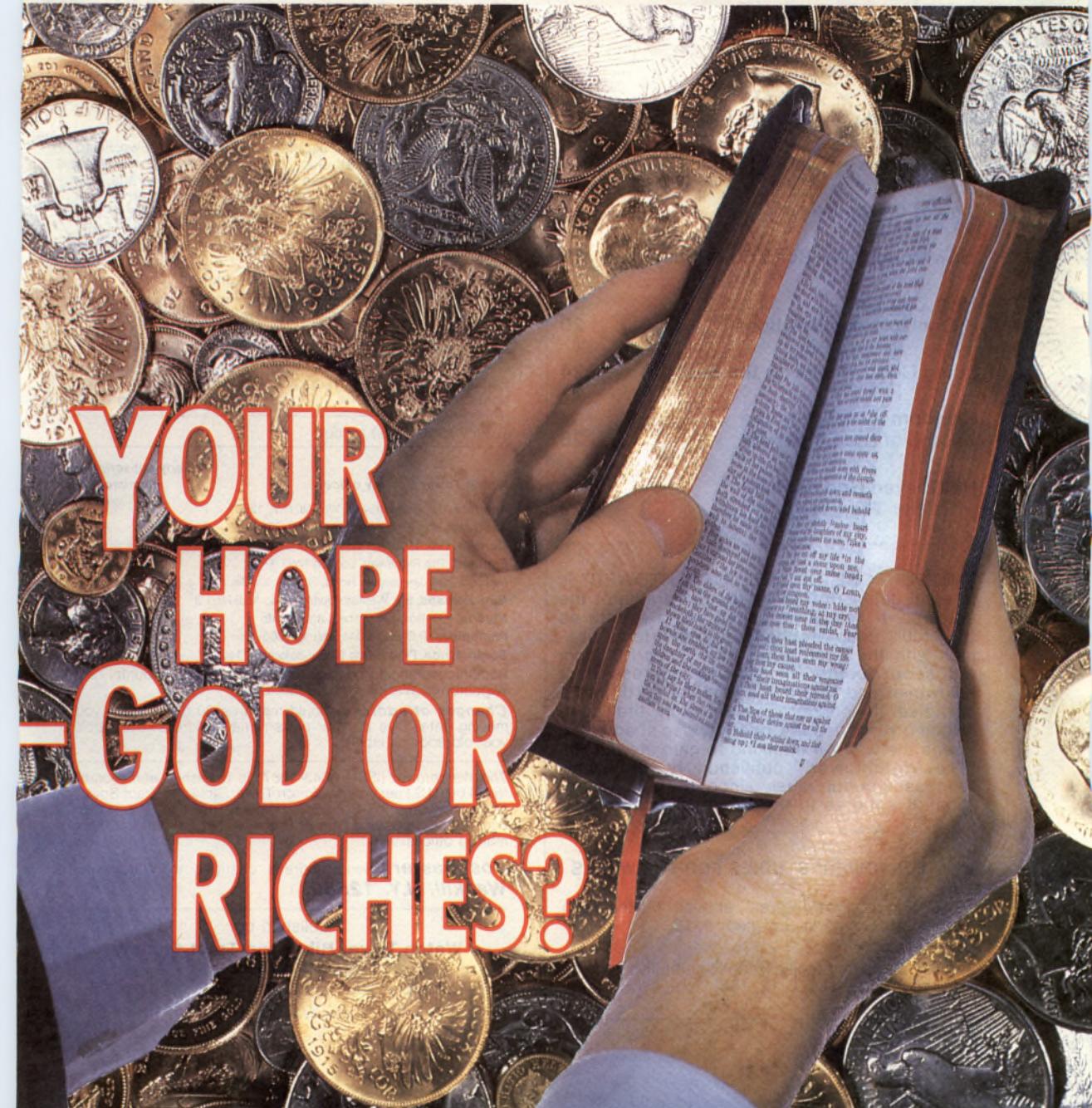


June 15, 1986



The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



YOUR HOPE - GOD OR RICHES?



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Vol. 107, No. 12

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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July 20: The Blessing of Jehovah Makes Rich.
Page 8. Songs to Be Used: 9, 16.

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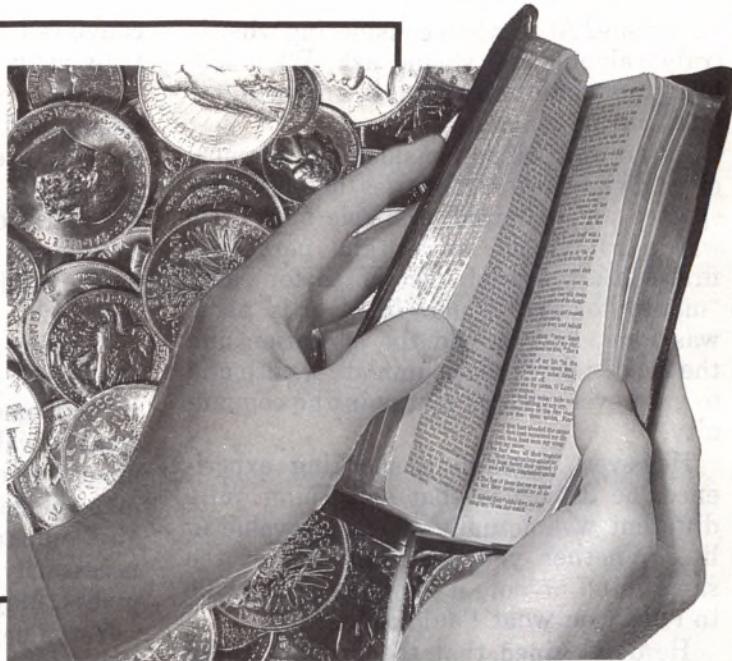
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Frederick W. Franz, President

What Is Truly Valuable?



"Many of them lead lives of emptiness, cannot hold a job, have no lasting relationships and move aimlessly from place to place in an isolated orbit—and no one cares. The reason: They are extremely rich."—*The New York Times*, May 15, 1984.

YOU well know that money is needed to obtain food, clothing, shelter, transportation, medical aid, and other essentials for life. In fact, you probably realize that in modern society it would be difficult to live without money, for, as the Bible says, "money is what meets a response in all things."—Ecclesiastes 10:19.

Yet, the newspaper article quoted above dealt with the emotional problems of the rich. Clearly, there would be a danger in centering your life on acquiring money and possessions. Still, many people do it. At times, greedy ambition is fatal. We hear of hard-driving men in their 30's and 40's dying of a heart attack. Some of these risked their health, even their lives, to

fulfill their ambitions involving money. We do not have to be deeply religious to agree that it would have been better if they had taken to heart Jesus Christ's words: "What benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"—Matthew 16:26.

What Is of Real Value?

You certainly know that there is no end of things that we might be tempted to seek. A video tape recorder, a private home, expensive sports equipment—in some lands these are items to reach for. Elsewhere the goal may be of more limited value. A young woman in one land prostituted herself to get money for nicer clothes.

While we may realize that there are dangers associated with a purely materialistic approach to life, how can we protect ourselves? Must we turn our back on society, becoming recluses or hermits as some

have done? Also, when considering what is truly valuable, we should ask, What will bring me genuine happiness and contentment in the long run?

As an aid, let us consider the example of a man who for centuries has been respected and admired as a role model. He was a rabbinical lawyer and part of a first-century Jewish sect noted for being "money lovers." (Luke 16:14) His name was Paul, and he had the education and the needed drive to accumulate wealth and to gain ever greater status in the community.

However, through a shocking experience, he discerned that something quite different was actually of utmost value in life. Whether you presently are of the same mind or not, it is worth your while to reflect on what Paul concluded.

He determined that the primary thing of value in life was an approved standing with God as a disciple of Jesus. This was so valuable that Paul, as an apostle of Jesus, was able to endure hardships and persecutions. He was like an earlier man of renown, Moses, who "esteemed the reproach of the Christ as riches greater than the treasures of Egypt."—Hebrews 11:26; 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

You should also know that Paul never regretted that becoming a Christian apostle had resulted in loss of prominence in Jewish society. After having enjoyed about 25 years as a devoted Christian, he wrote: "What things were gains to me, these I have considered loss on account of the Christ. Why, for that matter, I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. On account of him I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ and be found in union with him." (Philippians 3:7-9) You will have to agree that Paul was

convinced that he had gained something truly valuable.

Paul's choice did not mean that he no longer had any material things. Reflect, for instance, on his words: "In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want."—Philippians 4:12.

Whatever your situation is regarding Christianity, likely you can see how fine the outcome was for Paul. His choice as to what is valuable brought him a contentment that escapes the world's richest men and women. Jean Paul Getty, the millionaire oilman, confessed: "Money doesn't necessarily have any connection with happiness. Maybe with unhappiness."

Yet, a person might claim to be a Christian and still fail to recognize what is most valuable. That was true in the first century, for Paul said of one associate: "Demas has forsaken me because he loved the present system of things." (2 Timothy 4:10) At a time when he could have helped the imprisoned apostle, Demas gave up, preferring what the present system offered him.

Pointing to the grave danger into which a materialistic view could put a Christian, Paul stated: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have . . . stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Timothy 6:9, 10.

You might well ask, then, What role should money or possessions play in my life? Let us examine the matter further to see how you can possess what is truly valuable.

