

The **WATCHTOWER**

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

JANUARY 15, 1969

Semimonthly

THE FAITH THAT PLEASES GOD

ARE YOU READY FOR THE
RESPONSIBILITIES OF A
BAPTIZED WITNESS?

WHY HAS GOD PERMITTED
WICKEDNESS
UNTIL OUR DAY?

CHRISTIAN WEDDINGS SHOULD
REFLECT REASONABLENESS

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"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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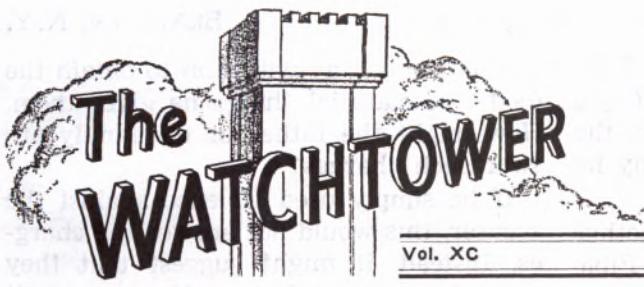
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THROUGHOUT all of man's history there has been much wickedness. And today, no matter where you look in the world, there is bloodshed, crime, hatred and immorality. All too often it is the innocent, decent people who suffer from the wicked acts of others. They may be victims of violence, perhaps losing their homes, loved ones or even their own lives. You may or may not have experienced such things personally. Even if you have not, you likely have gone through things that have caused mental suffering, experiences such as injustice, unkindness, being cheated or deceived.

Why has God permitted such wickedness until our day? There are a number of reasons, but to understand those reasons properly we need to examine the issues raised at the time of the first rebellion. You have likely read the account of this in the Bible in the third chapter of Genesis. Let us consider, then, the real meaning of these events.

Briefly, this is what occurred: Jehovah told man that his life depended upon obedience to his Creator, and that disobedience would result in death. (Gen. 2:17) God's adversary, Satan the Devil, contradicted this clear statement. He told Adam's wife that the human pair could disobey and still, "You positively will not

WHY HAS GOD PERMITTED WICKEDNESS

UNTIL
OUR
DAY?

die." He further claimed that such disobedience would actually improve matters for them, causing their eyes to be opened, and that they would "be like God, knowing good and bad." (Gen. 3:4, 5) Now, what was involved in this rebellious action of Satan?

THE ISSUES AT STAKE

A number of issues or vital questions were raised. First, Satan called into question *the truthfulness of God*. In effect, he called God a liar, and that with regard to a matter of life and death. Second, he questioned *man's dependence on his Creator for continued life and happiness*. He claimed that neither man's life nor his ability to govern his affairs with success depended upon obedience to Jehovah. He argued that man could act independently of his Creator and be like God, deciding for himself what is right or wrong, good

or bad. Third, by arguing against God's stated law, he in effect claimed that *God's way of ruling* is wrong and not for the good of his creatures and in this way he even challenged *God's right to rule*.

But Satan's action raised still another question, as is shown later in the Bible in the book of Job, chapters 1 and 2. There, in connection with a man named Job, it is shown that Satan called into question *the faithfulness and loyalty to Jehovah God of all creatures*.

In so many words, Satan made the claim that those who serve God do so, not because they love God and his righteous rule, but only for selfish reasons, such as the material blessings God gives them. He claimed that, if such reasons were taken away, then even a man like Job would turn away from God. (Job 1:6-11; 2:4, 5) Yes, Satan's rebellion in Eden called into question the loyalty of all God's creatures in heaven and on earth. If put to the test, would they prove their love for their heavenly Father and show that they preferred his rule to that of any other?

GOD'S WAY OF SETTLING THE ISSUES

Note, please, that Satan did not raise any question as to God's strength. He did not challenge Jehovah to use his might to destroy him as an opposer. But he did challenge God's right to rule and the rightness of his way of ruling. Also, he questioned the loyalty of God's creatures. So, instead of a test of strength, it was a moral issue that had to be settled.

Satan's false charges against God may be illustrated, to a certain extent, in a human way. Suppose a man having a large family is accused by one of his neighbors of many false things about the way he manages his household. Suppose the neighbor also says that the family members have no real love for their fa-

ther but only stay with him to obtain the food and material things he gives them. How might the father of the family answer such charges?

If he simply used violence against the accuser, this would not answer the charges. Instead, it might suggest that they were true. But what a fine answer it would be if he permitted his own family to be his witnesses to show that their father was indeed a just and loving family head and that they were happy to live with him because they loved him! Thus he would be completely vindicated.—Prov. 27:11; Isa. 43:10.

This illustrates in certain respects what God has done. Moreover, he has allowed sufficient time—now almost 6,000 years—for the issue to be settled beyond all doubt. He has allowed this time, not only to permit his faithful creatures to prove their devotion to him and his rule, but also to demonstrate that any other kind of rule results only in bad.—Prov. 1:30-33; Isa. 59:4, 8.

Satan set himself up as a rival ruler by rebelling against Jehovah God. And, by taking the course Satan recommended, the first human pair declared themselves independent of Jehovah's rule and came under Satan's control. (Gen. 3:6; Rom. 6:16) By God's letting both Satan and man go to the limit in their efforts to act and rule independently of their Creator, their total failure to produce good government, with real benefits for all mankind, would be made evident beyond all future denial. Meanwhile Jehovah would have those on earth who love him proclaim his name and purposes for the enlightenment of all who love and seek what is right.

So, the situation is much like that involving a Pharaoh of Egypt who took a course similar to that of Satan the Devil in opposing Jehovah God, and to whom Jehovah said: "By now I could have

thrust my hand out that I might strike you and your people with pestilence and that you might be effaced from the earth. But, in fact, for this cause I have kept you in existence, for the sake of showing you my power and in order to have my name declared in all the earth.”—Ex. 9:15, 16.

WHAT HAVE THE RESULTS SHOWN?

The Bible shows that Satan has made use of the time to build up an organization in heaven and earth over which he rules. The extent of his control of the earth is indicated by the fact that he could offer Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in exchange for Jesus’ worship. (Matt. 4:8, 9) That is why Satan is called “the god of this system of things” and “the ruler of this world.” (2 Cor. 4:4; John 16:11) What has this meant for mankind, and what has been the result of man’s course of independence from God and his rule?

History testifies to the fact that this has not brought peace, contentment and eternal life to mankind. It has brought the opposite: thousands of years of pain, suffering and death. The record of history and the dreadful state of affairs in the world today are proof that man has not succeeded in governing without God. Man has tried all kinds of government, but he still lacks security and enduring happiness.

True, there has been progress in a materialistic way. But is it really progress when men send rockets to the moon, and yet cannot live together in peace on earth? What good is it for them to build homes equipped with every convenience, only to have families torn apart by divorce and delinquency? Are wars, riots in the streets, destruction of life and property and widespread lawlessness something of which to be proud? Not at all! But they are the

fruitage of rule that ignores God. Truly, as Ecclesiastes 8:9 says, “man has dominated man to his injury.”

So God’s long permission of wickedness has proved beyond doubt that man’s attempt to ‘play God’ is a miserable failure. (Ps. 127:1) As a prominent editor said: “The more we search for an alibi, the more we discover that unhappiness on earth is man-made. Our key weakness is that we have not solved the problem of self-government.”* The inspired Bible writer Jeremiah rightly said: “I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step. Correct me, O Jehovah.”—Jer. 10:23, 24; see also Proverbs 16:25.

Satan’s influence over earth’s affairs has brought disunity, wickedness and death, and his rule has been by means of deceit, force and selfishness. He has proved himself unfit to be the ruler of anything. So Jehovah is now fully justified in destroying this debased rebel along with his demons and all those on earth who have shared in his wicked deeds. (Rom. 16:20) But what about the loyalty of God’s creatures to Jehovah’s loving rule and Satan’s claim that *all* would turn away if put to the test?

Jehovah God knew that “love never fails” and he knew that some of mankind would serve him willingly, out of love, and not because they were being bribed or forced. (1 Cor. 13:8) Many thousands have done this throughout the centuries. Job was one of these. Even though Satan brought terrific pressure against him and stripped him of his belongings, children and health, Job still declared: “Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity.” (Job 27:5) Job proved Satan a liar.

As we have seen, the perfect man Jesus

* David Lawrence, *U.S. News & World Report*, Sept. 25, 1967, p. 128.

resisted all of Satan's temptations and bribes. Further, when whipped by soldier guards and nailed to a cruel torture stake to die, Jesus held fast his loyalty to God. (1 Pet. 2:23) This proved that perfect Adam could have done the same if he had wanted to, and that God was not unrighteous in requiring full obedience from man. (2 Thess. 1:4, 5) By his loyalty to Jehovah, Jesus gave the finest answer to Satan's false challenge.

But Satan, his mind being twisted by selfishness and pride, has refused to slow down in his insane course. Although it has long since been proved that he was wrong and is a liar, he continues to persecute lovers of God. (Rev. 12:17) Since Jesus' death many thousands of Christians have

served Jehovah God because they loved him and wanted his loving rule over them. And right now, hundreds of thousands proclaim their loyalty to Jehovah as ruler. (Rev. 7:9, 10) Their faithful keeping of Jehovah's Word and their respect for his law have enabled them to live in contentment, in spite of all opposition from Satan.

What a mountain of evidence the unity, love and integrity displayed by God's servants throughout the centuries have provided against Satan and in behalf of Jehovah God! These clearly demonstrate that only Jehovah has the right to rule, that his way of ruling in love is the only right way, that man can stay loyal to him under the most severe test, and that Satan is the most monstrous liar of all time.

HOW LONG

JEHOVAH God has permitted wickedness until our day. But will he permit it to continue indefinitely?

No, for God's particular purpose in permitting wickedness was to settle all the issues raised by Satan. Thus, he has set a definite time when he will bring wickedness to an end. The Bible writer Daniel referred to this long ago when he wrote: "The end is yet for the time appointed."—Dan. 11:27.

