25.

In no way, therefore, can Jesus be called the actual son of Joseph. He was indeed born of a virgin. But why was this necessary?

From the Bible we learn that the first man Adam, through disobedience, lost perfect human life for all his offspring. We read: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Rom. 5:12) Yes, Adam actually sold the entire human race into slavery to sin and death. (Compare Romans 7:14.) A ransom price was therefore needed to effect a release for Adam's off-

spring. According to God's standard of perfect justice as revealed in the Mosaic law, that price had to correspond exactly to what had been forfeited. The Mosaic law stated: "You must give soul for soul." (Ex. 21:23) Since Jesus was conceived by holy spirit without the aid of an imperfect human father, he had precisely what Adam forfeited—human life totally free from all weaknesses and imperfections. That is why Jesus could give himself "a corresponding ransom for all."—1 Tim. 2:6.

Scriptural evidence thus points to but one conclusion: There really was a virgin birth. Only by means of this miracle could one be born who would be a perfect human son of God, without even the slightest trace of imperfection. Thanks be to God for this miracle that has paved the way for humans to be freed from sin and death!

Generously Opening The Hand



TO
**THOSE
IN NEED**

OUR God Jehovah leads the way when it comes to being generous. And this is not simply because as the Owner of all things he has the wherewithal to be generous. It is because he is the very personification of love and every generous sentiment. As the sweet singer of Israel declared: "You [Jehovah] are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing." (Ps. 145:16) He makes his rain fall and his sun shine upon even the least deserving ones. (Matt. 5:45) How thoughtful, how considerate he is of all of us tiny creatures on this small planet!

As for those who come near to worship him, he teaches them to strive to be like

him in his dealings with others. Back in an age that some reputedly wise men of our time have viewed as "primitive," this generous God instructed his worshipers as follows: "You should generously open up your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land." (Deut. 15:11) With the inculcation of this teaching there would be no need for great charity drives or campaigns, no need to pay large salaries to professional fundraisers. People would respond to the teaching and example of the One who "gives generously to all and without reproaching."—Jas. 1:5.

Modern-day worshipers of Jehovah have also learned this lesson of generosity. They are deeply impressed with the words of their Lord and Master, Christ Jesus,

namely: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) Too, they have experienced the truth of those words, for they take note of the needy ones in their neighborhood and unobtrusively share with such ones their material goods. Also, when they hear of fellow worshipers of Jehovah in other parts of the earth caught up in some calamity, how swift they have been to come forward and insist upon sharing in special relief measures! They open their hands generously toward the needy ones.

SHARING A MORE PRECIOUS GIFT

There is, however, a greater need that Jehovah's people have learned about, a need of multitudes throughout the earth, a need that Christ Jesus called attention to during his special ministry here on earth. Speaking on one occasion to a large crowd of needy ones, he counseled: "Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you." (John 6:27) Again, he declared: "It is written, 'Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth.'"—Matt. 4:4.

So there is something much more valuable than those vital materials, bread and water. Jesus' apostles were well aware of this. When accosted by a crippled beggar, for example, Peter said to the man: "Silver and gold I do not possess, but what I do have is what I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!" What was it they imparted to him? Not just the healing, though that was marvelous enough. It is evident that they aroused in the man a deep appreciation of the one in whose name the healing was done, Jesus of Nazareth, and of the One who sent Jesus into the world, Jehovah God. The account goes on to tell how the man was "walking and leaping and praising God" as he went into the temple.—Acts 3:6-8.

Today Jehovah's Witnesses do not have that miraculous power to heal people of their physical infirmities, but they are glad and eager to share with others what they have. And what is that? An appreciation of Jehovah God and knowledge of his purposes toward mankind and this earth as expressed in the Holy Scriptures. To impart this knowledge to others they go out into the city streets and the countryside to find people who will listen to the information they have to offer. It is life-giving information, for Jesus in prayer to his Father in heaven said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.

Christian witnesses spend many hours in this service, doing so at their own personal expense, just so they can open-handedly share with others the good things that they have received from God. Even if many to whom they go do not appreciate their motive, or even question the purity of their motive, these Witnesses go on with their work of searching out worthy ones, people who can learn to appreciate the Bible message.

And something that is worthy of note: No one needs to tell a true follower of Jesus Christ just what he should give in the way of material and spiritual help to those in need. No, for the Bible principle expressed at Deuteronomy 16:17 holds true with them: "The gift of each one's hand should be in proportion to the blessing of Jehovah your God that he has given you." And who knows the measure of the blessing that each one has received from God? Only God and Christ Jesus and the individual worshiper. So when a Christian meditates upon all the blessings that a generous God has showered upon him, he does not have to be urged to share with others. He is motivated by a grateful heart to do so.

Having in mind the urgent need of multitudes around the earth to hear the life-giving message of God's kingdom, the association of Christian witnesses have organized for the satisfying of that need. To this end they have formed corporations in various lands, such as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania here in the United States of America. In accord with the requirements of the law in these many lands such corporations are used to care for technical matters, such as the printing and shipping of Bibles and Bible study aids in scores of languages, to handle the funds contributed by Jehovah's Witnesses and their well-wishers, to provide for the services of traveling representatives and to care for a large variety of related activities.

None of the officers and directors of these corporations are salaried. All are happy to give of their time and energies for the advancement of this service of declaring the "good news of the kingdom" in all the earth. (Matt. 24:14) Then, too, there are some men and women who have turned away from the opportunities of obtaining lucrative positions with attractive possibilities in order to share in the needful activity of printing and preparing and shipping Bible literature to almost every part of the globe. They serve in over 90 branch offices and printing establishments maintained by Jehovah's Witnesses in as many lands. They are glad that they can give the best years of their lives in a most unselfish service, receiving in return their food and living quarters and a small cash allowance to care for incidentals.

All these corporations, branch offices and printeries and their personnel, serve under the direction of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, a body that represents and acts for all the spirit-anointed worshipers of Jehovah God on earth. Thus the dedicated efforts of all of Jehovah's

people are tied together for effective accomplishment of the work that God has decreed must be done before the end of this old system of things comes. (Mark 13:10) Over 2,000,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses are thus organized for the earth-wide teaching and preaching service. They are all happy to share in the witnessing service in their own localities. Those they cannot personally reach in other regions and countries they reach in a united way, namely, through the services of the worldwide organization. They send their small contributions to the branch office in the country where they reside, even as those living in the United States of America send their gifts for the promotion of the Kingdom work to the Watch Tower Society at 124 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

Thus the words uttered by God's own Son in his sermon on the mountain are most applicable in our time: "Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled." (Matt. 5:6) The openhanded God by his spirit moves his worshipers on earth to follow his lead and reach out with spiritual succor to the needy multitudes, while at the same time not overlooking the material needs of worthy ones. And these loyal worshipers of the God from whom comes every perfect present thoroughly appreciate the corporate instruments by which they can share unitedly in reaching out and delivering their contributions and gifts to distant hungry and thirsty ones.

Truly we worshipers of such a God have a grand privilege! We can imitate his openhandedness and demonstrate that we are his sons and daughters. Great is our joy when the inspired description of a generous person can be applied to us: "The man is good who is gracious and is lending. . . . He has distributed widely; he has given to the poor ones. His righteousness is standing forever!"—Ps. 112:5, 9.

Insight on the News

● The problems of nations have become global in nature. Expanding populations, growing industrialization and modern technology have put an ever-growing demand on earth's material resources. Air and water pollution crosses many boundaries. Nuclear warfare by intercontinental missiles can affect every country.

In this regard, scientist Isaac Asimov recently declared: "Global problems can only have global solutions. Such problems cannot possibly yield to piecemeal treatment here and there. They cannot yield even to worldwide treatment if each nation works on its own." For mankind's survival, he said, "there must be—in connection with global problems—global decisions, global laws and global enforcement. All this is a way of saying that if we are to continue into the 21st century with civilization intact, we can do so only under the aegis [auspices or sponsorship] of a form of world government."

But such cooperation among nations is nowhere to be seen. Only God's kingdom, the one government for all the earth that Christians pray for, will provide the "global decisions, global laws and global enforcement" to unite all mankind.—Matt. 6:9, 10.

● The radiocarbon dating method has been widely accepted by many scientists as showing that humans lived back to at least 50,000 B.C.E. That conflicts with what the Bible says.

