

The

THE WATCHTOWER

CAIN AND HIS WIFE

Where
did he get her?

DECEMBER 1, 1977

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

December 1, 1977
Vol. 98, Number 23

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.
FREDERICK W. FRANZ, Pres. GRANT SUITER, Secy.

IN THIS ISSUE

Cain and His Wife	707
Insight on the News	710
"Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide"	711
Do All Things with a Good Conscience	712
Does the Bible Contradict Itself?	717
Is Your Advice Hard to Take?	720
A Look at the Church in Ethiopia	725
Joshua Testifies to Jehovah's Faithfulness	728
What Did the Wise Man Mean?	732
School for Life	733
"Victorious Faith" International Conventions	734
Questions from Readers	735

Average Printing Each Issue: 10,400,000

Now Published in 79 Languages

Semimonthly Editions:

Afrikaans	Dutch	Iloko	Spanish
Arabic	English	Italian	Swahili
Cebuano	Finnish	Japanese	Swedish
Chinese	French	Korean	Tagalog
Chishona	German	Malagasy	Thai
Cibemba	Greek	Norwegian	Xhosa
Cinyanja	Hilligaynon	Portuguese	Yoruba
Danish	Ibo	Sesotho	Zulu

Monthly Editions:

Armenian	Hiri Motu	Pangasinan	Solomon Islands
Bengali	Hungarian	Papiamento	Pidgin
Bicol	Icelandic	Polish	Tahitian
Croatian	Kanarese	Romanian	Tamil
Czech	Kikongo	Russian	Tshiluba
Efik	Killuba	Samar-Leyte	Tsonga
Ewe	Lingala	Samoan	Tswana
Fijian	Luuale	Sepedi	Turkish
Ga	Malayalam	Serbian	Twi
Greenlandic	Marathi	Silopi	Ukrainian
Gun	Melanesian-	Sinhalese	Urdu
Hebrew	Pidgin	Slovenian	
Hindi	Pampango		

Five cents a copy

Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency	
Watch Tower Society offices 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 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5	\$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	\$1.70
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	PS
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 Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

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.

CAIN AND HIS WIFE

**Where did he get her?
From another human race?
When were they married?
Was their relationship incestuous?**

ALL Bible readers are familiar with the fact that Cain was the first man to be born on earth. He was the firstborn son of Adam and Eve, whom God had created directly.—Gen. 4:1.

The Bible account records the creation of Adam and Eve, and their sin. (Gen. 2:7, 21, 22; 3:1-6) It describes God's sentence of death upon them and *their* expulsion from the garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:14-19) God told Eve, however, that she would bring forth children.—Gen. 3:16.

Abel was the second boy born. (Gen. 4:2) The Scriptures are very brief and condense in this early account, but they supply all that we need to know, at the expiration of some time” that the



They tell us that the two boys *grew up*, each to pursue his own profession or occupation. Cain chose what is the oldest of all professions—farming—while Abel became a sheep-

herder. This implies the lapse of a good number of years.

So the account reveals: “It came about

two men brought offerings before God to gain his favor. (Gen. 4:3, 4) We note also that when Seth, the third *named* son, was born, his mother Eve viewed him as a replacement for Abel. (Gen. 4:25) Adam was 130 years old at the time of Seth's birth.

This indicates that there could well have been a number of other children of Adam by that time, including daughters. The Bible's silence as to the names of Adam's daughters presents no difficulty, since the birth of daughters was rarely mentioned and they were only occasionally named in the genealogical lists. But the Bible does actually tell us, in its summary of Adam's life, that "he became father to sons and daughters."—Gen. 5:4, 5.

There were no other races of humankind—no family of humans predating man, or having a separate origin, as some have conjectured in trying to answer the question about the origin of Cain's wife. The statement of Adam and the name Eve itself preclude this. For the Bible says: "After this [after God's passing of sentence] Adam called his wife's name Eve [meaning "living"], because she had to become the mother of everyone living." —Gen. 3:20.

The inevitable conclusion is, then, that Cain married one of his sisters.

ALL HUMANKIND FROM ONE SOURCE

The Bible statement, in Acts 17:26, that "[God] made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth" is acknowledged by Bible students to be backed up by the facts. John Peter Lange's *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*,* a work that considers the arguments of a great number of scholars in an analytical and explanatory discussion of the Bible, says on page 191:

* 1960 edition, 1976 printing, by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

"That the Scriptures neither know nor will know of pre-Adamites . . . nor of various primitive aboriginal races, appears not only from Genesis i. and ii., but also from the consistent presumption and assertion of the entire Holy Writ; for example, Matt. xix.4; Acts xvii.26; 1 Cor. xv.47. . . . The original unity of the human race coincides with the doctrine of the unity of the fall of man in Adam, and the unity of the redemption in Christ. . . . The greatest naturalists have mostly declared themselves against the originality of different human races . . . in regard to the alleged fruitfulness of sexual combinations among the various races, the proof of such fruitfulness is justly pronounced one of the strongest proofs of unity. . . . The autochthonic theory [that living things (in this case humans) were formed or occurred in the places where they were found] [can] not deny the fact that the origin of the various types of men points back to a common home in Asia."

This statement about the unity of the human race (that all are *one* race, one created *kind*, not "aboriginal" tribes or nations in the sense that they were separately created or separately originating) coincides with the Bible statements: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin," and, "just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive." Yet the Creator has arranged, through the countless genetic combinations, to provide in mankind the most delightful and interesting variations.—Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22.

For the reason that Adam was the father of *all* mankind, Christ can be called the "last Adam," for he was a perfect man on earth, and now he can become father to all Adam's offspring who exercise faith in his sacrifice. (1 Cor. 15:45) If men and women were from several different original fathers, the death of the one man, Jesus Christ, could not have provided a sufficient purchase price.—Deut. 19:21; Matt. 20:28.

Some readers of the Bible, particularly of the versions using archaic English, have thought that Cain procured his wife in the land of Nod (fugitiveness). The *Authorized or King James Version* of 1611 C.E. reads, at Genesis 4:16, 17: "And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch."

The thought that one might gain from this text is that Cain went into the land of Nod (which means "Fugitiveness") and there first "knew" his wife in the sense of meeting her. But Cain actually took a wife with him, for the expression "knew" was used in earlier English to mean to know carnally, or to have sexual intercourse. Accordingly, modern translations read: "With that Cain went away from the face of Jehovah and took up residence in the land of Fugitiveness to the east of Eden. Afterward Cain had intercourse with his wife and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch." (*New World Translation*) Likewise, James Moffatt's Translation, *An American Translation* and the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* all here use the expression, "Cain had intercourse with his wife." The *New English Bible* reads: "Cain lay with his wife."

WAS CAIN'S MARRIAGE "INCEST"?

Was God fostering what is now called "incest" by arranging matters so that the first children of Adam would marry one another—brothers marrying sisters? No. For, in Adam's original perfect state his children would have been born in perfection. (Deut. 32:4) There would have been no family weaknesses to be passed on and accentuated by the marriage of near relatives, as is the case today, when the sinful human race has greatly deteriorated and

IN COMING ISSUES

- How Dependent Are We on Jesus Christ?
- A World Without Violence—Is It Possible?
- How God's Kingdom Can Benefit You.

many genetic defects exist. Even after Adam had sinned, his descendants lived as long as 969 years in the days before the Flood.—Gen. 5:27.

Accordingly, it took a long time for genetic defects to become so numerous and so grouped in family lines that it became dangerous to the offspring for close relatives to marry. Even Abraham, some 2,000 years after the creation of Adam, married his half sister. (Gen. 20:12) Not until God gave the Mosaic law (about 500 years later) did He prohibit close family marriage unions among the people of Israel.—Lev. 18:6-18.

It is a wonderful arrangement of God that he made mankind one race, with one origin. All can have the same benefits from the atonement sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) All can approach God through this One as their "Eternal Father" and can come to have the same relationship as "children of God." (Isa. 9:6; Rom. 8:21) Under Christ's rulership humankind will again be one. (Eph. 1:9, 10) All national, ethnic, political and social barriers or boundaries will be permanently wiped out, bringing about the purpose that God had from the very beginning.—1 Cor. 15: 24, 28.

Insight on the News

- Does long-term exposure to television brutality affect adolescent boys? British psychologist William Belson says it does.

Behavior and TV Violence

At a recent conference of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, he reported on a six-year study involving 1,565 boys aged 13 to 16 who had been exposed to TV violence over the previous 13 years. It was found that those who often watch brutality are about 50 percent more likely to resort to violence than are boys who do not regularly view programs of that type.

Pointedly, Dr. Belson said: "All parents should now be more conscious about needing to make sensible judgments on what programmes their children watch." He added that the grown-ups should veto what they honestly consider harmful to their children.

What a child sees and hears will affect the youngster's behavior. But is it sufficient merely to curtail future viewing of television violence? No, for parents need to offset any possible past exposure of their children to detrimental forms of entertainment. Fittingly, the prophet Moses told God's people of old: "You must apply these words of mine to your heart and your soul. . . . You must also teach them to your sons, so as to speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up."—Deut. 11:18, 19.

Indeed, there is a need to impart wholesome spiritual instruction to children. Parents might do well, not only to govern their children's TV viewing, but to replace some of it by reading and discussion of the Bible.

- While many Asian and European doctors practice medicine in Africa, "Parade" magazine reports that "most Africans still prefer to be treated by their witch doctors." For instance, according to a recent survey, 85 percent of South Africa's black urban residents choose to consult witch doctors rather than competent medical practitioners. The journal also reports that the university of Witwatersrand at Johannesburg held a witchcraft symposium at which "it was explained that 'there is evidence that the benevolent witch doctor spends more time in

Do You Fear Witchcraft?

counteracting the evil deeds of the Tagati doctor—one who is hired to kill or cause damage to his patient's enemy—than in any other matter."

Some Africans may have considered it wise to visit a "benevolent witch doctor," especially as a precaution if they are fearful of becoming victims of death-dealing witchcraft. However, the Bible says nothing in favor of so-called 'benevolent' witch doctors.' Rather, God's people were instructed: "There should not be found in you . . . anyone who employs divination, a practitioner of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell. . . . For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah."—Deut. 18:10-12.

Devoted servants of Jehovah God are not affected by supposedly deadly spells, and they neither depend on nor fear practitioners of witchcraft. Instead, true Christians take full advantage of divine provisions. Having donned "the complete suit of [spiritual] armor from God," they are protected against assault from the wicked spirit forces responsible for all occult practices.—Eph. 6:11-18.