Nearly six thousand years from Adam's day to ours may seem a long time when viewed from the standpoint of humans who live about seventy years. But since God set the time limit, it is good to appreciate his view of the matter. The prophet Moses, at Psalm 90:4, says of him: "**A** thousand years are in your eyes but as yesterday when it is past." A year is a long time to a child of five, but to a

WILL WICKEDNESS CONTINUE?

man of sixty it is comparatively short. Likewise, to Jehovah, who lives for eternity, a thousand years is like a day.—2 Pet. 3:8.

This set time during which wickedness has been permitted has been no injustice to us. Why, if God had immediately crushed the life out of all the rebels in Eden, we would never even have been born! We would never have had the opportunity for eternal life in his new sys-

tem. So the fact that Jehovah did not cut short his long-suffering at some earlier time has given us opportunity to live now, and eternally in the future. (2 Pet. 3:9, 15) Also, God has used this time to provide for man's redemption through Jesus Christ.—Gal. 4:4, 5.

In addition, God has used the time to select and prepare from among mankind "vessels of mercy." These are the ones

who will make up the righteous government over those who will live forever on earth in the new system. What blessings this heavenly kingdom means for man-

kind! During the time that God has been preparing the "vessels of mercy," he has shown much long-suffering. He has tolerated the wicked, the "vessels of wrath." He has held off their destruction. Why? The Bible clearly answers: "In order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy." (Rom. 9: 22-24) To God's heavenly kingdom will go the glory of vindicating God's name and destroying the wicked, the "vessels of wrath." Also, by his allowing wickedness to continue for a time, facets of God's personality are manifested that would not ordinarily be seen: his mercy and long-suffering. These enrich our appreciation of the Creator and our own personalities, as we imitate him.—Eph. 5:1.

There has also been another real benefit in God's permitting wickedness as long as he has. If at any time in the future anyone should call into question God's way of doing things, it would not be necessary again for him to grant that one time to try out some other way. The record of six thousand years of failure by Satan, his demons, and men who have tried to run affairs independent of God has sup-

plied sufficient answer. No one can rightly claim: 'They did not get a chance,' or say, 'If only they had more time.' The permitted time has been enough to prove that the way of rebellion against the Creator has been absolutely disastrous! So God will be fully justified in swiftly crushing any rebel that threatens the future peace of the universe.—Ps. 145:20.

There is only a short time left before Jehovah will destroy this wicked system of things. This remaining time gives us the opportunity to take sides with him and 'make his heart rejoice.' (Prov. 27:

11) If we willingly submit to his rulership, he will bless us with eternal life in his new system. The choice of accepting or rejecting is set before each one of us. —Deut. 30:19, 20.

Obedience to God is not really difficult. If we appreciate that Jehovah's wisdom is much greater than ours, and that whatever he does is for our good because he is a God of love, then we will obey him in everything. Whatever Jehovah's will is, we will want to do it, whether in times of crisis or in the everyday things of life. That is the way loyal servants of God have always felt. (Dan. 3:16-18; Ps. 119:33-37) In the first century some of these said to a high court: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

Today, Jehovah is using his loyal servants to declare his name and purposes in all the earth. (Matt. 24:14) When that is done to his satisfaction, then he will show Satan his almighty power by crushing him and all other rebels, bringing an end to this wicked system. Thus, Jehovah will clear the universe of wickedness and pave the way for his righteous new system.

—2 Pet. 3:13.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Appreciating Jehovah.
- Appreciating Sacred Things.
- The Meaning of Present World Distress.
- Babylonian Chronology—How Reliable?

The FAITH

THAT PLEASES GOD

"The tested quality of your faith, of much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being proved by fire, may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. 1:7.

WHETHER a person is religiously inclined or not, everyone puts his faith in something. He may not believe in God, but he will believe in himself, the security of his bank account, the value of education, the superiority of a certain form of government, the integrity of a friend. So faith takes on many forms. But it was to man's relationship to his Creator and his confidence in the outworking of God's purposes that Jesus referred when he said: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man arrives, will he really find the faith on the earth?"—Luke 18:8.

What is "the faith" that Jesus referred to, and why is it so important to each one of us? Obviously Jesus was not referring to many different ideologies or

even to what man might accomplish of his own will when he spoke of "the faith." Rather he was referring to God and confidence in what He would do for the blessing of mankind, saying: "Certainly, then, shall not God cause justice to be done for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night, even though he is long-suffering toward them? I tell you, He will cause justice to be done to them speedily." (Luke 18:7, 8) However, Jesus did not indicate that God was going to use many channels or promote variant ideologies in dealing with mankind, each one to please the taste of some, when he spoke of "the faith."

Similarly the apostles indicated that there was a faith and a way that was pleasing to God. Concerning Paul's ministry in Ephesus the account at Acts 19:9 states: "Some went on hardening themselves and not believing, speaking injuriously about The Way before the multitude." Here the true faith was called "The Way," and, indeed, it was a way of life for those early Christians.

Even when on trial Paul boldly admitted "that, according to the way that they call a 'sect,' in this manner I am rendering sacred service to the God of my forefathers." These early Christians did not each one go his own way or follow his own line of thought, but endeavored to understand and follow closely the teachings of Christ and to gain insight into the mind of God, that their faith might have a solid base. As Paul wrote, "Now may the God who supplies endurance and comfort grant you to have among yourselves the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had, that with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Each one was not teaching a different philosophy,

1, 2. (a) How is it true that faith takes many forms?
(b) What did Jesus mean when he spoke of "the faith"?

3. How is early Christianity described, and what viewpoint did the disciples have regarding it?

creed or belief, but they were in "one accord" and, in fact, believed in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all persons."—Acts 24:14; Rom. 15:5, 6; Eph. 4:5, 6.

⁴ Can we have that "one faith" today? If you feel that your religious conviction is that one original faith, can you back it up with Scripture? Do you know it well enough to impart it to others, making disciples of people of all nations as the early Christians did? This should be the goal of everyone who truly follows in the footsteps of Jesus. Regardless of a person's belief, it is good to know exactly what one's religion teaches and the basis for it.

"SOLID IN THE FAITH"

⁵ Our faith should be solid like a rock-mass that sinks deep into the earth and cannot be moved regardless of the forces pushing against it. But some have faith that is more like sandy soil that gives or shifts under pressure or even washes away completely when the rains pour down. Still others are so devoid of substance to their faith that it is like quicksand that not only is completely lacking in support but also will envelop and destroy anyone trusting in it.—Matt. 7: 24-27.

⁶ Faith, to be like a rock-mass, must be based on truth. It must be clearly defined in one's mind, solidly established on accurate knowledge and facts. Such a faith will stand up to questions and opposing viewpoints. Our

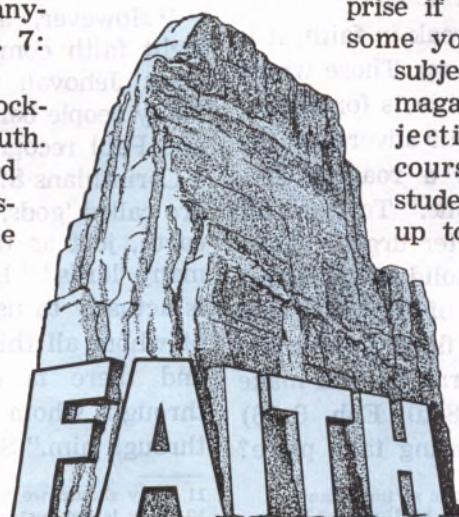
4. What should be our goal, and why?

5, 6. (a) How did Jesus describe a person with true faith as compared with one lacking it? (b) How can we make our faith firm?

faith should be a God-given faith. But how can we be sure? As 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, "Keep testing whether you are in the faith, keep proving what you yourselves are." Yes, we have to keep testing and examining our faith: Is it logical, is it reasonable, does it harmonize with the book of faith, the Bible?

⁷ Many have found their faith to be like the sandy soil that gave out on them under stress, having been built on traditions, human philosophies, not on the rocklike foundation of truth. This was the case of a woman who lost faith in the value of prayer and refused to teach her children to pray, because she had been taught to pray for the wrong thing, and when her prayers were not answered her faith was destroyed. She had built it on sandy soil. The individual she prayed for was violating God's righteous commandments, yet she thought God should miraculously protect him. She was encouraged in this belief by her religious adviser, but her faith was sadly misplaced.

⁸ Even a rocklike faith may be shattered in time if it is not constantly built up, reinforced and strengthened; so it is no surprise if the uncertain beliefs of some youths are eroded when subject to attack. As *Time* magazine reported: "The objectivity of the religious courses sometimes startles students, who frequently sign up to have their faith reinforced, not scrutinized." No wonder they are startled when the theologian commences his course by an attack on the basis



7, 8. (a) Why have some persons lost faith? (b) What is necessary for faith?

for their faith, saying: "The Bible is the greatest collection of mythology in the history of Western civilization." Certainly the faith of such students will never be built up by those who lack it, those casting doubts on God's Word. Rather, as Romans 10:17 tells us, "faith follows the thing heard. In turn the thing heard is through the word about Christ." So, to reinforce and strengthen one's faith, hearing the Word of God with understanding is required.—Jas. 1:5-8; Neh. 8:8.

⁹ The true faith directs us toward God and strengthens us for his service. True faith is not just a passive belief now any more than it was for Jesus and his apostles. It requires a solid foundation and real effort to build it up through proper study and associations. It is vitally important for each Christian to build up his faith, because it governs his course in life and, in fact, his relationship to his Creator. As Paul wrote: "You are all, in fact, sons of God through your faith in Christ Jesus." Again, Paul declared: "The life that I now live in flesh I live by the faith that is toward the Son of God, who loved me and handed himself over for me." Does your faith mean that much in your life? —Gal. 3:26; 2:20; 2 Thess. 1:3.

¹⁰ If one knows he is weak in faith, it is vital to work to build it up. Those whose faith is weak are likely objects for attack, for as Peter warned, "Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." To ward off such Satanic attacks, Peter urges: "Take your stand against him, solid in the faith." If you do, then "the God of all undeserved kindness . . . will himself finish your training, he will make you firm, he will make you strong." (1 Pet. 5:8-10; Eph. 6:16) How does this strengthening take place?