Highly Inaccurate
But physicist R. Brown of Andrews University claims that this radiocarbon dating method is highly inaccurate. After a ten-year study, he concludes that radioactive carbon atoms did not exist in the earth's atmosphere in significant amounts before 2000 B.C.E. and so cannot be used to date objects before then. Sometime around that date, he says, a major atmospheric change likely occurred, resulting in the buildup of radioactive carbon in the atmosphere.

One such vast change was the flood of Noah's day, which the Bible indicates to have taken place in 2370 B.C.E. That catastrophe without a doubt drastically altered atmospheric conditions.—Gen. 7:11, 12.

World

Government

Needed

industrialization and modern technology have put an ever-growing demand on earth's material resources. Air and water pollution crosses many boundaries. Nuclear warfare by inter-

continental missiles can affect every country.

In this regard, scientist Isaac Asimov recently declared: "Global problems can only have global solutions. Such problems cannot possibly yield to piecemeal treatment here and there. They cannot yield even to worldwide treatment if each nation works on its own." For mankind's survival, he said, "there must be—in connection with global problems—global decisions, global laws and global enforcement. All this is a way of saying that if we are to continue into the 21st century with civilization intact, we can do so only under the aegis [auspices or sponsorship] of a form of world government."

But such cooperation among nations is nowhere to be seen. Only God's kingdom, the one government for all the earth that Christians pray for, will provide the "global decisions, global laws and global enforcement" to unite all mankind.—Matt. 6:9, 10.

● The radiocarbon dating method has been widely accepted by many scientists as showing that humans lived back to at least 50,000 B.C.E. That conflicts with what the Bible says.

Highly Inaccurate
But physicist R. Brown of Andrews University claims that this radiocarbon dating method is highly inaccurate. After a ten-year study, he concludes that radioactive carbon atoms did not exist in the earth's atmosphere in significant amounts before 2000 B.C.E. and so cannot be used to date objects before then. Sometime around that date, he says, a major atmospheric change likely occurred, resulting in the buildup of radioactive carbon in the atmosphere.

One such vast change was the flood of Noah's day, which the Bible indicates to have taken place in 2370 B.C.E. That catastrophe without a doubt drastically altered atmospheric conditions.—Gen. 7:11, 12.

● Police chiefs in Colorado say that a breakdown in family ties and the indifference of society are important factors in the alarming increase of crime in their communities. Much of the crime is committed by persons sixteen to twenty-five years of age.

A police chief stated: "We raised a generation of people who don't care about anything or anyone. Many young people of today have no respect for the rights or ownership of other people and society has accepted it. There is no shame in breaking the law anymore." Another chief said: "There seems to be some kind of moral decentralization going on among families. We're finding the age bracket among criminal offenders is getting lower all the time."

But what example has been set for the young by adults? In our time adults have engaged in the worst mass killing in history; there has been enormous corruption in high places; and immorality is rampant at all levels of adult society. The Bible shows that society today is 'reaping what it has sown.'—Gal. 6:7.

● People in nations outside Christendom often express their dismay at the violence, corruption and immorality in Western countries that call themselves Christian. Religious commentator G. R. Plagenz observes that "religious nations are sick from overdoses of violence, greed, injustice, selfishness, prejudice, pornography, crime, drugs and weapons."

Thus Jesuit editor William Casey, in a special issue of the "Holy Cross Quarterly," says that he can understand why the non-Western world is "appalled at the level of public morality in those countries whose birth and development owe so much to the role of religion and who still pay lip service to the importance of religion in their lives."

God's Word shows that all of this is the fruitage of religion that has failed to live up to its obligations to God and his laws. It shows too that this bad fruitage is part of the clear evidence that this present wicked system of things is in its "last days," when people would be "having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power."—2 Tim. 3:1, 5.

Family

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We Put God's Service First

MY FATHER was a farmer from west Finland. Around 1911 he obtained some literature from Bible Students, who claimed that 1914 would be a significant year of world change. In 1912 he subscribed for *The Watchtower* in Finnish and received its issue of December 1, 1912, the very first one published in the Finnish language.

I still have my father's *Watchtower* magazines beginning with the first issue of the Finnish edition. From what happened in 1914 and afterward, it was obvious to my father that the prophecies were being fulfilled. Thus he became a zealous Bible Student, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called.

I was born September 7, 1914, and my earliest childhood is full of memories of my father's preaching efforts. He was active in municipal affairs, and he would use all his influence in the community to spread the good news about God's kingdom among the peoples. Even his gray horse, which took him on Sundays to give public talks, was known over a large area.

EFFECTS OF EARLY ASSOCIATIONS

When I was thirteen years old I left home to attend school in another district. As a result, direct contact with my father's instruction was broken and worldly teaching began to influence completely my thinking. Although in my heart I greatly

appreciated my father's personality, I would use what I learned in school to try to prove his Bible-based beliefs wrong.

In 1935 I entered Helsinki Technical University to continue my studies. The headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Finland is located in Helsinki, and at the time there was a vacant room. Since my father was a Witness, I was permitted to live there temporarily while going to the university.

Although my studies and college life took up most of my time, constant contact with the members of the Bethel family (as the family of headquarters workers is called) had a deep effect on me. Here I could see firsthand the marvelous influence that Bible truths can have on people's lives. The Christian spirit manifested at Bethel gradually began to mold my attitude, and finally, in September 1939, I was baptized to symbolize the fact that I had dedicated my life to serve Jehovah God. From that time on my life has been full of Jehovah's blessing and undeserved kindness.

ACTIVITY DURING WORLD WAR II

Later that fall, war broke out between Finland and Russia. My faith was put to the test many times as I would explain why, as a Christian, I couldn't take part in political or war activities. Eventually I wound up working in the State Railway

technical department in Helsinki, a position that suited my qualifications as a civil engineer.

The state of war was seized upon as an opportunity to stop the public preaching of Jehovah's Witnesses almost entirely. Our Christian organization was dissolved by order of the court, our magazines were banned, our literature was confiscated, the branch overseer was put in preventive custody, and many Witnesses were thrown into prison. All of this was done to Jehovah's Witnesses because they remained neutral, taking no part in the war.

However, Witnesses who were still free continued to do what they could. For example, a small group of us shared in a special work in behalf of those imprisoned. The group was called "Jehovah's Witnesses' Trustees," and by other names at times. What was the special work that this group accomplished?

Well, throughout the war we took petitions to everyone from the President of the Republic to individual members of Congress. These petitions requested that the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses be lifted or that Witnesses suffering persecution be helped. While the war lasted, results were not often discernible, but we were apparently very successful in giving a witness. Government officials on whom we called still respect and even admire us.

To cite an example: At the end of the war three Witnesses were sentenced to death in Yugoslavia. A committee of Witnesses went to Finland's Minister of Foreign Affairs about the matter, but he said he could not interfere in the affairs of another country. Then we went to the Minister for Defense, with whom we had become well acquainted as a result of previous interviews with him. Surprisingly, he agreed to help, and he wrote a personal letter to President Tito on behalf of our Christian brothers. The death sentence was repealed.

A few years ago this former Minister for Defense, who is now well known as a writer and lecturer in Finland, invited me to come and see him. He still remembered very well writing President Tito in behalf of our Christian brothers. He explained to me that even if he hasn't done any other good deed in his life, at least in this case he knows that he saved the lives of three men and he has never ceased to be happy about that.

MEETINGS DURING THE WAR

During the war there was also a ban on all our Christian meetings, yet they were held regularly nevertheless. We even had large conventions. How, you may wonder, did we do this?

The meetings were held as private gatherings. For example, an invitation card with my signature was given to a person who was vouched for by two trustworthy Witnesses. Thus, in a very short time, all the Witnesses in the Helsinki area received such an invitation to a "private gathering." These meetings were held regularly in the rooms of a certain student organization. Larger conventions were arranged in the same way. We felt that Jehovah's protection was on the arrangements, since not once was a meeting prevented.

At times we even sent a letter from such a meeting to government officials. A couple of days after one letter was sent by a group of 580 Witnesses, I received an order from the state police to report for questioning. The interrogator had our letter in his hand and he demanded information about the holding of meetings. He said that they were so well informed that they knew almost everything that people in the street said to each other, and demanded: "How is it possible that you can hold a meeting like that in the center of Helsinki without our knowing about it?" And this

meeting had been held just a few blocks from police headquarters!

