

The **WATCHTOWER**

JUNE 1, 1969

Semimonthly

BE A GOOD LISTENER!

—
FIGHT INDIFFERENCE WITH ENDURANCE!
—

GODLY RESPECT FOR LIFE AND BLOOD

—
CHOOSING A MODERN
BIBLE TRANSLATION

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Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**



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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLISHED BY THE
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
N. H. KNORR, President GRANT SUITER, Secretary
"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, 1961 edition. When other translations are used the following symbols will appear behind the citations:

AS - American Standard Version Le - Isaac Leeser's version
 AT - An American Translation Mo - James Moffatt's version
 AV - Authorized Version (1611) Ro - J. B. Rotherham's version
 Du - Catholic Douay version RS - Revised Standard Version
 JP - Jewish Publication Soc. Yg - Robert Young's version

Average printing each issue: 5,750,000 Five cents a copy
"The Watchtower" is Published in the Following 72 Languages

Semimonthly

Afrikaans	Finnish	Norwegian	Ewe	Melaneseian	Siamese
Arabic	French	Portuguese	Fijian	Pidgin	Silosi
Cebuano	German	Swedotho	Ga	Motu	Sinhalese
Chinese		Spanish	Gun	Pampango	Slovenian
Chitshona	Hilligaynon	Swedish	Hebrew	Pangasinan	Swahili
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English	Malagasy		Kikongo	Samoan	Twi
			Lingala	Sango	Ukrainian
			Malayalam	Sepedi	Urdu
			Marathi	Serbian	

Monthly

Armenian	Bicol	Croatian	Monthly
Bengali	Burmese	Efk	

Yearly subscription rates

for semimonthly editions

America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	\$1
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	\$1
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto 19, Ontario	\$1
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London N.W. 7	9/-
Jamaica, W.I., 41 Trafalgar Rd., Kingston 10	7/-
New Zealand, 821 New North Rd., Auckland 3	90c
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandfontein, Transval	70c
Trinidad, W.I., 21 Taylor St., Woodbrook, Port of Spain	\$2

Monthly editions cost half the above rates.

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn. Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, New York 11201, U.S.A.

Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y.

Printed in U.S.A.

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
Jehovah's
Kingdom

Vol. XC

June 1, 1969

Number 11

HERE are many kinds of beauty, all of which in one way or another bring delight to humankind. There are things that are beautiful to the sight: beautiful rivers, valleys and mountains, the various kinds of flowers and birds, and comely people. Love of beauty in women accounts for a multimillion-dollar cosmetics industry.

Many also are the things of beauty to our sense of hearing. There is melodious and harmonious music, the song of birds, the rustle of leaves in the breeze, the babbling of a brook. The cultured and well-trained voice is also a thing of beauty. Combining beauty of sound and of movement are certain ballets.

But the highest form of beauty is beautiful deeds: deeds that appeal to the moral sense, that appeal to one's ideals, deeds that delight the heart of man. These are properly described as beautiful because, as the dictionary defines it, beauty is "the qualification of high order for delighting the eye or the aesthetic, intellectual or *moral sense*" of man. It is this kind of beauty that is referred to in the ancient Biblical proverb: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger, and it is

'IT IS BEAUTY TO PASS OVER TRANSGRESSION'

beauty on his part to pass over transgression."—Prov. 19:11.

No doubt one reason why passing over transgression appears beautiful is that it denotes emotional maturity. It reveals ability to do the wise and difficult thing, control one's emotions under

stress, instead of following the line of least resistance by responding in kind. Just as a physically well-formed person is beautiful, so is an example of moral strength. It appears beautiful because it is a form of generosity.

If passing over transgression is beautiful, could it be that failure to do so might well appear otherwise? It most certainly could, as the following experience shows: It was a sunny summer Sunday afternoon as an elderly couple were walking down one of Brooklyn's streets. Looking up, they saw a teen-ager on a bicycle coming directly for them. It was not until he was right upon them that he suddenly stopped. Annoyed at the youth's lack of manners, the elderly gentleman pushed the teenager away with his foot, whereupon the youth jumped off his bicycle, doubled his fists and threatened to beat up the elderly gentleman. At that his wife, in a commanding tone, said to the teen-ager:

"Show respect for an old man!" With that the youth climbed on his bicycle and rode off.

This true-life incident well illustrates the fact that a failure to pass over a transgression can at times result in something that is quite lacking in beauty. Needless to say, the elderly gentleman felt sheepish, embarrassed, as he did not welcome warding off the blows of an angry teen-ager. But how much better an appearance he would have made, both to his wife and to the teen-ager, had he simply passed over the transgression! It would have had a measure of beauty about it.

The Bible gives us many examples illustrating the principle that it is beauty to pass over a transgression. Of course, the foremost example is none other than Jehovah God, for of him the psalmist wrote: "He himself well knows . . . that we are dust."—Ps. 103:14.

The ability to pass over transgression is not something that we are born with. It must be worked at. Children, as a rule, quickly want to retaliate, and so their parents must teach them not to be vindictive but to pass over transgression. And in particular do adults who are introverted or touchy need to be on guard. When transgressed against they should call to mind the wise counsel: "Do not say: 'Just as he did to me, so I am going to do to him. I shall repay to each one according to his acting.'"—Prov. 24:29.

This evidently is what Jesus Christ had in mind when he said in his Sermon on the Mount: "Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other also to him." (Matt. 5:39) This counsel has been criticized by many because of its being misunderstood as teaching pacifism, but not so. When

one is struck a blow calculated to harm one, it would be folly to welcome more injury. The sensible thing to do would be to take flight or seek to protect oneself. In fact, one has an obligation to himself and his loved ones to take such a course. But when one is jeered or has insults heaped upon him because of being a follower of Jesus Christ, figuratively slapped on the right

cheek, then the noble course of wisdom is to be kind and mild-tempered. This the other person could construe as turning the other cheek. Such is the course Jesus

took, for of him we read that "when he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return," but turned the other cheek as it were.—1 Pet. 2:23.

Of course, one should not read more into one Biblical principle than the rest of the Scriptures warrant. To pass over transgression does not mean to condone serious sins or crimes. The Bible strongly condemns those who connive at wrongdoing.—Ps. 50:18; Isa. 5:23.

Today, more than ever before, people manifest the spirit of vindictiveness. They are quick to retaliate and often respond not only in kind but with added interest. Popular opinion is prone to consider weak and foolish those who pass over transgression, but not so. It is a manifestation of strength to do so, and also of wisdom as well as of generosity; truly a thing of beauty. Dedicated Christian ministers in particular should at all times seek to manifest the beauty of passing over transgression. For in this way they can bring honor to their heavenly Father, even as Jesus Christ said: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens."—Matt. 5:16.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Joyful Endurer or Unhappy Dropout
—Which?
- Can You Imitate Jeremiah's Endurance?
- Beware of Overconfidence!
- The Bible—the Book That Gives Hope.

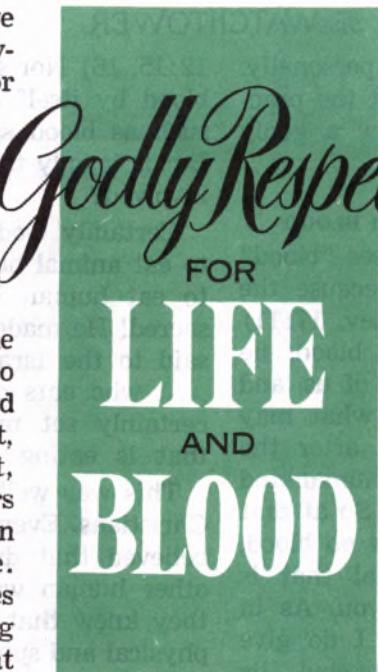
HOW much safer we would be if everyone had godly respect for life and blood! But many persons do not have such respect. Violence and bloodshed are on the increase everywhere. In many places a person's life is in danger if he simply walks the streets alone at night. So accustomed has the world become to violence that, even for entertainment, people will sit for hours and watch it on television or in a motion picture. However, the Bible teaches us that life is something sacred. Do you view it that way?

Unscriptural attitudes have become so commonplace today that Bible teachings on the matter may surprise some persons at first. However, the Author of the Bible, who is also the Giver of life and the Creator of blood, is the Supreme Authority on the subject. His laws are to be respected.—Ps. 36:5-9; Isa. 55:8, 9.

"SHEDDING MAN'S BLOOD"

It was first to Cain, a son of Adam, that Jehovah spoke about the seriousness of taking human life. God had already warned Cain that his anger might lead him into sin, but Cain ignored the warning and assaulted his brother Abel, killing him. Then God said: "Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground." For his lawless shedding of blood Cain had to answer to God.—Gen. 4:6-11.

Following the flood of Noah's day, God again emphasized that human life is precious in his sight. "Your blood of your souls shall I ask back," God said. "Anyone shedding man's blood, by man will his own



blood be shed, for in God's image he made man." (Gen. 9:5, 6) That commandment has not gone out-of-date. It applies to all mankind today as descendants of Noah. Whether human governments deal with criminals in accord with that divine law or not, Jehovah God will call to account those who lawlessly take life.

To remain blameless before the Giver of life, however, there is more required. At 1 John 3:15 it is written: "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer, and you know that no manslayer has everlast-

ing life remaining in him." If we want everlasting life, we need to root out of our lives all hatred for our fellowmen. God is not going to preserve into his new system persons who, like Cain, ignore divine warning and endanger the lives of others with their hot tempers. A godly view of life requires that we learn to love our fellowman.—1 John 3:11, 12; Matt. 5:21, 22.

If we conform to God's thinking on this matter, we will also appreciate that life is no less sacred because a person may be very old or very young. God's Word shows that even the life of an unborn child in its mother's womb is precious to Jehovah. (Ex. 21:22, 23; Ps. 127:3) And yet millions of abortions are performed throughout the earth each year. These are a violation of God's law, for the human embryo is a living creature and should not be destroyed. If married couples want to limit the size of their families for economic, health, or other reasons, that is their personal affair, and the way in which they do this is largely

a matter for them to work out personally. But we must face the fact that the practice of abortion does not show a godly respect for life.