9. Describe true faith and why it is so important.
10. How can attacks against faith be thwarted?

In Galatians chapter three Paul shows that by exercising faith the individual receives the backing of Jehovah's holy spirit when under attack. The fact that training and exercising are mentioned in connection with faith shows need for an effort on our part to build it up. Earnestly seeking such faith leads one to a righteous standing with God; in fact, God assures us that he declares the "people of the nations righteous due to faith."—Gal. 3:5, 6, 8, 22.

¹¹ Do you think you could never live up to God's righteous requirements or share your faith with others as Jesus did? God does not ask us to do the impossible, but with the backing of his spirit these are things we can do. As Jesus said, "That expression, 'If you can'! Why, all things can be to one if one has faith." (Mark 9:23) To be pleasing to God our faith must be unwavering. As Hebrews 10:38 tells us, "'My righteous one will live by reason of faith,' and, 'if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.'" Instead of shrinking back, we want to move ahead, to live in faith and to exercise our faith daily by sharing it with others.

THE GOD OF TRUE FAITH

¹² However, again the matter of the right faith comes into the picture if we want Jehovah to have pleasure in us. Many people believe in some kind of deity, and Paul recognized that, as recorded at 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6, "there are those who are called 'gods,' whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and many 'lords.'" But he emphasized, "There is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and we through him." So just believing in any god

11. Why should we not despair of pleasing God?
12. Why is not just any kind of belief pleasing to God?

would not be pleasing to the true God, Jehovah. He tells us that he becomes "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Heb. 11:6) But if we doggedly persist in looking for him in the wrong place or with the wrong concept we will not find him any more than if we look for a friend on the wrong street. Similarly, persons who put faith in man and deny the power and invisible qualities of God as seen through His creation will not find Him or have the faith pleasing to Him. Even religious people who put their faith in images, including those, please note, of imperfect or "corruptible man," "even those who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and venerated and rendered sacred service to the creation rather than the One who created," are not pleasing to God. (Rom. 1:20-25) So, obviously, what is pleasing to God is faith in the right thing, the right kind of faith, faith based on God's Word and a knowledge of the Almighty as a personal and intelligent Being.—Rev. 22:8, 9.

¹³ True faith must be based on a knowledge of the Creator. After contrasting false beliefs with the true, Moses declared: "You well know that Jehovah your God is the true God, the faithful God, keeping covenant and loving-kindness in the case of those who love him and those who keep his commandments to a thousand generations." (Deut. 7:9) Can you say that "you well know that Jehovah your God is the true God, the faithful God"? What is the evidence, both from the world around us and from the Bible, regarding the existence of God? True, we cannot see him, for God is spirit and invisible to us, but this is no reason to believe he is nonexistent. Rather, as Paul said at Romans 1:20, "his invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the

things made, even his eternal power and Godship." (Heb. 11:27) We know that man did not make the universe, nor does he have the power to do so, and it is illogical to assume that it just came about without intelligent creative force in view of the intricate nature of all matter, animate and inanimate.

¹⁴ Many things that are quite real to us are invisible yet have power to bring about audible or visible effects; for example, gravity, air, radio waves, even some light waves that are invisible to the human eye and yet make stones glow in the dark. We believe in these things we cannot see because we know the results they bring about. We may not see the strong wind that blows us about on a windy day, but we feel it. We may not see the powerful hand of gravity pulling us to the earth, but we feel its power when we plunge off a ladder, hitting hard on the ground. We see no lines tying in our radio or TV set to a transmitter many miles away, yet the invisible signal comes through the air and we hear or see the resulting program. Surely God is not less powerful or wonderful than his creation, nor is there less reason to believe in his reality than in these other things that we recognize to be realities.

¹⁵ The fact that radioactive elements in the rocks decay at a steady, measurable rate over thousands of years shows the passing of time and that the material had a beginning. Otherwise the radioactivity would finally have been exhausted. So the question arises, How and when did creative activity begin? Information such as this serves to strengthen our faith in the Creator and in the Bible account of a beginning to his creative works.—Gen. 1:1.

¹⁶ Again, we might ask, Where did plants, trees, and finally man, get their

13. On what should true faith be based, and what basis do we have for it?

14. Why is God's invisibility no reason for disbelief?

15. How do we know that Genesis 1:1 is true?

16. How do men's efforts compare with God's?

life? Not from men, who cannot artificially reproduce even the simplest forms of microscopic life, nor could it have started spontaneously with creatures lower than man, with even less intellect, when modern scientists with the latest equipment at their command cannot artificially reproduce the most simple living organism. As Thomas A. Edison, the great inventor, is reported to have said, "Until man duplicates a single plant, nature can laugh at his so-called scientific knowledge." No efforts of man have come close to the creative wisdom of Jehovah. So the Scriptures testify that God's "invisible qualities are clearly seen . . . because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable."—Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1; 100:3.

¹⁷ No wonder Professor Tresmontant, lecturer on the philosophy of science at the Sorbonne in Paris, stated: "Those who find no place for God in their philosophy must be prepared to affirm that mindless, inanimate matter has been able to organize itself, to become animated, and to endow itself with consciousness and thought . . . Matter must be credited with all the attributes that theologians specify as belonging to God, including supreme intelligence, creative power and eternal, autonomous existence . . . Even if by the great act of faith you accept the theory that the first large molecule was created by a chance collision of the right atoms under the right circumstances . . . The operations of chance would have to be brought in again at each stage to account for the development of each new organ . . . If you go on attributing to chance results that in fact are radically contradictory to the laws of probability, you find that you are in effect spelling chance with

a capital letter, and using it as a synonym for God."

WORLD TROUBLES NO REASON TO LOSE FAITH

¹⁸ An argument sometimes raised by those who deny the existence of God is that if God is so powerful and really does exist, why does not he do something to straighten out world conditions and alleviate our sufferings? Such skeptics are not usually persons who are really concerned about the Creator or interested in serving him, but rather they want a basis on which to divorce themselves from faith and its requirements. It is not that they are interested in God's purpose or where they fit in the stream of time, but rather in the results to themselves. Actually their question is well answered in the Scriptures, which reveal that it is not God, but his agelong opposer Satan who is causing the misery and distress from which people suffer, while God is doing something and those who serve him are doing something, pointing men to the only real remedy for the situation, God's Kingdom government. (Rev. 12:12; 1 John 5:19) God has permitted Satan to continue exercising power in the earth in order to demonstrate His power and justice and permit His name to be declared while a great crowd of faithful persons are gathered to the side of His kingdom. Rather than God's being the source of the troubles on the earth today, Moses declared: "They have acted ruinously on their own part; they are not his children, the defect is their own. A generation crooked and twisted!"—Deut. 32:4, 5.

¹⁹ Fortunately for us, God has kindly allowed time to settle permanently the challenge raised by Satan, while giving us the opportunity to show faith in him and to serve him. "What shall we say, then?

17. What did a French lecturer say about philosophies that ignore God?

18. What reasons do the Scriptures give for present world distress?

19. Why should we be happy over God's patience?

Is there injustice with God? Never may that become so!" Instead, we are reminded, "If, now, God, although having the will to demonstrate his wrath and to make his power known, tolerated with much long-suffering vessels of wrath made fit for destruction, in order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, . . ." then certainly we should be happy that he has given us this opportunity of knowing the truth and serving him, rather than get upset that he has not wiped out the present system along with many good-hearted persons who may yet learn the way to life.—Rom. 9:14, 22, 23.

²⁰ So one who bases his faith on the Bible and knows it well could answer the question by saying that God has permitted the continuation of wickedness for several reasons. He has given plenty of time for his Adversary to marshal all the degenerates in heaven and earth in opposition to His righteous purposes, and then He will show His power, not only at Armageddon when the earth is cleansed of wickedness to make way for the Kingdom rule, but finally at the end of the 1,000-year rule of Christ when wickedness is finally stamped out forever according to Jehovah's great purpose. (Rev. 20:7-10) By following this course of long-suffering and patience despite the reproach that God-dishonoring people have brought against him, Jehovah will magnify his name through the operation of his kingdom.—Mal. 3:14-18.

²¹ The day-by-day passage of time that may seem slow to men and make us impatient for a quick change in conditions is as nothing to our God who is without beginning or end. Yet the time that he has set for the accomplishment of his righteous purpose toward the earth is

scheduled to run out within the coming few years of this generation. So we do not want to fall now at this late date in man's history into Satan's trap of unbelief and lack of faith.—Matt. 24:34; Ps. 92:7; Eccl. 8:11-13.

BUILDING FAITH THAT PLEASES GOD

²² If you are among those "earnestly seeking" God, then you will want to keep strengthening your faith by study and association with Jehovah's witnesses, who are today truly exercising faith by bringing the good news of God's kingdom to others. If you feel you have need to strengthen your faith lest you or your family be among the sad ones whose faith cools off and who have nothing to replace it, then "continue applying yourself" to taking in knowledge and sharing it with others, "for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:15) The true faith is not some intangible, unexplainable feeling, for Hebrews 11:1 shows that faith is tied in with realities, not unrealities. What one does about his faith gives a demonstration of the reality of his faith to others, convincing them that his belief in God and his purposes is an assured expectation.

²³ So instead of putting your faith in financial resources that may quickly be wiped out, or in friends who may prove to be short-lived or of the fair-weather type, or even in a government whose administration may change when one least expects it, put your faith in the one who can help you, the one who has power of life or death. Let your faith be as solid as David's was when Jehovah delivered him out of the hand of his enemy Saul. He

20. How will Jehovah's kingdom magnify his name?
21. How do the Scriptures give us the right viewpoint to avoid Satan's trap?

22. (a) How can one show that he is earnestly seeking God? (b) How can one demonstrate the reality of one's faith?
23. To what can the faith that pleases God be likened?

beautifully expressed it in 2 Samuel 22, verse three of which says: "My God is my rock. I shall take refuge in him." Let your faith be of tested quality, purified like fine gold, but of greater value before Jehovah. (1 Pet. 1:7) Let it be not like an uncontrolled, windblown wave of the sea, but like a ship under control, now

anchored securely against a storm, now moving forward surely on course under the propelling force of God's spirit. (Jas. 1:6, 7) Be sure you have "the faith" that Jesus spoke of, that you are following "The Way" as the apostles did, and that yours is the faith that pleases God. —1 John 5:4.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE

Responsibilities of a Baptized Witness?