MARRIAGE AND A FAMILY

In 1941, while the war was still in progress, I married Kaisa Alastalo. She had been a Witness for as long as I had, and had served as a "pioneer" preacher (one who spends at least a hundred hours a month in the preaching work). In time our family came to include a daughter and four sons. Now there was the challenge of inculcating in our children a love for Jehovah God and a desire to serve him.

The first thing that I sought to impress on their minds was a deep appreciation for Jehovah and his congregation of people. We began each day with a discussion of a Bible text and with prayer. And we never missed one of the weekly congregational meetings, except in cases of sickness. "Sentiments lead to loss of life," was the slogan of my wife whenever maternal sympathy for our children was inclined to overrule what was truly in their best interests. And how we were blessed!

When our eldest child, the girl, was thirteen years old, she asked our permission to become a pioneer. We agreed, on the condition that neither her school grades nor her health suffered. And neither did during the two years she pioneered while going to school. In 1957 she left school and became a special pioneer far from home in central Finland. Later she married, and is now serving with her husband as a member of the Finnish Bethel family.

MOVE TO NEW TERRITORY

During the 1950's invitations were extended to Jehovah's Witnesses to move to places where the need for Kingdom preachers was greater. We would discuss the matter now and again as a family. How-

ever, I had a good job, and we had a beautiful house in a lovely suburb of Helsinki, a location ideal for rearing children. But one day a newspaper advertisement for engineers to work for the State Railways caught my eye. I had experience in the Railways, and the job openings were in cities where there were only a few Witnesses. If we were really serious about moving to serve where the need was greater, this was the time to do it.

One winter day in 1960 a large truck pulled up to what had been our home for ten years and loaded up our belongings. We moved to Seinäjoki, about 250 miles (400 kilometers) northwest of Helsinki, where there was a small railway junction. At the time there was a congregation of twelve Witnesses in this city of 20,000 inhabitants. My monthly salary in my new job was only a little more than a third of what it was before, but this did not decrease the happiness of the family. The following year we built a house, and on the same block we helped the congregation to erect a small Kingdom Hall.

The transferring of the boys to a new school was successful, and the rural environment proved to be more healthful than Helsinki. We continually kept pioneering before our boys as a worthwhile goal for which to strive. And tears of joy came into my eyes when our eldest son, on leaving school in 1961, got into the small used car we had bought for him and went off to his pioneer assignment in north Finland. In time, his younger brother followed him. When it was our third son's turn, there was apparently a little collaboration between the others. "We won't walk on the same side of the street as you if you don't go pioneering," they told him.

The youngest of our children had a very severe attack of illness when he was a year old, and his illness grew worse over

the years. Now at twenty years of age he is confined to bed. He is also mentally retarded and unable to speak. We cared for him at home until he was nine, but at that age the work proved to be too much and we were able to get him into a modern hospital nearby where we can regularly visit him. Thus, when our other boys all left home to pioneer, the opportunity opened up in 1970 for my wife to begin pioneering. This had been her goal for a long time, and the whole family appreciates her zeal for Jehovah's service.

REALIZING JEHOVAH'S RICH BLESSING

My desire has always been to help my family to enjoy the full-time preaching work, and I have made adjustments in my secular work with that end in view. In 1967 the Director General of the Railways invited me to come to Helsinki to manage a department and join the Board of Directors of the Railways. I agreed on two conditions.

First, that I could leave early enough at the end of the week to travel home in time for the weekend congregation meetings. And secondly, that when I had carried out the organizational reforms that I considered necessary I could return to my former job in Seinäjoki. Six months later, however, I received an invitation to be the Deputy Director General. I agreed to this promotion on the same conditions as before.

This new position gave me many opportunities to witness to people that might not otherwise be reached with the Kingdom message. Also, the apartment that I rented in Helsinki became a base for my pioneer children who would come from different parts of the country to Helsinki to visit or to attend conventions. At the same time, I still could care for my congregational responsibilities in Seinäjoki (although a

lot of commuting was involved) and my wife had plenty of time to pioneer.

After a few years, however, I saw that it was time to return to live permanently in Seinäjoki again. So I reminded the Director General of the agreement that we had made, and he remembered it very well. But he never believed that I would give up such a prominent position and return to my former job. When I did in 1973 it aroused a lot of attention and gave rise to articles in leading Finnish magazines that were favorable to Jehovah's Witnesses.

The congregation here in Seinäjoki has enjoyed such fine growth that the Kingdom Hall we built on our block in 1961 became too small. So last spring our congregation of sixty Kingdom publishers started building a new Kingdom Hall on a spacious block of land leased from the city. To the surprise of all, this large, beautiful hall was completed by the beginning of September, in less than six months!

The dedication of the hall was an especially heartwarming occasion to me. For I looked around the filled Kingdom Hall and could see eight members of my family present, including me and my wife, and three of our children and their mates. In our family, six are serving as pioneers and two are at Bethel!

As I look back now, I can say that my wife and I have really had a happy, purposeful life in the service of God, as did my father also, and as my children are now having. And we look forward to many future blessings in God's service. If we accept Jehovah's invitation to serve him, he surely fulfills his promise, as recorded by his ancient prophet: "Test me out, please, in this respect . . . whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want." (Mal. 3:10)—Contributed.

THE TESTED QUALITY OF OUR FAITH

A Cause of Praise and Honor

THROUGHOUT the history of mankind men of faith have been put to the test, harassed and persecuted by those opposing them. This was true of Abel, who was killed by his own brother because his sacrificial offering to God was viewed with favor while Cain's was not. It was true of the Jewish prophet Jeremiah, who was thrown into a miry cistern for faithfully declaring the word of his God. It was true of the founder of Christianity, Jesus, because of his exposé of religious hypocrisy and because of his willingness to carry out the will of his Father.

² A record of the trials and faith of many such persecuted ones, both men and women of times past, is recorded for us in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. What courage it must have taken for these servants of God to maintain their faith when being tortured, mocked, scourged, put in bonds and imprisoned, even being stoned or dying by the sword! As Paul, a disciple of Jesus, commented: "The world was not worthy of them." And yet they all had not only a solid faith, an "assured expectation," but also the confidence that "God foresaw something better" for them. (Heb. 11:1, 2, 38, 40) What was it that they looked forward to with such confidence that they were willing to endure any kind of trial?

1. Give historical examples of persecution faced by worshipers of Jehovah.

2. How does the book of Hebrews describe the trials of faithful ones?

"In this fact you are greatly rejoicing, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been grieved by various trials, in order that the tested quality of your faith . . . may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

—1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

³ It was the heavenly kingdom that these faithful men and women put confidence in, "a kingdom that cannot be shaken," God's kingdom of righteousness. Paul reminded the Hebrew believers of his day of the awesome display of Jehovah God's majesty at Mount Sinai when the Law covenant was given. But he explained that something far grander was to come, the establishment of the heavenly kingdom that was to rule over, not just Israel, but the whole earth. "Wherefore, seeing that we are to receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us continue to have undeserved kindness, through which we may acceptably render God sacred service with godly fear and awe."—Heb. 12:18-28.

HATRED FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESSES

⁴ It is appropriate that the word "martyr," which is of Greek origin, literally means "witness," for many were the early Christian witnesses who endured persecution, even martyrdom, rather than abandon

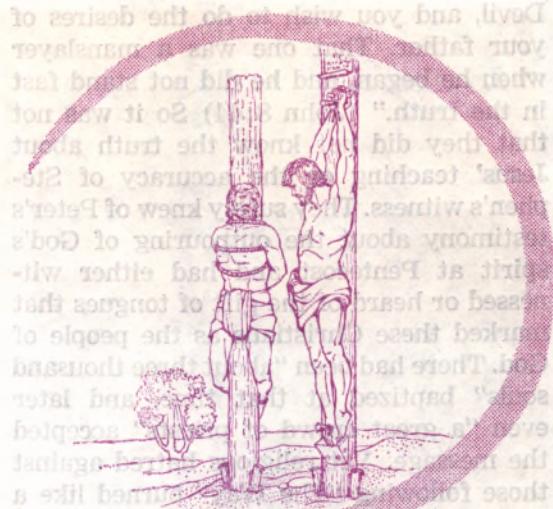
3. To what did they look forward with confidence?
4. What kind of treatment did early Christians face?

their faith. Paul himself was involved in such matters, as he later testified: "I used to imprison and flog in one synagogue after another those believing upon [the Lord Jesus]; and when the blood of Stephen your witness was being spilled, I myself was also standing by and approving and guarding the outer garments of those doing away with him."—Acts 22:19, 20.