'KEEP YOURSELVES FREE FROM BLOOD'

The holy Bible frequently uses "blood" to stand for "life." This is because the life or soul is in the blood. (Lev. 17:11) Since God is the Creator of blood, he knows more about it than any of us, and he has the full right to say what may be done with it. It was first after the global Flood that God granted humankind permission to eat animal flesh. So at that time he also gave them his law on blood, saying: "Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give it all to you. Only flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat." (Gen. 9:3, 4) Animal flesh might be eaten, but not the blood.

Later, that law was embodied in the commandments given to the nation of Israel, and God's Word makes it binding on Christians as well. After thoroughly discussing God's requirements for Christians, the governing body of the early Christian congregation wrote to the non-Jewish believers: "The holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things, to keep yourselves free from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!"—Acts 15:28, 29.

So, we, too, must 'keep free from blood.' And our doing so is a serious matter, having been put on a level with avoiding fornication and idolatry.

It is evident from what God says about blood that we should not eat the flesh of an animal that has not been bled. (Deut.

12:15, 16) Nor should we consume animal blood by itself or mixed in other foods, such as blood sausage or blood pudding. But is it only the blood of animals that is involved?

Certainly God did not forbid mankind to eat animal blood while permitting him to eat human blood, as if it were less sacred! He made this clear when he later said to the Israelites: "As for any man . . . who eats *any sort of blood*, I shall certainly set my face against the soul that is eating the blood."—Lev. 17:10.

This was well understood by the early Christians. Even though it was commonly believed that drinking the blood of another human would benefit one's health, they knew that lasting good health, both physical and spiritual, depended upon obedience to God. So, Tertullian, a Christian writer of the second and third centuries C.E., said:

"Those, too, who at the gladiator shows, for the cure of epilepsy, quaff with greedy thirst the blood of criminals slain in the arena, as it flows fresh from the wound, and then rush off—to whom do they belong? . . . Blush for your vile ways before the Christians, who have not even the blood of animals at their meals of simple and natural foods." They understood God's law to include blood of every kind, animal and human.

WHAT ABOUT BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS?

What about the use to which human blood is put today? Medical doctors, realizing the life-sustaining power of blood, use blood transfusions freely in their treatment of patients. Is this in harmony with God's will?

Some persons may reason that getting a blood transfusion is not actually "eating." But is it not true that when a patient is unable to eat through his mouth, doctors often feed him by the same method in

which a blood transfusion is administered? Examine the scriptures carefully and notice that they tell us to '*keep free* from blood' and to '*abstain* from blood.' (Acts 15:20, 29) What does this mean? If a doctor were to tell you to abstain from alcohol, would that mean simply that you should not take it through your mouth but that you could transfuse it directly into your veins? Of course not! So, too, abstaining from blood means not taking it into our bodies at all.

Does this put God's servants at a disadvantage in comparison with persons who ignore the Bible and take blood transfusions? No, it works no real hardship on them. Do not forget that, immediately after telling Christians to '*keep themselves from blood*,' the Scripture says: 'If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!'—Acts 15:29.

God had that recorded in the Bible for a purpose. He knows what he is talking about! He knows more about blood than do doctors whose efforts, though they may be well meaning, do not always produce the desired results.—Mark 5:25-29.

The fact is that, while most patients survive blood transfusions, many become diseased as a result of them and thousands die every year as a direct result of them. There are other forms of treatment that do not cause such harm. A doctor may tell a person that he will be dead within a short time if he does not submit to a transfusion, but the patient may die even though he accepts blood. On the other hand, as you know, there are many patients who regain good health in spite of a doctor's predictions to the contrary.

For the doubtful chance that one might be kept alive for a few more years in this system of things, would it make good sense to turn one's back on God by breaking his law? If we try to save our

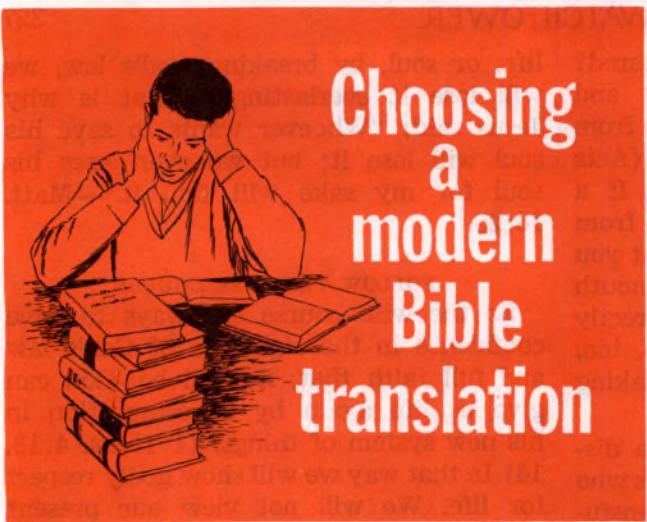
life, or soul, by breaking God's law, we will lose it everlasting. That is why Jesus said: "Whoever wants to save his soul will lose it; but whoever loses his soul for my sake will find it."—Matt. 16:25.

FOLLOW THE WISE COURSE

So the wise course is always to have confidence in the rightness of God's law and full faith that, if need be, God can give us life again by a resurrection in his new system of things. (1 Thess. 4:13, 14) In that way we will show godly respect for life. We will not view our present life as being more precious than loyalty to God. Instead, we will keep our eye on God's provision of *eternal* life for those who walk in the way of the truth.

As never before, there is an urgent need for people everywhere to get God's viewpoint of life. They need to learn of the provision that Jehovah God himself has made to save life. He sent his Son Jesus Christ to shed his own lifeblood on behalf of those who will exercise faith, and he resurrected him from the dead. (Heb. 13:20, 21) It is not by blood transfusions but only by means of faith in Jesus' shed blood that salvation can be had. And it is urgent to gain and exercise that faith now before this old system of things comes to its end.

If we have learned about this loving provision, then we should feel moved to tell others about it. Godly concern for the lives of other people will move us to do it with zeal and boldness. (Ezek. 3:17-21) If we shoulder this responsibility and persist in it until they have all had opportunity to hear, we will be able to say, as did the apostle Paul: "I am clean from the blood of all men, for I have not held back from telling you all the counsel of God."—Acts 20:26, 27.



Choosing a modern Bible translation

WHY should there be modern Bible translations? Are not the old ones, such as the *King James* and the *Douay* versions, good enough? They are good, no doubt, and have helped countless numbers to have faith in God and in his Word, the Bible. But could there be better translations?

Yes, there could be, and there are better translations of the Bible than the *King James* and *Douay* versions, and that for a number of reasons. Admittedly, it would be difficult to find an English translation of more literary beauty than the *King James*. Yet, as has been well noted: "The first duty of a translator is to convey as clearly as he can what the original author wrote. He should not try to inject a rhetorical quality . . . which belong[s] more truly to the first Elizabethan age in England than to the Hebrew originals. . . . It would certainly be dangerous to give the form of the translation precedence over the meaning."

One reason why modern translations may be better than such old ones as the *King James* of 1611 is that the English language itself has changed over the years. For example, to "let" used to mean to "hinder." Today the meaning usually at-

tached to the expression is just the opposite, to "permit." (2 Thess. 2:7) Likewise, to "prevent" used to mean to "go before" or to "precede." Today it means to "keep from happening." (1 Thess. 4:15) "Conversation" used to mean "conduct." Today it most often refers to talking with another. (Phil. 1:27) And for most persons today "shambles" does not refer to a "meat market," as it used to, but to a "scene of destruction."—1 Cor. 10:25.

The progress made in understanding the Greek in which the Christian Scriptures were written

has also made possible better translations. Ancient papyrus writings have been found that showed the everyday use of certain words not well understood. Thus "Raca" was simply thought to mean "a vain fellow," but that did not fit in with the severe condemnation of its use by Jesus. (Matt. 5:22, AV margin) Now, however, because of the discovery of a papyrus letter, scholar E. Goodspeed has said that "Raca" was a foul name "which one sometimes heard on the lips of foul-mouthed people but never saw in print." The *New World Translation* renders it "an unspeakable word of contempt."

Another example is that of the verb *ape'kho*, translated "have" in older translations, but which means "to have in full," being used "as a technical expression in drawing up a receipt," as stated in Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. So Jesus, in condemning those who hypocritically make a showing of their charity, said that they "are having their reward *in full*." That is absolutely all they will ever get, the praise of men, which was just what they wanted.—Matt. 6:2.

Modern translations often clarify the sense of figures of speech used by the Hebrews or Greeks but with which we

may not be familiar. Thus 1 Peter 1:13 (AV) reads "gird up the loins of your mind." Far more understandable to modern-day readers, however, is the rendering, "brace up your minds for activity." —NW.

Especially helpful in improving translations of the Bible has been the finding of older manuscripts. At the time of the translation of the *King James Version* only a few Greek manuscripts were available and these were of rather late origin. But since then many fine vellum manuscripts of the collected Scriptures have come to light, some going back as far as the fourth century of our Common Era. Also papyrus manuscripts and fragments have been uncovered that date back to the third and even the second centuries C.E. Usually, the older the copy, the less likely it is to have suffered changes from copying.

And not to be overlooked is the factor of an improved understanding of God's Word. This has come about even as foretold. "The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Prov. 4:18) The better God's purposes are understood, the more accurately the Word of God can be translated.

IT MUST BE ACCURATE

Regarding the translator of the Bible into English, it has well been said that his chief responsibility is to render the Biblical meaning as *accurately* as possible into appropriate English.

This is a position that hardly can be argued against, and yet comparatively few translators have acted in accord with it in regard to the distinctive name of God, Jehovah. In the Hebrew Scriptures this is represented by the Tetragrammaton, that is, the "four-letter word" YHWH.

There is no question as to its importance, for not only does it occur more than 6,900 times, but the Creator is referred to by it more than by all other designations used in those Scriptures.

The importance of the name Jehovah was highlighted in the Preface to the *American Standard Version*, 1901, which, among other things, stated: "This Memorial Name, explained in Ex. iii. 14, 15, and emphasized as such over and over in the original text of the Old Testament, designates God as the personal God, . . . the Friend of his people; . . . the ever living Helper . . . This personal name, with its wealth of sacred associations, is now restored to the place in the sacred text to which it has an unquestionable claim."