- Citing what it termed "the oldest known record of the medicinal use of wine," "The Journal of the American Medical Association" recently told

Wine as Medicine

of a Sumerian tablet from Nippur that provides descriptions of drugs prepared with wine. "Later," comments the journal, "wine was a principal medicine in Greece. . . . Hippocrates of Cos (460-370 BC) . . . made extensive use of wine, prescribing it as a wound dressing, a cooling agent for fevers, a purgative, and a diuretic."

These statements may surprise some modern readers. Yet the Scriptures acknowledge wine's medicinal value. Alluding to its antiseptic and disinfectant properties, Jesus Christ said that the neighborly Samaritan helped a beaten traveler by binding up his wounds, "pouring oil and wine upon them." (Luke 10:30-34) Also, the apostle Paul indicated that wine has curative value in certain cases of intestinal disturbance. Hence, he told his coworker Timothy: "Do not drink water any longer, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent cases of sickness."—1 Tim. 5:23.

"LET YOUR CONSCIENCE BE YOUR GUIDE"

IN QUESTIONS about human relations, particularly where honest, fair and upright dealings are concerned, people often are told: "Let your conscience be your guide." The person giving this advice usually does it with a shrug of the shoulders, partly because he hesitates to give sound counsel and partly because he feels that definite advice would not be followed anyway.

The expression has become so common that its meaning has deteriorated. It is now almost the same as saying, 'Do whatever your conscience will excuse.' A person may have some qualms of conscience on a point, but he may argue with himself and figure out a way to justify a questionable or dishonest action, salving his conscience and giving it an excuse to let him go ahead.

If an individual follows this line of reasoning, he can develop a "seared" conscience, which is no guide at all. It is like scar tissue from a bad burn, which has no sensitivity and transmits no pain as a warning to its owner to move away from danger. (1 Tim. 4:2) Since this can happen, good advice for anyone would be the converse to the aforementioned adage: Never violate your conscience.

Most people have a conscience that is sensitive on many issues of life. But a person's conscience may not always guide him in the best course, a course that leads to life. For while our conscience acts as a judge for us, interpreting and applying the

standards and laws that we believe are right, it may not be based on the right standards—God's standards.

For example, it is the custom in some lands to practice polygamy. The people have not known anything else. But on coming to a knowledge of what the Bible says, they see that polygamy is contrary to God's arrangement for Christians. They then make the adjustment in their consciences and their lives.

There are also some Christians whose faith has weaknesses, that is, they are not clear on certain points of morals and conduct. They need instruction to clarify principles and their application, so that they will come to have their "perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong."—Heb. 5:14.

Consequently, all of us must train our conscience so that its decisions are based firmly on God's Word. We need to adjust when we are informed, not becoming 'willingly ignorant.' (2 Pet. 3:5, *Authorized Version*) Only then can we be secure in 'letting our conscience be our guide.' At the same time we do not want to make our own conscience someone else's guide. While we may be able to help another person, from the Bible, to see issues more clearly in the light of basic principles, we want to accord him the same liberty that we desire, not trying to manage his conscience, for in this way we could hurt him, keeping him from having a good conscience before God.—1 Cor. 8:12.

DO ALL THINGS WITH A GOOD CONSCIENCE

"Happy is the man that does not put himself on judgment by what he approves." —Rom. 14:22.

IT IS not an easy thing to make right decisions on all the questions that we face in life. Jesus' half brother James acknowledged that "we all stumble many times." This was a reason, he said, that "not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment." (Jas. 3:1, 2) If we expand our giving of advice to others, we multiply our responsibility and liability for the outcome.

² If our counsel to others is based simply on our own conscience or opinion, we are bound to mislead them. Even if we try to counsel altogether according to the Bible, we must be sure that we have the right understanding, not mere conjecture or a privately held view. When a person accepts counsel based just on another's conscience or opinion and puts it into effect, it is of little benefit to him. It may even cause much damage. Why? Because he is not acting at the direction of his own conscience. For, "indeed, everything that is not out of faith is sin." —Rom. 14:23.

³ To have faith on a matter, which includes making a personal decision, an individual has to gain accurate knowledge from the Bible and firm evidence based on facts. (Heb. 11:1) "That the soul should be without knowledge is not good, and he that is hastening with his feet is sinning." (Prov. 19:2) If he does not have accurate

1. Why should we be cautious about giving advice to others on personal matters?
2. Why must all counsel given to others be based solidly on the Bible?
3. What is required on the part of an individual when making a personal decision?

knowledge of God's will, he could be led to hurry right into a bad course.

⁴ Some Christians, however, do have weaknesses in their faith, often due to a lack of knowledge on a certain problem or question in life. James comments that the Christian can get the required wisdom to handle any trialsome situation by praying to God for that wisdom. (Jas. 1:2, 5) Of course, to get an answer from God, he must also consult the Bible. Why will this help? Because Christians have the same human problems today as servants of God have faced throughout the centuries. If we look to the Scriptures we will see how faithful men, including the apostles and their associates, gave advice and handled these problems. Circumstances differ, of course, but there is no problem for which the Bible does not provide the right principle. *Application* of the principle brings into play *knowledge* and *conscience*.

LAW WRITTEN IN HEARTS

⁵ This matter of conscience was taken up by the apostle Paul in Romans, chapter 14. In the congregation at Rome, there was general agreement on the basic, foundation doctrines of the Bible, and on how to carry forward the work of proclaiming the "good news." (Rom. 1:8) But there were differences of opinion, particularly on personal matters. This was due largely

4. If a person has difficulty in making a decision, what can he do to get help?
5. Why did the apostle Paul write on the subject of conscience to the Christian congregation at Rome?

to the background and training of the various members of the congregation. These differences were principally because of the wide gulf that had separated the Jews from the Gentiles prior to their accepting Christianity.

⁶ Paul writes: "Welcome the man having weaknesses in his faith." (Rom. 14:1) These "weaknesses" were not weaknesses in faith in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, which leads to salvation. All had to have *this* faith. (*An American Translation* reads: "Treat people who are overscrupulous in their faith like brothers.") These "weaknesses" were points in which certain Christians were not fully established, not being so clear as to the scope of Christian freedom. For example, for centuries the Jews had been under the Mosaic "law code" (Rom. 13:9; 2 Cor. 3:6), which restricted them from eating cer-

6, 7. (a) What were the 'weaknesses in their faith' that some in the congregation had? (b) What was the primary purpose of the Law, and what changes did the Messiah bring?

tain foods that were "unclean," and which commanded observance of specific days, and so forth. (Lev. 11:46, 47; Deut. 5:12-14) God's purpose in giving this law was to keep the Jews from being absorbed into the pagan nations, with their idolatrous practices, until the Messiah should come. (Gal. 3:23-25) Then "the perfect law that belongs to freedom" would take its place—a "law within them," written in their hearts. (Jas. 1:25; Jer. 31:33) This new law is set forth in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

⁷ By the sacrifice of his own life the Messiah, Jesus Christ, did indeed release the Jews who accepted him. Gentiles could also gain release from their former bondage to idolatry. All Christians—Jews and Gentiles—now stood on the same ground before God. (Eph. 2:14-16) Nevertheless, it was hard for some of the Jewish Christians, ingrained with the former customs and practices, to make the change-over. In some things it 'just went against their consciences.'

⁸ The apostle Paul sets forth the proper view on such matters as he continues, telling the congregation with regard to welcoming those with a weak conscience, "not to make decisions on inward questionings." ("Do not criticize their views," *An American Translation*; "but not for disputes over opinions," *Revised*



Paul counseled that new believers should be welcomed even though they had 'weaknesses in their faith'

8. What was the tendency of some in the congregation toward those who had "weaknesses" in their faith, but how should they have been treated?

Standard Version.) Such a man, though his opinion or conscience was different, perhaps even "overscrupulous," was to be welcomed heartily as being fully a brother, a fellow heir of Christ. It was the tendency of some to dispute over his opinion or view, which came from *inside* him, from his heart. This was wrong, being damaging to the parties involved and to the congregation, which might tend to take sides and become disunited.

TWO EXAMPLES THAT ESTABLISH THE PRINCIPLE

⁹ Paul gives the example of eating meats. In those days, the animals slaughtered or the meats sold in markets had been, in many cases, presented before an idol, as if to sanctify the meat for the worshipers that ate it. Of course, this did not affect the meat itself. An idol was really nothing. But those who were not fully established in this correct view had qualms of conscience when eating meat because of fear that it might have been connected with the pagan rite. (1 Cor. 8:4-7) Therefore the apostle admonishes:

"One man has faith to eat everything [all things that are food, including meat bought at the market], but the man who is weak eats vegetables [in order not to eat, even unknowingly, of meat he considered "contaminated" by the pagan practice]."—Rom. 14:2.

¹⁰ What was to be done? Should not this man eating only vegetables be straightened out in his view before he could be respected as a full-fledged Christian? Some might call attention to the principle that 'all should speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among them, but that all should be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought.' (1 Cor. 1:10) But this unity was not a

9. What was the question that arose over the eating of meat?

10. Should not persons who have different personal views from the majority of the congregation be straightened out so as to bring about 'one mind and one line of thought'?

unity in opinion or viewpoint on matters of personal choice or conscience; it was a unity in following Christ, not men.

—1 Cor. 1:11-13.

¹¹ Some Jewish Christians who were fully clear on the matter, as well as most of the Gentile members of the congregation, who had never been used to the Mosaic regulations, inclined toward *looking down* with contempt on the overscrupulous ones, viewing them as foolish, opinionated or even fanatical, while the overscrupulous ones were *judging* the others as doing wrong in God's eyes by stepping beyond the bounds of their freedom. So the apostle corrected both:

"Let the one eating not look down on the one not eating, and let the one not eating not judge the one eating, for God has welcomed that one. Who are you to judge the house servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for Jehovah can make him stand."—Rom. 14:3, 4.

¹² If God has accepted a person, welcoming him and giving him His spirit, though he still may have some conscientious scruples or opinions that seem unnecessarily narrow, or, perhaps more broad than others, who are we to find fault? We all have to give account to our Master. We have enough problems, mistakes and faults of our own to keep us from meddling in someone else's affairs. One man cannot properly interfere with the servant or employee of another man as to how he serves that man—and this is even more so in the case of a servant of God. God is the Judge of his servant. Yes, "he will be made to stand" by Jehovah.