⁵ Another early Christian martyr was James the brother of John, the first of the twelve apostles to die as a martyr, executed by Herod Agrippa I by the sword. (Acts 12:1, 2) And if it had not been for Jehovah's intervention, Peter too would have been killed by Herod. (Acts 12:11) Efforts were also made on many occasions to have the apostle Paul put to death. (Acts 22:22) Toward the close of the first century the aged apostle John wrote of another Christian who died in faithfulness: "Antipas, my witness, the faithful one."—Rev. 2:13.

⁶ Why was there so much opposition to the early disciples of Jesus? Why did the leaders of the people go to such lengths that they induced men to give false testimony leading to Stephen's death? Jesus had told some of his religious opposers bluntly: "You are from your father the

5. What are some individual examples of faithfulness?
 6. (a) What did Jesus say about his opposers? (b) Why were they without excuse in their opposition?



Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father. That one was a manslayer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth." (John 8:44) So it was not that they did not know the truth about Jesus' teaching or the accuracy of Stephen's witness. They surely knew of Peter's testimony about the outpouring of God's spirit at Pentecost and had either witnessed or heard of the gift of tongues that marked these Christians as the people of God. There had been "about three thousand souls" baptized at that time, and later even "a great crowd of priests" accepted the message. Yet religious hatred against those following "The Way" burned like a fire. (Acts 2:41; 6:7; 9:2) No doubt the chief priests well remembered Jesus' words condemning them. (Matthew chapter 23) So their opposition against these early Christians marked them as being against the operation of God's spirit.

SAUL BECOMES A DISCIPLE

⁷ But not all reacted in that way. Saul (who became known by his Roman name Paul) was one who made great changes in his life. (Acts 13:9) Although brought up under the Law covenant and with the viewpoint of the Pharisees, he changed from his respected position in the Jewish faith to share the persecution heaped on the early Christians. (Phil. 3:5, 6) He well knew the consequences of this change, yet he did not hesitate when he was convinced of what was right. It was a time of great persecution against the Christian congregation. Saul himself had been dealing "outrageously" against the early Christians, invading one house after another, dragging out both men and women to be put into prison. (Acts 8:1-3) In fact,

⁷. What kind of background did Paul have before becoming a Christian?

it was when he was on his way to Damascus with letters from the high priest authorizing him to bring as prisoners to Jerusalem any he found who professed Christianity, either men or women, that an event took place that profoundly changed his life.—Acts 9:1, 2.

⁸ Suddenly he was startled by a heavenly light. "He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' He said: 'Who are you, Lord?' He said: 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.' Still blinded by the light, Saul was led to Damascus. After three days a disciple named Ananias was directed to come to his aid. After being assured that this was the Lord's will, Ananias told him: "Saul, brother, the Lord, the Jesus that appeared to you on the road over which you were coming, has sent me forth, in order that you may recover sight and be filled with holy spirit." How would you have responded to such an event? Would you find it difficult to make a change, knowing it would probably mean persecution and hardship for you, possibly being rejected by your own family? There was no doubt in Saul's mind

⁸. What experience did Paul (or Saul) have in learning the truth, and how did he react?



Saul of Tarsus "did not become disobedient to the heavenly sight," but became a disciple of Jesus and an example of faith and endurance.—Acts 26:19

as to what he should do, for we read: "Immediately in the synagogues he began to preach Jesus, that this One is the Son of God."—Acts 9:3-5, 17, 20.

AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH

⁹ As we consider his example of faith, Saul's endurance under trial, and the guidance and protection that Jehovah granted him, we find encouragement to overcome the trials facing true Christians in this generation. Even knowing that opposition would face him as it did the other Christians in those days, Saul was not one to turn back despite the fact that the Lord had told Ananias: "I shall show him plainly how many things he must suffer for my name." After spending a few days with the disciples in Damascus, Saul zealously began preaching. As a result, it was not long before the Jews plotted to kill him and started watching the city gates day and night in order to do away with him. But Jehovah was not going to let this "chosen vessel" be so easily set aside. (Acts 9:15, 16) The plot became known to Saul, and his disciples helped him to escape from the trap, letting him down by a basket through an opening in the wall. This was only the beginning of an exciting life in the preaching work for this former persecutor of Christians.

¹⁰ Saul and Barnabas were especially selected by holy spirit to accomplish the work of announcing the word of God to Jews as well as to non-Jews. On their first missionary tour they met a man described as a false prophet and a sorcerer who was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus. When Elymas the sorcerer began opposing Saul and Barnabas, trying to turn the proconsul away from listening to their message, Saul (now called Paul) filled with

9. (a) How are Saul's experiences an encouragement to modern Christians? (b) What narrow escape did he have in Damascus when he began preaching about Christ?

10. How did Saul's experience with Elymas indicate demonic opposition?

holy spirit, asked him: "Will you not quit distorting the right ways of Jehovah?" Immediately the sorcerer became temporarily blind. As a result, the astounded proconsul put faith in the things he had seen and heard.—Acts 13:6-12.

¹¹ Paul and Barnabas continued on to Antioch in Pisidia, where they gave a bold witness to the people of the city. When the Jews became enraged at their preaching concerning Jesus' resurrection, the two men turned their attention to the people of the nations, referring to the prophetic words of Isaiah: "I have appointed you as a light of nations, for you to be a salvation to the extremity of the earth." (Acts 13:47) And while Gentiles who were righteously disposed began to rejoice at this, the Jewish populace drove Paul and Barnabas out of the city. Yet they continued on their way filled with joy and holy spirit. At their next stop, in Iconium, they had a similar experience. As a result of their preaching, a great multitude of Jews and Greeks became believers, but those who did not accept the message stirred up the people, with both Jews and Gentiles becoming intent on doing them violence, so that it was necessary for them to flee elsewhere in order to continue preaching the good news.

¹² In Lystra, after Paul brought about the healing of a man lame from birth, the people thought the two men were gods. They called Barnabas Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, since he was the one taking the lead in speaking. However, Paul and Barnabas restrained them, saying: "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are humans having the same infirmities as you do, and are declaring the good news to you." (Acts 14:15) About then the Jews from Antioch and Iconium who

11. (a) Why, and on what Scriptural basis did Paul and Barnabas preach to the Gentiles in Antioch and Iconium? (b) What did they do after being driven out of these cities?

12, 13. (a) What happened to Paul in Lystra? (b) How did Paul show his trust in Jehovah?

were still on Paul's trail arrived and, finding Paul, they stoned him and dragged him outside the city, imagining he was dead. But by Jehovah's undeserved kindness Paul survived this ordeal, and the next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe, where he continued with his preaching and made quite a few disciples.

¹³ Perhaps you are thinking, 'After all of that I would have given up before I got killed.' But not so with Paul. In fact, the account at Acts 14:21 relates that Paul and Barnabas *returned* to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, where they had had so much opposition, as they wanted to strengthen and encourage the disciples. They reminded them, "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." So they continued in their work of building up the congregations and strengthening those who had become believers in Jehovah.—Acts 14:22.

FELLOW BELIEVERS CAUSE DISPUTES

¹⁴ Unfortunately, it was not just opposers who brought problems at times, but even fellow believers caused disputes, claiming, for example, that unless the Gentiles got circumcised according to the custom of Moses, they could not be saved. (Acts 15:1, 2) After considerable disagreement on the point, it was determined that Paul and Barnabas and others would submit the matter to the apostles and older men of the central congregation in Jerusalem. After hearing their testimony and that of Peter and others, what was the decision? Not to trouble those of the nations who were turning to God except with the necessary things, that they abstain from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from blood.—Acts 15:12-20.

¹⁵ Paul stood firm for the truth. In discussing his visit to Jerusalem, he says

14. What argument did some advance, and how was it resolved?

15. Because of what situation did Paul correct Peter?

that when "false brothers . . . sneaked in," "to these we did not yield by way of submission, no, not for an hour, in order that the truth of the good news might continue with you." In Antioch, when even Peter put on a pretense by not eating with or associating with his Gentile brothers in order not to offend some visiting Jewish Christians, Paul "resisted him face to face, because he stood condemned." He explained to the Galatians: "I do not shove aside the undeserved kindness of God; for if righteousness is through law, Christ actually died for nothing." (Gal. 2:4, 5, 11, 21) This helped the Galatians to understand that Christians are declared righteous by faith in Christ, not by conforming to the works of the Mosaic law. The Law covenant had been taken out of the way, and now the new covenant was in operation. Though some were slow to grasp this, Paul did not become discouraged by their display of human reasoning.