Your Hope —God or Riches?

"For years she cowered in her fancy house surrounded by a chain link fence and sealed off by two locked iron gates."

A NEWS report thus described a wealthy widow who had died at the hand of robbers who stole jewelry and \$1 million from her house. After her body was found, the police used a grocery cart to take another \$5 million in cash out of her home. The police also found thousands of "birthday gifts" with attached cards addressed "To Jesus Christ" and "To God."

This heiress seemed to have no friends, and she lived in constant fear. Ask yourself, How truly valuable were the millions that she so highly valued? Moreover, How rich was she toward God? You certainly know that God cannot be won with "birthday gifts," nor does the peace of God result from the possession of riches. That can be seen from the Bible's counsel that we 'rest our hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment.'—1 Timothy 6:17.

Why are riches so uncertain? Well, you probably know how true Jesus' words are: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal." (Matthew 6:19) As you realize, there is always the danger that fire will consume a home. Some people store their valuables in banks, but have not robbers stolen from these too? Even a new car will rust.

What about the economy of the nations? In many lands inflation is like a thief; it

reduces a person's assets. "After hyperinflation struck Germany during the early 1920's, shoppers needed baskets of currency . . . to buy groceries . . . Prices in Germany increased more than 1 trillion per cent from August 1922 to November 1923." (*The World Book Encyclopedia*) How disappointing trust in money can be!



Jesus wisely advised: "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matthew 6:20) What are these "treasures"? They constitute our individual record of fine works, our being rich toward God. 'What,' you may ask, 'does that require of me?' In part, the Bible answers that it means "to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share." —1 Timothy 6:18.

Around the earth today, there are millions of Jehovah's Witnesses who can

honestly testify that sharing spiritual and material things with others—particularly helping people to learn about the Kingdom hope by engaging in preaching, teaching, and disciple-making activities—are fine works that have Jehovah's approval and that bring real satisfaction. Not even death can rob a person of the rewards that such laying up of treasures in heaven brings. Why is that so? Jesus promised: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life."—John 11:25.

Priceless Treasures We Can Enjoy Now

After saying that we should rest our hope "on God," Paul continues that it is 'God who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment.' (1 Timothy 6:17) Besides the daily necessities of life, the Most High lovingly provides priceless treasures for those people whom he approves. What are such treasures?

Note what Proverbs 3:13-18 says: "Happy is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment, for having it as gain is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself. It is more precious than corals, and all other delights of yours cannot be made equal to it. Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand there are riches and glory.... It is a tree of life to those taking hold of it, and those keeping fast hold of it are to be called happy." So "wisdom" is a treasure that surpasses the value of all the world's riches.

Wisdom is the application of knowledge in the right way. It is the ability to use knowledge and understanding successfully to solve problems, to avoid, or avert, dangers, to attain certain goals or to help others to do so. Do you not agree that today we need such wisdom in order to deal with life's trials successfully and

to maintain a good standing with God?

In describing wisdom, Proverbs 3:13-18 highlights happiness. Is happiness not a treasure that all of us desire? Godly wisdom will give us this happiness because true happiness can come only from its Source, Jehovah God. Experience has proved that true happiness cannot be attained apart from obedience to the Most High and yielding to the operation of his spirit. The happinesses promised in the Bible depend on our proper relationship, or approved standing, with our heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:3-10) Therefore, by applying what we learn from study of the Bible, we will be displaying "the wisdom from above" that will give us the happiness that all the riches in the world cannot procure.

Recall also, though, that Proverbs 3:16 states: "Length of days is in its right hand." This is understood to refer to the right hand of protection, the hand that is ready to help and safeguard a person at critical times. Today many engage in loose living, sexual immorality, drug abuse, and so forth. Likely you have read that AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is linked to such practices. From what you have observed, are people who practice those things truly happy? Or do they bring upon themselves and others much sorrow and pain, even death?

In contrast, the application of the wise counsel from God's Word will always be at our "right hand" to protect us from such dangers. Therefore, wisdom can lengthen our life, guarding us from a course that would lead to a premature death. Thus, godly wisdom is certain to make our present life a more pleasant one.

Walk Wisely Now

The evidence all around us shows that we are living in "the last days" of this system of things. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)



Hence, it is vital that we be on guard against succumbing to the spirit of the world. Such a spirit emphasizes material things by appealing to selfish desires. One charge brought up concerning Job, a faithful man of Bible record, was that this man served God for selfish considerations, for material gain. (Job 1:9-11) Could such a charge truthfully be brought against us?

If we answer no, we might be successfully resisting today's materialism. But this danger, materialism, is one of the most subtle that we face. Jesus Christ said that "the anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches choke the word." (Matthew 13:22) Clearly, we must constantly be on guard against "the deceptive power of riches," for these are not truly valuable.

We need to remind ourselves of the relative worth of material things. God's Word says: "The valuable things of the

rich are his strong town, and they are like a protective wall in his imagination." (Proverbs 18:11) Yes, the security that riches can provide is sheer imagination, a deception. It is not that the material things in themselves are bad. What is wrong is the centering of our lives around them rather than on gaining God's approval. Jesus, who is recognized as one of history's wisest teachers, pointedly said: "Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses."—Luke 12:15.

So let us pursue a course in life that will make us "rich toward God." (Luke 12:21) Nothing is more valuable than an approved standing with the Creator. All efforts to maintain it contribute to our 'treasuring up for ourselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that we may get a firm hold on the real life.'—1 Timothy 6:19.

The Blessing of Jehovah Makes Rich

"It will be a difficult thing for a rich man to get into the kingdom of the heavens."—MATTHEW 19:23.

WHAT if someone notified you, "You have become rich"? Many would be thrilled to be told this if it meant that they were rich with money, land, or luxury possessions. But consider the matter of riches from this standpoint: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it."—Proverbs 10:22.

² As God dealt with the ancient patriarchs and the nation of Israel, he blessed their faithfulness with prosperity. (Genesis 13:2; Deuteronomy 28:11, 12; Job 42:10-12) King Solomon was one so blessed. He became immensely wealthy. Yet he learned by experience that a life centered on material riches "was vanity and a striving after wind." (Ecclesiastes 2: 4-11; 1 Kings 3:11-13; 9:14, 28; 10:10) So when Solomon wrote, "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich," he was not stressing material riches. He was stating the truth that if you have God's blessing, your life is incomparably richer than that of those not serving him. How so?

³ If you are a Christian, you can enjoy Jehovah's approval now and receive from him blessings such as godly wisdom. You can be accepted into a familylike congregation of Christians who are basically happy, trusting, and interested in you. God's laws shield you from many diseases and dan-

- 1, 2. What contrast can be drawn between types of riches?
3. In what ways are you truly rich if you have God's blessings?

gers. You also have reason to hope for divine protection through the "great tribulation" that lies ahead for this wicked system—and then for life in the endless Paradise to follow on earth. So, you see, with such marvelous blessings and prospects, you can truly say, "I am rich!"—Matthew 24:21, 22.

⁴ Your being "rich" with Jehovah's blessings could, though, be jeopardized by other riches—money or material wealth. Few of us (whether financially secure or of limited means) would readily admit, 'I face a real danger of being led astray by the love of money.' Recall, however, the warning: "The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains." (1 Timothy 6:10) That was written at a time when all approved Christians were anointed with God's spirit as a token that they could become heavenly rulers with Christ. Likely many had personally met apostles and others who had walked with Jesus. If money "led astray" some of them, how great the danger is for us!—2 Corinthians 5:5; Romans 8:17, 23.

The Rich Man and the Camel

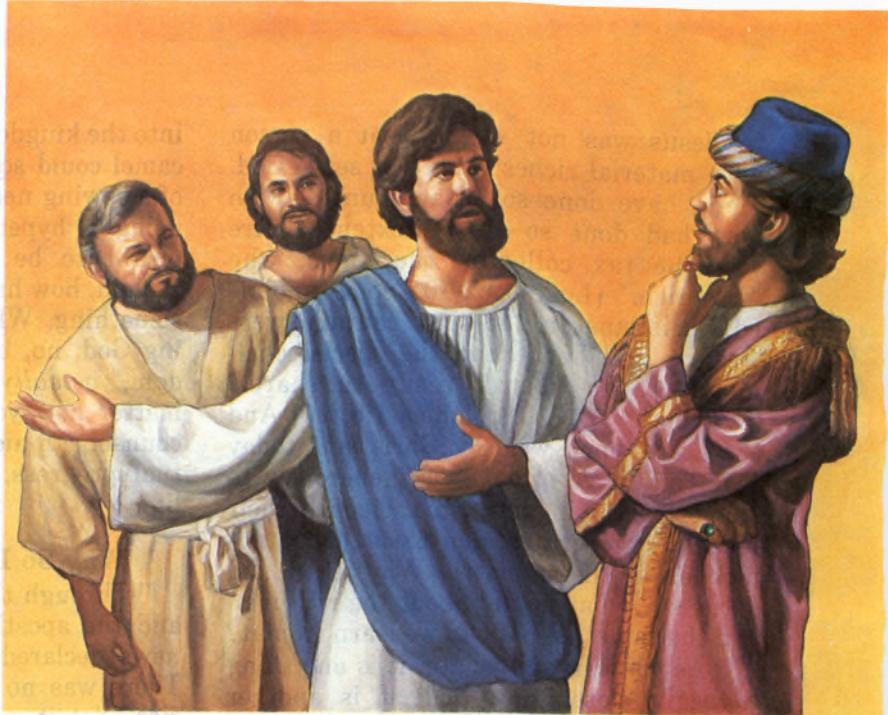
⁵ Jesus often brought up the peril of

4. How could you jeopardize your being spiritually rich? (Revelation 3:17, 18)
5. What was Jesus' view of riches?

riches, for it is a danger facing everyone, those who are wealthy and those who are not. (Matthew 6:24-32; Luke 6:24; 12:15-21) As a basis for personal examination, consider what Jesus said on one occasion, as related at Matthew 19:16-24; Mark 10:17-30; and Luke 18:18-30. In fact, why not pause now to read one or all of those accounts?