LIKE a man moving from one country to a new one, learning a new language and taking up a new occupation, so is the step of Christian baptism. The person making this move leaves this old system with its ties and allegiances and comes over into association with those of God's spiritual nation, becoming part of the New World society of Jehovah's people world wide. While still in the world, they are no longer a part of it, as they now recognize the power and authority of God's heavenly government, his kingdom, in their lives. And instead of being divided nationally or linguistically, they now learn the "pure language" that all Jehovah's people speak in common, the language of truth from the Scriptures. (Zeph. 3:9) Finally, they take on a new assignment of work, entering into the service of their Creator, making that the first interest in their lives.

1. What changes for a person does Christian baptism bring?

"Now as they were going over the road, they came to a certain body of water, and the eunuch said: 'Look! A body of water; what prevents me from getting baptized?'" —Acts 8:36.

Are you ready for such a move? Obviously it would take considerable thought, planning and prayer. That is why Jehovah's witnesses do not encourage anyone to rush into baptism without first thoroughly learning what it means and what the responsibilities of a baptized Witness are. Yet the work that Jesus commanded be done and that Jehovah's witnesses world wide are engaged in is to prepare sincere people for just such a move. Their work is to "make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them." (Matt. 28:19, 20) This is not a mere matter of putting one's name on a church membership roll, or subscribing to some creed to qualify for membership, which status may then be maintained indefinitely regardless of the person's course of conduct. To be a disciple of Christ a person must first qualify through study, acquiring faith by hearing the Word of God, and then deciding to make this move

2. How can one become a disciple of Christ?

to come over on God's side by taking one's stand as a dedicated servant of Jehovah God.

³ Those moving in such a direction usually come under attack in one or another of the many insidious ways that Satan uses to discourage those desiring to serve Jehovah. It may be opposition from family or friends; it may just be fear of what others will think. But it is something to expect, for, as Paul wrote at 2 Timothy 3:12, "all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." This is not due to any wrongdoing on their part, but is because of the basic truth that Jesus explained to his disciples: "If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you. Bear in mind the word I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:19, 20) This is no cause for alarm, because when we are on Jehovah's side, nothing that Satan can do can cause us lasting harm. Rather, Jesus showed, it should be a cause of happiness on our part if we suffer for his name's sake, becoming objects of Satan's attacks just as Jesus was.—Matt. 5:11.

⁴ However, it does mean that those doing the discipling and teaching work must prepare those with whom they study to be forearmed to withstand such opposition. It is a reason, too, why a person contemplating baptism should not rush into it, but should first have a good understanding of God's Word, strong faith in Jehovah, and a willingness to serve him faithfully, regardless of what may come.

The student must come to appreciate that Jehovah is the Great Teacher through his inspired Word the Bible. As Isaiah 48:17 says, "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk." He learns, not that it is Jehovah who needs him, but that he needs Jehovah and that he is born in sin and is therefore in need of Jehovah's provisions for life and salvation through Christ Jesus. In fact, each one, whether he realizes it or not, is a slave of sin and thus without hope of everlasting life until such time as he accepts the ransom Jehovah provided through Jesus. (Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 6:17, 18, 22, 23) When one's study and faith show him clearly what an undeserved kindness it is on God's part, not only for him to learn the truth, but to have his heartfelt dedication accepted by the Creator, he can see why those of the "great crowd" who now take this step of dedication in effect cry out with a loud voice, "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." —Rev. 7:10.

⁵ He can understand, too, why a change must be made in a person's life before his dedication would be acceptable to Jehovah. As Jesus said, "The true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for such-like ones to worship him." (John 4:23) But those who worship according to some religious formalism to be seen of men, or whose religious teaching is tainted with falsehood, cannot expect their way of worship to be pleasing to God. Rather, concerning the world organization of false worship, a voice out of heaven is heard declaring: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her

3. What should a person showing interest in the truth expect, but what attitude should he have?

4. What understanding should a person considering baptism come to have?

5. What changes may be necessary prior to baptism as indicated by the Scriptures?

sins."—Rev. 18:4; Matt. 6:1-5; 1 Cor. 10: 20, 21.

⁶ Some persons find that they need to make a real change in their way of living to qualify to approach Jehovah in dedication. Psalm 15:1-3 asks: "O Jehovah, who will be a guest in your tent? Who will reside in your holy mountain? He who is walking faultlessly and practicing righteousness and speaking the truth in his heart. He has not slandered with his tongue. To his companion he has done nothing bad." So it may require making one's mind over to Jehovah's way of thinking and conforming one's life to his righteous standards with the help of his active force. Those who continue in a absolute way of life, showing themselves to be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, those who are more interested in the desires of this life than in everlasting life and who show themselves to be friends of this old system of things, thereby indicate they are the enemies of God. He will not even consider their prayers, much less accept an insincere dedication, which amounts to saying one thing and doing another.—Isa. 1:15-17; Jas. 4:4.

⁷ However, all persons of honest heart who come to know Jehovah's Word and purposes are invited to share in the grand work recorded in Psalm 148:13, 14: "Let them praise the name of Jehovah, for his name alone is unreachably high. His dignity is above earth and heaven. . . . Praise Jah, you people!" This, in fact, is one of the responsibilities of a baptized Witness. God is indeed gracious to give mere man the honor of serving him in this way. And considering what a privilege it is to represent Jehovah in this way by bringing the truth to others as Jehovah's witnesses do in their house-to-house ministry, we can understand why the only ones invited

to share in this work are those who have not only come to appreciate the Scriptures and the Kingdom hope, but have also made their lives over in harmony with God's will. As Jesus said in prayer to his Father, at John 17:6: "I have made your name manifest to the men you gave me out of the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have observed your word." Yes, such ones have come out of this system with its corruption and disregard for God's righteous requirements and have come to observe and follow God's Word. They "observe the commandments of God" and so qualify for "the work of bearing witness to Jesus." —Rev. 12:17.

⁸ In order to observe the commandments and do the witness work, accurate knowledge of the truth is required. As Paul commented: "Do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself?" (Rom. 2:21) Especially before such an important step as baptism is it necessary to get an accurate fundamental knowledge of the Scriptures and of what is required of a baptized witness of Jehovah. Baptismal candidates, therefore, are encouraged to read and study the Bible carefully. As an aid to accurate knowledge the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has encouraged all persons before baptism to study or at least read carefully the basic Bible textbooks "*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*" and *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God* (or, if they are not available in your language, other recent publications of the Watch Tower Society that cover similar material). These publications help to establish a basis for rocklike faith as they cover subjects such as how we can be sure of the existence of God, which sacred book of religion is the truth, and how to

6. What things would be required for one's dedication to be acceptable to Jehovah?

7. What privilege and responsibility can be ours?

8. (a) Explain what preparation a person considering baptism should make. (b) What are some basic truths with which he should be familiar?

become one of God's men of "good will." Besides doctrinal information, the student learns of the respective places of man and woman in the Christian congregation, the importance of neutrality in this old system, the sacredness of blood, and of the fight that must be maintained against wicked spirit forces for one to receive finally the paradisaic blessings God has in store for those faithfully serving him.

⁹ Additionally, the Watch Tower Society has recently provided in English, and in a number of other languages, the publication "*Your Word Is a Lamp to My Foot*," showing the Scripturalness of Jehovah's modern-day organization in the earth. In the first portion of this publication some key Bible questions are propounded, together with their answer in the form of Scriptural citations. When the student consults with the overseer of the local congregation and can affirm that his life is in harmony with the Scriptural pattern and shows that he can comment with understanding on these basic truths, then, indeed, such a person is in position to dedicate himself in prayer to Jehovah and undergo water baptism in symbol of his dedication to do Jehovah's will. Such fine guides to accurate knowledge, provided by Jehovah as the Great Teacher through his channel of communication in the earth today, help us to appreciate what Jehovah requires of each person who loves him and desires to serve him. Then truly such a person is in position to say as did the Ethiopian with whom Philip discussed the truth: "Look! A body of water; what prevents me from getting baptized?"—Acts 8:36.

¹⁰ By this step of baptism one actively puts oneself on God's side, demonstrating

one's faith in Jehovah and in Christ Jesus. One takes up the fight of Christian faith, entering the ranks of those serving Christ. (2 Tim. 2:3, 4) He has made his dedication to Jehovah in prayer, in effect determining to devote himself to the doing of God's will unconditionally. In this he follows the example set by Jesus as recorded in the Scriptures. He indicates he is desirous of following the lead of God's holy spirit. Such a course has God's approval and brings the support of his spirit and the encouragement and assistance of his organization as well as the assurance of a good conscience that the individual is sincerely endeavoring to please God fully. (Mark 1:9-11; 1 Pet. 3:21) Thus when the individual is lowered beneath the water of the baptismal site, it is as though he is buried or dies symbolically to his past situation in life and is then raised up for a new start, ready and willing to conform fully to God's guidance in his life. Baptism is therefore a solemn commitment made to the Creator. Since nothing in a person's life can have greater significance than his relationship to God, his baptism as a Christian is therefore the most important step in his life.—Eccl. 5:4-6.

¹¹ At the time of baptism it is customary that other dedicated persons be present as witnesses to the ceremony. They recognize that the one being baptized is publicly avowing to accept the responsibilities and privileges that come with being a baptized Witness. But they are not the only witnesses. As Jesus said, the individual is baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." So we can be sure that Jehovah and Jesus are interested witnesses on such occasions. They are interested because this person has come to recognize that Jehovah is the

9. Why is it proper for a person considering baptism to consult with the congregation overseer prior to taking such a step?

10. (a) What does baptism mean for the individual, and why is it so important? (b) What blessings come to the individual who is baptized?

11. (a) How is baptism different from an individual's private prayer of dedication to God? (b) What does baptism indicate that a person recognizes?