PAUL NOT DISCOURAGED BY OPPOSITION

¹⁶ At Philippi, on his second missionary tour, Paul had the pleasure of bringing the truth to a business woman named Lydia, who opened her heart wide to the things spoken by Paul and showed great hospitality to these brothers. Here in Philippi too, Paul encountered problems, this time from the owners of a servant girl with the power of divination. Day after day she kept calling out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who are publishing to you the way of salvation." (Acts 16:17) Finally Paul got tired of it and, in Jesus' name, ordered the demon to leave the girl. When her owners who had profited by her predictions saw that she had lost this supernatural ability, they took Paul and Silas before the magistrates to have them beaten and imprisoned. Again this would have been enough to discourage many, first

16. How did the trials of Paul and Silas in Philippi turn into a blessing?

being beaten and then being thrown into jail, but not so with Paul and Silas. The account tells us that in the middle of the night, as they were praying and praising God with song, suddenly a great earthquake occurred, breaking open the jail doors and loosing the prisoners. Rather than trying to escape, Paul stayed to reassure the jailer, who was about to kill himself, and took the opportunity to share the word of Jehovah with him and his family. As a result, they were baptized that very night.¹⁷

¹⁷ Despite everything, Paul was not discouraged. He maintained the right attitude. As he wrote the Corinthian brothers: "When being reviled, we bless; when being persecuted, we bear up; when being defamed, we entreat." (1 Cor. 4:12, 13) He could see the truth of Jesus' words: "A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:20) Paul considered it a privilege to go through trials on account of the good news.—Phil. 1:27-30.

¹⁸ On Paul's third missionary tour he ran into opposition again, this time from craftsmen who made religious shrines. Demetrius, a silversmith who profited by making shrines of the goddess Artemis, warned the people that Paul was teaching that gods made by hands are not gods and that soon the shrine makers' occupation would come into disrepute. The city got into an uproar over this, and it was only with great effort that the city recorder calmed the people down and got the crowd to disperse. (Acts 19:23-41) Yes, Paul's life was threatened and his faith tested time after time.—2 Cor. 4:7-12; 6:3-10; 11:23-27.

¹⁹ Finally, while Paul was at Caesarea,

17. How did Paul view his trials, and what attitude did he maintain?

18. How did a silversmith oppose Paul's preaching, but what finally happened?

19. What warning did Paul receive, but why did he not shrink at the prospect of death?

the prophet Agabus warned him that he would be bound in Jerusalem and delivered into the hands of people of the nations. What would Paul do? Would he flee elsewhere? No, for he said: "I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21:10-13) He felt that, no matter what happened to him, he had been faithful in his assignment of service and that he was "clean from the blood of all men." —Acts 20:26.

²⁰ As foretold, in Jerusalem Paul was falsely accused at the temple and dragged outside. Only the quick intervention of the Roman military commander prevented his death. Paul was thereafter privileged to give his defense before the Jewish supreme court called the Sanhedrin. But here, too, dissension arose over the message he spoke. That night an angel stood by him and told him to be of good courage. Just as he had given a thorough witness in Jerusalem so he would bear witness in Rome. (Acts 23:11) Thereafter Paul's case was heard by Governor Felix, then by his successor, Porcius Festus, and finally by King Agrippa II, before he was sent to Rome. Two years he remained in custody, preaching to all who came to visit him. Apparently he was pronounced innocent and released by Caesar Nero. —2 Tim. 4:16, 17.

²¹ However, Paul was imprisoned again at Rome about 65 C.E. It was during this imprisonment that he wrote his second letter to Timothy and implied that his death was near. (2 Tim. 4:6-8) Likely he suffered martyrdom at the hands of Nero in 66 C.E.

²² There was no doubt about the tested quality of Paul's faith. He had good reason to have faith. Not only had he been

20. To whom was Paul privileged to give a witness, and how did he use the time during his imprisonment?

21, 22. (a) What evidence do we have that Paul expected to die as a result of his second imprisonment?

(b) Why did Paul have such strong faith?

called in a miraculous way, but time after time he had seen the operation of God's spirit in the things he was privileged to perform and in angelic intervention on his behalf. But despite the intense hatred he encountered from both demonic and human sources, he did not let his faith waver nor was he turned aside from the work to which he had been called. He put his confidence in the Lord and in the resurrection hope.—1 Cor. 15:14, 21, 22.

²⁸ Paul was not ashamed of his course of life. As he told King Agrippa: "I could wish to God that . . . not only you but also all those who hear me today would become men such as I also am, with the exception of these bonds." (Acts 26:28, 29; Rom. 1:16) Despite the trials he endured, he encouraged others to follow the same course. To the brothers at Corinth, he wrote: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1) He was not the type of person who went looking for trouble nor one who reveled in hardship or martyrdom as though it brought

glory to the individual. Yet he stood firm for the truth. When he wrote the Thessalonians, he rejoiced that the good news did not result in speech alone, "but also with power and with holy spirit and strong conviction . . . and you became imitators of us and of the Lord, seeing that you accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit."—1 Thess. 1:5, 6.

²⁴ Few of us will ever face all the trials Paul did. Yet we can all demonstrate faith like his. We can remember his encouraging words to the Hebrews: "Now we are not the sort that shrink back to destruction, but the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul." (Heb. 10:38, 39) Knowing that the tested quality of our faith works out endurance, we should be imitators of Paul as he was of Christ Jesus. By our faithful endurance despite the trials that come upon us, we know that in our case also the tested, enduring quality of our faith will be "a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. 1:5-7, 9; Jas. 1:2, 3.

23. How do we know that Paul was not ashamed of his course of life?

24. What blessings come from our demonstrating faith like Paul's?

Not Holding OUR LIVES TOO DEAR

IN JESUS' long-range prophecy spanning 1,900 years, he foretold intensified persecution for his faithful followers in the last days. He warned: "People will lay their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, you being haled before kings and governors for the sake of my name. It will turn out to you for a witness. . . . I

1. What did Jesus say would happen to his followers in the "last days"?

will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your opposers together will not be able to resist or dispute. Moreover, you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death; and you will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name."—Luke 21:12-17.

² Jesus did not say these things to dis-

2. (a) For what particular reasons do Christians not suffer? (b) But from what source can persecution be expected?

courage his followers, but to forearm them. He told them to "have no fear" for "he that finds his soul will lose it, and he that loses his soul for my sake will find it." (Matt. 10:31, 39) So Christians from that time to this have not been surprised or perplexed at the opposition they have encountered as a result of their stand for the truth or for sharing the good news with others. However, their suffering never has been as a result of wrongdoing. "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations," Peter exhorted them. "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." (1 Pet. 2:12; 4:3) "It is better to suffer because you are doing good, if the will of God wishes it, than because you are doing evil." (1 Pet. 3:17) Opposition was bound to come from the great adversary or opposer, Satan, and those taking his side against Jehovah's servants. Paul could confirm this from his own experience, as he wrote Timothy: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted."—2 Tim. 3:12; 1:7, 8.

FACING SPIRITUAL WARFARE

³ The last book of the Bible also foretold that persecution would continue in the time of the end. The account in Revelation chapter 12 reveals that Satan was cast down from heaven to earth, "having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Rev. 12:9, 12) He has always claimed that men are motivated by selfishness, not by love of God, and that they would forsake God if their lives were at stake. Now time is running out for Satan and those aligned with him, so he intensifies his opposition toward God's servants, waging war against them. Each one has to

decide which side of this controversy he wishes to be on, and whether he will serve God faithfully out of love no matter what comes.

⁴ Satan uses certain elements in his attacks against true Christians. One, described at Revelation 13:1, 6-8 as the "wild beast" or the political element, not only was instrumental in the death of Christ and many of his followers in the first century, but also was foreseen to wage war against the "holy ones" and to speak "blasphemies against God" in its attempt to get the support and worship of all peoples in the last days. Often supporting this political "beast" in its actions is the false religious organization fittingly described at Revelation 17:5, 6 as "Babylon the Great," which is depicted as "drunk with the blood of the holy ones and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus." Both of these elements, the political and the religious, worked together in bringing about the death of Jesus, as well as the imprisonment of the apostle Paul, Jewish zealots turning Jesus over to the Roman state.