⁶ A young ruler came to Jesus and asked: "By doing what shall I inherit everlasting life?" Jesus directed him to the Law, thus showing that Jehovah had not failed to indicate what was necessary. The man replied that he had kept God's commands 'from his youth on.' It was as if he were at the door to life, but he sensed that he was yet lacking something. Perhaps he thought that there was some added good, some heroic act, that would be the final step through the door into everlasting life. Jesus' response has broad implication: "Sell all the things you have and distribute to poor people, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come be my follower." What happened? "When he heard this, he became deeply grieved, for he was very rich [or, was holding many possessions]." So the man left.—Luke 18:18, 21-23; Mark 10:22.

⁷ Afterward Jesus observed: "How difficult a thing it will be for those having money to make their way into the kingdom of God! It is easier, in fact, for a camel to



get through the eye of a sewing needle than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:24, 25) Was that counsel only for that rich ruler? Or are you involved, whether you are wealthy or poor? Let us see.

⁸ You may be helped to understand that young ruler's situation if you imagine a modern equivalent—a clean young Christian with good Bible knowledge, fine morals, and coming from a wealthy family. You might envy such a person today. But Jesus found a major lack with the young Jewish man: His wealth or possessions were too important in his life. Thus Jesus counseled as he did. You can see why this Bible account is for all of us, whether rich or poor. Money and possessions could become too important for any one of us, whether we already have them or we just long to have such.

6, 7. (a) What conversation took place between Jesus and a young man? (b) Afterward, what counsel did Jesus offer?

8. (a) What was the young Jewish ruler like? (b) What fault did he have, and why should that concern us?

⁹ Jesus was not saying that a person with material riches could not serve God. Many have done so. That young Jewish man had done so—to an extent. There was the tax collector Zacchaeus, who “was rich.” (Luke 19:2-10) Some anointed Christians in the first century were wealthy and hence had the special challenge “to be liberal, ready to share.” (1 Timothy 6:17, 18; James 1:9, 10) And there are some wealthy Christians today too. They have often given generously to support the Kingdom work, opened their homes for meetings, and used their automobiles in the ministry. Why, then, did Jesus say what he did about the rich man and the camel? What can we learn from it?

¹⁰ As you can appreciate, it is one thing to begin worshiping God; it is another thing to prove faithful to the end. (Matthew 24:13; Philippians 3:12-14) Jesus may have had this in mind when saying: “It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter

9. How do we know that Jesus was not condemning wealthiness as such?

10. We can conclude what from Jesus’ counsel on that occasion?

into the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:25) No camel could squeeze through the tiny eye of a sewing needle, so Jesus obviously was using a hyperbole, an exaggeration not meant to be taken literally. It shows, though, how hard it is for a rich man to do something. What? Not just to begin serving God, no, but “to enter into the kingdom,” actually to gain everlasting life. No matter how you stand financially, Jesus’ counsel can aid your thinking, your spiritual progress, and your gaining lasting life.

Why So Difficult for the Rich?

¹¹ Through the preaching done by Jesus and the apostles, ‘the poor had the good news declared to them.’ (Matthew 11:5) There was no discrimination against the rich. Yet it seems that more of the poor recognized their spiritual need and responded to the message of hope. (Matthew 5:3, 6; 9:35, 36) The rich Jews were more satisfied with how things were going. (Compare Luke 6:20, 24, 25.) Still, there were exceptions back then, and there are

11. How were the poor and the wealthy affected by Jesus’ preaching?

Wealth and the Family

WHEN thinking about the potential effects of wealth, do not overlook your family. Consider these items:

From Canada comes a report from psychiatrists who had studied the children of the superrich: “Life bores them. They have no goals other than pleasing themselves and cannot tolerate even the smallest frustration. They feel few emotions of any kind. Their main pursuits are buying things, traveling, and searching out new sources of excitement.”

The New York Times commented on a former millionaire: “As he became more successful in business and gained wealth, he says he saw his family change. ‘My wife and daughter would measure people by the money they had, and if I gave one daughter a

\$300,000 home I’d have to give the other daughter \$300,000 in cash.’” After suffering a heart attack, “plus seeing what wealth had done to his wife and children,” he changed his way of life.

Concerning an oil-rich land in the Middle East, Arnold Hottinger observed: ‘Wealth as pathology is something also familiar to the many foreign physicians who come here to earn high incomes. Nowhere, they report, are psychosomatic ailments as common as here—ailments which cause genuine suffering but are not caused by any demonstrable failing in the physical organism. There are, they say, young people who give every sign of being elderly, and old people who behave like juveniles.’

exceptions today. Some wealthy persons accept the Bible's message and serve God. The outcome for them can be marvelous. It was in the case of Paul, who did not let his station in life stop him. (Philippians 3:4-8) Nevertheless, Jesus said that it would be more difficult for the rich.

"Deceptive Power of Riches"

¹² In his illustration of seeds falling on different soils, Jesus said that some "fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them." He explained: "As for the one sown among the thorns, this is the one hearing the word, but the anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful." (Matthew 13:7, 22) Almost all people experience some of "the anxiety of this system of things." It is easy to see why that is so for a person who is impoverished, unemployed, or handicapped. The financially secure person might not have the same anxieties, yet even he or she could be quite anxious over the effect of inflation, changes in taxation, or the danger of theft. So wealthy and poor alike may have anxieties.—Matthew 6:19-21.

¹³ Jesus showed that some would be hindered also by "the deceptive power of riches." Becoming a financial success can be all-consuming. The millionaire Aristotle Onassis once commented: "After you reach a certain point, money becomes unimportant. What matters is success. The sensible thing would be for me to stop now. But I can't. I have to keep aiming higher and *higher*—just for the thrill." Similarly, a Christian could find it thrilling to struggle up the corporate ladder. Or he could be seduced to expand his business long after reaching what earlier in life he would have

12, 13. (a) In an illustration, what point did Jesus make about anxieties? (b) Why do the wealthy face an added obstacle?

viewed as "enough." Rather than reduce his work (or retire) so as to become a full-time minister, he 'tears down his storehouses [or homes] and builds bigger ones.' (See Luke 12:15-21.) Could that happen to you? Do you think that God would judge anyone in that situation as serving him whole-souled?—Matthew 22:37.

¹⁴ There are yet other ways in which riches (or the passion to gain them) can hinder a Christian from 'inheriting everlasting life.' One is that love of riches might move him to adopt worldly tactics, such as underreporting profits or using other dishonest but common tactics. Or if he employs fellow Christians who are honest and hardworking, he might put his own personal gain ahead of their spirituality. For instance, in order to lock them to their job, he might encourage them to develop a more expensive life-style (or even to go into debt for luxuries). And since he is their boss, this relationship might tend to carry over into congregational dealings.

¹⁵ Some wealthy Christians in the first century may have been among those who fell victim to "the deceptive power of riches." James wrote of 'the miseries coming upon you rich men.' They owned costly garments, had accumulated gold and silver by underpaying employees, and had grown fat in luxury. (James 5:1-5) It is similar today. Wealth often permits a person to have rich food and drink that may damage his body. It may also allow for constant travel that separates him from the local congregation. This is not to say that nice clothes, jewelry, food, and travel are in themselves harmful. However, the "rich men" that James wrote about were not

14. That riches could hinder a Christian can be illustrated how? (Proverbs 28:20)

15. How may some early Christians have felt the harmful effects of riches? (Psalm 73:3-8, 12, 27, 28)

helped by such; with their low spirituality and standing before God, they had reason to 'weep, howling over the miseries that were coming.'

¹⁶ Jesus certainly knew of the pain and the obstacles to spirituality that the wealthy often experience. He knew also that valuables may rot literally or turn out to be worthless, which will never happen to Christian riches. (Proverbs 11:28; Mark 10:29, 30) Hence, Jesus was doing all of us a genuine service by warning: "How difficult a thing it will be for those having money to make their way into the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24) His warning can benefit us even if we have very limited resources. How? By our stifling any ambition that we have to become wealthy now. Christians believe that Jesus spoke truth. We believe and live by what Jesus said about his Father, about the end of this system, and about cultivating love. This Truth-Speaker also said: "It is easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God." (Matthew 19:24) Do you truly believe that? Do your actions, life-style, and attitudes prove that you do?

