

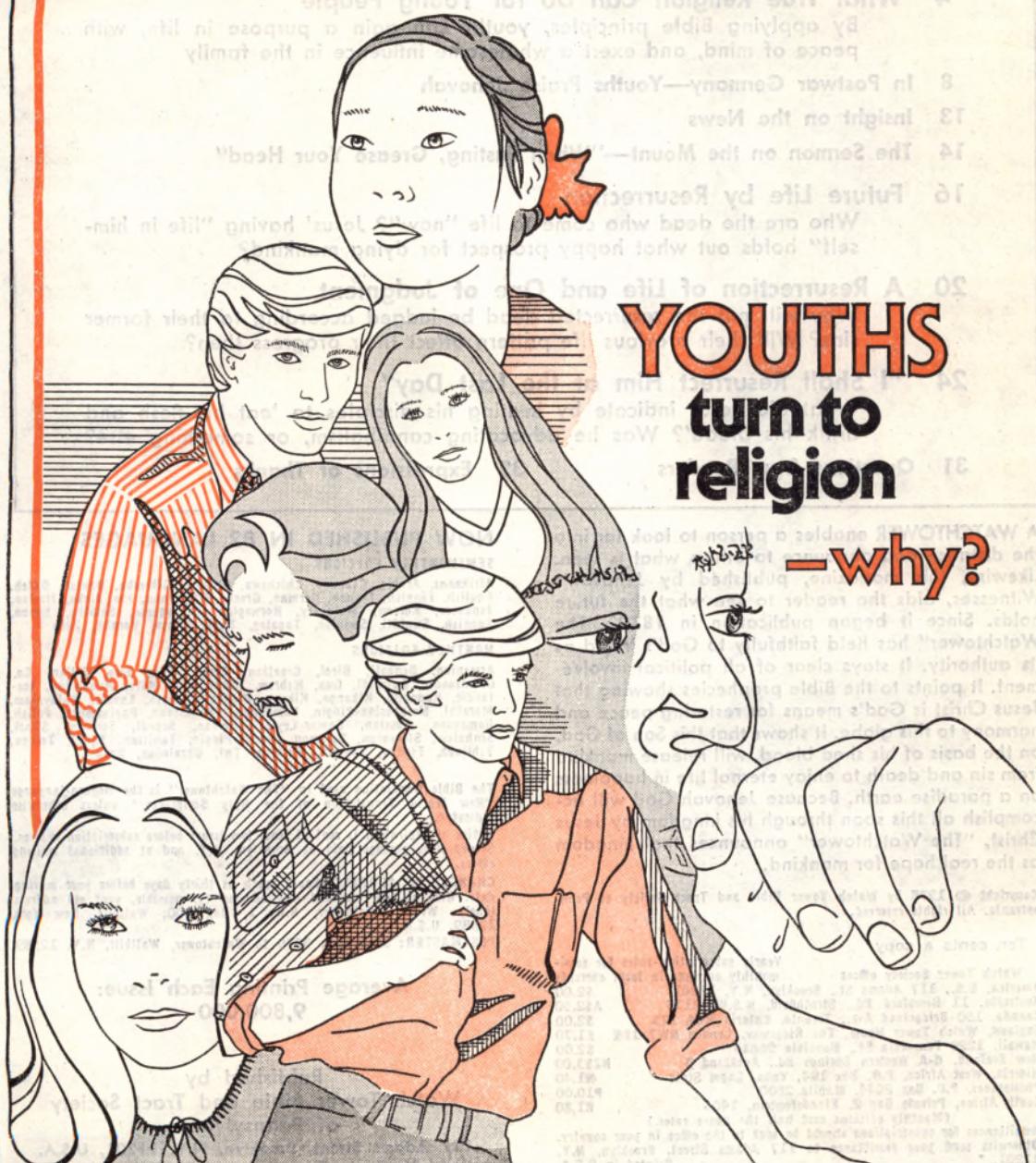
September 1, 1978

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

YOUTHS turn to religion

-why?



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YOUTHS turn to religion

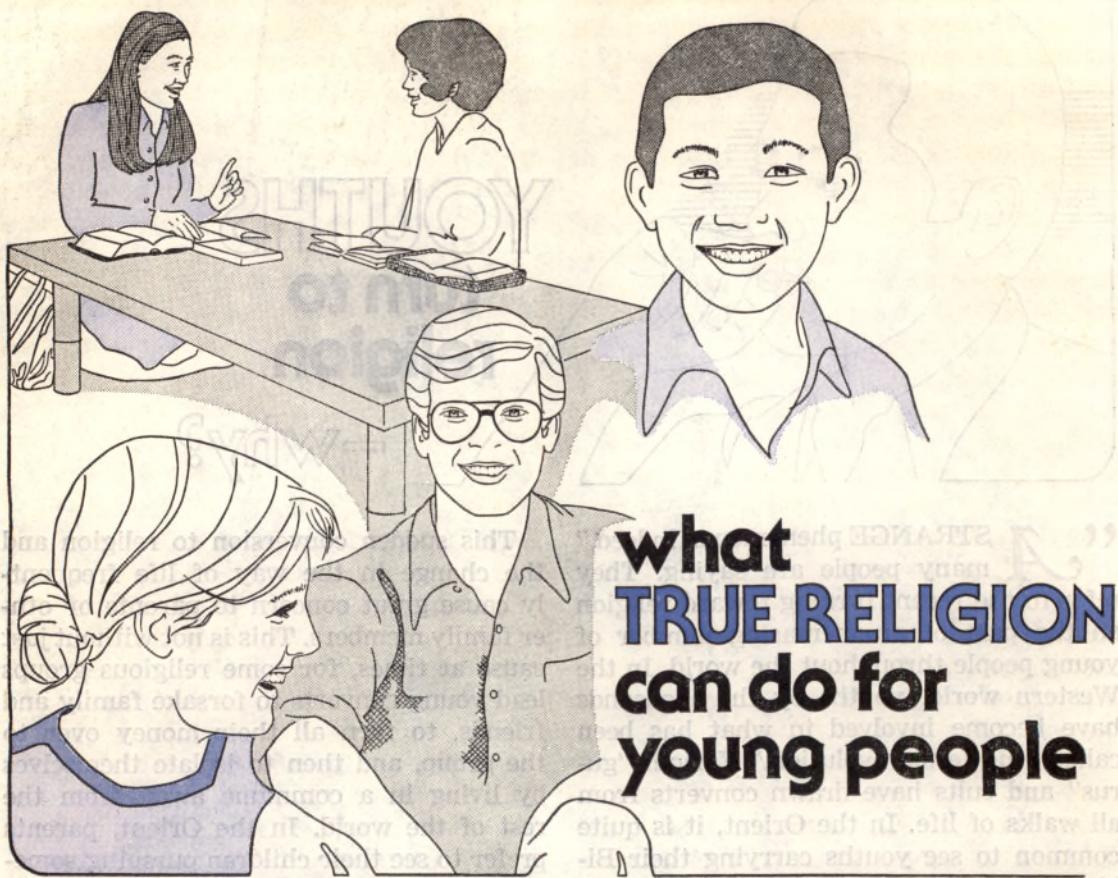
-why?

A STRANGE phenomenon indeed," many people are saying. They refer to the recent turning toward religion on the part of an increasing number of young people throughout the world. In the Western world, youths by the thousands have become involved in what has been called "the Jesus revolution." Various "gurus" and cults have drawn converts from all walks of life. In the Orient, it is quite common to see youths carrying their Bibles to church on Sunday rather than going on outings. In Hong Kong, many small independent youth groups have formed simply to fellowship together, discussing the Bible and perhaps passing out tracts printed by Bible societies.

What has generated this surge of religious fervor? It could not be religious schools, for, reportedly, the lessons on religion are usually boring and without substance. Rather, it seems to be the fact that, world wide, youths can see that materialism, human governments and schemes have led only to greed, selfishness, wars, misery and general futility. Many have tried drugs, sex and alcohol, but found no answers. So they hopefully turn to religion, but often not the religion of their family.

This sudden conversion to religion and the change in the way of life frequently cause great concern to parents or other family members. This is not without just cause at times, for some religious groups lead young converts to forsake family and friends, to turn all their money over to the group, and then to isolate themselves by living in a commune away from the rest of the world. In the Orient, parents prefer to see their children pursuing something with material benefits, such as more education and higher paying jobs.

If you are a youth, how should you feel and react when suddenly some members of your family oppose your religious beliefs? Does difference in religion or even opposition necessarily mean that a serious breach must exist in relationships between family members? No. But to answer those questions properly, you first must have the right religion, and have the facts to prove it. This is because only the right religion, the religion of the Bible, makes better children and shows one how to have a closer relationship with parents and other family members. In the Bible, the originator of families, mankind's Creator, Jehovah, gives detailed instruction on how to have truly united and happy families.



what **TRUE RELIGION** can do for **young people**

IF ALL the members of all families would give close attention to the Bible and would make attempts, even though imperfect ones, to put the Bible's good advice into effect, all families would enjoy internal unity and happiness. Moreover, strife and warfare between families, tribes and nations would cease. But at the present time such is not universally the case. Sometimes only one member of a family takes this good course. What if this is the situation—if, say, only a son or a daughter tries diligently to apply Bible principles? Does this bring about a happy family atmosphere? Not always. But a strong influence toward greater unity does result. And certainly God helps the son or the daughter to cope more satisfactorily with

the problem, to have greater peace of mind and to exert a wholesome influence in the family.

In considering this statement about a Christian's unifying effect, some may recall that Jesus said, in Luke chapter 12, verses 52 and 53, that he came to cause division—"five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." In saying this, Jesus was not encouraging a split in the family relationship. Jesus did not take a position against his own fleshly brothers. On the other hand,

his brothers did not encourage him, but tended to speak disparagingly about his claims. However, Jesus' course was such that his brothers finally believed the "good news" that he taught and became Christians.—John 7:3-5; Acts 1:13, 14.

Jesus, not only by his own life experience, but also by his words, pointed out that his followers would, in many instances, receive rebuffs, ridicule and even persecution from their own families. However, the believer was not to be the cause of the enmity through rude or disrespectful conduct on his part. This would actually be unchristian, and could be a snare into which a Christian, particularly one who is young, might easily fall. He or she may have been disrespectful before coming to a knowledge of the truth of the Bible. But Bible truth can make marvelous changes in the Christian, for he can exemplify its sterling value, thereby recommending himself to every conscience in the sight of God.—2 Cor. 4:2.

With regard to those who may actually manifest vigorous opposition, due to failure to understand or appreciate the Christian's changed course, Jesus commanded: "Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you; that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens." (Matt. 5:44, 45) The Christian's hope always is that such ones may eventually become believers.

In the face of opposition to the truth, the Christian will, like his Master Jesus Christ, stand firm for the truth. But firmness does not have to be harshness. He will always be kind. He will not think himself above others, nor be one who is insolent or "talks back" (traits particularly characteristic of many young persons today). During periods of ridicule or abuse, the Christian also does well to remember Peter's words to be "always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but

doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Pet. 3:15) Especially should this mild temper and deep respect be shown toward family members. To answer in this manner requires sincere, earnest, diligent study and effort. All, even youthful Christians, should be able to give sound, clear, thorough reasons for their faith. Otherwise, where is their faith?

