

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

JUNE 1, 1972

Semimonthly

NEVER "TOO BUSY TO PRAY"

SINGAPORE SUPPRESSES CHRISTIAN
MINORITY

CURRENT EVENTS
IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

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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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Christendom's Days Are Numbered!

SINCE the fourth century C.E., or for 1,600 years, the section of nations known as Christendom has dominated the earth. But in recent times Christendom has been thrown into fear by the rise of Communism. This godless ideology has gained strength as a serious threat to Christendom's continued existence.

Additionally, right in Christendom's own realm she is disintegrating. Church membership has decreased, and in some instances attendance has fallen so low that church buildings have been closed. Men are leaving the priesthood and the ministry. Faced with these and other significant evidences, the pastor of the largest church in Denver, Colorado, said:

"The truth is, in spite of the heritage and goodwill of the church, it is currently in a state of decline."

A minister in Ontario remarked: "The times are tough and will no doubt get tougher for the men who wear round collars and preach sermons."

Nevertheless, some may say, 'Yes, but

the churches will ride out the storm. Look at Christendom's antiquity. True, it is a test on the church, but God will pull it through.' Roman Catholic Archbishop James V. Casey looks for an early recovery: "I can't help but feel," he says, "the church will come out stronger in the 1970s than it was

before." And the Ontario minister who saw tough times ahead for the clergy added: "But they are exciting and challenging, too."

Is the rather halfhearted optimism expressed by such clergymen justified? If the final outcome were left in the hands of men, they might possibly see some ray of hope for Christendom's survival. But it is really to God that Christendom has to account. The apostle Paul writes to those professing Christianity, pointing out to them that it is God "with whom we have an accounting." (Heb. 4:13) Has Christendom come to her time to face God in an accounting?

Yes, the signs indicate that the days of Christendom's churches are numbered, and the Bible points to that fact even more definitely. How does the Bible reveal this shocking truth?

AN ACCURATE PICTORIAL EXAMPLE

Well, besides saying much in the Christian Scriptures about the destruction of hypocritical false religion, the Bible tells

us that things that occurred during Jerusalem's ancient history were typical, and were recorded as a warning. They correspond with the things that would take place near the end of the present system of things. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11) This God-inspired record sets before us as a parallel of Christendom the case of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, as Christendom, professed to serve God, and her religious leaders also prophesied survival for her.

We go back to a time only about six years before Jerusalem was destroyed—*very* close to its end. Certainly a warning to Jerusalem's inhabitants then would be timely and extremely urgent. God kindly provided it. In Jerusalem, God's prophet Jeremiah was busy warning the people, while among the exiled Jews in Babylon Ezekiel was given a vision actually numbering the greatly shortened days of Jerusalem's existence. In the vision, Ezekiel was shown that Jerusalem would face its accounting with God exactly three hundred and ninety years from the time that the division of Israel into two kingdoms had occurred. Alarming! Why? Because already three hundred and eighty-four years of that time had passed (997-613 B.C.E.). In 607 B.C.E. Jerusalem's end would come!

What is there about Jerusalem's position that should concern us now? This: that Christendom has come to the same corrupt condition that Jerusalem had then reached. Moreover, the same Ezekiel-like warning has been given to Christendom for more than fifty years now. By whom? Who acts as a modern-day "Ezekiel"? It is the association composed of true Christians, Christ's spiritual brothers who are on earth today. In this work they have been assisted by thousands of others who have taken up the warning message and are carrying it to the people. These anointed spiritual brothers of Christ, as a body,

serve as a "prophet" for God, and are witnesses for Jehovah.

The Ezekiel-like warning they give emphasizes the nearness of Christendom's end. And it consists of information, not only from Ezekiel's prophecy, but also from other parts of God's Word the Bible. Bible chronology and the things fulfilling prophecy before our eyes make certain the early destruction of Christendom. Briefly the Bible gives us the following picture:

In the fall of 1914 C.E. the "Gentile Times" ended. These "times" embraced the period from the fall of God's typical kingdom in 607 B.C.E. until 1914 C.E. (2,520 years). During this period the Gentile nations ruled as they pleased without interference from any kingdom representing God, either on earth or in heaven. But 1914 marked the time of the enthronement of Christ on the heavenly throne.* Christendom has been on judgment, especially since then, and since 1914 her record has been more blood-stained than in all her past history. She is responsible for two world wars, fought within her own realm, and nothing seems to deter her from preparing for a third one. Her sins of bloodshed, immorality, crime, delinquency, revolution, idolatry and spiritism are so great that, like Jerusalem, there is no longer any justification for her existence. She has proved to be a fighter against God and his Messianic kingdom.

When you read what God said about Jerusalem, notice how accurately it describes Christendom's condition. God said to Ezekiel:

"This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'This is Jerusalem. In the midst of the nations I have set her, with lands all around her. And she proceeded to behave rebelliously against my judicial decisions in wickedness more than the nations, and

* See the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, chapter 10, published by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, New York.

against my statutes more than the lands that are all around her, for my judicial decisions they rejected and, as for my statutes, they did not walk in them.'

"Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'For the reason that you people were more turbulent than the nations that are all around you, in my statutes you did not walk and my judicial decisions you did not perform; but according to the judicial decisions of the nations that are all around you, you performed, did you not? Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said: "Here I am against you, O city, even I, and I will execute in the midst of you judicial decisions in the eyes of the nations. And I will do in you that which I have not done and the like of which I shall not do anymore by reason of all your detestable things.'"—Ezek. 5:5-9.

BAD FOOD AND HEALTH CONDITIONS

Now, with Christendom more than fifty years in her "time of the end," and in view of her internal state of affairs, it is evident that Christendom's days must indeed be numbered. When these days end, then what? Jehovah told Ezekiel what would occur in the typical pattern, Jerusalem:

"And as for you, take for yourself wheat and barley and broad beans and lentils and millet and spelt, and you must put them in one utensil and make them into bread for you [such mixture of ingredients would be unclean to a law-abiding Jew. (Compare Leviticus 19:19).], for the number of the days that you are lying upon your side; three hundred and ninety days you will eat it. And your food that you will eat will be by weight [as in a famine]—twenty shekels a day [slightly over eight ounces]. From time to time you will eat it. And water you will drink merely by measure, the sixth part of a hin [about a pint]. From time to time you will drink."—Ezek. 4:9-11.

A starvation shortage that would bring on pestilence! But even more horrible things would occur:

"Therefore fathers themselves will eat sons in the midst of you, and sons themselves will eat their fathers, and I will execute in you acts of judgment and scatter

all the remainder of you to every wind. Therefore as I am alive,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, 'surely for the reason that it was my sanctuary that you defiled with all your disgusting things and with all your detestable things, I myself also am the One that will diminish you and my eye will not feel sorry and I myself also will not show compassion. A third of you —by the pestilence they will die, and by famine they will come to their end in the midst of you.'—Ezek. 5:10-12.

Then Jehovah showed Ezekiel that conditions in Jerusalem would get so bad that food would be almost nonexistent, and that they might even have to use dung as fuel. When Jehovah, in order to emphasize the extreme hardships that would develop, told Ezekiel to use human excrement as fuel, as the son of a priest he was horrified. The thought was revolting; so God allowed him to use cattle manure. Just as horrified as Ezekiel was about this, so the Jews would be at the conditions they would experience during Jerusalem's siege by the Babylonians. Jehovah said:

"Son of man, here I am breaking the rods around which ring-shaped loaves are suspended, in Jerusalem, and they will have to eat bread by weight and in anxious care, and it will be by measure and in horror that they will drink water itself, to the intent that they may be lacking bread and water and they may look astonished at one another and rot away in their error."—Ezek. 4:16, 17.

What about the survivors of the famine and pestilence? To show what would happen to them, Ezekiel was told to shave off his hair and his beard and to weigh it out in three portions. A third was to be burned with fire, another part struck with the sword and the last portion scattered to the wind.—Ezek. 5:1-4.

The third to be burned in the midst of the city would stand for those dying by famine and pestilence.—Ezek. 5:12.

The third of the hair struck with the sword would represent the portion of the people not dying by pestilence, but who

would be killed with the sword of warfare.

The last third would symbolize the survivors of Jerusalem's fall, who would suffer dispersal among the Gentile nations, as the hair that was scattered to the wind. They were scattered, not for a peaceful life in exile, but, as Jehovah said: "I shall draw out a sword itself after them."—Ezek. 5:2.

Ezekiel evidently was to take a part of this last third of his hair and use it in two ways. God commanded him: "And you must take therefrom a few in number and wrap them up in your skirts. And others of them you will take and you must pitch them into the midst of the fire and incinerate them in the fire."—Ezek. 5:3, 4.

By God's undeserved kindness, the situation was therefore not absolutely hopeless for *all* Jerusalem's inhabitants. The few hairs bound up in Ezekiel's skirts would represent a remnant from among those taken captive. These would go into exile also, but they (or their offspring) would come back from the dispersion to take up a purified worship of Jehovah after the land of Judah had lain desolate for seventy years.

Nonetheless, for the captives in general, it would be a very hard, sad experience. The consuming fire of Jehovah's anger would be against them, for God said of those represented by the hairs from the last third pitched into the fire: "From one a fire will go forth to all the house of Israel." Like human hair, they would be very combustible and would not enjoy Jehovah's protection.—Ezek. 5:4.