Continue to Be Rich—God's Way

¹⁷ Evidence is coming in from all over the world that by far the majority of God's servants are taking to heart counsel such as that found at Matthew 19:16-24. Many young Christians are resolving that once they complete the normal amount of public schooling, they will pursue the full-time ministry. Wives who could do secular work to increase the family income are, instead, devoting more time to Christian activities, making themselves and others richer spiritually. Even some men who have the

16. Why did Jesus offer such clear counsel about riches, and what should you ask yourself?

17. How are many Christians putting themselves in line for being enriched by Jehovah?

Scriptural responsibility to provide materially for their families are finding ways to have a greater share in the ministry.

¹⁸ One elder in his mid-30's admits that "being a full-time minister was always just words that rolled from my lips." He was earning over \$25,000 a year, besides which he had an expense account and use of a company car. Then he was asked to deliver the 1983 convention talk "Setting and Reaching Proper Goals." He confesses: "As I eagerly read over the material, I was so embarrassed and ashamed that my conscience was just killing me." Before the convention arrived, he and his wife discussed their situation. Soon he got a part-time job and joined his wife as a pioneer. They are still pioneering, happily enjoying many spiritual blessings.

¹⁹ Others have moved from areas where financial possibilities abound to places where they could expand their spiritual activities. A Canadian couple wrote concerning their pioneering in Latin America: "Although there is much poverty here among the brothers, they have a marvelous zeal for the truth. They may be poor in a worldly way, but spiritually they are millionaires. We have 38 publishers, 10 of whom are regular pioneers. Double meetings are necessary because there are so many attending—from 110 to 140 on the average. The two elders and three ministerial servants have to take care of all these meetings. We are relearning from our humble brothers here what it means really to put Jehovah first in our lives. They show us that Jehovah can be served whole-souled no matter what our circumstances might be."

²⁰ Such Christians have no valid reason to envy a rich person, whether outside or

18, 19. What steps have some taken who have sought Jehovah's blessing?

20. How should we feel in our hearts about being materially rich?

inside the congregation, or to be preoccupied with materialistic ambitions. They realize that some money is needed for normal life. (Ecclesiastes 5:3; 7:12) But they appreciate also that Jesus told the truth—the wealthy face many spiritual obstacles, challenges, and dangers. One difficult challenge is for “those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God.”—1 Timothy 6:17.

²¹ Sadly, the young ruler who spoke with Jesus failed to meet that challenge. Others like him have served God for a time but have later suffered pain and spiritual failure related to their wealth. In contrast are the millions of loyal Christians who continue to prove that “the blessing of Jehovah—

21. What is the lot of those who pursue spiritual riches?

Thoughts to Consider

- What sort of riches are meant at Proverbs 10:22?
- What was the point of Jesus' comment about the rich man and the camel?
- Why is life often more difficult for the wealthy?
- How can we strive to be rich in God's way?

vah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it.” (Proverbs 10:22) Their lives have meaning; they have valuable goals and a sense of accomplishment. Their good works will last forever, providing them with intense joy now and in the future. Let each of us strive to be rich in that way.—Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20.

The Gospels—Fact or Fiction?

SO-CALLED higher critics have long attacked the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life on several fronts: They claim that these accounts are full of contradictions and were written too long after the events to be valid history. They dismiss the miraculous elements as mere fabrications.

In his book *Caesar and Christ*, historian Will Durant endeavored to examine the Gospel accounts from a purely objective viewpoint—as historical documents. Admitting that there are seeming contradictions and problems in the Gospel accounts, he nonetheless concluded: “The contradictions are of minutiae [trivial details], not substance; in essentials the synoptic gospels agree remarkably well, and form a consistent portrait of Christ.”

But what of the claims of higher critics that the Gospels do not meet the criteria of real history? Continued Durant: “In the enthusiasm of its discoveries the Higher Criticism has applied to the New Testament

tests of authenticity so severe that by them a hundred ancient worthies—e.g., Hammurabi, David, Socrates—would fade into legend. Despite the prejudices and theological preconceptions of the evangelists, they record many incidents that mere inventors would have concealed—the competition of the apostles for high places in the Kingdom, their flight after Jesus' arrest, Peter's denial . . . No one reading these scenes can doubt the reality of the figure behind them.”

Historian Durant concluded: “That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty an ethic and so inspiring a vision of human brotherhood, would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the Gospels. After two centuries of Higher Criticism the outlines of the life, character, and teaching of Christ, remain reasonably clear, and constitute the most fascinating feature in the history of Western man.”

Insight on the News

The Right to Decide

Do family rights override religious beliefs? No, says the Ōita, Japan, district court. An adult is not "doing anything illegal by refusing blood transfusions in adhering to his faith," the court ruled.

The man involved in this court case developed a sarcoma—a malignant tumor—in the bone of his left thigh, and the entire leg needed to be amputated. He agreed to the operation, provided that no blood transfusion would be administered. The hospital refused to perform the operation with such a condition. Fearing the loss of their son's support in their old age, the parents of this 34-year-old Jehovah's Witness filed an injunction, claiming their rights as parents. While the court recognized their right "to live happily with the family and to expect support from their son in the future," it ruled that "'family rights' do not override the religious beliefs of" an individual.

It is important that a Christian look after his parents and 'practice godly devotion in his own household,' yet this must be done in harmony with other Scriptural commands. (1 Timothy 5:4, 8) Just as it is not moral to steal in order to provide for one's family, neither would it be valid in God's eyes to look after one's family at the cost of ignoring His laws regarding the sanctity of blood. The Scriptures admonish us to "abstain . . . from

blood." (Acts 15:20, 28, 29; compare Leviticus 17:10-12.) In such matters God-fearing persons will "obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

Poor Alternatives

The staggering rise of illegitimate teenage pregnancies has prompted United States authorities to take a closer look at the problem. For example, one state government passed a law requiring parents to "foot the bill" if their unwed son or daughter under the age of 18 becomes a parent. Such a measure, they hope, will encourage parents of teenagers to become more involved in preventing pregnancy in the first place. Other authorities, however, believe that such a law only encourages teenagers to have abortions. They offer as alternatives state-funded sex education as well as contraceptives for sexually active teenagers.

Such measures are certainly poor alternatives. Why? Because they do not eliminate the cause, namely, premarital sexual intercourse. One expert on teenage pregnancy stated: "In the eyes of their peers, it is important for kids to be sexually active. No one wants to be a virgin." (*Time* magazine) A declining use of the Bible is the main reason for this "free-for-all attitude," notes Emory Davis in a lecture at Rutgers University.

What, then, is the solution? The Scriptures are clear: Sexual intercourse among unmarried persons is forbidden by God's

Word. *Fornicators* "will not inherit God's kingdom," says 1 Corinthians 6:9. Parents must inculcate God's law on such matters into the hearts of their children. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) Why? As wise King Solomon stated: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it."—Proverbs 22:6.

Anglican Membership

"Devastating!" says Robert Runcie, primate of the Church of England, about the findings on church membership in the recently published report *Rural Anglicanism*. Why? Because a typical rural diocese membership roll shows a drop from 17.5 percent of the population in 1950 to 7.4 percent in 1980. The analysis presents "a picture of almost unmitigated hopelessness," says *The Times* of London, and merely reflects what has long been existing in inner-city dioceses.

One main reason given for the slump in Anglican support is the alienation of young people from the church. Church social programs geared to the young, the report implies, may reverse the trend. Yet, the apostle Paul placed the emphasis on the spiritual part of a person's life. He admonished the young man Timothy to "pursue righteousness, faith," and "godly devotion" as his aims.—2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Timothy 4:7, 8.



'Sow Bountifully, Reap Bountifully'

"He that sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."—2 CORINTHIANS 9:6.

OUR God Jehovah is "the happy God." No doubt one reason is that he is such a bountiful Giver. His Son, Jesus Christ, explained: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (1 Timothy 1:11; Acts 20:35) No one has given more than Jehovah has—from the bringing forth of his only-begotten Son, the Logos, down to the present time. So without the shadow of a doubt he is the happiest individual in the entire universe.

² A somewhat similar principle is enun-

ciated at 2 Corinthians 9:6: "He that sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." How bountifully Jehovah God has sown as to his works of creation! His Word tells of hundreds of millions of spirit creatures. (Revelation 5:11) Note also the countless galaxies in the stellar heavens, each consisting of thousands of millions of stars. When we come down to this earth, what an infinite variety of things, animate and inanimate, Jehovah God created! Surely 'the earth is full of his productions.' (Psalm 104:24) Moreover, how bountifully he has endowed us in our mind, in our senses, and in our body! Truly we are "wonderfully made."—Psalm 139:14.

1. Why is Jehovah God the happiest individual in the universe?

2, 3. (a) In what ways has God sown bountifully? (b) Why can it be said that Jehovah has reaped and will yet reap bountifully?

³ There is no question about it, Jehovah God has sown bountifully. This is so not only in his works of creation but also in his dealings with his earthly creatures. Has he, though, reaped bountifully? Indeed he has! In what way? In that he has had, is having, and will yet have ever so many intelligent creatures who serve him out of love. Their doing so makes Jehovah's heart glad, especially as it proves the taunting Devil a liar.—Proverbs 27:11.

⁴ The Bible contains abundant testimony that, beginning with the Logos, many faithful servants of Jehovah God have likewise sown bountifully and reaped bountifully. This is just as it should be, since Jehovah's principles apply at all times and to all individuals. Hence, the principle about sowing can prove true in your life.