Supreme Sovereign and Life-Giver and that Jesus, his Son and our Redeemer, is the enthroned King of Jehovah's new system of righteousness. He acknowledges the guiding power and force of Jehovah's spirit in his life and realizes that his dedication and baptism put him on the side of the 'great cloud of witnesses' who today faithfully follow the lead of 'the Chief Agent and Perfecter of their faith, Jesus.' —Heb. 12:1, 2.

¹² Baptism brings responsibilities and privileges, but also opposition. Jesus showed that this dedication of one's self to Jehovah must take precedence in one's life, even over family or relatives if they are opposed. Only by one's faithfulness will one be found pleasing to Jehovah and perhaps impress on one's family the importance of their also taking up the same faithful course that leads to life. (Rom. 10:13) As Jesus said, "Whoever is not carrying his torture stake and coming after me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26, 27) Are you willing to do that? The goal toward which one strives is a great one—everlasting life. Since the reward is great, it is only reasonable that achieving it is not easy, but with Jehovah's help it can be gained. Jesus described access to this reward as a narrow gate and a cramped road that few find, but, once found, it is the road to stick to regardless of the problems along the way. (Matt. 7:14) Since Jehovah has shown such love for us through the sacrifice of his Son, to make this prospect of life possible, we want to show unwavering love also for Him in living up to our dedication.

—1 John 4:9.

¹³ Once one is baptized, one does not lean back and rest on one's laurels, feeling that now one has done what God requires.

12. Why is following the course of dedication to God to be recommended despite all obstacles?

13. (a) What does baptism not mean for the individual? Why? (b) What good Scriptural counsel should a baptized Christian be sure to follow?

It is not the end of the road, but the beginning, just as Jesus' life showed. It was after his baptism that he commenced his public ministry, throwing himself into the preaching work, despite the opposition and hatred manifested by the religious class in his day, which hatred was appeased finally only by his death. So, recognizing the work ahead, one who dedicates oneself to Jehovah wants to be sure one keeps well equipped for it. This means study. Not just congregational study, but personal Bible study so that when we need a convincing Bible answer to help someone appreciate the truth, we will be able to give it. (1 Tim. 4:16) As Proverbs 18:15 says, "The heart of the understanding one acquires knowledge, and the ear of wise ones seeks to find knowledge." Peter urged: "Go on growing in the undeserved kindness and knowledge of our Lord." (2 Pet. 3:18) Paul counseled, "Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright." (2 Tim. 2:15) Finally, Hebrews 6:1 encourages, "Let us press on to maturity." So the baptized Witness does not slow down or stop his studying of the Scriptures just because he is now baptized or perhaps because the one who previously studied with him discontinues giving this assistance. Rather he sees the need to continue growing in knowledge and understanding himself and so plans a definite schedule for continued personal study and asks Jehovah through prayer to help him by means of his spirit to understand his Word even more as time goes on. (Prov. 2:4-6; Jas. 1:5) He recognizes this as one of the responsibilities of a baptized Witness in order to keep spiritually strong.

¹⁴ His study as well as his association

14. (a) What arrangement does Jehovah have for the well-being of his servants on the earth, so why should a baptized person want to cooperate with it? (b) What did Jesus say about Christian unity?

with Jehovah's people helps him to understand that Jehovah has, not only a heavenly, but also an earthly, visible organization of people doing his will. Jesus foretold that among his people there would be a "faithful and discreet slave" class who would be providing the spiritual food to God's family of devoted servants on earth, acting as his channel of communication and overseeing the carrying out of the Kingdom interests world wide. (Matt. 24:45-47) These anointed overseers serve as though being guided in their activities by the right hand of Christ. They take the same viewpoint as Jesus had when he said to Jehovah, "Let, not my will, but yours take place." (Luke 22:42) To illustrate the harmony that would prevail in Jehovah's organization, Jesus likened it, in John 15:1-10, to a vine with branches. Jehovah is the Great Cultivator, Jesus is the vine and those coming into spiritual union with him are the branches. Clearly this necessitates a recognition of Jehovah's organization in the earth today. This vine is a productive one bearing fruit that will last through Armageddon.—Heb. 13:7, 17.

¹⁵ What kind of fruit is it that those attached to the vine must bear in order to have God's favor and to avoid being pruned off as unproductive sprouts? Actually the Scriptures mention two kinds of fruitage that a Christian would endeavor to cultivate. One is the fruitage of the spirit, including love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22, 23) To stay in harmony with Christ and to be pleasing to Jehovah, these qualities must be produced. But we want to see such fruitage, not only in ourselves, but also in others. Those who are disciples of Christ understand that it is Jehovah's will that

they make disciples of others also. As Proverbs 11:30 says, "The fruitage of the righteous one is a tree of life, and he that is winning souls is wise." This was the work to which Paul and the early Christians devoted themselves. Paul wrote to the Romans (1:13) that he hoped to come to minister among them that he 'might acquire some fruitage also among them even as among the rest of the nations.' By this he referred to Kingdom fruitage or Christian disciples. Each one who dedicates himself to Jehovah has a responsibility in this regard to endeavor to acquire fruitage by discipling people of the nations.

¹⁶ Paul felt so strongly about this responsibility, that he said: "If, now, I am declaring the good news, it is no reason for me to boast, for necessity is laid upon me. Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!" (1 Cor. 9:16) This work is not one we do just in our own strength, but we can be assured of the assistance of Jehovah's spirit as long as we prepare and do our part. It is Jehovah who brings the fruitage and the increase as a result of the activities of his servants throughout the earth. Each one who dedicates himself to Jehovah has a serious responsibility before his Creator. As Ezekiel 33:8 says, if "you actually do not speak out to warn the wicked one from his way, he himself as a wicked one will die in his own error, but his blood I shall ask back at your own hand." How much happier a course to share actively in giving the warning and as a result have the joy of rescuing many honest-hearted ones for life in Jehovah's paradisaic new system! To such ones Jesus declared: "I say, then, to you, Everyone that confesses union with me before men, the Son of man will

15. What good fruits should all Christians endeavor to produce?

16. How do the Scriptures point out a Christian's responsibility and the wise course to follow?

also confess union with him before the angels of God."—Luke 12:8.

¹⁷ What a cause for joy to have the Son's favor! So, one who enters into a dedicated relationship with Jehovah and who accepts Jesus as his Mediator automatically receives responsibilities; one also receives many blessings and much joy. Such one recognizes that Jehovah is his strength and source of help, the One who saves and shepherds his people. (Ps. 28:7-9) He finds that, far from being a burden, the service he performs to Jehovah brings him much happiness and is a source of refreshment to him. (1 John 5:3) Even though one may be under much pressure from family or friends, or though circumstances are difficult for the time, the one who continues to find a place for Kingdom interests in his life, making first place for Jehovah and his service, will find the way smoothed for him. This was true for the returning captives of Zion, and it is true for spiritual Israelites today. As Psalm 126:5, 6 declares: "Those sowing seed with tears will reap even with a joyful cry. The one that without fail goes forth, even

weeping, carrying along a bagful of seed, will without fail come in with a joyful cry, carrying along his sheaves."

¹⁸ What a privilege it is to know the truth and have some share in advancing the Kingdom interests in these "last days." For those of you contemplating baptism, now is the time to prepare for it by careful study, by bringing your life into conformity with Jehovah's righteous requirements, and by prayer to Jehovah for his guidance. Then do not hold back, but, like Jesus, move ahead into greater service and receive Jehovah's approval. And for those who have taken this step, let each one live up to the responsibilities that come with dedication to Jehovah, knowing that "loving-kindness belongs to you, O Jehovah, for you yourself pay back to each one according to his work." (Ps. 62:12) Show to all that you have moved over from the old system to the new, that you have learned and can now teach the pure language of truth under the direction of Christ the King because you willingly accept the responsibilities of a baptized Witness.—Luke 9:59-62.

17. Despite difficulties, of what can one who is dedicated to Jehovah be sure?

18. What should an unbaptized person do, and with what goal in view?

A Magazine Found in the Street

One day, in Mexico, a lady picked up a copy of *The Watchtower* that she found lying in the street. She began reading it, and what she read aroused her interest so much that she was moved to go to an Evangelical Temple to ask if this was the place where *The Watchtower* was distributed. They told her that it was not, but they mentioned that they thought it was distributed on a certain street. For two days this interested lady hunted up and down this street, asking everyone she met.

Locating the meeting place of Jehovah's witnesses, she waited on Sunday from 11 a.m. till the meeting time came. When the meeting began she was in the audience, enjoying very much the method of Bible study carried on. Arrangements were made for her to be given personal instruction by means of a Bible study. Soon what she was learning began to move her to make changes. After learning that Jehovah God is invisible and that making images of him is really impossible, she removed the images from her home. She regularly came to the meetings prepared to participate by commenting in the *Watchtower* study. She legalized her marriage and stirred up her husband's interest in God's purposes. She told her relatives about God's truth, and some of them came to the meetings. All this because a lover of God's truth picked up *The Watchtower* lying in the street.



JOY has been the continuous theme of my lifetime of service with Jehovah's organization. My sentiments of joy are well expressed in song Number 101 of the songbook "*Singing and Accompanying Yourselves with Music in Your Hearts*," a song entitled "Our Godly Joy." And now, with Jehovah's help and spirit, I would like to tell you how Jehovah has given me godly joy.—Isa. 65:14; Phil. 4:4.

I was born in 1894 in Altenstadt bei Geislingen a/d Steige, now known simply as Geislingen an der Steige, Germany. I was a happy child, and my parents were as happy as others around them, though they did not live by a true Bible hope. As far as they could do so, they taught us three girls and four boys to do what is right and to work hard. Still, there was something missing in life. I did not really know God. We had a measure of happiness, but it was not the "peace of God that excels all thought." That was the kind of joy I wanted.—Phil. 4:7.

In the year 1913 I went to Zurich, Switzerland, to work for my aunt who operated a bakery store. A year later, World War I broke out. Three of my brothers had to go to war. That was a hard experience. Now I needed something more than a happy family upbringing to sustain me. I needed something that only

God can give—spiritual qualities to aid me to face this era of death and sorrow. The religions with which I was acquainted offered no real hope or joy. On Sundays I would seek out lonely places in the woods where I could meditate and pray. I did not know God by his name Jehovah at that time, but I knew he was the only sure source of joy. I was much like the Ethiopian eunuch about whom the Bible tells us, a man who was reading the Scriptures but needed guidance to gain right understanding. (Acts 8:30, 31) Jehovah knew my problem and began to answer my prayers.