Though stated almost seventy years ago, its position is affirmed by one of the latest scholarly translations, *The Jerusalem Bible*. Although many of its footnotes savor of higher criticism, this translation restores God's name to its rightful place, but preferring the form "Yahweh." The Editor's Foreword states, among other things: "It is not without hesitation that this accurate form has been used, and no doubt those who may care to use this translation of the Psalms can substitute the traditional 'the Lord'. On the other hand, this would be to lose much of the flavour and meaning of the originals. For example, to say 'The Lord is God' is surely a tautology [needless repetition or redundancy], as to say 'Yahweh is God' is not."

Of all the many modern translations of the Bible into English, few indeed are accurate in this matter. Among those few are Rotherham's *Emphasised Bible*, which translation also uses the form "Yahweh," and Young's *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, the *American Standard Version* and the *New World Translation*, which use the form "Jehovah."

THE VIRTUE OF CONSISTENCY

While the virtue of consistency cannot be pressed too far in the matter of Bible translation, it does appear that many translations do not give enough thought to this factor or let their religious prejudices interfere. As has been well observed, "There must be consistency in the translation of technical words with a rather sharply fixed content of meaning, not allowing translation to blur the distinctions carried by different words in the original. In the New Testament there is a distinction between 'Hades' and 'Gehenna'. The former is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew 'Sheol,' the world of the dead; the latter is the final place of punishment for the wicked."—*Why So Many Bibles*, American Bible Society.

However, some translations, such as *Today's English Version*, *The New Testament in the Language of Today* (by W. F. Beck), and that by Monsignor Knox are doubly inconsistent in that they use more than one English word to translate *Hai'des*, one of these being "hell"; and they translate both *Ge'enna* and *Hai'des* by the English word "hell." Among those that are consistent in this matter are the *American Standard Version* and the *New World Translation*.*—Matt. 5:22; 10:28; 11:23; 16:18.

Lack of consistency is also shown on the part of many translators in failing to distinguish between *dou'los*, meaning a purchased slave, and *dia'konos*, meaning servant or minister. In the Scriptures Christians are referred to as slaves because they have been bought with a price; so they are slaves to Jehovah God and Jesus Christ their Masters. They are not mere hired servants, free to quit whenever they please. Apparently many translators

do not like the sound of the word "slave," but Bible writers had a reason for using it instead of "servant." Among the few that are consistent in this regard are C. B. Williams' *New Testament* and the *New World Translation*.—Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 7:23.

The foregoing are but a few of the many examples that could be cited to show how Bible translators at times are inconsistent. They also show the value of consistency if the reader is to get the sense of what was originally written.

A FAITHFUL TRANSLATION

Bible translation is by no means easy. In ever so many instances the merits of a certain rendering are relative. By that is meant that the evidence is not unequivocal. Thus a goodly number of the oldest and best manuscripts may read a certain way, while a lesser number, but still highly regarded manuscripts, read another way.

However, at times translators betray unfaithfulness to the original text. For example, the *Catholic Confraternity* version has Jesus asking his mother, at the time of the wedding feast in Cana, "What wouldst thou have me do, woman?" This is just the opposite of the way Roman Catholic Monsignor Knox renders the text: "Nay, woman, why dost thou trouble me with that?" Obviously the *Confraternity* let religious bias influence its rendering.—John 2:4.

Concerning the Bible translator Phillips we are told that he disregards "the first, second and last rule of the translator: that he be faithful to the original. Why is it necessary, for example, for him to translate in Luke 24:49, 'Now I hand over to you the [command] of [my] Father,' when the clear meaning of the text is, 'And I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised'? The reference

* To be consistent, however, AS should have left *Tar'ta'ros* untranslated, instead of translating it "hell." —2 Pet. 2:4.

to the future coming of the Lord in 2 Timothy 4:8 'to all who have loved his appearing' is lost in 'to all [those] who have loved what they have seen of him.' " Then after listing other examples, this criticism goes on to say: "Other examples could be cited, but these are sufficient."—*Why So Many Bibles.*

Another modern translation that can be charged with a lack of faithfulness to the original is Moffatt's *New Translation of the Bible*. Time and again he arranges chapters and verses in a way to suit himself in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures. Particularly is what he does with the book of Isaiah open to censure, rearranging the chapters and verses to suit himself. The Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, going back, as it does, about a thousand years earlier than the accepted Masoretic text, leaves Dr. Moffatt without any justification whatever for such rearranging of Isaiah. This makes it difficult to find certain Bible texts.

IS IT A HELPFUL TRANSLATION?

At times the conscientious translator may feel justified in adding a word or two to make the meaning clear. However, there is always the danger, when this is done, of misleading the reader. Thus in an attempt to aid the reader the translator of *Today's English Version* replaced "he" with "Christ" at 1 John 3:2. However, in this he erred, for Jehovah God and not Jesus Christ is here referred to, even as is clear from the preceding verse. Likewise at 1 Timothy 6:15, he added "God" to the text and so misleads the reader since the apostle was speaking about Christ's being the "happy and only Potentate . . . the King of those who rule as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords."—Compare verse 14.

Where done in keeping with the context and free from religious bias, such renderings can be very helpful. Thus Matthew 26:26 (*NW*) reads, "This means my body," for this is obviously what Jesus meant, since he still had his own body and so the bread could not literally have been his body. Likewise when *koima'omai*, a word used to refer to sleeping, is used to refer to death, the *New World Translation* ordinarily reads "he fell asleep [in death]," as at Acts 7:60. The brackets show that "in death" does not appear in the original.

This same translation is also quite helpful when rendering the word *ky'rios*, which means "lord" or "master." Whenever the context indicates that Jehovah God is referred to, it will render *ky'rios* as "Jehovah." Is this too radical? No, for in every instance except one such is also found to be the way a number of Hebrew versions have rendered *ky'rios*. (Matt. 1:20, 22) Especially is the name Jehovah fitting in the Christian Greek Scriptures when these quote from the Hebrew Scriptures where "Jehovah" is used.—Matt. 3:3; 4:7, 10.

Today the English Bible student has many modern translations from which to choose. By far the greater number, however, consist of only the Christian Greek Scriptures. Some of these translations have become quite popular by reason of their smooth flow of language and many apt turns of speech or felicitous expressions. However, as seen from the above examples, these are prone to err by taking too many liberties, because of misunderstanding or due to religious bias. Since accuracy and dependability are the most important requirements of a modern Bible translation it would seem that a largely literal translation is to be preferred, especially by readers who have faith that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Which translation do you think is the most desirable for you?



BE A GOOD LISTENER!

"Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul find its exquisite delight in fatness itself."—Isa. 55:2.

JEHOVAH God designed the human body with two ears and thus provided one of the most important channels for learning that we have. During the first few years of life we learn to speak and understand a language by means of them. They are our principal channel for learning at that time. Throughout the rest of our life we grow in knowledge from verbal instruction given by our parents, teachers, employers and others. Our eyes, of course, are also important organs for learning. It is thought that these two organs—the ears and the eyes—are the means by which we obtain 98 percent of what we learn in our lifetime. But how well our ears serve us as a channel for learning depends upon our ability to listen.

² It is written at Proverbs 18:15: "The heart of the understanding one acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise ones seeks to find knowledge." We get knowledge through the ears when we listen to other persons. This means paying attention and giving thoughtful consideration to what they say. It means making an effort to prevent the mind from wandering to other things, as that causes the ears to become deaf even though they may

function properly in a physical way. In order to hear, your mind must be receptive to the sounds conveyed to it by your ears. Think of the times that someone has told you something at a time when your mind was on other things and later you sincerely maintained that it was never told you. Your ears faithfully conveyed the sounds to your mind, but you did not hear because you were not listening.

³ A vast source of wisdom and knowledge from which we can constantly learn is Jehovah God himself, our Creator. It is written in his Word: "Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment." (Prov. 2:6) He speaks to us today through his written Word, the Bible. Whether we are using our eyes to read what is there or using our ears to hear what someone else is reading aloud from it, we gain the knowledge he gave to the ancient Bible writers. This is the way to become spiritually well-nourished. It is with good reason, then, that Jehovah God says at Isaiah 55:2: "Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul find its exquisite delight in fatness itself." By letting our minds feed upon the upbuilding knowledge

1. What principal channels of learning do we possess?
2. Explain why listening affects our growth in knowledge.

3. How does God speak to us today, and why should we listen to him?

and wholesome things God provides in his inspired Word we can gain spiritual health. As fatness indicates health when compared with the emaciated condition of a person suffering from malnutrition, so spiritual fatness indicates spiritual health, and this is what the prophecy promises those who listen attentively to Jehovah.

¹⁰ The prophet Samuel is an example of a good listener. He paid close attention whenever Jehovah spoke to him. When he was still a young boy, Jehovah called to him while he was lying down in his place in the temple. Samuel said in reply: "Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Sam. 3:10) Because Samuel's mind was not wandering to other things, such as the duties he had to perform in the temple that day, while Jehovah was speaking, he was able to remember everything he was told and could relate it later to High Priest Eli. He listened carefully, completely absorbed in what Jehovah said to him. This is a fine example of good listening for us today.

⁵ What do you do when you sit in an audience to which a Bible talk is being given? Do you listen as attentively as Samuel did? Or do you permit your mind to drift to other thoughts and so miss much of what is said? Only half listening is not the way to increase your knowledge and understanding of God's Word. Can you imagine Jesus' apostles only half listening when he spoke to them on the Mount of Olives about things that would take place in the last days? It is not likely that any of them were thinking of other things such as whether a bird scratching nearby was finding a worm or some relative was among the people that could be seen milling about the temple courtyard on the other side of the Kidron Valley. Without a doubt their minds were com-

pletely concentrated on what Jesus said. By listening to him they showed themselves to be wise. They gained faith-building and life-sustaining information from God's own Son.

⁶ Throughout Jesus' ministry the apostles listened so attentively that they were able to remember years later the details of his conversations. Eight years after Jesus died Matthew wrote these details in what is now the Bible book of Matthew. Sixty-five years later the apostle John wrote many intimate details of what Jesus said and did in what is now the Bible book of John. God's spirit helped them to remember what they had heard, but if they had not listened, the details would not have been in their minds for the holy spirit to bring back to remembrance. (John 14:26) Cultivating the habit of listening when someone is speaking about the truths of God's Word is just as important to us today as it was for the apostles.