⁵ Throughout the centuries Satan has used as the ultimate threat, the key weapon, the fear of violent death to try to break the integrity of Jehovah's servants. Most people do not get too concerned or upset at the advent of old age with the prospect of eventual death, but may get very fearful if threatened with immediate death, being inclined to compromise or do anything to avoid it. Satan well knows this. But we should remember the faithful course of Jesus, that he learned obedience by the things he suffered and that he showed his loyalty even to death. As Hebrews 2:14, 15 says, it was "through his death [that] he might bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death,

3. (a) What charge has Satan made against the servants of God? (b) What decision does each person have to make, and what makes this decision difficult?

4. What elements were foretold to share in the attack against true worshipers?

5. (a) What key weapon has Satan used to break integrity? (b) How can we enjoy freedom from fear?

that is, the Devil; and that he might emancipate all those who for fear of death were subject to slavery all through their lives." We do not want to be in slavery due to fear of death. Instead, we should put our confidence in Jehovah and be prepared to face any tests that may come, even as Paul and other men of faith of times past did.

⁶ The three Hebrews in captivity in Babylon were of this sort, not holding their lives too dear, being unwilling to compromise even though it could mean their death. When warned that they would be thrown into the fiery furnace if they did not bow before the golden image erected by King Nebuchadnezzar, they boldly replied: "Our God whom we are serving is able to rescue us. Out of the burning fiery furnace and out of your hand, O king, he will rescue us. But if not, let it become known to you, O king, that your gods are not the ones we are serving." The account shows that these men were delivered from the furnace, not a hair of their heads being singed and without even the smell of fire coming upon them.—Dan. 3:17, 18, 27.¹

⁷ Jesus also faced death in the service of his heavenly Father. On one occasion those listening to him in the synagogue at Nazareth became so filled with anger that they led him to the brow of a mountain, intending to throw him down, but without success. (Luke 4:28-30) Yet the time did come for him to die in the accomplishment of Jehovah's purpose. Now the chief priests taunted him, saying: "He has put his trust in God; let Him now rescue him if He wants him, for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" (Matt. 27:43) But God did not prevent Jesus' death. In effect, "Jehovah himself has caused the error of us all to meet up with that one," but "because of

6. What fine example of faithfulness do we find in Daniel chapter three, and how did Jehovah bring deliverance?

7. (a) What attitude did Jesus display when taunted and threatened with death? (b) Why did Jehovah permit him to be killed?

his wounds there has been a healing for us." (Isa. 53:6, 5) Thus as a redeemer and ransomer for the human family, he accomplished even more by his death in faithfulness than by all the rest of his ministry on earth. (Mark 10:45) The course of faithfulness he followed was not an easy one, yet he did not hold his life as too precious, but was willing to offer it as a sacrifice on behalf of mankind. (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) Even when suffering, he did not resort to threatening or reviling in return. As Peter commented: "Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely."—1 Pet. 2:21-24.

LOYALTY TO DEATH

⁸ Having proved his loyalty to death, Jesus was raised by Jehovah to spirit life in the heavens where he is in a position to 'bring Satan to nothing' as the one who has used both the threat and the execution of violent death in his efforts to control mankind and to break the faith of the righteous ones. (Heb. 2:14) Jesus counseled his disciples Andrew and Philip: "He that is fond of his soul destroys it, but he that hates his soul in this world will safeguard it for everlasting life." (John 12:25) Thus to love our life with undue desire to preserve it at all cost may mean loss of our prospects for everlasting life. But our not being unduly concerned with threats to force us to compromise our faith can mean safeguarding our prospects for eternal blessings in Jehovah's new system.

⁹ We do well to remember that since Christ "himself has suffered when being put to the test, he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test." (Heb. 2:18) Jehovah has also promised to give us the strength to bear up through trials. (Ps. 55:16, 22; Isa. 35:4) So Chris-

8, 9. (a) What power does Jesus now possess? (b) Why should we not be fearful about facing trials?

tians are encouraged even though they expect persecution. Suffering for their adherence to the truth brings them no shame, but, rather, joy that they can stand firm under reproach in a way that honors Jehovah's name.—1 Pet. 4:12-14.

¹⁰ As Paul said: "I do not make my soul of any account as dear to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:24) Similarly in the prophecy at Revelation 12:11 we are told that Christ's brothers would prove themselves conquerors over Satan despite his false accusations of them before God. "And they conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their witnessing, and they did not love their souls even in the face of death." Thus the victory over Satan will include, not only his defeat at the hand of the "Lord of lords and King of kings," but also the moral victory of all faithful servants of God who show themselves faithful even in the face of threat of death. (Rev. 17:14; 20:1-4) Christ's followers are conquerors "because of the blood of the Lamb," in that they have confidence in the redemptive value of his sacrifice. They also show themselves conquerors by "the word of their witnessing," not being intimidated by opposition intended to silence the proclamation of the Kingdom message.¹⁰

¹¹ Do we have the same spirit? Do we love Jehovah so much that we would not shrink back even from death if necessary to prove our loyalty? Do we really believe that Jehovah is the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him, so that even if we die we know we have not lost out but have the hope of life through the resurrection? Since hatred along with persecution of Jesus' followers in all nations is one of the

10. (a) What did Paul indicate was most precious to him? (b) In what way can Christ's followers be conquerors?
11. How can persecution actually increase our faith and happiness?

signs he gave regarding the time of the end, the fact that it is now taking place should actually strengthen our faith. (Luke 21:12) We do well to remember Jesus' words: "Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake." (Matt. 5:11, 12) Yes, it can even be a cause for joy to be privileged to demonstrate the tested quality of our faith under trial as we maintain a good conscience before God.—Jas. 1:2, 3.

HATED WITHOUT CAUSE

¹² Christians know that when they suffer as Christians it is for a righteous cause. It is not for taking sides in politics, or for being involved in a seditious conspiracy, or some crime of violence. For as Peter wrote: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer . . . But if he suffers as a Christian, let him not feel shame, but let him keep on glorifying God in this name." (1 Pet. 4:15, 16) So it is not for any such wrongdoing that Christians face persecution in this generation, but, rather, for zealously observing the commandments of God and sharing in the work of bearing witness to Jesus. (Rev. 12:17) It should come as no surprise then that, in more than forty of the 210 countries where Jehovah's Witnesses were busy last year preaching about God's kingdom, there have been hindrances or opposition to the work, such as restrictions on public assembly, or prohibitions on the house-to-house activity, or refusal to accord legal recognition to the work or to permit importation of certain literature, or refusal to legalize marriages, even outright bans and imprisonment of those speaking about the "good news" to others.¹¹

12. (a) What did Peter say about Christian suffering? (b) What problems do Jehovah's Witnesses face in some countries?
13. Why are true Christians objects of world hatred?

"objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name." (Matt. 24:9) Certainly this has not been true of those who are Christians in name only, those who are 'friends of the world,' supporting the old system in its policies, no matter how contrary to Scriptural principles they may be. (Jas. 4:4) But it is true of those who, by reason of following the precepts of Jesus, make themselves "no part of the world." Just before his death Jesus prepared his followers for what was to come and the opposition they would face, not only in that century, but also in the last days, when he said: "These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you. Bear in mind the word I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also . . . But it is that the word written in their Law may be fulfilled, 'They hated me without cause.'"—John 15:17-25.

¹⁴ That this hatred exists in modern times can be seen by the following reports from various parts of the world. The Witnesses in a Spanish-speaking country report: "There is a campaign against us on all fronts, on the radio, over the TV, in the newspapers, in worker centers, at the hospitals, in the streets, in the schools, even block by block. A great number of friends are without jobs. We are as the Israelites in Egypt. We continue encouraging the friends to go on with the good news because no demon or human can stop them." However, the brothers face severe hardships. Parents have been im-

prisoned from three months to a year because their children have refused to take part in flag ceremonies. They have steadfastly followed the course of the faithful Hebrews mentioned in the third chapter of Daniel. This issue has involved at least one thousand cases. According to the law, children can be taken from their parents if the judges find it advisable. Pregnant mothers have been incarcerated with all sorts of criminal types, and have been forced to leave little ones at home in an effort to stop these mothers from teaching their children God's Word.—Ex. 20:4, 5.

