

# The WATCHTOWER

*Announcing*  
JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM

AUGUST 15, 1969

Semimonthly

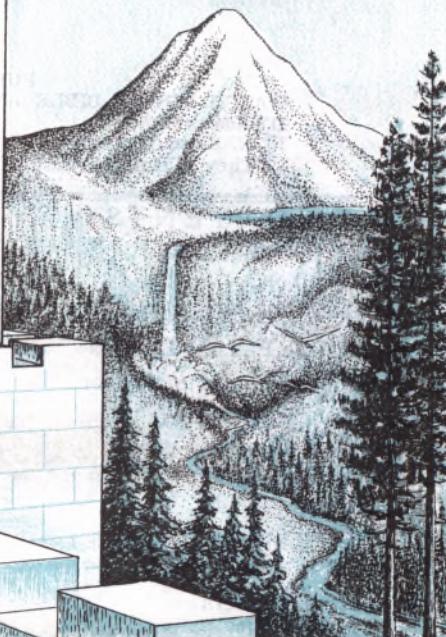
GOD REWARDS THE  
EARNEST SEEKERS

JEHOVAH GOD, THE HEARER OF PRAYER

CHRIST'S RETURN—WHAT DOES IT  
MEAN FOR YOU?

BE ON GUARD AGAINST  
"EXCESSES WITH WINE"

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

## THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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



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

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AS - American Standard Version	Le - Isaac Leeser's version
AT - American Translation	Mo - James Moffatt's version
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Announcing  
JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM

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# CHRIST'S RETURN

## -What does it mean for you?

When and how does he come?

Why should you be interested?

**T**ODAY professed Christians generally give little thought to Christ's return. The Bible's teaching on such related subjects as the end of this system of things and Christ's second presence, also termed the *parousia* or second advent, is largely neglected. Those who really believe these Bible teachings frequently are considered fanatics or extremists. However, such is a serious mistake, for the truth about Christ's return is of the utmost importance to you and all others living on earth today.

Jesus Christ repeatedly stated that he would return. (Luke 18:8; John 14:2, 3) This he did, not only by direct statements but also by means of parables. (Matt. 25: 1-30; Luke 19:11-27) The hope of Christ's return was strong and loomed large in the minds of Christ's early followers. In fact, according to R. A. Torrey's book *What the Bible Teaches*, Christ's return is referred to 318 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. In particular did the apostle Paul repeatedly mention Christ's coming again, as at Hebrews 9:28. There he wrote: "The Christ was offered once for all time to

bear the sins of many; and the second time that he appears it will be apart from sin."

More than that, when we once understand the purposes of Jesus' first and second coming or presence, we see that the second has to follow the first as clearly as night follows day. At his first presence he might be said to have purchased a valuable property. By reason of his faithful course and sacrificial death, Jesus purchased the life rights of the human family, as well as his right to head God's kingdom. At his second presence he takes possession of God's kingdom and will bestow upon purchased mankind life and Kingdom blessings.—Matt. 13:44-46; John 6:51; 1 Cor. 7:23.

### THE TIME OF HIS COMING

Many modern theologians state that they are not concerned with the time of Christ's coming. However, his apostles were. They asked him: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" Jesus listed

a number of events, as recorded at Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13 and Luke 21. Among these were: "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another.... and because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off.... And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matt. 24:7-14.

As we contemplate what has taken place during the past fifty years or so, we must conclude that the words of Jesus have had a striking fulfillment particularly since 1914.\* Thus also the apostle Paul wrote that "in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here," because of extreme selfishness, violence and godlessness.—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

No question about Paul's words finding their fulfillment in our day. And concerning these "last days" the apostle Peter wrote: "For you know this first, that in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his?'" Thus we see that Christ's presence and the "last days" coincide.—2 Pet. 3:3, 4.

But you may well ask, If Christ has returned, where is he? Has anyone seen him? To whom has he returned?

#### HOW HAS CHRIST RETURNED?

The fact that people who look for Christ to return generally expect to see him in the skies with their natural eyes no doubt helps explain why so many today fail to take seriously Christ's return. However, could it be that Christ has returned but is invisibly present? That is exactly what the Scriptures teach.

\* For a comprehensive review of this subject see *Awake!*, October 8, 1968.

Jesus said of himself: "The bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world." (John 6:51) Having laid down his fleshly life for the life of the world, he could not take it back. And so we read: "Why, even Christ died once for all time concerning sins, a righteous person for unrighteous ones, that he might lead you to God, he being put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the spirit." As a mighty invisible spirit creature, the resurrected Jesus "dwells in an unapproachable light," and "not one of men has seen or can see" him.—1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Tim. 6:16.

Knowing that he would shortly become a spirit creature, Jesus told his apostles on the night of his betrayal: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more, but you will behold me." (John 14:19) Only his intimate followers thereafter saw him, even as Peter told Cornelius: "God raised this One up on the third day and granted him to become manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses appointed beforehand by God, to us, who ate and drank with him after his rising from the dead." So you cannot expect to see the returned Jesus with your natural eyes.—Acts 10:40, 41.

But you may ask, Did not the apostle Thomas see and feel the wounds in Jesus' side and hands, indicating that Jesus rose in the same body in which he died? How can this fact be explained?—John 20: 26-28.

The Bible shows that invisible spirit creatures at times have assumed human bodies. This, many angels did in times past and this is what Jesus did upon his resurrection. That is why, upon his resurrection, Jesus repeatedly was not recognized. That is also why he was able to come into the room where his eleven apostles were gathered, even though the door

was securely bolted.—Luke 24:15-35; John 20:11-20; 21:1-4.

But perhaps you are now asking, Then how are we to understand the words of Revelation 1:7: "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him"? The Bible speaks of two kinds of sight. Thus Jesus on one occasion said that his religious opposers were 'blind guides leading the blind and that both would fall into a pit.' (Matt. 15:14) Obviously Jesus did not mean that they were literally or physically blind, but that they were blind as to their understanding.

So when you read that every eye will see Jesus you may be certain that, since the Word of God cannot contradict itself, what is referred to is figurative sight. Yes, there will come a time when all the earth will be made aware of Christ's presence when he begins to execute the wicked.  
—2 Thess. 1:6-10.

That this is the reasonable and logical explanation of Revelation 1:7 you can further appreciate when you consider the magnitude of the problem of having every eye at one time over all the earth see a human body in the sky. Consider also the fact that one-half of the earth is always bathed in darkness. That figurative language is used here is also indicated by its being found in the book of Revelation, which is largely filled with figurative language.—Rev. 1:1.

#### WHERE IS HE?

Then should you think of Jesus as invisibly present in the earth's atmosphere? When the Bible speaks of Jesus' return, it does not at all follow that for him to be present he has to leave his abode in the heavens.

As a mighty spirit person, 'the exact representation of God's very being,' all that would be necessary is for Christ to direct his attention to the earth. (Heb.

1:3) For example, the Scriptures frequently speak of God's coming down to earth to make inspection, as at the building of the tower of Babel and to take note of what the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were doing. Also we read of his 'visiting' his people Israel and noting their plight while they were in bondage in Egypt.—Gen. 11:5-7; 18:21; Ex. 2:25; 3:8, 16; 4:31.

But do you think it was necessary for Jehovah God actually to leave his heavenly throne to make inspection or take action? Hardly! Rather, he took note, he turned his attention to the things of earth. So when we read that "God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name," (AS) it simply means that he turned his attention to the Gentiles. That is why we read, according to *An American Translation*, "God first showed an interest." Other translations use "concern" (Mo); "looked with favour" (Knox) or, as the *New World Translation* reads: "God for the first time *turned his attention* to the nations to take out of them a people for his name."—Acts 15:14.

So in this sense it can be said that Christ's second advent or presence has taken place even though he actually resides in heaven. He has returned in that he has turned his attention to the affairs of the earth at God's due time, even as Jehovah indicated to him in the prophecy that says: "Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet."—Ps. 110:1.

#### TO WHOM HAS HE COME?

You may now be wondering, to whom or to what did Jesus direct his attention upon his return? He directed his attention to earthly things, for it was from the earth that he had departed about nineteen centuries previously, leaving his disciples here below.

So he turned his attention to his faithful followers for a harvesting work on earth. As Jesus showed in his parable of the sower, he himself is the sower, and he began to sow this seed at his first presence in the first century C.E. Then at the conclusion of this system of things he would do a harvesting work by means of his angels. (Matt. 13:36-43) This is in keeping with his promise that he would return and receive his followers to himself.—John 14:2, 3.

There is reason to believe, from Biblical parallels, such as Jesus' cleansing the temple three and a half years after his being anointed as King, that it was three and a half years after Jesus was installed as King, or in 1918, that Jesus in heaven turned his attention to the judging of his faithful followers who make up the spiritual temple. At that time he rewarded those sleeping in death with a resurrection to heavenly glory. As the apostle Paul foretold, when Christ returned then "those who are dead in union with Christ will rise first."—1 Thess. 4:16; Matt. 21:12-17.

He comes to judge also the rest of the living: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25:31, 32) After that he will call forth all those in the memorial tombs, the righteous and the unrighteous, and judge them during his thousand-year reign.—John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:1-6.

#### ITS MEANING FOR YOU

It is particularly in regard to Christ's present judging work that his return is full of meaning for you and all others living at this time. As Jesus went on to show, all mankind today is being judged by their

attitude and course of action toward Christ's brothers, the anointed footstep followers of Jesus Christ, of whom a "remnant" are still upon earth. These and their dedicated companions are sharing in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matt. 24:14.

Jesus' anointed followers are serving in his stead. (2 Cor. 5:20) He therefore counts what is done to them as done to him. (Acts 9:5) So, those who treat with kindness Christ's followers, who take their stand with them, are counted as doing these things to Jesus himself, even as he said in his parable: "Truly I say to you, To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."—Matt. 25:40.

Since this work of dividing the "sheep" and "goats" is going on under the direction of Jesus Christ, his return by directing his attention to the affairs of earth is of the greatest importance and meaning to all upon earth. Your destiny, as well as that of all persons now living, is fixed by the course of action taken toward Christ's followers. There is no middle ground. As Jesus said: "He that is not on my side is against me, and he that does not gather with me scatters."—Matt. 12:30.

To help you and all other lovers of God to take the course that merits the approval of Jesus Christ the Judge is one of the main purposes of the Christian witnesses of Jehovah and of the magazine you are reading. If you take your stand for Jesus Christ and with his followers, you too can hope to hear the blessed words: "Come, you who have my Father's blessing, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world."—Matt. 25:34.