MAKE LISTENING A HABIT

⁷ Of all the time we spend communicating with other persons, we spend 45 percent of it listening. Although this is one of the things we do most frequently in our lives, it is estimated that we operate at a listening level of about 25 percent efficiency. Some persons may have even lower levels. Surely it is worth the effort needed to improve your listening ability, which is so important in your daily life. A conscious effort has to be made in order to do this. As soon as you find your mind wandering during a talk bring it back to what your ears are hearing. Since the knowledge in God's Word is vitally necessary for good relations with him, you have a good incentive to pay more than passing attention to it.

4-6. (a) Why is Samuel an example of a good listener? (b) Who else in the Bible manifested good listening ability, and how is this evident?

7. What is our usual listening efficiency, and what can be done to improve it?

⁸ With effort good listening can become a habit, but it will take time to break the bad habit of permitting the mind to wander freely during a talk from one disconnected thought to another. Such mental excursions can cause you to become deaf to what the speaker is saying even though your ears function properly. Not until you return from the excursion will the words coming in your ears make sense in your mind. But then it is difficult to pick up the speaker's line of reasoning and argument because of what was missed. It would be much more beneficial to you to exercise enough effort to overcome the wandering tendency of your mind. Once you establish the habit of listening, it will become easier to keep your mind on what your ears are hearing.

⁹ At Hebrews 2:1 it is written: "That is why it is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us, that we may never drift away." The manner in which the apostles listened to Jesus is 'paying more than the usual attention.' That was attentive listening. More than the usual attention is not half listening. It is not allowing the mind to wander to the things you did yesterday or plan to do tomorrow. It is not wrestling with a personal problem or worrying about something while someone is speaking. It means turning over in your mind what he says and applying to your own life the Bible principles or counsel he brings out. What makes a Bible talk important and of value is not the person speaking but the information he expounds from God's Word. Anything from that divine Word is worthy of more than the usual attention given to the commonplace things heard every day.

8. How can a person become deaf to a speaker although his ears are functioning properly?

9. What is meant by 'paying more than the usual attention' to the things heard?

WAYS TO IMPROVE LISTENING HABIT

¹⁰ Interest is a big factor in good listening. When God gave Noah the dimensions of the ark, Noah got all of them correct because he was interested in what God told him and listened with rapt attention. But the person who concludes that the subject a speaker is due to speak on is dry and uninteresting commits an error that is common with poor listeners. This conclusion causes lack of interest and encourages the mind to wander to other thoughts. Another person who does listen may mention at the conclusion of the talk some of the interesting facts and good arguments brought out by the speaker which were missed by the one who did not listen. Then he may wish he had paid closer attention, and he may be surprised that he missed so much.

¹¹ A good listener avoids the preconceived notion that any subject is uninteresting. He concludes that the speaker would not be up there speaking if he did not have something worth saying, so he tunes in to see what he can learn. It is better to do that than to waste the time fidgeting in a chair wishing the speaker would finish. Instead of jumping to the conclusion that the subject will be uninteresting, make up your mind to find something of interest in it such as a fact that was not known to you before, a fresh way of expressing something, an argument that can be used, and so forth. Just the effort of trying to find something of interest can do much to help you pay attention.

¹² Another factor contributing to poor listening is to conclude in advance that the speaker has nothing worth while to say. This is a listening pitfall that good listeners avoid. They realize that other persons know things they do not know and that a speaker is likely to have bits of

10-12. (a) Why is interest a big factor in good listening?
(b) What preconceived notions does a good listener avoid?

valuable information gleaned from the research done when preparing the talk. So they listen so as to catch these bits of information and add them to their fund of knowledge.

¹³ Perhaps the speaker has poor speaking ability, but that is no reason to decide that he is not worthy of a listening ear. It does not mean the material he has is of little value. The apostle Paul apparently was not a polished speaker, but the things he had to say were worthy of close attention. In his second letter to the Corinthians he reveals the opinion that some persons had of his speaking ability when he says: "For, say they: 'his letters are weighty and forceful, but his presence in person is weak and his speech contemptible.'" (2 Cor. 10:10) Despite this opinion some persons had of him, those who overlooked his shortcomings as a speaker and listened to what he had to say greatly increased their understanding of God's Word and purposes. So delivery, proper grammar, coherence and correct pronunciation are not the most important factors in a talk, although they do make listening easier. The reasoning, the arguments, the facts and the principles are more important.

¹⁴ Still another factor contributing to poor listening is the great difference between the speed we speak and the speed of our thoughts. The English language is spoken at an average rate of 125 words per minute, but when speaking to an audience this rate is likely to be somewhat slower, about 100 words per minute. With our minds thinking at an average rate of at least 400 to 500 words per minute, there is quite a bit of time for the mind to do other things. This tempts it to go off in pursuit of unrelated thoughts. A

13. Why is it wrong to conclude that a poor speaker has nothing worth while to say?

14. Explain why our thinking speed can contribute to the habit of poor listening.

good listener makes use of this speed difference so as to impress on his mind what the speaker says, and there are various ways this can be done.

¹⁵ From what a speaker is saying try to anticipate the next point. In this way the greater speed of your mind can be used to run ahead of the speaker, and if the anticipated point is correct, learning is reinforced by the point coming into the mind twice. On the other hand, when a different point is anticipated, a comparison can be made of the two so as to determine why the speaker chose the other point. This will be making use of the best way we learn, which is by comparison and contrast.

¹⁶ Look for the elements the speaker uses to support his points. This will help to evaluate the talk. During pauses make quick mental summaries of what he has said, noting how the theme is being emphasized and developed. Analyze the points he brings out as to their relationship to the theme. The theme can be compared with the hub of a wheel to which all the supporting points, like the spokes, are fastened, giving support to the entire talk. Unfortunately, some speakers fail to speak coherently and fail to emphasize their theme. When this is encountered, it is necessary to make an even greater effort to keep your mind from going off on excursions.

¹⁷ Listening only for facts is not the way to be a listener who retains what he hears. Facts can best be remembered when the way they are tied in with the argument and the way they support it is clearly seen. Unless some connection can be observed, isolated facts are soon forgotten. For this reason, good listeners listen mainly for the principal idea that the facts support.

15, 16. How can we put to good use our great thinking speed so as to improve our listening ability?

17. Why is it best to listen for principles rather than for facts?

In this way they get the principles and can use them as connecting threads for tying the entire talk, with its facts, into a comprehensible whole. The supporting facts can be remembered by recalling the principles and by understanding the reason for them. They act like hangers upon which the facts are hung. When the principles are brought out of your memory they will usually bring the facts with them.

¹⁸ Note-taking is very helpful in remembering what was said. A good practice is to use two sheets of paper. Mark one "Principles" and the other "Facts." As the talk progresses write down the principles the speaker brings out and then on the other sheet the supporting facts. Make the notations brief so most of the time can be spent listening. A good listener usually listens for several minutes without making any notes, and then he will make a brief one-sentence summary of what was heard. In the meantime the speedy thinking ability of the mind can be analyzing the talk, summarizing what was said and anticipating what might be said.

THE BENEFITS FROM A GOOD LISTENING HABIT

¹⁹ In the business world a person makes himself a valuable employee when he shows that he is a good listener and can be depended upon to get verbal instructions correct. But of far greater importance is the beneficial spiritual knowledge he can gain by being a good listener when talks are given on Bible subjects such as at the various assemblies Jehovah's witnesses have from year to year as well as at their Kingdom Halls. Since the average person lacks the time to do all the Biblical research that goes into these talks, he is able to expand greatly his personal knowl-

18. What is one method of taking notes that can improve a person's listening ability and his retention of what a speaker says?

19. What are some of the benefits from a good listening habit?

edge of God's Word by being a good listener. Fresh, stimulating viewpoints and arguments in such talks can strengthen his faith and deepen his appreciation for Scriptural truth. Good counsel helps him to maintain good conduct and a healthy attitude. The benefits are many from paying close attention.

²⁰ We might compare these Bible talks with the occasions when the nation of Israel gathered together as a huge audience, and a speaker spoke to them about the law of God. One of these occasions was shortly after they had crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Following the fall of the cities of Jericho and Ai, they assembled in a narrow valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. From a vantage point, probably on the side of Mt. Ebal where he had built an altar, Joshua read to them the law of God. (Josh. 8:30-35) A voice can carry very easily across this narrow valley. What they heard refreshed their memories about what God required of them and reminded them of their dependence upon him. So too do Bible talks today.

²¹ It is difficult to imagine that the parents in that gathering allowed their children to run about, to talk or to walk aimlessly among the assembled crowd while Joshua was speaking. More than likely, the children were right with their parents, paying close attention, even though some of the things Joshua said may have been difficult for them to understand. They learned respect for God's Word and were given a good foundation for growth to spiritual maturity. Should it be any different today?

²² From an early age children can be

20. With what can Bible talks today be compared, and what are their benefits?

21. Where is it reasonable to conclude the Israelite children were when Joshua spoke to the assembled people, and why was this good?

22. How can children be taught by their parents to become good listeners?

taught to remain seated at a talk and to pay attention. They can be encouraged to pick out one or two points from the talk and to be ready to tell their parents about them at the conclusion of the program. In fact, the parents can ask them a few questions. This should encourage the children from an early age to develop the good habit of listening, a habit that will enable them, as they grow up, to "make a defense before everyone" that demands a reason for their hope.—1 Pet. 3:15.

²³ Talks on subjects difficult to understand are a good test of one's listening ability. If he is a poor listener his mind is soon wandering aimlessly. At the conclusion of the talk he goes away without having benefited from the strong spiritual meat in it, and so he has missed an opportunity to grow spiritually. The good listener, on the other hand, strives to be more attentive than usual, making a greater effort to catch the principles and to reason on the supporting arguments. Even if he fails to understand all that is in the talk, what he does get will elevate his Scriptural knowledge and broaden his understanding a little more. He will not be stunted in spiritual growth, unable to take anything but spiritual milk. That is the way he strengthens the foundations of his faith and grows in ability to digest the spiritually deep things of God's Word.—Heb. 5:12-14.