NO SURVIVAL TO BETTER TIMES FOR CHRISTENDOM

Are such terrible things coming upon Christendom? Well, already we see that declining church attendance is causing churches and related seminaries and other institutions to begin to suffer and perish

from lack of contributions and patronage. This is because the clergy have not fed the people true spiritual food from God's Word. Many have not read the Bible and an increasing number are losing all belief in it and even in God. Like Israel, "the whole head is in a sick condition, and the whole heart is feeble." (Isa. 1:5) Those who do not bother themselves to discern this fact now will find it too late when Christendom's days run out. All the signs show this time is dangerously near.

Consequently, just as Jerusalem was turned over to the full fury of the Babylonian armies, so Christendom will not escape devastation at the hands of disgusted worldly elements. God will not pull her through, for it is God himself that is directing her execution. Any associated with Christendom who survive the destruction of false religion in the "great tribulation" will not come through to any improved, long-lived future. They will experience only the fire of Jehovah's anger and his symbolic "sword" of judicial execution in the final part of the "great tribulation," the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at the world situation called Har-Magedon.—Rev. 16:14-16; 19:11-21.

What is the value of considering all these things? It is of the greatest value to you. For there is a way to escape Christendom's execution. Recall the few hairs that Ezekiel wrapped up in his skirts. It is not yet too late for those associated with Christendom's churches to listen to the Ezekiel-like warning now being proclaimed by Jehovah's Christian witnesses, and find the place that He has kindly provided for refuge from his burning anger. How can we be assured that there is such a place of refuge?

We can be sure because God has stated his purpose to have a "new earth," a righ-

teous human society upon this earth. He does not purpose to leave a religious vacuum. To the contrary, his very purpose in destroying false religion is to have pure worship unrivaled and undisputed in the earth.—Gen. 1:28; 2 Pet. 3:13.

Therefore the people who will survive the "great tribulation" are those who will not let themselves continue to be deceived and fooled by the hypocritical, lying claims of religious clergymen. They must also be people who *care* about what is happening, not only to themselves, but also to others. They must *think* and *reason*. They must realize that there is TRUTH in the earth, and that Jehovah is the God of truth. They must recognize, as did a few

in ancient Jerusalem, the life-or-death need to "set matters straight" with Jehovah to avoid being 'eaten up' by the sword of execution.—Isa. 1:18-20; compare John 8:32.

Since Christendom's days are fast running out, it means that immediate, definite, decisive action must be taken by all who want to live. The coming "great tribulation" will not be easy for anyone, for, as the apostle Peter wrote: "If the righteous man is being saved with difficulty, where will the ungodly man and the sinner make a showing?" But he also said: "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial."—1 Pet. 4:18; 2 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 24:21, 22.

They Are Leaving the Churches

AMONG those leaving the churches of Christendom today are people who have a real love of righteousness. Not only are they disturbed by the hypocrisy they have witnessed in the churches, but they are very much interested in learning about the Bible. Many of these sincere people are now enjoying a study of the Holy Scriptures with Jehovah's Christian witnesses. They are also eager to tell others about the good things they have learned.

● In Shillong, India, a college student began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. Later he returned to his village. There he built a Kingdom Hall and began holding regular meetings. Recently one of Jehovah's witnesses from Shillong visited the village. To his great surprise, eighteen persons were assembled with the former college student. Their deep interest in the Bible was evident from their many questions. Twelve of those present had already severed their ties with the Lutheran church. Included in this group was a seventy-year-old man who had been a preacher in the Lutheran church for sixteen years. His leaving the church meant being deprived of his livelihood. But with joy he

exclaimed: "I have come out of Babylon the Great and now I am in God's organization."

● In yet another village of India, where a new church was being constructed, Jehovah's witnesses began building a modest Kingdom Hall. Eventually church attendance dwindled and attendance at the Kingdom Hall increased. The number of those sharing the Bible's message with others in the village increased to twenty-eight. Recently, when a traveling minister of Jehovah's witnesses gave a public discourse on Sunday at the Kingdom Hall, 149 persons attended. But only five people were seen at the church that Sunday.

The fine attendance at the Kingdom Hall was despite the fact that the church secretary had hired a man to go round the village, beating a drum and calling the people to church. Church members even got a man to throw dung into the hut where the traveling minister of Jehovah's witnesses was staying.

According to the latest information, the church secretary has left that church and the treasurer is seriously thinking about doing so. The thought among those who are still church members is that Jehovah's witnesses will soon be using the church building as their Kingdom Hall.

Never

"TOO BUSY TO PRAY"

"Pray incessantly."—1 Thess. 5:17.



SPEECH is the natural bridge to understanding and friendship between men. Prayer is the spiritual bridge to understanding and friendship between man and Jehovah God. It is described as a precious privilege, but is so often neglected. Are you at a loss for words as to what to say and how to say it to your Father in heaven? In the pursuit of life and happiness it is not wise to forget to talk to the Source of life, our Creator and God, Jehovah.

² Did you forget to talk to God today? Do you find yourself overwhelmed by circumstances so that you overlook the need to pray? We are living in the midst of an ungrateful world. There is an ever-present danger of becoming a forgetter of God, saying in effect that you have no need of him. What impression are you giving to the "Hearer of prayer," the One to whom

1, 2. (a) What is prayer? (b) What danger is there in not praying?

all people should come?—Ps. 65:2.

³ Your prayers mirror your dependence on the Life-Giver. Can anyone really "be too busy" to pray and actually ignore God? By your silence it may be that you are saying in effect, There is no God, or he is dead or not interested in man. Modern science has accomplished much, but gives little or no credit to the Creator of all

things. Should we let their accomplishments and their products distract us from talking to God? Of all times, today we need to stay awake to our privilege of prayer.—Luke 21:34-36.

⁴ By your requests God knows what is on your mind, what concerns you most. He knows whether you keenly desire the things asked for or if you merely recite words. We are admonished in Matthew 6: 7: "But when praying, do not say the same things over and over again." Some may find it difficult to talk to someone they never saw; others may feel they have nothing to say to the One who already knows everything. But should a Christian reason that way?

⁵ The Bible, the book of prayer, tells of outstanding men of prayer such as Moses, Daniel and David. King Solomon asked for wisdom and discernment so as to judge

3. When "too busy" to pray, what may one actually be saying?

4. Should prayers be repetitious, or what should they reveal?

5. (a) Give examples of men of prayer. (b) Who is our best example?

properly. Daniel used prayer very effectively in Babylon. (Dan. 9:4, 5, 18, 19) Although we could point to many men of prayer, we can with surety say that no man appreciated prayer like Christ Jesus. Prayer was a prominent part of his life. Even with supernatural powers at his disposal, he always looked to his Father in heaven for wisdom and strength, as well as voicing praise and thanksgiving.—John 5:19, 30.

⁶ We have the simplest yet the greatest pattern of prayer in the sermon on the mountain. (Matt. 6:9-13) The master teacher talked to his disciples about prayer, and he himself found quiet places to meditate and commune with Jehovah. He was not careless about prayer nor was he ever too busy to pray, even in his active life. He emphasized the need always to pray and never to give up. (Luke 18:1) The apostles likewise stressed the subject. (Eph. 6:18; 1 Pet. 4:7) With all the Scriptural emphasis, we should appreciate the value of talking with our heavenly Father. Is it your desire to reach the lofty throne of Jehovah often with your voice of thanks, praise and petition? What a wonderful gift to man, this privilege of prayer! Day and night in any language you can speak to God, accepting his invitation to approach him, telling him what is on your heart and mind.

REASONS TO KEEP PRAYING

⁷ Prayer helps you to stop and think when making decisions. Remember, Jesus spent a whole night in prayer prior to choosing his apostles. (Luke 6:12, 13) Daily you are faced with decisions that affect yourself, your family, your brothers and your relation to God. It is appropriate to ask for direction to do God's will.

6. (a) What pattern for prayer is there? (b) How should prayer be viewed?

7. How can decisions be made in harmony with Jehovah's will?

Then when you know what is pleasing to him, act decisively and with confidence that you are doing what is right.

⁸ Included in the model prayer is the request to be delivered from the wicked one. (Matt. 6:13) Keep asking for God's help to be strong and endure temptation, so that you might have the courage to say No to deceptive desires, trends, and snares of the old system. (1 Cor. 10:13, 14) We should pray for one another to be on guard against the one who wants to bring Jehovah's people down to defeat. (2 Thess. 2:9-11) If we practice badness, the Hearer of prayer will not be listening to our petitions. (Prov. 15:29) Thinking on divine principles and laws will help us to see the approved way to go. Ask that you might recall scriptures and Bible examples of faithfulness to keep you away from the borderline of compromise and temptation.

⁹ Never hesitate to pray to keep spiritually alive. Our expressing ourselves in this vein will keep us alert to ways to maintain our spirituality. You are aware of your physical needs such as food, sleep, work and recreation. However, the spiritual needs can easily be neglected, such as the need to pray, to study God's Word and to share it with others. (Matt. 5:3) As a minister of God, to fulfill your objective in life, rather than taking a natural view of things, endeavor to obtain Jehovah's elevated viewpoint, to the end of fully pleasing him.—Col. 1:9, 10.

