

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Literal towers in Bible times were elevated vantage points from which watchmen could observe happenings, warn of danger, or announce good news. Our magazine figuratively occupies such a vantage point, for it is founded on the very pinnacle of wisdom, God's Word. That elevates it above racial, national and political propagandas and prejudices, frees it from selfish bias. It is not bound by any traditional creed, but its message advances as the light on God's purposes and works increases.—Habakkuk 2:1-3.

It sees things Scripturally. When it observes this generation afflicted with greed, delinquency, hypocrisy, atheism, war, famine, pestilence, perplexity and fear, and persecution of unpopular minorities, it does not parrot the old fable about history repeating itself. Informed by Bible prophecy, it sees in these things the sign of the world's time of the end. But with bright hope it also sees opening up for us just beyond these woes the portals of a new world.

Thus viewed, "The Watchtower" stands as a watchman atop a tower, alert to what is going on, awake to note signs of danger, faithful to point out the way of escape. It announces Jehovah's kingdom established by Christ's enthronement in heaven, feeds his kingdom joint-heirs with spiritual food, cheers men of good will with glorious prospects of eternal life in a paradise earth, comforts us with the resurrection promise for the dead.

It is not dogmatic, but has a confident ring in its voice, because it is based on God's Word. It does not privately interpret prophecy, but calls attention to physical facts, sets them alongside prophecy, and you see for yourself how well the two match, how accurately Jehovah interprets his own prophecy. In the interests of our salvation, it keeps sharp and faithful focus on Bible truth, and views religious news generally.

'Be watchful in these perilous times,' God admonishes. So keep on the watch by regularly reading "The Watchtower".

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

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Abbreviations used in "The Watchtower" for the following Bible versions	
AS	American Standard Version
AT	An American Translation
Da	J. N. Darby's version
Dy	Catholic Douay version
ED	The Emphatic Diaglott
Le	Isaac Leeser's version
LXX	The Septuagint Version
Mo	James Moffatt's version
NW	New World Trans. (2nd Ed.)
Ro	J. B. Rotherham's version
RS	Revised Standard Version
Yg	Robert Young's version

Unless otherwise indicated, the Bible used is the King James Version

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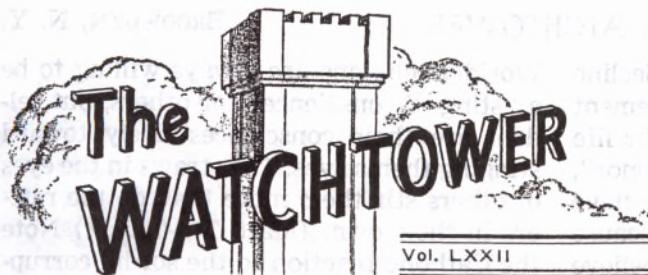
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THE MORAL COLLAPSE

THEN years ago a prominent news columnist in the United States wrote: "What is happening to us is essentially a moral collapse. The gap between what we pretend to believe and what we do in practice has constantly been widening. . . . I don't know just when the moral code was substituted by the idea that wrongdoing is not profitable. If you listen to radio dramas nowadays, you learn that crime doesn't pay—that it is not compatible with the profit motive. The G-men always get the gangster in the end. In the old days it used to be God and remorse that were the retribution. Nowadays God is J. Edgar Hoover, and he's an inadequate substitute. . . . In the twentieth century moral sanctions began to give way to scientific explanations. 'Science' confirmed the laws of survival of the fittest, biological selection, historic relativism, psychological determinism. Religion became superstition and morals wholly relative. If we go on thinking that way, democracy is on the rocks." —Los Angeles News, March 29, 1941.

Today's news underscores this analysis of a decade ago. Recently leading educators, including General Eisenhower, said that if the United States is to survive as a democracy it must develop "intelligent and fervent loyalty to moral and spiritual values". Numerous exposures of moral delinquency in governmental affairs caused Senator Fulbright to say: "Democracy is, I believe, more likely to be destroyed by the perversion of, or abandonment of, its

true moral principles than by armed attack from Russia." He suggested a Congressional investigation of "the general moral level" of the federal government's executive branch.

President Truman had branded as "asinine" some of the investigations that later unearthed much political corruption, but stubbornly contended that his house was clean and that no "illegal influence" was at work. He did not comment on the charge of "improper influence". But even he recognized the moral collapse, saying we must "try to mobilize the moral forces of the world against the unmoral forces". In the wake of exposures of improper handling of government loans and the presidential endeavor to side-step matters by the claim that it was not "illegal", the *U. S. News & World Report* of March 16 asked: "Often it is not illegal. Is it improper? Have morals gone out of style?"

For many, yes. Princess Elizabeth of England said: "We can hardly help admitting that we live in an age of growing self-indulgence, of hardening materialism and of falling moral standards. . . . I believe there is great fear in our generation of being labeled as priggish. In consequence, people are sometimes afraid to show disapproval of what they know to be wrong." Prior to this Sir Stafford Cripps had told a conference that the "moral background of our community life has become very dim and is sometimes almost obscured". Senator Robert Taft of the United

States, in an article deplored the decline of political morality, recalled a statement that "the decline of integrity in public life has brought us into the twilight of honor", and concluded: "Perhaps the people have lost their sense of moral integrity because their leaders have lost it, but I don't believe so. I think it is a feeling of hopeless disgust rather than one of approval."—*Reader's Digest*, November, 1950.

As seems customary with the highly respected religious organizations of the world, only after public opinion became aroused did they find their conscience and cry out belated protests. One clergyman declared: "The slovenly and tawdry manner of conduct and conversation is an index of sloppy and shabby character. All this goes for the public press, the movies, the pictorial magazines, and the ham commentators, together with the literature of the time, all of which appear to take a satanic and moronic relish in splashing their vulgarities into the face of the public."

Last November cleric R. J. McCracken said: "The greatest danger that faces this country is the danger of moral lassitude—liberty turned to license, rights demanded and duties shirked, the moral sense deteriorating, the traditions and standards of the nation weakened, the spiritual forces within it losing ground." A week later in similar vein he said: "Americans often speak of Russia as atheistic. It is openly and frankly atheistic. Ought we not to ask, however, in what significant or realistic sense can we apply the name 'Christian' to ourselves or to our national life? . . . Is the moral tone of the nation—its politics, its business life, its literature, its theatre, its movies, its radio networks, its television stations—Christian?"

Last March a New York city rabbi said church and synagogue should be a "sting of conscience" to rulers and governments.

Worldly religions are always willing to be a "sting of conscience" for others, but seldom are their consciences lively toward stinging themselves. The straws in the eyes of others stir them more than do the rafters in their own. (Matt. 7:3-5, NW) Note the Catholic reaction to the sordid corruption from gambling, recently exposed. After noting these "shocking" corruptions of public life and sports due to gambling, the American Catholic Philosophers Association whitewashed church gambling by stating: "Be it resolved that this association, while convinced that gambling is not in itself immoral, does hereby condemn gambling carried on in ways and conditions that are immoral."

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, of Union Theological Seminary, recently commented in puzzlement on the moral collapse: "It is not quite clear why everything seems to have gone wrong in man's actual history." The Bible is clear on it, showing it to be a part of the sign of the last days of Satan's world. (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) The Bible counsel to resist temptation and shun wrongdoing at the start is practical, and one person wrote this in substance to the *New York Times*, then added: "There will be many who will say this is too naïve, too simple, that the matter is more complicated than that. But if it is so simple, how many of us do it? The truth is always simple; it is we who complicate it."

Not politicians nor social workers nor clergymen will stem the moral collapse. The Bible's remedy is the practical remedy, and practical persons will apply its simple remedies, for relief now and for permanent relief for all mankind in a new world of righteousness. Those who sigh and cry because of these immoral conditions, who recognize their spiritual need, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, will be filled and made joyful.—Ezek. 9:4; Matt. 5:3-7, NW.

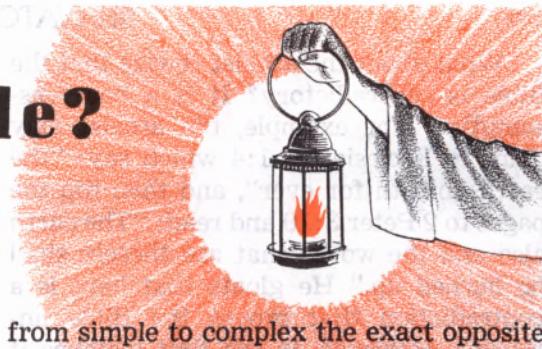
How Practical Is the Bible?

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light on my path."—Ps. 119:105, AT.

J EHOVAH'S Word the Bible is the best seller of all time. For many it is also becoming the best dust-collector of our time. The most-sold but proportionately least-read book. Why? The Bible's worth comes under assault from many quarters. The scientist says it is not scientific, the atheist says it is contradictory, the modernist clergy say it is legend, the fundamentalists make it appear ridiculous and void, and the people generally dismiss it as impractical for guidance in this hard-headed, realistic, wicked old world. But it is not unscientific, not contradictory, not legendary, not ridiculous and void, and above all it is not impractical. The scientist, the atheist, the modernist and fundamentalist clergy, and the people generally are wrong, for the Bible is the most scientific, consistent, factual, reasonable and practical book on earth! It alone is the reliable lamp and light for the feet and pathways of men.—Ps. 119:105.

² Only briefly will limited space allow us to turn back these assaults, but it should suffice to open honest minds to further investigation. Though the Bible is not provided as a textbook on science, yet when it touches on scientific matters it is accurate and true. For example, science teaches that man's speech evolved from grunts and growls as he ascended from some primitive ape, but the known facts are that the older the language the more difficult and complex it is, forcing the authorities in the field to conclude that instead of speech evolving

1. What charges undermine the Bible, yet what is its value?
2. What facts refute the charge that it is unscientific?



from simple to complex the exact opposite is true. This matches the Bible account, that man was created perfect, with full powers of speech, capable of expressing in fine shades of meaning the thoughts of a perfect mind.* Also, scientists scoff at the Bible account of Jacob engineering spotted offspring from his flocks by making the females look at a spotted pattern-work of rods, such ideas of prenatal influence or maternal impressions being now largely discarded. However, the scientists overlook that this was only Jacob's opinion, and that in a dream that followed Jehovah corrected Jacob and showed him the real reason for the spotted offspring, a reason in harmony with Mendel's laws of heredity, which scientists did not appreciate until this twentieth century.† (Gen. 30:37-43; 31:10-12) Finally, ridicule comes from scientists because the Bible classes the rabbit with animals that chew the cud. (Lev. 11:6; Deut. 14:7) But now a few alert scientists have discovered that rabbits do accomplish in effect or principle a chewing of the cud, by a strange process causing food to go through its digestive system twice. This unusual fact has been verified by the Smithsonian Institution.‡ The Bible is not like the textbooks that scientists write and which are useless and out-of-date in a few years because of their many mistakes; the Bible endures as true forever.—Isa. 40:8; John 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:25.