⁵ While the Scriptures abound with reasons and examples for our sowing bountifully, it is by no means an easy thing to do. Why not? Because we have three foes that strongly oppose our doing so. First, there is our own inherited tendency toward selfishness. We read at Genesis 8:21: "The inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up." God's Word also informs us that the human heart is treacherous and desperate. (Jeremiah 17:9) Second, we have to contend with pressure from the wicked world, which lies in the power of the wicked one. (1 John 5:19) Third, the Devil himself who is ready to devour us if we are off guard.—1 Peter 5:8.

4. How has the principle of 2 Corinthians 9:6 applied at all times, including our own time?
5, 6. (a) What foes make it difficult for us to sow bountifully? (b) What must we be willing to do, and in what aspects of our sacred service?

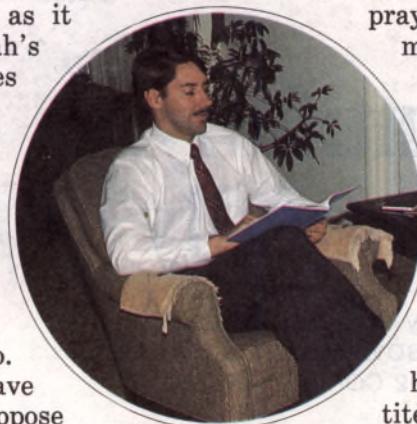
⁶ Are you constantly alert to those three foes? Because of these opposers, we should be eager to 'listen to counsel and accept discipline, that we may be wise in our future.' (Proverbs 19:20) In fact, we must do as the apostle Paul did, 'pummel our bodies and lead them about as slaves,' lest we lose out in the end. (1 Corinthians 9:27) The principle that if we sow bountifully we will reap bountifully applies to all the various aspects of the sacred service engaged in by all Christian witnesses of Jehovah. Yes, look where we will, we find that this principle applies: in our personal study, in our meeting attendance, in our prayers, in our witnessing formally and informally, and in our family relationships.

Sowing Bountifully as to Bible Study

⁷ To be fruitful ministers of Jehovah God, we must first sow bountifully as to our personal Bible study. We should want to have a keen spiritual appetite, appreciating that we do not live by material things alone. With all the cares and activities of daily life pressing in on us, it takes conscious effort to be keenly aware of our spiritual need. (Matthew 13:19) It truly would be fine for us personally to have the appreciation for God's Word that the psalmist had when he wrote: "I am exulting over your saying just as one does when finding much spoil."—Psalm 119:162.

⁸ A definite aid in this is our heeding the counsel to 'keep strict watch that how we walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time.' (Eph-

7, 8. (a) To sow bountifully as to our personal Bible study, what must we have? (b) What goals should we set, and how can we attain these?



sians 5:15, 16) You might even want to apply a check on yourself in this regard. Ask: Do I arrange my affairs to make time to read each *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazine as it comes out? What about the *Yearbook*, as well as the bound books and other literature that we get at conventions? We may not always be able to find an hour or two for reading these, but by being alert we can gain a few minutes here and there to read a Bible chapter or a magazine article. Not a few Christians arrange to get up 10 or 15 minutes earlier each day so as to read when they are most alert. Others find that they can get much reading done while traveling on public transportation. What about you?

⁹ By sowing bountifully in these ways, we can also hope to reap bountifully. How? In that we will have a stronger faith, a brighter hope, and a happy and positive frame of mind. More than that, we will be better equipped to witness to others. We will be able to contribute to wholesome conversation and to help our brothers as opportunity affords. Notice from 1 Timothy 4:15, 16 what the outcome may be.

Sowing Bountifully as to Meeting Attendance

¹⁰ You might ask: Does this principle of reaping bountifully if we sow bountifully apply also to our attending congregation meetings? Most assuredly! We should feel like the psalmist David when he said: "I

9. How may we reap bountifully as to our personal Bible study?

10. What should be our attitude as to our meetings?

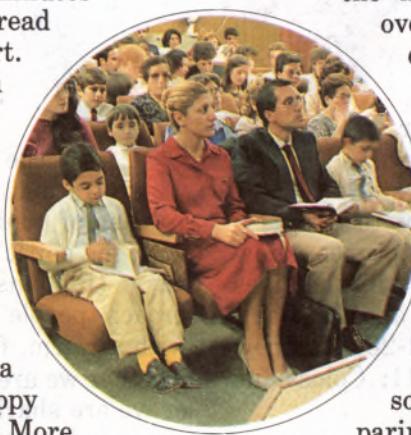
rejoiced when they were saying to me: 'To the house of Jehovah let us go.' " Yes, we should feel drawn to meet with our brothers.—Psalm 122:1.

¹¹ What does that require of us? It means regularly and faithfully attending our five weekly meetings, not letting a little inclement weather or a slight physical indisposition serve as an excuse for staying home. How often do we find the weather—hot or cold, wet or dry—interfering with meeting attendance? Yet, the more obstacles we have to overcome to attend, the greater the blessing Jehovah seems to bestow upon us. We can also sow bountifully by coming early to have encouraging conversation before meetings, then lingering afterward for the same purpose. How do you personally measure up in this regard? Should you try to sow more bountifully? Preparing well for the *Watchtower*

Study and the other meetings is involved too. The reason for this is that we may sow bountifully by commenting as opportunity affords.

¹² In what ways can we hope to reap bountifully from this? We cannot make an encouraging remark without being encouraged ourselves; we cannot cheer up a depressed soul without having our own hearts lifted up. Yes, we cannot express ourselves by a comment at meetings without strengthening our own faith in the truths we utter. It is simple: "The generous soul will itself be made fat, and the one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered."—Proverbs 11:25.

11, 12. How can we sow and reap bountifully as to attending our meetings?



Sowing Bountifully as to Our Prayers

¹³ The Scriptural principle of sowing bountifully applies also to our personal prayers. Are our prayers stereotyped, mechanical, repetitious, or do they really come from the heart? Do they include not only petitions but also heartfelt praise and thanksgiving, and, on occasion, supplication? Do we really take seriously the precious privilege of prayer? Do we pour out our hearts to our heavenly Father? Or do we rush through our prayers, at times even being too busy to pray?

The Christian Greek Scriptures show that prayer was prominent in the lives of Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul.—Luke 6:12, 13; John 17:1-26; Matthew 26:36-44; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12.

¹⁴ To the extent that we sow bountifully as to our prayers, to that extent we can hope to reap bountifully by Jehovah's answering them and by our having a good relationship with him. Family prayers serve to draw the members closer to the one offering the prayer. Let us keep in mind also Jesus' words at Matthew 7:7: "Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you."

13, 14. How may we (a) sow bountifully, (b) reap bountifully, as to our prayers?



Sowing Bountifully as to Our Ministry

¹⁵ Perhaps nowhere is our theme more clearly apparent than in connection with our witnessing. Obviously, the more time we can devote to it, the more likely we are to reap in the way of interesting experiences, fruitful return visits, and productive home Bible studies, resulting in living letters of recommendation.—2 Corinthians 3:2.

¹⁶ Sowing bountifully as to the field ministry, however, is a matter not just of quantity but also of quality. We want to "be aglow with the spirit" when sharing in the ministry. (Romans 12:11) We ought to approach people with freeness of speech, with a warm, friendly smile. That applies whether we are going from house to house or we are sharing in street witnessing. If it is available in our language, our new witnessing aid *Reasoning From the Scriptures* should help all of us to become more efficient, and so be more fruitful, reaping more from the time and energy we spend in the ministry.

¹⁷ And does not sowing bountifully as to our field ministry also mean being conscientious to note where we have found interest? Linked to that is our accepting the obligation to call back and cul-

15. Where especially may bountiful sowing and reaping be enjoyed?

16, 17. (a) Sowing bountifully as to the field service requires what of us? (b) Doing so, what results can we expect?

tivate that interest to the point of starting a home Bible study if at all possible. More than that, we must be careful to build with fire-resistant materials. This means that we teach with conviction, yet with empathy and discernment, skillfully drawing out the Bible students as to how they feel about Bible principles. Only by sowing bountifully in these respects can we hope to produce Christian personalities that will be able to resist the onslaughts of Satan and his system of things.—1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

Sowing Bountifully as to Family Relationships

¹⁸ The theocratic principle that we reap according to the way we sow applies likewise within the family circle. Here we can bear in mind Jesus' words at Luke 6:38: "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."

¹⁹ There are so many opportunities that husbands and wives have to sow bountifully by affectionate deeds of thoughtfulness and unselfishness! The apostle Paul gives fine advice at Ephesians 5:22-33. Please read these verses while thinking of how *you* can sow more bountifully. To the extent that a Christian wife is truly submissive, cooperative, and supportive, to that extent she is likely to reap bountifully. In

18. What counsel should we keep in mind regarding our family relationships?
19. How can husbands and wives sow bountifully and benefit thereby?



what ways? In the ardor and appreciative affection of her husband, he being moved to love her as his own body. Similarly, to the extent that a Christian husband exerts himself to show the consideration urged at 1 Peter 3:7 and the unselfish love highlighted at Ephesians 5:28, 29, to that extent he can hope to reap as to his wife's submissiveness and loyal support.

²⁰ Nor should we overlook our responsibility in rearing our children in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah.