¹³ Here Paul does not mean that God will support his servant in everything he does, certainly not in wrongdoing. But

11. How were persons in the congregation viewing one another over matters of conscience?

12. Why must we fully accept other Christians who may have opinions on personal matters that are different from our own?

13. How is it true that God will indeed make his servant to stand?

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



Respect a new Christian's conscience regarding Sabbath observance or eating certain foods

even though a Christian has a conscientious view that might be criticized by others and even regarded by them as a disqualifying trait, God will not judge him adversely, but will be pleased that his action is conscientious. If God sees fit, in his due time he will bring his servant's conscience around to a realization of a more mature view. But no Christian should presume to superimpose his conscience on another. If he does, he may bring the other person into difficulty, or may damage that one's faith. Consequently, he himself would be subject to a "heavier judgment," or a certain degree of condemnation, as James says.—Jas. 3:1.

¹⁴ The apostle gives another example:

"One man judges one day as above another; another man judges one day as all others; let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day observes it to Jehovah. Also, he who eats, eats to Jehovah, for he gives thanks to God; and he who does not eat does not eat to Jehovah, and yet gives thanks to God."—Rom. 14:5, 6.

¹⁵ For instance, a Jew who had accepted Christ but who in the past had given long-

time obedience to the law of the Sabbath,

might feel qualms of conscience in doing any laborious work on a Jewish Sabbath day. It might be cooking, carpenter work, or traveling a considerable distance. Even if it was a work of the congregation, something that other members of the congregation expected him to do for them or with them, on *that* day he might refrain because of conscience. On any other day he would be glad to do it. But he observed that day as special "to Jehovah," that is, he felt that it was Jehovah's will he was doing by observing that day as especially sacred. And in eating, he thanked God that he could be absolutely clean and separate from idol worship because God had clearly outlined his view on such matters in the Mosaic law. (Note how Daniel, *then under the Law*, felt. [Dan. 1:8]) His conscientious action hurt no one in the congregation, and he was not engaging in any wrongdoing. Therefore, Jehovah did not count him unclean. Jehovah appreciated that he was rendering obedience to the best of his knowledge and with a clean conscience, not denying the sacrifice of Christ.

14-16. Explain Paul's words at Romans 14:5, 6.

¹⁶ On the other hand, the general body of Christians esteemed all days as belonging to God equally—all as sacred—and none as especially so. They ate meat with a clean conscience, knowing that, if it had formerly been presented before an idol, this did not change the meat itself, because idols actually had no power. They thanked God that they could eat the food that he had provided and were grateful for the freedom that he had given through Christ.

¹⁷ However, each one had to be *fully convinced in his own mind*. If a Christian conscientiously could not see the other's point of view clearly, in his own mind, it would do him no good, but actually harm, should he adopt that view contrary to his conscience. And neither one should criticize, dispute with, judge or look with contempt on the other. (Jas. 4:11, 12) Neither should try to force his own viewpoint on the other. If this were done, an individual would be trying to dominate the other's faith.

¹⁸ This does not mean that matters of conscience cannot be discussed, and research done, to obtain the Bible's view. Arguments toward the Scriptural position may be brought to bear on a subject. But wrangling and disputing, or insisting that the other person see it our way or do as we say, should be avoided. Elders and others who are mature can help those weak or misinformed on such points. But that is as far as they can properly go. The individual must then act on what he conscientiously feels is acceptable to God.

PRINCIPLE FOR DECISIONS IN DOUBTFUL AREAS

¹⁹ While the apostle here uses only the two examples, he sets the principle for all

17. Why must each one be fully convinced in his own mind?

18. Is there anything that the elders or others may do to help a person to get a more accurate view on a personal matter? If so, what?

19. How can we draw the line between what is to be left to individual conscience and what is not?

cases in which conscience is involved. Today there are many circumstances in which there is no specific, direct instruction or rule from the Bible. These are sometimes called "gray areas." Such areas exist in the fields of employment, medical treatment, food, clothing, and others. The Bible gives principles to guide us in all these areas. What it definitely states, all should follow. For example, the Bible says that dress and grooming should be 'well arranged, with modesty and soundness of mind,' neat and clean. (1 Tim. 2:9; 2 Cor. 7:1) Respect for our brothers' feelings and for the congregation and its good reputation in the community should be maintained. But styles, colors, and so forth, may vary greatly according to individual tastes.

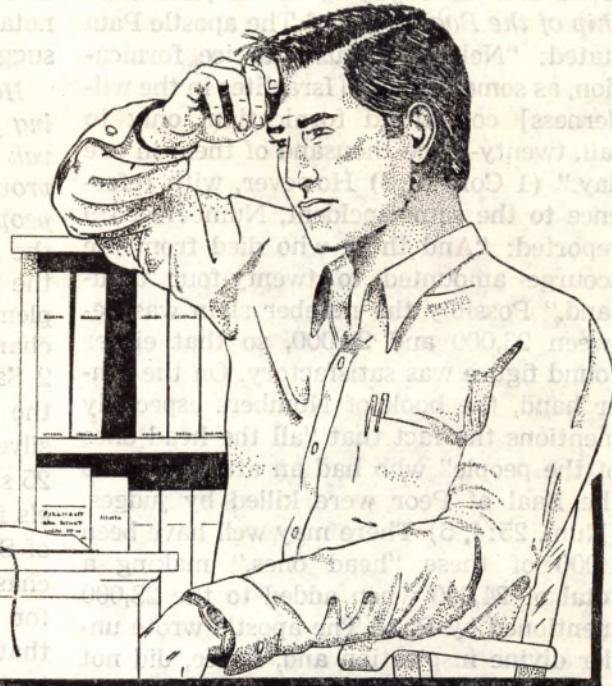
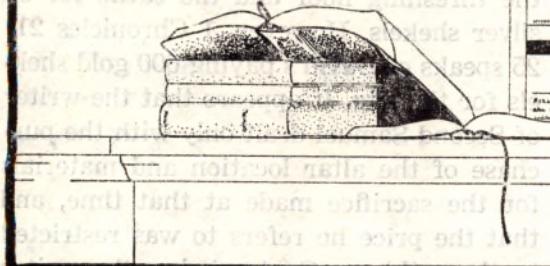
²⁰ The individual involved in these "gray areas" should look to the Bible and Bible aids. If he is still not clear on a decision, he may consult elders or others who can help him to see what the Bible says, but he should not let others make his decision for him. They are not his "conscience." Let him weigh matters himself, make his own decision, and follow through on this conscientious conclusion. With the passage of time he may come to see the matter in a different light, and make an adjustment, but he should avoid doing anything about which he has doubts, so that he will not be self-condemned.—Rom. 14:23.

²¹ All Christians should strive constantly to progress in understanding and to make advancement in coming closer to a perfect imitation of God and Christ. In doing this they will be progressing continually toward having a conscience more accurately trained. At all times they should be doing all things in such a way as to maintain a good conscience and they should allow their Christian brothers the same freedom.

20. What should a person do who faces a problem the answer to which is not clear to him?

21. If we have certain opinions that are conscientious, does this mean that we should never change, or what?

does the BIBLE contradict itself?



CHRISTIANS view the Bible as a gift from God. They read it with pleasure and benefit. On the other hand, certain individuals argue that the Scriptures contain contradictions and therefore are unreliable.

For that matter, whether persons are opponents of the Bible or have sought to understand it and have simply been unable to reconcile seeming discrepancies, they may share the same opinion. They may believe that the Bible does indeed contradict itself. Yet, what does careful research and thought reveal?

ARE THEY DISCREPANCIES?

When encountering difficulties in reading the Bible, critics are all too ready to take a negative view, jumping to conclusions. Those who treasure the Bible as God's gift to man, however, are positive in searching out the answers. Consider how the *harmony* of scriptures can be explained.

Who sold Joseph into Egypt? Genesis 37:27 says that Joseph's brothers sold him. But the next verse states: "Now men, Midianite merchants, went passing by. Hence they [half brothers of Joseph] drew and lifted up Joseph out of the waterpit and then sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty silver pieces. Eventually these brought Joseph into Egypt." So, did Midianite merchants take Joseph from the pit and sell him to the Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt? No, even Joseph later confirmed that his own brothers had sold him, saying: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt." (Gen. 45:4) So what are we to conclude? Either that the Midianites (who were related to the Ishmaelites) were also called Ishmaelites or that the Midianite merchants were traveling with the Ishmaelite caravan. And Joseph was sold to them by his brothers. *How many Israelites died for having immoral relations with the daughters of*

Moab and for engaging in the false worship of the Baal of Peor? The apostle Paul stated: "Neither let us practice fornication, as some of them [Israelites in the wilderness] committed fornication, only to fall, twenty-three thousand of them in one day." (1 Cor. 10:8) However, with reference to the same incident, Numbers 25:9 reported: "And those who died from the scourge amounted to twenty-four thousand." Possibly the number slain was between 23,000 and 24,000, so that either round figure was satisfactory. On the other hand, the book of Numbers especially mentions the fact that "all the head ones of the people" who had an attachment to the Baal of Peor were killed by judges. (Num. 25:4, 5) There may well have been 1,000 of these "head ones," making a total of 24,000 when added to the 23,000 mentioned by Paul. The apostle wrote under divine inspiration and, hence, did not err. Also, whereas 23,000 apparently were direct victims of the scourge from God, all 24,000 in general experienced Jehovah's scourge inasmuch as they all died under God's decree of judgment.—Deut. 4:3.

When King David improperly registered the people, how many armed men were there in Israel and Judah? According to 2 Samuel 24:9, Israel had 800,000 men and Judah had 500,000. However, according to 1 Chronicles 21:5, there were 1,100,000 men of Israel and 470,000 men of Judah. It is unwise to consider this a scribal error, for the two accounts may have reckoned the numbers from different viewpoints. For instance, possibly members of the standing army and/or their officers were counted, or omitted. Also, different methods of reckoning may have resulted in a variation in listing certain men, that is, as to whether they were under Israel or Judah. First Chronicles 21:6 mentions that Levi and Benjamin are not regis-

tered in among them, whereas no such notation is made in Second Samuel, also suggesting, therefore, such a variation.