RESPECT FOR PARENTAL AUTHORITY

A youth who has become a Christian learns, as Jesus said, that "the truth will set you free." (John 8:32) He (or she) finds that there is indeed freedom from many of the things that control, yes, actually enslave young people today—fear of their peers, social pressure to 'follow the crowd,' hero worship, jealousies, rivalries, wrong desires, frustrations and calamitous results from being influenced by bad associates. But youths need to recognize that they are not *absolutely* free. They must recognize properly constituted authority, one of the foremost being parental authority. It is God himself who gave parents the responsibility to train children in the right way and to determine what is the best for each child.—Deut. 6:1, 6, 7; 31:12, 13.

Parental authority includes the "rod" of discipline. Proverbs 23:13, 14 states: "Do not hold back discipline from the mere boy. In case you beat him with the rod, he will not die. With the rod you yourself should beat him, that you may deliver his very soul from Sheol itself." At times, children may feel that the discipline is not properly administered, but they must remember that it is to God that the parents are accountable for the exercise of their authority, and that if discipline is improperly administered, God can, nevertheless, make it work out to the good of the obedient child.—Rom. 8:28.

Subjection to parental authority is much easier for the young person if he gives thought to the apostle Paul's words: "True,

no discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous; yet afterward to those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness." (Heb. 12:11) A youth who appreciates this can be thankful for the discipline that he receives at the hands of parents and older ones in the congregation, as well as at school. He will make rapid progress and will enjoy a good conscience and freeness of speech, for when he submits to authority, even though it is sometimes not the most pleasant experience, the youth is serving the Lord Jehovah and his Son Jesus Christ. The apostle gave special attention to youthful ones, to comfort them, when he wrote: "You children, be obedient to your parents *in everything*, for *this is well-pleasing in the Lord.*" (Col. 3:20) The only exception would be in the event that the youth was called on to do something not pleasing to the Lord.

EXERCISING THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE

When you worship the Creator, you may not receive help from family members or associates. To keep your balance under such circumstances, you can pray for and obtain wisdom from God. The disciple James, a half brother of Jesus Christ, wrote to those undergoing difficulties: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials." "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him."

—Jas. 1:2, 5.

James also describes the "wisdom from above" as being "first of all chaste, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits, not making partial distinctions, not hypocritical." (Jas. 3:17) Consider each of these qualities carefully, and honestly see whether you are displaying them, and where improvement can be made. These qualities will help you

to understand the situation and feelings of others as well as your own.

It should be kept in mind that your family members nearly always have your best interests at heart, even though they may have only a limited knowledge as to what true Christianity is. Perhaps you have begun studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Your relatives and friends may not really know what kind of people Jehovah's Witnesses are. They may therefore feel that 'this religion is taking up a lot of your time.' In view of the hypocrisy seen in most religions today, older persons understandably may be apprehensive and cautious. Seeing your youthful zeal toward religion, they worry that your action may not be based on good sense, but only on emotion. If they manifest opposition, you may be able to prove, by respectful answers in the spirit of peaceableness and reasonableness, that you have made a sensible and well-founded decision.

So ask yourself: Am I truly peaceable and reasonable? Do I demonstrate this attitude toward my family even though they, to some extent, oppose my beliefs? What can I do to improve family togetherness and thereby make my service to the Creator whole-souled? In this regard, does my scheduling of activities show balance and reasonableness, so that I can take care of family obligations and share in proclaiming the "good news" in an effective way?

By applying the Bible's wisdom from above, the Christian should constantly improve in conduct and in communication with family members. Your family and friends may not oppose you, but if they do, the apostle Peter's words point out what you should do. He comforted Christians with the following words: "Hold a good conscience, so that in the particular in which you are spoken against they may get ashamed who are speaking slightly of your good conduct in connection with

Christ. For it is better to suffer because you are doing good, if the will of God wishes it, than because you are doing evil."

—1 Pet. 3:16, 17.

Often, a Christian's conduct makes a more powerful appeal to others than the spoken word.

In Hong Kong, when a girl in her early 20's started regularly attending the Bible-study meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, this was frowned on by the family, especially by the older brothers. However, one brother noted that, whereas the daughter had previously engaged in loud, shouting arguments with her mother, as she continued to study the Bible she began to change and was progressively demonstrating a more quiet and mild spirit. Still he had doubts and was not sure that this improvement was due to the influence of her new religion. He felt that actually his sister was being "taken in" and that her changed attitude was only superficial.

To make a test of the matter, the brother went with her once to the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses to attend the meeting. To his surprise, he did not find a social club or a collection-plate-passing session, but, rather, a group of warm, friendly people interested in studying the Bible and applying it in their lives. Soon, he, too, was studying the Bible. Now, as baptized Witnesses, this brother and sister attend meetings together and are starting to bring along other family members. Interest in God and his Word had been aroused and opposition turned to family unity and happiness—all because of a daughter's application of Bible counsel in developing a mild temper and a spirit of desire to help others.

At times, it may seem that good conduct goes unnoticed by opposers, but this should not discourage the Christian.

A young girl who had previously been prone to get into mischief and show her independence worked hard at changing over to a Christian personality. At first, this brought no comment and had no apparent effect on her parents. Then, one day, she overheard her mother say to a neighbor: "I used to oppose my daughter when she joined this religion [Jehovah's Witnesses] but I have noticed such an im-

provement in her conduct that I won't oppose her anymore, for this must be a good religion."

How happy this girl was that she had persevered in displaying fine conduct!

OLDEST ANCESTOR, "ANCIENT OF DAYS"

What is it that causes youths among Jehovah's Witnesses to follow the Bible with such tenacity even when the family disapproves? Is it that they are being taught disrespect for relatives? Indeed not! Rather, they are following a practice as old as the human race, namely, respect for and obedience to the eldest forefather. In societies around the world, until more recent times, the eldest male member of the family was looked to for advice, wisdom and guidance. His word was law and took precedence above that of others—a son, a grandson or a great-grandson. Many persons in the Orient even worship their dead ancestors and look to them for guidance. But true Christians are actually listening to the oldest ancestor or forefather, who is not dead, but is "the living God," namely, mankind's Creator, Jehovah God.—Jer. 10: 10-12.

The Bible book of Daniel (7:9) speaks of God as the "Ancient of Days." He is from everlasting to everlasting and the source of life for all humans. (Ps. 36:7, 9; Acts 17:24, 25, 28) Accordingly, all should be obedient to him, even as properly trained youngsters should be quick to listen to parents and grandparents. It is by following the wisdom and instructions of the "Ancient of Days" that we can come to be called his children. (1 Pet. 1:14; 1 John 3:1; 2 Cor. 6:18) Understandably, then, youthful servants of the Creator feel that they must conscientiously listen to this highest parent as the final authority whenever there is a conflict of commands, while still maintaining respect and showing love toward their parents.

Since Jehovah is the originator of families and family life, it follows that youths who serve him will become better family members. Sons and daughters will not shame their earthly parents by following the fads, immorality and bad conduct of this world. They will be quick to help out at home and otherwise bring glory to their parents through their chaste and upright conduct at all times. (Titus 2:6-8) By giving attention to these things, which are much more pleasant and satisfying than strife and resistance to authority, true Christian youths bring praise to the Creator. Their heavenly Father also receives

glory from this and blesses them for their love and faith.

In all corners of the earth, in whatever circumstances, thousands of youths are taking the course that pleases God. Perhaps some of the world's greatest attractions for youth, and the greatest pressures, exist in the so-called modernized nations, where the prevalent spirit is materialistic. Can true Christianity provide youths what they need for contentment and happiness, and free them from being swept along by worldly materialism? A good example is found in the Federal Republic of Germany of the postwar period.

IN POSTWAR GERMANY —YOUTHS PRAISE JEHOVAH

GERMANY, 1978. The flat windswept plains of the north carpeted with eye-catching fields of heather; the big industrial center of the Ruhr, as hustle-bustle as ever, lying half hidden under a layer of smog; the majestic Bavarian Alps blanketed with thick coats of freshly fallen snow, and with tourists swarming over the landscape in search of leather pants, colorful dirndls, beer mugs and cuckoo clocks—that is the Germany everybody knows. Little seems to have changed.

And yet the world, including Germany, has changed, perhaps never so rapidly as since the end of World War II. It has been introduced to new dangers, new attitudes and new standards of conduct. Emerging from the holocaust of war, what kind of heritage would the former generation be able to give the postwar generation?

There could be no better heritage to en-

able the new generation successfully to cope with their problems than an accurate knowledge of the true God Jehovah and of his purposes. During the Hitler regime there were Christians who had this knowledge and whose faithfulness under persecution is well known. Keeping in mind David's words, that "generation after generation will commend your works, and about your mighty acts they will tell," they have been resolved to pass this fine heritage on to the postwar generation. (Ps. 145:4) Have they succeeded in this? Let us investigate.

THOSE REARED BY BELIEVING PARENTS

Many of Jehovah's Witnesses of the present generation (since 1945) have had the advantage of being reared by parents and even grandparents who were Jehovah's Witnesses. For example, Elke and her sis-

ter Heidi, both serving God full time, are happy to belong to the fifth generation of Witnesses in their family. How wonderful to see whole families serving Jehovah unitedly!

Consider, too, a family in Westphalia with 15 children. Gerhard, now serving full time at the headquarters office of the Watch Tower Society in Wiesbaden, remembers the fine parental training the children received when all were still at home. Three family studies were necessary to look after their individual needs: one for the older children, one for the very small, and one for the "middle-aged." Before meetings, and afterward as well, the father would spend an hour and a half driving back and forth to get the *entire* family to the Kingdom Hall. Strong Christian families are not built without effort!

THE PROBLEM OF DIVIDED HOUSEHOLDS

Others have not been blessed with a united family background, for they have been brought up in religiously divided households.

Friedhelm recalls that his father repeatedly burned his Bible, his books and his magazines. Despite the ambitious plans his father had made for him, an only child, he settled instead on serving as a full-time proclaimer of the good news of God's kingdom.

Similarly, Wilfried tells of how he and his mother often found themselves locked outdoors when they returned home from Christian meetings. Once they even had to spend the night in the car. At another time his father dragged him out of bed and began beating him with a lamp. But by re-

maining faithful, he earned, not only his father's respect, but, what is more important, Jehovah's approval. "The brothers always made me feel welcome in the congregation, even though I was only 11 or 12 at the time, and it was this love that kept me going," he explains.

Uwe, a teen-ager when he first became a Witness, had opposition at work as well as at home.

He remembers once when he took advantage of an opportunity to speak the truth to others during a coffee break and was rewarded, not with hearing ears, but with a bucket of water dumped on his head. However, both he and his brother, now a missionary in Spain, continued to advance to Christian maturity.

Rolf-Dieter was only five or six when his mother came to appreciate Bible truth. He and his younger brother were not permitted by their opposing father to attend Chris-



tian meetings, although their mother talked to them at home and took them along whenever possible.

"I remember once when my father made me go to the church services of one of Christendom's denominations," he relates. "But mother had explained everything to me beforehand. I went and listened, but could not conscientiously take part in the ceremonies, which I understood to be unscriptural, despite the fact that the others sitting nearby kept punching me and whispering what I should do." Nevertheless, Rolf exercised self-control toward those in attendance at the services, recognizing that the Scriptures command respect for other persons.

COPING WITH PROBLEMS, LARGE AND SMALL

Young Christians do not have it easy. Being mocked and made fun of at school can be a real test of one's integrity. After graduation male students are faced with the question of neutrality. And they, as well as female Witnesses, have had to contend with all the problems common to young people today: drugs, alcohol, immorality and so many, many more.

Why, even finding a marriage mate can pose a problem. It was Ute's. She explains:

"Where could I find a suitable mate? All the young people in our congregation were already married. Maybe it would not hurt to 'look around in the world' just a little. But, no, I just couldn't, being aware of the Scriptural counsel to marry 'only in the Lord.' In this matter, too, I placed my confidence in Jehovah. Then during construction work on our new assembly hall in Trappenkamp I met my fiancé. We are getting married in June."