* See *Evolution versus The New World*, page 38.
† For details see *The Watchtower*, November 1, 1950, page 431.

‡ See the *Awake!* magazine, April 22, 1951, page 27.

³ What about the atheist charge that the Bible is contradictory? It is a hasty assumption. For example, the atheist may point to Ecclesiastes 1:4 which says "the earth abideth for ever", and then flip the pages to 2 Peter 3:10 and read: "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." He gloats that here is a contradiction that proves the Bible unreliable. However, in the first instance it is the literal earth that does abide forever; while in the second reference the term "earth" stands for the peoples generally and their organized governments under Satan. (2 Cor. 4:4) The context shows this correct, for it had just mentioned that the earth in Noah's day was destroyed by water. We know the flood did not destroy the literal earth; it is still here. It did wash out of existence the wicked peoples and governing arrangements upon the surface of the earth. This symbolical reference to peoples as "earth" is not infrequent. (1 Ki. 10:24; Ps. 66:4; 98:9) Or, the atheist may say Christ contradicted himself, one time telling his disciples not to provide themselves with purses and on another occasion instructing them to do so. (Matt. 10:9, 10; Luke 10:4; 22:35, 36) In the first instance they were being sent forth on missionary work, to trust in God's provision for them as workers worthy of their pay. They would be taking spiritual food to the people, and interested persons would gladly respond with some material help for the preachers. But in the second instance Jesus was about to be nailed to the torture stake, his followers scattered, persecution set in, with enemies on all sides, and even those favoring the message fearful of showing friendliness for Christ's followers. Then Christians would have to make provision for their material needs.

⁴ By ignoring the context and possible

symbolic meanings of scriptures the atheist thinks he finds contradictions, and because he is looking for contradictions he ends his search with his superficial reading, happy, feeling rewarded, thinking he has found what he was seeking. He does not wish to continue his study to get an understanding that would bring harmony to the passages that his prejudiced mind views as contradictory. He has his reward. —Matt. 6:2, 5, 16.

⁵ The modernist clergy join in with the attacks on the Bible because they are caught in this trap: "The fear of man leads one into a snare." (Prov. 29:25, AT) The popular concept of the day is that the Bible is only myth and legend, and its only value is literary. Fearing the scorn of the worldly wise and trying to keep pace with the intellectual classes and stay in their favor, the modernist clergy abandon the Bible truths to embrace the theories and philosophies of the smart men of this world. The Bible sounds a warning against such spineless deserters: "Look out: perhaps there may be some man that will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ." (Col. 2:8, NW) Typical of those who abandon the Bible in fact but cling to it for a selfish living is the attitude expressed by the head of a theological seminary in Denver, Colorado. He said: "The biggest challenge of religious education is to fit a camel-train philosophy into a diesel civilization." This is just another way of saying that the Bible is not practical, that it is too old-fashioned for our day, that it is about as out-of-date as a camel train would be in our fast-moving, machine-age civilization.

⁶ Creed-bound fundamentalist clergymen

3. What instances may the atheist cite to support his charge of contradiction? Do they prove his point?
4. Why is the atheist so readily deceived?

5. How do modernist clergy view the Bible, and why?
6. How do fundamentalist clergy make it seem ridiculous and void?

that always take the Bible so literally make it ridiculous. After emoting at length on how God is love, they turn right around and say that he torments people forever in a lake of fire and brimstone. However, if the punishment of the wicked were to be torment, why did Jehovah tell Adam that to disobediently eat the forbidden fruit would mean death? (Gen. 2:17) If the wages of sin is eternal torment, why does Romans 6:23 say: "The wages sin pays is death"? (NW) To withstand eternal burning in a lake of fire, one would have to be immortal. And so these fundamentalists teach concerning man's soul. But if the human soul is immortal, why does Ezekiel 18:4 state: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"? And if man is immortal, what need is there for a resurrection through Christ Jesus? In many ways such clergymen make God's Word appear ridiculous and void by their religious traditions and creeds.

⁷ The Roman Catholic clergy are foremost in making void the Bible by their tradition. Only last February Catholic Bishop F. E. Hyland said in a speech in Columbus, Ohio, that "oral tradition is equally as valid as the Bible in determining what the great religious truths are". However, one of these traditions is that Mary's body of flesh and blood ascended literally into heaven. Yet 1 Corinthians 15:50, according to the Catholic Douay Bible, states: "Flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God." Obviously, this Catholic tradition and this Bible text are not 'equally valid'. Either the tradition or the scripture is false. It is not the scripture. By adding these traditions as supplements to God's Word, religious organizations come under the condemnation declared at Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18, and add divine plagues to themselves. The Bible does not need the addition of unin-

7. How do Catholic clergy view their church tradition as compared to the Bible, and what results therefrom?

spired traditions prattled by men to make it complete: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Tim. 3:16, 17, NW.

MODERN-DAY SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

⁸ By clinging to traditions and creeds that make void the Bible today's clergy are like the scribes and Pharisees. They added their oral tradition to the Hebrew Scriptures, and to them Jesus said: "You have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition. You hypocrites, Isaiah aptly prophesied about you, when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, yet their hearts are far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep paying respect to me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines.'" (Matt. 15:6-9, NW) The scribes and Pharisees read with their lips from the Law of Moses and quoted with their mouths the Prophets and Psalms, but did not live up to the divine precepts. They added their Talmudic traditions and based their doctrines upon these human commands. Moreover, in a showy, public display they decorated the tombs of the prophets and wailed that they would never have shared in taking the blood of these martyrs; then they turned right around and pressured unwilling Pilate into killing God's greatest prophet, Christ Jesus!—Matt. 23:29-36; 27:22-25; John 19:12-16.

⁹ So today the clergy of Christendom eulogize Bible characters and man-made saints, but persecute Jehovah's witnesses, who are preaching God's pure kingdom

8. What was the course of the scribes and Pharisees with regard to their oral tradition and the Hebrew Scriptures?

9. How is their course paralleled by the clergy of Christendom today?

message as representatives of God and Christ. (Matt. 25:40, 45) The clergy and people generally give the Bible a place of honor, make it the best seller, have it in their museums, and amid much fanfare pay prices for rare copies that are far higher than any other printed book draws. They have it in their homes, they place it in hotel rooms, swear on it in court and use it to administer oaths of office. Bible societies distribute it world-wide, and either in all or in part it circulates in more than a thousand languages. Christendom's politicians love to quote it and pretend that their political parties will fulfill the Kingdom promises. Many millions of people today give the Bible much lip-service, as did the scribes and Pharisees; but also like the scribes and Pharisees they fail to live up to it, add to and subtract from it, make it void, and persecute and sometimes kill those who do take the Bible as a practical guide and try to live up to its commands.—Matt. 23:13.

^{be}¹⁰ Despite their shallow lip-service to the Bible and their circulation of it booming into the billions, Christendom's populations are not edified by it. Their leaders have actually killed the Bible in the minds of many by the publicized statements that it is unscientific, contradictory, mere legend and myth, and oftentimes they have made it seem ridiculous and void by their false creeds and traditions. Following these blind leaders, the blind people stumble into the same blundering conclusions and dismiss the Bible as impractical for guidance in modern living. Any who try to follow it and base hope on it are accused by them as being unrealistic, idealistic dreamers. How well do today's worldlings fit the description given them at 2 Timothy 3:4, 5 (NW): "Lovers of pleasures rather than

lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power."

WHO ARE THE PRACTICAL ONES?

^{be}¹¹ Since this world dismisses the Bible as of little importance because it is impractical, we should expect this world to be very practical. But just how practical is it? How practical is this modern generation living in the twentieth century with its glittering, scientific, atomic civilization? How practical, for example, were the two world wars they fought, by which they soaked the earth with innocent blood, spilled from the veins of women and children as well as from soldiers? How practical is their present course toward a third world war? How practical is this world's politics, politics that has become so corrupt and riddled with graft that it is a standing joke with the people? And what about the politicians that are oftentimes more the pawns of gamblers than servants of the people? How practical is her economic system, that allows a few ultrarich to loll in the lap of luxury while millions exist in anxiety over obtaining the bare necessities of life? How practical is her rising tide of crime, the growing immorality, the soaring divorce rate, the mushrooming juvenile delinquency, problem drinkers seeking escape, and even common gluttony, all of which courses of conduct bring down upon us a flood of physical and mental ailments, venereal diseases, broken homes, illegitimate children, overcrowded jails, human heartache and untimely death? Please tell us, just what is practical about all this?

^{be}¹² How can people who indifferently and callously accept such conditions and even condone them as normal charge the Bible with being impractical? If the peoples of

10. What have Christendom's leaders actually done to the Bible, resulting in what?

11. Since this world dismisses the Bible as impractical, what questions probe into the world's practicalness?
12. How would the Bible be practical in coping with such world woes?

this world followed the Bible, they would not kill one another, but would beat sword into plowshare. Nation would not lift up sword against nation. Nor would they learn war anymore. (Ex. 20:13; Mic. 4:3) Would not that be practical? Would not the Bible prohibition on stealing and bribery be a good guide for politicians? In Israel the kings were to have a copy of God's law for guidance; politicians today have the Bible. It would be a blessing if they followed it as much as they quote it. (Ex. 20:15; Deut. 17:18; Amos 5:12) As for the economic system that makes the few rich and the many poor, it could not so operate under Bible principles, which in several ways made provision for the poor. (Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 23:22; Deut. 15:7, 8, 11; 14:28, 29; Prov. 29:7) And would not the Bible be practical in stemming the rising tide of crime, turning it back, drying it up completely? Obedience to its commands would eliminate fornication and adultery, divorce and broken homes, venereal disease and illegitimate children. Moral parents would instruct their offspring in godly principles, to the elimination of juvenile delinquency. Prohibited gluttony and drunkenness would cease, and with it many of the crimes and illnesses and heartaches that attend them.—Ex. 20:12-17; Deut. 6:6, 7; 21:20, 21; Prov. 22:6; Mark 10:11, 12; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

¹³ In the wake of all this some worldling will cry out: All well and good, but it is easier said than done! Of course it is easier said than done. Everything is easier said than done. That is why so many persons say so much and do so little. That is why so many preach the Bible but so few practice it. But the fact remains that there are individuals that strive to heed these Bible precepts, and succeed in large measure. If one, or a hundred, or a few thousand

13. What objecting cry is raised to all this, yet what is the key to success in applying Bible principles?

can do this, can the remaining millions plead that the Bible standards are too idealistic, too far above imperfect man to be practical to shoot at? If application of these principles would end wars, dirty politics, oppressive economic systems; if it would empty jails, end crime, quench delinquency and drunkenness, and eliminate many diseases, would it not be a practical endeavor? Applying the principles to daily living is not as hard as it may seem at first. The procedure is to change over your mind, which directs your body. Alter your will, desires, interests, disposition, mental outlook and heart condition. With these inward driving forces changed for the better our actions will automatically change for the better. The key to effecting such change is what the mind feeds on, and the Bible is the inexhaustible storehouse of the needed mental food.