¹⁵ A brother, fifty-seven years of age, was accused of proselytism and was fined \$100. A sister nineteen years of age was sentenced to a month in a penitentiary for the same reason. Many have been accused of being involved with the American C.I.A. to stir up hatred against them. Brothers are often arrested for having "illicit meetings," sometimes even being arrested on such charge late at night when everyone in the home is sleeping. Some have been imprisoned for their conscientious objection to military service. Many have suffered beatings or were forced to work long hours in the fields. Three brothers were sentenced to two years in prison for refusing to work on tobacco for reasons of conscience. The government does not permit children of Jehovah's Witnesses to attend meetings for religious instruction. Kingdom Halls have been closed and all types of restrictions have been put on Christian meetings so that newly interested persons and young ones cannot receive instruction in God's Word. Yet still the brothers write: "Jehovah our God is the one in whom we have to trust. Jehovah loves his people tenderly and he shows his power marvelously."

14. In what ways have the Witnesses in one country been put under pressure?

15. What trials and hardships have the brothers had to endure, and how have they been strengthened?

¹⁶ In another country where the work is banned some of the brothers arranged to travel to a nearby country to enjoy the convention program. However, on their return, eleven of them were beaten and were thrown into prison for two days. A brother visiting there was arrested on arrival and the Bible literature he had with him was confiscated. After some time in prison he was finally sent out of the country. The night before his departure the local television station announced that all religions are free in this country, but, of course, no mention was made of Jehovah's Witnesses. Seven brothers were imprisoned for some months in this country, but the circuit overseer reported: "They are busy preaching the good news to their fellow prisoners." Arrangements were made for these brothers to be helped with food so that they did not have to suffer unduly during their imprisonment.

¹⁷ In a country where religion has strongly influenced the government until recently, two special pioneers were imprisoned for their preaching work. They say that no assemblies can be held in the country, and the road controls have been tightened so the possibilities are slim for anyone to leave to enjoy an assembly elsewhere. A letter from them says: "In spite of talk about personal freedom for every citizen, a number of Christians were imprisoned just because of preaching from the Bible, which is considered an activity hostile to the church. We received reports from at least three congregations where groups of brothers were arrested during their house-to-house service, during meetings, and even in their homes. Some were offered freedom if they would pay a fine for having preached things not in har-

mony with church doctrine. They preferred, rather, to remain in prison, counting it an honor to suffer for Christ's sake."
¹⁸ In still another country where the government has refused to recognize the work legally, the brothers continue with their Bible teaching work despite much opposition. Because of not getting involved in political matters, not buying political party cards or singing political songs, many brothers and sisters have been terribly beaten and over 500 jailed. When the circuit overseer visited one area of strong opposition, he was badly beaten until he fainted, but thereafter he never stopped encouraging and building up the brothers. When told he must pay a fine, he explained: "Those you have locked up with me are my home, my food and my brothers, so where will I find money for a fine?" Even in the face of dire threats, one of these brothers commented: "What a privilege to test my faith and see prophecies come to fulfillment!"

¹⁹ Of the 502 locked up, 124 were women and 21 of these were pregnant. The child of a sister who was born in prison due to this persecution was appropriately named "Persecution." During their imprisonment the brothers were not properly fed except by their own children who brought them food. When they were finally freed, they were warned not to cultivate their land. They were also told: "You must not be seen two or three together in one place. You must not be seen with tracts, booklets, books or singing songs of your religion. You should not be heard from you. You should not be seen having meetings. Do not be calling each other 'brothers.'" (Compare Daniel 6:7, 10.) Despite all of this, the brothers did not give up or quit. They simply determined to meet together

16. Why have the brothers been willing to risk imprisonment, and how have they turned the situation to Jehovah's praise?

17. How has false religion instigated imprisonment for some brothers?

18. Over what issues have some Witnesses courageously faced beatings and jailing?

19. What threats were made when the Witnesses were released, but how have they responded?

in small groups at different times and on different days. In spite of all the persecution in this area, a tremendous witness has been given as the people see that Jehovah's Witnesses do not return evil for evil toward those who persecute them.—Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Cor. 10:13.

So throughout the world Jehovah has faithful ones, both young and old, who have shown their loyalty and devotion under trial, not counting their lives too precious in the face of death. Regardless of whether we face opposition from family or friends or even violent abuse from other sources, the important thing is to put our trust in Jehovah. While individuals may die as did Stephen and Paul, Satan and his agents will never wipe out God's

20. (a) Why should we not count our lives too dear?
(b) What wonderful prospects await those who come off victorious?

people. Rather, Revelation definitely foretells a "great crowd" of faithful servants of Jehovah who will be delivered safely through the "great tribulation," proving their devotion to God by rendering him sacred service day and night. Instead of now fearing the wrath of Satan or of any man, we should be more concerned with maintaining Jehovah's favor and not being among those who come under the burning rays of the "sun" or "scorching heat" of God's displeasure. How much better to continue enjoying the helpful direction of the Lamb of God who has promised to shepherd faithful mankind, guiding them to the fountains of waters of life! There "God will wipe out every tear from their eyes" as the persecution and hatreds of the present system are put far behind them.—Rev. 7:14-17.

ROMANS

-Good News for Jew and Gentile

THE inspired letter of the apostle Paul to the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome was indeed good news for them. Due to the ransom provided by Jesus Christ, Jew and Gentile were on equal footing before Jehovah God, and by exercising faith in Jesus Christ they could be declared righteous by God. No more were Jews in bondage to the Law, and Gentile converts to Christianity were not required to be circumcised to become worshipers of Jehovah. What "good news"! In fact, Paul uses the term "good news" a dozen times in this letter.—Rom. 1:9, 17; 3:20-30.

When and from where did Paul write

this letter? The book of Acts and the book of Romans itself make it clear that Paul wrote this letter while in Corinth, around the year 56 C.E. Strictly speaking, Paul dictated it, the writing being done by one of his co-workers, Tertius.—Rom. 16:22.*

How did the Christian congregation at Rome get its start? It could well have been formed by Jews and proselytes who came to Jerusalem at Pentecost 33 C.E., heard the good news about Jesus Christ as

* It is generally held that Romans comes first in the collection of Paul's letters because of its length. Be that as it may, it doubtless was providential, as the truths therein presented are fundamental and the rest of his letters might be said to be based on or to take these truths for granted.

preached by Peter and others, got baptized and then returned to Rome.—Acts 2:5, 10.

In this letter Paul evinces not only his warm love for his brothers in Rome but also a fine sensitivity. How so? In that, repeatedly, when he had occasion to counsel or correct them he adds a softening expression, as it were. For example, after stressing that circumcision of the heart rather than circumcision of the flesh is what counts with God—a point that some Jewish Christians found hard to accept—he then notes that, nevertheless, the Jews were advantaged by reason of God's entrusting to them the "sacred pronouncements," that is, the inspired Scriptures.—Rom. 2:28 to 3:2.

Paul's inspired letters, by and large, might be said to deal with three areas of Christian thought and activity: exposition of Christian doctrine, matters relating to himself personally and exhortation as to Christian conduct; this is true of Romans.

DOCTRINE—THE GOOD NEWS

In developing the theme of being declared righteous on the basis of faith, Paul uses the term "righteous" some fifty-five times in all his letters, and it is found more often in the book of Romans than in any other book of the Christian Greek Scriptures. The related term "righteousness" also appears, proportionately, far more frequently in Romans than in any other book of the entire Bible.

Paul begins by telling that he is an apostle of the good news, that he is not ashamed of it and that 'the righteous one will live by reason of his faith.' (Rom. 1:1, 16, 17) This good news holds out the hope of everlasting life to those working at what is good. God is not partial, and so the Gentiles, even though not having a statement of God's laws, had a law written in their hearts.—Rom. 2:7-16.

Regardless of who may or who may not

accept the truth of God's Word, as far as Christians are concerned, they are to "let God be found true, though every man be found a liar." (Rom. 3:4) All men are born sinners, and that being so, no one can be declared righteous by the Law; rather, it highlighted man's imperfection and sinfulness. Apart from the Law, God has made righteousness possible through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, thus allowing no grounds for boasting. To show the superiority of faith over works of the Law, Paul notes that Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith, even before being circumcised.—Rom. 4:1-12.

Paul goes on to show what great love God expressed in giving his Son to die for us, doing so while we were yet sinners. Just as sin and death came to all men due to the disobedience of one man, Adam, so also through the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ, many will become righteous and gain life.—Rom. 5:12; 6:23.

Therefore all in union with Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, are free from condemnation. God, in making such provisions, is not unjust, for he has a right to determine matters. He showed that right when he chose Isaac and not Ishmael, and Jacob rather than Esau, and also in his dealings with Pharaoh of old. As the Great Potter, he can do with human vessels as he pleases; yes, everything depends "upon God."—Rom. 8:1; 9:6-26.