And what about our little ones and their "little" problems? Let us listen to Eric:

"I am 10 years old and in the fourth grade. My parents have been Witnesses for a long time, so until I started school I associated only with fellow believers. Everything went along fine until the day our class left to spend a week in the country at a school hostel. I had never been

away from home before. Suddenly our teacher took sick and a substitute teacher went along. I did not know him. Sunday morning he said: 'This morning we are all going to church.' I knew I must explain to him that I did not agree with the teachings presented there, and for this reason would rather not go. During breakfast I thought of what I could tell him. After breakfast, I talked to him, but he said: 'You are going, so let's not have any argument!' I went to my room and, when I was alone, I recalled what mother had told me the morning I left: 'If you run into trouble, Jehovah knows your heart. You can speak to him about your problems.' I cried as I prayed. I didn't want to have anything to do with false religion! A little while later when I went back outside I met another teacher who asked me what the matter was, because she saw I had been crying. I told her. She said: 'I will take care of it for you.' A little later she came back and told me: 'You don't have to go. I spoke to your teacher.' I was so happy! I thanked Jehovah that he had listened to my prayer. His hand was not too short."

A "little" problem? Some may think so, but our postwar generation has discovered that Jehovah considers no problem too small or insignificant to warrant his attention. Neither does he desert us in the face of larger ones. Take the case of Marion:

She was a fine example of Christian youth, regularly active in Kingdom preaching. Marion was just 17 years old and full of life. But then a tumor on her spinal cord started slowly to paralyze her arm. An operation became absolutely necessary, but because of its dangerous nature no doctor was willing to perform it without blood. Marion and her parents remained firm. Disobedience to Jehovah was out of the question! Although she was in pain, her good spirits never faltered. Finally a surgeon was found who was willing to respect her religious convictions. An operation was successfully performed without blood! However, relief was short-lived; a second operation was necessary and then a third one. As the paralysis spread, her pain increased. Her tongue became paralyzed, but her actions at the hospital continued to give witness to her faith. Lovingly, and

with great effort, she knitted her nurse a sweater. When death finally became inevitable, her parents took her home. Although her voice was almost inaudible and she could scarcely lift her head, yet as often as possible they took her on a stretcher to Christian meetings. Like Job when plagued, she held to the firm conviction that she, too, would one day be blessed by God and be as full of life as ever. She died on December 28, 1977, at the age of 18. Refusing to compromise her faith in Jehovah, she was strengthened by Him and joined a long line of Christians faithful unto death, including others of our post-war generation, whose prayer for life will be answered in the resurrection.—Acts 24: 15.

THOSE NOT REARED BY BELIEVING PARENTS

Of course, many of our young Witnesses were not reared by believing parents. They, too, have had to overcome problems, sometimes very serious ones, before they could become servants of Jehovah.

For example, there is Christa, 22 years old, who became interested when Jehovah's Witnesses started a Bible study with her brother. She was active in Catholic youth work, but also attended Baptist meetings every week. She explains why she herself then began to study with the Witnesses:

"I had not the faintest idea of becoming one. My aim was to win my brother back to Catholicism. So I wanted to learn as much as possible about the Bible and then use it to fight against these 'enemies.'

But the more she studied, the more she became convinced that the Witnesses had the truth, as she says, "to my horror!" She continues: "I was torn between my Catholic friends, my newly found Baptist friends and Jehovah's Witnesses, of whom I really knew very little except that they were able to answer all my Bible questions."

Christa's next problem was music. Since the age of 15 she had sung in public and dreamed of one day being a "star." She had received good reviews at talent shows and had performed in England as well as

in Germany. What should she do? She goes on to say:

"I made my decision after visiting my pen pal, Janet, in England. She told me she had been forced to leave home because of the truth. This made me stop and think, because Janet had known about the truth for only four months, since the time my brother and I had witnessed to her during her visit to Germany. Now things began happening fast. Before leaving England I stopped smoking. As soon as I arrived home I broke off all my worldly friendships and stripped my walls of all the photos of the 'stars.' Now I was free to attend all the meetings. Soon I had many new, and really true, friends. I was baptized in 1974. Seven months later I flew to England to see my friend Janet being baptized. We are so grateful to Jehovah that he delivered us from false religion and strengthened us to overcome our many problems."

FULL-TIME SERVICE

Because they are young and generally without family obligations, many of this postwar generation in the Federal Republic of Germany have been able to devote their energies full time to preaching and teaching God's Word. Once having tasted the blessings of full-time or "pioneer" service, most have wanted to continue enjoying them as long as possible. In fact, Karl-Heinz was so determined that he sought a mate who held his viewpoint of this service. He says:

"We have since enjoyed eight years of 'pioneer' service together and have been greatly blessed. We have a happy marriage and have helped several persons accept the truth, including an entire family, the head of which is now himself an elder in the congregation."

Others have been willing to make changes in their secular work to enable them to devote more time to proclaiming the "good news." "It was not beneath my dignity to work as an unskilled laborer in order to 'pioneer,'" is the way Wolfgang, a professional decorator, expressed it. Eighteen-year-old Carola does part-time

housework and describes it as "a wonderful profession!" Helmut, trained in an architectural office, spent part time in the plastering trade and switched over to delivering newspapers early in the morning so that he could be a "pioneer."

Before learning the truth, Ulrich was a chef, working in the best hotels, catering to prominent politicians and well-known movie personalities. He gave it up to have more time for Scriptural pursuits. He says:

"My friends and colleagues advised against it, saying I would 'sink' ever lower. My career of becoming a famous chef was over, also my dream of 'big money.' But I would never exchange all of that for what I have today. As a 'pioneer' I am happier than ever before—certainly happier than I was before I 'sank' so low."

PRAISING JEHOVAH IN MANY TONGUES

The postwar generation has also done excellent work among the foreign-language groups in Germany. Many have learned a foreign tongue in order to serve in one of the 167 English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish or Yugoslavian congregations in Germany. So they are "missionaries" in a foreign field within their own country. Others have moved to Spain, Luxembourg, France, Italy and other countries and are serving there.

But, of course, Germany's postwar generation has its missionaries who have received training at the Witnesses' missionary school, and are now serving in foreign countries. The majority of the 124 young men and women sent from Germany to this school (in the United States) during the past 10 years belong to this age group. And some who have had to return from their assignments for health or other reasons are, nevertheless, still in full-time service.

THE OTHER SIDE

But, of course, there are two sides to every story and it would be misleading to assume that all young people among Je-

hovah's Witnesses in Germany are like the ones described above. Public indifference, worldly influences, materialism—they have all taken their toll and continue to do so. Some youths have become spiritually weak because they have not diligently studied the Bible and prayed to God for "the wisdom from above." A traveling overseer recently wrote that he was shocked to see how little some of the young people are doing in the preaching work:

"In the last three congregations that I visited, they make up 23 percent of the Witnesses but, as regards time spent in preaching, they are the weakest. It hurts a person to see that some of them have scarcely any relationship with Jehovah and with the congregation. They are 'members' of a religion, nothing more. It is bitter for the parents when they discover this, but oftentimes they themselves are not without blame. It is, in some cases, due to parental neglect of their children's spiritual welfare."

As this wicked system hurries toward its destruction, it is high time for all such youths to awake to the seriousness of the situation, and act accordingly. Jehovah will bless them if they do so.—Rom. 13:11; Luke 21:34-36.

May those of our postwar generation faithfully serving Jehovah and telling of his mighty acts KEEP UP THE FINE WORK! (Ps. 145:4, 12) May their example encourage others of their age group to put up a strong fight against becoming ensnared by Satan's wicked system. Having been recipients themselves of a fine heritage, let them recognize their obligation to transmit it now to the oncoming generation. But there is further motivation for serving faithfully now. If they do so, they may be privileged, because of the coming miracle of the resurrection, to pass this fine heritage on to generations that have preceded them! What a thrilling prospect! Who would not want to be among those so privileged?

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

- Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of the Federal Republic of Germany observed: "I've had the impression for a long time that we don't talk to each other enough, neither married couples, nor parents

Families Need to Talk

with their children, nor friends among themselves." He added: "We have become more and more speechless, and that frightens me." Chancellor Schmidt suggested that once a week people should turn off their television sets and communicate with each other.

The good effect of proper family communication was noted by Walter Washington, the mayor of Washington, D.C. While visiting a convention of over 52,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in that city this summer, he noted the presence of united family groups, and their discipline and cleanliness. Mayor Washington commented on the need of such "moral fiber" in families, and that these families served as fine examples to other religious groups.

Families of Jehovah's Witnesses have this success because parents take seriously the counsel of God's Word to bring up their children "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." This inculcates in the young the highest moral standards, obedience to law, respect for persons of all races, and faith in God and his purposes.—Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:4-7.

One way that these parents accomplish this is by having regular Bible discussions in the home. This affords them the opportunity to impart vital instruction to their children, and also allows the young to express what is in their hearts, including their questions and problems.

- "The United States, very simply, is in the throes of a teen pregnancy epidemic," declared "Science News" recently.

**Teen-Age
Pregnancy
Epidemic**
Government statistics for the latest year available, 1976, showed that illegitimate births rose to a record 468,000, more than double the figure of ten years ago. Half of these, 235,300, involved teen-age girls. In addition, an estimated 300,000 teen-age girls had abortions during the year.

Authorities say that the major reasons for this epidemic of pregnancies include: a loosening of family and religious ties; the huge rise in the number of broken families and divorces; and this world's growing emphasis on sex and sexual freedom.

"Science News" also observed: "Probably the best solution to the teen pregnancy epidemic . . . is the strengthening of American family life, . . . since those girls who get pregnant usually come from homes where sexual values and guidance are lacking."

Truly, there is no substitute for proper parental guidance for the young, especially where parents teach their young the Bible's high moral standards.—Prov. 22:6; Ps. 119: 104, 105.

- In England, a Cheshire housewife wanted an abortion, but her husband objected, appealing for a High Court injunction to restrain her. But

**No Human
Rights for
Innocent?** the court ruled that the husband 'has no legal right whatsoever . . . to stop his wife from having an abortion.' She had the abortion. Thus, in the law's eyes, the destroyed child had no legal rights either.

In Pennsylvania, a judge ruled that the stabbing death of a nine-month-old fetus still in its mother's womb could not be considered murder, since the fetus 'did not have a separate existence of his own.' Yet, in a few days the child would have been born, and such a death then would be murder in the law's eyes.

Those who condone the death of the unborn might ask themselves, how many of them do not rejoice that they themselves were not among the unborn who were aborted?

God's law states the principle: "Do not kill the innocent." (Ex. 23:7) Surely, the unborn could thus be designated. God does not view a human embryo or fetus as a mere piece of tissue, but as a developing human whose rights should be protected.—Ps. 139: 13-16.

The fact is that taking the life of the unborn innocent is condemned in God's sight, and those who show persistent disregard for life will be accountable to him.

AFTER discussing almsgiving and prayer, Jesus directed attention to a third major aspect of worship practiced by the Jews, namely, fasting. But before noting what the Son of God said on this matter, let us consider some background information.

Fasting was not mentioned specifically in God's law through Moses. But the Law did command that on the Day of Atonement the Israelites "afflict" themselves, which is understood to mean fasting. (Lev. 23: 27; Num. 29:7; see also Leviticus 16:29-31, *Jerusalem Bible*; compare Psalm 35: 13; Isaiah 58:3, 5.) Though this was the only public fast required by the Mosaic law, the Israelites observed many others. They fasted publicly on anniversaries of national disasters and during times of drought, scarcity of crops, pestilence and war.—Zech. 7:5; 8:19.