In 1914 one of Jehovah's witnesses (then known as "Bible Students") came into the store to buy bread. Little did I realize that she had the more important "bread of life" for which I longed. (John 6:31, 35) She talked of God's kingdom, and, though my aunt showed no interest, I listened eagerly. It was so different, so logical, so refreshing! I invited her into the kitchen.

I will always remember how patiently and kindly she explained that wondrous Bible promise: "And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more." (Rev. 21:4) How could this ever take place? I inquired as to where I could learn more about such matters. She invited me to regular meetings of the Witnesses.

JOY THROUGH ASSEMBLY

How precious that first meeting was! What joy I found there! Here at the Assembly Hall was the real Christian fellowship that I had lacked. How right the Bible is to advise the assembling together of true Christians! (Heb. 10:25) So deep-

ly impressed was I that it has been my goal ever since to make meeting attendance a "must" in my weekly schedule. Without meetings I could not possess true godly joy.

As one progresses to maturity, joy begins to take on new depths. In those days, as today, meetings were truly beneficial. We studied such publications as *The Three Worlds*, *Tabernacle Shadows*, and *Studies in the Scriptures*. My godly joy increased to the point of cultivating the hope of one day being with Jehovah and his beloved Son in the heavenly kingdom. I dedicated my life to Jehovah, being baptized in token thereof.

Not long ago, when I sat in our Kingdom Hall here at Brooklyn Bethel and saw the film "God Cannot Lie," my mind went back to the days when another film was popular—"Photo-Drama of Creation." I wanted everyone to see and hear that Drama. Together with one of my Christian sisters I wrote the Watch Tower Society to arrange for showings in Geislingen. Those who came were greatly blessed and my joy increased at seeing some increase of interest on the part of people in my hometown. Today there is an active congregation of seventy-five Witnesses in Geislingen, and even now I receive letters telling how older people in the territory still recall my earlier efforts among them.

Assemblies, too, have been a source of great joy. In 1922, for example, I attended one in Stuttgart, Germany, where the main lecture urged us to "advertise, advertise, advertise the King and his Kingdom." Those of us who had been engaged in Kingdom work for many years learned that we were not yet "going home" to the heavenly kingdom to be with our Lord Jesus Christ. No, not yet! There was more work for us right here on earth.

Joyfully I continued sharing in the preaching of the Kingdom, though not without opposition. Satan the Devil was busy sowing bad seed among Jehovah's faithful servants. An "evil slave" class was beginning to be manifest. (Matt. 24: 48-51) I knew something was going on in the congregation. As one of God's "sheep" I wanted to be led correctly and avoid those having selfish designs on God's flock. How happy I was when matters were clarified by J. F. Rutherford, the Watch Tower Society's president, in a speech at the Basel assembly in 1926. A week later he spoke to our small group at Zurich, encouraging us to stick loyally to Jehovah's organization. Now we knew what road to take. Jehovah was leading us toward greater joys and privileges in his service.

JOY OF BETHEL SERVICE

I knew that the worldwide witness work must be accomplished and I wanted to get closer to the headquarters of Jehovah's earthly organization, so I decided to come to America. The day of departure came. I left behind me my dearest friends in Zurich and reached New York in September 1926. A few months later I put in my application for Bethel service. Today, most young people who qualify are called to Bethel in a matter of months after submitting an application. I had to wait ten years. That really made me wonder if it was Jehovah's will. But I waited. I was determined to serve joyfully at what I was doing in the meantime.

It never occurred to me to go back to Switzerland. I knew that if it was Jehovah's will for me to be in Bethel service, I would receive the call in due time. I kept the matter before him in prayer, and as I waited there were many things for me to learn as a preacher of the good news of his kingdom.

When a servant of Jehovah waits for his blessing long enough, why, when the blessing does come it seems that there is an extraordinary joy experienced. That was what I found. Imagine the peak of joy when I received that long-awaited letter from Brother Rutherford inviting me to be a member of the Bethel family! What better place to be than at Bethel. I have come to appreciate it fully during my thirty-two years in this wonderful place.

At Bethel a new life began for me. I well knew that my part as a woman was to serve my God humbly and I assented in my heart to do anything Jehovah would arrange for me to do through his organization. I was assigned as a housekeeper, taking care of thirteen rooms. That meant something that a housewife ordinarily does not have to do—making twenty-six beds every morning! Also there was the scrubbing of floors, cleaning windows, dusting, washing sinks and mirrors, vacuuming rugs and taking care of washrooms.

On the surface this might appear to be plain, ordinary hard work. Not so at Bethel! I have learned to face each day with the happy thought that I am doing something for my brothers here. They would not appreciate coming home from a hard day's work in the factory or office to an untidy room and unmade beds. No, there is a sense of satisfaction in doing this work. Seeing things neat and clean also brings joy and satisfaction.

Many are the expressions of appreciation I have received from the brothers whose rooms it was my privilege to clean. A housekeeper gets a certain pleasant relationship with the occupants of a room, even though she may not often see them. It was always a joy to know that people appreciated such services. Actually I have found that a housekeeper can be artistic, getting joy out of fixing little things in the room differently each week.

However, as time goes on we get older, and with age come problems. I recall feeling that I could not possibly keep up with the work. But then I had a heart-to-heart talk with one of the older Christian sisters in our beloved family. I will never forget that discussion. It opened my eyes to other avenues of joy; for example, the joy of trusting in Jehovah to grant one strength for each new day. When young we tend to overlook the need for that kind of trust. We already have the physical strength. But as we get older, our need becomes apparent, our problems take on a new aspect, and this draws us more frequently to Jehovah in prayer. So I learned to pray often for strength, while at the same time learning how to do things more efficiently. After all, actors, even in old age, often improve on their art, even though their faculties are not so sharp. So we, in Jehovah's service—more precious than all of the arts—can strive for efficiency even in old age.

JOY IN SINGLENESS AND OLD AGE

Looking back on my years of Bethel service, I am thankful for the valuable training received here. The combination of so many different personalities, all devoted to Jehovah and all assembled in one place with their imperfections, their varied habits and interesting customs, surely provides a grand field for training. In every aspect of life I have learned that I am not so good as I once thought I was. Bethel has taught me to be humble—that quality so precious in God's sight. (Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:4) I have been able to develop patience, endurance, peace and gratefulness. Situations have arisen that aid one to measure one's humility and willingness to share with others. It is my prayer that Jehovah will continue to mold me as a vessel fit for honorable use in his house.

Then there is the blessing of singleness. I have chosen to lead a single life in my service to Jehovah. Do I ever get lonely? Not at all. Really, my moments alone are among some of the most precious. I can commune with Jehovah in prayer. I can enjoy meditation and personal study without distraction. And whenever there is a need for companionship, all I have to do is visit some friend's room, sit in the beautiful Bethel garden, or go to the lounge, where one can often enjoy hearing someone play the piano. Singleness has contributed not a little to my joy.

Bethel service, too, includes assignments with one of the local congregations. All members of the Bethel family have the privilege of preaching from house to house, making return visits on interested persons, and conducting Bible studies with people who hunger and thirst for righteousness—all this in cooperation with one or another of the 187 congregations in the New York area. When I first came here there was only one congregation in Brooklyn. How joy-inspiring it has been to witness the marvelous growth! Surely it is the Lord's doing!

I have also witnessed the construction of two new Bethel homes and three new factories for producing Bibles and Bible literature. Even as I write, another Bethel home takes shape just across the street. What wonderful evidence of Jehovah's prospering hand with his devoted people! I have seen all this. What more could one ask?

It has been a pleasure to learn of the phenomenal growth of Kingdom interests

in the land of my youth also. Among the multitudes in Germany who have listened to the Kingdom message and thrown in their lot with God's worshipers is the son of that aunt of mine in Zurich. He and his whole family are now Witnesses, to my great joy.

I am now seventy-four years of age. Considering all things, I am in fair physical condition. Looking back over the three decades and more of Bethel service, I am constrained to praise Jehovah for all he has given me, and above all for the joy. I still do some housework along with other lighter duties in the Bethel home. I have no regrets. I have been privileged to receive divine education here. I have witnessed Jehovah's manifest blessing upon his people in these "last days." To me it is marvelous, satisfying, joy-inspiring. Life has been anything but monotonous. It has been filled with good things. I have learned to renew my strength through trust in Jehovah. I thrill at the new music we have, the new literature, the sharper discernment of Jehovah's purposes. My heart is strong and joyful.

Upon Jehovah's people world wide I have seen the fulfillment of his grand promise: "Look! My own servants will rejoice, . . . My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart." (Isa. 65:13, 14) With strong confidence in Jehovah, then, I am continuing right on down to the close of my earthly ministry, trusting in him to aid me to retain, cultivate and improve my godly joy!



HIS is what I've wanted since I was a little girl," said the prospective bride in Florida about her wedding.

She was thrilled over what was planned, including her costly lace-and-pearl gown, with its thirty-foot train. The traditional wedding music would flow from a ten-piece orchestra as she made her entrance. And what an entrance it would be! Emerging from an artificial "cloud" emitted by a hidden device, she would descend a twenty-one-step staircase. Down she would come, between gilded cages of doves, to her waiting bridegroom.

Following the ceremony, the reception or wedding feast would include champagne and an eight-foot-tall wedding cake. When the bride began to cut the cake two lovebirds would be released to flutter through the ballroom. How did the prospective bridegroom react to all this? Unnerved by the extravagant plans for the \$25,000 affair, he fled the scene nine hours before the wedding!*

You probably have never seen a wedding as lavish as that one. Yet you likely know that weddings and associated events range from modest to mammoth, from simple to sumptuous, from God-honoring to godless.

How, then, is a Christian who loves God and desires to be guided by the principles of his Word to decide what to arrange for his own wedding? Where does *he draw the line?* Complicating matters further, one author observed: "No social custom is as deeply rooted in tradition and bound by convention as a wedding." Should the Christian try to follow all the traditions, some of them, or none of them?