# *Peace in God's Way Firmly Upheld*

DURING the week prior to the opening of the "Peace on Earth" International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in North America tens of thousands of persons poured into the assembly cities. From Europe, Central and South America, Africa, the Orient and the islands of the sea they came for a week-long spiritual feast.

Special interest was focused on the final day of the assembly. Thousands of placards, tens of thousands of lapel cards and hundreds of thousands of handbills all were used to invite the public to be present for the discourse "The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years." On July 13 this faith-building talk was heard simultaneously by a combined audience of 234,546 gathered in large stadiums in New York city, Atlanta and Buffalo. At the same time assemblies were getting under way in Pomona, California, and Vancouver, British Columbia. On just that one day the grand total of 298,589 were gathered at these five cities for the "Peace on Earth" International Assembly, and this was only the beginning of a series of assemblies that would reach into all parts of the earth.

In full harmony with the Bible, the officers of the Watchtower Society who delivered the discourse on "The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years" declared: "No lasting world peace can be hoped for from the nations, either in a united organization or singly. No political ruler or nation will yet step forward and be the one

that divine history will greatly honor with the title of Peacemaker." For that we must look to the one anointed by Jehovah God, namely, his own Son Jesus Christ. He will clear away all obstructors to peace in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon. This will be followed by a time of rest from the violence that has torn apart human society for the past six thousand years. Earth will become a paradise. The dead will be restored to life. Satisfying activity will fill the lives of all mankind, it was explained. Jehovah's Christian witnesses of today are joyfully preparing for this approaching peace of a thousand years.

On the day preceding this public discourse, a powerful Declaration was enthusiastically adopted by the conventioners. It exposed Christendom and her clergy for fomenting war. It made clear that "peace and prosperity will never be brought by radical political governments of men who are not at peace with God." And it expressed the determination of Jehovah's witnesses to continue to point men everywhere to God's Messianic kingdom as the only hope for enduring peace.

As this "Peace on Earth" assembly made plain, Jehovah's witnesses are not interested in peace with those who are enemies of God. They do not endorse the misguided efforts of men who seek to bring peace in their own way. They advocate only the enduring peace that Jehovah God will bring in his way for the blessing of all who love righteousness.



122,011 Packed Out Yankee Stadium and Nearby Tents to Hear "The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years"

**A**RE you a father, or a mother, or perhaps a member of a family living at home with your parents? In either case, do you not agree that a vital necessity for happy family life is in being able to express yourself freely just as you feel the need or the desire? It often happens under present conditions that such needs and desires cannot find a normal and proper outlet and are repressed. But they are still there and are not easily stifled, finding an outlet maybe through channels that are harmful. They are plainly evident from earliest childhood. The little one cries for sympathy and attention over the smallest thing. If something delights him, he wants to show it to someone who will respond with understanding. Who has not seen a small child suffer some slight accident while playing outdoors, then silently bottle up his grief, rushing in to find his mother, and only then does he feel he can give vent to his feelings?

<sup>2</sup> Yes, man has the ability and strong desire to communicate, to share with others the things that concern and interest him. He earnestly seeks to express himself, either for the sheer pleasure of it, or to get help when in need, or for the joy of helping someone else in need. Can we trace the cause of this strong desire? Indeed we can. Man has a reasoning and enquiring mind. He can explore, invent and organize. He has a keen sense of right and wrong. He can choose and form judgments. He can search out the understanding of things and can build up a deep appreciation of things and of people. It logically follows that he himself desires to

1. What is essential to happy family life, and how is this manifested?

2. What qualities and abilities give rise to man's strong desire to communicate?

# God Rewards the Earnest Seekers

"Moreover, without  
faith it is impossible to please him  
well, for he that approaches God must believe  
that he is and that he becomes the rewarder  
of those earnestly seeking him."

—Heb. 11:6.

be understood and appreciated by others. He has the capacity to love and has an intense longing for that love to be reciprocated, resulting in feelings of the greatest satisfaction and encouragement when a reciprocation of love is fulfilled. Is this not your experience? These wonderful abilities and qualities are there to be exercised and naturally call for expression, prompting the desire to communicate.

<sup>3</sup> This desire, however, brings another important factor into consideration, namely, that of *relationship*. The two are closely linked, each depending on the other. You cannot enjoy full and free communication unless a good relationship is maintained. On the other hand, you cannot build up a good relationship without learning how to

3. (a) What other factor is involved? (b) How are both factors seen to be important from childhood onward?

communicate. Both need to be carefully developed, and for proof we again refer to children. They have a natural desire to express themselves and do so spontaneously, taking the loving attention bestowed on them, the good relationship, for granted. But quite early, if properly trained, they are taught to realize that even their mother is not going to answer immediately their every cry. They learn that there are times when they must keep quiet. They are trained to appreciate that a good relationship can be spoiled by bad behavior. As they grow they learn that in every aspect of life the two factors of communication and relationship play a vital part, whether it is at school, or is in forming friendships, especially with those of the opposite sex, or when going out into the world for business or pleasure. Yes, these two factors contribute a great deal to one's happiness and success in life. We need never stop learning how to improve on these two factors and thus promote and safeguard our best interests in life.

#### A HIGHER LEVEL

<sup>4</sup> Can we raise this discussion to a higher level? Many are satisfied to limit consideration of these factors to human contacts, but is it right or reasonable to do so? May we not thereby be missing out on a still deeper sense of satisfaction, with benefits more lasting and secure? Surely the possession of such fine qualities and abilities as already mentioned are self-evident proof that man is not the result of some blind and impersonal force, but is the product of a supreme Mastermind, an intelligent Designer and Creator, who himself possesses these same qualities in a superlative degree. Furthermore, man is not a robot, governed by instinct, but is free to use or abuse these gifts as he may choose.

4. Is it wise to limit the exercise of these factors to human contacts?

There is much talk these days, both by individuals and by nations, about living their own life and working out their own destiny. In effect, they choose to ignore the existence of a Creator who has a definite purpose for this earth and man upon it. But is it right or reasonable to view things that way and pursue such a course?

<sup>5</sup> We trust we already have given sufficient grounds to show the wisdom of not going the way of the world or of being affected by its spirit. If this is agreed to and the existence of a Creator is granted, is it not reasonable as a next step to enquire if this One has not given man a revelation of himself and his purpose? The possession of a reasoning and enquiring mind, with the capacity of exercising faith and love and devotion—surely these fine gifts would argue that the Giver would afford man the highest form of expressing these qualities and would reward those earnestly seeking him. Having seen how important these things are in human contacts, let us see if the same aspects involved are true when we are raising the discussion to a higher level, with far more rewarding conclusions.

<sup>6</sup> Since communication and relationship play a vital part among us humans, surely they are even more vital between the Creator and ourselves. If even children are conscious of their needs in this respect, is it not only natural that we should feel the need and desire to enjoy a good relationship and communication with our Creator as his offspring, his progeny? The gratification of such desires depends, of course, entirely on the Creator. He alone can make it possible, and what a joy it is to be able to say that he has indeed done this very thing! Yes, he has certainly revealed himself and opened the way for us

5. The possession of fine qualities gives rise to what questions?

6. How only can our needs and desires be truly satisfied, and how has this been made possible?

to get in touch with him through prayer. How so? Primarily through his written Word, the Bible, and, as the Bible itself explains, also through a living Word, his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who is given the title, "The Word of God."—Rev. 19:13; John 1:1.

<sup>7</sup> In the written Word we find good support for the foregoing argument. When talking to the men of Athens, who were "given to the fear of the deities" and whose "city was full of idols," the apostle Paul took the opportunity to explain about the Creator. He said he was the "God that made the world and all the things in it." He confirmed that it was the Creator's pleasure for men to "seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us. For by him we have life and move and exist, even as certain ones of the poets among you have said, 'For we are also his progeny.'"—Acts 17:16, 22-28.

<sup>8</sup> With this encouragement, we go on to enquire if the Bible gives specific information for our guidance respecting communication and relationship so that we might really find God and learn how to pray to him acceptably. Though, like children, we are often more conscious of the need to keep open the lines of communication, yet really the question of relationship is far more important. So we will consider that first. Does the Bible tell us what are the necessary initial steps so that we might find favor with God and please him?

#### THREE PRIMARY REQUIREMENTS

<sup>9</sup> The first requirement is that of faith. Paul makes this plain when he says to

7. To those seeking God, what encouragement is given?  
8. To approach God acceptably, what kind of information do we need?

9. (a) How does God's Word highlight the first requirement? (b) Why is it reasonable to believe in the existence of a personal Creator, this leading to what questions?

the Hebrews that "without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Heb. 11:6) To the honest, enquiring mind, it should not be difficult to believe in God's existence, even though he, along with his qualities, is invisible to man. This is so because, as Paul elsewhere argues, "what may be known about God is manifest . . . For his invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they [men who want to ignore God and suppress the truth] are inexcusable." In view of our increasing knowledge of the boundless energy pervading space, operating under laws pointing to a central source and control, we can readily agree with this. However, what assurance have we that God is the "rewarder of those earnestly seeking him," and how does this help us in the matter of relationship?—Rom. 1:18-20.

<sup>10</sup> Here again the Bible record helps us. Early on, in Genesis, chapter 15, it tells about a man who earnestly sought God, who exercised faith in him, and who was promised a great reward. (Gen. 15:1, 6) His name was Abram, later changed to Abraham. How did he come to have faith in Jehovah as the true God in the first place? This is important, as it points to a second requirement. Abraham was familiar with the written record handed down through his forefathers, Noah and Shem, later forming the first part of the Pentateuch, now comprising the opening chapters of Genesis. This reliable information gave Abraham accurate knowledge, this providing the essential basis for true faith. For our own benefit, as well as helping us

10. What was Abraham's basis for faith, pointing to what further requirement?

to put ourselves in Abraham's place and to appreciate better his fine example, we will take a look at some of those things first recorded.

<sup>11</sup> In support of our earlier argument, it is plainly stated that man was created in God's image, and was endowed with qualities and abilities enabling him to subdue the earth and have all things in subjection. He was in close communion with his Creator and had His blessing, enjoying a good relationship with Him. He not only knew of his Creator's "power and Godship," but had abundant evidence of his many loving provisions, the crowning gift being an ideal mate and helper, completing his happiness and opening up still further avenues of delightful communion and relationship.—Gen. 1:26-31; 2:18-23.