¹⁴ Romans 12:2 (NW) states: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over." Serious Bible study will change your views on many things, will refashion your mind and make it over according to God's righteous view of matters. Colossians 3:9, 10 (NW) advises: "Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality which through accurate knowledge is being renewed according to the image of the one who created it." So it is accurate knowledge that enables one to cast off old ways and take on new ones that coincide with those of God and Christ. Ephesians 4:22-24 (NW) adds its similar testimony: "You should put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct . . . You should be made new in the force actuating your mind, and should put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true right-

14. What scriptures bear out your answer on how to succeed?

eousness and loving-kindness." With Jesus in mind, the Bible admonishes: "Arm yourselves with the same mental disposition." (1 Pet. 4:1, NW) He did so by study of God's Word. If we do likewise and fill our mind and heart with Bible truth, good will come of it: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."—Matt. 12:34, NW.

¹⁵ We have considered some of humanity's bigger woes that the absorption of Bible principles would erase. Now reflect on some lesser benefits, improvements in human relations and everyday living. Consider, "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." (Gal. 6:7, NW) Sowing good may seem impractical, but it has its satisfying harvest in due time. Sow evil, and you reap that in time also. Go out with a "chip on your shoulder" and someone will knock it off. Be cross and grumpy and grumbly, and others will be that way toward you. Shout angry words, and others will return them with interest. Strike a man, and you will very likely receive a blow or two in return. But treat people courteously, smile, be friendly, show kindness, act in sincerity, unselfishly, with Christian love, and in all probability they will respond in like manner. "Cast your bread upon the surface of the water, for after many days you will find it." (Eccl. 11: 1, AT) You may do quite a bit of sowing before the time of reaping arrives; but eventually, after many days, results will prove your good course practical. As Jesus said: "Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing. For with the measure that you are measuring out they will measure out to you in return."—Luke 6:38, NW.

15. What Scriptural principles can be applied to everyday living to improve human relations?

CONQUER EVIL WITH GOOD

¹⁶ And what if a person approaches you in wrath? Heed Romans 12:17 (NW): "Return evil for evil to no one." In such cases the Bible advises: "A gentle answer turns away wrath; but harsh words stir up anger." (Prov. 15:1, AT) Your soft answer will soften his hard approach, whereas harsh words on your part would harden the person all the more. So refuse to supply fuel for the fire another causes to burn against you, and the fire will soon burn itself out and cool off. In sober moments to follow, the hothead will feel shame at his childishness as he reflects upon your exercise of restraint and maturity, and you will have avoided the shameful folly of rendering evil for evil.

¹⁷ If a person acts wickedly toward you, why should you make yourself into his evil image? That is the impractical way of this wicked old world. Because one calls you names, must you berate him? If one lies or backbites or gossips about you, must you repay him in kind, and yourself become a hateful liar or backbiter or gossip, lowering yourself to his level? Would he not thereby show himself the stronger, in that he changes you into his image, his evil practices becoming your practices? If your adversary is wicked, must you abandon all your good principles and convictions in the name of being practical, or in the name of some other such senseless expediency, and lower yourself to his wicked level, and eventually be a sharer with him in God's wrath? Rendering evil for evil sets in motion a vicious circle of evil-doing. Lie begets lie, hate breeds more hate, violence spawns greater violence, and the circle of evil gains momentum as each races in the wicked footsteps of the other, trying to outstrip the other in evil-doing, striving to repay the other with greater evil. By such

16. What if a person approaches you in wrath?

17. Why is it folly to render evil for evil? How will Christians counter evil?

dizzy whirlings both men and nations are soon unbalanced and toppled into Satan's pitfalls. Christians will shun such snares by refusing to complete the first circle or set it in motion by returning evil for evil. Instead, they will counter with good. "Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil with the good."—Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:21, NW.

¹⁸ In view of all of the foregoing, we strongly contend that it is highly practical for persons today to follow the principles of the Bible, not just toward fellow Christians, but in their dealings with all men. "If you love those loving you, of what credit is it to you? For even the sinners love those loving them. And if you do good to those doing good to you, really of what credit is it to you? Even the sinners do the same." Rather, show unselfish love toward all, even as Jehovah is "kind toward the unthankful and wicked". (Luke 6:27-36, NW) The good that you sow upon the seas of humanity will return to you manifold in due time, if not from the recipients then from Jehovah God.

¹⁹ It is practical to live in accord with God's Word. Some may protest that if all men did it would be fine, but since the majority do not it is useless for a few to do

18. Toward whom will we practice such good principles, and with what example in mind?

19. What further protests fall flat, and when will all opposition to righteous principles vanish?

so. Yet these same men fight for their political and social convictions, even though they may be in a minority. Christians stand firm in their beliefs. Other worldlings may say Christ's kingdom will be fine when it gets going, but until then they must do something to improve conditions. However, Christians do not sit idly by, awaiting the Kingdom's full sway over earth. They are given so much work to do that it is imperative that they redeem the time in order to complete their gospel-preaching. Unimpressed, the worldlings continue absorbed in their own political and social schemes, dismissing the Bible as impractical. Actually, their dismissal of the Bible as impractical is only to justify their disagreement with it or their unwillingness to walk in its clean and narrow ways. They want to do things in their way, trusting in their own schemes, their own efforts, their own right. That is highly impractical, in view of the fact that Jehovah God is the wisest and mightiest force in the universe. At Armageddon, God will in a very practical way sweep into oblivion all who oppose him, and will make all who remain of like mind with him. Then people will be unified in the righteous principles of His Word. Everyone will put them into practice, and in that righteous new world all of the woes of this old world will have vanished like smoke in the wind.



Spirit of Crusades Appears in Truman Speech

On January 8, 1951, President Truman addressed a joint session of the United States Eighty-second Congress to present his State of the Union message. Outlining the need for continued American support to countries in the North Atlantic Treaty in the mounting world crisis with communism, Mr. Truman said: "The defense of Europe is the basis for the defense of the whole free world—ourselves included. Next to the United States, Europe is the largest workshop in the world. It is also a homeland of great religious beliefs shared by many of our citizens—beliefs which are now threatened by the tide of atheistic communism." Such words may revive as well the suspicion that the religion which makes its home in Vatican City has for some time been anxious to stir up some form of crusade to save its doorstep from the threatening Red tide. Before jumping on crusade band wagons, however, thoughtful persons will reflect on the bloodshed and suffering caused by the useless medieval crusades.



Why the Bible Is Specially Practical for Our Day



AT THE mention of Armageddon and the fact that we are living in the last days of this present system of things, many will rise up to scoff and say that that is the most impractical part of the entire Bible, to believe that God is going to fight a battle of Armageddon to destroy the wicked and usher in a perfect kingdom that will transform earth into a global paradise. Highly impractical and unreasonable, they say, is the declared message that we are living in the last days. They will proceed to cite the fact that the same claim was being made in their father's day and in their grandfather's day. That may be true. We know that many false warnings have been sounded. Just as today there are many clergymen who misinterpret the Scriptures and make them ridiculous and void, so in generations past there were some who did not understand the Bible prophecies

concerning the last days and hence sounded premature warnings. The mere fact that there were false alarms in the past does not prove the present alarm sounded by Jehovah's witnesses to be false. It is folly to judge a matter before you hear it.
—Prov. 18:13.

² The Scriptures show that Christ Jesus does not come in a flesh-and-blood form visible to man at the time of his second presence. (John 14:19; 1 Cor. 15:45) His kingdom is in heaven. He is enthroned there. But he turns his attention toward earth, to cause warning to be given prior to Armageddon, the battle of God Almighty, wherein the wicked will be wiped from the face of the earth as thoroughly as they were in Noah's day. Armageddon is no fight between nations, but is Jehovah's battle, fought through Christ and his angels, against Satan and his demons and their visible representatives on earth. (Rev. 16:14-16; 19:11-21; 20:1-3) Warning is given in advance so that honest persons who love righteousness, who are willing to use their minds, who are not blinded by the tinsel and glitter of this present civilization, may discern the approach of Armageddon and take the necessary steps for survival.

³ In the Scriptures this battle of Armageddon is pictured as a time of winter. Christ Jesus, in speaking of it as the greatest tribulation

2. What is "Armageddon", and why warn of its coming?

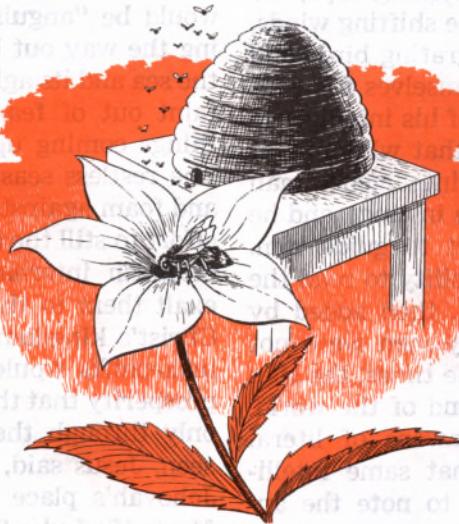
3. To what time is Armageddon likened, and what scriptures show the appropriateness of so doing?



ever to come upon the earth, likened it to the rigors of winter. (Matt. 24:20, 21) Marking it as a time when the wintry elements would be used to carry out Jehovah's will of destruction, the psalmist states: "Praise the Eternal from the earth, ye depths of ocean and ye waterspouts, lightning and hail and snow and ice, storms carrying out his will." (Ps. 148:7, 8, *Mo*) Corroborating this we read: "He bids the snow fall on the earth, also the heavy rains, that keep men within doors—to let all mortals feel his power; the beasts retire into their dens, and lurk inside their lairs. Storms blow out of the south, and cold comes from the north; the ice forms at his breath, and freezes the broad water hard; he loads a heavy cloud with hail, and from the clouds his lightning scatters, darting here and darting there, turning as he directs it, doing whatsoe'er he bids it over all his world. Have you ever entered the stores of the snow? Have you seen the arsenals of hail—which I have reserved against the time of distress, against the day of war and battle?" (Job 37:6-12; 38:22, *Mo*; 38:23, *AT*) These wintry elements will be used by Jehovah at Armageddon to fulfill his will in bringing destruction upon a wicked world.