Additionally, certain persons would undertake voluntary, private fasts to seek special favor from God or when mourning. (2 Sam. 12:16) The fast might be for a single day or for a much longer period. Jewish tradition specifies that the actual abstaining from food took place, not for an entire 24-hour period, but just during daylight hours. Usually individuals would undertake such voluntary fasts only in dire circumstances.

But it was different with the Pharisees. According to a parable of Jesus, certain members of that religious fraternity took it on themselves to "fast twice a week." (Luke 18:12) The usual days for these fasts were Monday and Thursday. Evidently the Pharisees believed that voluntary fasts held on a regular basis would bring blessings from God and avert national calamities. As an indication of the extremes to which some might go, the *Babylonian Talmud* relates concerning a rabbi who lived during the first century C.E.:

"R[abbi] Zadok observed fasts for forty years in order that Jerusalem might not

"When Fasting, Grease Your Head"

be destroyed, [and he became so thin that] when he ate anything the food could be seen [as it passed through his throat]. When he wanted to restore himself, they used to bring him a fig, and he used to suck the juice and throw the rest away."

THE
**SERMON
ON THE
MOUNT**

JESUS' COUNSEL ON FASTING

Jesus began his counsel about abstinence from food by saying: "When you are fasting, stop becoming sad-faced like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting." —Matt. 6:16a.

Jesus never commanded his disciples to fast, and they were known as not doing so on any regular basis. (Matt. 9:14, 15) On the other hand, the Son of God did not direct his followers to avoid the practice altogether. The expression, "when you are fasting," indicates that some of his disciples would fast on special occasions.—See Acts 13:2, 3; 14:23.

But never should they "disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting." The hypocrites to whom Jesus referred purposely appeared "sad-faced." They neglected the appearance of their faces during fast-days, probably by not washing or grooming and by sprinkling ashes on their heads. Their real motive in doing so was "that they may appear to men to be fasting." They enjoyed the admiring glances and approving nods of fellow humans who were impressed with their external display of piety.

As in the case of persons who made a show of almsgiving and prayed in public so as to be observed by men, Jesus said of those who fasted for similar reasons: "Truly I say to you, They are having their reward in full." (Matt. 6:16b; compare 6:2, 5.) Rather than getting blessings from God, admiration of fellow humans was the whole of their "reward." It was received "in full" and God would add nothing to it.

"But you, when fasting," continued Jesus, "grease your head and wash your face." (Matt. 6:17) Rubbing the body with oil and washing were regularly practiced by the Jews. However, Jewish tradition forbade doing that on public fast-days such as the Day of Atonement and the ninth day of the fifth month, Ab (the anniversary of the destruction of God's temple in Jerusalem). The Pharisees took it on themselves to observe similar prohibitions during their voluntary fasts twice a week. However, if the occasion might arise when Jesus' listeners would desire to fast, they were to 'grease their heads and wash their faces,' that is, look normal.

As to the reason for this Jesus stated: "That you may appear to be fasting, not to men, but to your Father who is in secrecy." (Matt. 6:18a) They must please, not men, but God, who is "in secrecy," far removed from the gaze of human eyes. Hence, there would be no need to give visible evidence of fasting.

But Jesus assured that, though humans might not notice and praise one who refused to make a public display of fasting, "your Father who is looking on in secrecy will repay you." (Matt. 6:18b) God is indeed "looking on," observing how his servants carry out their worship. What counts with God is, not an external show of pious deeds, but sincerity of heart coupled with deeds of loving-kindness toward one's fellowman. (1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chron. 28:9) Regarding fasting Isaiah wrote:

"Indeed you people were finding delight in the very day of your fasting, when there were all your toilers that you kept driving to work. Indeed for quarreling and struggle you would fast, and for striking with the fist of wickedness [due to being irritable from hunger]. Did you not keep fasting as in the day for making your voice to be heard in the height? Should the fast that I choose become like this, as a day for earthling man to afflict his soul? For bowing down his head just like a rush, and that he should spread out mere sackcloth and ashes as his couch? Is it this that you call a fast and a day acceptable to Jehovah?"

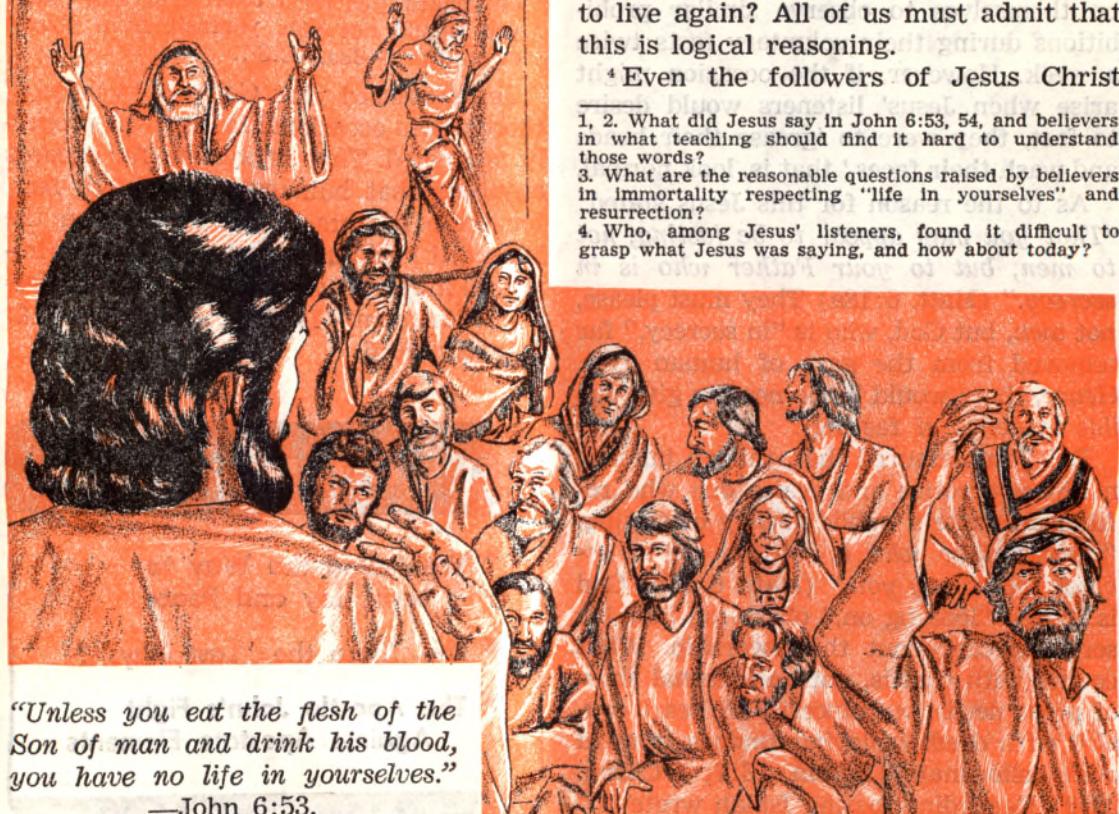
"Is not this the fast that I choose? To loosen the fetters of wickedness, to release the bands of the yoke bar, and to send away the crushed ones free, and that you people should tear in two every yoke bar? Is it not the dividing of your bread out to the hungry one, and that you should bring the afflicted, homeless people into your house? That, in case you should see someone naked, you must cover him, and that you should not hide yourself from your own flesh?"—Isa. 58:3-7.

Jesus assured that God would "repay" those whose occasional fasting was properly motivated. That repayment far exceeds anything that humans can give. In fact, for those hearers of the Sermon on the Mount, it held out opportunity to gain immortal life in heaven as part of God's Messianic kingdom.—Luke 22:28-30; John 14:2-4; Rev. 20:6.

In Coming Issues

- We Found the Way to Love, Joy and Peace
- Are These the "Last Days"?
- The Apostle John's Fight Against Apostate Elements

Future Life By Resurrection



"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves."

—John 6:53.

THE teaching of the immortality of the human soul is quite widespread. Believers in it should therefore find it hard to see how the words of Jesus Christ could be true, as recorded in the Bible at John 6:53, 54:

¹ "Most truly I say to you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves. He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I shall resurrect him at the last day."

² If, as claimed by so many, the human soul is already immortal, living on after its present bodily encasement dies, why do we have to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ, "the Son of man," and to drink his blood in order to have 'life in ourselves'? If the soul is freed at the body's death and escapes alive into the spirit world, why does a human have to be resurrected in order to live again? All of us must admit that this is logical reasoning.

³ Even the followers of Jesus Christ

1, 2. What did Jesus say in John 6:53, 54, and believers in what teaching should find it hard to understand those words?

3. What are the reasonable questions raised by believers in immortality respecting "life in yourselves" and resurrection?

4. Who, among Jesus' listeners, found it difficult to grasp what Jesus was saying, and how about today?

found difficulty over what he said, for we read: "But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were murmuring about this, said to them: 'Does this stumble you?' " (John 6:61) Even today some of our readers may find Jesus' words hard to grasp. Yet Jesus knew what he was talking about at that time, for he himself did not believe in the immortality of the human soul. His own words prove that fact.

⁵ Once Jesus said to his disciples: "Be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." (Matt. 10:28) Later, before his arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, he said to his disciples: "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death." (Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:34) Jesus quoted the prophecy of Isaiah frequently and agreed with what it said concerning him: "He will make his burial place even with the wicked ones, and with the rich class in his death, . . . he poured out his soul to the very death."—Isa. 53:9, 12.

⁶ That is why, in John 6:53, 54, Jesus indicated that he would become a human sacrifice, and there would be those who would eat or feed on his flesh and drink his blood before "the last day." These would die in course of time, but, as respects each one of these, Jesus said: "I shall resurrect him at the last day." According to what Martha of Bethany said, at John 11:24, the time of the resurrection of the dead was considered to be that "last day." Where Martha lived was near Jerusalem. Here, some time after the Passover of 31 C.E., Jesus had spoken of his God-given commission to resurrect the dead. **He had come under religious criticism because on the Sabbath day he had healed a man and told him to pick up his cot and go home. In response to such criticism, Jesus said:**

⁷ "For just as the Father raises the dead up and makes them alive, so the Son also makes those alive whom he wants to. For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son. . . . He that does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Most truly I say to you, He that hears my word and believes him that sent me has everlasting life, and he does not come into judgment but has passed over from death to life."

⁸ "Most truly I say to you, The hour is coming, and it is now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who have given heed will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted also to the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to do judging, because Son of man he is. Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment. I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative; just as I hear, I judge; and the judgment that I render is righteous, because I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me."—John 5:21-30.

⁹ In the above words we notice the emphasis that is laid on the matter of judgment, the words "judge," "judges," "judging" and "judgment" occurring together for a total of seven times. Also, a "resurrection of judgment" awaits a practitioner of vile things.

¹⁰ Thus the subject of resurrection is associated with judgment. Because the Son of God from heaven became the "Son of

7, 8. (a) Whom does Jesus Christ make alive from the dead, and like whom does he deserve to be honored, and why? (b) Who is it that now passes over from death to life? (c) To what kinds of resurrections will the Son of man call forth all those in the memorial tombs?

9. In the aforequoted words of Jesus the emphasis is particularly laid on what matter?

10. During Christ's reign of a thousand years the judging of mankind is turned over to whom, and why will there be no appeal from such judging?