<sup>12</sup> However, first the woman and then the man, not being robots, used their freedom of choice in a course of willful disobedience to Jehovah's expressed command. They wanted to live their own life and work out their own destiny. With what result? Among other things, their relationship and communion with their Creator, also with each other, were badly damaged. They "went into hiding from the face of Jehovah God," and, when questioned, the man tried to push the blame onto God and the woman, saying: "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree and so I ate it." (Gen. 3:8, 12) Here we can learn a most important lesson, as doubtless Abraham did. Adam and Eve knew they were indebted to Jehovah for life and every good thing they enjoyed. During the time they appreciated this and remained subject to their Creator in a spirit of devotion and dedication, they enjoyed the blessings of a good relationship and com-

munion with him. But as soon as they lost that spirit and took things into their own hands, they immediately forfeited those blessings. That was true then and is true now. Thus we can appreciate a third vital requirement, which must accompany faith and accurate knowledge, namely, that of whole-souled devotion to Jehovah.

<sup>13</sup> These three requirements are closely related. Faith is not just a mental assent or belief in something unseen, not something spoken of as a blind faith. Rather, it is the assured conviction of things, though unseen, yet having the stamp of truth and reality. This implies the need for accurate knowledge as a basis for such faith. Paul defined faith as "the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld." The greatest unseen reality is Jehovah. His "invisible qualities are clearly seen" and demonstrated by the things made. His Word, the Bible, has the stamp of truth, as Jesus said: "Your word is truth." Such a faith, or assured conviction, is a forceful, living thing, and of necessity bears fruit in accord with its basis of accurate knowledge and of understanding gained from God's Word. The possessor of such faith is convinced that God is the "rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." That is what dedication means, a desire and determination continually to seek Jehovah, to find a delight in doing his will as recorded in his Word. This was Jesus' own attitude, as prophetically recorded of him: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law [your word] is within my inward parts."—Heb. 11:1, 6; Rom. 1:20; John 17:17; Ps. 40:8.

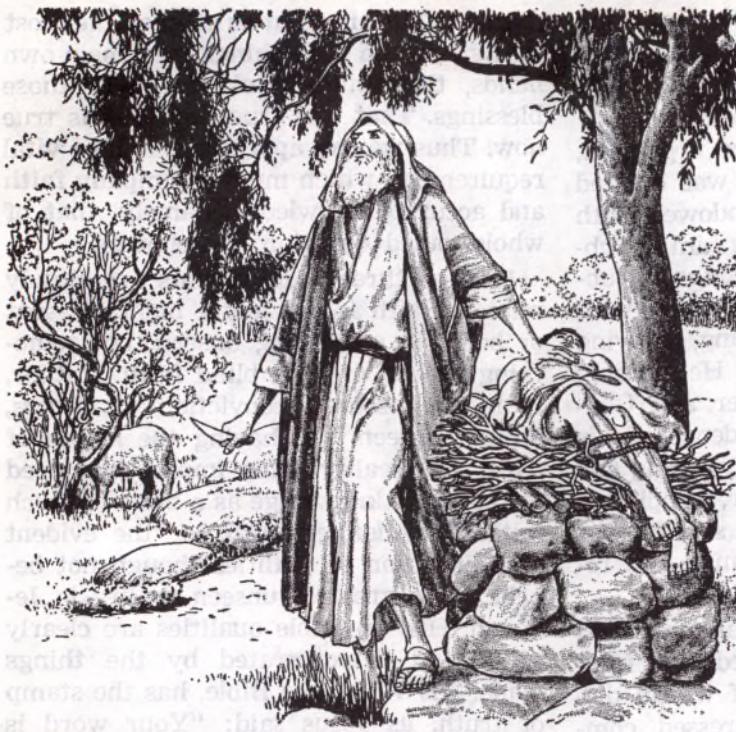
<sup>14</sup> There is something else, however, that Abraham learned from that early record that greatly increased his faith in the

11. How does the record of man's creation give worthwhile information?

12. What resulted from man's disobedience, and how is a third requirement thus emphasized?

13. In what way are the foregoing requirements seen to be closely related?

14. How did Jehovah in Eden give a strong basis for faith and hope?



**Abraham showed his faith by being willing to offer up his son. "Now I do know," said Jehovah, "that you are God-fearing," and He gave Abraham a very special reward**

promise of a reward, also his loving devotion toward the One who gave that promise. Your own faith and devotion can be increased too. When pronouncing judgment in Eden after the outbreak of willful disobedience, Jehovah, in the very same breath, as we might say, uttered a remarkable prophecy. In cryptic form, it embodied a promise that held out a sure hope of a reward. It foretold enmity between the seed of the serpent and that of the woman, though not identifying her. God then said: "He [the seed of the woman] will bruise you [the serpent] in the head," this implying the crushing in defeat and death of the one using the serpent, that is, Satan the Devil.—Gen. 3:15; see also John 8:44.

<sup>15</sup> That would be understood as a great reward for the faithful seed of the woman. It would also give hope of deliverance from bondage to sin and death, that resulted from that original rebellion, to those who exercised faith and devotion toward Jehovah. The first such one was Abel, the first of a long line of men and women of faith listed in Hebrews, chapter 11. Abraham is there mentioned, where the reward for him and the others is described as being a permanent place in God's city-like arrangement, enjoying the blessings of fully restored relationship and communion with him in perfection. In fact, because of their faith, those blessings were enjoyed to a large degree by those men and women in their own day, while they were still imperfect. As will be shown later, Paul shows in that same letter that similar blessings can be enjoyed by men and women of today to an even greater degree.—Heb. 11:8-10, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Speaking of Abraham, the record at Genesis 22:1-18 shows that Jehovah was pleased to give him a very special reward. After passing a severe test of his faith and devotion, even to the point of proving willing, if necessary, to offer his beloved son Isaac in sacrifice, then Jehovah revealed that the seed, promised in Eden, would come through his line, and that "by means of your seed all nations of the earth

15. Faith and devotion toward Jehovah open the way for what blessings and reward?

16. What special reward was given to Abraham due to his faith and devotion?

will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." As Jehovah had said earlier to Abraham: "Your reward will be very great."—Gen. 22:18; 15:1.

#### EARNESTLY SEEKING JEHOVAH

<sup>17</sup> Though we have examined the preliminary steps leading to a good relationship with Jehovah, there is still the question of how to establish and keep open the lines of communication with him. This can be quite a problem, even though the desire proves to be almost instinctive within us. Hard-bitten men, avowed atheists, have been known to call on God when in desperate need or danger. Even Cain, the first murderer, cried out to Jehovah: "My punishment for error is too great to carry," because, for one reason, as he said, "from your face I shall be concealed." Likewise Eve, though condemned, was anxious to bring Jehovah into the picture at the birth of her children, saying: "I have acquired a man with the aid of Jehovah," and again later: "God has appointed another seed in place of Abel."—Gen. 4:1, 13, 14, 25.

<sup>18</sup> As further evidence as to how widespread is this deep-rooted desire, is it not true that in most religions, if not all, prayer occupies a prominent place in some form or other in their services? But is it not also generally true that, whether claiming to be Christian or otherwise, the emphasis is on routine and formalism, varying only for special occasions and religious seasons, as at Christmas and Easter? This includes their prayers, often being either chanted or recited in a monotone from a prayer book. To a great many, especially in Christendom, who from childhood have never known any other kind of religious service, this may go unques-

tioned. To those accustomed to it, it gives an emotional satisfaction. Everything is designed to that end, including the building and the music and the vestments, with often a certain mysticism added, all together creating an atmosphere of exaltation and serenity. They feel they have been in touch with sacred things, another world.

<sup>19</sup> When it comes to individual prayers, are not these often marked by the same characteristics, the ones praying having been taught that way from childhood? The little one is taught a set form of words as a prayer at mealtime, or when it is going to bed. The same method is often adopted by adults, reading from a book, or memorizing, together perhaps with counting beads or some other formalism, such as a prayer wheel.

<sup>20</sup> This, especially as carried out by the individual, is often done in all sincerity, but is it really prayer in the true sense of the word? It may give a sense of satisfaction to the individual, but does it please God? Does he say he will hear and answer any form of prayer, as long as it is sincere? Does he leave it to us to decide what is acceptable in this respect? Collectively, has any religious organization, however large and ancient, the right to decide such matters on its own authority, relying heavily on tradition, as is often the case?

<sup>21</sup> We said just now that forms and expressions of worship often go unquestioned. But is it not a marked feature of our day for one to leave nothing unquestioned, adopting instead a very critical attitude? The younger generation are not inclined to take anything for granted. Many are not ready to pay respect to anything, except in material things, such as progress in human achievements, or to some politi-

17. Is there evidence of a general desire to be able to call on God when in great need?

18. What characteristics mark the part that prayer plays in most religious services?

19, 20. Is the same often true of individual prayers, this leading to what pertinent questions?

21. How do the younger generation often view tradition and custom, and what conclusion can be reached?

cal or military hero. As a result, both inside and outside religious circles, it can undoubtedly be said that most people have forgotten how to pray, except those who go through a formalism and think they are praying by the use of beads or chants.

<sup>22</sup> All the same, we believe there are countless numbers who, if aided in the right way, would be very glad to learn how to pray with the assurance that their prayers were acceptable to the great Creator. As mentioned, neither can this be determined on the basis of human authority, nor can it be left to one's feelings or emotions. Learning how to pray is not a matter of learning words. Instead, following the line already taken, we will go to God's Word, the Bible, in confident expectation. We have found that it gives helpful information as to the necessary steps in order to approach God acceptably. In particular, we found that the book of Hebrews gives practical counsel and advice on this question. You will recall that in chapter eleven it records a long list of men of faith who enjoyed God's favor and blessing. They all believed that God "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him."—Heb. 11:6.

<sup>23</sup> However, Paul shows in that same letter, not only regarding those men of faith, but for all of us who are dedicated to God, that we must earnestly seek something else in addition. Indeed, it is indispensable if we are to prove successful in finding favor with God. What is that?

#### EARNESTLY SEEKING GOD'S CITY

<sup>24</sup> At Hebrews 13:14 Paul reminds those to whom he is writing that "we do not have here a city that continues, but we are earnestly seeking the one to come."

22, 23. (a) Where can we confidently look for guidance respecting prayer? (b) In seeking God, what question is raised?

24. How does Paul speak of and identify the city that we must earnestly seek?

What is this city that we must earnestly seek? First, regarding Abraham, Paul says that "by faith he resided as an alien in the land of the promise as in a foreign land . . . For he was awaiting the city having real foundations, the builder and creator of which city is God." Respecting Abraham and his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob, Paul likewise says that "they . . . publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land," that is, they forsook their place in the old system of things, in the land of the Chaldeans, and held no land in Canaan. Instead, Paul says, "they are reaching out for a better place, that is, one belonging to heaven [though, please note, not a place *in* heaven]. Hence God is not ashamed of them, to be called upon as their God, for he has made a city ready for them." Later, Paul plainly identifies this city. After mentioning how fleshly Israel approached Mount Sinai under Moses' leadership, he then, in contrast, says to the true Christians making up spiritual Israel: "But you have approached a Mount Zion and a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem."—Heb. 11:9, 10, 13-16; 12:18-22.