How much did David pay for the threshing floor where he built an altar to Jehovah as the means of ending the scourge provoked by David's registration of the people? Apparently Araunah, or Ornan, the owner of the threshing floor, offered the place, along with cattle and wood implements for the sacrifice, without any charge. But David insisted on paying, and 2 Samuel 24:24 shows that he purchased the threshing floor and the cattle for 50 silver shekels. However, 1 Chronicles 21:25 speaks of David's paying 600 gold shekels for the site. It appears that the writer of Second Samuel dealt only with the purchase of the altar location and materials for the sacrifice made at that time, and that the price he refers to was restricted to these things. Contrariwise, the writer of First Chronicles discussed matters with regard to the temple later built on that site, and he associates the purchase with that construction. (1 Chron. 22:1-6; 2 Chron. 3:1) The entire temple area being quite large, apparently the sum of 600 gold shekels applied to the purchase of that large area rather than to the small portion required for the altar first built by King David.

HARMONIZING TEXTS IN THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

Some individuals contend that there are discrepancies in the Gospel accounts regarding Jesus Christ and elsewhere in the Christian Greek Scriptures. But here again alleged discrepancies can be resolved. Consider just a few examples to show that various texts in the Christian Scriptures harmonize with one another.

From how many men did Jesus expel the demons who took possession of a

large herd of swine that thereafter rushed over a precipice and drowned in the Sea of Galilee? The Gospel writer Matthew mentions two men. (Matt. 8:28) But Mark and Luke refer to only one. (Mark 5:2; Luke 8:27) Doubtless Mark and Luke center attention only on one demon-possessed man because his case was the more outstanding of the two. Perhaps he was more violent and had suffered longer under demon control than had the other man. Afterward possibly that one man alone wanted to accompany Jesus. Rather than allowing this, Jesus directed him to make known what Jehovah had done in his behalf. (Mark 5:18-20) In a somewhat parallel situation, Matthew spoke of two blind men healed by Jesus, whereas Mark and Luke mentioned only one. (Matt. 20:29-34; Mark 10:46; Luke 18:35) Since Jesus' conversation evidently was directed particularly toward one person in each instance, Mark and Luke did not mention the fact that another demoniac and another blind man were present. Yet, Matthew's Gospel account is not incorrect because he gives these details.

Who bore Jesus' torture stake? The apostle John said of Jesus: "Bearing the torture stake for himself, he went out" of Jerusalem. (John 19:17) However, Matthew, Mark and Luke say that 'as they were going out, Simon was impressed into service to bear the torture stake.' (Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26) Actually, Jesus Christ did bear his own torture stake, even as John recorded. But, in his condensed account, John did not add the point that later Simon was impressed into service to carry the stake. Hence, the Gospel accounts harmonize on this matter.

How did Judas Iscariot die? Matthew 27:5 says that Judas hanged himself. However, Acts 1:18 states: "Pitching head foremost he noisily burst in his midst and

all his intestines were poured out." Whereas Matthew appears to deal with the mode of the attempted suicide of Judas, Acts describes the results. Viewed together, it appears from the two accounts that Judas tried to hang himself over some cliff, but either the rope or the tree limb broke so that he plunged downward and burst open on the rocks below. Such a possibility is certainly conceivable, in view of the topography around Jerusalem.

IT IS GOD'S WORD OF TRUTH

Undoubtedly, after examining just a few examples that show the harmony of the Scriptures, you will agree with the psalmist who said to God: "The substance of your word is truth." (Ps. 119:160) Similarly, Thessalonian Christians of the first century received "God's word" with appreciation. The apostle Paul wrote: "Indeed, that is why we also thank God incessantly, because when you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers."

—1 Thess. 2:13.

Likewise today, Jehovah's Christian witnesses view the entire Bible as God's Word of truth. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) They read and study it diligently in order to be able to talk on the Bible, to share its life-saving message with others. A good understanding of true Scriptural doctrines frees one from superstition and false religion. (John 8:32; Rev. 18:4) Application of the Bible's moral laws and principles result in a happy, satisfying life right now, with the prospect of eternal life in God's promised new order. So, gain and maintain a 'tight grip on the word of life,' as found in the Bible and enjoy a precious relationship with Jehovah God, mankind's greatest Friend.—Phil. 2:14-16.

Is Your Advice Hard To Take?



"James Smith, you know what your trouble is? You talk too much. You never listen. You're stubborn. My advice to you is to make some changes in your attitude. I've told you before and I'm telling you again, change your attitude! Start showing some respect! You think you know everything, you talk constantly, and you're heading for trouble! And when you get there, don't come crying to me for help!"

THAT is one way of advising someone to talk less and listen more. However, it is the wrong way. It comes as an attack and will arouse defensive reactions. The advice itself may be good, but no good will come of it.

² Corporations pay out thousands of dollars to send their executives to seminars for training on how to counsel others and cope with confrontations. Yet, the really worthwhile basic techniques were long ago outlined in the Bible, and cost nothing.

³ "By giving these advices to the broth-

ers," the apostle Paul told Timothy, "you will be a fine minister of Christ Jesus." He instructed him in, not only what advice to give, but also how to give it: "Do not severely criticize an older man. To the contrary, entreat him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness." He said entreat, not browbeat. The purpose is to restore, not drive away.—1 Tim. 4:6; 5:1, 2; Jas. 5:19, 20.

⁴ Giving advice that has been asked for is a delicate business; giving it without invitation requires even more sensitivity. Advice unrequested tends to come across

1. Why is the example quoted in the illustration the wrong way to give advice?
2, 3. (a) How do business corporations show their concern about proper counseling? (b) What advice as to counseling did Paul give to Timothy, and with what purpose in view?

4. Why must the one offering counsel possess sensitivity?

as criticism, and no one likes to be criticized. To counsel without giving offense requires patience and the ability to teach, not just to lecture someone. Thus Paul wrote to Timothy: "Reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all long-suffering and art of teaching."—2 Tim. 4:2.

THE COUNSELOR'S ATTITUDE

⁵ Christ Jesus, the Wonderful Counselor, exemplified counseling gently when the apostles argued about which one was the greatest. By illustration and contrast he showed that kings of nations lorded it over others, but "you, though, are not to be that way." Jesus was a perfect man, with inspired counsel to give; yet he was "mild-tempered and lowly in heart." We do well to copy him. "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus." —Luke 22:24-27; Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:5.

⁶ It is difficult to reason with those whose tempers are hot, and the apostles were arguing heatedly. Jesus used an illustration of how arrogant kings lorded it over others, and when the apostles saw themselves in this light they cooled down. The prophet Nathan was also tactful when he counseled King David for taking Uriah's wife, Bath-sheba. The rich man with many sheep and cattle took the one lone ewe lamb of a poor man, in order to feed a visitor. David was furious and judged: "The man doing this deserves to die!" Then he learned that he was the man. (2 Sam. 12: 1-9) Today, illustrations may be used to outflank emotions and help one to see matters objectively.

⁷ Feelings are important. The one counseling should be aware of his own feelings as well as those of the one to whom he is talking. If he is motivated by a desire to feel superior and self-righteous, he may

be unnecessarily quick to lecture others for minor slips. (Eccl. 3:7) These feelings will be sensed and resented by the one being talked to, and if he shows a bad attitude, it may be the fault of the counselor more than the counsel itself. Proverbs 15:1 says: "An answer, when mild, turns away rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up."

THE APOSTLE PAUL SETS AN EXAMPLE

⁸ Brotherly love and compassion are also felt when these are exercised. Paul had to correct a serious mistake made by the congregation at Corinth, and it grieved him deeply that he had to be quite severe in what he wrote, for later he said: "Out of much tribulation and anguish of heart I wrote you with many tears, not that you might be saddened, but that you might know the love that I have more especially for you." Paul's deep feelings of concern are shown also a few chapters later, when he says: "Even if I saddened you by my letter, I do not regret it. . . . For sadness in a godly way makes for repentance to salvation that is not to be regretted." —2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8-10.

⁹ Therefore, lessen the pain of correction by showing empathy and understanding. Let others retain their dignity and self-respect. See the good in others and show appreciation for it. Command before counseling wherever possible. (Rev. 2:1-4, 12-14, 18-20) Paul commended the Corinthians for their eagerness now to see justice done and for clearing themselves by righting the wrong. (2 Cor. 7:11) He then referred to the boasts that he had made to Titus about them: "Anything I may have said to him to show my pride in you has been justified. Every word we ever addressed to you bore the mark of truth;

5. Copying Jesus in giving counsel, what will be our bearing and attitude?

6. What examples show the value of using illustrations in counseling?

7. Why are the feelings of the one giving counsel important?

8. What were Paul's feelings when correcting the Corinthians for making a serious mistake, and what was the result of this correction?

9. (a) What Scriptural examples show the propriety of commanding before counseling? (b) Why is commendation of those who profit from counsel of value?

and the same holds of the proud boast we made in the presence of Titus: that also has proved true." (2 Cor. 7:14, *New English Bible*) We all make mistakes and need correction, so when we do something right a commanding "Well done" helps. It revives our spirit!—Matt. 25:21, 23.

TESTING OURSELVES

¹⁰ "Keep testing whether you are in the faith" is an admonition we might also apply to counseling. (2 Cor. 13:5) Do we pass the test presented by the following texts?

¹¹ Ephesians 4:32: "Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate." Are we, when we counsel?

¹² Galatians 6:1: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted." Do we counsel in mildness, aware of our own frailties?

¹³ Colossians 4:6 (*NE*): "Study how best to talk with each person you meet." Do we take time to know the individual and then tailor our talk to meet his needs?

¹⁴ Proverbs 18:13: "When anyone is replying to a matter before he hears it, that is foolishness on his part and a humiliation." Do we acquaint ourselves with all sides of the matter before giving advice?

¹⁵ Philippians 2:3: "Doing nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you." When counseling others, are we aware that in other ways they may be superior to us?

¹⁶ Romans 2:21: "Do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching 'Do not steal,' do you steal?" Do we appear hypocritical, preaching what we do not practice?

¹⁷ John 16:12: "I [Jesus] have many things yet to say to you, but you are not able to bear them at present." Do we go

10-12. Why should we counsel in kindness and in a spirit of mildness?

13, 14. Of what should we be well informed before giving counsel?

15, 16. What should we bear in mind about ourselves as we counsel others?

17, 18. What restraint and consideration should we show the one whom we are counseling?

beyond the need of the moment, and start listing all the person's shortcomings that we can think of, thereby either stirring up his anger or crushing his spirit?