WARNING OF WINTER'S APPROACH

* Did you note the statement in the above quotation that during this time of wintry wrath the beasts retire into their dens and lurk in their lairs? In this way many



beasts of earth yearly pass through the hard time of winter. Also consider that visible evidences indicate the approach of literal winter. The blue skies of summer give way to the gray bleak skies of late fall. Temperatures drop, winds swing round from the south and come out of the north, with a chill that touches the bones, bringing snow flurries with them. The sap of trees retreats underground, the stream of life slows, leaves fall, the days become very short. We reach the time on the calendar that shows it is the seasonal time for winter. From instinct the animals appreciate the meaning of these changes. Birds gather in flocks for southward flight. Some land and water animals and certain insects also migrate. Other insects store food, such as the honeybee that packs honey in hives during the favorable season of summer and retires within those shelters stocked with food to live out the winter. Many other animals prepare when they see the sign of winter's approach, not by migrating or by storing up food in dens, but by changing their eating habits to store up fat in their own bodies and by thickening furry pelts to keep out the coming cold.

* It would not be very practical for the animals and insects and birds to refuse to play their roles in preparation for the migration or seclusion or hibernation necessary for their survival of the rigors of winter. To ignore the sign of approaching winter would mean death. These animals

4. What evidences warn of winter's approach, and how does wildlife react for preservation?

5. What has Jehovah provided them for guidance? What failure on their part would be highly impractical?

and birds and insects are not of such intelligence to appreciate the sign of approaching winter, but Jehovah has provided them with instinct that moves them in ways of preparation for their self-preservation. It would be highly impractical, yes, suicidal for them to ignore or fail to obey the instinctive urgings to move them to make the various preparations peculiar to their kind.

⁶ Man can read the signs of the weather, can note his calendar to see that according to seasonal chronology winter approaches. He can see the changing face of the sky, the falling leaves, the shortening days, the dropping temperatures, the shifting winds, the snow flurries, the migrating birds and the animals fattening themselves for winter hibernation. Because of his intelligence he is able to understand that winter is at the door. Because of his intelligence man does not need to rely upon instinct, and he possesses no such instinct to guide him. Jesus referred to man's ability to read the weather signs of the sky, then added by way of rebuke that many men were not able to read the sign of the times, the sign of his presence and the end of the world. By intelligence man is aware of literal winter's approach. By that same intelligence he should be able to note the approach of the winter of Armageddon. (Matt. 16:1-4) Just as sure a sign of its coming is provided, a sign visible to man, to be reasoned upon intelligently and not to be sensed through some instinct or intuition or hunch. What, then, is this provided sign?

⁷ The disciples of Jesus asked the same question: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the consummation of the sys-

tem of things?" In answer Jesus said that nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom in world war, in the wake of which would come pestilences and food shortages and earthquakes in many places. His followers would be hated by all nations, persecuted, some killed, and even among his followers many would be stumbled and these would hate and betray those standing fast. Despite the opposition these faithful ones would endure to the end, preaching the good news of the established kingdom to all the inhabited earth for a witness before the end at Armageddon would come. During these happenings there would be "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and its agitation, while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth". The restless seas of humanity would dash and foam against themselves, and in a vain effort to still the stormy turmoil men would establish international ruling bodies and exalt them to the holy place reserved for Christ's kingdom, claiming these political makeshifts would bring in the peace and prosperity that the Bible foretells will come only through the Kingdom. When this is seen, Jesus said, it is high time to flee to Jehovah's place of refuge.—Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21, NW.

⁸ Christ also declared that the preaching of the Kingdom gospel would separate the peoples of earth, dividing them as a shepherd does the sheep and goats, the sheep-like ones taking a stand for the Kingdom and gaining eternal life, the goatish ones that balk being herded into destruction at Armageddon. (Matt. 25:31-46) Other prophecies show other parts of the sign of Armageddon's nearness. Peter spoke of the scoffers that would walk after their own lusts, sneer at the warning, and de-

6. Rather than instinct, what faculty has God given man? In line with this discussion, how should he use it?
7. What happenings did Jesus say would partly signify the end of this system of things?

8. What takes place with regard to the people generally? the scoffers? the ultrarich?

mand: "Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning." (2 Pet. 3:3, 4, NW) James foretold that there would be the ultrarich who would pile up their wealth for the last days, that they would greedily hold back the hire of laborers, but that none of this would avail them in the days of his wrath at Armageddon. (Jas. 5:1-6) Let 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 12, 13 (NW) round out the picture of conditions in the last days:

⁹ "Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, without gratitude, with no loving-kindness, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with self-esteem, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power; and from these turn away. In fact, all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted. On the other hand, wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled."

¹⁰ The Bible prophecies show that during this time of unprecedented woe and the preaching work and the dividing of the people Christ would be reigning in the midst of his enemies, and at the climax of this time period Armageddon would strike. (Ps. 110:1, 2; Rev. 11:15-18, NW) Then concerning this series of visible happenings Jesus concluded: "Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just

as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur." (Matt. 24:32-34, NW) Beginning in 1914, has not our generation seen world wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution and murder of Jehovah's witnesses, yet their worldwide preaching of the good news that Christ is enthroned in Kingdom power in the heavens? Do we not also see distress of nations, men faint with fear over what they see coming to pass, the worsening conditions of both adult and juvenile delinquency, the millions of lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God but who don a hypocritical form of godly devotion, and finally first a League of Nations and now a United Nations that seeks to rule the world, and which religious and political world leaders have lauded as the only hope for peace and as the "political expression of the kingdom of God on earth"? Moreover, these things started happening on time, for just as our calendar tells when winter is due so Bible chronology told us that these events were due to start A.D. 1914. *The Watchtower* has repeatedly published this date with proof of its Scripturality, the first time being in 1880, thirty-four years in advance. Hence our generation is the generation that will see the start and finish of these things, including Armageddon.

THE COMPOSITE SIGN

¹¹ And here is a point not to be overlooked. All of these happenings combined constitute the sign. Each one is not a sign in itself. It is only a part of the composite sign. It is like the case of literal winters.

9. What general description of conditions among men is given at 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 12, 13?

10. Are physical facts in fulfillment of these prophecies now observable? What may this generation expect to see?

11. What vital point must not be overlooked? How is it illustrated in the case of literal winters?

The mere fact that days are getting shorter does not prove winter's imminence. Days are growing shorter in July. Falling leaves alone prove nothing. Some trees shed leaves the year round, and others may drop theirs because of disease or drought. Even summer skies may turn gray for a time, and unseasonal storms blow up, or cold spells may come in early fall; but none of these taken alone proves the advent of winter. But when all of the previously mentioned conditions are present in combination, then together they indicate with certainty the approach of winter.

¹² So it is with the events of the last days. When these events are told as indicating the last days, many persons say such things happened in times past, history repeats itself, our fathers said these things happened in their day and they were told that the last days were upon them. But we know now that they were not living in the last days. The point is, men misinterpreted the events. They failed to appreciate that not just one or two or a half dozen of these things must be seen, but that all of them must be seen. The sign is not wars, or famines, or pestilences, or earthquakes, or persecutions, or gospel-preaching, or conditions of fear and perplexity and delinquency. None of these events taken singly signify that we are in the last days. But when ALL of these happenings come to pass upon one generation, in the foretold series or sequence, with none missing, then ALL OF THESE THINGS TOGETHER CONSTITUTE THE SIGN.

¹³ When we see this composite sign, it is time to heed Jesus' warning to flee to God's organization for safety during Armageddon. Delay would be fatal for us, and hence Jesus said with the wintertime

of Armageddon in mind: "Keep praying that your flight may not occur in winter-time nor on the sabbath day; for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." (Matt. 24:20, 21, NW) Too cold to flee in that wintertime and too late to work out salvation on that sabbath period. On that occasion it is Jehovah who will work through Christ at Armageddon, to vindicate His name. If we are to do the necessary working and fleeing in preparation for surviving Armageddon, we must discern the sign now, appreciate it now, find out Jehovah's requirements for us now, and take the essential precautions now by obeying right now his counsel on how we can weather Armageddon's storm.

¹⁴ How practical would it be for the birds to refuse to fly south at winter's approach? Just as practical as it would be for us to ignore the sign of the nearness of Armageddon. How practical would it be for the honeybees to refuse to store honey in their hives for nourishment during winter? How practical would the woodchuck be that ignored the approach of winter and refused to heed the urgings of his instinct to make preparation? Or the bear that refused to change his eating habits to fatten himself and thicken his fur in order to survive a long winter sleep? Not practical at all, but so impractical that death would follow. For us to now ignore the composite sign of Armageddon's approach would be just as fatal for us as it would be for the swallow to refuse to fly south, or the woodchuck to hibernate, or the honeybee to store food for winter. It would happen to us as stated at Jeremiah 8:20: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

12. What accounts for the sounding of false warnings concerning the last days in the time of our fathers or grandfathers?

13. What is imperative for us when we see the composite sign?

14. How practical would it be for us to now ignore the composite sign?

¹⁵ Now is the favorable season of harvest and summertime wherein we study God's Word, preach the gospel, warn others, bring forth fruits of righteousness, and store up treasures in heaven that will assure us God's protection during Armageddon. We may have to change our eating habits now, shifting to good spiritual food for our upbuilding and strengthening in Christian work. Now, before Armageddon starts, is the time for it. When wintry destruction sets in the favorable season for work will be gone, the harvest will be past, the summer will be over, and many will see that they are not saved. Like the bird or the bee or the bear that might wait for the first blizzard to be convinced of winter's coming, these tardy persons will be caught unawares and be swept into destruction. When winter starts it is too late for animals to prepare for survival. So it will be for persons who wait for Armageddon's start to begin flight.