<sup>25</sup> A city is used in the Scriptures as a fitting symbol of a community of people living as a closely knit organization under a central control. John was given a vision of this "holy city, New Jerusalem," and the composition of it is made clear in the book of Revelation. John sees and describes it as being "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," and then he hears an angel identify the participants as "the bride, the Lamb's wife," referring to Christ Jesus and his bride class, the true church, or Christian congregation.—Rev. 21:2, 9; see also Revelation 14:1, 4.

25. Of what is a city a fitting symbol, and how is God's city further identified?

<sup>26</sup> Do you see the force of this picture of God's city? In the picture, or type, the literal, earthly city of Jerusalem, situated on Mount Zion, was the beloved capital city over the whole land of ancient fleshly Israel. In actual fact, only a few Israelites could claim citizenship in Jerusalem itself. Likewise in the fulfillment, Christ Jesus and the true church with him in heaven, form the capital organization ruling over all of God's earthly realm, this arrangement producing "new heavens and a new earth." (2 Pet. 3:13) In these days of the conclusion of the old system of things, truly dedicated Christians with the heavenly hope and citizenship have already been restored to a closely knit unity. (Phil. 3:20) Closely associated with these is a

26, 27. (a) How does the picture of God's city find fulfillment today? (b) Who are closely associated with those who have hope of heavenly citizenship? (c) What question do we look forward to answering?

"great crowd" of dedicated men and women with the hope of life on earth as subjects of God's kingdom. They are "rendering him [God] sacred service day and night in his temple," in association with the remnant of those who make up God's spiritual house or temple. (Rev. 7:15; Eph. 2:19-22) In the same spirit as that of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, these dedicated men and women of today must forsake the old system of things. Especially must they flee from that wicked symbolic city, Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. Instead, in proof of a living faith, they must earnestly seek God's city, his city-like arrangement, as is plainly manifest among Jehovah's witnesses.

<sup>27</sup> Still, you may ask, how will finding God's city help me in my prayers? We look forward to discussing this question in the following article.

## JEHOVAH GOD, *The Hearer of Prayer*

DAVID was a man of faith who earnestly sought God. He was richly rewarded in his search. In his youth he was anointed by Samuel, under God's direction, to be Israel's future king, being the one that Jehovah found "agreeable to his heart." Not long after, in the well-known encounter with the Philistine giant, Goliath, David proved his strong faith and devotion to Jehovah in action. Even earlier, as a shepherd boy, he had shown that

same spirit in slaying a lion and a bear when rescuing his father's sheep from the very mouths of those fierce creatures. David had a good background, and we can learn much from him.—1 Sam. 13:14; 16:11-13; 17:34-36, 45-47.

<sup>2</sup> When David eventually came to the throne and captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites, particularly the "stronghold of Zion," he established his throne in that city. At the first opportunity, David

1. How did David when young prove his faith and devotion toward Jehovah?

2. When enthroned in Zion, what action did David take, and why?

brought the sacred Ark with great rejoicing up to Zion. He appreciated that it represented Jehovah's presence, that it was the "ark of the true God, where a name is called on, the name of Jehovah of armies, sitting on the cherubs."—2 Sam. 5:5-7; 6:2.

<sup>3</sup> David was not satisfied with that however. As he later said on one occasion: "It was close to my heart to build a resting house for the ark of the covenant of Jehovah and as the footstool of our God." Though not permitted to build this house, or temple, himself, having spilled much blood in war, yet Jehovah allowed David to go a long way toward fulfilling his heart's desire. In preparation, he gathered a vast quantity of the required building materials, some of it at great cost to himself. As he said: "According to all my power I have prepared for the house of my God . . . [and] there is yet a special property of mine, gold and silver; I do give it to the house of my God over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house."—1 Chron. 28:2, 3; 29:2, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Finally, David blessed Jehovah before all the congregation in prayer, in language of the utmost dignity and reverence. It is very interesting to note how closely his thoughts run parallel with the main points contained in what is known as the Lord's prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13) Foremost in mind, David exalts and sanctifies God's name, ascribing to him "the greatness and the mightiness and the beauty and the excellency and the dignity . . . we are thanking you and praising your beauteous name." Stressing the importance of God's kingdom and of God's will being done in heaven and earth, he prays: "For everything in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Jehovah,

the One also lifting yourself up as head over all. . . . you are dominating everything." As in the Lord's prayer there follows the petition for personal needs to be supplied and request for forgiveness of sins, so likewise David goes on to acknowledge for himself and all the people their complete dependence on Jehovah's provisions and their own personal unworthiness. Lastly, David expresses the essence of the spirit of dedication and whole-souled devotion in these words: "O Jehovah our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build for you a house for your holy name, from your hand it is, and to you it all belongs."—1 Chron. 29:10-16.

<sup>5</sup> God's house and God's city, these were manifestly the two things uppermost in David's mind and dear to his heart. His close identification therewith greatly aided and guided him in his prayers. A fine example of this is seen in Psalm 122, which we recommend that you read. Every line tells of his keen desire, in company with others, to worship and "give thanks to the name of Jehovah" at Jehovah's house, situated "within your gates, O Jerusalem . . . a city that has been joined together in oneness." He specially asks his people to pray "for the peace of Jerusalem." Why? Partly, as he says, "for the sake of my brothers and my companions I will now speak: 'May there be peace within you.'" But more important: "For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God I will keep seeking good for you."

<sup>6</sup> In line with our theme, note also David's words recorded in Psalm 65. Showing that worship can be expressed by way of contrast, he prays: "For you there is praise—silence—, O God, in Zion; and to you the vow will be paid." He then says: "O Hearer of prayer, even to you people

3. What next step did David desire to take, and with what outcome?

4. How does David's prayer compare with the Lord's prayer?

5. In what way does Psalm 122 show keen appreciation of God's house and city?

6. Regarding the approach to God in prayer, what does Psalm 65 indicate?

of all flesh will come." Does this mean an unconditional approach, that we can find God everywhere, anywhere, as some believe? By no means. Notice what David was next inspired to say: "Happy is the one you choose and cause to approach, that he may reside in your courtyards. He will certainly be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holy place of your temple."—Ps. 65:1-4.

<sup>7</sup> However, we note that David did not say that only his own people, the Israelites, could approach God. He definitely said that to Jehovah, the "Hearer of prayer, even to you people of *all flesh* will come." What a gracious invitation is implied in these words! In close harmony with this, how appealing and definite are the words recorded by Isaiah: "And the foreigners that have joined themselves to Jehovah to minister to him and to love the name of Jehovah, in order to become servants to him . . . I will also bring them to my holy mountain [Zion] and make them rejoice inside my house of prayer . . . For my own house will be called even a house of prayer for all the peoples."—Isa. 56:6, 7; see also 2 Chronicles 6:32, 33.

<sup>8</sup> Do you see yourself as one of these "foreigners," that is, not as a spiritual Israelite with the heavenly hope, yet rejoicing in coming to know Jehovah and to love and serve him? Have you responded to the invitation to join with other sincere worshipers and come to Jehovah's house of prayer? Even those of spiritual Israel needed to be gathered in this way, for during the World War I period they incurred Jehovah's anger and fell into a sick, dispersed condition. But Jehovah, in his great mercy, restored them to his favor, besides opening the way for a great crowd of sheeplike people to be gathered in close

7. How widespread is the appeal in God's Word to come near to him?

8. How has Jehovah shown great mercy, first to spiritual Israel, then also to many "foreigners"?

union with the remnant of spiritual Israel. Isaiah's prophecy goes on to confirm this very clearly, saying: "The utterance of the Lord Jehovah, who is collecting together the dispersed ones of Israel, is: 'I shall collect together to him *others* besides those already collected together of his.' "—Isa. 56:8; see also Isaiah 12:1; Revelation 7:13-15.

<sup>9</sup> That David knew how to pray is abundantly evident from his many psalms. But who taught him? He must have responded well to his parents' instruction and training. They carried out the commandment given through Moses, to "love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your vital force. And these words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son" at all times. (Deut. 6:4-7) Thus David learned to appreciate and to fulfill the primary requirements of first imbibing accurate knowledge from a reliable source, God's written Word. He being teachable and having the right heart condition, this knowledge and understanding strengthened his faith, which, as we have seen, he was not slow to demonstrate from his early youth onward. Along with his faith, there was built up in him a great love and loyalty toward Jehovah, which nothing could break, even though once or twice he grievously erred.

<sup>10</sup> You may not have the same advantages as David enjoyed from early infancy, but there is no other way. There is no shortcut. You can start by taking in accurate knowledge and gain a proper understanding of God's will and purpose as revealed in his Word. This course must be maintained. You must keep searching and digging as for hid treasure, building a foundation that grows ever broader and

9. Who first taught David the true knowledge of God, and with what results?

10. Is a course similar to David's possible and necessary today, this leading to what question?

deeper. (Prov. 2:1-9) This intake of knowledge and understanding must be responded to and acted on, allowing it to produce a strong faith in Jehovah and love for him, leading to dedication. It can be done. It has been done from earliest times, commencing with Abel. It is being done today by men and women and young folk of varying temperaments and from all walks of life, some with a poor and adverse background. Granted, we all need much help and encouragement, and this includes learning how to pray. However, like David, we can be greatly aided by maintaining close association with God's city and God's house. But where are these to be found today? Is it a literal city and a literal house?

#### GOD'S MODERN CITY AND HOUSE

<sup>11</sup> God's Word gives a clear and encouraging answer to these questions. The Bible shows that these things that God used in his dealings with ancient Israel were pictures, foreshadowing far better things, commencing with Christ Jesus, the Greater David. Paul says that the entire arrangement of the Law, given through Moses, was "a shadow of the good things to come." When Christ Jesus came, he brought an end to that typical arrangement, figuratively "nailing it to the torture stake." Through him, God established a better arrangement and made him a "mediator of a new covenant," for the purpose of producing a new people, a spiritual Israel, the Christian congregation. There is still a remnant of this people on earth today, forming the nucleus of Jehovah's witnesses. It is this people, anointed with God's holy spirit and with the heavenly hope, who fulfill the prophetic picture of God's city and house, or temple. Using both illustrations, Paul, when writing to

the Christians at Ephesus, says: "You are fellow citizens of the holy ones and are members of the household of God." After mentioning the apostles and Christ Jesus, "the foundation cornerstone," he continues: "In union with him the whole building, being harmoniously joined together, is growing into a holy temple for Jehovah. In union with him you, too, are being built up together into a place for God to inhabit by spirit." What a lofty, yet intimate, conception of the close relationship between Jehovah and the entire Christian congregation, the temple class. —Heb. 9:15; 10:1; Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:19-22.