¹⁸ Matthew 18:15: "If your brother commits a sin, go lay bare his fault between you and him alone." Do we first counsel in private, aware of our brother's feelings?

¹⁹ A simple guide for counseling, but one that we tend to forget at times, is this: "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you." (Matt. 7:12, *NE*) We like to be understood, so we must be understanding. We like to have our say, so we must let others have theirs. If we dislike being lectured, do we refrain from lecturing others? Counseling involves listening, and in this way we, not only show reasonableness, but also gain insight into the person's problem and become aware of his feelings. Counsel so given comes across as a part of the conversation and not as a lecture being delivered.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR ADVICE?

²⁰ The prophet Jeremiah said: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." If he cannot direct his own steps, how competent is he to direct someone else's? Jeremiah then prayed: "Correct me, O Jehovah." We are so aware of the shortcomings of all of us that it is difficult to take correction from any of us—unless the correction we get is God's correction! How good our advice is depends on how close it sticks to God's Word. —Jer. 10:23, 24.

²¹ "Do not go beyond the things that are written" is good advice. (1 Cor. 4:6) We came out of systems where men's rules prevail, with tragic results. No longer do we want to be subjected to human rules not required by God's Word, for we obey, "not with acts of eyeservice, as men pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, with fear

19. What is a simple guide for counseling, and what are its advantages?

20, 21. When does our advice become of questionable value, and how can we make it completely reliable?

of Jehovah," and we follow Paul's counsel: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men." (Col. 3:22, 23) The Pharisees' rules burdened down the people and made void God's Word.—Matt. 23:4; 15:3.

²² The Pharisees used the tyranny of authority when officers sent out to arrest Jesus returned without him because they were impressed with Jesus' teaching. "You have not been misled also, have you?" the Pharisees asked. "Not one of the rulers or of the Pharisees has put faith in him, has he? But this crowd that does not know the Law are accursed people." The Pharisees did not use reason, but declared that wise people rejected Jesus, only the stupid listened to him.—John 7:45-49.

²³ When we advise others we should use reason and scriptures, not demanding compliance because of a position we might have. (Phil. 4:5) We should be like Paul, who did not use his position as an apostle to pressure people. Instead, he commended them for checking to see whether his teaching was based on the Bible. "They received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so. Therefore many of them became believers."—Acts 17:11, 12.

²⁴ The Devil used Scripture when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, and Jesus used scriptures to refute him. Both used scriptures, but with this difference: Satan misapplied them, but Jesus used them properly. (Matt. 4:1-10) We should never twist texts to serve our own purpose, as Satan did. Let us make sure that God is saying what we say that he is saying!

²⁵ For example, in Romans chapter 14 we are cautioned not to stumble weak ones

relative to food or drink or anything. Does this mean that if in a large family one member claims he is stumbled because coffee is served, no coffee should be served? Or that one must wear black shoes because someone is "stumbled" by brown ones? Is there not some limiting factor governing application of this counsel? The context relates to matters of faith, to days that some considered holy, to meats that some thought defiled. The counsel concerns matters of conscience, and in this area we should make concessions helpful to others. But it is not a blanket instruction to cater to every personal whim that has no bearing on faith.

WHEN YOU NEED IT, CAN YOU TAKE IT?

²⁶ If counsel is offered lovingly and Scripturally, can we accept it meekly? It is not easy, but it is beneficial. "No discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous; yet afterward to those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness." (Heb. 12:11) Previously we were asked to test ourselves as to our attitude when giving counsel. Now let us test ourselves as to our willingness to receive it.

²⁷ Proverbs 17:27: "Anyone holding back his sayings is possessed of knowledge, and a man of discernment is cool of spirit." Do we listen, and remain cool?

²⁸ Proverbs 12:15: "The way of the foolish one is right in his own eyes, but the one listening to counsel is wise." Do we think we know it all, or do we listen?

²⁹ Proverbs 29:20: "Have you beheld a man hasty with his words? There is more hope for someone stupid than for him." Do we immediately try to refute the counsel given?

³⁰ Ecclesiastes 7:9: "Do not hurry yourself in your spirit to become offended, for the taking of offense is what rests in the bosom of the stupid ones." Are we overly sensitive, easily offended?

22, 23. What arrogant attitude did the Pharisees adopt, but how did Paul manifest an opposite attitude?

24, 25. (a) What contrast was there between Satan's use of Scripture and Jesus' use of it? (b) What example shows how application of Scripture must be limited by the context?

26. When we find discipline hard to take, what reminder does Hebrews 12:11 give us?

27-31. What scriptures and what questions emphasize the need to listen quietly when we are being counseled?

³¹ James 1:19, 20: "Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath; for man's wrath does not work out God's righteousness." Can we listen to correction without being angered?

³² Sometimes people have decided to pursue a certain course of action and will go from one would-be counselor to another until they find someone who agrees with them. In ancient Israel King Rehoboam went to older men for advice, but it did not suit him. He went to younger men, who told him what he wanted to hear. The results were disastrous: Ten tribes revolted from him and formed their own kingdom! (1 Ki. 12:1-20) The apostle Paul spoke of a time when people would search until they found counselors who would say just what they wanted to hear: "They will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled."—2 Tim. 4:3.

32. How do some who seek advice show that they really want self-justification?

³³ We, however, should take counsel that is supported by God's Word. When David was rebuked by the prophet Nathan, he responded: "I have sinned against Jehovah." (2 Sam. 12:13) The congregation at Corinth took Paul's counsel and cleared themselves of all blame. Jesus illustrated a proper course when he described a father who had two sons, whom he told to go work in his vineyard. One agreed to, but did not. The other refused, but later did, and gained approval even though he was slow at first to respond. (Matt. 21:28-31) Those who counsel should exercise patience, allowing time for the one reproved to evaluate it.

³⁴ "I shall bless Jehovah, who has given me advice." (Ps. 16:7) Will those we advise be able to bless us for it?

33. What examples show the proper reception of advice?

34. What searching question does Psalm 16:7 raise for those who give advice?

35. How does the counsel here presented contrast with that given in the first illustration of this article?

³⁵ "Jim, thanks for meeting with me. You're making good progress in the congregation now. I do want to mention again your problem of talking unwisely at times. Of course, we're all guilty of that; as James said, if we don't misuse the tongue we're perfect. Paul counseled the elders at Ephesus day and night, for three years! So I hope you don't think I'm picking on you by mentioning this again. You're making progress, so keep working on it. As a suggestion, you might reread James chapter 3. If I can help, don't hesitate to call on me."



A LOOK AT THE CHURCH IN ETHIOPIA



ENDURING bumpy roads into remote areas, slippery pathways along narrow edges, adventurous climbs on dangling rope ladders and many other inconveniences, thousands of tourists have gone in search of Ethiopia's unique rock-churches and hidden monasteries.

In Tigre Province they saw churches skillfully hewn into rock walls. In the remote town of Lalibela they discovered "monolithic" churches, which are structures carved in one piece out of solid rock by isolating a huge block of granite and then shaping it both inside and out.

Religion comes to mind also when one meets the people of Ethiopia. Men bear names such as Habteyesus ("Gift of Jesus"), Haile Selassie ("Power of the Trinity"), Woldemariam ("Son of Mary"), or Gebremikael ("Servant of Michael"). Some women display on their foreheads large tattooed crosses. Customary greetings include phrases such as: "May God give you health!" "Thanks to God, I am well. How

are you?" Some Ethiopian towns bear Biblical names.

Clearly, the Ethiopian Church has had a powerful influence on a country with now more than 25 million people. Let us take a closer look at this church.

SOME ANCIENT HISTORY

Prior to the fourth century of the Common Era animism prevailed in much of what is now modern-day Ethiopia. This is the belief that conscious, personal life exists in animals, plants and other objects of nature. Especially prominent was worship of serpents. In time, immigrants from southern Arabia introduced worship of sun, moon and star gods.

Besides these primitive beliefs, Hebrew religion had an effect on the people of Ethiopia. Bible readers remember the good services of the Ethiopian eunuch Ebed-melech to Jeremiah. (Jer. 38:7-13) Also, Ethiopia was one of the lands among which Jewish exiles were scattered after the

Babylonian conquest of Judah.—Isa. 11:11, *New American Bible*.

Shortly after the Christian congregation was established in 33 C.E., Philip was directed by Jehovah's angel to witness to "an Ethiopian eunuch, a man in power under Candace queen of the Ethiopians." Philip baptized the eunuch, who then "kept going on his way rejoicing," and undoubtedly he gave expression to that joy by proclaiming the "good news" in Ethiopia. (Acts 8:26-39) However, Ethiopia became a part of Christendom's domain, at the latest in the fourth century, when Frumentius was ordained by Orthodox Archbishop Athanasius in Alexandria, Egypt, as the first bishop of Ethiopia.

In Aksum, capital of the old kingdom in northern Ethiopia, King Ezana embraced the new faith and proclaimed it the official religion. He came to be called the "Constantine of Ethiopia," as his conversion followed closely the example of his Roman contemporary, Constantine the Great.

CEREMONIES AND PRACTICES

In many respects, the Ethiopian Church's teachings are like those of other Orthodox churches. There is the use of crosses, candles, rosaries, neck cords and pictures. Baptism of children is practiced, along with anointing of the candidates up to thirty times upon different members of the body.

For daily prayer, worshipers are asked to prostrate themselves three times to the Trinity, also once to Mary and once to the cross. Formerly, after the death of a wealthy person, Mass was said daily for forty days, though five Masses were considered sufficient for someone poor. Church worship includes many hymns, some with numerous stanzas, each greeting a different member of the body of a particular "saint." Church services are largely con-

ducted in the otherwise extinct language of Ge'ez.

Other features are even more unusual. During a typical year there are at least 33 festivals for Mary. This compares with only nine for Jesus Christ. Worship of Mary is so important to Ethiopians that the Amharic word for "Protestant" signifies "Enemy of the Virgin." On the seventh of each month is a feast to the Trinity, while the twelfth is devoted to the archangel Michael and the twenty-ninth to the birth of Christ. All Wednesdays and Fridays are days of fasting. In all, there are at least 293 feast and fast days in the Ethiopian yearly calendar. A hundred and eighty of these are obligatory.