²⁴ Whether a person is mature or immature, he needs the counsel and discipline of God's Word just as the Israelites did so as to know how to direct his steps into the future. "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, in order that you may become wise in your future." (Prov. 19:20) Without that guidance it is very easy to make

a false step that can take you into the broad road that leads away from the goal of eternal life. (Matt. 7:13, 14) That counsel is given in talks at the Kingdom Hall and especially at large, yearly district assemblies of Jehovah's people. Now, what about the person that is wandering about the assembly grounds when such counsel is being given? Is he following the advice at Proverbs 19:20? Is he learning how to keep his path of life straight in the eyes of God? Is he learning how to avoid disastrous pitfalls? And what about the person that leaves before the speaker is finished? Would he not be better benefited by waiting a few minutes more and listening to all that the speaker has to say? Would that not be showing greater appreciation for a provision designed to instruct and strengthen him spiritually?

²⁵ During the short time remaining for this old system of things, we need strong faith as well as the knowledge that permits us to give a fine testimony to the people of this old system of things and its rulers. To do this we need the Scriptural enlightenment, the strengthening arguments, the stimulating words of encouragement and the correcting counsel presented in talks at assemblies as well as in talks at the Kingdom Halls. By means of them Jehovah's organization is teaching us through the ear, giving us the means to be wise in the future course we choose to follow. It is, therefore, vitally necessary to be a good listener. Consider the ability to listen to be as important to us as the ability to speak. As we are Scripturally obligated to speak about the fine things in God's Word, so we are obliged to listen to them.

²⁶ By your being a good listener your spiritual advancement will become manifest not only to yourself but also to others

23. How can Scriptural talks on things difficult to understand benefit a person?

24. Of what benefit are talks that bring out the counsel and discipline of God's Word, and how can appreciation be shown for them?

25, 26. Why is it vitally important for Christians to be good listeners at this time?

with whom you speak. (1 Tim. 4:15, 16) Listen intently and make proper use of the ears God gave you. With the knowledge you can gain by listening grow in spiritual health and fatness to your own eternal welfare.

FIGHT INDIFFERENCE

"In every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers, by the endurance of much."

—2 Cor. 6:4.

IN THE thirteenth year of the God-fearing king of Judah, Josiah (647 B.C.E.), Jeremiah was commissioned by Jehovah to warn his subjects that the kingdom of Judah was going to fall and that frightful desolation was coming upon their capital city of Jerusalem and upon the entire land. It was reasonable to expect these people to give heed to that warning in view of the record of accuracy Jehovah's prophets had established during the more than eight hundred years that had passed since the people had come into covenant relationship with him. But this generation living during the forty years of Jeremiah's preaching were indifferent to his warnings. They refused to listen to him.

² Indifference means that a person lacks interest or concern about something, that it is of no significance or importance to him. The unconcern of the people of Judah could have been due to selfishness that prevented them from feeling moved by Jeremiah's warnings, or it could have been due to insensitivity to what is bad. In any event, they were indifferent to their

1. What was the warning that Jeremiah preached, and how did the people react to it?

2, 3. (a) What is the meaning of indifference, and to what can it be due? (b) How did the people of Judah show indifference?

failure to give God exclusive devotion and to their violating of his righteous laws. They selfishly wanted to do only what was pleasing in their own eyes and cared nothing about what was pleasing in Jehovah's eyes.

³ To them Jeremiah said: "I kept speaking to you people, rising up early and speaking, but you did not listen. And Jehovah sent to you all his servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, but you did not listen, neither did you incline your ear to listen, they saying, 'Turn back, please, every one from his bad way and from the badness of your dealings, and continue dwelling upon the ground that Jehovah gave to you and to your forefathers from long ago and to a long time to come. And do not walk after other gods in order to serve them and to bow down to them, that you may not offend me with the work of your hands, and that I may not cause calamity to you. But you did not listen to me,' is the utterance of Jehovah." (Jer. 25:3-7) He then foretold that the land would be desolated for this reason.

⁴ It is not difficult to imagine how discouraging it was to Jeremiah to preach

4. How was Jeremiah affected by the indifference of the people?

with
ENDURANCE!

to these people for forty years with no good result. He had the same human feelings we have and must have felt disheartened at times by the unfruitfulness of his efforts. On one occasion he expressed his discouragement by saying: "I became an object of laughter all day long; everyone is holding me in derision. For as often as I speak, I cry out. Violence and despoiling are what I call out. For the word of Jehovah became for me a cause for reproach and for jeering all day long. And I said: 'I am not going to make mention of him, and I shall speak no more in his name.' And in my heart it proved to be like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I got tired of holding in, and I was unable to endure it."—Jer. 20:7-9.

⁵ These are the very feelings that God's servants can have today when trying to warn the people of this present age of the coming "war of the great day of God the Almighty." (Rev. 16:14) The people's lack of interest and their unconcern can make these modern-day servants of God feel, at times, as if they are wasting their breath and should no longer speak about his purposes. Possibly you have felt this way if you are a Christian who is conscious of his responsibility to proclaim the good news of God's kingdom and to warn of God's coming war of Armageddon. Like Jeremiah you need to endure the indifference of the people and to persist in fulfilling the commission to preach that Jesus gave his followers.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

⁶ Looking back to Jeremiah's time, we can easily see the folly of the Judeans in refusing to listen to him. From the vantage point given us by time, we know that his warning was a valid one. Jerusalem was eventually destroyed in 607 B.C.E., and the entire territory of the Judean kingdom was desolated for seventy years

just as Jeremiah had prophesied. (Jer. 25:11) Although he probably appeared ridiculous in the eyes of those people during the forty years that he preached to them, he was vindicated when the disaster of which he warned came. The foolishness of the people's indifference was then clearly evident.

⁷ Since 1877 C.E., Jehovah's witnesses have been warning the people of the world that the time when God will execute his adverse judgment upon this present system of things and replace it with a new and better arrangement is near. Generally, they have been confronted with the same lack of interest that Jeremiah was. Though many years have passed since they began proclaiming this warning, this does not mean that God's declared purpose will not be carried out, no more so than the forty years of preaching by Jeremiah meant that for the kingdom of Judah. Just as surely as the foretold destruction of that kingdom was fulfilled, so the foretold destruction of the present system of things will come to pass. (Isa. 55:11) When it is over it will be possible for survivors to look back to our day and clearly see that Jehovah's witnesses were doing the right thing by proclaiming God's kingdom and the battle of Armageddon, just as that can now be seen of Jeremiah's preaching. It will then be clear to all that their enduring of the people's indifference was the course of wisdom.

⁸ What makes things very trying for some of Jehovah's witnesses is the fact that they live in divided households where unbelieving members of the households are often a constant source of discouragement to them because of indifference or because of outright opposition. This should not seem strange. Jesus foretold that this would be so. (Matt. 10:35, 36) Enduring

5. Why is Jeremiah an example to God's servants today? 6, 7. Make a comparison of the ministry of God's servants today with the preaching done by Jeremiah.

8. What is the best way to fight indifference within a Christian household, and how can the trials it brings be regarded?

this discouragement without compromising your integrity to God is the best way to combat it. In time the situation can change. There are many examples of Christian women who have seen the attitude of their opposing husbands change for the better after enduring indifference or opposition from them for many years. Their trials at home were regarded by them as part of the many trials foretold to come upon Christians. Such trials can be likened to a torture stake that can test a Christian's faith, integrity and love for God. Jesus said: "Whoever does not accept his torture stake and follow after me is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10:38) By our endurance of such trials within a household we can prove worthy of him.

⁹ Even within a Christian congregation we can be tried by the indifference of others. Sometimes persons there have allowed their original love for the truth to cool off to the point where their Christian activity is no longer stimulatingly hot or refreshingly cold, but is lukewarm. They have become like the congregation at Laodicea, which was unconcerned about its commission from God and the life-giving truths he was supplying them. Regarding that congregation the resurrected Jesus Christ said: "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or else hot. So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15, 16) This is very likely what will happen to indifferent persons who profess to be Christians today unless they change their attitude before Jehovah's day of vengeance arrives. Until they do, their lukewarm presence in a congregation can be a trial upon Jehovah's witnesses because of their being unmoved by the urgency of the ministry and unconcerned about their

9. How can indifference try a person within the Christian congregation?

own spiritual need. Jehovah's witnesses must not permit their discouraging attitude to slow them down or to influence their own outlook. This takes endurance.

WHY INDIFFERENCE MUST BE FOUGHT

¹⁰ The poor attitude of others toward the Christian ministry can have a bad effect on Jehovah's witnesses if they permit it. Their lack of interest in God's Word and purposes can dampen their zeal for his service and cause Christians to hold back from the ministry. Christians might feel that it is useless to preach in a territory where the people are indifferent to their message of truth. That is precisely what Satan wants us to conclude. He wants us to quit! He wants us to be silent about what Jehovah is going to do. He does not want us to bring liberating truths to the people who are in chains of religious darkness and superstitions or who are imprisoned by the divisive spirit of nationalism. We would fulfill his wishes if we brought our ministerial activities to a standstill because people in a territory will not listen. But we do not want to serve his interests! In time circumstances may change, causing some to be receptive to the good news of God's kingdom, making continued preaching worth while. They are entitled to every opportunity to hear as long as this system of things lasts. In times past God's servants felt discouraged on many occasions, but they did not allow it to conquer them, as we have seen in the case of Jeremiah. Neither should we!

¹¹ Moses experienced discouragement and felt as if it were not worth while for him to speak to Pharaoh because of the indifference shown him by the Israelites, his own people. He said: "Look! The sons of Israel have not listened to me; and how

10. How can indifference in others affect us, and how can we fulfill Satan's wishes unintentionally?

11. How are Moses and Elijah examples for us as successful fighters of indifference?

will Pharaoh ever listen to me, as I am uncircumcised in lips?" (Ex. 6:12) But it was not Jehovah's will for him to remain silent. Notwithstanding the attitude of the people, Jehovah God commanded him to proclaim the message he was given. "You—you will speak all that I shall command you." (Ex. 7:2) So he did, giving a powerful testimony to the truth in behalf of the true God. The prophet Elijah also felt discouraged by the apparent unfruitfulness of his preaching. The people of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel were indifferent to his efforts to bring them back to true worship. He felt like quitting and going off to die somewhere. (1 Ki. 19:4) But that would not have accomplished Jehovah's purposes, so Jehovah sent Elijah back to finish his work. (1 Ki. 19:15-18) These men of God did not allow the indifference of others to inactivate them.