<sup>12</sup> However, this is not the first time such a thought had been expressed. When Paul wrote those words he likely had in mind what the psalmist was inspired to record in fine poetic form in Psalm 132, entitled "A Song of the Ascents." He first tells of his avowed determination to give himself no rest "until I find a place for Jehovah, a grand tabernacle for the Powerful One of Jacob." He describes the bringing of the ark in triumphal procession up to Zion, and says: "Do arise, O Jehovah, to your resting place, you and the ark of your strength." He then tells how Jehovah himself feels toward this house and this city that he has chosen: "For Jehovah has chosen Zion; he has longed for it as a dwelling for himself: 'This is my resting place forever; here I shall dwell, for I have longed for it.'" (Ps. 132:1-5, 8, 13, 14) Can we not say that since Jehovah feels that way about it, then surely prayer and communion with him is not going to be difficult for anyone who sincerely identifies himself with that dwelling place?

<sup>13</sup> That temple class was clearly seen in Paul's day in the various Christian con-

11. (a) In what way was the Law 'a shadow of good things to come'? (b) How does Paul speak of and identify God's spiritual house?

12. According to Psalm 132, where does Jehovah find delight in dwelling, and with what encouragement to us?  
13. How does Paul liken the Christian congregation to a full-grown man?

gregations. Still more clearly is it seen in our day, especially since 1919, when many of Jesus' prophetic parables are being fulfilled, such as 'gathering the wheat into the storehouse,' and 'collecting the fine fish into vessels.' (Matt. 13:30, 48; 24:31) Paul looked forward to this time when the Christian congregation would come to its maturity as a "full-grown man, to the measure of growth that belongs to the fullness of the Christ." He explains how this growth and fine relationship are maintained, first "through every joint that gives what is needed," also "according to the functioning of each respective member in due measure," and thus this "makes for the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."—Eph. 4:13-16.

<sup>14</sup> This happy and healthy condition is to be found today in the fine large family of Jehovah's witnesses. All are dedicated to Jehovah, as Scripturally evidenced by water immersion and their subsequent course of action. They meet the primary requirements of taking in accurate knowledge by continual study of the Bible, building up their faith and spirit of devotion to Jehovah. Though only a minority, a remnant, have the heavenly hope, yet all of them world wide are 'harmoniously joined together and made to co-operate' through the major joints, or links, seen in those appointed to positions of oversight. However, as Paul said, the growth is also maintained by "each respective member in due measure," each one taking his part, whether young or old, male or female, some in a small measure to begin with, others in a greater measure of responsibility. As Paul said earlier in that same letter, it was God's good pleasure "at the full limit of the appointed times . . . to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on

14. In what respects do Jehovah's witnesses today meet the requirements referred to by Paul?

the earth." This gathering of Christians into a close unity is according to God's will, and to him all the credit is due. It is "God who makes it grow."—Eph. 4:16; 1:9, 10; 1 Cor. 3:7.

#### TEACH US TO PRAY

<sup>15</sup> In view of this, is it not reasonable to conclude that for ourselves, individually, we will be greatly helped in maintaining personal relationship with Jehovah and communion with him in prayer by a close association with this body of dedicated worshipers of Jehovah, among whom he dwells? They would consider it a real privilege and a pleasure to encourage and aid you in this precious and vital aspect of your Christian life. When one of the disciples said to Jesus: "Lord, teach us how to pray," he readily responded with a model prayer. He followed this up with an illustration stressing the need for persistence in prayer. This did not imply that the heavenly Father was slow to listen or respond, for Jesus concluded by saying that as imperfect, sinful parents 'know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!'—Luke 11:1-13.

<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Jehovah's witnesses, as disciples of Jesus, will gladly do all they can in this regard, by direct guidance, based on God's Word, also by example. When contacting someone who shows interest, they seek to arrange for a regular home Bible study with that person, which study is opened and concluded with a brief prayer whenever possible. All their meetings and sessions, except public meetings, include this same feature, prayer, in which all present sincerely join. By attending and

15. (a) What association should we seek, and why?  
 (b) When asked to be taught how to pray, how did Jesus respond?

16. How do Jehovah's witnesses follow Jesus' example in this regard, and on what is their unity based?

sharing in the spirit of these meetings, you will find an atmosphere conducive to prayer. We do not mean this in the way of an emotional appeal or excitement, but it is because all assembled are united in feeding at Jehovah's table on the up-building spiritual food from his Word. They are united, too, in their devotion to Jehovah and in the service of his Kingdom interests, also in their genuine, warm, unselfish love for one another. Naturally, your feelings may be deeply stirred on such occasions, but feelings in themselves are not the criterion or the chief aim in view.—Matt. 18:20.

<sup>17</sup> Additionally, you will be helped in the more personal aspects of prayer, such as the proper things to include in your petitions and expressions of praise and thanksgiving. Problems may arise in your life, as they do in the lives of all seeking to be true Christians; and, in all these things, however complex, you will find you will be helped to get God's viewpoint on the matter. You will learn how to put into practice the apostle's fine exhortation: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:6, 7.

<sup>18</sup> We could, of course, enlarge on many more details, but in this review on the subject of prayer our main purpose has been to show sincere seekers from the Scriptures where to find God and how to approach him through the one and only channel, Christ Jesus. Regarding him, Paul said: "For we have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without

sin. Let us, therefore, approach with freedom of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time."—Heb. 4:15, 16; John 14:13, 14.

#### TWO PICTURES OF CLOSE ASSOCIATION

<sup>19</sup> The Scriptures emphasize the importance of close association in a remarkable way. For your encouragement, we will consider two pictures of this, from the two viewpoints, collective and personal.

<sup>20</sup> As already mentioned, there is still a remnant of the anointed temple class on earth, built up "into a place for God to inhabit by spirit," making it possible for a "great crowd" of "other sheep" to enjoy close fellowship with such. (Eph. 2:22; Rev. 7:9, 15; John 10:16) Some will ask, Will that blessing be lost when all of the temple class are eventually united with Christ Jesus on his heavenly throne, after Armageddon? Not according to what John saw in vision. He saw and described the "holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." It defies imagination! Not only are the city's measurements far beyond our experience, being 375 miles (3,000 furlongs) in each direction, in length, breadth and height, but the entire city is seen to descend out of heaven. No, not by a literal descent of the heavenly government, but by a turning of its attention and activities toward this earth. Nevertheless, with what effect as regards those on earth? It is as John hears announced: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them." (Rev. 21:2, 3, 16) A closer association could not be

17. How is help given in meeting personal problems?

18. How can sincere seekers be aided in approaching God, and with what Scriptural support?

19, 20. (a) Collectively, what fine association is now enjoyed, giving rise to what question? (b) What remarkable thing did John see in vision, and with what effect? (c) How is this closeness emphasized?

expressed in words. If you reside with someone, you live in the same house with that one, do you not? That is the picture. What a joy and a comfort to all those in harmony with that heavenly government, giving them a sense of its immediate nearness! Also note that every time John refers to this city he is inspired to mention its descent. He mentions it three times for emphasis. The first instance is when he records the promise given to "the one that conquers" in the congregation at

Philadelphia: "I will write upon him . . . the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which descends out of heaven from my God." (Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10) This precedes the message to the congregation in Laodicea, where we find our other illustration. It is a personal one and has reference, not to God's house, but to your own house.

<sup>21</sup> What a sorry condition that last-named congregation was in! Lukewarm and ready to be vomited out of the Lord's mouth. Yet we find given to any individuals in that congregation ready to listen, this friendly word of warning and counsel: "All those for whom I have affection I reprove and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent." Now notice what Jesus next says: "Look! I am standing at the door and knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and take the evening meal with him and he with me." (Rev. 3:19, 20) No, he does not tell you to come and knock on the door of *his* house, wondering what the summons thither might mean. Instead, he pictures himself as standing and knocking at *your* door. What an amaz-

21. (a) What counsel and illustration did Jesus give at Revelation 3:19, 20? (b) How would we benefit by responding to the knocking that Jesus mentioned?

ing picture! Imagine it is your house and you are on your own, about to have the usual evening meal. Then suddenly you hear a knocking and a voice announcing who it is. The Lord himself! Why, of course, you would immediately invite him in. No need to worry about what is in the larder, for you would know he had not come to eat you out of house and home, as we sometimes say. Rather, you would know that the real purpose of his call was to give you the benefit of a rich, up-

building, spiritual feast and to enjoy precious communion with him in the homely atmosphere of personal friendship. Is that not what Jesus did when on earth and invited in for an evening meal, such as with Lazarus and his sisters?—Luke 10:38-42.

<sup>22</sup> For one thing, this illustration shows that our dedication involves a two-way invitation. First, Jehovah, through Christ Jesus, invites you to give yourself in full and unreserved dedication to him. Secondly, Christ Jesus, speaking for his Father and himself, asks you to invite him into your house, into your mind and heart and your whole life. For what purpose? He wants you to let him talk to you in the quietness of your own mind and heart. How so? Through his Father's Word and also his organization, that is, at the meetings and in fellowship with his people. That means, as you eagerly listen, there will be a free flow of Jehovah's spirit. In such an atmosphere there would surely be no difficulty or barrier in the matter of prayer, no more than there is in fellowship with your brothers and sisters at the meetings.

<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, what a striking lesson

22. How does dedication involve a two-way invitation, resulting in what blessings?

23. What fine lesson of humility is here seen regarding the shepherding work?

#### COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- A World Without Faith.
- Faith and Determination Needed to Please Jehovah.
- Christians Should Lead Honest Lives.
- The Beauty of Compassion.

we have here of true humility. Even the risen Lord does not demand entrance, saying, Come on, open up! Instead, he pictures himself as standing out there, patiently knocking and waiting to see if you will be good enough to hear and respond. When on earth, Jesus said he was "mild-tempered and lowly in heart." He still is, and in this he sets a fine example for us. Much emphasis is placed in these days on the shepherding work being done mainly by the appointed servants and overseers in the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses. These have a duty to call on all of Jehovah's little ones, paying special attention to any who have become like sick or straying sheep. When making such calls, how careful these servants must be to have the same motive and show the same friendly and humble spirit as Jesus portrayed in his illustration.—Matt. 11:29; 18:12-14; Heb. 13:8.