¹⁰ To be alive and alert to privileges of serving the only true God, it is vital to have his holy spirit. Do you find yourself asking for it? Christ Jesus recommended doing just that: "How much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11:13) Pray for

8. How is prayer a protection, and what might you ask for?

9. (a) What will help in maintaining spirituality? (b) What is often neglected?

10. (a) Why should we ask for Jehovah's spirit? (b) What will it aid us to do?

it, rely on it, work for the fruitage of the spirit, for it will motivate you to preach the Kingdom good news. (Luke 4:18, 19) Just think what would be accomplished by a free flow of the holy spirit in each one's life, helping one to grow in love, goodness and righteousness, and protecting one from being infected with the spirit of the world.—1 Cor. 2:12.

¹¹ Our prayer should also be for Bible knowledge, understanding and wisdom. As the human body takes in food, water and air to function, so the mind must be supplied with spiritual food and provisions of divine knowledge and instruction to enable us to cope with problems of life and to accomplish God's will in our life. The apostle Paul continued praying that the love of the brothers "may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment." (Phil. 1:9) There is a need for understanding; this can be sought after, as well as wisdom. Never be too busy so as not to pray that you might make the best possible use of your time and talents and resources. We are encouraged by James: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all."—Jas. 1:5.

¹² Our sincerity in prayer is shown by the effort made to learn what God says to us. By regularly studying His Word we are listening to him, letting him talk to us. We need to heed and listen to God's counsel as the Israelites were encouraged to do. (Deut. 28:15) When going before an earthly ruler, would it be polite to dominate the conversation, doing all the talking? It is only reasonable that, if we want Jehovah to listen to our prayers, we must pay attention to how we listen to him.—Prov. 28:9.

11. (a) What three things can we request? (b) And why are they needed?

12. If we want God to listen to our prayers what must we do?

KEEP AWAKE FOR SERVICE

¹³ Having come to a knowledge of the truth, the generous person will be ready to share it with others. Why not pray daily for opportunities to witness. When pausing for water at a well, Christ Jesus witnessed, and as a result many became believers. (John 4:5-42) We can petition God that we might be found in a proper frame of mind to tell the good news anytime, anywhere, as a guest in someone's home, in the routine of daily activity or in the actual public preaching work.

¹⁴ We are obligated to work in harmony with our prayers. As we practice forgiving we can ask for forgiveness. (Matt. 6:12) When asking God to bless the increase of his organization, requesting him to make it grow, then we should plant and water. (1 Cor. 3:6, 7) We should busy ourselves in his ministry. Prayer is not a substitute for honest effort. Certainly God will not do for us what we can do ourselves. If we want to grow to maturity, then we ought to study diligently and carefully obey the good news. You will talk to Jehovah in vain if you do not work in accord with your prayers to him.

¹⁵ There is a grand witness work to be done today. Jesus said: "Also, in all the nations the good news has to be preached first." (Mark 13:10) Are you thankful for the privilege to represent the Kingdom government, recommending it to others? We should pray to be useful to the Sovereign Lord that we might prove to be zealous witnesses, talking to others, as well as to him, using his spirit to help us to preach.

¹⁶ Prayer improves the heart attitude and the mental appreciation for what

13. How can one keep alert to witness to others?

14. (a) What should accompany our petitions to God? (b) How could our talking to him be in vain?

15, 16. How can a person prove he is for God's kingdom?

counts the most in God's sight. That is why Paul prayed that the brothers might "make sure of the more important things." (Phil. 1:9, 10) In the model prayer of Jesus we have emphasized the universal triumph of righteousness in vindication of Jehovah's name and sovereignty by means of his kingdom. (Matt. 6:9, 10) Why should anything or anybody loom up more importantly in a Christian's mind than doing God's will and placing His great name and kingdom foremost?

YOUR PRAYERS TELL ON YOU

¹⁷ Your daily prayers mirror your humility

and closeness to God. By calling him Father you acknowledge an inferior position for yourself. Only the humble will talk to Jehovah out of the abundance of the heart; others will find it hurtful to their pride to confess their sins and need of protection. (Luke 18:10-14) Our communication with the loving Creator should display childlike simplicity, sincerity and reverence. It is a joy to talk with one you love and shows true friendship to confide in him, revealing what concerns you most, where your interests are, telling him your desires and regrets.

¹⁸ Expressing ourselves in petitions to God is a daily reminder that what we have, comes from the Giver of every good gift. How beautifully the scripture says: "Every good gift and every perfect present is from above." (Jas. 1:17) Living as we do in the midst of a proud, haughty world with its improper value of treasures, it is

17. What will prayers reveal as to pride and humility?

18, 19. Expressing ourselves to God is a good reminder of what? How can our prayers show maturity?

good to acknowledge our contentment with what we have, requesting: "Give me neither poverty nor riches."—Prov. 30:8; 1 Tim. 6:6-10.

¹⁹ If we always try to reflect God's glory, then our sincere and humble requests will show our maturity and protect us from boasting. Christ Jesus always pointed to his Father, turning attention to him. Following his example will make us careful not to attract attention to ourselves. (Mark 10: 17, 18) Ever drawing close to Jehovah in prayer can save us from the snare of overconfidence, keeping

our hearts in tune with our God.—Jas. 4:8-10.

²⁰ It is important regularly to recognize our dependence on God for what we have and need. Tell him what is in your heart as you express appreciation for the measure of health and life you enjoy. Follow the instruction of the psalmist: "Before him pour out your heart." (Ps. 62:8) By your prayers you show that you are not relying solely on your own strength and ingenuity. Ask that you might use your 'all' wisely in the Kingdom's interests so that later there will be no regrets of wasted days or years when little can be shown for any real progress or results in Kingdom service.

²¹ It is probably the exception that any of Jehovah's witnesses planned on being a minister. However, who can question the ability of God to make a minister out of anyone? By accepting the teaching and training available through the Bible and

20. (a) On whom should we always rely? (b) By our taking what course will there be no later regrets?

21. (a) How does one become a minister? (b) How is the best progress made thereafter?

THE NEXT ISSUE

- Will God Let Polluters Destroy the Earth?
- How Does Your Status with God Affect Your Children?
- Seeking the Goodwill of God Now.

publications provided by the Watch Tower Society and regularly attending the Kingdom Hall congregational meetings, one can progress rapidly from a student to a teacher of God's Word. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) What a privilege to let Jehovah use you to minister the truth to others! This is something to work for and pray for.

²² When you consider the progress you have already made, it is proper and fitting to give Jehovah the credit. Did the success of Christ Jesus go to his head? No, he himself said when inviting others: "Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart." (Matt. 11:29) The gifted apostle Paul credited God for making things grow. (1 Cor. 3:5-7; 2 Thess. 3:1) Your prayers should show your acknowledgment that what success you have enjoyed in the ministry has been dependent on God's blessing.

²³ One of the best indications that the Christian has faith in God is prayer. Always be on the lookout for indications of his blessing. Ask for God's direction and help. Be sure to correct your course when not meeting with success. What seems best is not better than what Jehovah says. Display your complete trust in your heavenly Provider, not leaning on your own ideas. (Prov. 3:5, 6) Then you will want to rejoice when you see his hand with you in giving the witness. Our prayers can express our heartfelt desire to be of service to the Most High God. In view of the fact that our enemies are stronger than we are, it is good to show appreciation for the divine protection we have. That we are alive and busy in the ministry is evidence of divine approval and God's protecting hand. Be sure to use every form of prayer along with the spiritual armor that has been

provided in order to stand firm.—Eph. 6: 18.

EXPRESS APPRECIATION ALWAYS

²⁴ Prayer should include expressions of praise and thanksgiving. Life is so valuable that no one can set a price on it. Prayer can be said to be a yardstick of our gratefulness for life. Giving thanks to the Life-Giver aids us to count our blessings. There are many occasions daily to say 'Thank you' silently to our heavenly Provider. The grateful heart appreciates the small things as well as the big ones. Readily recognize the Source of all goodness, as the psalmist David did: "You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing." (Ps. 145:16) Follow the advice in First Thessalonians 5:17, 18: "Pray incessantly. In connection with everything give thanks."

²⁵ Living in a selfish world where people think there is more happiness in getting, we need to copy our God, the Great Giver. Also we should keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) After our having come to a knowledge of the truth it is not intended that it be hoarded selfishly but it is to be used like a wonderful trust, wisely in Kingdom service. We can often thank our Maker, who gave us the gift of speech so that we are able to talk and tell others the wonderful truths learned from the Bible. Neighbor love will move you to be hospitable with what you know. Then it would be most appropriate to thank Jehovah for the good experiences enjoyed in going from door to door preaching and in calling back on interested ones.

²⁶ Sharing the message of God's Word with others, visiting them in their homes,

22. Who should get the credit for progress made?

23. (a) What is a good indication of faith? (b) If we are not meeting with success, what can be done?