Pilgrimages also play an important role in the Ethiopian Church. The most popular one may well be that to the village of Kulubi in eastern Ethiopia toward the end of December. This is a festival in honor of "St. Gabriel." An estimated 100,000 or more pilgrims to this festival flood the countryside surrounding this small village.

As mentioned earlier, elements of ancient Israelite worship play a role in the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. These include Sabbath observance, circumcision and distinction between clean and unclean meats. Jewish influence can be seen also in the structure of church buildings.

All Ethiopian Orthodox churches have divisions somewhat modeled after Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. The outside portion serves mainly for singers of Psalms and hymns. The next chamber is called *keddest* ("Holy") and is the location where Communion is administered. The innermost chamber, called "Most Holy," contains the *tabot*, a replica of the ark of the covenant of Solomon's temple. In procession the *tabot* is carried aloft, accompanied by singing, dancing, beating of prayer sticks, and the sounding of other musical instruments. Observers say that

this recalls the time when King David danced with joy when transporting the original ark of the covenant to Jerusalem.—Compare 2 Samuel 6:11-16.

Many of these teachings and practices, of course, are not found in the Holy Bible. Some stem from apocryphal books added to the Bible and more than two dozen other books with titles such as: "Book of the Cock," "Acts of the Passion" or "Book of Paradise." In the opinion of some Ethiopians, these books are more important than some of the actual Biblical books.

Another notable feature of the Ethiopian Church is its magical practices and superstitions. Many magical prayers of non-Christian origin are now combined with references to the "Virgin Mary" and the "saints." There is still much fear of "the evil eye." Many priests practice magic and cast spells, some of which are said to be very powerful.

In a few places snake worship has survived. People believe that "saints" have sent snakes as protectors of beloved shrines. In some locations people still offer sacrifices to snakes. On occasion these are accompanied by songs and prayers offered by priests.

THE RESULT OF CHURCH-STATE UNION

The union of church and state, which began under King Ezana, grew steadily stronger. This led to bloodspilling warfare. In the sixth century C.E. King Caleb, following urgings of the patriarch of Alexandria, invaded Yemen to avenge sufferings of Christians. During later centuries the Ethiopian Orthodox faith was spread with fire and sword. Suppression of non-Orthodox religious influences by a certain king Zara Yakob is said to have rivaled all the excesses of Roman Catholic "inquisitions."

The Ethiopian Church continued to increase in power right down to the nineteenth century. A law went into effect

requiring that the emperor must belong to that church and take an oath to defend the faith. Articles that prohibited scoffing at religion were introduced into the penal code. Proselytizing by other religions was limited to certain "open areas" selected by the Church.

WINDS OF CHANGE

After sixteen centuries of life closely supervised by the Church, we have seen people take stock of the fruitage of this long period. What did they see?

A recent estimate revealed that only about 10 percent of the adult male population was literate. Poverty afflicts masses of Ethiopians, while the Church itself and a few of its respected members have become rich. During recent years of drought and famine, the Church has come under heavy criticism, especially by the younger generation, for callous abuse of its wealth and refusal to help the needy. Consequently support for the Church has been fading more rapidly than before.

As a result, many monks and priests have abandoned the churches and are seeking refuge in their home villages. Especially the young have begun looking elsewhere for direction in their lives. In spite of efforts by church officials to stem the increasing alienation of youths from the Church, atheistic teachings are finding many listening ears.

Our brief review of Ethiopia's Church reveals a peculiar type of worship. With usual Orthodox Church practices it has mingled animism, snake worship and Israelite elements.

At the same time Jehovah's Witnesses in this country are happy to share Bible truths with their neighbors. The Witnesses are kept very busy in conducting numerous Bible studies with individuals here. Because of this, many Ethiopians rejoice that they have learned how to "worship

the Father with spirit and truth." (John 4:23) No longer do they engage in ritualistic forms of veneration. They have experienced the truthfulness of what Jesus

said: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

—John 8:31, 32.

Joshua testifies to Jehovah's Faithfulness

THE dependability of the faithful universal Sovereign Jehovah God stands in striking contrast to the failure of human rulers to keep promises. He is a God who always keeps his promises, fulfills his part of any covenant that he makes with his creatures. Rightly, the prophet Moses spoke of him as "a God of faithfulness."—Deut. 32:4.

Joshua, the sixth book of the Bible, is really a record of how Jehovah God faithfully fulfilled the promises that he made to the nation of Israel and to their forefathers. Time and again he promised to give them the land of Canaan. In fact, it came to be called the *Promised Land*.^{*} Moreover, Jehovah assured Joshua of success in all his undertakings, on condition that he adhere to God's law. Joshua did obey and, true to his promise, Jehovah caused him to be successful.—Josh. 1:8.

AUTHENTICITY AND WRITERSHIP

Like many other books of the Hebrew Scriptures, the book of Joshua has been the object of attack. Some term it a "romance," others claim that it is "utterly unhistori-

cal." But their attacks lack sound basis. How could this book be a fraudulent piece of writing in view of the way it honors the Creator, Jehovah God, as the Keeper of Promises? How could such a claim be made in view of the book's earnest exhortations to faithfulness and the candor with which it records the failings of God's people? Furthermore, the book has all the earmarks of a contemporary account. This is apparent from the many details provided both as to time and the geographical location of the happenings narrated.

Also strongly testifying to its authenticity are the many references that later Bible writers make to the events recorded in the book of Joshua. Time and again the psalmists make mention of these, and so do Governor Nehemiah, the prophet Isaiah, the first Christian martyr Stephen, the apostle Paul and the disciple James.^{*} Certainly these inspired writers would not have done so had there been any question as to the factualness of the events recorded in the book. Then, too, at 1 Kings 16:34, we find the fulfillment of

* To Abraham (Gen. 13:15); to Isaac (Gen. 26:3); to Jacob (Gen. 35:12); to Moses (Ex. 3:8). See also Moses' references to this promise, as at Leviticus 25:2; Numbers 14:31; Deuteronomy 4:22; 5:33; 6:10; 7:1; and so forth.

* Ps. 44:1-3; 78:54; 105:42-45; 135:10-12; 136:17-22; Neh. 9:22-25; Isa. 28:21; Acts 7:45; 13:19; Heb. 4:8; 11:30, 31; Jas. 2:25.

the curse that Joshua pronounced on any man that would rebuild Jericho.—Josh. 6:26.

That it was none other than Joshua who wrote the book is a most reasonable conclusion. Since he succeeded Moses as the leader of Israel, he would logically continue the record of the history of his people begun by Moses. This has been the firm conviction of Jewish scholars in times past as well as that of the early Christians. Furthermore, some dozen times the expression 'down until this day' occurs, indicating that the writer was a contemporary of the events he records. Then, too, we have the direct testimony: "Joshua wrote these words in the book of God's law and took a great stone and set it up there under the massive tree that is by the sanctuary of Jehovah."—Josh. 24:26.

The book of Joshua appears to fall into four main divisions: Chapters 1 to 5 deal with events from the death of Moses to the beginning of the conquest of the land; chapters 6 to 12 tell of the conquest of Canaan; chapters 13 to 22 deal with the division of the land; and chapters 23 and 24 contain Joshua's farewell messages, calling to our minds Moses' farewell addresses to Israel.

EVENTS PRECEDING JERICHO'S FALL

This book by Moses' successor begins with the assurance that Jehovah would be with Joshua even as He had been with Moses—if he faithfully perused

God's Word day and night and acted in harmony with it. (Josh. 1:1-9) Having received this encouragement, Joshua ordered his people to get ready to cross the Jordan. First, however, he sent two men to spy out the land and particularly Jericho. These entered the house that may well have been an inn operated by Rahab the harlot. The woman told them how all Jericho had become fearful of the Israelites and about her faith in Jehovah God. Because of having hidden the two spies from the men sent by the king to take them, she elicited a promise that when the Israelites took Jericho she and her household would be spared.—Josh. 1:10-2:24.

After the spies had reported to him, Joshua, together with all his people, rose early to cross the Jordan. In the front were the priests bearing the ark of the covenant. As they moved forward, and actually stepped into the waters of the Jordan, which was at flood stage, Jehovah



Joshua faithfully studied Jehovah's laws 'day and night'

vah, true to his promise, parted the waters, enabling the Israelites to cross over on dry ground. To commemorate this miracle, Joshua had stones taken from the midst of the Jordan set up as a pillar at the camping place for that day. Next, Joshua ordered all the males to be circumcised, after which the Passover was celebrated. At this point they began eating of the produce of the land, and Jehovah ceased to provide manna for them. Joshua was reassured by the appearance before him of the angelic "prince of the army of Jehovah."—Josh. 3:1-5:15.

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

In obedience to divine instructions, the Israelites marched around Jericho once a day for six days. On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times. The procession consisted of a well-equipped army, and also the priests, blowing on rams' horns, accompanying the ark of the covenant. When, on the last time around on that final day, the priests blew their horns, the people shouted and, true to Jehovah's word, the walls of Jericho fell. The Israelite soldiers marched straight in and put to the sword all the inhabitants, as well as all the livestock, and burned the city with fire. Only Rahab and the relatives in her house were spared.—Josh. 6:1-27.

Joshua and his people next proceeded against Ai. However, here, to their great consternation, they met with defeat. Joshua prostrated himself before Jehovah, and asked the meaning of this reversal. Especially was he concerned about what would happen to Jehovah's name if his people were destroyed. Jehovah answered by telling him that unfaithfulness had been committed in connection with the destruction of Jericho. By means of lots, Joshua ferreted out the guilty one, Achan of the tribe of Judah, who had taken spoils contrary

to Jehovah's explicit instructions. After Achan and his family and all his belongings were destroyed, Israel again met with success, taking both Ai and the city of Bethel. Then, in obedience to Moses' instruction, the Israelites were stationed, six tribes in front of Mount Gerizim and six tribes in front of Mount Ebal, while Joshua pronounced to them the blessing and the malediction.—Deut. 11:29; Josh. 7:1-8:35.

Next, we read of how the men of Gibeon sued for peace with Israel. Because of this the surrounding nations set out to attack the Gibeonites, who then called on Joshua for help. By a forced march, Joshua came to their rescue. It was during this battle that Joshua asked the sun and the moon to stand still. This they did for about a whole day, enabling Israel to complete their rout of the combined forces that had threatened the Gibeonites. Here again Jehovah proved to be the faithful God. Not only did he answer Joshua's request but He sent down great hailstones, which killed more of the foe than the Israelite warriors did.—Josh. 9:1-10:15.