<sup>24</sup> However, all of Jehovah's witnesses can take the same lesson to heart. All of our work in calling on the people, from

24. How does this same lesson apply to all of Jehovah's witnesses?

the first call onward, includes the aspect of shepherding. We are looking for sheep-like people. In a literal way, we keep "standing at the door and knocking." Yes, we feel it is an obligation to keep on calling, but though many may fail to respond or show a sheeplike attitude, we must never, either literally or figuratively, put our foot in the door, insisting on delivering our message at all costs. We cannot demand either a hearing or an entrance, but we should let the people know we are there and by a sincere, friendly manner, "together with a mild temper and deep respect," show that our motive is good. —Rev. 3:20; 1 Pet. 3:15.

<sup>25</sup> Finally, this lesson of humility is going to be a great help to us with regard to our prayers to the "Hearer of prayer." A truly humble mind and heart will go a long way in enabling us at all times to "approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness," assured of being heard and finding mercy and help at just the right time.—Heb. 4:16.

25. In what further way will true humility be an invaluable help to us?

## ASSYRIAN CONQUEST OF ISRAEL

**I**HE Bible records the conquest of Israel by Assyria. Assyrian king Pul, more commonly called by the name Tiglath-pileser, came against Israel at least twice some years before Israel was finally conquered completely by Assyria in 740 B.C.E. The Bible tells of the first of these invasions:

"Pul [Tiglath-pileser] the king of Assyria came into the land. Consequently Menahem [king of Israel] gave Pul a thousand talents of silver . . . At that the king of Assyria turned back, and he did not stay there in the land."—2 Ki. 15:19, 20.

A few years later Pekah killed Menahem's son who had succeeded him on the throne, and Pekah became king of Israel. The Bible goes on to tell about a second invasion by this same Assyrian king, this time in the days of King Pekah: "Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria came in and proceeded to

take Ijon and Abel-beth-maacah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and to carry them into exile in Assyria. Finally Hoshea the son of Elah formed a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah and struck him and put him to death; and he began to reign in place of him."—2 Ki. 15:29, 30.

It is of interest that in writings of Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser, which have been uncovered in archaeological discoveries, he speaks about these very events recorded in the Bible. For example, in one document he wrote: "I received tribute from Kushtashpi of Commagene, Rezon of Damascus, Menahem of Samaria . . ." And in another document he said: "They overthrew their king Pekah and I placed Hoshea as king over them."

# BE ON GUARD AGAINST

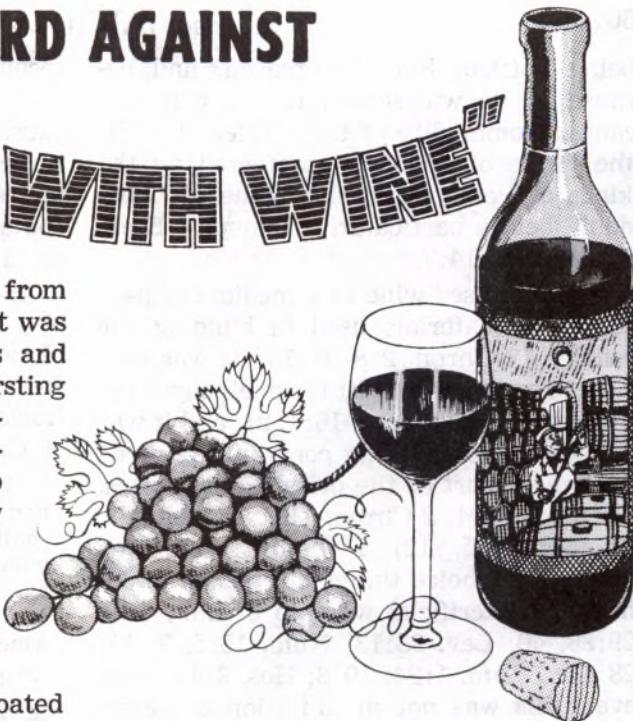
## "EXCESSES WITH WINE"

**W**INE—what a wonderful gift from our Creator, Jehovah God! It was He who made the delicious grapes and other fruits, made them fairly bursting with sweetness when ripe, and blended in esters and acids for aroma, flavor and bouquet. Jehovah God also established the laws of chemistry whereby these fruit sugars can be broken down by fermentation into alcohol. More than that, Jehovah made the microorganisms called yeasts, so necessary as catalysts in the fermentation process, and even coated the skins of ripe grapes with a delicate dusting of these yeast cells. Truly the whole cycle, from the fruit to an aged wine, reflects the wisdom and goodness of our grand Creator!

However, if we in turn show similar wisdom we will listen to Jehovah's instructions on how this choice beverage should be used, not abused. This means we will be on guard against excessive and abusive use of wine. (1 Pet. 4:3) Our appreciation for this unique product of the vine will also be enhanced by a little background information on the history and uses of wine.

### BIBLICAL HISTORY OF THIS USEFUL BEVERAGE

The recorded history of wine making is more than forty-three hundred years old, the oldest account telling how Noah planted a vineyard after the Flood and made wine from its grapes. (Gen. 9:20, 21) From earliest times this beverage has been used at mealtime. (Gen. 27:25; Eccl. 9:7)



Wine, bread and other foods are often associated together. (1 Sam. 16:20; Song of Sol. 5:1; Isa. 22:13; 55:1) Melchizedek set "bread and wine" before Abraham. (Gen. 14:18-20) Jesus drank wine with his meals when it was available.—Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:34.

Wine was very much a part of special celebrations—banquets (Esther 1:7; 5:6; 7:2, 7, 8; Dan. 5:1, 2, 4), wedding feasts (John 2:3, 9, 10; 4:46), and other festivals. (1 Chron. 12:39, 40; Job 1:13, 18) The royal commissaries were stocked with wines (1 Chron. 27:27; 2 Chron. 11:11); King Solomon had his "house of wine" (Song of Sol. 2:4); it was the customary beverage of kings and governors. (Neh. 2:1; 5:15, 18; Dan. 1:5, 8, 16) Travelers often included it in their provisions for the journey.—Josh. 9:4, 13; Judg. 19:19.

Here is a beverage that can be kept for years, even improving in smoothness, mellowness and quality with age. In fact, it is the only beverage that improves after

being bottled. For this reason, and because of its widespread usage, wine became a commodity of trade (Neh. 13:15), the "wine of Helbon" (preferred by the kings of Persia) and the "wine of Lebanon" being particularly famous.—Ezek. 27:18; Hos. 14:7.

Solomon used wine as a medium of payment for materials used in building the temple. (2 Chron. 2:8-10, 15) It was considered an excellent gift for one's superiors (1 Sam. 25:18; 2 Sam. 16:1, 2), and it was included in the tithing contribution given for the support of the priests and Levites. (Deut. 18:3, 4; 2 Chron. 31:4, 5; Neh. 10:37, 39; 13:5, 12) Fittingly, wine was among the choice things offered up to Jehovah in sacrificial worship of him. (Ex. 29:38, 40; Lev. 23:13; Num. 15:5, 7, 10; 28:14; 1 Sam. 1:24; 10:3; Hos. 9:4) However, this was not in imitation of pagan worship of Dionysus (Bacchus) and the pouring out of drink offerings to other gods.—Deut. 32:37, 38; Isa. 57:6; 65:11; Jer. 7:18; 19:13.

Wine was not at first a part of the Passover meal, but was added later, perhaps after the return from Babylonian exile. It was therefore on the table when Jesus celebrated the Passover the last time with the twelve apostles, and was conveniently used by him in instituting the memorial of his death. The red "blood of grapes" was a fitting representation of Jesus' own sacrificial blood poured out on behalf of mankind. On that occasion Jesus spoke of it as "this product of the vine," and since it was perhaps seven months after the grape harvest, there can be no question but that it was fermented juice of the vine.—Gen. 49:11; Matt. 26:18, 27-29.

As reported by the physician Luke, wine had certain medicinal value as an antiseptic and mild disinfectant. (Luke 10:34) So here is a beverage that has medicinal value as well as pleasing taste. The Bible

recommends it as a curative remedy in cases of certain intestinal disturbances caused by drinking bad water. It was observed that people who drank wine were not subject to diseases associated with contaminated water. Hence, Paul counseled Timothy: "Do not drink water any longer, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent cases of sickness." (1 Tim. 5:23) That this was sound medical advice, Dr. Salvatore P. Lucia, professor of medicine, University of California School of Medicine, writes:

"Wine is the most ancient dietary beverage and the most important medicinal agent in continuous use throughout the history of mankind. . . . Actually, few other substances available to man have been as widely recommended for their curative powers as have wines."

Concerning its effectiveness in combating various intestinal ailments this same authority says:

"Wine is widely used in the treatment of diseases of the digestive system. It is found to be particularly beneficial in anorexia, hypochlorhydria without gastritis and hypothenic dyspepsia. Minor hepatic insufficiency responds not unfavorably to unadulterated dry white table wine. The tannin content and the mild antiseptic properties of wine make it valuable in the treatment of intestinal colic, mucous colitis, spastic constipation, diarrhea and many infectious diseases of the gastrointestinal tract."—*Wine as Food and Medicine*, pp. 5, 58.

From the above it is apparent that wine is indeed one of the wonderful gifts included among Jehovah's other earthly blessings to mankind. Wine "makes God and men rejoice"; it "makes the heart of mortal man rejoice"; it puts the heart in "a merry mood." (Judg. 9:13; Ps. 104:15; Esther 1:10; 2 Sam. 13:28; Eccl. 2:3; 10:19; Zech. 10:7) Hence, Daniel when in mourning drank no wine. (Dan. 10:2, 3) An abundant supply of wine, symbolized by the "vine" in the oft repeated expression 'sitting under one's own vine and fig

tree,' denotes prosperity and security under Jehovah's righteous administration. (1 Ki. 4:25; 2 Ki. 18:31; Isa. 36:16; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10) Wine is also included in the 'restoration blessings' promised by Jehovah. (Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13, 14; Zech. 9:17) Such blessings, however, depend on faithfulness to Jehovah and strict obedience to his righteous requirements. Disobedience means the converse: calamity and desolation with little or no wine.—Deut. 28:39; Isa. 24:7-11; Amos 5:11; Mic. 6:15; Zeph. 1:13; Hag. 1:11.

#### **GUARD AGAINST DRUNKENNESS**

Moderation in all things is a Bible principle. Even honey is no exception—in moderation it is good; overeating of it is injurious. (Prov. 25:27) So also with Jehovah's gifts of wine and strong drink. They too must be used as he directs. Overindulgence and disregard for Bible principles in the use of these provisions brings Jehovah's disapproval and leads to debauchery and death. The Bible is very emphatic on this matter, both in its precepts and examples.—Prov. 23:29-31.