Christian Weddings

SHOULD REFLECT REASONABLENESS



Just what is a reasonable Christian wedding?†

CHRISTIAN REASONABLENESS

True Christians know that when they marry, the ceremony must fulfill the requirements of the secular law, whether that be in a religious service or a civil one such as at a courthouse or registration office. (Luke 20:25) Throughout the earth Jehovah's witnesses recognize this and so fulfill local requirements. Yet questions remain as to certain customs followed at the wedding ceremony. Just what should Christians do?

A key quality needed to gain the proper view of this subject is reasonableness. This is something that Christians should display in all their activities, but it is es-

* Saturday Evening Post, August 13, 1966, p. 29.

† Social events connected with marriage, such as the wedding feast, will be considered at a later occasion.

pecially needed in connection with social functions involving so many people and traditions. Under inspiration the apostle Paul wrote fine counsel to Christians in his day, and remember, they also got married and had wedding celebrations. He counseled: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men." (Phil. 4:5) Emphasizing this, the disciple James said that wisdom from Jehovah is "reasonable." —Jas. 3:17.

Christians who are spiritually mature and who appreciate the importance of applying Scriptural principles evidence this by manifesting reasonableness. Without needing a long list of specific rules, they exercise care that the spiritual aspects of the wedding are not overshadowed by mere ceremonial matters.

However, not too long ago a wedding in Brazil turned out to be an extremely elaborate affair in view of the financial means of those being married, and unusually opulent for the modest Kingdom Hall where the Bible talk was given. For many there, the excessiveness of the arrangements, the luxurious gown, the abundance of bridesmaids and attendants and other details, drew so much attention that those things eclipsed the fine counsel being offered from the Scriptures. Truly, when reasonableness is lost, other things are lost by many persons, including the bride and groom.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

Since there are so many traditional practices, should a Christian try to avoid all the wedding customs of his area? Not necessarily. He can be selective. Sometimes marriage customs have a practical basis, such as marrying on the day when most people are off from secular work, or in the cooler part of the day, after "siesta." Or a tradition may be a touch of local color; one would hardly expect that per-

sons in their hometown in Korea would dress as do natives of Lebanon, Finland or Fiji.

Of course, some customs are unscriptural and so they are objectionable to Christians. In many lands odd customs are followed so that the bride and groom or their guests will have "good luck." Jehovah's witnesses do not worship the god of Good Luck. (Isa. 65:11) Nor do they follow traditions that would lead observers to think that they do. Other customs are plainly acts of false worship. So one planning a wedding does well to examine practices common in his area and analyze how people view them locally. If it is acknowledged that a custom is connected with false religion or "good luck," then the Christian will shun it.—2 Cor. 6:14-18.

Other traditions are unreasonable or unloving. In many lands it is common to throw rice at the bride and groom. What is the point of the custom? "Some peoples believe the rice is food to keep evil influences away from the bride and groom. Some say it assures the couple fertility." (*Science News Letter*, June 8, 1963, p. 357) This illustrates that there are often a number of opinions as to the origin of a certain custom. But whatever the background of this one, do Christians normally take food and throw it at their friends, dirtying up the street in the process? Also, consider the matter of loving your neighbor as yourself. Would Christian love move one to play "practical jokes" to the embarrassment of a bride and groom? Jesus said: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—Luke 6:31; 10:27.

Then there is the tradition of the wedding ring. A study of the subject would likely leave you confused as to the origin and meaning of the wedding ring; the claims are many, the facts muddled.

Even if the Bible does not directly mention wedding rings, it is plain that Jehovah's servants could wear rings. (Job 42:11, 12; Luke 15:22) But what if people in one's land believe that a wedding ring symbolizes a couple's unbroken faith, love and devotion? Christians do not attach any symbolic meaning to a wedding ring, even though they cultivate these qualities in marriage, and even if many in the world are hypocritical in claiming to manifest such. A wedding ring ensures nothing. It merely serves public notice of married estate. It is not improper for a Christian to give evidence of his or her married status by wearing a wedding ring, be it on the right hand, as in Germany, or on the left. Yet this is not a necessity where it is not a legal requirement. So the couple can decide what to do in accord with their financial situation and personal preferences.

Hence, in regard to wedding customs one can be selective, asking oneself: What is the significance of the custom in this locality at present? Will it offend others? Is it loving? Is it reasonable?

WEDDING APPAREL

One decision that the couple will have to make before the wedding is what to wear. One's wedding is a special occasion, so attention is ordinarily given to looking joyful and attractive. Yet this does not mean that one must wear a certain type of gown or suit. One does well to consider local styles, expense and personal tastes.

In Bible times the bride and groom often wore very fine garments. (Ps. 45:13, 14; Jer. 2:32) Even the holy city, New Jerusalem, is described as "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:2) Thus elegant marriage costumes are not unscriptural. Yet, they are not necessary for a happy wedding. Spiritual apparel is more important.—1 Pet. 3:3, 4.

If an engaged couple wanted to purchase a special gown, for example, and the circumstances allowed for that, it would be for them to decide. Would it be reasonable, though, to buy such an expensive costume as to cause a financial burden for themselves or others? One Christian in northern Europe relinquished the treasure of serving as a special full-time minister to do secular work so as to get a fancy wedding dress. Which do you believe would have been of more lasting value to her? And what about those in the bridal party, if there is one? Will they feel obligated to buy expensive clothing because of the richness of the bride's dress?

The matter of apparel can be handled in various ways. While many have bought or rented "wedding" garments, some brides have enjoyed using the gown of a dear friend or relative. Others have received great satisfaction from making their own bridal outfit, possibly in that way being able to have a garment that could be used on other occasions in the future.—Prov. 31:13, 22.

And it is perfectly proper for a couple to wed in their most attractive regular clothing, having it neat and clean for the occasion. Some have done this so as to be able to use the money saved to help them to enter the pioneer ministry or to continue in it. Others who might be in position to have an elaborate wedding may personally desire to have a "quiet wedding" because of the criticalness of the times, "keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah."—2 Pet. 3:12.

While well-intentioned friends and relatives may have ideas as to how they would arrange the wedding, and some of the suggestions based on experience can be helpful, the couple getting married should let their wedding reflect their own preferences and plans for the future. And if there are small differences in ideas, the

bride and groom can resolve them in a loving way. That should be the case with matters after the wedding, both recognizing God's arrangement of headship in the family. So this would be an opportunity for them to show their ability to work together in love and according to godly principles.—Eph. 5:22-33.

'But what about wearing white, and having a veil?' some have wondered. As with other traditions, ideas about the meaning of these vary greatly. To some in Germany, a white gown signifies virginity. Others there believe that it prevents evil spirits from recognizing the bride. In Japan some view the white gown as a symbol of mourning; the bride 'dies' to her parents and remains with her husband until death. However, to many persons throughout the earth, the white dress is simply a quaint tradition with no particular meaning. A Christian bride need not think that a white gown is essential, nor that it is universally forbidden.

A veil may be viewed similarly. The Scriptures do not disapprove of a woman's wearing a head covering in the presence of her husband-to-be. (Gen. 24:63-67) So there is no objection to wearing a bridal veil as an attractive article of clothing. However, if there is considerable local feeling as to a false religious or superstitious significance of a bridal veil, the couple should consider that.

There is no need to discuss other examples involving wedding garments. The point to keep in mind about wedding apparel, whether it be luxurious or simple, is that it is not the most important thing! It should not be allowed to be a source of stumbling or unhappiness. (1 Cor. 8:13) It will soon dim in one's memory, but the happiness of a reasonable Christian wedding will endure as husband and wife apply the Scriptural counsel received.

THE CEREMONY ITSELF

This mature emphasizing of the rewarding spiritual aspects of the wedding applies especially to the ceremony itself. There is no special form of ceremony necessary, beyond what the law of the land might require. So most details can be worked out on a personal basis. This includes questions such as whether the wedding party will enter the hall in a certain way, whether anyone will "give away" the bride, whether there will be a bridesmaid and friend of the groom ("best man") or others sharing in the ceremony, and other such matters that are actually just minor technicalities. (Ps. 45:14; John 3:29) If any one of them would, if added, rob the occasion of its proper joy, why include it?

Before a wedding takes place at a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's witnesses, the Christian couple should have the approval of the ministers responsible for the hall as to the arrangements. These mature men do not desire to impose their personal tastes on the wedding. But they are concerned that nothing be done in connection with the Kingdom Hall that would interfere with the meetings held there or that would stumble or disturb those in the congregation or community. They keep in mind the counsel: "Make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others."—Phil. 1:10; Ps. 133:1.

But this should create no difficulty, since the Christian couple getting married endeavor to apply that same Bible counsel. For instance, the bride and groom can show their principled love and consideration for those attending the wedding by setting a time for the ceremony and then striving to be on time. This punctuality, as recommended in Jesus' illustration of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:10-12), will mark the Christian wedding as different from

many in the world, where disregard for others and idolizing of womanhood are often displayed by the bride's purposely being late.

If this is the first time worldly relatives of the couple attend the Kingdom Hall, they may well be impressed by such differences. They may note that if music is used it is based on Scriptural themes, taken from the songbook used by Jehovah's witnesses, and not the traditional marches involving secular music. And especially should they be impressed by the beneficial marriage talk based on God's inspired Word.

Yes, Jehovah's witnesses are willing to be different from the world in many

avenues of life, so they do not feel compelled to study books outlining how weddings "must" be performed. They realize that the worldly weddings described often turn out to be extravaganzas, prestigious affairs that leave those involved exhausted, disappointed and debt-ridden. And at such a wedding so much time and attention are taken up by material things and formalities that the deep spiritual significance of the wedding is lost. In contrast, at weddings, as elsewhere, mature Christians manifest the balance and reasonableness they obtain from studying God's Word by being moderate, thoughtful and loving. Thus, they let their "reasonableness become known to all men."—Phil. 4:5.