MOST PRACTICAL NOW, BEFORE ARMAGEDDON

¹⁶ With Armageddon scheduled for this generation, we can appreciate why the Bible is specially practical for our day. Not only does it withstand the reckless charges hurled at it by scientist and atheist; not only does it prove God true and men liars who would make it ridiculous and void; not only would the application of its righteous principles eliminate the majority of the woes that plague the social and economic and political and military spheres of this world; not only would its precepts applied to everyday human relations erase nervous tension and put pleasant companionship in its stead; not only for all these overwhelming reasons is the Bible so practical for us now, but primarily is it so because it will chart our course through the perilous storm of Armageddon's winter and

15. Why would it be fatal to delay flight to God's organization until Armageddon started?
16. So why is the Bible practical, and specially so now?

guide us through the portals of a new world more refreshing and lasting than any literal springtime could ever be.—Isa. 2:2-4; 11:6-9; Rev. 21:1, 4.

¹⁷ If we accept and follow the Bible as our practical guide now, after Armageddon we will look over the destruction wrought by the unleashed wrath of Jehovah God. We will see the wreckage and ruin of this so-called diesel civilization, that was too proud and conceited and sophisticated to fit itself to what it considered a camel-train philosophy. Like dung upon the ground will lie the unburied bodies of those who would not heed God. Strewn over the earth, unlamented, says Jeremiah. (25:33) There will lie the corpses of those practical people, the hardheaded realists of this world, the smart ones who thought the Bible unscientific, the godless ones who thought the Bible contradictory, the religious philosophers who thought the Bible legendary, the narrow fanatics who made His Word ridiculous and void, and the masses of blind ones who followed these blind guides and who deemed the Bible impractical for life in the old world's atomic age. All are blinded by Satan the Devil, who is himself the great blind guide of this present wicked system of things. (Matt. 15:14; 23:16-26; 2 Cor. 4:4) We do not want to reap the fruits of such blindness. We do not wish to be as blind as such ones, till white looks black and black looks white, till what is practical looks impractical and what is impractical looks practical. Let this old world scoff and call us foolish and witless. It comes as no surprise, for this too was foretold:

¹⁸ "The speech about the torture stake is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is God's

17. What scene will Armageddon's survivors view? What blindness will we avoid?

18. What evaluation does God's Word make of worldly wisdom and divine wisdom? of the worldly wise and Jehovah's witnesses?

power. For it is written: 'I will make the wisdom of the wise men perish, and I will shove the intelligence of the intellectual aside.' Where is the wise man? Where the scribe? Where the debater of this system of things? Did not God make the wisdom of the world foolish? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not get to know God, God saw good through the foolishness of what is preached to save those believing. For both the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks look for wisdom; but we preach Christ impaled, to the Jews a cause for falling but to the nations foolishness; however, to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because a foolish thing of God is wiser than men, and a weak thing of God is stronger than men. For you behold his calling of you, brothers, that not many wise in a fleshly way were called, not many powerful, not many noble; but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put the wise men to shame, and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put the strong things to shame; and God chose the ignoble things of the world and the things looked down upon, the things that are not, that he might bring to nothing the things that are, in order that no flesh might boast in the sight of God. . . . If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this system of things, let him become a fool, that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written: 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness.' And again: 'Jehovah knows that the reasonings of the wise men are futile.' Hence let no one

be boasting in men."—1 Cor. 1:18-29; 3:18-21, NW.

¹⁹ There is wisdom in God's Word for those wise enough to heed it, though in doing so they make themselves appear as fools in the sight of this old world. Also, the unmistakable sign of the last days and the approach of Armageddon's destructive wintertime may now be discerned. Because this is as foolishness and is impractical to this world is no reason for us to view it so, and be so impractical as to die with the world. Do not allow your Bible to collect dust. Study it. Gain its wisdom. Appreciate its practicalness. Conform yourself to its principles, obey its commands, and have the divine protection it promises obedient ones. You will have the hope of surviving the winter of Armageddon that will catch unawares and freeze in the cold grip of the grave the majority of men. Do not ignore the sign of Armageddon's approach, no more than do the animals ignore winter's coming. Just as they heed the instinctive urgings planted in them by God to make preparation, so you act upon your God-given intelligence as you look around you and see the composite sign of the end of this present wicked system of things, and prepare to pass through it in accord with Jehovah's provision. Enter into everlasting life in a new world free of sin and suffering, sorrow and death. That is the only practical course now, in the midst of this dying old world. And since the Bible is the only book that makes this course clear, the Bible is The Practical Book, specially so for our day.

19. To what should we now set ourselves, and to what conclusion do we come concerning the Bible's worth for our day?



"Pure Language"

WHAT a confused, disunited and bemuddled old world this present system of things is! Thousands of nationalities, races and tribes separated and divided by their prejudices, customs and, more particularly, by their religious traditions and human philosophies. Besides the host of heathen cults, there are literally hundreds of sects within Christendom, all opposed to one another over political, commercial and religious issues, even to the point where they wage violent wars of bloodshed against one another—Catholic against Catholic and Protestant against Protestant. No, it is not so much the 2,796 different languages and dialects spoken by the people as it is their babble over confusing religious creeds, that divide and separate earth's population into so many antagonistic groups.*

Of course, the principal cause for this global state of confusion and perplexity, especially since the year 1914, is the god of darkness and confusion, Satan the Devil. In that year the old Dragon, Satan, was hurled down out of heaven and his wicked demonic angels with him. Consequently, "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time" before he is bound in the abyss of restraint.—Rev. 12:7-9, 12; 20:1-3, NW.

Now it may come as a shocking surprise to hear that the clergy of both heathendom and Christendom have been used with great success by the Devil to deceive and mislead the people and bring them into this present state of disunity, but the facts, if investigated, prove this to be the truth. By the teaching of deceptive lies and by suppressing the truth, organized religion

has blinded the minds of the people to the light of truth and bound them in chains of darkness, superstition and fear.—Deut. 18:20; Jer. 14:13-15; 23:25-32; Matt. 23:2, 4.

Is there no way out for the people, no remedy or relief? Ah, yes, indeed! Twenty-six centuries ago Jehovah God declared: "For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. 3:9, AS) It is now in this period of time just prior to the battle of Armageddon that this prophecy is in the course of fulfillment, for the preceding verse describes other things taking place today: nations of this old world being gathered in order that Jehovah may pour upon them all his fierce anger and consume them with devouring fire.

But what is the "pure language"? Says the psalmist: "The words of Jehovah are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, purified seven times." "Every word of God is pure." Every word of Jehovah is the truth! (Ps. 12:6, AS; Prov. 30:5; John 17:17) The "pure language" as revealed in the inspired textbook of truth, the Bible, is the glorious message that tells about the establishment of a *new world* of righteousness. What a mighty unifying force this proclamation is!

Already hundreds of thousands of people out of all nations have learned this pure language and now "call upon the name of Jehovah" and "serve him with one consent" in pure worship. You too can join this mighty crowd by reading your Bible. Get a copy of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, for it further purifies this language by reaching back to the purity of the original inspired writings. Thus, by diligent study you too can be rescued from impending destruction at Armageddon.

* Further details are cited in *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1950.

With the President in



This article continues the account of the travels of the Society's president N. H. Knorr and his secretary M. G. Henschel.

DOWN the runway sped the DC-4 Skymaster and soon the island of Oahu melted away in the haze and clouds. That was at 1:30 p.m., Sunday, March 4. With us we had the fragrance of the leis and there was time to think of the ones behind and those ahead. The sun set and we felt need of some sleep. After a couple of hours we were awakened, for we were nearing Canton Island, a small coral isle used for refueling by all transpacific planes headed "down under". We landed on the square-mile gas station at 10 p.m. and remained for about an hour. It was warm without the sun's rays and doubtless during the daytime would be most uncomfortable in any attire except the wrap-around few yards of cloth tied at the waist by the employees from the Gilbert Islands stationed there. We had crossed the equator and were in the Southern Hemisphere, but we were very near the equator and I was glad we did not have to stay overnight as we did on the previous trip.

When midnight came we were flying again. Sunday had passed and somewhere along the way Monday disappeared too, for we crossed the International Date Line en route to Fiji and at the end of our seven-hour flight at the Nadi airport it was Tuesday morning. It was just past 5 a.m. and we had been flying for 16 hours and 42 minutes from Hawaii.

It was the rainy season in Fiji and heavy dark clouds hung overhead as we alighted from the aircraft "Clipper Monsoon". We had scarcely reached the shelter of the airport terminal building when down came the rain like a flood. We passed by the im-

migration and health inspection all right and while we were waiting for the baggage to be unloaded from the plane we spied Bill Checksfield, attired in white shorts, which are typical of a British colonial. Of course, we were glad to see him, for he is the only graduate of Gilead now working in Fiji. There had been opposition to the witness work in past years because of the influence of the clergy, and at one time the literature of the Society had been banned from the colony. We were not the only ones who saw Brother Checksfield. The customs men knew him and they were therefore very much interested in what we might have in our possession in the way of literature. The inspection was quite thorough and certain things were put aside, namely, my copy of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, *The Watchtower*, the *Informant*, and some Scripture notes we used in giving talks. It seemed very odd that the Bible should be taken away from someone to be passed through inspection, but I thought that if the customs men wanted to read it it was all right with me. There were other Bibles that would be available in Suva through the local publishers. But the inspectors wanted to be sure and they did not want to take the responsibility of allowing Watchtower publications into the colony. Why the Fijian government should be afraid of the Bible is difficult to understand in this enlightened day. Perhaps sometime the answer will become known. Evidently it is only the Bible in the hands of Jehovah's witnesses they do not like. At any rate, after spending a half-hour with the customs inspectors and having them seal up the publications and papers, I was given the things under seal, to be delivered to the Collector of Customs in Suva for clearance and approval.

When we cleared through all formalities at the airport we could talk to Brother Checksfield, and he was delighted to have some brothers visit him. He works alone a good bit of the time and it is nice to have companionship sometimes. He told us that it was the hurricane season there, and that may have been the reason for some bumps in the air when we neared Fiji. Brother Checksfield seemed to be used to the rains, yet he had experienced something different on his way around the island from Suva—a swollen stream had filled the floor of his car with water as he plowed through and all of his clothing had been soaked, his suitcase having been filled too. He would not promise what road conditions would be like on the return trip to Suva, but it was raining as we piled suitcases and ourselves into the waiting 1936 British Ford and started on the 133-mile trip to Suva.