Wine and its proper use are not censured, but drunkenness and lack of self-control are Scripturally prohibited and condemned. "Woe to those who are getting up early in the morning that they may seek just intoxicating liquor, who are lingering till late in the evening darkness so that wine itself inflames them!" (Isa. 5:11) "Who has woe? Who has uneasiness? Who has contentions? Who has concern? Who has wounds for no reason? Who has dullness of eyes? Those staying a long time with the wine, those coming in to search out mixed wine." (Prov. 23:29, 30) "Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine," for an excess of alcohol causes "poverty," "drowsiness," "takes away good motive," causes "rage," "loafing about,"

or makes one "boisterous."—Prov. 23:20, 21; Hos. 4:11; 7:5, 14; Zech. 9:15.

Whereas moderate quantities of wine are beneficial as a food and medicine, excessive amounts cause a state of drunkenness in which one is overpowered and loses control of mind and body. (Ps. 60:3; 78:65; Jer. 23:9; Joel 1:5) Excesses, the wise man wrote, are 'just like a serpent's bite, just like a viper's poison,' causing cirrhosis of the liver and mental delirium tremens, even to the point of killing a drunkard. (Prov. 23:32) The one with an insatiable love of wine is also bound to come to poverty, unable to work, unreliable.—Prov. 21:17.

The Bible also furnishes us with warning examples of misuse of wine and strong drink. Noah, it appears, inadvertently became intoxicated, which in turn led to serious improprieties. (Gen. 9:20-27) Made drunk on wine, Lot did not know at the time that he fathered the sons of his two daughters. (Gen. 19:32-38) Of the "drunkards of Ephraim" it is said, "they have gone astray in their seeing, they have reeled as to decision." (Isa. 28:1, 7) Nabal was an example of a "good-for-nothing" drunkard with little or no self-control.—1 Sam. 25:25, 36.

#### **CHRISTIANS TO BE ESPECIALLY ON GUARD**

The drunkard is prone to be boisterous, unrestrained, noisy and ridiculous in his actions. (Ps. 107:27; Prov. 20:1; Isa. 19:14) Consequently, the practice of drunkenness cannot be tolerated in the Christian congregation. Individuals, therefore, coming into the Christian congregation lay aside the "works of the flesh," including "drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these," knowing full well that 'drunkards will not inherit God's kingdom.' (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:10) "For the time that has passed by," the apostle Peter writes Christians, "is sufficient for you to have

worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, *excesses with wine*, revelries, drinking matches." (1 Pet. 4:3) "Do not be getting drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery," is the command. (Eph. 5:18) Moderation and soundness of mind are required of all in the congregation—of overseers, ministerial servants, aged men and women as well as the younger ones.—1 Tim. 3:1-3, 8; Titus 1:6, 7; 2:2-4, 6.

Contrary to the erroneous opinions of some, alcoholic liquors are not mental stimulants, but are in reality sedatives and depressants of the central nervous system. "Give intoxicating liquor, you people, to the one about to perish and wine to those who are bitter of soul," not as a mental stimulant to make them more conscious of their pain, but rather, that they might forget their troubles. (Prov. 31:6, 7) The ancient custom of giving criminals drugged wine to blunt the pain of execution may explain why Roman soldiers offered Jesus drugged wine when impaling him.—Mark 15:23.

Because alcoholic beverages are depressants Jehovah forbade the priests and Levites, when on duty at the tabernacle or temple, to indulge even in small amounts, under penalty of death. (Lev. 10:9; Ezek. 44:21) Off duty they were free to drink in moderation. (1 Chron. 9:29) It was also a divine regulation that Nazirites under vow were not to drink alcohol. (Num. 6:2-4, 13-20; Amos 2:12) Because Samson was to be a Nazirite from birth, his mother was not even allowed to touch wine or liquor during her pregnancy. (Judg. 13:4, 5, 7, 14) When officiating, "it is not for kings to drink wine or for high officials to say: 'Where is intoxicating

liquor?'" lest they "forget what is decreed and pervert the cause of any of the sons of affliction." (Prov. 31:4, 5) Similarly, as already mentioned, ministerial servants in the Christian congregation "should likewise be serious, . . . not giving themselves to a lot of wine."—1 Tim. 3:8, 9.

#### IS TOTAL ABSTINENCE NECESSARY?

Yes, sometimes. Alcoholism is said to be a disease in which the victim has a constant compulsion to drink alcoholic beverages and which is stronger than his will-power to desist. Persons thus afflicted should abstain altogether lest the urge to excesses overpower them. There are other cases in which drinking alcohol, even in small quantities, is ill-advised and detrimental to one's health. Then there are occasions when one should refrain from drinking intoxicating liquors in order to avoid stumbling others, out of love and consideration for the consciences of others, even as the apostle Paul declared. (Rom. 14:21) Remember, "expressions of endearment are better than wine." (Song of Sol. 1:2, 4; 4:10) After all, alcoholic beverages are not a necessity. For forty years the Israelites drank no wine or strong drink. (Deut. 29:5, 6) After restraining from drinking wine for nearly 300 years the Rechabites were commended for their faithfulness. (Jer. 35:2-19) Abstinence while living the life of a Nazirite did not impair the health and strength of either strong man Samson or rugged John the Baptist.—Num. 6:1-4; Judg. 16:17; Matt. 11:18; Luke 1:15; 7:33.

So if you are better off abstaining, well and good. But if you are free to enjoy this good gift from Jehovah, do so at appropriate times and places and in compliance with God's laws of moderation.

**OVER HALF A CENTURY**

OF

# Satisfying Service

**As told by Seth Keith**

FROM her perch on a chair, as she engaged in closet cleaning, Mother threw down an old magazine, wrinkled and colored with age. "There! Perhaps that will help clear up some of those Bible questions you have been asking. But don't forget, your grandfather Killion always said the Bible would never be understood. And his opinion was always sought after."

I was just a youngster at the time. At our home in Washington, Indiana, there were no real Bible scholars, but I was keenly interested in getting to understand the Bible. This old paper that Mother had dug out from the accumulations of the years was like a dim light that was due to grow brighter and brighter in my life. It was an early issue of *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*.

In 1911 there came to me through a man named Fred Parker a copy of the

*People's Pulpit* and a copy of *The Bible Students Monthly*, both published by the Bible Students, as Jehovah's witnesses were then known. One told about the condition of the dead and the other intimated that the second coming of Christ Jesus was due.

When a man in our neighborhood got killed accidentally the day after he had turned down an invitation to join the Methodist Church, the preacher took it for granted that he had gone to a fiery hell, and used the funeral as an opportunity to remind everyone about how hot it was in hell. In a later discussion the assistant minister quoted from Dante's *Inferno* to back up this doctrine. That disgusted me, and from then on I had no confidence in the church. At home I kept raising the question about the state of the dead, until my sister hunted out that old magazine again as well as the other Bible Student papers. Here we found advertised six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* and the *Watch Tower* magazine. We sent for them right away.

I was working on the farm by day and studying the Bible late into the night for some time. What a thrill it was to find that God's purposes were beautifully in harmony with truth and justice, just as his visible creations are a source of pleasure to humble men and women! At the same time I was realizing what a blasphemy, what a dishonor to God's name, were the ridiculous traditional teachings of superstitious religion. Of course, I kept talking about the things I was learning, and the neighbors suggested I was losing my mind. My view was that anyone who loses his own mind and gets the Lord's mind on any subject is well ahead.

Meanwhile I met up with Fred Parker again, and with him I attended the showing of the "Photo-Drama of Creation," an explanation of God's purposes by means of slides and movies. Then we started putting out Bible tracts. Especially at any large gathering of people we would drop tracts in cars and horse-drawn carriages. In 1915 I attended a small convention and had the privilege of meeting and hearing Pastor Russell, the Watch Tower Society's first president. It was truly impressive how boldly he came out with exposure of religious errors, advocating the clearing away of all the traditional rubbish from atop God's own Book.

#### GETTING INTO HARNESS

The year 1916 was an eventful one for me. Early that year Pastor Russell gave a lecture in our hometown and later invited me to enter the colporteur service, the full-time service of distributing Bibles and Bible literature, later known as "pioneer service." On June 10 of that year I symbolized my dedication to God by being baptized. I took up colporteuring with a more experienced man, first around the home county, then into the copper region of northern Michigan.

The following year my companion and I were arrested at Princeton, Indiana. Roman Catholic authorities were out to stop the distribution of the book *The Finished Mystery*. After five days and four nights the sheriff released us from jail, there being no evidence against us and no orders for our arrest. Then, with my companion, we had the job of distributing issue No. 3 of *Kingdom News* on the topic "Two Great Battles Raging," in the Harrisburg, Illinois, area. That caused quite a commotion. In fact, we later heard that the police were waiting to seize two men at the railroad station. It so happened that

we were late, and my companion told me to jump on the back of the train while he bought our tickets. So the police did not see two men together.

On one occasion we went to Evansville to hear a lecture by Hugo Riemer, one of the Society's traveling representatives. He told us that the Society had had some 300 colporteurs, but that all but 56 of them had quit. "So keep right ahead and the Lord will give you a blessing," he told us. And that is what we did. We traveled far and into many states, including Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Arizona and New Mexico. We even tried, unsuccessfully, to get into old Mexico.

#### IN THE THICK OF THE FIGHT

Few people today realize what a fight had to be put up in those days to maintain the right to preach the Bible's message. J. F. Rutherford's famous lecture "The World Has Ended, Millions Now Living Will Never Die," seemed like the prelude to very exciting times, especially for colporteurs. My companion and I had the joy of being able to work right up to the end of World War I. Imagine the joy we got, too, out of the marvelous, hope-inspiring conventions at Cedar Point, Ohio, in 1919 and 1922. Never will I forget the call to advertise the Kingdom and the zeal of the assembled throng!

Many were the instrumentalities that we used to get the Kingdom preaching done. Often we would walk; we used bicycles up till about 1922, and after that we started using cars. I can recall an old house-car we used; it got its name from the fact that we had fixed the seats so we could convert them into beds. We used the phonograph to play Bible sermons to the people, and then came the transcription

machine that used sixteen-inch records to be played over a sound system.

Once, when working in Harrisburg, Arkansas, as I was going down the street offering literature to the householders a man asked me if I was a Bible Student. On my affirmative reply he seemed to get quite excited, and inquired if I had the book *Enemies*. I told him I had one in the car, and as we walked along he burst out: "See that tall spire over there! That is the Baptist Church, and I preach there. I am an officer of the law. When I was in Louisiana, we of the American Legion destroyed the homes of forty of Jehovah's witnesses."

With that he took me to jail and placed me in a cell with just a piece of metal for a bunk and two blankets. I was tired out and soon was sound asleep anyway. It happened to be Christmas Eve, and along about 10 p.m. they filled up the jail with drunks. During the night I was awakened by one man screaming and crying. He was suffering from delirium tremens. To my relief, in the morning I was brought before the sheriff and released after questioning.