¹² We need to recognize the demoralizing effect of indifference, and that it can cause a person to drift away from Jehovah, from his organization and from the way to eternal life. This can happen when a dedicated Christian allows indifference to become overly discouraging or to take root in himself and to grow. In due time it can paralyze his spiritual activity and bring on spiritual death. So it is vitally necessary for us to put up a vigorous fight against it.

FIGHTING INDIFFERENCE

¹³ The deteriorating influence of indifference can be fought successfully by endurance, by not permitting it to cause us to slacken our hand in God's service. As with persecution, it is something that has

to be endured with firm determination. It was by means of endurance that the early Christians conquered persecution during a period of about 280 years when the Roman Empire persecuted them off and on. By our enduring persecution today as well as indifference to our preaching, we recommend ourselves as God's ministers, just as it is written: "In every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers, by the endurance of much."—2 Cor. 6:4.

¹⁴ It is possible for a person to have held up under severe persecution but afterward to succumb to the deteriorating influence of indifference, because it acts in such a subtle way. Over a period of time it can succeed in doing what physical persecution has failed to do. It is like a termite that eats away on the inside of a building. In time the building collapses because its supports have been weakened. This can happen to the supports of our faith if we permit the influence of indifference to get a hold on us.

¹⁵ The quality of our faith must stand up under all kinds of tests, as Peter pointed out when he wrote: "In this fact you are greatly rejoicing, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been grieved by various trials, in order that the tested quality of your faith, of much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being proved by fire, may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

(1 Pet. 1:6, 7) It is at the coming "war of the great day of God the Almighty," the battle of Armageddon, that the revelation of Jesus Christ will take place, as that is the time when he comes to bring "vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news." (Rev. 16:14; 2 Thess. 1:8) How can the tested quality of our faith stand

12. What does a Christian need to recognize regarding indifference?

13, 14. (a) How can indifference be successfully fought, and how can this be seen in the conquering of persecution by the early Christians? (b) Why can a person maintain his faith under persecution but lose it in the face of indifference?

15. What must we expect about the quality of our faith?

if it fails to survive the trial of indifference now?

¹⁶ A fine way to build a faith of good quality that can endure indifference is to keep strong our appreciation for Jehovah God and his life-giving truths. This requires not only regular feeding on the spiritual food he provides but also meditation on his marvelous promises due to be fulfilled in the future and on what he already has done. Constant awareness of our spiritual need is a contributing factor in maintaining appreciation. If we get to the point where we become unconcerned about this need, we are in the dangerous position of losing our footing on the narrow way that leads to eternal life. Jehovah's Word and organization exist for the purpose of filling that spiritual need. Those drawn to his organization recognize this, and because they are conscious of their spiritual need they responded to its invitation: "Let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free." (Rev. 22:17) But if a person who has thus responded later permits indifference to dull his consciousness of his spiritual need the inevitable result for him is loss of appreciation and faith, with an eventual return to his previous situation of separation from God's organization. (2 Pet. 2:22) So we need to maintain appreciation for God's Word and organization.

¹⁷ When we encounter personal problems or troubles and succeed in solving or overcoming them by applying the counsel from God's Word or organization, we can ask ourselves what we would have done without that counsel. This helps to build appreciation. So also does a review of what we were doing before making a dedication

to serve God. What would be our situation today if we had not permitted the transforming power of the truth to change our way of life? (1 Pet. 4:3) We can think of the undeserved kindness he has shown us by providing his Son as a ransom sacrifice, which has made eternal life possible for us. We can also meditate on what the realization of God's promises of a new system of things will mean for us. This can build up our appreciation, which can help us to counteract the discouragement that comes from the indifference of others.

¹⁸ Stimulating appreciation in a person who is studying the truth of God's Word in a home Bible study is an effective way to overcome a tendency toward indifference on his part. This was done by one of Jehovah's witnesses in Malaysia. A young girl with whom she was studying was indifferent to the truth, although she was willing to study because of having spare time. The Witness sought to overcome this indifference by building up appreciation for God's Word and his organization. She did this by asking the girl a question when a Bible principle was under discussion along with a problem it could overcome. "When we are faced with this problem," she asked, "wouldn't we be lost if the Bible did not provide us the way out?" On another occasion she would ask, when the solution to a common problem was brought out in the study: "If Jehovah's organization did not explain the solution to us, we wouldn't know how to solve the problem, would we?" Questions like these helped the girl. Gradually, as her appreciation increased, her indifference disappeared, and she eventually chose to associate actively with Jehovah's organization. In this manner appreciation can be built up in ourselves and in others, aiding us to endure the testing of the quality of our faith.

16. What can maintaining appreciation do for us, and why is it important to be conscious of our spiritual need?

17, 18. Explain a way that appreciation for God's Word and organization can be increased in ourselves as well as in others.

JESUS SET US A FINE EXAMPLE

¹⁹ During the time of Jesus' earthly ministry he was confronted continually with indifference from people in his own nation, notwithstanding the fact that Hebrew prophets had foretold his coming many centuries in advance. Even around his headquarters in Galilee where he found many people who received him gladly there were practically whole towns that were unresponsive to his preaching. Such was the case with Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida and even his hometown of Nazareth. (Luke 10:13-15; Mark 6:1-6) Neither did Jerusalem receive him except for the persons who hailed his entrance into the city. On the whole, Jerusalem was indifferent to him just as it had been to Jeremiah more than six hundred years previous. Addressing the city, he said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent forth to her—how often I wanted to gather your children together in the manner that a hen gathers her brood of chicks under her wings, but you people did not want it!" (Luke 13:34) He set a fine example by continuing to fulfill his divine commission despite their unresponsiveness. He fought their indifference by enduring it, and so recommended himself as God's minister.

²⁰ Because Jesus Christ was obedient to God and proved the quality of his faith by his endurance, he received the approval of Jehovah God and a great many other blessings. (Phil. 2:9-11) Pointing to him as an example for us, the Scriptures state: "Indeed, consider closely the one who has endured such contrary talk by sinners against their own interests, that you may not get tired and give out in your souls." (Heb. 12:3) If we follow his example of endurance we too can confidently expect to receive God's approval and to be among

the survivors of the great war of God that is near at hand.

²¹ By enduring faithfully to the end, we will have reason to be happy, not only because of our preservation through the end of this system of things but also because we will have shown our love for Jehovah God and because we will have maintained integrity to him. But survival through the battle of Armageddon is only one of many benefits that can be expected for fighting indifference and persecution with endurance. What is said of Christ's anointed followers at James 1:12 can also be said, in a sense, to those expecting to be earthly subjects of God's kingdom. "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him." Thus eternal life is one of the many benefits coming to those who endure. Jesus indicated this when he said: "By endurance on your part you will acquire your souls."—Luke 21:19.

²² When the time inevitably arrives for the complete end of this system of things, the Christian that has endured will be able to feel satisfaction and happiness for having completed the work God gave him and for having proved the quality of his faith. Paul had these feelings at the end of his career. He said: "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith." (2 Tim. 4:7) No doubt Jeremiah must have had similar feelings when he finished his divinely assigned work, having done what God commanded him. But the end of this system of things is still ahead of us, and we must continue to fight indifference, not permitting it to discourage us to the point of quitting.—Gal. 6:9.

19, 20. (a) How did Jesus set an example for us in fighting indifference? (b) How did this personally benefit him?

21. What are some of the benefits from fighting indifference?

22. What feelings can a Christian expect when the foretold end of this system of things comes? Why?

²³ Since servants of Jehovah God in ancient times successfully fought indifference, we can too. But we have to be willing to make a determined effort to fight it. We need to be aware of the bad effect it can have on us and how it can eat away at a person until his faith collapses. We need to maintain appreciation for Jehovah's promises, for the dependability of his Word, for our need for his organization and how these have changed our lives for the better. We also need to recall how God's Word and organization have aided us in solving personal problems and in making important decisions. We need to think of the fine examples of endurance that can be found in the Bible so they can be a source of encouragement to us. By successfully fighting indifference with endurance, as the prophet Jeremiah did, and continuing faithful in the Christian ministry, we recommend ourselves as God's ministers.

23. What is one way we can recommend ourselves as God's ministers?

DO YOU Get the Point?



GIVING counsel and correction to others is an art. Receiving counsel is also an art. An expert counselor is empathetic; he is kind; he chooses his words with tact and makes an effort to avoid unduly hurting the feelings of his listener. But his main purpose is to make sure that the person who needs help understands the point of the counsel. Much will depend on whether the one being corrected has cultivated the art of being a good listener.

To receive the full benefit of counsel it is essential to have the proper frame of mind. Today, people have a marked tendency to "blow up" as soon as someone begins to call some fault to their attention. They do not really hear, much less reason on what is being said to them. They would do well to heed the advice of one of Jesus' disciples who said, "Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." (Jas. 1:19)

If you are being corrected, make an effort to get into this frame of mind quickly.

It is not difficult to know when some counsel is forthcoming. In the first place, you may be aware of something that has taken place in your life that might require some correction. Then, too, it is not every day that an overseer invites you to sit down for a "little chat." A good counselor will usually preface his words of correction with some merited praise or commendation. So if this happens to you, while you should not become immediately suspicious and think the praise is insincere, keep in mind that a few valuable suggestions may follow. Prepare to accept them humbly.

NEED FOR DISCERNMENT

But having the proper frame of mind is not all that is necessary to get the point of counsel. You will also need discernment.

Remember, your counselor has probably thought at length about this conversation and has tried to make a good choice of words and thoughts. The matter of counsel may never be mentioned; he may simply tell you that he would like to make a "suggestion" or two. Do you get that point? He will also endeavor to be tactful and may speak to you in an indirect way, perhaps using an illustration. So it may be necessary for you to think, not only of what is said, but also of what is being left unsaid to avoid hurting your feelings or embarrassing you. Perhaps you will get the full impact of his words by thinking of how a less tactful, less loving person might put it to you.