The trip proved to be very interesting. On the ground one can see things. Along the roadside in the rich sugar-cane districts Indian cultivators can be seen working in the canefields. Where the road skirted the palm-fringed beaches there was a constantly changing scene as the green ocean swell would break foaming white on the coral reef and merge into varying shades of blue and light-green with the changing depth of water on the shore reef. The road continually passed through native villages where Fijians live their own happy life in a very carefree way. They live in picturesque thatched houses. A house is called "bure" by the native. It is quite large

and the entire family stays together. The house of the chief is designated by the poles sticking out at either end of the peak of the roof. The villages are built in clearings, often near a river or stream, and all around there is dense jungle growth. Toward the center of the island of Viti Levu, which we were on, there are some fairly high peaks, all of volcanic origin, and often jagged or of odd shape. The mist hanging down in the valleys accentuated the dark green of the mountains and explained why there is such lush growth.

One thing which would make the viewing of the sights in Fiji more pleasant would be improving the highways. The road is corrugated all the way and in many places there is loose gravel that caused a skid. Bridges are wide enough for just one car and often have no fences or railings at the sides. Sometimes the railroad tracks go over the same bridge, for a railroad that gives free rides to all passengers on its narrow-gauge train. There are many curves and hills. It took seven hours to cover the 133 miles, with plenty of work for Brother Checksfield. After sitting for 16 hours on the plane and 7 hours in



the car, standing up was a pleasure. Perhaps a horseback ride would have the same aftereffects.

In Suva the roads are paved and very good. It is a town of interest to the visitor, because many races of the South Pacific mingle in the streets or the market place. Europeans, Indians and Chinese run shops in the city. The Indians, with their brown

skin and fine features, are numerous. Sikhs among the Indians always are identified by the turbans. Women wearing saris are a common sight, and many have jewels or gold ornaments set in punctured noses. There are the Fijians with the bushy hair of which they are proud, and the powerfully built men wearing *sulus*, which a European might compare to a skirt. Indeed it is a crossroads of the islands, for there are Polynesians, Melanesians, and Micronesians on the streets beside the Chinese, Europeans and Indians.

Suva is built on a hilly peninsula. We entered the city from the Queens road, which runs west from Suva, and drove straight through the business section and down the broad Victoria Parade to the Grand Pacific hotel where we were to stay. Behind the hotel was the bay and almost directly across the street stood the huge government buildings and the clock tower. Every fifteen minutes we heard the clock strike. This helped us to keep track of the time as the few hours passed before the convention opened. After registering at the hotel, we proceeded to the Customs House to present the sealed parcel we had carried through from Nadi. The official who looked after us was very kind and friendly and informed us that he was merely doing his duty under orders from the government. He found no fault with any of the things we had and turned all publications and papers back to us.

SUVA CONVENTION

The convention in Suva was held on March 6, 7 and 8, in the evenings. All meetings were in the Kingdom Hall on Thompson street, one flight up, except for the public meeting. It was right in the center of Suva and convenient to all. The opening session ran from 5 p.m. until 10 p.m. without any interruption. The brothers had expected that we would be there for only

two days, but due to a change in flight schedules we were able to stay four days. That explains why the first evening's program was so full, with talks, service meeting, ministry school, experiences, and songs. Brother Henschel and I spoke too. There were 51 present—Europeans, Fijians, Indians, Rotumans and Euranesians.

It was certainly a pleasure to be with them for four days. We had the privilege of engaging in the field service in Suva and found the people easy to talk to. The territory was near the government buildings and not far from the hall. Since there are different kinds of people in Suva, going from door to door means you never know whom you are going to meet. Indian women usually let you talk and talk, and they say nothing, even though they know English. Often the people would say they would have to refer the matter of taking literature to a husband or father; however, one young Indian woman did take the book "*Let God Be True*" without comment at all. She merely handed me the contribution and promptly sat down on the floor to read. It would be interesting to know how the back-call turned out when the local publisher called.

The public meeting was to be held that evening, March 7, and so the day was devoted to advertising the meeting and distributing handbills at the homes. The Suva Town Hall had been engaged for the public meeting and at 7:30 p.m. a good crowd of people had gathered at the old wooden structure that houses the town offices and the hall. The audience of 187 persons included all kinds of people. It was noticeable that a good number of Indians came, but all were men. The listeners were very attentive, and surely there is a splendid opportunity in Suva for helping the interested ones. Many booklets were handed out after the meeting. The police inspector who attended made no comment.

The other talks that had originally been listed to follow the public meeting were held over until Thursday night to make a better convention program. On this last night of the convention there were 44 in attendance in the Kingdom Hall. A heavy rainfall that night had kept away those that were living a distance from the center of the city.

While there is a lot of interest and good will in Fiji, the problem is to get the publishers out into the field regularly. In the past four years there has been an increase from 9 to 12 publishers, on the average. A look at the company chart in the Kingdom Hall showed that during the 1951 service year the report would be much better, because there was a peak of 20 reporting. The company has begun the street magazine work now and there is more field activity, because some of the publishers who were living on a farm have come into the town. Another factor is that a zealous couple from Australia took work in Fiji, and they have been a help to the graduate of Gilead who is acting as company servant in helping others appreciate the importance of preaching the good news. It is sincerely hoped that the assembly did much to make them appreciate their responsibilities before the Lord as a company in getting the good news preached in Fiji.

What would help the work in the Fiji Islands, in addition to regular service on the part of the company publishers, would be to have a few energetic pioneers there, and it is hoped that some can be sent in and that some of the local company may be able to enter the pioneer work. Also, literature in the Fijian language will go a long way in helping the native people to learn the truth. A brother is working on a translation, and it is hoped that he will soon have it completed. To the end that more workers might be serving in Fiji, a visit was made on the colonial secretary, pre-

senting the matter of having more assistance sent in so as to aid Brother Checkfield in the missionary work. One brother came over from the other large island, Vanua Levu, but there is no organized preaching there nor in the other smaller islands, and someone is needed to go there. The colonial secretary listened but made no promises, so all that can be done is to make application for some new entries. The Society has tried from time to time to send other persons in there to take up pioneer service, but the government has always turned down the applications. The policies of the Society and the manner of carrying on the work were explained to the colonial secretary and his assistant, and now they have a clear idea of what the aims and purposes of the Society are, and this may bring a more favorable reaction to new applications.

After seeing the colonial secretary that Friday noon, the next thing to do was to check out of the hotel and start on our journey to the west to Nadi airport. The brothers had arranged to have us eat a real Fijian feast, giving us all the native dishes to taste. So we stopped at the roadside a few miles out of Suva and were guided to the home of a brother who is a sea captain. There we enjoyed Fijian hospitality to the full. It was a new experience for us. We started out with a drink from a polished half coconut shell, a drink of brown color that is made from roots. Each one took his turn drinking and there was a clapping of hands for each one, a sign of joy and honor. For the meal all of us sat on straw mats on the floor and the food was set in front of us. The food was delicious and different in flavor from other things we had eaten; there were such things as breadfruit, dalo (taro root), coconut milk, banana and tapioca pudding, and pineapple pie, with a fruit drink. We were told that the custom in Fiji is to lie back and sleep after a feast

like that, but time would not permit us to carry out that part of the custom.

A few things were learned concerning the Fijian customs and the language. We found out that "b" is pronounced "mb", as in "timber"; "c" is pronounced "th", as in "thy" (not as in "thigh"); "d" is pronounced "nd", as in "handy"; "g" is pronounced "ng", as in "singer"; "q" is pronounced "ng", as in "finger". So that meant that we were heading for the Nadi airport, but we should call it "Nandi".

At 3 o'clock many of the brothers were on hand to tell us farewell, and a number showed their love by joining with us for the long ride to Nadi. There were 14 of us traveling in the faithful Ford and a Dodge panel truck. We traveled the same route as on the way to Suva after our arrival in Fiji. On the way I saw one of the most beautiful sunsets of my life. It helped me forget the humidity and heat of Fiji and the heavy rains that had fallen. The storm clouds had broken up and the setting sun turned them to gold as it went down slowly over the breakers of the South Pacific, which spent themselves on the coral reef about a half mile from the shore. Even the sea took on a golden shimmering tint. The palms and bushy trees between the road and the beach looked black against that golden background. I was glad the sunset lasted a good while, for it was a feast for the eyes that only Jehovah could prepare.

Then came the evening stars and darkness of the night. The trip went fast because of the good company. Some were singing and others dozing, while some told experiences they had had. Traffic was light and only very seldom did we pass an oncoming car or truck, perhaps every 15 or 20 miles. Often around the curves we would suddenly come upon one of the gods of the Hindus, a member of the cow family, standing in the center of the road, and the

brakes would have to be quickly applied, and sometimes there would be Fijians or Indians along the roadway. It was after 9 o'clock when we saw some of the red lights that told us the airport was there in the distance. At 10 o'clock we stopped a few moments in the town of Nadi to fill the fuel tanks and have some refreshment and then made our way to the airport three miles distant. One of the tires on the truck blew out near the airport and the car which was ahead kept going, because none of the occupants of the car knew what had happened. So some of the brothers and sisters who were riding in the truck walked with me to the airport, my pocket flashlight helped to find the way, and the car was sent back to fetch the baggage which we were to take on to New Zealand.

At the airport we learned that the Stratocruiser from America would be a bit late and our departure would not take place in a DC-4 until after the Stratocruiser left for Australia. Some mail and passengers on the big plane were to be sent to New Zealand and all we could do was wait. Here again we appreciated having so many of the brothers with us, and a very pleasant evening was spent with them at the airport from 10:30 p.m. until 3:30 Saturday morning. They had brought a lunch with them and this was put to good use. Brother Henschel arranged with the Pan American passenger representative to take all of the publishers aboard the Stratocruiser to see the plane that had been so widely publicized in Fiji, and this they appreciated.

It was very kind of the brothers to make the long trip with us, and when the Clipper Monsoon took off at 3:30 for Auckland we could not help thinking of their hospitality and being grateful to them. We hoped their return trip to Suva would be a safe and pleasant one and that they would return in good form for the magazine work that was scheduled to be done that afternoon.



THE Roman Catholic religious organization claims that some four hundred million persons profess its faith. Outstanding among what it teaches these multitudes is that Peter was the first pope. When any of these are pressed for Scriptural proof they immediately refer to the words of Jesus to Peter: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church." (Matt. 16:18, *Dy*) But we ask, Is that what Jesus meant by those words, that Peter is the rock on which His church is built? Was Peter the first pope? Is it certain that Peter was ever in Rome? What are the facts?

First of all let us note that the church of Christ is not a literal building of stone, for, as Paul told the Athenians, God "does not dwell in handmade temples". (Acts 17:24, *NW*) The original Greek word translated "church" at Matthew 16:18 is *ecclesia* and does not refer to a building of stone or wood but to a congregation or assembly of people. God had a church or assembly or congregation long before the time of Christ, for Stephen, when referring to the nation of Israel in the wilderness, called it an *ecclesia* or church or assembly. (Acts 7:38) Nor does this word apply only to religious assemblies. Luke, in telling of the mob that gathered at Ephesus in protest to Paul's preaching, refers to it as an *ecclesia*, an assembly.—Acts 19: 29-41.