While serving in the hot, humid regions of Arkansas, I became ill. The doctor said I had a case of arrested tuberculosis and recommended that I move out to western Texas. There I had many exciting times, for the flag-salute issue had the people all stirred up into a kind of frenzy. At Menard, Texas, I recall that a couple of frenzied men had me jailed and sentenced to a fine of \$200 and costs. It was arranged for one of my friends to go to San Angelo and obtain a bond for me. However, when he brought it back the officials said they would honor it only after my fine was paid. I told them I would stay there before I would pay an unjust fine. However, my well-meaning friend made an arrangement with them to dis-

miss the \$200 fine if I would just pay the costs.

My health was deteriorating at this time, so friends persuaded me to go to a sanitarium for an examination. Upon examination it turned out I was too chronic a case for them. They claimed they would not take anyone over sixty years of age. When I pointed out that I was only fifty-nine it made no difference. Anyway, I decided to go and live out in the open that winter.

In the fall of 1944, the Watch Tower Society assigned me to Pecos, Texas. The local preachers did not like my preaching about God's kingdom and stirred up the authorities. All together I must have been arrested six times in the Pecos area. They tried to get me to admit that I was selling literature. I refused, since it was a matter of accepting small contributions that in no way reflected the full value of the Bible literature we left with the people. At the second arrest one old lady, herself also a Witness, got out of a sickbed and drove thirty-seven miles to bail us out.

Throughout all of these experiences it is truly wonderful the sense of satisfaction we experienced. We knew that we were putting forth our very best endeavors to serve Jehovah God and promote study of the Bible with its message of hope. We rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer for righteousness' sake.—1 Pet. 2:19, 20.

High-handed officers showed their prejudice and their hatred of any who claimed their ordinary rights as citizens. When we went to preach at Tombstone, Arizona, for example, we were told that if we would just pay a \$3 license fee everything would be all right. Of course, we refused, since our work was in no sense commercial. The third time we appeared before a certain judge, he told us that we were worse than any criminals and murderers. Strange language, is it not, to direct at

people whose only offense was to preach the good news of God's kingdom?

I remember in one town that they arrested me simply because I inquired for the address of a Witness living there. The marshal told me that he would arrest me every time I showed up in their town. He expected that as soon as I was released I would leave the district. But he was disappointed. He had me fined, and when I refused to pay the fine, then I was thrown into a filthy cell. A few days later the sheriff came in and said that if I would leave the county they would turn me loose. I reminded him that I had been illegally jailed and would never leave on any such conditions. He finally let me out, no strings attached.

#### CAUSE FOR SATISFACTION, JOY

All of those experiences were sources of deep satisfaction, yes, even joy, at the time, for were not Jesus' followers warned that if they followed the lead of their Master they would receive the same treatment that he received? (John 17:14) And, of course, all of the bad treatment that we received was as nothing compared to the joy we had when humble people responded to the message that we brought them and showed their appreciation by extending to us 'the cup of cold water' spoken of by the Lord Jesus. (Matt. 10:42) And it was

always thrilling to note the evidences that the enthroned King of God's choice was already accomplishing his grand separating work, and to reflect on the fact that we were humble instruments in his hand.—Matt. 25:31-33.

It is true that age has greatly reduced my physical ability. I am now over eighty-six. And if I permit my mind to dwell on this it can be quite discouraging. But I take comfort in the knowledge that our Father in heaven knows us better than we do ourselves. He knows our infirmities, and he knows our longing to be able to serve in some small way the interests of his Kingdom; perhaps to be able to encourage someone who is physically better able to preach and teach today. And Jehovah is good to his servants. See how he has raised a multitude of Kingdom proclaimers to intensify the witness among the nations in these "last days"! How satisfying to know that we are in the days of the fulfillment of the prophecy: "The little one himself will become a thousand, and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, shall speed it up in its own time!"—Isa. 60:22.

(Since writing this account, Seth Keith finished his earthly course with confidence that 'the things he did would go right with him,' because he had the hope of sharing with Christ in the heavenly kingdom.—Rev. 14:13.)

#### *She Preached to Her Minister*

A woman who began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses became so enthusiastic over what she was learning that she was moved to tell everyone about it. Among the ones to whom she spoke was her Lutheran minister. She talked with him for three hours about what she had learned from the Bible. During the conversation she reminded him of a sermon he once gave about the Trinity. He had said: "We know the Father; we know the Son, but who knows who the Holy Ghost is? I do not. Do you?" The woman told him that she now knew the answer. She said that it is right in the Bible! It is God's active force, which is the holy spirit. She then left him some Watch Tower publications to read. This time it was not the minister who was doing the preaching.

## Questions from Readers

- What is the unforgivable sin?—E. M., U.S.A.

The type of sin mentioned in the Bible as being unforgivable is not simply a category such as stealing, lying or sexual immorality. These things are serious, however, and may involve unforgivable sin. (Rev. 21:8) But the unforgivable sin is deliberate sin against the manifest operation of God's spirit. It springs from a heart that is thoroughly and forever alienated from God.

Jewish religious leaders who came to Galilee to see and hear Jesus Christ on one occasion had already taken counsel as to how they might destroy him. (Matt. 12:14) In Galilee they saw Jesus cure a man who was unable to speak, was blind and demon-possessed. Instead of admitting the obvious fact, that Jesus was performing miracles by means of God's holy spirit, the Pharisees maliciously accused him of doing it by means of the power of Satan. After showing how wrong they were, Jesus said:

"Every sort of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. For example, whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, no, not in the present system of things nor in that to come."—Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28, 29; Luke 12:10.

With these religious leaders it was not just a case of failing to be convinced by Christ's teachings and works. The people of Chorazin and Bethsaida had been so preoccupied with their way of life that they did not accept Jesus and repent; yet they evidently will benefit from God's mercy and have a resurrection and a future opportunity to learn the way of righteousness. (Matt. 11:20-24) Nor with the Pharisees was it a matter of blaspheming and opposing true worshipers because of ignorance of God's will. Saul of Tarsus had been such a man, but he was shown mercy and forgiven. (1 Tim. 1:13-16) Rather, these religious leaders were rotten in their hearts right to their core, and Jesus knew it. Unlike the common people, they had a considerable knowledge of God's Word.

Now they had seen an evident demonstration of God's spirit. Nevertheless, they completely rejected what was accomplished by Jehovah's spirit and blasphemously credited Jesus' miracles to Satan's power. How bad could one get?

Was their sin serious? Jesus, "knowing their thoughts," realized that they were deliberately—with their eyes wide open to the facts—sinning against knowledge of the operation of the holy spirit. He indicated that they were "guilty of everlasting sin." (Matt. 12:25; Mark 3:29) Because of the context of those words, and in view of the fact that Jesus later said that many religious leaders of that time were headed for eternal destruction in Gehenna, it seems that they had committed the unforgivable sin. (Matt. 23:15, 33) Their sin was unforgivable, not because Jehovah is not a forgiving God, but because they were past repentance and beyond being retrieved. Their sin left them in total infidelity as to the real worship of Jehovah. Even in the system of things to come, one guilty of such sin could not be forgiven.

Could one sin against the holy spirit today, and thus be beyond forgiveness? Yes, that is possible. A person could become so hopelessly corrupt in mind and heart as to carry sin to the point of sinning against the spirit. And one need not be a spirit-anointed Christian to do so. Remember that those Pharisees were not anointed Christians and yet they committed unforgivable sin.

How would one know if the unforgivable sin had been committed?

This type of sin is related to what we read in Hebrews 10:26: "If we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left." So there is a deliberateness or willfulness about this kind of sin. One callously sins, fully aware of the fact that he is going directly contrary to the operation of God's spirit and His righteous laws. Furthermore, we all are sinful and need Christ's ransom sacrifice to obtain forgiveness. But "there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left" for one who knows that and "who has trampled upon the Son of God and who has esteemed as of ordinary value the blood" he shed. That one "has outraged the spirit of undeserved kindness with contempt." (Heb. 10:29) He will never repent and humbly seek God's forgiveness for his sin and rejection of Christ's ransom. He is beyond repentance.

But one important point needs to be remembered: In Jesus' case, he knew the innermost

thoughts and heart condition of the Jews and could thus be certain that they had sinned against the holy spirit. Imperfect humans today cannot read hearts as can Jehovah and Jesus, so we cannot determine when someone has carried sin to the point of having sinned against the spirit. (Matt. 12:25; Heb. 4:13) That is for God to determine.

Even the fact that a person has been disfellowshiped from the Christian congregation does not necessarily mean that he has committed the unforgivable sin. He may later repent. In the early Corinthian congregation an anointed Christian had to be disfellowshiped because of his immorality and lack of evidence of repentance. Yet, apparently, that man was later reinstated into the congregation, showing

that he had not sinned against the holy spirit.—1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:6-8.

Nevertheless, the mere fact that it is possible to sin against the holy spirit should put us on the alert. Being imperfect creatures, we unconsciously sin daily. If one is cut to the heart and truly repentant over his sins, then that is evidence that he has not committed the unforgivable sin. How important it is, then, to maintain a humble spirit, admitting our errors and seeking God's forgiveness. (1 John 1:9; Mic. 7:18) And recognizing that eternal destruction will be the lot of those who are "guilty of everlasting sin," the sin against the holy spirit, we should strive to avoid making sin a habit or denying the evident operation of God's spirit.

Is it not meet that the most fervent United Brethren to follow Jesus out of an unloving, unloving church should be called to follow out of reval-

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### FIELD MINISTRY

Zeal for a cause is contagious. Those who possess such zeal stimulate others to action. The apostle Paul was such a zealous one that when he spoke or wrote, others were stirred up to preach more actively the good news of the Kingdom. (1 Cor. 11:1) Moved by the words of Paul to imitate him even as he imitated the Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah's witnesses zealously preach the Kingdom good news from house to house. As they do this during the month of August, they will be presenting the fine Bible-study aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, for just 25c.

### ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER FIRST

October 1, 1969, this year falls on Wednesday, on which day at 10 o'clock in the forenoon the annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held at the Society's office located at 4100 Bigelow Boulevard, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. All members of the corporation should be certain that the Secretary's office has their present addresses so that the letters of notice will reach them shortly after September 1.

Proxies will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting. The proxies are to be returned so as to reach the office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 15. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not.

### "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

August 31: God Rewards the Earnest Seekers.

Page 488. Songs to Be Used: 117, 35.

September 7: Jehovah God, the Hearer of

Prayer. Page 495. Songs to Be Used: 42, 87.