Again and again Paul stresses the importance of faith for salvation. Those calling upon Jehovah's name will be saved, but how can they call on him of whom they have not heard, and how can they hear unless someone preaches to them? True, the great majority of Jews failed to accept Christ, but that did not spell defeat for God. No, a remnant accepted Christ, even as in the days of Elijah there was a remnant of 7,000 who had not apostatized. Then Paul illustrates the way in which many Jews, like cultivated olive branches,

were lopped off as prospective members of the seed of Abraham, because of their lack of faith in Jesus. Wild olive branches were grafted in their place, but this is no grounds for boasting, for should they lack faith they too can be lopped off.

PERSONAL MATTERS

Paul's inspired epistles are indeed personal letters replete with bits of information that cause us to know him better and to love him all the more. Thus, after his introduction, Paul commends the Christians at Rome for their strong faith and reveals his love for them by writing: "I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you in order for you to be made firm; or, rather, that there may be an interchange of encouragement among you, by each one through the other's faith, both yours and mine."—Rom. 1:11, 12.

In his exposition he adds the warm human touch by continually including them, by the personal plural pronoun "we," as well as by repeated references to himself—"the good news I declare," "I am speaking in human terms," and so forth. In chapter seven he tells of his own struggle with sin in the flesh. (Rom. 2:16; 6:19; 7:7-25) Next he tells of his sorrow because of the unbelief of his Jewish brothers, which causes him to plead with God on their behalf. He has this great concern for them even though he is "an apostle to the nations," that is, the Gentiles.—Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1, 2; 11:13, 14, 25.

In his counsel to present our bodies to God's service, Paul personally urges us: "I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers." (Rom. 12:1) And the last two chapters especially deal with his personal matters. In chapter fifteen he tells of the extent of his preaching activities as well as his desire to preach in untouched fields. He refers to his bringing a contribution to the needy brothers at Jerusalem and

asks the brothers to pray for him. In his final chapter he names twenty-six Christians in Rome and sends greetings to them, as well as to others. He cautions them against certain dangers and prays for their spiritual well-being.

EXHORTATION ON CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, gives much admonition and encouragement. He is not one to discuss doctrinal matters at great length without broaching matters of conduct. For example, in chapter one he tells of God's wrath against godless men who are inexcusable, since God's qualities can be seen in creation. Yet, despite this, as he says, they keep worshiping creatures rather than the Creator and indulge in all manner of immorality, and so they deserve destruction.

In chapter two Paul warns us against judging others while ourselves doing the same things for which we judge them. Also, he counsels against our preaching that others should keep God's commandments but at the same time breaking them ourselves. Then, in chapter five, he encourages us to exult in tribulation, as it leads to an approved condition, which, in turn, leads to hope and confidence. Since Christ died for us, we should be dead as to sin and now 'present our members as slaves to righteousness with holiness in view.'—Rom. 6:1-23.

Continuing, Paul shows that we are to be minding the things of the spirit, which mean life, and that God's spirit bears witness to those who are his spiritual sons that they really are such. God works in all things for good to those that love him, and so, "if God is for us, who will be against us?" Yes, God's love is so strong that no power in heaven or on earth, past or future, can separate us from that love. (Chapter 8) In chapter ten he stresses that we must both believe in our hearts and make confession with our lips to gain

salvation. In chapter 12 he urges us to make our minds over to be able to serve God in an acceptable manner and to have tender affection for one another.

Then, in chapter thirteen, Paul gives compelling reason for obeying secular authorities, such as in paying taxes. Again he warns against judging others, this time in regard to food; for the kingdom of God does not mean eating and drinking. Rather, we should be concerned with doing what is right and living in peace with one another. Are we strong? Then let us patiently

put up with those whose consciences are weak. Further, he reminds us that God's Word was recorded for our instruction, that through its comfort and our endurance we might have hope. (Rom. 15:1-4) And in conclusion he warns against selfish men that would cause divisions, and he counsels us to be wise as to what is good but innocent as to what is evil. Truly, all of it is fine admonition!

May we today benefit likewise as we read this letter and seek to apply it in our lives!

Missionaries Sent Out—by Whom?

"YOU are being sent out as representatives of whom?" was the question that Milton Henschel posed to the twenty-five missionaries of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead's 60th class, at their graduation exercises held in New York city on Sunday, March 7.

Henschel, the third of six featured speakers, answered his own question for the benefit of the graduates and their hundreds of well-wishers present. He pointed to the example of the Chief Missionary, Jesus Christ, who said: "I know [God], because I am a representative from him, and that One sent me forth."—John 7:29.

The speaker called attention to Jesus' being sent out from the realms of heaven. He came down to live amidst imperfect humans, whose thinking and practices were foreign to God's thinking. (Isa. 55:8) Jesus never complained, nor did he exalt himself as God's missionary, but glorified the One who sent him.

Theodore Jaracz, chairman for the occasion, opened by noting that a number of relatives of the graduates were present from overseas. He remarked that this class was young, averaging about twenty-eight years, but had, on the average, been serving as witnesses of Jehovah for thirteen years, nearly half their lives.

Jaracz then called on U. V. Glass, Gilead instructor, for a few parting words to the students. Glass called attention to the human ear with its ability to distinguish even slight differences in the tone and quality of a sound. The Christian, he pointed out, knows the "sound," the exact "tone" of the truth from

God's Word—the voice of the Fine Shepherd. (John 10:25) He counseled the students to be alert to reject false or counterfeit "tones" that could decoy them from their true objective as missionaries.

John C. Booth, the next speaker, had been in a position to become acquainted with nearly all of the more than 5,000 graduates of Gilead from its beginning in 1943. Booth encouraged the graduates by first asking, "Do you qualify to be sent out as missionaries?" He called attention to the fifty-nine previous classes. Are not the increases in praisers of God in lands where missionaries have been sent living proof that they qualified?

Following this talk there was an interval of relaxation during which the audience stood as the School Registrar, E. A. Dunlap, read telegrams from near and far, expressing appreciation for the School and good wishes for the graduates in their assignments.

"Beware that You Do Not Become a Dropout," was the theme developed by Lyman Swingle. Reminding the graduates that they had been Bible students before coming to Gilead School, he added that while at School they had learned much more. But they were now actually only beginning to learn. To believe otherwise would lead to their loss of spirituality and eventual dropping out from the missionary ranks. Indeed, even undesirable circumstances, which one might use as an excuse for becoming a dropout, could actually become another lesson imparting strength.

"Nothing we can do will enrich Jehovah God. Yet he invites us to bring our gifts to him." With these words, Leo Greenlees introduced a description of God's arrangements for sacrifices offered to Him at the temple in ancient Jerusalem. Only sound, unblemished sacrifices were acceptable. Likewise when we present a "sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of [our] lips," it must be sincere, wholehearted, accompanied by prayer.—Heb. 13:15; Ps. 141:2.

As the final speaker of the two-hour morning session, N. H. Knorr developed the theme "What Do You Think?" Those starting out in foreign missionary work could have their right thinking influenced by a change in language, customs and living conditions. They could begin thinking about giving up their missionary assignments. Only by sticking close to the thinking found in God's Word could they remain steadfast. He went on to cite the incident in which the apostle Peter, sincere but thinking the thoughts of men, tried to dissuade Jesus from going through with his sacrificial course. Jesus, however, thinking the thoughts of God, immediately rejected Peter's thinking and maintained his right course.—Matt. 16:21-23.

Following the talks the new missionaries

received their diplomas and assignments to twelve countries, among them being Iceland, the Seychelles Islands, Spain and India.

The afternoon session was student-arranged. In this school class there were contingents of Scottish, English, American, German, Spanish and Hawaiian students. Each small group enlisted the help of others for its own part and coached them, to come up with a program that delighted the audience. A presentation of three Bible-based dramas followed.

In conclusion, Brother Jaracz closed the joyful day's gathering with the words of the apostle Paul to the elders in the ancient city of Ephesus: "And now I commit you to God and to the word of his undeserved kindness, which word can build you up and give you the inheritance among all the sanctified ones." —Acts 20:32.

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June 6: The Tested Quality of Our Faith—A Cause of Praise and Honor. Page 272. Songs to Be Used: 33, 51

June 13: Not Holding Our Lives Too Dear.
Page 278. Songs to Be Used: 16, 57.