Note that this church or congregation is termed by Jesus "my church". It is not the church or congregation of Paul, Apollos or Peter, for, as Paul well states, none

of these died for the Christians. (1 Cor. 1:12, 13) It is Christ's body, his bride, and consists of 144,000 members. Following in his footsteps faithfully to death, these will share in his resurrection and glory.—1 Cor. 12:12-28; Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:17, 18, 24; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Rev. 14:1, 3.

In a larger sense, however, Christ Jesus is also a part of the Christian congregation or church, and it is God's church or assembly. (1 Cor. 1:1, 2; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:14) It is God who builds the church and sets the various members of it in their respective positions. (Matt. 20:23; 1 Cor. 3:9; 12:18; Eph. 2:10) As Christ Jesus co-operates with his heavenly Father in all things, he could properly say, "I will build my church"; even as we read not only that "God created the heaven and the earth", but also that "without him [the Word or Logos] was not any thing made that was made".—Gen. 1:1; John 1:3; 5:17.

So the church is the Christian congregation which belongs to both God and Christ Jesus, who work together in the building of it. And who or what is the rock or foundation upon which it is built? According to the construction that Roman Catholic theologians place upon Matthew 16:18, that rock or foundation is the apostle Peter. In this connection note that Jehovah God is referred to as "the Rock". (Deut. 32:4) His kingdom is also referred to as a stone or rock. (Dan. 2:44, 45) Christ Jesus identified himself as the rock or cornerstone which the builders had re-

jected, and the apostle Paul bore similar testimony. (Matt. 21:42-46; Rom. 9:32, 33; 1 Cor. 10:4) And the apostle Peter shows that Christians are living stones, built, not upon himself, but upon Christ Jesus. "Coming to him as to a living stone, rejected, it is true, by men, but chosen, precious, with God, you yourselves also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house . . . For it is contained in Scripture: 'Look! I am laying in Zion a stone, chosen, a foundation cornerstone, precious.'" (1 Pet. 2:4-6, NW) Doubtless such scriptures as the foregoing account for the fact that so many confuse the "church" with a literal building of wood or stone.

From the context of the scripture under consideration, Matthew 16:18, we learn that Peter had just given testimony that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, and Jesus told him that God had revealed this to Peter. Continuing, he then said: "And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church." (Dy) Consulting the original Greek words (by means of Strong's Concordance of the Bible) we find that Jesus was here using two related words but which have distinctly different meanings. "Peter" (Greek, *Petros*—a proper noun, in the masculine gender) means "a (piece of) rock". But when speaking of the "rock" on which he would build his church or congregation, Jesus used a different Greek word, *petra* (a common noun, in the feminine gender), which means "a (mass of) rock". So the *New World Translation* properly renders this text: "Also I say to you, You are Peter, and on this rock-mass I will build my congregation." For other instances of the use of the same word see Matthew 7:24, 25; 27:51; Mark 15:46; 1 Corinthians 10:4, *New World Translation*. Clearly Jesus was here saying that He himself, the one identified by Peter as the Messiah, the Son of God, was the rock-

mass or foundation on which he would build his church or congregation.

PETER NOT PRE-EMINENT

If the construction put upon this text by Catholic theologians were correct, then we should find the apostles and early congregation following through by according to Peter a place of pre-eminence, and thus show that in a special sense he was the foundation of the early church and took the place of Christ Jesus as his vicar. But from all the evidence at hand it is clear that the mere fact that Jesus singled out Peter to give him the keys of the knowledge concerning the Kingdom did not raise him above his fellow apostles. He was still only one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, only one of twelve foundation stones, not a chief cornerstone: 'Only one is your Master, and all the rest of you [including Peter] are brothers.'—Matt. 23:8; Luke 11:52; Rev. 21:14.

Could it be possible that Peter was the first pope and did not know it himself? He certainly makes no mention of it! If the Christian congregation was being built upon Peter, and Peter was the vicar of Christ, then certainly Paul would have been behind Peter. Paul contended for his status as an apostle, and we may be sure that if Jesus had intended that Peter should be chief, Peter would have had occasion to remind the others of that fact. On the contrary, it was necessary for Paul to rebuke Peter and bring him (the supposed pope, the vicar of Christ, the infallible one!) into line doctrinally for fearfully compromising in his dealing with Gentile converts.—1 Cor. 9:1, 2; Gal. 2:11-14.

Further, when the elders and apostles gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the question of circumcision, we find that it was not Peter but the disciple James who summed up the matter. Surely had Peter been the chief and in Christ's place he

would have done so. Had Christ Jesus been present, could we imagine him letting James thus sum up the matter?—Acts 15:13-21.

EARLY "CHURCH FATHERS" DID NOT CONSIDER PETER THE ROCK

Neither the early Christian congregation nor the early "church fathers" held that Peter was the rock on which the church was built. This is clearly seen from the facts brought to our attention by one Bishop Strossmayer of Bosnia, in his speech made before the college of cardinals in 1870, at the time that the dogma of the infallibility of the pope was discussed. Among other things this bishop told that august assembly:

"I come now to speak of the great argument—which you mentioned before—to establish the primacy of the Bishop of Rome by the rock (*petra*). If this were true, the dispute would be at an end; but our forefathers—and they certainly knew something—did not think of it as we do. St. Cyril, in his fourth book on the Trinity, says, 'I believe that by the rock you must understand the unshaken faith of the apostles.' St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, in his second book on the Trinity, says, 'The rock (*petra*) is the blessed and only rock of the faith confessed by the mouth of St. Peter;' and in the sixth book of the Trinity, he says, 'It is on this rock of the confession of faith that the church is built.' 'God,' says St. Jerome in the sixth book on St. Matthew, 'has founded His church on this rock, and it is from this rock that the apostle Peter has been named.' After him St. Chrysostom says in his fifty-third homily on St. Matthew, 'On this rock I will build my church—that is, on the faith of the confession.' Now, what was the confession of the apostle? Here it is—'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Ambrose, the holy Archbishop

of Milan (on the second chapter of the Ephesians), St. Basil of Seleucia, and the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon, teach exactly the same thing. Of all the doctors of Christian antiquity St. Augustine occupies one of the first places for knowledge and holiness. Listen then to what he writes in his second treatise on the first epistle of St. John: 'What do the words mean, I will build my church on this rock? *On this faith*, on that which said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' In his treatise on St. John we find this most significant phrase—'On this rock which thou hast confessed I will build my church, since Christ was the rock.' The great bishop believed so little that the church was built on St. Peter that he said to the people in his thirteenth sermon, 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock (*petra*) which thou hast confessed, on this rock which thou hast known, saying, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, I will build my church—upon Myself, who am the son of the living God: I will build it on Me, and not Me on thee.' That which St. Augustine thought upon this celebrated passage was the opinion of all Christendom in his time." (Augustine died A.D. 430, or about 400 years after Jesus spoke those words to Peter.)

NO BISHOP OF ROME

Nor was Peter the first bishop of Rome, any more than he was the "rock" or the first pope. Many scriptures show that Paul was in Rome. Why should Paul find it necessary to give the Roman Christians so much counsel if Peter were there and were superior to Paul? In his letter to the Romans Paul mentions 35 Christians by name and sends greetings to 26 of them, but no mention of Peter, no greetings for him. If Peter had been in Rome and there as the pope or bishop, could we imagine

Paul so completely ignoring him? Further, Paul wrote a number of his letters from Rome, and in these he made reference to other Christians in Rome who were with him or who also sent greetings, but never a word regarding Peter. Why the great silence if Peter actually were there at the time? And had Peter established himself as bishop of Rome could he still have been termed the apostle to the circumcision? To claim that Peter's reference to Babylon in his first epistle (5:13) refers to Rome merely is to admit how weak the case is for Peter's having been in Rome.

According to Bishop Strossmayer, one

Scaliger (termed by the *Encyclopedia Americana* "the founder of the science of chronology" and therefore no mean authority) did not hesitate to say that "St. Peter's episcopate and residence at Rome ought to be classed with ridiculous legends".

Thus we see that both the Scriptures and historical facts unite to testify that the Christian congregation is built on Christ Jesus and not on the apostle Peter, that Peter was not the first pope, and that there is no proof that he was ever in Rome. Truly, "the truth will set you free."—John 8:32, NW.

Two Classic Letters of Great Importance

TRAJAN, ruler of the sprawling Roman empire, needed a governor for the province of Bithynia-Pontus in Asia Minor. He therefore appointed his trusted friend Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, otherwise called Pliny the Younger. Arriving in Bithynia A.D. 111, Pliny died two years later, but during that time he wrote many letters to Trajan on a variety of subjects. One of these, together with Trajan's reply, deals with early Christians and is highly regarded as a monumental document of antiquity. It reveals the attitude, conduct and disposition of God's consecrated servants as viewed through non-Christian eyes. Of such historical importance (they were written only a very short time after the last of the apostles died) are these letters that they are herewith reproduced, as translated and published in the *Harvard Classics*, 1909, vol. 9, pp. 425-428.

"It is my invariable rule, Sir, to refer to you in all matters where I feel doubtful;



for who is more capable of removing my scruples or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials concerning

those who profess Christianity I am unacquainted not only with the nature of their crimes, or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter into an examination concerning them. Whether, therefore, any difference is usually made with respect to ages, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance entitles them to a pardon; or if a man has been once a Christian, it avails nothing to desist from his error; whether the very profession of Christianity, unattended with any criminal act, or only the crimes themselves inherent in the profession are punishable; on all these points I am in great doubt. In the meanwhile, the method I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as Christians is this: I asked them whether they were Christians; if they admitted it, I repeated

the question twice, and threatened them with punishment; if they persisted, I ordered them to be at once punished: for I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation, but, being Roman citizens, I directed them to be sent to Rome. But this crime spreading (as is usually the case) while it was actually under prosecution, several instances of the same nature occurred. An anonymous information was laid before me containing a charge against several persons, who upon examination denied they were Christians, or had ever been so. They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and incense before your statue (which for that purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods), and even reviled the name of Christ: whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians into any of these compliances: I thought it proper, therefore, to discharge them. Some among those who were accused by a witness in person at first confessed themselves Christians, but immediately after denied it; the rest owned indeed that they had been of that number formerly, but had now (some above three, others more, and a few above twenty years ago) renounced that error. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the

gods, uttering imprecations at the same time against the name of Christ. They affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error, was that they met on a stated day before it was light, and addressed a form of prayer to Christ, as to a divinity, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble, to eat in common a harmless meal. From this custom, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I forbade the meeting of any assemblies. After receiving this account, I judged it so much the more necessary to endeavor to extort the real truth, by putting two female slaves to the torture, who were said to officiate in their religious rites: but all I could discover was evidence of an absurd and extravagant superstition. I deemed it expedient, therefore, to adjourn all further proceedings, in order to consult you. For it appears to be a matter highly deserving your consideration, more especially as great numbers must be involved in the danger of these prosecutions, which have already extended, and are still likely to extend, to persons of all ranks and ages, and even of both sexes. In fact, this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the neighbouring villages and country. Nevertheless, it still seems possible to restrain its progress. The temples, at least, which were once almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; and the sacred rites, after a long intermission, are again revived; while there is a general demand for the victims, which till lately found very few purchasers. From all this it is easy to conjecture what numbers might be reclaimed if a general par-



don were granted to those who shall repent of their error."