Let us take an example from true life. A good one is found in the Bible at 2 Samuel 12:1-14. King David of Israel had committed a grievous sin by coveting another man's wife, having sexual relations with her and then having her husband murdered. Jehovah sent the prophet Nathan to give David the necessary correction. Nathan began with an illustration: "There were two men that happened to be in one city, the one rich and the other of little means." These opening words—and undoubtedly Nathan's tone of voice—should have been sufficient to set David thinking seriously. But apparently not. Nathan continued with his illustration. A traveler came to visit the rich man, but instead of preparing a meal for him from his own abundant flocks, he appropriated from the man of little means his one and only female lamb that, as was customary among poor Israelites, had grown up with his sons and had become as a daughter to him. David, the ex-shepherd, was incensed. "David's anger grew very hot against the man, so that he said to Nathan: 'As Jehovah is living, the man doing this deserves to die!'"

Yes, he was incensed, but he failed to get the point. He had failed to see himself as the rich man, Uriah as the man of little means and Bath-sheba as the small female lamb. He had failed to discern what Nathan had left unsaid, so it could be left unsaid no longer. "You yourself are the man!" were Nathan's next words, and how David was cut by them! But he was not resentful. He humbly confessed his error and accepted the punishment.

Of course, a Christian counselor should not speak in riddles or "beat around the bush." This is not what Nathan did. He used an illustration to prepare the ground, but when this was insufficient he became very direct. Read the remainder of the account in your Bible and you will see that he in no way minimized the extent of David's sin. But there was nothing objectionable in the way his counsel was given.

While using discernment to get the full impact and benefit from counsel, one should be careful not to go to the other extreme and take more than is intended from the words of his counselor. Use your imagination, but do not let it run away with you. If you do, you may harbor unfair and untrue thoughts about someone who made a sincere effort to try to help you.

Counsel given sincerely is an expression of love, and it is to be received in the same way. 'Love does not keep account of the injury. It believes all things'—that is, all that is good and upbuilding about one's associates.—1 Cor. 13:4-7; Prov. 27:6.

So as to avoid misunderstandings you would do well, on receiving correction, to let your counselor know that you do indeed get the point. A more discerning David might have stopped Nathan at the end of his illustration and said something like, 'Oh, you mean me and Uriah?' Had he done so, Nathan might have been able to save some of his more direct words. Per-

haps he could have let David finish out the counsel himself and asked him what he thought should be done about it, before announcing Jehovah's sentence. So make it clear that you do understand. This will give your counselor the satisfaction of knowing that the suggestions were well received. Otherwise, he may feel that he should try again and in a more direct way, and this could mean unnecessary irritation for both.

There is no doubt that when we make mistakes—and all of us do—there will be need for correction. This is for our good, because "in the multitude of counselors there is salvation." Knowing how to give and receive counsel makes for smooth and productive working conditions. There is a feeling of accomplishment, upbuilding and mutual confidence, together with a total absence of outbursts of wrath and hurt feelings.—Prov. 24:6.

They are ACTING on what they are learning

"**S**IX months! What if the end of this system comes in three?" This is what a father of four small children in Florida seriously asked when Jehovah's witnesses told him about their free six-month home Bible-study course. This man's wife had obtained from them the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. Both he and his wife had been up late each night examining its contents.

So when the Witnesses called back at their home and offered to help them learn the Bible's message, the couple asked to study twice a week. This was arranged, with each study lasting several hours due to their eagerness to learn. And this man had formerly opposed the Witnesses, not allowing them in his home!

In Tennessee a woman began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses, using the *Truth* book, and was thrilled at what she was learning about God. During her studies she would say, "This is just won-

derful! Anyone could understand this." Her joy was so great that one day during her study she called to her husband and said: "Honey, I wish you would come in and sit with us in this study. I have never learned so much in all my life."

A mother in Iowa told the Witness who was helping her what happened one morning: "My husband was in the bathroom shaving when I studied my lesson. Every few minutes I was running into the bathroom to read parts of the lesson to him. Finally he just had to turn off his shaver and listen." She told her husband that she was reading ahead in the *Truth* book. Her reason? "I have to find out what is going to happen to me!"

Yes, many thousands of sincere persons are rejoicing over the fine things they are learning from the Bible by means of the *Truth* book. "I have found the truth!" is what many have said after a short period of study. They have come to appreciate

that only the Bible's truth can lead to eternal life. Even more amazing is the rapidity with which Bible truth is affecting the lives of many of these persons.

LIVES ARE BEING CHANGED

As honest-hearted ones learn Jehovah's requirements for life, they quickly make the necessary adjustments in their lives to conform to his will. Often this means making some drastic changes in their thinking and habits.

In explaining why he liked studying the Bible with the *Truth* book, one man in Texas said he appreciated the way it showed him what changes were needed in his life. Did he respond and make those changes? Yes, for he said, "I stopped smoking and I started using cleaner language."

In South Carolina a teacher was studying for her master's degree. When she began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses, she realized that her church was not teaching her what the Bible taught. Since she wanted to do God's will, she officially served notice on her pastor that she was breaking all her ties with the church. She also decided to give up seeking a master's degree, for she said it was not really going to do her any good. She decided to master the knowledge that could lead her to eternal life. All this despite her husband's opposition.

Even folks who studied the Bible with the Witnesses for years without acting on what they learned are now taking a decisive stand to serve Jehovah. One family in the southern United States who had studied with the Witnesses for three years had done very little about what they had learned. But when they were told about the new six-month Bible-study arrangement, they were visibly touched. Now for the first time a real sense of urgency struck them. They could not bear the

thought of having all connections with Jehovah's people severed. So they sent a letter of withdrawal to the Baptist church because they knew that they were not being taught the Bible's truth there. They began attending all the Bible meetings of Jehovah's witnesses and sharing with others the things they learned.

For a certainty, God's truths, which these persons are learning, are moving them to transform their lives to conform to the divine will.—Rom. 12:2.

THEY ARE EAGER TO LEARN MORE

Persons who begin studying the Bible with the Witnesses also take time to read other publications provided by the Witnesses. However, there are some who are so eager to learn that they will do extensive reading. Such ones realize that, although the *Truth* book gives them a basic knowledge of the Bible's teachings, there is a great deal more to learn about Jehovah's purposes.

A Witness in California writes about such an individual: "I certainly can say I had never seen anyone hunger and thirst for God's Word as much as this girl did. When we had just studied a few chapters in the *Truth* book, she could see that Jehovah's witnesses had a great deal of truth, and, in addition to our study, she wanted to read everything she could get her hands on so as to get a better understanding of the Bible. She ended up reading almost everything in my library, including most of my bound volumes [of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines] of some ten years."

Another Witness in Alabama writes about a mother whom she was helping: "Each week I returned to have the study and I would leave each issue of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazine. I must say that I have never seen anyone read so

much. She read every magazine and then wanted me to bring her other literature. If she saw a book advertised on the back of the magazines, she wanted it. I could see that she really wanted knowledge of the Bible."

A New York woman who began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses was not at first particularly interested. But soon she had a great desire to read everything published by the Watch Tower Society. The Witness who called on her reports that if she did not bring this woman a book a week, the woman would reread those that she had, many of them two or three times.

Obviously, these persons are not content with just a basic knowledge of God. They are anxious to learn as much as they can in order to press on to spiritual maturity.—Heb. 6:1.

ATTENDING THE MEETINGS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

When persons who love God begin to study the Bible with his witnesses it is not long before they want to assemble with them at their meetings. This has been especially true of many of those who have taken advantage of the six-month home Bible-study arrangement.

Consider the policeman in Oregon who was at first opposed to his wife's studying with the Witnesses and going to their meetings. When he and his family moved to another town he allowed the Witnesses to come and discuss the Bible with him. After hearing about the *Truth* book and the value of the study course offered to him, as well as the marvelous blessings before him, he said that he would "like to have lessons in the Bible."

At the conclusion of his first Bible study, he asked about what went on at the Kingdom Hall. The Witness invited him to come. He replied: "Oh, I intend to, this

Sunday!" He and his family came and they have missed only one meeting in over three months.

The former opposer in Florida who was mentioned at the beginning of this article started to attend some meetings with his wife and their four small children two weeks after their first study of the Bible at home. They did this despite opposition from their neighbors. After they had completed seven chapters in the *Truth* book, they decided to arrange their affairs to attend all the meetings, preparing for them and participating in them as well.

As for the mother in Alabama who read every magazine and wanted the books advertised on the back of them, she too did not take long to begin attending meetings. During her fourth study, she asked the Witness who was helping her about the meetings. The Witness explained them and invited her to come. The following Sunday she came and brought her husband and two children. Up until this time her husband had not been sitting in on his wife's study, but now his interest was aroused. Arrangements were made to include him in the family Bible study.

A restaurant chef in New York was acquainted with the Bible truth for about eighteen years but did nothing about it. His work also kept him from attending meetings on Sundays. However, when he started studying the *Truth* book, he began to realize that he wanted to do something about what he knew was God's truth. He now had the courage to ask his employers for Sundays off. If they could not accommodate him, he would have to leave. At first they ignored his request, but then they realized that he meant it. Knowing that they would be the losers if he left, they consented. Yes, his determination to serve God won out.

Truly, the thousands who are beginning to associate with God's servants in their

meetings are being blessed. They are experiencing the love and unity that Jesus said would identify his followers.—John 13:35.

TELLING OTHERS WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING

Persons who appreciate the Bible's good news cannot keep it to themselves. They find themselves talking to others about it. This has been the case with thousands who are studying the Bible with the aid of the *Truth* book.

In Oregon a young Witness began studying the *Truth* book with one of her schoolmates. After the second study the girl asked the Witness if she could accompany her in the preaching work. She has gone out every week since. In fact, she even arranged to get out of school every week to share in this work. She had signed up for a class that required her to do community service. So she told her teacher that she would go from door to door and tell about God's kingdom. Not only is she allowed time in the afternoon to do this work, but she also gets credit for it. She has expressed her desire to go into the full-time preaching work instead of going to college.