Thereafter Joshua and his army conquered the Canaanites in the south and the west and then in the north. Repeatedly Israel gained the victory over combined enemy forces. All told, 31 kings were defeated.—Josh. 10:16-12:24.

THE DIVISION OF THE LAND

In recording the division of the land, Joshua logically began by rehearsing that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh had received their inheritance east of the Jordan (at their own request, as it was ideal pastureland and they had large flocks). All the land west of the Jordan was divided by lot, beginning with the tribe of Judah. Provision was made for six cities of refuge, havens for accidental manslayers. These were included in the 48 cities assigned to the

tribe of Levi that had no separate inheritance in the land.—Josh. 13:1-21:42.

In concluding the account of the division of the land, Joshua stressed: "Jehovah gave Israel all the land that he had sworn to give to their forefathers . . . Not a promise failed out of all the good promise that Jehovah had made to the house of Israel; it all came true."—Josh. 21:43-45.

After this the warriors of the two and a half tribes whose territory lay east of Jordan, but who had helped fellow Israelites to take possession of the land, returned to their own inheritance. Their building an altar as a monument was misunderstood as an act of apostasy and caused a temporary crisis. But when it was explained that the altar simply was to serve as a witness before Jehovah, and was not for sacrifice, all the other Israelites were satisfied.—Josh. 22:1-34.

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESSES

Sensing that he did not have much longer to live, Joshua summoned all the older men, the heads, judges and officers of Israel to him. He reminded them of what Jehovah had done for them, even as He had promised, and then urged: "Be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses by never turning away from it to the right or to the left." After warning them what would befall them if they proved unfaithful, he again reminded them: "You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed."—Josh. 23:1-16.

Then, upon convening all Israel at Shechem, Joshua gave them Jehovah's message in which Jehovah recounted their history, from the time of Abraham on to the time that they came up out of Egypt,

their sojourn in the wilderness, their crossing of the Jordan and now their success in taking the land of Canaan. In view of all of this, Joshua urged his people to fear Jehovah God and to worship him alone. But, "if it is bad in your eyes to serve Jehovah, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah." Appreciatively the people answered that it would be unthinkable for them to serve any god other than Jehovah.—Josh. 24:1-18.

However, Joshua did not let it go at that. Rather, he reminded them: "You are not able to serve Jehovah, for he is a holy God; he is a God exacting exclusive devotion. He will not pardon your revolting and your sins." In turn the people insisted: "No, but Jehovah we shall serve!" To that Joshua replied: "You are witnesses against yourselves that you of your own accord have chosen Jehovah for yourselves, to serve him." To this they replied: "We are witnesses." So Joshua concluded a covenant with the people to that effect.—Josh. 24:19-28.

Not long thereafter Joshua died at the age of 110 years. And we read that "Israel continued to serve Jehovah all the days of Joshua and all the days of the older men who extended their days after Joshua and who had known all the work of Jehovah that he did for Israel." (Josh. 24:29-31) All of these had certainly seen how faithful is Jehovah God, true to all his promises.

We today stand to profit from the book of Joshua, even as the apostle Paul noted: "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." Yes, the book of Joshua strengthens our hope that whatever Jehovah God has promised he will certainly perform.—Rom. 15:4.

What Did the WISE MAN

Mean?

Seize the Opportunity

At times excellent opportunities present themselves for doing good or for getting something useful. Due to the uncertainties of life in this present system, however, a degree of faith may be involved when taking proper advantage of certain situations. And yet, if we have misgivings in such a case, we could lose out on something truly worth while. We may well fail to be a source of encouragement to others.

Wise King Solomon provided very practical advice on this matter. He wrote: "Send out your bread upon the surface of the waters, for in the course of many days you will find it again. Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not

know what calamity will occur on the earth." (Eccl. 11:1, 2) These words have commonly been viewed as an exhortation to generosity.

A person never knows what might result from his acts of generosity. It may seem to him that he is committing something to a body of "waters," without immediate returns in sight. Nevertheless, his generous acts may endear him to the hearts of others, causing them to respond generously should he come into real need. Not that the truly generous person should be calculating and counting on being repaid. Rather, he takes delight in giving to others and is confident that he will always have what he needs. So, he does not restrict his giving to a select few, just two or three, but he is generous in a wholehearted way, giving to "seven, or even to eight." Some cautious persons may think that this is most unwise, fearing that one could come into a needy situation should calamity strike. The generous person, however, is far more likely to receive help should he be faced with disaster. A similar thought was expressed by Jesus Christ when he said: "Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing."

—Luke 6:38.

One's acts of generosity might even be compared to planting rice in soil covered with water. After "many days" what was thus planted comes to maturity and yields a rich return.

Next, Solomon draws on certain fixed laws in showing that irresoluteness in matters of life is not the best course. He notes: "If the clouds are filled with water, they empty out a sheer downpour upon the earth; and if a tree falls to the south or if to the north, in the place where the tree falls there it will prove to be." (Eccl.

11:3) These things simply happen; they cannot be humanly controlled. So why be indecisive and hence hesitant about being generous or doing what needs to be done? If it is going to rain, it is going to rain. If a tree is going to fall a certain way, that is where it is going to fall. That is true of many other things in life. Inaction alone will not guarantee their not happening.

If a person sought to regulate his life by trying to determine first exactly what may or may not happen, he would not get anything done. As Solomon noted: "He that is watching the wind will not sow seed [fearing that the seed will be blown away]; and he that is looking at the clouds will not reap [fearing that if he cuts the grain it will get wet before he can put it into his storage place]."—Eccl. 11:4.

We, therefore, have to go ahead with what needs to be done, appreciating that there are bound to be uncertainties. There is no way to fathom the work of God, that is, to discover some rule by which to determine precisely what he may do or tolerate in the outworking of his purpose and then conduct our affairs according to such rule. Solomon pointed out that God's work is just as much a mystery to man as is the development of a baby in the womb. He wrote: "Just as you are not aware of what is the way of the spirit in the bones in the belly of her that is pregnant, in like manner you do not know the work of the true God, who does all things."—Eccl. 11:5.

In view of life's uncertainties and human inability to change certain fixed laws, Solomon gives this advice: "In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest; for you are not knowing where this will have success, either here or there, or whether both of them will alike be good." (Eccl. 11:6) Hence, the best course is to go ahead diligently with our labors, not permitting un-

certainties to worry us to the point of stifling our activity, whether spiritual pursuits, secular labor or acts of generosity.

This can contribute to a person's having a cheerful outlook on life. Solomon wrote: "The light is also sweet, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun; for if a man should live even many years, in all of them let him rejoice." (Eccl. 11:7, 8) Since only the living can appreciate the light and the sun, Solomon is here pointing out that it is good to be alive and that one should find enjoyment in living. However, he adds a sobering thought: "Let him remember the days of darkness, though they could be many; every day that has come in is vanity." (Eccl. 11:8) A person should not lose sight of the fact that he may lose his strength and vigor when the "days of darkness" or old age set in. Reduced to a decrepit state, he may find that, as life drags on for years, every day is vanity, seemingly empty and meaningless. So while he can, he should strive to get wholesome enjoyment from life, using good judgment and seeking God's guidance in all that he does.

School for Life

AT SCHOOLTEACHER in Ecuador has conducted a regular Bible study with over 200 students in her school. Before the school term, she explained to all the parents what she had in mind and asked if there were any objections. There were none—in fact, some said that they were happy to see their children being taught good morals and habits. The school covers grades two through six, so children from the second to the fourth grade were given the textbook "Listening to the Great Teacher," while grades five and six received the more advanced "Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It." The studies are held in groups, as in regular class sessions, but the sessions are opened and closed with prayer, as in a home Bible study.

"Victorious Faith" International Conventions

AFTER more than 60 years of faithful service, the apostle John could write: "The victory that defeats the world is our faith." (1 John 5:4, New English Bible) Today, we are more than 60 years into the "conclusion of the system of things," and we rejoice that there are still with us some of the generation of 1914 who, like the apostle John, are living examples of faithful endurance. (Matt. 24:3, 34) Also, throughout the earth, there are now more than two million other servants of God who are exhibiting 'the tested quality of their faith' as they eagerly wait for Jesus to reveal himself at the "great tribulation."—1 Pet. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:6-8; Rev. 7:9, 14.

Starting in the late spring of 1978, the "Victorious Faith" International Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses will provide a testimony to the entire world that there is one people that is displaying invincible faith in these turbulent "last days." (2 Tim. 3:1) Some may have asked, What purpose do these very large assemblies serve? Why are they needed? Is the self-sacrifice required on the part of many of the conventioners worth it? Well, let us look back on some of these assemblies.

Were you among the 253,922 in attendance at the Divine Will International Assembly in New York city, August 3, 1958? What a grand climax that was to eight days of spiritual feasting! And how thrilling it was to be a part of that throng, so united in doing the divine will! Though there were hardships in traveling there, and in attending, these paled into insignificance alongside the spiritual blessings received. It is these blessings that everyone remembers, along with the joy of being part of God's assembled people.—Prov. 10:22.

Think, too, of the extensive witness given by large worldwide assemblies. The international conventions of 1963, 1969 and 1973 were testimony 'around the world' to the faith and zeal of Jehovah's Witnesses. The love, cleanliness and zeal of God's people were widely commented on and prejudices were broken down. Our brothers in many foreign lands still recall

those conventions with joy—for they were grand occasions for the black, the yellow and the white to mix happily in that marvelous unity that is to be found only among Jehovah's true people. A foretaste indeed of the paradise earth!

By planning and preparing from now on to share in all five days of at least one of the "Victorious Faith" International Conventions, you will assure yourself of a rich blessing. No doubt Joseph and Mary in Bible times had to plan well ahead to take their family of seven or more children the long distance up to Jerusalem for the annual festivals. (Matt. 13:55, 56; Luke 2:41-43) They likely had to make it on foot. Tiring, but rewarding! And they provide a fine pattern for all families that appreciate spiritual things today. True, there may be obstacles, but did not Jesus say: "If you have faith the size of a mustard grain . . . nothing will be impossible for you"? (Matt. 17:20) "May Jehovah reward the way you act" in preparing to share with his people earth wide in the "Victorious Faith" International Conventions.—Ruth 2:12.