5. By what statements did Jesus show that he did not believe in the immortality of the human soul?

6. According to John 6:53, 54, what would some do about the human sacrifice of Jesus before "the last day," and what would happen to these at that day?

man" on earth, he has been given the authority to do the judging of all the members of humankind. So God the Father has made his faithful Son to be his associate judge. During the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ the judging of all mankind is first turned over to the Son of God as Associate Judge. There will be no appeal from the judgment rendered by the Son of God, because it will be perfect. The judging that Jehovah God does after the thousand-year Day of Judgment will not be because of any appeal by restored mankind to Jehovah as the Supreme Justice, the Final Judge.—1 Cor. 15:24-28.

PASSING FROM DEATH TO LIFE NOW

¹¹ On earth Jesus Christ acted as God's mouthpiece to man. So any hearer's believing what Jesus the Son of God said was the same as believing what God the Father said. The benefit that this would bring to the Jews who heard Jesus, he indicated when he said the following words to the Jews: "Most truly I say to you, He that hears my word and believes him that sent me has everlasting life, and he does not come into judgment but has passed over from death to life." How does this come about? Jesus explains by next saying: "Most truly I say to you, The hour is coming, and it is now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who have given heed will live." (John 5:24, 25) Of course, back there those who were literally dead in the graves could not hear Jesus' spoken word and heed it, at the "hour" about which he was speaking. So, of what "dead" ones was Jesus then speaking?

¹² Since Jesus said that the "hour" for this to happen "is now," he could only mean those humans who were walking

11. In John 5:24, 25, how did Jesus explain why his believers passed over "from death to life"?

12, 13. (a) What "dead" ones did Jesus mean when speaking about their hearing his word and living as a result? (b) Because of such a divine provision, what could Paul write to those "dead" in trespasses and sins, according to Ephesians 2:4-7?

about on earth but who were under the condemnation of death due to imperfection and sinfulness inherited from Adam. From God's standpoint all mankind in general are "dead"; they have no right to life and the "wages" that sin pays to them is death. (Rom. 6:23) But by hearing and heeding Jesus' "word" they would come out from under God's condemnation of them to death and would thus, figuratively, "pass over from death to life."

¹⁴ Because of such a divine provision, the apostle Paul could write to the "holy" believers at Ephesus who were "in union with Christ Jesus" the following words: "Furthermore, it is you God made alive though you were dead in your trespasses and sins . . . God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, made us alive together with the Christ, even when we were dead in trespasses—by undeserved kindness you have been saved—and he raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly places in union with Christ Jesus, that in the coming systems of things there might be demonstrated the surpassing riches of his [then past] undeserved kindness in his graciousness toward us in union with Christ Jesus."—Eph. 1:1; 2:1, 4-7.

¹⁵ Those who were relieved of the condemnation of death and made spiritually alive to sit with Christ Jesus "in the heavenly places" were made members of the congregational body of Christ. They were also formed into a "temple" class in which God could dwell by his holy spirit as in a "holy temple." (Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:20-22) Because of being Christ's "body," they are specially "in union with Christ Jesus." They need to remain in union with him.—John 15:4.

¹⁶ To these ones Jesus' words apply:

14. Those thus made spiritually alive sit where and form what kind of group and must remain in union with whom?

15. What questions arise about the Father's having "life in himself"?

"Just as the Father raises the dead up and makes them alive, so the Son also makes those alive whom he wants to." (John 5:21) This means that the Son also has power to impart life to others. The reason for this Jesus stated when he said: "For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted also to the Son to have life in himself." (John 5:26) What does the Father's having "life in himself" really mean? Does it mean merely that he is alive as the only "living and true God"? (1 Thess. 1:9) Does it mean that he has independent life or inherent life? In other words, immortality? *An American Translation* understands the matter that way, for it renders John 5:26 this way: "For just as the Father is self-existent, he has given self-existence to the Son." In line with this, *The Holy Bible in Modern English* by Farrar Fenton understands the name Jehovah to mean "Ever-Living," and so renders Isaiah 42:8: "I am Ever-Living; —for that is my name." Jehovah has been called "The Self-Existent One."

¹⁶ However, according to the line of argument in the immediate context the expression "life in himself" has a more forceful meaning than his self-existence. The expression means that the heavenly Father has a reservoir of life in himself, so that, like a father, he is able to impart life to others. In the face of this fact, he was able to impart life to his Son in such quantity that he also would be able to impart life to others. If the Father's giving the Son the ability to have "life in himself" meant merely giving him *perfect* life, then the Son would not be outstanding. Why not? Because God gave perfect life also to the heavenly angels. Not only that, but he gave perfect life to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. But why was the Son of God given "life in himself"?

16. If the giving of "life in himself" to the Son of God meant merely giving him perfect life, why would the Son not be outstanding in this respect?

¹⁷ It was because the Son of God laid down his perfect human life as a ransom sacrifice for all mankind. (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6) In this way he could buy back mankind from the death to which they were condemned due to inherited imperfection. With this thought in mind Jesus could open up his prayer on Passover night with the words: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your son, that your son may glorify you, according as you have given him authority over all flesh, that, as regards the whole number whom you have given him, he may give them everlasting life."—John 17:1, 2.

¹⁸ *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* by Ronald A. Knox captures that truth and makes it evident in its translation of John 5:26. There it reads: "As the Father has within him the gift of life, so he has granted to the Son that he too should have within him the gift of life."* After his sacrificial death, his resurrection and his presenting the value of his perfect human life to his heavenly Father, Jesus Christ could be authorized and empowered to impart the benefits of it to those in need of it—all condemned and dying mankind. Hence, we read, in Romans 6:23: "The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."

* Regarding John 5:25, 26, we read: "The life denoted by this *zésoùsin* [Greek for *they will live*], seeing the subjects of it were *dead*, must be something which is in process of being *imparted* to them,—a life which comes from the Son, the quickener. But He could not impart it if He had not in Himself a divine and independent fountain of life, like the Father, which the Father, the absolutely living One (vi. 57), gave Him when He sent Him into the world to accomplish His Messianic work; comp. x. 36."—Page 184, of the *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Gospel of John* by Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, published in English in 1884.

The *Good News Bible* renders John 5:26: "Just as the Father is himself the source of life, in the same way he has made his Son to be the source of life." (Published by American Bible Society in 1976)

17. Why was "life in himself" given to the Son, and how does his prayer, in John 17:1, 2, harmonize with this?

18. How does the translation by R. A. Knox of John 5:26 make that truth evident, and when was Christ authorized and empowered to impart life?

¹⁹ As a human of flesh and blood, Jesus the "Son of man" could offer to God the exact equal of what Adam had forfeited for all his descendants by his willful sin in Eden. (Heb. 2:9, 14, 15; John 1:14) Inasmuch as Jehovah God uses him in the giving of life to condemned, dying mankind, Jesus Christ the "Son of man" is the rightful one for Jehovah to use in judging redeemed mankind.

²⁰ In harmony with that fact, Jesus went on to say: "So he [the Father] has granted also to the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to do

19. Why is Jesus Christ the rightful one for God to use in judging mankind?

20. At John 5:26, 27, what did Jesus say about authority to do judging, and how did Paul confirm this in his speech on Mars Hill?

judging, because Son of man he is." (John 5:26, 27) Because the now glorified Jesus Christ was once a man himself in the midst of a corrupt worldly system of things, he can be a judge both merciful and righteous toward those whom he redeemed from death. This fact was clearly stated to the highest judicial body in ancient Athens, Greece, when the apostle Paul stood among the judges on Mars Hill and said: "He [the God unknown to them] has set a day in which he purposed to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead."

—Acts 17:23, 31.

A Resurrection of Life And One of Judgment

ON God's "set" day his Son will use "the gift of life." (John 5:26, *Knox*) He will resurrect the human dead to whom the benefit of his ransom sacrifice applies. The "day" will be a time of judgment, but not 24 hours long. It will be the period of 1,000 years as set for Christ's reign. (Rev. 20:4-6) The process of judgment will result in life for some and in judicial condemnation to destruction for others. Does this sound marvelous to us today when there is so much miscarriage of justice and so much religious misunderstanding of what God's day of judgment will be? It sounded marvelous to the Sabbath-keeping Jews of Jesus' day.

² Consequently Jesus said to them: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out,

1, 2. Why is Jesus' declaration that authority to do judging had been given to him not too marvelous to be believed?

those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment. I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative; just as I hear [from the Father as the Supreme Judge], I judge; and the judgment that I render is righteous, because I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me."—John 5:28-30.

³ Before Jesus said the above-quoted words, he spoke, in John 5:24, 25, about other "dead" ones whose "hour" for becoming alive had begun. Such designated ones were said to be "dead" and yet were not "in the memorial tombs." They were even then hearing the spoken "word" of the Son of God and were believing the One who sent him. They were thus passing over from death to life and would not

3. How are those who pass over from death to life and who do not come into adverse judgment different from those about whom Jesus spoke in John 5:28, 29, and what class of persons must they be?

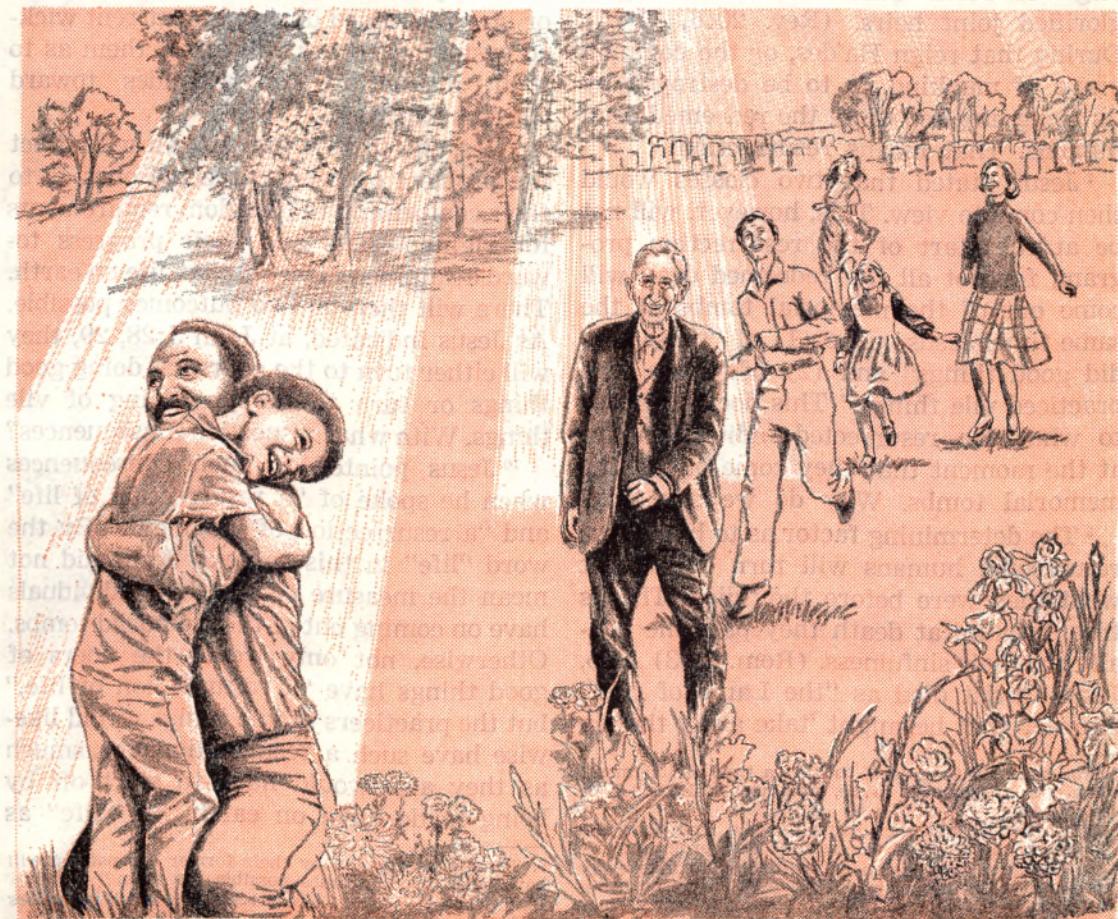
come into adverse judgment. Because of having passed over from death to life, these heeders of the voice of God's Son were said to live and have the prospect of everlasting life. These must be the ones who become the heavenly joint heirs of Jesus Christ, namely, the 144,000 who are given a resurrection into the spirit realm to be with him in the Kingdom.