A father of three children in California did not hold back from telling others about Jehovah. When the Witness talked to him about the qualifications required to preach, he insisted that he not be held back, as he felt the urgency and obligation to Jehovah to tell others about what he was learning in his Bible study. He met the Scriptural requirements and so, after having seven studies, he went out into the preaching work and enjoyed it.

A Methodist Sunday school teacher in Tennessee clearly saw the need to be a witness to others, but her church had no program for doing this. She began to study the Bible with the Witnesses. After completing the first chapter in the *Truth*

book, her reply to the review question about what we must do to please God was, "We have to bring accurate knowledge to all sorts of men." This sincere woman has been directed to where she can fulfill her heartfelt desire.

Others have spoken or written to their relatives. Their words have aroused the interest of many others in the Bible. They see the need to talk about the magnificent things of God.

BAPTISM—A STEP THEY HAVE GLADLY TAKEN

Many of the individuals who began studying the Bible with the *Truth* book soon appreciated that baptism is a divine requirement to please God. Actually, there were some who wanted to get baptized without fully knowing the responsibilities it brings. All they knew was that God required this, and they wanted to please him. They were encouraged to wait until they learned more, and they were baptized as soon as they qualified.

Consider what the Witness in California wrote about the woman mentioned earlier who read almost all the bound volumes of ten years back: "It had not been three months since our first Bible study, and an assembly was coming up. The woman felt she should be baptized to symbolize her dedication that she had already made. I thought, 'Three months, that is too soon!' But then I thought, 'She has read the *Truth* book as well as the other literature; she is going from door to door and conducting Bible studies. She is attending all the meetings, but still three months is not very long.' The presiding minister of our congregation reviewed her on the basic requirements, and not only did she know the answers but she also knew the scriptures to the answers. Well, needless to say, she was baptized."

How thrilling it is to see so many sheep-

like persons acting on what they are learning from the Holy Word of God! What a joy it must bring to Jehovah to see so many responding to his invitation to learn about him and serve him forever in happiness!

Are you studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses? If not we would like to encourage you to do so. If you are, are you acting on what you are learning to be God's truth? Think about what one woman wrote to the Watch Tower Society about

Jehovah's witnesses: "I am glad that there are people who are willing to help teach others to learn the Bible. Yes, who are always ready to help others answer their questions that are so important to them. The world needs more people like these."

Will you help fill this need by sharing in the most important work of Bible education? If you do, you will find the great happiness that comes from acting on what you are learning!

Reaping Spiritually What We Have Sown

To 'sow with a view to the spirit' requires what attitude toward material things?

A Christian who has a family must give thought to providing the needed material things of life. For him to fail to do so would be to deny the faith and would make him worse than a person without faith. (1 Tim. 5:8) However, he should not let himself become discontented with what he has or envious or jealous of what others possess. He should not keep "eagerly pursuing" material things. Rather, he is wise if he keeps such things in their right place by 'seeking first Jehovah's kingdom and His righteousness,' trusting that other needed things will be added to him, even as Jesus promised. (Matt. 6:32, 33) In this way he can hope to reap spiritually what he has sown to the spirit, even as the apostle Paul states at Galatians 6:8: "He who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit."*

Why must those who would sow and reap spiritually guard against harboring improper sexual desires?

Today from every direction the enticements to improper sexual desires crowd in upon the Christian and especially upon those of teen age. Romantic novels and cheap picture-story-type magazines glamorize fornication and adultery under the guise of "true love." Motion pictures, by and large, pander to the perverted

taste of the majority for the sake of profits, and so do many television shows. Then, too, the talk of one's companions, in school or at one's secular employment, often gravitates to adventures with the opposite sex, real or imagined.—Eph. 5:3, 4.

Unless the Christian is careful, seeds of wrong desire can take root and grow, resulting in the minding of the flesh, which means enmity with God and loss of life. (Rom. 8:6-8) One must therefore keep strict watch that how one walks is as a wise person and not as an unwise one, especially in view of the wicked times in which we are living.—Eph. 5:15, 16.

Why must those who would sow with a view to the spirit watch their motives?

True Christians are busy people; they always have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58) They invite others to share with them in the work of preaching the good news of God's kingdom. Each time before they engage in the field ministry they ask Jehovah's blessing upon their activity. But such activity of itself may not necessarily be sowing with a view to the spirit, for some may be doing it with a wrong motive. If their actions are for self-justification, self-praise, or from a spirit of rivalry or jealousy, their good works would not merit the promised reward, and they would see the corrupting of their spiritual life. Whatever they do they

* For details see *The Watchtower*, September 1, 1968.

must do whole-souled as to Jehovah and not to men.—Prov. 14:30; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:23, 24.

That is why Christians should not become slaves to figures or measure their integrity by such goals. That could well lead to boasting in the flesh on the part of some and discouragement on the part of others. They know that the widow mentioned at Luke 21:1-4 who gave a few small coins of little value was approved because she gave 'all that she had.' And so they keep in mind the purposes served by their ministry: To bring honor to Jehovah's name; to help lovers of truth and righteousness to get on the way to life; to warn the wicked, and to prove their own integrity and gain the reward of life.—1 Tim. 4:16.

Against what pitfalls must one guard in order to keep sowing to the spirit?

Among the pitfalls that mature Christian ministers must guard against if they would be sowing to the spirit and reap everlasting

life from the spirit are: The tendency to view one's brothers according to the flesh and perhaps even cherish resentment because of some disagreement. The feeling of jealousy if one has been passed over as regards advancement in the congregation in favor of someone else. Resenting the correction, counsel and encouragement given by a mature fellow Christian. The tendency of the flesh to become weary in well-doing; letting one's zeal become luke-warm instead of remaining fiery hot.—Rev. 3:16.

Encouraging all to the right kind of sowing, with a view to the spirit, are the words found at Hebrews 6:11, 12: "But we desire each one of you to show the same industriousness so as to have the full assurance of the hope down to the end, in order that you may not become sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."



- How does Jesus' counsel in Matthew 6:7 against long and repetitious prayers apply to private and public prayers, in view of some of the lengthy prayers recorded in the Bible? —M. F., U.S.A.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus condemned religious hypocrites who liked "to pray standing in the synagogues . . . to be visible to men." (Matt. 6:5) Their motive was bad. Their prayers were not sincere, humble expressions. So Christ counseled: "When praying, do not say the same things over and over again, just as the people of the nations do, for they imagine they will get a hearing for their use of many words." Or, they "think that God will hear them because of their long prayers."—Matt. 6:7; *Today's English Version*.

By the time Jesus came to earth the hypocritical religious leaders of Judaism had defined every attitude and gesture in prayer, and had fixed, repetitious prayer formulas. With them public prayer had degenerated into a

work of self-righteousness by which merit might be obtained and piety displayed. Such leaders may have impressed some gullible men, but they did not impress God. A heavier judgment awaited those hypocrites with their "long prayers."—Luke 20:47.

It is true that a few of the proper prayers in the Scriptures were of considerable length. As given in the Bible, Solomon's prayer at the inauguration of the temple might have taken close to ten minutes to offer. (1 Ki. 8:23-53; 2 Chron. 6:14-42) John's account of a prayer Jesus said on the last night with his disciples takes up twenty-six verses. (John 17:1-26; note also Nehemiah 9:5-38.) These prayers were special public ones, offered at unique times. God heard and approved of Solomon's, and certainly he did of Jesus'. (2 Chron. 7:12; John 11:42) And we are thankful to have these extended prayers recorded in the Scriptures.

From the examples of acceptable prayers in the Bible we can see that what Jesus was criticizing was not particularly the length of prayers, but the improper motive underlying the long, repetitious, showy prayers. Hence, when Solomon, Jesus or other men with spirituality and balance offered lengthy prayers out of a good motive and with sincerity, Jehovah did not disapprove.

There is no need or Scriptural authorization

for rules as to the length of public or private prayers—they can vary.

Sometimes special trials, problems or situations may make a long prayer appropriate, particularly so a private prayer. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed considerably. And just before selecting the twelve apostles he "continued the whole night in prayer."—Luke 6:12; 22:41-45.

On the other hand, the Bible abounds with fine prayers that were extremely brief, just dealing with the matter at hand. (Neh. 2:4; 1 Ki. 18:36, 37; 2 Ki. 6:17, 18; John 11:41, 42; Acts 1:24, 25) While other matters might have been included in the above cases, would they have been appropriate at the moment? Apparently those praying did not think so. And we recall the brevity of the model prayer Jesus provided.—Matt. 6:9-15.

Evidently the circumstances have to be taken into consideration. Though Jesus knew that it was not amiss to pray all night, did he pray at extreme length prior to feeding the four thousand? The Bible says: "He took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and began to

give them to his disciples to serve." (Mark 8:6) Similarly today at congregation meetings, the circumstances should be considered. For instance, at the celebration of the Lord's Evening Meal four separate prayers are said. If these were all of great length, the orderly arrangement for the use of the hall and the very discourse itself might needlessly be disrupted. Balance and good judgment need to be used.

In the final analysis, though, the significant point we should learn from Jesus' comments about the prayers of the religious leaders is the importance of proper motive and thought. A Christian who is praying should be sure that he is not extending his prayer so that the hearers will think him more "spiritual." Nor should he use flowery speech in order to impress others. Prayer to our loving heavenly Father is a marvelous privilege, one we should take advantage of regularly and with sincerity and humility. (Luke 18:13, 14) If we view it in this light, then the length and subject of our prayers, public or private, can fit the occasion and need.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

Farmers know that to get a bumper crop of good grain it is necessary to sow good seed. This is true in everything we do, is it not? We reap what we sow. The Bible says: "He who is

sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh." The converse is also true: "He who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit." (Gal. 6:8) To know how to sow with a view to the spirit and to reap spiritually, it is necessary to know what God's Word says and to apply its principles. Jehovah's witnesses are interested in providing people with a Bible, as well as an understanding of it. Hence during their house-to-house ministry in June, they will be offering a copy of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, for \$1; or they may combine the Bible and a copy of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, for \$1.25.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS
June 15: Be a Good Listener! Page 332. Songs to Be Used: 13, 19.

June 22: Fight Indifference with Endurance! Page 338. Songs to Be Used: 24, 26.