24. For what should we be always thankful, and why should we pray incessantly?

25, 26. Who can be copied in giving? What can be given to others?

helping them to search the Scriptures is a joyful work. It is a pleasure to feed starving people the word of life. (Amos 8:11; Matt. 4:4) If you are timid about expressing your faith to others, pray for boldness and courage to preach. (Acts 4:29) It is not a religious drudgery to be an active witness to Jehovah's kingdom, but genuine joy comes from being a loving extrovert, cheerfully helping others on the way to life.—2 Cor. 9:7.

THE NEED FOR DIRECTION

²⁷ In an age of growing self-indulgence, fallen moral standards, a materialistic generation, the Christian needs continual divine guidance for protection. (Jer. 10:23) We should not expect a miracle every time we pray, but it is good to ask for wisdom to cope with our problems. Our petition can be for Jehovah's spirit too, for it guides us in the right direction, in safe paths so that we might bring our whole life pattern into conformity with God's will for us. (Col. 3:10) God's guidance is a supplement to and not a substitute for action on our part. An earthly father expects his son to show initiative when given a task, so God expects his people to come to him mainly with problems they cannot solve themselves. By listening to him daily we will receive wisdom to stay well within the safe bounds of his laws and Scriptural principles.—Eccl. 7:12.

²⁸ It is the course of wisdom to qualify our petitions to God: 'If it be your will.' (Jas. 4:13-15) If we claim to be Christian, following Christ Jesus, we should not be doing things of our own initiative that run contrary to God's will for us. Our

continual request should be to do the divine will, to be sensitive to God's direction. If we want our prayers to be heard we must be doing the all-important will of our Father in heaven. As recorded in John 9:31, a man healed by Jesus said very fitting words along this line: "But if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, he listens to this one." It is fine to meditate on what you study and learn from the Bible, the inspired Word of God, keeping your mind and heart filled to brimming; then out of the abundance of your heart you will witness readily to those you meet.—1 Pet. 3:15.

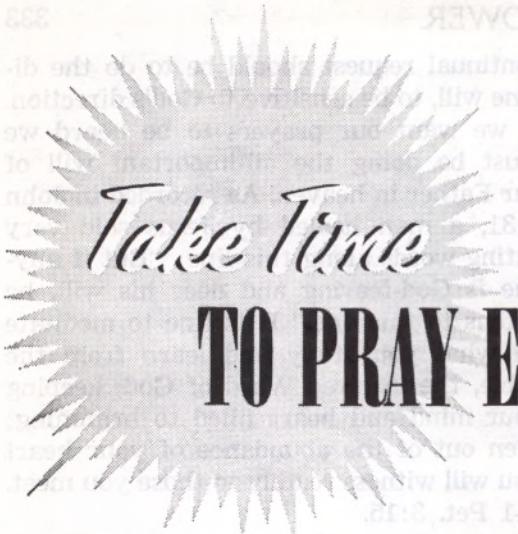
²⁹ As we approach the universal war of Armageddon it is vital to stay close to Jehovah's mighty organization. Jehovah's witnesses by means of 27,254 congregations throughout the world are bound together in love and unity. We should pray for that organization and those in it, that our brothers might stay solid in the faith. (1 Pet. 5:9) We would be easy targets for the Devil if we were to forsake the association of God's people and try to go it alone.

³⁰ Your prayers tell how much you appreciate the organization that brought you the truth and that feeds you regularly, as through the columns of the *Watchtower* magazine. How foolish to wander off now to other pastures and think you can come back later if you choose to do so. One elderly brother who had been in the truth, active and busy for many years, when asked how he stayed faithful and true for so long replied to the effect that if you stay in the middle of a flock of sheep you cannot get lost. May our daily prayer be that we may also always be found in the midst of Jehovah's people. Never be too busy to pray like that.

27. (a) Is it proper in prayer to ask for miracles?
(b) What can be requested?

28. (a) How can we be more useful to the Creator?
(b) What is the advantage of meditating on God's Word?

29. How can we aid our brothers in prayer?
30. Where should we remain for safety?



Take Time

TO PRAY EVERY DAY

WHEN the family comes together for their meals each day it is a fine practice to pause first and express appreciation for the provision of food. Do you stop and thank God for the food you eat? Yes, it may have been your money that bought it and perhaps your hands that cultivated it or prepared it for serving, but, when you think about it, was it not our grand Creator who made the wonderful provision of food in the first place, as explained in the book of Genesis: "Here I have given to you all vegetation bearing seed which is on the surface of the whole earth and every tree on which there is the fruit of a tree bearing seed. To you let it serve as food?"—Gen. 1:29.

² Jehovah wonderfully designed the vast and delicious variety of things to eat, such as grains, vegetables, fruits and meats. How can anyone be too busy to remember the Giver of anything so vital as the food we eat and need for daily nourishment. It does not take many words to show appreciation and recognition that is due God in this regard. Here again we can imitate

1. What is a good practice before eating?
2. (a) Should we be too busy to recognize the Giver of food? (b) What confidence did David and Christ Jesus express?

Christ Jesus, who taught us to pray: "Give us today our bread for this day." (Matt. 6:11) When he fed thousands miraculously he said a blessing. (Matt. 14:14-21) We can have faith that Jehovah will not let his people go hungry. David had that confidence when he wrote: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous

left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread."—Ps. 37:25; Matt. 6:31-33.

³ Congregational prayer is a vital part of our worship. It shows proper respect to be at the meetings arranged for the congregation in time to be seated so as to listen carefully to the opening prayer. One dedicated brother is chosen to represent the group in prayer. Listen to what he says, expressing himself in prayer to God. If you are in agreement with the thoughts that are expressed, you can say from the heart, 'Amen' (a Hebrew word that means "surely").—1 Cor. 14:16.

⁴ It is stimulating to hear warm expressions of praise, thanksgiving to Jehovah, the Hearer of prayer, and requests for his spirit and guidance. How fitting it is to pray at the start and the closing of our meetings for Bible study and training. It aids the attender to dismiss distracting thoughts and lends an air of seriousness to the arrangement. Both young and old can listen and learn to fear and obey God as they gather together. (Deut. 31:12) Truly the precious provision of prayer at our meetings binds our brothers together in love and unity and helps us to keep in mind those unable to attend. (Acts 12:5) Praying together binds a congregation together and, along with other spiritual

3. (a) What is an important part of our worship? (b) Why should we come in time for the opening of our meetings?
4. What does prayer do for those attending a meeting?

blessings of the meetings, incites all to love and fine works.—Heb. 10:24, 25.

PERSONAL PRAYERS

⁵ Talking with God should not be limited to mealtime and the congregational meetings. We can find many occasions daily to commune with our Father in heaven. There is no special position necessary or formality to follow. The apostle Paul follows up a description of our spiritual armor with these words: “While with every form of prayer and supplication you carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit.”—Eph. 6:18.

⁶ Kneeling when praying helps one to have the right mental attitude. It is a most respectful way to approach the Sovereign of the universe. (Eph. 3:14) In some lands it is customary to bow to people. It is most proper to bow to the Greatest Person alive. The invitation of Psalm 95:6 is: “O come in, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker.” It is just marvelous to think that no appointment is needed; anytime or anywhere a brief request or expression of gratitude can be made through the channel, Christ Jesus, to God.—John 16:23.

⁷ Talking with God is a matter of the heart as well as the mind. The psalmist emphasized this point, saying: “I have called with my whole heart. Answer me, O Jehovah.” (Ps. 119:145) Rather than a special physical position or a special place to pray, it is what you say and the motive behind the words that count. Do not say the same things over repetitiously. Some think that prayer is more effective this way. But that is not what Jesus recommended. (Matt. 6:7) It is not good to memorize words for this purpose. In sincere prayer it is the ideas and thoughts

that mean the most. Worship must be from the heart, not only the lips. (Matt. 15:8) It is beneficial and aids in concentration to seek out a quiet place to talk to God.—See Matthew 6:6; Mark 1:35; Luke 9:18.

⁸ Aside from your basic needs and other petitions, do you confess your sins in the Scriptural way? On the basis of Jehovah's loving-kindness and mercy we can now plead for forgiveness of our sins by means of Christ's sacrifice. (Num. 14:17-19) There is one mediator, Christ Jesus, the appointed way to approach God. (1 John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5) Of course, if we want forgiveness we in turn must be forgiving, as shown in Luke 11:4. It is well to remember that, no matter how much you forgive others, you will never equal the extent to which God has forgiven you.

⁹ An earnest confession of sins and error aids one to go forward with a better conscience. (Ps. 32:5) However, do not confess your sins at night and ask to be forgiven if the next day you fail to put forth the proper effort to overcome the particular weakness. The proverb wisely states: “He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and *leaving* them will be shown mercy.” (Prov. 28:13) At times it is necessary also to ask help from older men in the congregation, requesting their prayers on one's behalf, as shown in James 5:14-16. This loving arrangement is another fine provision for our spiritual well-being.

¹⁰ When coming to an accurate knowledge of the Bible, one will form new habits as one puts on the new personality. (Col. 3:9, 10) One of these habits should be that of regular prayer. It is good to

5, 6. (a) Is there some special position or formality required when prayer is offered? (b) Why will kneeling aid?

7. (a) Name two vital things to consider in talking to God. (b) Why is it good to be in a quiet place?

8. Why should a confession of sins be made? On what basis?

9. (a) What follow-through is necessary for mercy to be shown? (b) Describe a loving provision for help.