(Ephesians 6:4) Actually, this comes ahead of other theocratic duties and privileges. Sad to say, this is a principle that has been overlooked by some Christian parents. On the one hand, parents must be willing to sacrifice pleasures and comforts for the sake of their children's emotional and spiritual well-being, spending a reasonable amount of time with them and showering love upon them. On the other hand, parents must show firmness. They are counseled:

"Chastise your son and he will bring you rest and give much pleasure to your soul." Sow in these ways, and you will very likely reap bountifully by having integrity-keeping children who respect you and feel close to you.—Proverbs 29:17.

Be a Reaper of Benefits!

²¹ We see, therefore, that the principle that we reap according to the way we sow applies in all aspects of Christianity. If we sow bountifully as to our personal Bible

20. How can bountiful sowing be applied to the rearing of children, and with what results?

21, 22. In what various ways can we sow and reap bountifully as to our sacred service and our family relationships?

study, we will reap a strong faith, a bright hope, and preparedness for our ministry. If we sow bountifully as to our meetings, we will have our own faith strengthened, and we will strengthen the faith of others. If we sow bountifully as to our prayers, we will reap a good relationship with our heavenly Father and have our prayers answered. And if we sow bountifully as to our witnessing, we will benefit personally, and we can hope to have letters of recommendation to show for our efforts.

²² Likewise, let us never forget that this principle applies to our family relationships. By sowing bountifully in loving consideration and acts of unselfishness, we as husbands, wives, parents, or children can hope to reap a family life that is bountiful in rewarding association and experiences. It will also give a good witness to those on the outside, recommending our way of life.

²³ So let each Christian witness of Jehovah ask himself or herself: Could I sow more bountifully? Paul's words at 1 Thessalonians 4:1 are quite pertinent: "Finally,

23. We do well to heed what counsel?

brothers, we request you and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, just as you received the instruction from us on how you ought to walk and please God, just as you are in fact walking, that you would keep on doing it *more fully*." Yes, indeed, let all of us try to sow more bountifully so that we may reap more bountifully, to Jehovah's honor and to the blessing of ourselves and our brothers.

Points for Review

- How does Jehovah God exemplify the truth found at 2 Corinthians 9:6?
- What can you do to reap more bountifully regarding Bible study and Christian meetings?
- How can you sow and reap more fully as respects the field service?
- What practical steps might help your family to sow and reap more bountifully?

How Can You Control Your Emotions?

MANY today crave emotional stimulation. They seek excitement through fast driving, dangerous sports, illicit sex, and stimulating drugs. Indeed, the world of commerce and entertainment stresses the need for emotional experiences. Thus, many have a low tolerance for peace and quiet, feeling they deserve to

get more emotional exhilaration out of life.

Of course, all of us have emotions. For example, when we smile, laugh, or cry, we indicate our emotional state at the moment. But did you know that emotions can even affect your body, such as by causing changes in blood pressure, heart rate, and sweating? They may also cause physical

discomfort, such as headaches, upset stomach, and back problems. Hence, people generally seek the pleasant emotions and avoid the unpleasant. Some people try to evade the unpleasant ones by daydreaming, overeating, and overdrinking. On the other hand, the proper emotional condition promotes well-being. Proverbs 14:30 says: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism."

Interestingly, God's Word mentions all sorts of human feelings, such as love, hate, joy, grief, courage, and fear. You may recall that once "Jesus gave way to tears," showing his emotions upon the death of a friend. (John 11:35) Joseph struggled to hold back tears "because his inward emotions were excited toward his brother," whom he had not seen for years.—Genesis 43:30.

Why Control Your Emotions?

Since we are living in "times of stress" and we are imperfect, more unpleasant feelings creep into our lives than pleasant ones. (2 Timothy 3:1-5, *Revised Standard*) As the Bible says, "mere oppression may make a wise one act crazy." (Ecclesiastes 7:7) So if we do not try to control undesir-



able emotions, we can harm our relations with our family, schoolmates, fellow workers, and Christian associates.

Naturally, all of us are affected emotionally by what the Bible terms "time and unforeseen occurrence." (Ecclesiastes 9:11) For example, a married couple, who were in the full-time ministry, returned to their apartment to find that they had been robbed of most of their possessions. This upset them, even to the point of their feeling ill. It took them some days to regain control of their emotions. Once they recuperated, they continued in their work of 'comforting the mourning ones.'—Isaiah 61:2.

Or you may know persons who allow themselves to become aroused emotionally by watching soap operas. They so identify with the characters that they often cry over this mere fiction. Consider, too, the case of a single woman living by herself. One night she started to watch a horror film. Although "scared to death," she could not stop watching. Afterward she had trouble getting to sleep. When she finally dropped into a fitful sleep, you can imagine what she dreamed about: vampires and monsters. The point is: We are affected emotionally by what happens around us. Certainly, then, we ought to be selective, avoiding that which is harmful or needlessly upsets our emotional balance.

Stressing Desirable Emotions

On the other hand, God's Word recommends that we "be moderate in habits," using 'our power of reason.' (Titus 2:2; Romans 12:1) That does not mean that we should restrain ourselves to the point of being apathetic about life. Appropriately controlled emotions add spice to life. The Bible says, for instance: "There is nothing better than that the man should rejoice in his works."—Ecclesiastes 3:22.

Therefore, to make life truly enjoyable,

we can learn to cultivate the positive emotions. This, rather than negative thinking, can help us to be "eager to do what is good." (Titus 2:14, *New International Version*) Strong, healthy sentiments strengthen determination and perseverance so as to achieve what is worthwhile. Of course, Christians know they are not accomplishing things in God's service because of positive thinking in itself. Rather, they recognize the need to rely fully on Jehovah's spirit so as to face the future. (Luke 11:13; Proverbs 19:21) How, then, can we control our emotions, magnifying the beneficial ones?

"Quit Being in Anxious Suspense"

Because of their harmful effects, emotions such as wrath, jealousy, animosity, and fear need to be controlled. To illustrate how we can do this, consider just one emotion: anxiety.

God's active force strengthened his willing and faithful servants in the past, as it does today. Led by the holy spirit, Jesus preserved a positive outlook by taking a keen interest in spiritual matters. He encouraged his followers to "quit being in anxious suspense." (Luke 12:29) He was never uncertain about his Father's loving care. (John 15:9, 10) His zeal and enthusiasm were not hindered by boredom and frustration. Likewise, too, if you want to control excessive anxiety, occupy your mind with 'praiseworthy things.' (Philippians 4:8) Yes, confidence in Jehovah can dispel negative thoughts.

For example, a handicapped young girl in São Paulo, Brazil, worried about her lack of skills and her future. She cared for the minor children in the house while her parents both worked. Feeling of little use, she wrote: "I am afraid I will end up losing my head, doing something foolish. I even thought of suicide. I feel I never will be able to marry." After receiving a letter that

urged her to increase her study of the Bible, she wrote: "I began to feel that at last someone was interested in analyzing my problems. You showed me how vital it is to live in Jehovah's new system." Thus, instead of just worrying, why not set definite goals, especially spiritual ones, such as to do more in spreading the good news of the Kingdom or to spend more time studying God's Word?

True, some temporary relief may come from relaxing, going for a walk, changing routine or environment, or listening to soothing music. We, nevertheless, may be inclined to negative thinking and anxiety, depending on the things we have been taught or have experienced. For this reason, intellectual ability and willpower are not sufficient to produce peace of mind or bring one into God's favor. We must learn to 'throw all our anxiety upon Jehovah.' We can do this 'because he cares for us.'

—1 Peter 5:7.

God's Personal Interest in You

The Creator did not intend everybody to be alike and to react in the same way. In the Bible, he provided guiding principles that are suitable and sufficient for all. He also gave us vivid examples of his showing personal interest in his servants' well-being. "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart . . . Many are the calamities of the righteous one, but out of them all Jehovah delivers him." (Psalm 34: 18, 19) In fact, Jehovah is aware of our inmost emotions, even our troubles and tears. Psalm 56:8 expresses it this way: "Do put my tears in your skin bottle. Are they not in your book?" Hence, when we are in real need, even "afflicted and poor," Jehovah can be our "assistance and the Provider of escape." (Psalm 40:17) But just what is required of you to receive this help?

Appreciation of God's excellent qualities, his "tender mercies," helps us to avoid

concentrating unduly on ourselves. (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4) We cannot self-centeredly follow our emotions blindly because the human heart can be "treacherous," leading to imprudent actions, even immoral relations. (Jeremiah 17:9) For instance, a married woman in Latin America became attracted to a man next door. Moved by her emotions, she rationalized her desire to "help" him. Fortunately, she sought spiritual counsel from mature Christians. With heightened appreciation of God's qualities, she ended the relationship. Now she happily says: "My marriage was saved." Certainly, all of us do well to cultivate willingness to be taught by Jehovah and to draw close to him.—Psalm 19:7-11.

Strong faith, that is, assured anticipation and confident hope, contributes to a positive attitude, whereas the unknown stimulates anxiety and fear. (Hebrews 11:6) Really, negative thinking or doubts can make us fail where we could have succeeded. Lack of faith indicates the need to develop more confidence in God's ability to act. (1 John 5:10) How vital, then, to rely on God, offering frequent prayers for help to control our emotions!—James 1:5.

Self-control and reasonableness, too, are qualities we need to cultivate so as to promote pleasant relations with others. "A man of discernment is cool of spirit," controlling his emotions. (Proverbs 17:27) Besides this, the apostle Paul wrote: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men," thus contributing to an orderly and peaceful life.—Philippians 4:5.