⁴ These 144,000 joint heirs of Jesus Christ, instead of being judged, will sit with him on thrones of judgment. Revelation 20:4 says that "power of judging was given them." Their resurrection is called "the first resurrection." By it they are

⁴. Instead of their being judged, what assignment is given to the 144,000 joint heirs of Christ?

instantaneously resurrected into the heavenly estate.—Rev. 20:6.
⁵ There was a previous judgment period for these 144,000 when they were on earth. This started at the birth of the Christian congregation of spiritual Israel on the day of Pentecost of 33 C.E. Such judgment period continues until the completion of this congregation of spiritual sons of God. (1 Pet. 4:17, 18) Concerning their glorious future, Jesus said to his faithful apostles on Passover night of 33 C.E.: "I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my

5. When did the judgment period of the congregation of spiritual Israel begin, and what did Jesus say would be their privilege in his kingdom?



kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:29, 30) So, in place of being judged during the millennial reign of Christ, they share with him in judging redeemed mankind.

⁶ For redeemed mankind in general to have a time of judgment here on earth there needs to be a resurrection of "all those in the memorial tombs." In confirmation of that, Jesus said, in John 5:28-30, that the "hour" would come in which all these would hear his voice and respond. He would call them out of their graves, in the same way that he cried out to his entombed friend in Bethany: "Lazarus, come on out!" (John 11:43, 44) That "hour" would come during the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ with his 144,000 glorified joint heirs. (Rev. 20:6, 11-14) During that reign Ha'des, or the common grave of mankind, is to be destroyed by its being emptied of all the redeemed dead humans. That means resurrection!

⁷ Jesus stated that two classes would then come to view. This, however, will not be at the start of the resurrection program, for not all the redeemed dead will come out of the memorial tombs at the same time. Jesus spoke (1) of "those who did good things" and (2) of "those who practiced vile things." This does not refer to what the resurrected individuals are at the moment that they come out of the memorial tombs. Why do we say this?

⁸ The determining factor as to how these resurrected humans will turn out is not what they were before they died. This is true, because at death they paid the penalty for their sinfulness. (Rom. 6:23) Also, Jesus Christ died as "the Lamb of God" in order that he might 'take away the sin

6. For mankind in general to have a time of judgment, what does there need to be, and how will Ha'des be destroyed?

7. What two classes then come to view, and does this happen at the start of the resurrection program?

8. (a) Because "the Lamb of God" died to take away the world's sin, into what will they not come by being raised from the dead? (b) Yet, how will their former lives affect them, and why?

of the world.' (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2) So what he "takes away" cannot be charged to the world of mankind after they are resurrected from the dead. To this effect, the apostle Paul wrote: "We should no longer go on being slaves to sin. For he who has died has been acquitted from his sin." (Rom. 6:6, 7) Hence, by being resurrected no redeemed human comes into "double jeopardy," to be punished again for what he did before his death. Consequently, the determining factor for resurrected mankind will be, What will they henceforth make of their lives, now that they are given a new start under Christ's 1,000-year kingdom? Of course, during their sleep of death there comes no change in their personality. Hence, what they did or how they lived during the current wicked system of things will affect them as to their inclinations or attitudes toward Christ's kingdom.

⁹ Yes, the former life pattern will affect the problem of the resurrected ones as to their conforming to Kingdom requirements for righteousness and their progress toward attaining perfect human life on earth. There will then be two outcomes possible. As Jesus indicated, at John 5:28, 29, they will either turn to the course of doing good things or turn to the practicing of vile things. With what respective consequences?

¹⁰ Jesus pointed to such consequences when he spoke of "a resurrection of life" and "a resurrection of judgment." By the word "life" in this context, Jesus did not mean the measure of life that individuals have on coming out of the memorial tombs. Otherwise, not only would the doers of good things have "a resurrection of life," but the practitioners of vile things would likewise have such a resurrection, forasmuch as they also would have to start off by being made alive on earth. So, "life" as

9. Those thus affected by their former life pattern will have what two outcomes possible for them?

10. In the expression "a resurrection of life," what does "life" mean?

used in John 5:29 means perfection of life as attained by some at the end of Christ's reign through their persistent doing of good things in obedience to his kingdom and judgeship.

¹¹ Similarly, "judgment" represents what results to other individuals either during or by the close of the millennial "day of judgment." In John 5:29 "judgment" means the opposite of "life." Hence, it means a condemnatory judgment, a sentencing of the practicers of vile things to eternal destruction. This is a destruction of soul and body in Gehenna.—Matt. 10:28.

¹² Thus there are two possible finales to either one of which a person's being resurrected under Christ's kingdom may lead, either perfect human life or judgment that results in a loss of all life. Nicely *An American Translation* renders John 5:29 so as to read: "will come out to resurrection and life, and . . . to resurrection and judgment."

¹³ During the millennium the judgeship of Jesus Christ and his associated judges will be a righteous one for all mankind. Jesus said: "Just as I hear, I judge."—John 5:30.

¹⁴ What Jesus hears from the Supreme Justice, Jehovah God, he embodies in his own judgment. He will conform to the prophetic description of him as judge that his heavenly Father inspired Isaiah to write in chapter 11, verses one through five. On the Bench, the 144,000 associated judges will imitate Jesus Christ. In this way it will really be Jehovah's judgment that will be carried out, for his Son Jesus Christ will ever seek to do his Father's will, not his own will. Hence, from such a judgment rendered by Jesus Christ there can

be no appeal to a higher court. Thus at the end of his 1,000 years of judgeship, he will be able to turn over the Kingdom to the Supreme Justice, free of all charges of malfeasance in office. (1 Cor. 15:24-28) From then on Jehovah God will handle matters with regard to a final, determinative test on all men turned over to him by his Son.—Rev. 20:7-15.

THE "GREAT CROWD" AND THE RESURRECTION

¹⁵ The approaching day of judgment is something for all mankind to take into account. (Acts 17:30, 31) With a due recognition of this, the apostle Paul wrote to his onetime missionary companion Timothy: "I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is destined to judge the living and the dead." (2 Tim. 4:1) By the expression "the dead," Paul refers to "those in the memorial tombs" and those in a 'watery grave.' But who are the ones whom Paul calls "the living"?

¹⁶ They will be those on earth who survived the coming "great tribulation" and the binding of Satan the Devil and his demons. These will therefore be still alive on earth when the 1,000-year reign of Christ over his earthly realm begins. The ones who then become his subjects with the hope of everlasting life in an earthly paradise are the ones particularly meant. Some of the anointed remnant of prospective joint heirs of Christ will also have survived, but whether they will start judging on earth before they are transferred to the heavenly kingdom remains to be seen. (1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Pet. 3:11-14) However, a "great crowd" of Christ's "other sheep" will survive the "great tribulation," along with the remnant of spiritual Israelites, and will enter the millennium alive. Revelation 7:9-17 proves this to be true.

11. In the expression "a resurrection of judgment," what does "judgment" mean?

12. So, then, what two possible finales are there to which a person's being resurrected under Christ's kingdom may lead?

13, 14. (a) What is it that Jesus hears before he and his associate judges render judgment? (b) Why is there no room for appeal from such judgment by Christ during the millennium?

15. In solemnly charging Timothy by Christ Jesus, who is destined to judge the living and the dead, who did Paul mean "the dead" are?

16. Who particularly are "the living"?

¹⁷ All this combines to establish that our earthly planet will not be totally depopulated at the complete end of this system of things. Thus the "great crowd" of Christ's "other sheep" will be "the living" with whom the millennial day of judgment begins.

¹⁸ The marvelous thing about this "great crowd" of "tribulation" survivors is that they never experience a resurrection. Having never died and undergone the dissolution of the human body, they will have no need for the King Jesus Christ to call them out of the memorial tombs. Because

17. How do we know whether the earth will be depopulated at the complete end of this system of things?

18. What will be the marvelous thing about this "great crowd" of "tribulation" survivors, and for what reason?

of the way they treated the anointed remnant of Christ's spiritual brothers in the past, these sheeplike ones have been put at the King's right side of favor, and to them he says at the beginning of his millennial reign: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world." Thus they will be ushered into the way toward the gaining of perfect human life on a paradise earth. (Matt. 25:31-46; John 10:16) Great will be their privilege to be here when the reigning "Son of man," Jesus Christ, starts calling those in the memorial tombs out in a resurrection that will afford them the opportunity to gain eternal life on earth.

"I shall resurrect him at the last day"

THOSE remarkable words were spoken by Jesus, at John 6:54. They could not apply to the living "great crowd" that survives the approaching "great tribulation." (Rev. 7:9-17) Well, then, whom did Jesus have in mind when he said those words 19 centuries ago?

² The Bible verses surrounding John 6:54 show that Jesus was speaking those words, not just to mere Jews as such, but also to many of his Israelite disciples, including his 12 apostles. Their Passover of the year 32 C.E., "the festival of the Jews," was near. (John 6:4) In preparation for that feast, the Jews would slaughter the Passover lamb at the temple in Jerusalem and the priests would catch the blood in

bowl and dash it toward the base of the altar. (See M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclopaedia, Volume 7, under "Passover," p. 738, column 1, paragraph 4, lines 1-34; also, *The Temple—Its Ministry and Services As They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ*, by Alfred Edersheim, 1874 C.E., pp. 190, 191.) Jesus purposed to attend that feast in order to commemorate the first Passover celebrated down in Egypt in 1513 B.C.E. He himself was, in fact, the anti-typical Passover Lamb, "the Lamb of God." —John 1:29, 36.

³ The Jews, including his disciples, had seen him perform a remarkable miracle on the day before his reported conversation with them in Capernaum. He had multiplied five loaves and two fishes to feed

1. Jesus' words, "I shall resurrect him at the last day," do not apply to what class of persons living today?

2. Jesus spoke those words about resurrection to whom, and near to what festival of the Jews that involved him?

3. Why did the Jews track Jesus down after his miracle of the previous day, and what justification for this did they offer to him?

the thousands of his listeners. So the patriotic Jews wanted to make him king as their Messianic Leader. Since Jesus was to be a heavenly Messianic King, he got away from those would-be king-makers. Later, by walking out on the water, he joined his 12 apostles who were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. (John 6:14-21) But the Jews were not so easily to be foiled in their purpose to follow an earthly human Messiah. So they tracked him down, having in mind the miracle of the previous day. They wanted a Messianic King who could supply them with material food as Jesus had demonstrated himself able to do. As a justification for this, they reminded Jesus that in the wilderness of the Sinaitic peninsula God had given their forefathers "bread from heaven" to eat in the form of miraculous manna.—John 6:22-31.

⁴ In answer to this, Jesus told them that Moses had not given their forefathers the true bread from heaven. "The bread of God," said he, "is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."—John 6:32, 33.