10. What benefits are there from making prayer a habit?

raise your heart and, where convenient, your voice to Jehovah and talk to him. It does not require an abundance of words. When, starting out the day, you want to accomplish much, let him know that. When, tiring out during the day, you need added strength, ask for it. At the end of a day of accomplishment, there is some satisfaction; express your appreciation for it. All day long keep in touch, expressing yourself. Make it a habit to confide in your heavenly Father; then gradually prayer will become a part of your life. You will enjoy this privilege to the full. "Be vigilant with a view to prayers." "Pray incessantly." Establish the fine habit of talking with God.—1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Thess. 5:17.

¹¹ The Bible speaks of supplication along with prayer, supplication being a more intense form of humble entreaty to God. (Phil. 4:6) Christ Jesus prayed for Peter so his faith would not give out. (Luke 22:32) Jehovah stood ready to help his own Son in time of need. (Heb. 5:7) There are times when a person needs help—when his physical strength runs out, when his mental powers are exhausted and when serious problems need to be solved. This is the time to lean on your God for help, direction, wisdom and strength. It is comforting to learn that "the eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help."—Ps. 34:15.

¹² In view of the fact that our enemies are more powerful than we are, it is not possible to stand alone, without outside aid. There is the vital spiritual armor from God described in Ephesians 6:11-17, along with prayer and supplication (vs. 18), to enable us to stand firm against the Devil and the demons. Through diligent study, prayer, meditation and regular association with our Christian brothers and a desire to share the good news with oth-

ers, we can be healthy in the faith, strong and determined to stay in the truth. As we daily draw close to our heavenly Protector we will be reminded to keep up our guard so as to wage the right kind of warfare.—1 Tim. 6:12.

¹³ If you take time, not being too busy to pray, you can receive much comfort, knowing that Jehovah helps in many ways with our problems and the things that tend to weigh us down. We are invited to throw our burdens and anxieties upon him, for he assures us that he cares for us. (Ps. 55:22; 1 Pet. 5:7) After having prayed about a matter we do well to have the faith that God will take care of it, that is, if we work in harmony with what we asked of him. We are commanded not to be anxious over anything. (Phil. 4:6) Why not relieve your mind of that which may trouble you. With prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God.

OVERCOMERS WITH PRAYER

¹⁴ We have reached a time when we are facing the greatest crisis in world history. There are tests of faith now and more ahead. It is wise to pay constant attention to ourselves and to our teaching. (1 Tim. 4:16) It is no time to take chances. Not only must we be in the race but we must obey the rules for life. One rule is to be "vigilant with a view to prayers." In prosperous lands it is easy to get ensnared with the love of things that you can own or possess and find yourself putting earthly treasures ahead of heavenly ones. It is very easy also to get contaminated with worldly ways. Ask Jehovah for strength to speak out the truth when necessary and strength to keep quiet when you might betray a trust. The most precious moments

11. What is supplication, and when is it necessary?
12. What did Jehovah provide to aid in our warfare?

13. What wonderful relief can be had from daily burdens?
14. (a) How can we win in tests of faith? (b) How should we view the time spent in talking with God?

every day can be when you approach God, asking him to help you and that he might guard your steps in his way. (Ps. 37:34) Pray not only to win through trials and temptations but also to gain divine approval.

¹⁵ The fact that God commands us to pray and fills his Word with examples of men of prayer should convince us that we can expect him to listen to our petitions. Pray to be on the safe side, Jehovah's side of the great issue, and that you might keep a deep-seated joy of true friendship and understanding with him. If you want to enjoy the blessed close relationship with God, then you must be consistent and live in strict harmony with what you tell him. When decisions must be made, choose the course that will keep your trained Christian conscience clear and clean. (1 Tim. 1:5, 19) You should not reason that, since God already knows our inmost thoughts, it is not necessary to tell him anything. You should want to express yourself freely to him because of a heartfelt desire to enjoy the best of relations with him at all times.

¹⁶ Our request should also be to maintain a theocratic attitude so we will not be talking to God and actually be serving his chief enemy. One who is dedicated and baptized to do God's will should not be doing enemy thinking or acting. The Bible rule is that one cannot be serving two masters. (Matt. 6:24) Nor can we be limping between two opinions, dividing our worship and service between Jehovah's organization and Satan's. (1 Cor. 7:23) Some may not openly argue against the truth or God's way of doing things but on the other hand they may refuse to act on the good things learned and thus resist the direction to move ahead. By main-

taining an intimate relationship to God, using that spiritual bridge of prayer, a person will be more apt to keep in mind his always staying loyal and faithful to God.

¹⁷ Your prayer habits should never deteriorate into a mere routine or formality. Continue to approach the Most High God in full faith and ask always in line with his will. (1 John 5:14, 15) Faith is not a quality only to be assigned to men of Bible times. We can pray for more faith so as to accomplish more than 'we think we can.' Reading the scripture at Ephesians 3:20 should encourage us to tap more regularly this unseen reservoir of unlimited help to carry out God's will for us: "Now to the one who can, according to his power which is operating in us, do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive . . ." Feel free to ask for physical needs, spiritual blessings and the triumph of righteousness, and to be a better and stronger witness, giving a fine, logical explanation of the truth at a moment's notice.

¹⁸ With the principles of faithfulness and loyalty to Jehovah's interests ingrained in our minds and hearts, may we stay strong in the faith, persevering in prayer so that we may never swerve from the path of righteousness. (Rom. 12:12) It should be unthinkable to chase Jehovah God out of our mind even for one day of our dedicated life. Consider for a moment the joy, the strength, the confidence and poise Jehovah's name people have because they know how to reach their Father in heaven via prayer. (John 16:24) We need to think about our precious privilege of prayer often so that we will be riveted to our assigned places in Jehovah's ever-expanding organization. We want to be ever ready

15. (a) Why can we expect God to listen to us? (b) Should we express ourselves freely to him?

16. (a) What attitude should the Christian maintain? (b) Should one talk with God and serve his enemy?

17. (a) How is a person able to accomplish more than he thinks he can? (b) What source of strength should be tapped?

18. (a) Should we forget to pray? (b) Why do we need prayer?

to accept all that is lovingly provided to maintain our whole-souled devotion to the Hearer of prayer.

¹⁹ When presenting the Kingdom message to others, the reply is often heard: "I'm too busy." It is hard to fathom why people are too busy to listen to a Bible message. However, on the other hand, do we find in our own course of action that we are saying in effect we are too busy to talk to God or to listen to his Word by a regular study of it? Be careful not to get caught in a whirlpool of activity that will stealthily drown your appreciation of

¹⁹ What excuse is heard in the field ministry, and can we properly use such excuse for not praying?

communing with God. In other words, never let collapse that spiritual bridge to true understanding and friendship with Jehovah God.

²⁰ May we be always happy for the divine invitation to pray: "Jehovah is near to all those calling upon him, to all those who call upon him in trueness." (Ps. 145: 18) Be assured that through the miracle of prayer Jehovah is able to listen to you. Speaking with him is truly a most sacred and treasured privilege. If you appreciate that fact, you will pray. Take time to do it every day.

²⁰ What invitation should we accept daily?

Their Prayers Were Answered

MANY who are Jehovah's witnesses today started a new way of life because their prayers, or prayers in their behalf, were answered.

● From the United States comes this experience: "One day in April of 1970, I went to God in prayer, really pouring out my heart to him. I remember saying, 'Dear God, help me. If my church is right, increase my faith. If it is not, please send me the truth.'

"Two days later my prayer was answered when I found a *Watchtower* magazine in my door. [The magazine had been left by a Witness because no one had been at home.] I read it and the next day sent away for the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. Soon thereafter I began studying the Bible with one of Jehovah's witnesses."

Today this woman and her two teen-age daughters are baptized witnesses of Jehovah. They are finding real joy in sharing Bible truth with others.

● In Guadeloupe two fleshly sisters became estranged when one of them became a witness of Jehovah. Each time the Witness tried to explain her Bible-based hope to her sister, her sister became angry. On one occasion she took another Witness along to speak with her sister. She hoped that this Witness might be able to get through to her sister. But, as things turned out, her sister conducted herself in an even worse manner than at other times. It seemed as if the efforts of the Witness to help her

sister to gain an accurate knowledge of the Bible were all in vain. Then she decided to have a subscription for the *Awake!* magazine sent as a gift to her sister. Meanwhile the Witness did not stop praying that members of her family might come to view things differently.

Finally things did change. The Witness relates: "One day, while my husband and I were getting ready to attend our meeting at the Kingdom Hall, there was a knock at the door. Who was there? My fleshly sister! Yes, she wanted to have a Bible study. Imagine our joy! She told me, 'I'm truly confused by what is taking place in the Catholic church; now I want to know!'

Since that time the sister began attending the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses at the Kingdom Hall with her children. Her husband was delighted with the changes she was making by applying the counsel of the Bible in her life.

Other relatives of the Witness, including her mother and a brother, have also begun to study the Bible.

Truly this can be a source of encouragement to heed the inspired admonition of the apostle Paul: "I therefore exhort, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, offerings of thanks, be made concerning all sorts of men . . . This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth."—1 Tim. 2:1-4.