Love for others promotes the most delightful sentiments, being willing to encourage others and to make them feel at ease. "In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead." "Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs."—Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5, Today's English Version.

If you continue to cultivate these qualities, you can be certain of Jehovah's help. As Paul wrote: "The peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:7.

What Do You Want to Do?

Though each of us may recognize his own need to control certain emotions better, we can be confident that progress and greater happiness are within our grasp. To that end, we ought to take great care that we do not daydream nor give in to uncontrolled emotions such as needless worrying. Rather, let us exert ourselves to cultivate positive, healthy emotions in order to be at peace with ourselves, our associates, and God.

Yes, it is worthwhile to be determined to do that, looking forward to the day when Jehovah 'will satisfy the desire of every living thing.' (Psalm 145:16) Hence, work steadily toward enjoying life in God's peaceful new system of things. Doing so will even contribute to your present happiness, certainly a most desirable emotion.

Doing Good Works on the Sabbath

IT IS the spring of 31 C.E. A few months have passed since Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in Samaria while en route from Judea to Galilee.

Now, after teaching extensively throughout Galilee, Jesus again leaves for Judea, where he preaches in the synagogues. Compared to the attention given to his Galilean ministry, the Bible tells little of Jesus' activity in Judea during this visit and during the months he spent here following the previous Passover. Evidently his ministry did not receive as favorable a response in Judea as it did in Galilee.

Soon Jesus is on his way to Judea's principal city, Jerusalem, for the Passover of 31 C.E. Here, near the city's sheepgate, is





the pool called Bethzatha, where many sick, blind, and lame come. They believe that people can be healed by getting into the pool's waters when these are agitated.

It is the Sabbath, and Jesus sees a man at the pool who has been sick for 38 years. Being aware of the long duration of the man's sickness, Jesus asks: "Do you want to become sound in health?"

"Sir, I do not have a man to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed," he answers, "but while I am coming another steps down ahead of me."

Jesus says to him: "Get up, pick up your cot and walk." With that the man immediately becomes sound in body, picks up his cot, and begins to walk!

But when the Jews see the man, they say: "It is Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry the cot."

The man answers them: "The very one that made me sound in health said to me, 'Pick up your cot and walk.'"

"Who is the man that told you, 'Pick it up and walk'?" they ask. Jesus had turned aside because of the crowd, and the one who was healed did not know Jesus' name. Later, however, Jesus and the man meet in the temple, and the man learns who it is that healed him.

So the healed man finds the Jews to tell them that it is Jesus who has made him sound in health. On learning this, the Jews go to Jesus. For what reason? To learn by what means he is able to do these wonderful things? No. But to find fault with him because he is doing these good things on the Sabbath. And they even begin persecuting him!

Luke 4:44; John 5:1-16.

- ♦ About how long has it been since Jesus last visited Judea?
- ♦ Why was the pool called Bethzatha so popular?
- ♦ What miracle did Jesus perform at the pool, and what was the reaction of the Jews?

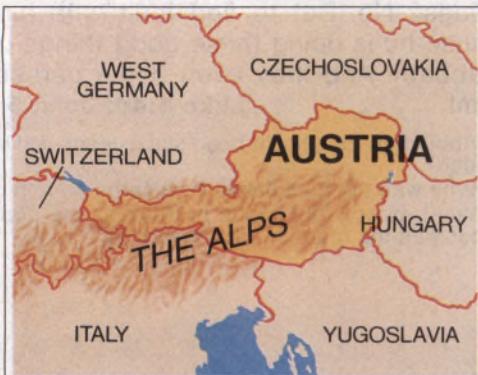
Kingdom Increase in the Land of the Emperors



IF YOU look at a map of Central Europe, you will notice nestled at the foot of the Alps the small country of Austria, covering an area of just 32,375 square miles (83,850 sq km). This was the homeland of Johann Strauss, the king of the waltz. Here people come to marvel at the dancing of the Lippizaner horses. And here, at one time, was the seat of the great Austro-Hungarian Empire, which held sway over Bohemia and Moravia, parts of Italy, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia.

That empire is a mere memory today, but it was still in existence in 1911 when Charles Taze Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society, visited Vienna and the local press prominently published his discourse. It was still in existence three years later when someone else carried the good news there.

Max Freschel was a Jew who later took the name Maxwell Friend. He writes: 'When J. F. Rutherford, who was to be the second president of the Watch Tower Society, paid us a visit, he asked me whether I would like to be sent to Austria-Hungary in order to spread the good news of the Mes-



sianic Kingdom among the many Jews living there. Gladly I accepted the invitation and went to Prague in the beginning of 1914. Afterward I went to Vienna. There were only four subscribers to *The Watchtower* in Vienna. I visited them repeatedly to encourage their interest in God's Word.'

Later on in that year, however, the Austrian crown prince was assassinated, and Europe was catapulted into World War I. The Central Powers, including Austria-Hungary, lost the war, and the great Austro-Hungarian Empire was shattered. From the wreckage, the small German-speaking Republic of Austria emerged.

However, according to Bible prophecy, another "nation" was to be born at that time, a spiritual nation that would have members all around the world. (Isaiah 66:8) As this "nation" began spreading the good news of God's now-established Kingdom among all the nations, its influence was soon felt in Austria.

Joseph Ehm, a music teacher in Deutsch-Wagram, near Vienna, heard the message and recognized the tune of Bible truth. It was not long before he started to share the good news with others. In the following year, 1921, another interested person in Austria, Franz Ganster, a book-keeper in Klagenfurt, received literature from Switzerland. At the same time, a farmer in Upper Austria, Simon Riedler, obtained a booklet from a friend in Linz. Thus, a small beginning was made. The first branch office of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in Austria was established in Vienna in 1923. The seed of truth had fallen on fertile ground and started to grow. By 1937, there were 549 workers spreading the good news.

A Second Major World Crisis

However, during this period other forces were set in motion that would have

a cataclysmic effect and would move Austria once again to center stage in world events. National unrest and political rivalries made it possible in 1938 for the Austrian-born chancellor of Germany, Adolf Hitler, to bring his native land into the new German Reich, or empire. This was approved by a national plebiscite and supported by the local Catholic hierarchy. But it brought immediate problems for Jehovah's Witnesses in Austria.

Because of their neutrality, many Austrian Witnesses were now put into concentration camps. *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen* (The History of Mauthausen Concentration Camp), which has a preamble by Franz Jonas, former president of the Austrian Federal Republic, says: "There existed a group of people in Mauthausen Concentration Camp who were persecuted on religious grounds only: members of the sect 'Earnest Bible Students,' or 'Witnesses of Jehovah' . . . Their rejection of the loyalty oath to Hitler and their refusal to render any kind of military service—a political consequence of their belief—were the reason for their persecution."

Recent Increase

Hitler's "1,000-year" Reich lasted for only a few years, and when it fell, this faithful flock of loyal servants of God regained their freedom. Eighty-four-year-old Alois Moser, who spent years in concentration camps, tells about the day of his liberation in 1945: "It was in the woods near Schwerin, Mecklenburg, that 230 Witnesses from ten nations gathered. We expressed our grateful heart's delight in a resolution: 'All of us Witnesses of Jehovah are sending our most heartfelt greetings to the faithful covenant people of Jehovah and to its companions in the whole world . . . We make a solemn resolve that we have only one wish, after having

experienced the long chain of endless proofs of wonderful protection and deliverance from all the thousands of conflicts and affliction during our stay in the lion's pit—namely to serve Jehovah and his King Jesus Christ from deeply felt gratitude with a willing and joyful heart and to time indefinite.’’

One year later, 730 praisers of Jehovah reported their activity. Two years after that there were 1,551, and the increase has continued without letup ever since. The preaching work among the several thousands of foreign laborers has also yielded results. Austria now has groups of Christians speaking Hungarian, English, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Turkish, and Arabic, as well as its 229 German-speaking and 6 Serbo-Croatian-speaking congregations. To date, Jehovah’s Witnesses number more than 15,000, but many other people are attracted by the power of the good news. Thus, 27,502 assembled in 1985 for the annual commemoration of Jesus Christ’s death. Truly, ‘the little one himself has become a thousand.’—Isaiah 60:22.

A Display of International Unity

The geography of Austria made it possible for Witnesses from Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, and Turkey to come here during recent years for happy association. In 1981 it was a stirring sight when, at the “Kingdom Loyalty” District Convention, Austrian Witnesses rose from their seats together with their brothers from Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary to close the convention with a joyful song of praise to Jehovah.

In 1982 the Witnesses in Austria were once again hosts to their brothers from Hungary at a convention in Vienna. A former Viennese athlete told the assembled Witnesses that he had trained for his events in the very stadium where the as-

sembly was being held, and that the last contest he took part in was against a Hungarian team. Later, a Witness from Hungary came to the convention office and related that he, too, used to be an athlete. His last athletic contest was against an Austrian team. Now these two Christians are no longer competing against each other. They are running together in the Christian race for everlasting life.—Hebrews 12:1.