4. How did Jesus explain whether Moses had given their forefathers the real "bread from heaven"?



As the manna sustained the Israelites in the wilderness, so Jesus, "the bread of life," now sustains the spiritual Israelites.

⁵ At this the Jews said: "Lord, always give us this bread." Jesus identified himself as being it, saying: "I am the bread of life. He that comes to me will not get hungry at all, and he that exercises faith in me will never get thirsty at all. . . . For this is the will of my Father, that everyone that beholds the Son and exercises faith in him should have everlasting life, and I will resurrect him at the last day."—John 6:34-40.

⁶ Thus those particular ones coming to Jesus and exercising faith in him as the Messiah during this present system of things have the prospect of everlasting life. Why so? Because Jesus Christ will raise them up from the dead at the last day. This guarantees to them a resurrection. Here we should note that Jesus did not say, in this case under discussion, that a person must first have a resurrection and afterward come to him in faith and feed upon him in order to have everlasting life. Quite plainly Jesus is here not talking about those already dead in the memorial tombs like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, David and John the Baptizer. Jesus was there talking to the then living Jews, including many disciples of his, who were in the Mosaic law covenant.

⁷ The Jewish listeners began murmuring among themselves in a contention about the origin of Jesus. From the comment that Jesus made about this we should identify the particular ones to whom he directs his speech. "In answer Jesus said to them: 'Stop murmuring among yourselves. No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him; and I will resurrect him in the last day. It is written in the Prophets, "And they will all be taught

5. What did the Jews then ask of Jesus, and what did he say in explaining the way for them to gain everlasting life?

6. Why are those who come to Jesus and put faith in him as the Messiah during this system of things guaranteed a resurrection?

7. In response to murmuring by the Jews, what did Jesus say about the person drawn to him and having everlasting life?

by Jehovah." Everyone that has heard from the Father [as Teacher] and has learned comes to me. . . . Most truly I say to you, He that believes has everlasting life.'"—John 6:41-47.

⁹ Jesus was there quoting from the prophecy of Isaiah 54:13, which is addressed to God's "woman," the heavenly Zion, and which says: "And all your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant." These are the spiritual sons of Jehovah God. These are the ones whom he draws to Jesus by their present belief in him. These are the ones of whom Jesus speaks as entering into everlasting life by his resurrecting of them at the last day. Their life would be everlasting in Jehovah's heavenly spirit organization. Jesus was therefore offering to his Jewish listeners, including many disciples of his, the opportunity to become sons of God's "woman," heavenly Zion.

"MY FLESH IN BEHALF OF THE LIFE OF THE WORLD"

¹⁰ After Jesus repeatedly said that he was "the bread of life," he went on to say: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone [of you, my listeners] eats of this bread he will live forever; and, for a fact, the bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world."—John 6:51.

¹¹ Jesus was thus the true, life-giving Manna from heaven. This symbolic bread, he said, was his flesh. This flesh, he said, was "in behalf of the life of the world." By adding those words, did Jesus mean that the Jews who ate the manna in the wilderness in the days of Moses pictured the "world" of mankind during the millennial reign of Christ and his glorified congregation?

8. What prophecy was Jesus quoting, and what opportunity was he there offering to his Jewish listeners? 9-11. (a) Jesus' saying that that "bread" given by him is his "flesh" and this "in behalf of the life of the world" raises what question? (b) How does Paul answer that question in 1 Corinthians 10:2-11?

¹¹ Paul answers: "All got baptized into Moses by means of the cloud and of the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food [the manna] and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they used to drink from the spiritual rock-mass that followed them, and that rock-mass meant the Christ. . . . Now these things became our examples, for us [Christians] not to be persons desiring injurious things, even as they desired them. . . . Now these things went on befalling them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us [spirit-begotten Christians] upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived."—1 Cor. 10:2-11; Ex. 16:1-35; Num. 11:1-9.

¹² So those Israelites in the Sinaitic wilderness under Moses pictured the spiritual Israelites during this system of things. This system is death-dealing, spiritually speaking. Now is when the spiritual Israelites feed on the antitypical heavenly manna, the sacrificed Jesus Christ. During the 1,000-year reign of Christ, resurrected mankind will not be in a wilderness condition like that of Sinai. The restoring of paradise earth wide will be under way. Jehovah will then not be 'drawing' mankind to Jesus as He the Teacher now does with the spiritual Israelites. (John 6:44) Rather, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah sets his Son Jesus Christ as King over mankind, and this King calls the dead out of the tombs.

¹³ Bread made of grain is a bloodless eatable, just as the ancient manna was. Jesus said that the "bread of life," the antitypical manna, was his flesh "in behalf of the life of the world." To correspond with the ancient manna, the term "flesh" here must be understood as flesh drained of its blood. What Jehovah gave the Israelites in the wilderness to drink was water, not blood.

12. How does the situation of the spiritual Israelites during this system of things contrast with that of the world of mankind during the millennium?

13. To be the antitype of the ancient manna, this "flesh" must be of what kind or how treated?

¹⁴ The Jews listening to Jesus understood matters that way, for, in their contention over what he meant, they said: "How [in what way] can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52) They knew God's law on the subject of blood. When, after the flood of Noah's day, God enlarged the diet of mankind, he did not give them both animal blood to drink and animal flesh as their solid food to sustain their lives. He gave them water to drink and drained flesh to eat. He claimed the blood for himself as being the Life-Giver to all creatures of flesh and blood. (Gen. 9:1-4) Under the Mosaic law as given to the nation of Israel, the violation of God's law concerning animal blood was punished with the death penalty for the offender. (Lev. 17:10-12; Deut. 12:16, 22-27) The eating of human flesh, even when drained of its blood, was repugnant to the Jews listening to Jesus. They did not want to become cannibals.

—2 Ki. 6:26-31.*

¹⁵ Jesus wanted his Jewish listeners to understand that the eating of his flesh would be done in a figurative way. So, to make this point still stronger, he next said something that would be still more objectionable if taken in a literal way. We read:

¹⁶ "Accordingly Jesus said to them: 'Most truly I say to you, Unless you [my Jewish listeners] eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves. He [of you, my listeners] that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I shall resurrect him at the last day; for my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. He that feeds on my flesh and drinks

* The Hebrew equivalent for "cannibal" is *okhel adam'*, meaning "eater of earthling man"; or, *okhel ben mino'*, "eater of the son of his kind." For horror at an instance of this in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., see Josephus' "Wars of the Jews," chapter 3, book 6.

14. Why did Jesus' listeners understand his reference to be to "flesh" drained of its blood, even human flesh?

15, 16. (a) How was the feeding on Jesus' flesh to be done? (b) According to John 6:53-59, how did Jesus make this point still stronger?

my blood remains in union with me, and I in union with him. Just as the living Father sent me forth and I live because of the Father, he [of you, my listeners] that feeds on me, even that one will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. It is not as when your forefathers ate [the manna in the wilderness] and yet died. He that feeds on this bread will live forever.' These things he said as he was teaching in public assembly at Capernaum."—John 6:53-59.

¹⁷ Here the expression "in public assembly" is, literally in the original Greek text, "in synagogue." It is the same expression that Jesus used in John 18:20, saying: "In a synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews come together." So Jesus was addressing a Jewish audience who were in the Mosaic law covenant. This included many disciples of Jesus. We can imagine the impact of Jesus' words when he spoke, not only of feeding on his flesh, but also of drinking his blood. "Therefore many of his disciples, when they heard this, said: 'This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?'" (John 6:60) This statement shows that not all of Jesus' disciples were shocked by his speech. Besides the shocked ones, there were more "disciples," including the 12 apostles. (John 6:61-66) Thus Jesus' words in John 6:53 were directed in large part to his disciples and, by extension, to those who would become his disciples before the "last day." These became spiritual Jews, spiritual Israelites.

—Rom. 2:28, 29.

¹⁸ The Jews in the Mosaic law covenant knew that the blood as well as the fat of

17. (a) What was the impact of those words of Jesus in the Jewish synagogue, even upon many of his disciples? (b) So Jesus' words in John 6:53 were directed, in large part, to whom, and what did these become?

18, 19. (a) To whom did the blood of the sacrificial victim belong, and therefore the making of a meal upon Jesus' blood and flesh meant what? (b) How was such a meal referred to by Jesus because of the faith of a Gentile army officer and also by a certain Jew commenting on Jesus' words at a dinner?

a sacrificial victim belonged to Jehovah. (Lev. 3:16, 17) When Jesus ascended to heaven and appeared in Jehovah's presence, he offered to Jehovah his "blood" or the value of it as a redemption price. (Heb. 9:12-14; John 6:61, 62) Since the blood belonged to Jehovah, the drinking of it and the eating of the flesh of Jesus would indicate having a meal with Jehovah. God would thus be sharing the blood of his Lamb Jesus Christ with the disciples of this Lamb. Jesus spoke of such a meal with Jehovah as the Greater Abraham, when he foretold that many Gentile believers (like the believing Gentile "army officer") would come from all parts of the earth and "recline at the table with Abraham [Jehovah] and Isaac [Jesus Christ] and Jacob [the spirit-begotten Christian congregation] in the kingdom of the heavens."—Matt. 8:5-12.

¹⁹ Once when speaking of a dinner having real merit because of those who were invited to attend, Jesus explained why it had merit, saying: "You will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous ones." This brought to a person's mind the privilege of having a meal with Jehovah God, for we read: "On hearing these things a certain one of the fellow guests said to him: 'Happy is he who eats bread in the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 14:12-15) In response to this exclamation Jesus gave the parable of the "grand evening meal" spread by a certain householder. By this Jesus showed that not all would have the happiness of dining with God in the Kingdom.—Luke 14:16-24.

Jehovah "LIFE IN YOURSELVES"

²⁰ In John 6:53 Jesus said: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves." Because the similar expression occurs here as appears in John 5:26, *An American*

20. Those who gain 'life within' themselves by eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood have life in what measure, and where and when will they use this capacity?

Translation renders John 6:53: "I tell you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no self-existent life." So Jesus here meant "life" with a specific capacity when he went on to say: "He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I shall resurrect him at the last day." (John 6:54) That everlasting life is to be enjoyed by the one gaining it, not on earth, but in the heavenly kingdom with Christ. He will enter into such life when he is resurrected by Jesus Christ at "the last day." Those who, with Christ in the heavens, have such 'life in themselves' will be able to impart to others the benefits of Christ's human sacrifice. They will do so when the redeemed ones of mankind are called out of their memorial tombs on "the last day."—John 5:28, 29.

²¹ When we contemplate the quality of the "everlasting life" that is to be gained in heaven, we appreciate why Jesus said: "My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." (John 6:55) After that remark he showed the special relationship into which his obedient disciples would enter by adding the words: "He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in union with me, and I in union with him. Just as the living Father sent me forth and I live because of the Father, he also that feeds on me, even that one will live because of me." (John 6:56, 57) Thus Jesus spoke of his disciples as remaining in union with him and his remaining in union with them. Later, in like phraseology, he said in a parable:

²² "Remain in union with me, and I in union with you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine, in the same way neither can you, unless you remain in union with me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He

21, 22. (a) In what respect was Jesus' flesh and blood "true food" for the partakers? (b) Such partakers have what relationship with him and what dependence on him?

that remains in union with me, and I in union with him, this one bears much fruit; because apart from me you can do nothing at all."—John 15:4, 5.