MANY informed persons are disturbed by news reports of worsening world conditions. They wonder why the situation continues to deteriorate despite efforts to correct matters. What is the meaning behind it all?

AN AGE OF WAR

"A half-century of conflict—turbulence, war, revolution, desolation, and ruin." "The century of Total War." That is how historians describe our times. Even since 1945, some fifty-five wars have been fought.

Still fresh in the minds of many is the recent India-Pakistan war. The Middle East continues to rumble ominously. Skirmishes there threaten to precipitate an outbreak of hostilities at any moment. Indochina is a raging, bloody battlefield, and in April the newspapers reported a step-up in retaliatory bombing raids in Vietnam.

Centuries ago Jesus Christ foretold a significant time when "nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." Does not the world scene today fit that description? —Matt. 24:7.

FOOD SHORTAGES THREATEN MANY

Malnutrition is taking a very heavy toll in the health and lives of people in many lands. One would think that modern equipment, improved farming methods and rapid shipping would have prevented food shortages a long time ago.

Yet a year ago it was reported that "pockets of hunger remain in the hollows of Appalachia [United States] despite the Nixon Administration's pledge to put an end to hunger and malnutrition, and after nearly a decade of massive Federal aid to the distressed region." —New York "Times," June 18, 1971.

This same paper on March 30, 1972, told of a food crisis now threatening Bangladesh. Not long before this crisis, a severe storm struck that part of the world. Thousands died of starvation.

Compare this with Jesus' further warning that, along with wars, there would be, at the time of which he spoke, "food shortages . . . in one place after another." —Matt. 24:7.

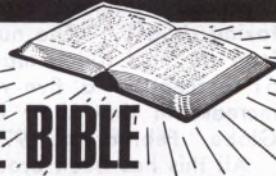
EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES

Each year earthquakes continue to wreak havoc. Those that hit Yugoslavia, Turkey, Peru, Alaska and California in recent times may still be fresh in your mind.

Then on April 9, 1972, came Iran's worst earthquake since 1968, striking the southern

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part of that country. Unofficial sources estimated that up to 4,000 persons died. Countless others were made homeless.

Was this to be expected? Yes. For, speaking prophetically about our day, Jesus said, "there will be earthquakes in one place after another." —Mark 13:8; Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11.

DISEASES AND MORAL BREAKDOWN TAKE THEIR TOLL

War has helped to spread disease. Indirectly, its violence has broken down morals, and this, too, has contributed to the increase of disease. Also pollution of land, sea, air and food undermines health. Coupled with this are the pressures and insecurity characteristic of this system of things. As foretold by Jesus, "men become faint out of fear," their hearts literally failing them. (Luke 21:26) Interestingly, among Americans, "the death rate from heart attacks among young men age 25 to 44 has risen 14 per cent . . . since 1950." —New York "Times," April 4, 1972.

The moral breakdown has resulted in a phenomenal rise in venereal disease. Gonorrhea in the United States "is truly epidemic," according to Dr. J. Donald Millar, a director of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia. It is estimated that "there are over 2½ million cases occurring each year now." —Atlanta "Constitution," February 14, 1972.

The Los Angeles "Times" of March 16, 1972, reported that "the incidence of venereal disease in Brazil is soaring with the spread of sexual freedom and the increasing use of birth control pills." It was noted that "in one big city in the northeast of Brazil, the number of reported cases of gonorrhea among women is almost seven times what it was a generation ago."

Drug abuse also continues to be a top moral problem. The "Medical Tribune," March 1, 1972, said that "an increasing number of

children, adolescents, and young adults from all socioeconomic levels in North America are succumbing each year to the 'allure of a chemically induced paradise [resulting from taking drugs].'" The number of American college students trying marijuana has climbed to 51 percent in a five-year period, a tenfold increase in that short time!—Boston "Sunday Globe," February 6, 1972.

All this has been brought on by the general rejection of God's laws and moral standards. The love of many for God has grown cold. And this is exactly what Jesus said was going to happen in this time of man's history. "Because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off."—Matt. 24:12.

THE DECLINE IN WORLD RELIGION

A most striking characteristic of our times is the decline in world religion. This is seen in the steady decrease in the number attending church.

"The Oregon Journal" of March 4, 1972, printed an article about Sunday-school attendance. While four American denominations showed some growth in this field, ten showed losses. "But," noted the paper, "things are even worse than those figures indicate, for the growth ranges from 3,000 to 85,000 and losses from 11,000 to 300,000."

The hopelessness of reversing this decline in religion is reflected by the words of John Duryea, a Catholic chaplain who attended a meeting with 'all the important people' in a Catholic archdiocese in America to see about improving church attendance. "A few proposals were made," he said. "But later I concluded that all we were doing was rearranging the furniture on the Titanic [a ship that sank after hitting an iceberg in 1912]."—San Francisco "Chronicle," November 24, 1971.

The decline in religion is also manifest in its loss of favor in political circles. In many cases this is due to clergy meddling in political affairs. For example, the clergy in white-dominated Rhodesia recently received sharp criticism from Mark Partridge, Minister of Local Government. He complained: "It is a pity that, of late, [the clergy] have become, apparently, more concerned with political problems than with moral ones. . . . How distressed I am to see, on so many occasions, unnecessary and ill-informed participation in the political field."—"Rand Daily Mail," South Africa, March 14, 1972.

And about a month before this the London "Times," of February 14, 1972, reported that

the president of the black-dominated Zaïre Republic openly denounced the missionaries and priests of the Roman Catholic Church as being "subversive agents." He prohibited priests in the Kinshasa archdiocese to pray for a cardinal whose activities had earned him the disfavor of the government.

Brazil and Argentina both have taken action against militant clerics. And recently in the United States there has been a court case involving Catholic priests who are charged with antigovernment activities.

What is all this leading to? Obviously, political powers are becoming antagonized. Eventually, these will come to the point where they will completely turn against world religion and destroy it as foretold in the Bible in Revelation chapter 17.

TRUE CHRISTIANS HATED BY ALL NATIONS

Another part of Jesus' prophecy concerns his own true followers, who do not meddle in political affairs. This, too, has undergone fulfillment in our day. Matthew 24:9 refers to this, saying: "You will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name."

To whom has this happened? What organization is hated in all the nations for its stand for Christian principles and for faithfully preaching the good news of God's kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ? Jehovah's witnesses.

True, they are preaching in 207 lands, yet often with difficulty. Iron Curtain countries have long proscribed their work of Bible education. Early this year they were put under ban in Singapore. In fact, at present over thirty countries have a ban on Jehovah's witnesses in one form or another. In other lands opposition and hatred of them is expressed in many other ways.

THE MEANING BEHIND IT ALL

Jesus Christ explained why such events were to befall this system of things. He said, "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near." We obviously live at that time.—Luke 21:31.

All the troubles afflicting the modern world are part of a great sign that the present wicked system of things is in its last days. As long ago foretold in the Bible, it is time for God's kingdom to take over complete rulership and control of this earth. It will wipe out everything and everyone that is not in harmony with God's righteous ways. When that time arrives, what will be your standing with God?—Luke 21:32-36; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

SINGAPORE SUPPRESSES CHRISTIAN MINORITY

WHEN a "new nation" is formed, people around the world generally wonder what course the government will chart for its people. To what extent will leaders of the new nation show wisdom and restraint in their exercise of power and authority? Will there be freedom for all? Or will minority groups suffer? People ask, "Would I want to live there, visit there or do business there?"

Among the "new nations" of the earth is Singapore, an island republic off the southern end of the Malay Peninsula. The capital city, also called Singapore, is one of the world's busiest ports, handling something like 40,000 ships a year. Separating from the Federation of Malaysia, Singapore became an independent country in 1965. It has a multiracial population, about three fourths being of Chinese descent, about one sixth Malaysian, and the remainder being minority groups of Indians, Pakistanis and Europeans. Listen, now, to statements made by some of Singapore's leaders back in 1967. They seemed to give assurance that the new government indeed presented no threat to the freedom of its people.

Under the headline "*Success . . . that's when a minority doesn't feel it's a minority: Lee,*" *The Straits Times* of March 16, 1967, quoted Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, as telling the nation's

parliament that 'if 10 years from now Singapore was still making exhortations of religious tolerance and the virtues of a multiracial society, then the Government would have failed.' The Prime Minister said that 'nobody feared any racial, religious or linguistic persecution or suppression in Singapore.'

Two months later (May 24, 1967) the same newspaper carried the headline: "SINGAPORE LEADS WORLD: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM." It reported that "the Minister for Labour, Mr. Jek Yeun Thong, today called on Buddhists and others, whatever their religion or race, to play their part to ensure that Singapore remains a bastion of multi-racial and multi-religious tolerance to give her strength and purpose." The newspaper then quoted Mr. Jek as saying: "Our strength lies not in limiting the citizens to believe in only one state religion but in allowing everyone to believe in any religion so that everyone is happy and contented to contribute his fullest to the country. . . . No one has been or ever will be persecuted or discriminated against because of his faith."

All this was in full harmony with the enlightened principles set forth in Article 11 of the Singapore Federal Constitution, guaranteeing every person the right to profess and practice his religion.

It may therefore come as a shock to

many to learn that less than five years later Singapore has suddenly become the scene of government suppression of a religious minority, the Christian witnesses of Jehovah.