1978 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS UNITED STATES AND CANADA

To assist conventioners in making plans to attend one of the 25 international assemblies scheduled for the Continental United States and Canada, the following chart sets out the assembly cities and nearby circuits. To the extent possible, it is recommended that the brothers in America attend the convention shown for their circuit unless vacation plans or other circumstances make it necessary to attend elsewhere. In some cases the size of the crowd needs to be balanced with the seating facilities available and so some congregations in those circuits marked with an asterisk (*), although closer to another convention city, are requested, if possible, to attend the convention indicated so that there will be plenty of room. Where the chart indicates that

a portion of a circuit should attend a particular assembly, such as $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$, and so forth, it simply means that those living in the part of the circuit closest to that convention would attend where indicated, but the rest of the circuit would attend another assembly close to them, as shown elsewhere on the list. In Los Angeles and New Orleans, where two conventions are scheduled on different weeks for each city, we are recommending that the brothers in the circuits listed in the chart attend during the particular week indicated, to the extent possible, to assure adequate seating for everyone. Additional details regarding rooming headquarters addresses, and so forth, will be provided later.

Most of the listed dates and places for conventions in the United States and Canada are tentative, but these are the locations we are endeavoring to secure. Please note also that since the list of international conventions printed in the September 1, 1977, *Watchtower* the assemblies in San Diego, Calif., and E. Rutherford, N.J., have been canceled. Both Milwaukee, Wis., conventions have been combined into one on June 14-18. Also, the following convention dates have been changed: Cincinnati, Ohio, to July 19-23; New York Metropolitan Area [Elmont, N.Y.] (Spanish only) to August 9-13.

Note to the Body of Elders in each congregation: Please determine immediately from the chart below which assembly it is suggested that your congregation attend and announce to the congregation several times the city and dates so that all will know what the Society has recommended.

JUNE 14-18:

Dallas [Irving], Tex. (Spanish only): S-3, S-6, S-7, S-8, S-10, S-14, S-18, S-24-A, Missouri Spanish Circuit.
 Milwaukee, Wis.: Ill. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Ind. 1, $\frac{1}{2}$; Iowa 1, 3, 4; Mich. 7; Minn. 3, 4, 6-B; Wis. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
 New Orleans, La.: Ala. 2, 3, 5; Ark. 2-A; Fla. 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11; Ga. 2*, 3*, 5*; La. 2-B; Miss. 2.
 Washington, D.C.: D.C. 1; Md. 1, 2, 3-A, 4, 5; N.J. 7-C; N.C. 1, $\frac{1}{2}$, 5, 6; Tenn. 5-C; S.C. 1, $\frac{1}{2}$; Va. 1, 2, 3, 4, $\frac{1}{2}$, 6; W.Va. $\frac{1}{2}$ -B.

JUNE 21-25:

Detroit [Pontiac], Mich.: Canada—Ont. 7; United States—Ind. 7; Mich. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; Ohio 5, 11.
 Lakeland, Fla. (Spanish only): S-12, S-16, S-26.
 New Orleans, La.: Ala. 1*, 4, 6; Ark. 4-B*; Fla. 2, 4, 7, 8, 10; Ga. 1, 6, 7; La. 1, 4, 5; Miss. 1, 3.

JUNE 28-JULY 2:

Los Angeles, Calif.: Ariz. 1, 3; Calif. 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 20, 21, 30, 32, 35, 36, 37, 39; Colo. $\frac{1}{2}$, 7*; N.M. 2, $\frac{1}{2}$ -A; Utah 1.
 Philadelphia, Pa.: Md. 3-B*; N.J. 1-A*, 3, 4*, 6, 7-B, 8*; Pa. 1, 2*, 3, 4, 5-A, 5-B, 6, 9-A, 11, 13.
 St. Louis, Mo.: Ark. 1, 3, 4-A; Colo. 4; Ill. 6, 7; Ind. $\frac{1}{2}$; Iowa 2; Kans. 1, 2, 3, 4; Ky. 1; Mo. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; Neb. 1, $\frac{1}{2}$, 2, 3; Okla. 2-A, 3; Tenn. $\frac{1}{2}$, 3.

THE WATCHTOWER — DECEMBER 1, 1977

JULY 5-9: Montreal, Que. (English): Canada—O-1, 2, 3, 4*, 5, 6*, 8*, 9, 10, 11, 12*, 13, 14, 15*, 16, 17, 18*; NB-1, 2; NS-1, 2; Q-4, 9; PEI-1; Newfoundland. United States—Conn. 1*, 2*; Me. 1; Mass. 1*, 2*, 3*, 4*, 5*; N.H. 1; N.Y. 3*, 6, 9-A*, 16*, 21, 22; R.I. 1*; Vt. 1.
 (French: Canada—Q-1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10.)
 (Greek: Canada—G-1. United States—N.Y. Greek Circuit.)
 (Italian: Canada—I-1, 2, 3. United States—Chicago and N.Y. Italian congregations.)
 (Portuguese: Canada—SP-1. United States—Portuguese 1.)
 (Spanish: Canada—SP-1. United States— $\frac{1}{2}$ S-13 [Michigan Spanish congregations].)
 (Sessions also in Arabic, Korean, Ukrainian)

JULY 12-16:

Houston, Tex.: Ark. 2-B; Colo. 5*; La. 2-A; N.M. $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ -A, 3-B; Okla. 1, 2-B, 4; Tex. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.
 Los Angeles, Calif. (Korean also): Ariz. 2, 4, 5; Calif. 1, 3, 4, 9, 11-C, 16, 17, 24, 25, 28, 31, 33, 38, 44, 45, 46; Colo. 2, 6; N.M. $\frac{1}{2}$; Utah $\frac{1}{2}$.
 New York City [Queens], N.Y.: Conn. 3; N.J. 1-B, 2, 5, 7-A; N.Y. 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19.
 San Francisco, Calif. (Chinese and Japanese also): Calif. 10, 11-A, 11-B, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 34, 40, 41, 42, 43; Nev. 1; Utah $\frac{1}{2}$.
 Winnipeg, MB. (Ukrainian sessions also): Canada—M-1, 2, 3, 4; S-3, 5, 6-A; United States—Colo. 1, $\frac{1}{2}$; Minn. 1, 2*, 5*, 6-A*; Mont. $\frac{1}{2}$ -B; Neb. $\frac{1}{2}$; N.D. 1; S.D. 1; Wyo. 1.

JULY 19-23:

Cincinnati, Ohio: Ga. 4, 8; Ind. 2, 3, $\frac{1}{2}$, 4, $\frac{1}{2}$, 5, 6; Ky. 2, 3, 4; N.C. $\frac{1}{2}$, 3*, 4; Ohio 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 15; S.C. $\frac{1}{2}$; Tenn. 1, $\frac{1}{2}$, 4, 5; W.Va. $\frac{1}{2}$.
 Monroe, N.Y. (Near New York City) (French only): N.Y. 20; Florida French Congregation.

Vancouver, B.C.: Canada—B-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7-A, 8, 9, 10, 11. United States—Wash. 2-A.

JULY 26-30:

Pittsburgh, Pa.: N.Y. 7, 8, 9-B, 13; Ohio 1, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14; Pa. 7, 8, 9-B, 10, 12, 14; W.Va. $\frac{1}{2}$, 2-A, $\frac{1}{2}$ -B, 3*.
 Seattle, Wash.: Ida. 1, 2; Mont. 1; Ore. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Utah $\frac{1}{2}$; Wash. 1, 2-B, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.

AUGUST 2-6:

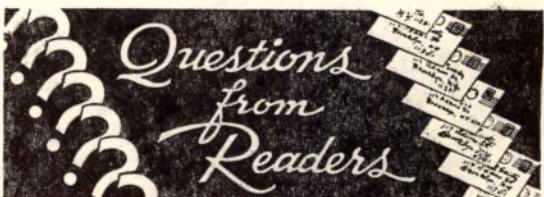
Los Angeles, Calif. (Spanish only): S-4, S-5, S-9, S-11, S-15, S-19, S-20, S-23, S-24-B, S-28.

AUGUST 9-13:

New York Metropolitan Area [Elmont, N.Y.] (Spanish only): S-1, S-2, $\frac{1}{2}$ S-13, S-17, S-21, S-22, S-25, S-27, S-29, S-30, S-31.

AUGUST 23-27:

Edmonton, AB. (Ukrainian sessions also): Canada—A-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; S-1, 2, 4, 6-B; B-7-B. United States—Mont. 2-A, $\frac{1}{2}$ -B.



● In the first of the ten plagues Moses turned all the water of Egypt into blood. The Egyptian priests then appeared to imitate the feat. But where could they have gotten water?

Regarding the first plague, Jehovah told Moses: "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and

stretch your hand out over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their Nile canals and over their reedy pools and over all their impounded waters, that they may become blood.' And there will certainly be blood in all the land of Egypt and in the wooden vessels and in the stone vessels." Moses and Aaron obeyed, "and the blood came to be in all the land of Egypt."

—Ex. 7:19-21.

The account next says: "Nevertheless, the magic-practicing priests of Egypt proceeded to do the same thing with their secret arts." (Ex. 7:22) So what water did the priests use?

Some commentators have reasoned that the first plague did not affect *all* the water in Egypt. (Compare Exodus 9:25; 10:5.) They have said that the reference to water in "the wooden vessels and in the stone vessels" does not need to be understood as meaning that all the water already in containers became blood. If this is so, then the point of the final expression in verse nineteen would be that, with the Nile and the water in all its canals and pools having been turned into blood, then, once the unaffected water in containers had been used up, there would be no unaffected water with which

to refill them. Hence, according to this line of reasoning, the magic-practicing priests could have performed their trickery on some water that had been taken from the Nile before the plague.

However, there is another possibility that accords with the facts. Exodus 7:24 says: "And all the Egyptians went digging round about the Nile River for water to drink, because they were unable to drink any water of the Nile River." Unaffected water, then, could apparently be collected by digging wells in the moist soil in the area of the Nile. If Egyptians could obtain drinking water from these wells, perhaps the magic-practicing priests used a limited amount of such water in order to work their magic that had the effect of dissuading Pharaoh from releasing the Hebrews.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

January 1: Do All Things with a Good Conscience. Page 712. Songs to Be Used: 115, 85.

January 8: Is Your Advice Hard to Take? Page 720. Songs to Be Used: 37, 97.



barrier across our path, not only to turn off at a right angle but also to turn off the path of life. Just as our system of beliefs now stands

in the way and our blood carries hot diseases, urging us off our path but not out of us.