Answering this letter from Pliny, Emperor Trajan wrote: "You have adopted the right course, my dearest Secundus, in investigating the charges against the Christians who were brought before you. It is not possible to lay down any general rule for all such cases. Do not go out of your way to look for them. If indeed they should be brought before you, and the crime is proved, they must be punished; with the restriction, however, that where the party denies he is a Christian, and shall make it evident that he is not, by invoking our gods, let him (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. Anonymous informations ought not to be received in any sort of prosecution. It is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and is quite foreign to the spirit of our age."

WHAT COMMENDABLE TESTIMONY!

An analysis of these letters tells us a great deal about the early Christians. A small minority of both "the young and the adults", yet no amount of "third degree" brutality seemed to bend or break those true footstep followers of Christ. "Inflexible obstinacy," Pliny called it. But really it was a godly example of unselfish devotion, complete faithfulness and unbreakable determination to do what Jehovah commanded, to do what was right, and not a selfish display of stubbornness.

And what terrible crimes did those Christians commit? Pliny says that they prayed to God in the name of Christ, "binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design," but rather, they vowed "never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up", and, in addition, it was their practice to "eat in

common a harmless meal". Truly the empire had no better, more upright or more desirable citizens, and yet these were the ones Pliny was out to slaughter and destroy!

Not all those brought before Pliny, however, proved to be such faithful Christians. Some denied they were ever such, and to prove it they gladly worshiped the pagan gods and "offered religious rites with wine and incense" before Trajan's statue, "and even reviled the name of Christ." Even Pliny was satisfied these were not Christians, for "there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians into any of these compliances".

A third group brought to trial before Pliny were like the ones Jesus mentioned, individuals who had hard, stony hearts in which the truth found such shallow root it withered away under the heat of persecution. (Matt. 13:20, 21) Unfaithful ones, lacking integrity to Jehovah God, they compromised with the rulers of this satanic old world, "deserted" their sacred covenant, abandoned their godly way of life, and forsook the Lord's assembly, all because puny men like Pliny and Trajan "forbade the meeting of any assemblies". (Heb. 10:25) To this unfaithful and worthless class Pliny extended mercy and forgiveness, and in this action Trajan concurred and the Devil gloated. However, in Jehovah's sight those covenant breakers were only worthy of death.—Eccl. 5:4, 5; Rom. 1:31, 32.

Nevertheless, persecution and the falling away of some did not stop this "contagious superstition", as Pliny called it. In fact, Christianity spread "while it was actually under prosecution", and "persons of all ranks and ages, and even of both sexes" accepted the truth. Waived Pliny, it is "not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the neighboring villages and country".

Questions from Readers

- Why or in what sense does the *New World Translation* use the word "tormented" at Revelation 20:10?—F. F., West Virginia.

The expression "will be tormented" here translates the Greek verb *basanizo*. This verb is derived from the Greek noun *básanos*, which was a Lydian stone by which gold was tried. When pure gold was rubbed against it it left a yellow streak. Hence *básanos* came to mean "touchstone", and then "examination, test, trial of genuineness", and, when applied to humans under examination, "inquiry by torture," and then just "torture, torment" from various causes. Because in ancient times the prison keepers or jailers were the ones to apply this torture of prisoners under examination, the jailers came to be called *basanistés*, as at Matthew 18:34 (NW). You will notice the footnote on this text in the *New World Translation* says: "Or, 'tormenters.'"

Hence the *New World Translation* renders Revelation 20:10: "And the Devil who was misleading them was hurled into the lake of fire and sulphur, where both the wild beast and the false prophet already were; and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever." This, of course, means they will be jailed in destruction for ever and ever, because verse 14 says the lake of fire "means the second death". It corresponds with Gehenna, in which Jesus said God Almighty is able to "destroy both soul and body". (Matt. 10:28, NW) The jailers will never release them from this state of destruction.

Since *basanizo* means basically to examine or test by a touchstone, this tormenting of them daily and forever means that the Devil, the wild beast and the false prophet challenged the supremacy and universal sovereignty of Jehovah God. So they are permitted to exist to test the genuineness of Jehovah's rightful supremacy and sovereignty, and the test which eventually results in their being cast into the "second death" proves Jehovah genuine in his right to supremacy and sovereignty. Therefore during all time to come, "day and night for ever and ever," whenever reference is made to

the Devil, the wild beast and the false prophet as a touchstone, that is, whenever they are tormented on the score of Jehovah's supremacy and sovereignty, such reference to Devil, beast and prophet will be against them but will show up the rightful sovereignty and supremacy of Jehovah God. In other words, by means of them Almighty God settles forever the question at issue on the supremacy and sovereignty of the universe. They never return to life to challenge him again.

- In the April 1, 1951, *Watchtower*, page 218, it states concerning Christendom: "After she falls at Armageddon, we must do like Ezekiel, preach the Kingdom and the divine vengeance upon all systems outside of Christendom, till the 'war of the great day of God the Almighty' destroys them and his universal sovereignty stands vindicated forever." Does this mean that after Armageddon starts and organized religion falls the witness work will continue and further ingathering of 'other sheep', especially from heathendom, will take place?—F. B., New York.

None got into Noah's ark after the flood started. None escaped from Sodom and Gomorrah who delayed flight till the fire and sulphur began to fall. Jesus showed how impossible successful flight would be for those who delayed till Armageddon's beginning, by use of the symbolisms of winter and sabbath day. (Gen. 7:1-24; 19:12-29; Matt. 24:20-22) When Jesus warned of the folly of delaying flight, he did mention a shortening of the days of tribulation that some flesh might be saved. We are now in this specially provided period for the salvation of Jehovah's "sheep", when the tribulation launched against Satan's organization in 1914 has let up but will soon resume to its climax and finish in Armageddon. Now is the time to flee, as prefigured by the temporary lifting of the Babylonians' siege of Jerusalem, and which allowed for escape by those who heeded Jeremiah's preaching. (Jer. 37:1-12; 39:1-9) Similarly, the Roman siege of Jerusalem began A.D. 66, but was strangely lifted for a time and allowed opportunity of escape before its resumption under Titus and the city's fall, A.D. 70. Both of these sieges and falls of Jerusalem, with their interims of relieved pressure allowing for escape, pictured the final tribulation upon Satan and his organization beginning A.D. 1914 and ending at Armageddon, but shortened by the present in-between period

allowing opportunity for the saving of persons devoted to Jehovah God. Hence the foregoing shows there is no opportunity for last-minute flight or deathbed repentance after Armageddon begins.

What, then, did the words of *The Watchtower* as quoted by this questioner mean? Why, that as long as there are persons attached to this present wicked system of things we will preach about the kingdom of God and declare his vengeance. We will let whatever men and organizations that remain after the fall of Christendom's religions know that Jehovah's battle of Armageddon has started and that his vengeance will reach out to consume all of Satan's world, climaxing in the abyssing of Satan himself. Ezekiel declared God's vengeance against

heathen nations after he had foretold the divine wrath against Jerusalem. (Chapters 25-32) Jeremiah, at Jehovah's command, extended the wine cup of God's fury to heathendom after he had made Jerusalem drink of it. (25:15-29) It was not, in these cases, a message of good news and invitation to eternal life, but one of coming doom at Jehovah's vengeance time. Hence the article in the April 1 *Watchtower*, which was discussing Isaiah chapter 6, was telling us that even after Armageddon has started we will preach "until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land".—Isa. 6:11, 12, AS.

"CONTINUE IN THE THINGS YOU LEARNED"

In the book of life-giving knowledge, the Bible, is to be found this admonition: "Continue in the things you learned." (2 Tim. 3:14, NW) The servants of the Almighty God, Jehovah, have learned from this source of knowledge the truths so vitally necessary to one's gaining life. They have studied these truths and now want to unselfishly aid others to learn of this knowledge. During the month of July these faithful servants will offer to others this information by means of the book "*This Means Everlasting Life*", together with a self-covered booklet. If you have learned these truths and are now happy in them, why not work along with Jehovah's witnesses? Associate with others who are continuing in these same things and then report your activities to the local company of Jehovah's witnesses, or send it to the Watchtower.

BROOKLYN BETHEL VACATION

From August 4 to August 19 inclusive the Bethel home, offices and factory printing plant will be closed down to give the family a rest period. No mail or correspondence will be handled during this period. There will also be an unavoidable delay during all of August resulting from the accumulation of mail. Bear this in mind by making plans early and ordering needed supplies well in advance of this time.

SAVE YOUR "WATCHTOWER"

For a complete library and reference file of the many important scriptures discussed in *The Watchtower* during the year, why not retain and file your copies of the *Watchtower* magazine after you have read them? You would then have an excellent Bible study aid, providing a complete and convenient index of all the subjects and scriptures found in that year's *Watchtower* listed in the December 15 issue. This would prove to be a valuable source of information not only for research, but excellent for answering Bible questions.

CORRECTIONS

In the April 1, 1951, *Watchtower* there was published a Chart of Outstanding Historical Dates, pages 221, 222. In connection with the date 1918 B.C. Acts 13:19 was cited. It should have been Acts 13:17-20, NW. Along with the date A.D. 70 Matthew 23:27 was cited. It should have been Matthew 23:37. In the May 1, 1951, *Watchtower* the early copies of that issue had a line misplaced. Page 262, first column, seventh line from the top, should read "not observe to do all the words of this law".

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES

Week of July 8: How Practical Is the Bible?
Week of July 15: Why the Bible Is Specially Practical for Our Day.