There are presently more than 27,000 congregations of Jehovah's witnesses throughout the earth in some 207 lands. Aside from those in dictatorial and many Communist countries, these congregations are able to exercise freely their religion. The question obviously arises therefore: Why such action by Singapore's government? Are Jehovah's witnesses there different from their brothers elsewhere on earth? Do they teach some other doctrine or differ in their conduct?

Here is a firsthand report of what happened as related by Norman D. Bellotti, who, together with his wife, until recently was serving as a missionary in Singapore.

BANISHED AFTER TWENTY-THREE YEARS

His account begins:

"The morning of January 12, 1972, dawned just like any other day in the tropics and, really, it was a delightful morning in Singapore. I and my wife Gladys knew that, as the day moved on, it would soon get hotter and possibly reach a temperature of 90 degrees Fahrenheit. After all, we had lived here for twenty-three years. Singapore was our home. And among Eastern cities it is one of the nicest, both clean and green. A visitor can quickly note that the society of people living here is an affluent one.

"My wife and I had arrived in Singapore in the early part of 1949 as missionaries of Jehovah's witnesses. Knowing of the good things taught in the Bible and the wonderful hope that the Bible holds out for honest-hearted persons of all races, we had devoted our lives to helping others learn about the good news of God's kingdom. This is the good news contained in

the Lord's Prayer, that God's kingdom will come and the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven.—Matt. 6:9, 10.

"That morning of January 12, Gladys had appointments to conduct free home Bible studies and was soon on her way to meet the first family. I proceeded with work in the office of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, for which I served as branch representative in Singapore. I was just getting some mail off to congregations of Jehovah's witnesses when the telephone rang and a Mr. Huan Tzu Hong wanted to speak with me. Identifying himself as an official of the Ministry of Home Affairs, he asked me to come down to his office right away to see him. The matter seemed urgent. As I had no transport available right then, it was arranged that the appointment be made for 2 p.m.

"About twenty minutes later, a police car came up the driveway of the branch office at 11 Jalan Sejarah, and a letter from Mr. Huan was delivered to me, confirming the appointment I had just made on the telephone. I signed the receipt book on receiving the letter. The matter indeed seemed urgent.

"At 2 p.m. I arrived at the office of the Minister for Home Affairs and was ushered inside. Mr. Huan greeted me after being introduced by Mr. Woon, another official from the department. Without delay Mr. Huan stated the purpose of the call. He said he had been instructed by the Minister for Home Affairs, Dr. Wong, to issue me with an Order, the contents of which were on a typed sheet he now handed me. It was an Expulsion Order, issued under the Government Banishment Act, Chapter 109. The Order read:

I, WONG LIN KEN, the Minister for the time being charged with responsibility for banishment, hereby order in accordance with the provisions of section 8 of the Banishment Act that NORMAN DAVID BELLOTTI born on 13th October, 1919 in AUSTRALIA leave

SINGAPORE before the expiration of a period of fourteen days from the date of service of a copy of this order, and thereafter remain out of SINGAPORE.

And I hereby specify the 19th day of January, 1972, as the date on or before which the said NORMAN DAVID BELLOTTI shall execute the bond specified in subsection (5) of the said section in the sum of one thousand dollars with surety.

And in exercise of the powers conferred by subsection (3) of the said section, I hereby further order that you NORMAN DAVID BELLOTTI, before so leaving Singapore, shall report to the Controller of Immigration, Singapore.

Given under my hand this 12th day of January, 1972.

Signed: Wong Lin Ken
Minister for Home Affairs,
Singapore.

"I read the order and was shocked. No reason was given as to why I was being banished. I asked Mr. Huan why this action was taken. He said that he did not know the details as he was only asked by the Minister to serve me with the order. 'The Minister would know why.' I asked if I could see the Minister. 'No,' he replied. Then could I make an appointment to see him? He said that this was 'impossible.' The law does not require that a reason be given for banishment. Mr. Huan was anxious to have me sign the copy of the order and his work would be over.

"But I pressed the matter further and pointed out that it is a blot on a man's character to be banished from a country, especially a well-known place like Singapore. Was I being accused of some subversive activity? Or being labeled a Communist? One who is banished is usually of bad character and I surely would be glad to have some information as to why I was being given an expulsion order.

"Mr. Huan had no comment to give. So I said, 'This means, then, that I have been able to live in this country for twenty-three years, during which time no one has made a complaint against me that I know

of, no one in the government has ever come to talk to me about my Bible-educational work, no official has been man enough to interview me or accuse me of some wrong I have done, either real or supposed, and yet I am served with a banishment order and I am not given the privilege of knowing what it is all about and being able to make some kind of explanation.' Mr. Huan answered that he had no further information to pass on to me and that 'he had a job to do like everyone else.'

"I signed the order saying that I had received it. That part of his job finished, Mr. Huan proceeded to read to me that portion of the law which pertains to persons who have an expulsion order and who do not comply with it.

"I assured him that I had been a law-abiding person during the last twenty-three years and I would continue to obey the law. The government had no need to fear a God-fearing Bible lover. Over the years I had the privilege of meeting many of the officials of the government and talking with them about the Bible's promises. Yearly assemblies were arranged and mostly we used Government auditoriums. We often used the Singapore Conference Hall, the Cultural Centre, the Victoria Memorial Hall, numerous Community Centres and Social Function Halls. My dealings with officials in these buildings were always cordial. The officials had no complaints and they never refused us the use of the halls. In 1963 the Watch Tower Society arranged a large international assembly in the Victoria Theatre and visitors came in from all over the world. In order to hold all these assemblies I applied and got police permits. Officers in the different Police Departments always treated me with respect. Many of them, too, believed the Bible. So, I was truly very surprised and shocked when I was issued a banishment order.

"Mr. Huan instructed that S\$1,000 be deposited with him, on or before the 19th of January, as a surety that I would leave the country at the appointed time. Before leaving his office I said that I was startled that such action was taken against a man of the Bible, without giving a reason. Mr. Huan's final words on that day were: 'When you return by the 19th to pay the S\$1,000, possibly the picture will have become a little clearer.'

"I returned home and broke the news to my wife. We both sat down to try to make some plans. Where to go? What to pack and what to leave behind? Would we get to say good-bye to all our good friends? We had been here for twenty-three years and we had friends all over Singapore and not only here but all throughout Malaysia. And what was behind that statement: 'The picture will become a little clearer by the 19th'?

"We began to pack, needless to say with heavy hearts. Friends and neighbors called and wanted to know what it was all about. 'Why?' 'Why?' 'Why?' But this question could not be answered. The Minister for Home Affairs, Dr. Wong Lin Ken, did not say in his Banishment Order. He had never talked with me and was not prepared to have an audience with me when requested. The order was 'get out and stay out!' But no reason, no explanation. Two days later, by the morning of January 14, departure plans were fairly well in hand. However, before the day ended, things happened that startled us all. It was to be a dark day for Singapore.

PLACE OF WORSHIP PADLOCKED

"Just before midday, police came to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses at 8 Exeter Road, which is situated just opposite a very busy market. They posted an order of dissolution on the front door.

"That day, the 14th of January, 1972,

the Minister for Home Affairs, Dr. Wong Lin Ken, had deregistered the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. The congregation had registered under the Societies Act some ten years earlier and the Kingdom Hall was its registered headquarters. Regular Bible classes had been held there throughout the years in English and Chinese.

"Were these secret meetings? No, but all meetings were open to the public, and of recent years the hall was always filled on Sundays. Each year an annual general meeting was duly held and the business report and financial report were returned to the Registrar of Societies on the forms provided. All the office-bearers of the registered congregation were ministers of religion, none were foreigners. They were law-abiding citizens, men who do an honest day's work, many of them working in government offices.

"This congregation of Jehovah's witnesses, with which my wife and I had associated for twenty-three years, had orderly meetings, with no loud music or shouting to disturb the neighbors. They were not following some so-called 'Western culture.' The very Bible they use as their guide is an Oriental book, written and preserved by men of the Middle East. Not one of the members of the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses was ever arrested or charged for a criminal offense, or for any other offense for that matter. The congregation had gone about its preaching work in a public manner and there had been no complaints. Many thousands of persons enjoyed reading regularly the issues of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines in their different languages.

"Yet now the government of Singapore had acted to ban this Christian congregation. These honest men and women and children can no longer meet together for Christian worship in the Kingdom Hall.

This has been declared illegal. No freedom of religion exists for them any longer.

"Officers of the law now prepared to break into the Kingdom Hall and steal out what did not belong to them. Had they but asked the president, vice-president or secretary-treasurer of the registered congregation for the key to the hall, it would have been supplied. A phone call is all that would have been necessary. But they preferred dramatically and forcibly to break in through the front door. They took everything of value, particularly seizing all Bibles, Bible literature and library books.

"The caretaker in the flat upstairs had gone out. They went into his flat and stole his personal property, even taking his personal copy of the Holy Bible! The hall was now padlocked. When the caretaker came back in the afternoon he could not even enter his own home. A citizen was locked out of his own house with just the clothes he stood in! Unable to pass the padlocked door to take a shower and change his shirt and trousers, he was forced to borrow a change of clothes.