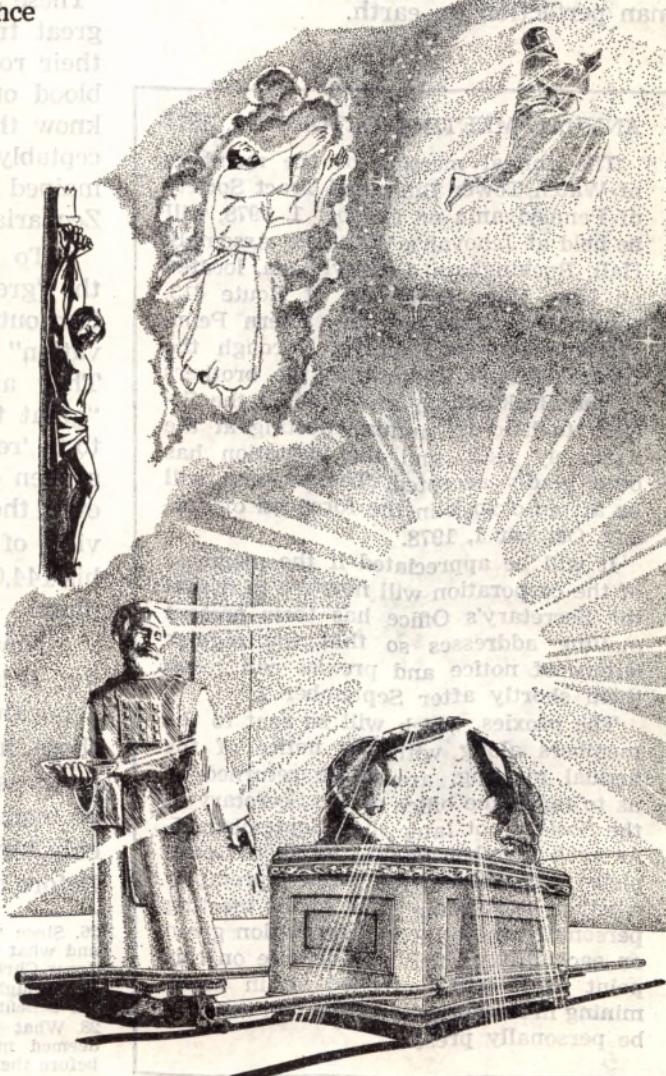
²³ Although Judas Iscariot remained in the personal company of Jesus Christ for more than a year longer, he did not remain in union with his Master. So he did not take up feeding on Jesus' sacrificed body and drinking his blood, from Pentecost of 33 C.E. onward. He failed to gain 'life in himself.'—John 6:66-71.

²⁴ However, Jesus reminded Judas and the rest of his Jewish audience there in that assembly in Capernaum of how their forefathers ate manna in the wilderness to sustain themselves. In closing his talk, he said: "This is the bread that came down from heaven. . . . He that feeds on this bread will live forever." (John 6:58) He had been "the Word" of God up in heaven, but, at God's due time, he "became flesh." (John 1:14) Thus as a perfect fleshly Son of God he was "the living bread that came down from heaven," the antitypical manna. His flesh, which served as symbolic manna for the spiritual Israelites,* also serves "in behalf of the life of the world." (John 6:51) Today Jesus Christ lives again in the heavens, immortal, because of his heavenly Father, for this "living Father" resurrected him from the dead to spirit life. Correspondingly, the disciple that "feeds" on the anti-

typical manna (Christ's "flesh") before the coming of "the last day" will, as Jesus said, "live because of me," for the living Jesus will resurrect him "at the last day."—John 6:54, 57, 58.

²⁵ In heaven, when having 'life in themselves,' the resurrected spiritual Israelites

25. (a) Will those feeding on Christ's sacrifice on earth continue to do so in heaven? (b) In what sacred office will they serve, and with what benefit to mankind?



* Note that, according to Revelation 2:9, 17, "the hidden manna" is reserved for the spiritual Israelites as conquerors. —Compare Hebrews 9:4.

23. Why, then, did Judas Iscariot fail to gain 'life in himself'?

24. (a) How was Jesus the "bread" that came down from heaven? (b) How did Jesus live because of the Father, and how do those feeding on him live because of him?

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**DIVINE PROVISIONS
FOR PERFECT HUMAN LIFE**

will no longer need to feed on Jesus' flesh and drink his blood. (John 6:53) They will be privileged to serve as "priests of God and of the Christ" and will thus be able to pass on to mankind the lasting benefits of Christ's atoning sacrifice. (Rev. 20:6) Because in heaven they have everlasting life, they will need no successors in the priestly office. Like the High Priest, Jesus Christ, they will be able to serve as underpriests continuously throughout the whole millennium. In this way they will share with Christ in uplifting mankind to human perfection on earth.

ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 1, 1978

The annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania on October 1, 1978, will be held at Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, Buckingham, Pennsylvania, located on New Hope Road, off of Route 413, south of Buckingham in eastern Pennsylvania (Bucks County). Through the Assembly Hall Committee, the brothers in the Buckingham area invited the Society to hold its annual meeting at the Assembly Hall, and the invitation has been gladly accepted. The meeting will be at ten o'clock in the forenoon of Sunday, October 1, 1978.

It will be appreciated if the members of the corporation will now see to it that the Secretary's Office has their present mailing addresses so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after September 1.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 15. As each member knows, he should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point as it will be relied on in determining in advance those who will actually be personally present.

²⁶ As we know, since the middle of the fourth decade of our 20th century, a "great crowd" of Christ's "other sheep" has been forming. (Rev. 7:9, 10; John 10:16) They also will benefit from this priesthood of a thousand years. The apostle John, who had the apocalyptic vision of the "great crowd," was reminded that they also have an appreciation of the shed blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ. They appreciate it as a means of cleansing, for John was told: "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14) These know that they could not serve God acceptably at his holy temple if they remained clad in filthy garments.—Compare Zechariah 3:3-10.

²⁷ To God and the Lamb Jesus Christ the "great crowd" ascribe, not a resurrection out of the memorial tombs, but "salvation" out of the "great tribulation." They are preserved alive through that "great tribulation." So they do not need to be 'resurrected at the last day,' as those spoken of in John 6:54 need to be. However, they will need the benefit of the services of the High Priest Jesus Christ and his 144,000 underpriests during the millennium.

²⁸ Now a marvelous "hour" is approaching. It is the "hour" when Jesus Christ as Jehovah's associate judge will call "all those in the memorial tombs" to come forth as his redeemed ones. They will all be made the earthly subjects of his heavenly kingdom whether they like it or not. Before all of them will be set the opportu-

26. Since when has the "great crowd" been forming, and what need do they feel for the blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ?

27. Though not needing a resurrection, they will need the benefit of what services during the millennium?

28. What "hour" approaches with respect to dead redeemed mankind, and what opportunity will be set before them?

nity to attain to perfect human life on a paradise earth.—John 5:28, 29.

29 What will Christ's subjects then have to drink? What will they eat? The Revelation given to the apostle John shows that then "a river of water of life" will be flowing out from under the throne of Jehovah God and of the Lamb Jesus Christ. On both sides of the "river" were the "trees of life," bearing a crop of fruit each month.

29. What will the "great crowd" and resurrected mankind then drink and eat, and what exceptional opportunity will the "great crowd" then have?

QUESTIONS from READERS

- When in the future God resurrests persons on earth, will they be of about the same age and appearance as they were formerly?

The Scriptures do not specifically comment on this, but reason and certain Biblical indications suggest that they will.

Regarding the spiritual resurrection, the Bible uses the illustration of plant seeds and says: "God gives it a body just as it has pleased him." Yes, he provides what is fitting and needed. (1 Cor. 15:35-44) We can expect the same of the earthly resurrection.

The Bible accounts of resurrections in the past give no indication that the humans raised were markedly changed in age or appearance. When a boy in Shunem died and was resurrected by Elisha, he came back with the age and appearance that he had at death. (2 Ki. 4:32-37) Consider also Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus, who had been dead four days and whose body had begun to decay. Did Lazarus come to life drastically changed in appearance or with parts of his flesh decayed away? No. He looked about the same as before. Had he not, religious enemies would certainly have used that fact to discredit Jesus.—John 11:32-47.

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Their leaves were for the curing of the nations. Of those divine provisions, the "great crowd" and the resurrected dead will drink and eat. (Rev. 22:1-3) By taking full advantage of all this undeserved kindness of Jehovah God through Jesus Christ the appreciative and obedient ones will make theirs "a resurrection of life." Those of the resurrectionless "great crowd" of Christ's "other sheep" will then have the opportunity to live on without ever dying and returning to the dust of the ground.

Further, we know that Jehovah is a God of order, kindness and mercy. That weighs against thinking that he will bring someone back to life missing a limb or being horribly disfigured by the terminal stages of a fatal disease. (Jas. 1:17; Luke 11:13) This does not require, though, that the individual come back "in the prime of life." If someone died of heart failure at 75 years of age, why could not God raise him with a comparable body, but with a heart that would continue to pump? Then as the healing power of Jehovah's provisions, including the merit of Jesus' sacrifice, were applied, the person could progress toward perfection.—Rev. 22:1, 2, 17.

But it is not necessarily profitable or advisable to pursue questions about the state of resurrected ones. God could have included in the Bible detailed information about just what he will do. The fact that Jehovah did not do so indicates that he does not view it as vital information for us now. He did record in the Bible a number of accounts of resurrections being performed by his power. And he set out in the Scriptures assurances that there will be "a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29) Then he left it up to us to develop faith in his Word and his promises. We can be certain that if we ourselves exercise faith and thus survive into the New Order, God will see to it that there will be no insurmountable problems regarding the resurrection. We will have the joy of receiving back, recognizing and helping those who are raised from the dead.

Expressions of Thanks

"This is just a short note to tell you how much I appreciate the recent articles in *The Watchtower* as well as those in the *Awake!* The articles in the March 1, 1978, *Watchtower* on 'Our Incoming World Government—God's Kingdom' are especially appreciated, and should help all of God's people to see clearly the times and seasons in which we live. When I made a dedication of myself to serve Jehovah in 1923 I made a resolution that I would read every article of every issue of *The Watchtower* and *Golden Age*, now *Awake!* For over 55 years I have faithfully kept that resolution and have read each and every article in both magazines. This has not been a burden but a source of much joy, comfort and education. Thank you very much for the vast amount of research, study and work that goes into the preparation of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* for our benefit, which is indeed spiritual food."

From a Longtime Reader

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! For what? For the recent *Watchtower* articles on the subject of the coming world government. They are excellent. I am so grateful to have them available to me. Thank you again for your wonderful work."

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'Something New About God's Name.' I grew up Jewish but never did I hear that name. Even attending Jewish camp I never heard it. The only 'name' I learned was *Adonay*. You can't imagine how thrilled I was to read the irrefutable evidence in this most recent article. I cannot wait to get my hands on more copies. If there is anything I detest, it is the abuse, misuse and lack of using God's name. This article will help me to fulfill my heart's desire, making our wonderful Creator's name known. Thank you! and Jehovah bless you."

From a Jewish Reader

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

October 8: Future Life by Resurrection, ¶1-20, and A Resurrection of Life and One of Judgment, ¶1-5. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 83, 100.

October 15: A Resurrection of Life and One of Judgment, ¶6-18, and "I Shall Resurrect Him at the Last Day," ¶1-8. Page 22. Songs to Be Used: 53, 93.

October 22: "I Shall Resurrect Him at the Last Day," ¶9-29. Page 26. Songs to Be Used: 98, 111.

October 29: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 30. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.

November 5: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 36. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.

November 12: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 42. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.

November 19: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 48. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.

November 26: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 54. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.

December 3: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 60. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.

December 10: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 66. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.

December 17: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 72. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.

December 24: "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (see page 11). Page 78. Songs to Be Used: 100, 101.