Kingdom Increase Continues

People of various origins, as well as of different political and religious views, have come to realize that neither a monarchy nor a dictatorship nor a democracy will be able to bring about a permanent solution to mankind’s problems. This realization has resulted in an ever-increasing growth in the ranks of those who recognize God’s Kingdom as a reality and who wholeheartedly submit to this Kingdom as loyal subjects. Jehovah’s Witnesses in Austria will keep on zealously endeavoring to bring the good news of the Kingdom to all kinds of people. All the while, in this land of the emperors, they themselves give priority to that government whose beneficial rule will reach “from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.”—Psalm 72:8.

In Our Next Issue

■ **Liberation—How Desirable!**

■ **Who Really Are the Escapists?**

■ **Living for God’s Will
—Today and Forever**

He Obeyed God as Ruler Rather Than Men

**"We must obey God as ruler
rather than men."**

ALMOST 2,000 years ago, these bold words rang out across the Sanhedrin hall in Jerusalem. A group of first-century Christians were being questioned by the Jewish high priest. They had been arrested in the temple while they were teaching a crowd of people. Jehovah's angel had commanded them to go there and preach God's Word. The priests had told them not to. Whom would you obey in such a situation? The Christians had no doubt. They would obey God as ruler rather than men.

—Acts 5:17-32.

In the many centuries that have passed since that time, others have followed their bold example when religious leaders, like those first-century Jewish priests, have refused to hear the truth themselves and have tried to prevent others from hearing it. (Matthew 23:13) At the beginning of the 15th century, John Hus* (1371-1415) appealed to those same words when he was

ordered not to preach in his native Bohemia (a part of modern Czechoslovakia). He recognized the supreme authority of God and His Word at a time when the pope and the church were considered supreme by almost everyone else. How did he come to take this stand?

Origins of Hus' Bible Teaching

John Hus was brought up by his widowed peasant mother; so to get an education was a struggle. He often had to sing in churches to earn a living. Although he was not brilliant, he managed to gain an education at the University of Prague and finally rose to become the rector of the university.

At that time, there was much strife in the university between the Germans and the Czechs. Hus became a champion of the Czech cause, and his influence grew as he became a more powerful preacher. For some time, there had been unrest and discussion over many abuses involving the Roman Catholic Church, and this was intensified by the spread of the writings of the English reformer John Wycliffe. The Bohemian movement did not owe its origin to events in England; rather, it ran



John Hus

* Sometimes spelled Huss.

parallel with them. John Hus found himself attracted to the writings of Wycliffe, especially the work *On Truth of Holy Scripture*, which he obtained in 1407.

He was opposed, however, by Archbishop Zbynek of Prague, who took exception to Hus' preaching and publicly burned many of Wycliffe's writings in 1410. Zbynek followed this by prohibiting all preaching except in recognized churches, which excluded the Bethlehem Chapel where Hus presided. Hus refused to obey the archbishop's prohibition, stating that he had to "obey God rather than men in things which are necessary for salvation." He appealed to the pope, whereupon the archbishop excommunicated him. But Hus did not waver, finding that his greater understanding had sharpened his conscience and made it more sensitive to the teachings of the Bible. He stated clearly: "Man may lie, but God lies not," echoing the apostle Paul's words to the Romans. (Romans 3:4) King Wenceslas defended Hus' reform movement, and ultimately Zbynek fled the country, dying soon after.

Opposition to Hus rose once more when he condemned a crusade against the king of Naples and exposed the sale of indulgences for it, thus spoiling the priests' revenues. The indulgences allowed a person to get a remission of temporal punishment by a money payment. To avoid bringing problems on the city, Hus left Prague for temporary exile in the country. There, in 1413, he wrote the work *On Simony*, which exposed the clergy's love of money and the support that was given them by the secular authorities. Again, Hus found his authority in God's Word, saying: "Every faithful Christian should be so minded as not to hold anything contrary to the Holy Scriptures."

Hus also wrote a treatise entitled *De Ecclesia* (On the Church). In it he set forth a number of propositions, one of which

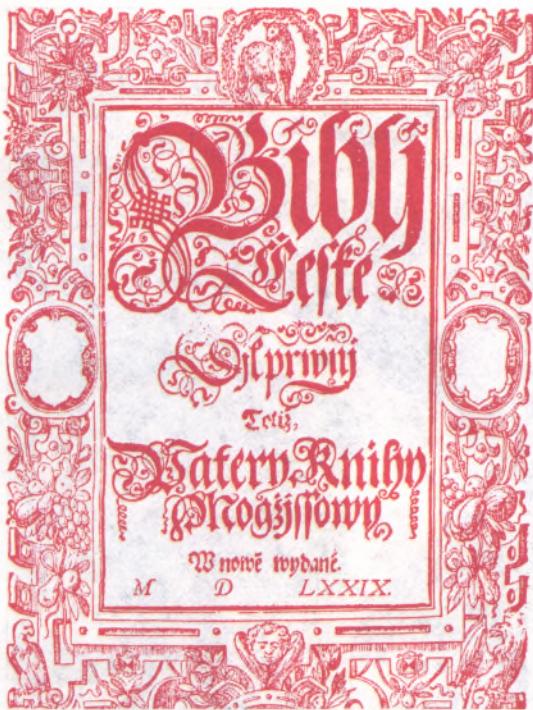
stated: "That Peter never was, and is not, the head of the Church." He found that the key verses of Matthew 16:15-18 clearly established Jesus Christ as the foundation and head of the church, which was the entire body of called-out believers. So the law of Christ as found in God's Word stood supreme and not that of the pope. Rather, the papacy had its origin in the power of imperial Rome.

Testimony Before the Council of Constance

The Catholic Church could no longer put up with Hus' exposures and summoned him to answer for his views before the Council of Constance, held from 1414 to 1418 near Lake Constance.* He was tricked into attending by the king's brother, Emperor Sigismund, with the promise of a safe-conduct, which quickly proved to be false. Soon after his arrival he was arrested, but he continued to resist the authority of both the pope and the council.

When the council called upon Hus to retract his ideas and teachings, he replied that he would gladly do so if he was proved wrong by Scripture, in accordance with 2 Timothy 3:14-16. Hus felt that his conscience would always reproach him if he made a retraction couched in ambiguous terms. He declared: "My wish always has been that better doctrine be proved to me out of Scripture, and then I would be most ready to recant." Despite his challenge that the least member of the council show him his error from God's Word itself, he was condemned as an obstinate heretic and sent back to prison without anything being discussed from the Bible.

* A council is a meeting of bishops and other leaders of the Catholic Church to consider and hand down decisions about doctrines, disciplines, and other matters. A number of such councils throughout history are recognized by the Roman Catholic Church.



Czech Bibles, such as the 1579 edition shown above, are prized by collectors today. John Hus was burned at the stake because he valued what the Bible said above the word of man

On July 6, 1415, Hus was formally condemned in the cathedral of Constance. He was not allowed to reply as the charges against him were read. Then his priesthood was publicly stripped from him, while his writings were burned in the churchyard. He was led out to a field in the suburbs and there burned at the stake. His ashes were collected and thrown into the Rhine River to prevent anyone from keeping relics of this martyr. Because of the close links with John Wycliffe, the council also condemned that reformer—who was already dead—ordering his body to be exhumed and burned and his ashes flung into the river Swift in England. Later, Hus' most prominent follower, Jerome of Prague, was also burned at the stake.

What Hus Achieved

In that age, Hus was one of the first men to dare to oppose the authority of both pope and council and to accept instead the supreme authority of the Scriptures. He thus set in motion the movement for the rights of the individual, for freedom of conscience and speech.

More than a hundred years later, Martin Luther in Germany was accused of renewing the errors of Wycliffe and Hus. Certainly, Luther had the same basic view as Hus when saying: "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God." Perhaps that is why he said: "We are all Hussites without knowing it."

Hus, Wycliffe, and Luther really did revive many of the teachings of the early Christians. Of course, they did not go along that road fully because it was not easy in those days to dispel the darkness of centuries. Yet, they all agreed on one important matter: God's Word had to come first, no matter what the opinions of men. The first Christians held this same enlightened viewpoint because they had been taught by the Master, Jesus Christ, himself.—John 17:17; 18:37.

Today, Christians must take the same stand. We have many advantages over those earlier centuries. First, the Bible is freely available in most languages. Second, in these last days the holy spirit has guided responsive ones to a greater understanding of the Bible. Have you accepted this understanding? If so, you will have no hesitation in taking up the principle that John Hus so insistently echoed. Today, a larger number of people than ever before in history are living by those words of the apostles: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

'It's What I Have Been Looking For'

The lives of people can be changed by a small thing. This is illustrated by a young Argentine girl who wrote the following to the Watch Tower Society's world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York:

"Dear Editor:

Please tell me soon how I can receive the magazine *The Watchtower* that you publish. My neighbor lent me a copy of the magazine and what I read in it is what I have been looking for for a long time. How much good it did me! It gave me great comfort. You see, I am 15 years old and am all alone in the world. I do not have anyone to worry about me, and your magazine filled me with a hope. The neighbor asked me to return the magazine since it was one of the things that her mother, who died recently, left her."

The young girl concluded her letter explaining that she is very poor but would do everything possible to pay for the magazine. Her letter was forwarded to Argentina, and a representative of the Watch Tower Society soon afterward called on the girl. She subscribed for both *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* She progressed rapidly in Bible knowledge and was baptized. Now she shares with the thousands of her Argentine brothers and sisters in the Christian ministry.