YOUR VACATION IN 1969

WHAT are your plans for vacation in 1969? Are you heading for the mountains, or will you be lured by the sound and the scent of the sea? Perhaps you are toying with the idea of taking to the open road and camping in a park or a forest. You may even be attracted by the color and gaiety of island resorts. There surely is a variety to choose from. But you do want to return from your annual holiday with a real sense of satisfaction from having used the time beneficially.

So why not, right from the start, build your vacation around something solid, something pleasurable, something truly upbuilding? The core of your vacation plans could be attendance at one of the conventions of Jehovah's witnesses that will be held this year in cities around the world. With a little forethought you could arrange to travel in easy stages to the convention city of your choice. En route you could enjoy some camping or other outdoor pleasures. On the way home, too,

there could be more scenic delights or restful interludes, whatever you may feel to be the need.

Particularly if you plan to vacation as a family will you find this a delightful way to arrange a holiday. It will provide a refreshing change. At the convention you can enjoy a program of good, wholesome Bible discussion, interspersed with realistic Bible dramas—dramas that apply the Bible's fine counsel to the problems and relationships of today. Last year, for example, the prophetic Bible drama of Jephthah was thrillingly enacted. But more than that—its significance for our day was made clear for all.

At such gatherings it is so interesting to enjoy the inexpensive meals served in the Witness-manned cafeterias. Here there is opportunity to chat informally with other likable, warm-hearted persons—becoming like old friends in an astonishingly short time. In fact, you might easily get to speak with missionaries from South

America, native Witnesses from African lands, visiting delegates from the ends of the earth. Those who attended assemblies in Central America in December 1966 were thrilled to meet colorfully garbed Indians from the mountains who had traveled long distances to enjoy the convention program.

Visiting a strange city with your family should occasion little worry when you know that you will be among thousands of families of Jehovah's witnesses. Many of these Witnesses have a great deal of travel experience and are glad to assist you in finding your way around. If you attend an assembly in New York, London, Paris, Copenhagen or Tokyo, you will enjoy visiting the Bethel home and printing plant of the Watch Tower Society there. Time can be set aside, too, to see some of the other interesting landmarks. Wherever you go, there is much to see that will broaden your outlook and impress more deeply things you have already learned from reading.

At these assemblies young people as well as older ones are always well represented. No matter what the age of your children, there will be many of the same age at the assembly. One first-time visitor to an assembly of Jehovah's witnesses in Ottawa, Canada, remarked: "The thing that surprised me most was the age of the delegates. My estimate is that fully 80 percent of them were under 40 years of age. It is safe to say that over half of them were in their twenties and under." And here is an editorial expression from *La Presse*, Montreal, of August 7, 1968: "Another useful contribution of Jehovah's witnesses is the accent the group places on family unity, respect for the authority of the family head and participation by adolescents in common endeavours."

PEOPLE WANT TO COME AGAIN

The happiness and the spiritual tonic experienced at these conventions are very real. For example, at one of last year's assemblies in Norway, a woman who had studied theology, and who attended for the first time, explained to the Witness who had invited her: "Today I sent two express telegrams to my son telling him, 'If you want to experience heaven on earth, take the first plane and come here. I'll pay for the ticket.' I have never sent an express telegram before in all my life, but today I have sent two! I'm sure my folks are wondering what is the matter with me."

Yes, a vacation that includes attendance at the sessions of one of these conventions dispenses with the element of aimlessness that often robs one of real joy. On the way to the convention city there is the expectation of good things ahead, while on the way home there is so much to recall and talk about with pleasure!

It may well be that your vacation plans look beyond the confines of your own homeland. If so, you may be able to attend one of the conventions that are being arranged for Europe, the Far East or the Americas. Or perhaps your first trip to Hawaii could coincide with the convention scheduled for there during 1969.

Witnesses in all parts of the world plan and prepare to attend assemblies months in advance, sometimes a year and even longer. Do you wonder why? Why, for example, did two girls pedal their bicycles 540 miles from Denmark to Stockholm, Sweden, in 1963? And why did a young Spanish Witness, paralyzed from the chest down, determine to travel the hundreds of miles to attend an assembly in Milan, Italy? It was mainly to enjoy the uplifting association of other Witnesses and gain the spiritual refreshment from the as-

sembly programs. They had attended other assemblies. They knew what to expect.

You, too, will by no means suffer disappointment. You will be welcome, you and your family. And consider with what added appreciation you will view the scenic wonders that are the handiwork of the Grand Creator, after hearing discussed his wonderful provisions for the happy

future of obedient humans! Is it not a fact that after such a practical and up-building vacation one would be able to resume one's regular responsibilities with renewed zest and a hopeful outlook? It is indeed so!

By all means, then, plan to attend a convention of Jehovah's witnesses during your vacation in 1969.

International Conventions Planned for 1969

July 6-13: Atlanta Stadium, Atlanta, Ga., U.S.A.; Cleveland Municipal Stadium, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. (tentative).

July 7-13: Yankee Stadium, New York, N.Y., U.S.A. (includes Spanish).

July 13-20: Empire Stadium, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Fairgrounds Grandstand, Pomona, Calif., U.S.A. (Spanish).

July 14-20: Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, Calif., U.S.A.

July 21-27: White Sox Park, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A. (includes Spanish); Municipal Stadium, Kansas City, Mo. (tentative).

July 29-Aug. 3: Wembley Stadium, London, England.

Aug. 5-10: Colombes Stadium, Paris, France; Sports Park, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Aug. 10-17: Zeppelinwiese, Nuremberg, Germany; Palazzo dello Sport, Rome, Italy.

Aug. 13-17: Palazzo dei Congressi, Rome, Italy (Greek, Spanish).

Oct. 12-16: Changchoong Gymnasium, Seoul, Korea.

Oct. 14-19: Tokyo, Japan.

Oct. 18-21: Taipei, Taiwan; City Hall Theater, Hong Kong, China.

Oct. 22-26: Rizal Memorial Stadium, Manila, Philippine Republic.

Oct. 24-26: Port Moresby, Papua.

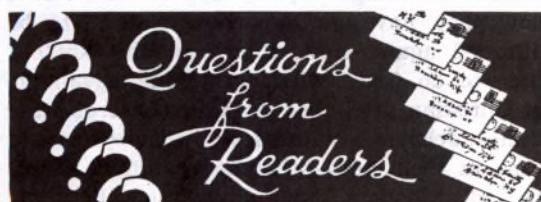
Oct. 26-31: Melbourne Showgrounds, Melbourne, Australia.

Nov. 4-9: Auckland Trotting Club, Auckland, New Zealand.

Nov. 9-12: Town Hall, Suva, Fiji; Papeete, Tahiti.

Nov. 11-16: Honolulu International Center (Arena), Honolulu, Hawaii.

Dec. 24-28: Mexico Arena, Mexico City, Mexico.



● What did the apostle Paul mean when he wrote, at 1 Timothy 2:15, that women would "be kept safe through childbearing"?—B. G., Chile.

Under inspiration Paul was discussing the proper attitudes and activities for women. One worthwhile and protective function for Christian wives is caring for their children. Paul wrote: "She will be kept safe through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and sanctification along with soundness of mind."—1 Tim. 2:15.

The Bible translation by R. A. Knox renders

this verse in a way that allows for the idea that childbearing itself will result in eternal salvation for a woman. But that cannot be the thought. Many other texts show that to be saved eternally men and women alike must believe on the Lord Jesus, have accurate knowledge and exercise faith.—Acts 16:30, 31; John 17:3; Rom. 10:10.

Other translations give the impression that this is a promise that God would preserve all his female servants alive through the experience of childbearing. (*Moffatt, New American Standard Bible*) Yet that had not been so in every case up till then, and it has not been true since then. (Gen. 35:16-18) Believers and nonbelievers have survived childbirth, and believers and nonbelievers have died in childbirth. So it does not mean being kept safe all throughout the course of childbirth. Rather, it means that by means of childbearing and caring for the responsibilities that go with it they will be kept safe, provided they also

manifest faith, love and soundness of mind.

As mentioned, Paul was discussing the proper frame of mind and duties for women. In the congregation their attitude should be one of submissiveness, recognizing that they are not to try to exercise authority over adult males. Exemplifying the difficulties that can result when a woman does not recognize her position, the apostle cites Eve's case. She ran ahead of Adam, was deceived and came to be in transgression.—1 Tim. 2:11-14.

Later in this same letter Paul cautioned Christian women about their activities. Some of the younger widows were "unoccupied, gadding about to the houses; yes, not only unoccupied, but also gossipers and meddlers in other people's affairs, talking of things they ought not." These activities could lead to all sorts of trouble, including getting involved in giving advice and making decisions on matters that were properly the responsibilities of husbands or appointed servants in the congregation. How could those younger widows be kept safe from such dangers? Paul said that

one way was "to marry, to bear children, to manage a household."—1 Tim. 5:11-15.

Hence, when he wrote that women would be "kept safe through childbearing," he meant that they should be occupied with worthwhile activities. By managing a household and giving of themselves in training their children, which are valuable roles for which women have marvelous God-given abilities, they would probably be kept safe and out of the snares that trap untheocratic women. And these duties would nicely complement their activities in God's service, helping them to "continue in faith and love and sanctification."

Women who are not married or who do not have children, as well as Christian men, can learn from the principle of this inspired admonition: We all need to be on guard to see that we are profitably occupied. God's Word advises each of us: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked."—Eph. 5:15, 16.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Time really means life. And Christians value their lives. So they want to walk wisely, buying out the time for serving God during these wicked days. (Eph. 5:15, 16) By observing

world events, they know that the end of this system of things rapidly approaches. Hence now they have an opportunity never to be afforded again. How, then, can one buy out time to do God's will? By taking advantage of Christian privileges at the expense of other things. Jehovah's witnesses do that by making time in their busy schedules to direct others to God's kingdom, that they might walk wisely in these wicked days. During January these Christian witnesses will be offering to interested persons this Bible magazine, which announces Jehovah's kingdom. A year's subscription for *The Watchtower*, along with three Bible booklets, will be offered for \$1.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

- February 9: The Faith That Pleases God.
Page 40. Songs to Be Used: 33, 17.
- February 16: Are You Ready for the Responsibilities of a Baptized Witness? Page 46.
Songs to Be Used: 108, 94.