"The bank account of the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses was also seized by the authorities. This money had all been contributed on a voluntary basis, being donated by goodhearted persons who wished to see the Bible-educational work expand in Singapore. None of it was obtained by taking up collections or soliciting it from the people. The congregation had not engaged in any kind of commercial business.

"On that Friday evening, January 14, a regular Bible meeting was scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. in the Kingdom Hall. Due to preparing for this meeting, many of the Witnesses and their friends did not hear a radio broadcast of the government's action. On arriving at the Kingdom Hall, they were shocked to see a big padlock on

its door. Among them were the president and vice-president of the registered congregation. No one had spoken to them about the banning. No official had shown the gentlemanly consideration to notify his fellow citizen of the government action against his religion and his freedom of worship and study of the Bible. Disappointed, these men and their families had to return to their homes.

BIBLE LITERATURE BANNED

"That same day another blow came. The Minister for Culture, Mr. Jek Yeun Thong, took action against the literature printed by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Published in the Government Gazette of that date, the notice read:

In exercise of the powers conferred by subsection (1) of section 3 of the Undesirable Publications Act, the Minister for Culture hereby prohibits the importation, sale and circulation of all publications published or printed by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

"Mr. Jek was the same man who, five years earlier as Minister of Labour, had urged all people to help Singapore remain 'a bastion of multi-racial and multi-religious tolerance.' His promise then was that 'no one has been or ever will be persecuted or discriminated against because of his faith.' Yet now religious freedom was being forcibly taken away from the minority group of Jehovah's witnesses, and Mr. Jek was involved in such action.

"Finally, on the evening of January 14, some statement was made as to the government's justification for its action against this Christian minority. Radio and Television Singapore, in announcing the dissolving of the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and the banning of the Watch Tower literature, presented the press statement released by the Ministry of Home Affairs. It read as follows:

The Government today de-registered the

Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses on the ground that its continued existence is prejudicial to public welfare and good order in Singapore. The doctrine of the sect and nature of its propaganda are based on its claim that 'Satan' and its dispensation are responsible for all organised Government and religion. The result of the impending 'Armageddon' will be the destruction of everyone except Jehovah's Witnesses who will inherit the earth. By virtue of this doctrine the sect claims a neutral position for its members in wartime. This has led a number of Jehovah's Witnesses in the National Service to refuse to do any military duty. Some of them even refuse to wear uniforms.

The 'parent' body of the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society incorporated in the United States of America. This Society has an Australian missionary (Mr. N. D. Bellotti) in Singapore, whose task is to see to the importation of the Society's literature and its distribution to the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and others. With the dissolution of the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, there will be no further need for such literature or for him to remain in Singapore. The Government has therefore banned the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society literature and asked Mr. Bellotti to leave the country.

"The following day, January 15, the newspapers reported the banning. Local reporters and photographers and foreign press representatives besieged the branch office for more information; they said the matter was not clear. I could give no information other than what the government press statement provided. I was being banished because I was importing Bibles and Bible literature into the Republic, just as I had been doing for the past twenty-three years. The office-bearers of the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses had not been told anything. Apparently their 'crime' was that they were

reading the Bible and these kindred publications.

"Note the government's press statement that the continued existence of the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses 'is prejudicial to public welfare and good order in Singapore.' What proof, what facts were there to back up such a statement? Surely, because a small minority believes that God will soon bring an end to all wickedness and will restore this earth to a paradise state, and that the 'meek will inherit the earth,' this is not going to upset the good order of any nation, large or small. Look at any country on this earth today and you will find no evidence that Jehovah's witnesses have ever been a disrupting force as to the good order of any land. Like the apostle Paul, they have 'renounced the underhanded things of which to be ashamed, not walking with cunning, neither adulterating the word of God, but by making the truth manifest recommending [themselves] to every human conscience in the sight of God.' (2 Cor. 4:2) They earnestly seek to obey the apostle Peter's exhortation: 'Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection.'—1 Pet. 2:12.

"For twenty-three years my wife and I had used the literature of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in our Bible-educational work in Singapore. Even as Jesus and the apostle Paul could say, so we could say that nothing was done 'in secret,' 'in a corner,' but openly, 'publicly.' (John 18:20; Acts 26:26) We shared in distributing the Bible in English, Chinese and Tamil and offered our services free to help Bible-loving persons to get a better understanding of it. In a world that has moved and is moving farther away

from the high standards of conduct found in the Bible, Jehovah's witnesses find that there are many people anxious to know what God says about this in his Word. We were not trying to push a new religion on someone, but were aiding those who wanted to know more about the Bible and what hope it gives for the future.

"Far from favoring or fomenting disorder or anarchy, Jehovah's witnesses teach the rightness of submission to authority. They recognize that it is God's arrangement to allow human governments to operate in the present system of things and that therefore 'he who opposes the [governmental] authority has taken a stand against the arrangement of God.' (Rom. 13:1, 2) They do, of course, believe the Bible's teaching that God is shortly going to replace all human forms of government with the perfect rule of his own Son, Christ Jesus, from heaven. (Dan. 2:44) But Jehovah's witnesses know that this will be by divine power, not by trying to effect such change themselves. So, they are careful not to interfere in the operation of the existing governments.

"Their stand of neutrality as to worldly conflicts and as to participation in military activities is not based on some sectarian dogma or propaganda, but on plain statements in the Bible. It was Jesus Christ who said to his followers: 'If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen **you** out of the world, on this account the world hates you. . . . A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also; if they have observed my word, they will observe yours also.'—John 15:19, 20.

"Jehovah's witnesses are living in harmony with the words found on a wall of the United Nations Plaza, words taken from the Bible at Isaiah 2:4 (*Authorized*

Version): 'They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' Singapore is a member nation of the United Nations Organization. True, the nations today do not live in accord with those words. They continue to stockpile weapons and learn war. But is it right to condemn as 'prejudicial to public welfare and good order' those who *do* live in accord with those words, yes, who are even willing to suffer persecution rather than violate them? In a world that is steadily filling with violence, how can it be said that such persons are setting a bad example by their peaceful and peaceable way of life? Would not this whole earth be a safer, finer, more pleasant place to live if all, or even the great majority of persons, followed the example of such sincere Christians?

"During my years in Singapore I lived through several riots in which many persons lost their lives. But not one of Jehovah's witnesses was ever involved in such disorder. None of the publications of the Watch Tower Society has ever advocated such use of violence.

"On the other hand, is it considered prejudicial to a country for Jehovah's witnesses to point out what the Holy Bible says at Revelation 16, verses 14-16, that the great war of God is coming and that it is called 'Armageddon'? A person who warns his neighbor of an approaching disaster and points to the way of safety is considered a good friend. Jehovah's witnesses give such warning, doing so out of friendship for the people of all lands. Of course, they can only sound the warning. As to whether people believe it or not, this is up to them.

"On January 18 I returned to the Ministry of Home Affairs to pay over the S\$1,000. Mr. Huan's words, 'The picture

will become a little clearer by the 19th,' had already been fulfilled. A small community of Christians were no longer able to meet for worship. Their religious meeting place had been raided and the property seized and sealed; their bank account was frozen.

"Now, when I offered Mr. Huan the money, he apologized, saying that he had misinformed me. What was really required was some local person to come and sign a bond or surety, guaranteeing that I would leave the country at the stated time. If I defaulted, then this man would lose his money and I could be arrested and dealt with. Having made many good friends in Singapore, I found it no problem to get one to sign the bond.

SADDENED MISSIONARIES LEAVE

"Time was now running out. The saying of good-byes was a tearful experience, yet faith in the true God Jehovah was still strong. Truth is not mere 'propaganda' but something that comforts and strengthens the mind and heart. It gives honest-hearted persons a purpose in life. It makes them better men and women.

"Both to Mr. Huan, in the office of the Ministry of Home Affairs, and to the Deputy Controller of Immigration, Mr. Tan Han Tuan, who held my passport just prior to departure, I explained that I felt no vindictiveness toward the government of Singapore. I had come into the country as a respectful guest and I would leave as a respectful guest. My stay in the country had been a very enjoyable one. But I was very sad to see that something terrible had happened, the taking away from citizens of Singapore the freedom of worship, an effort to suppress the exercise of their own conscience and the making of expression of their faith. It is a pity that such harsh treatment has been handed out

to a minority group of sincere law-abiding Christians, whose only desire is to live peaceful lives in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. Other progressive countries have spoken out very favorably about the fine Christian conduct of Jehovah's witnesses. It is indeed a shame that these Christian witnesses of Jehovah cannot meet together for worship in Singapore, a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and that even the various Bible translations they use, and which are printed on the presses of the Watch Tower Society, have come under Government ban along with the literature they use to announce the kingdom of God.

"On the evening of January 25, 1972, my wife and I took our departure from the Republic of Singapore. We left behind us our beloved, lifelong friends of the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses."

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Our prayers go out on behalf of this small group of Christians in Singapore. You, too, may wish to express your concern for them in prayer to Jehovah God, petitioning him for the safety of those loving him and that he may prosper the proclamation of his word of truth even under severe difficulties. (2 Cor. 1:8-11; 2 Thess. 3:1, 2) As the apostle Paul, when a prisoner for preaching the good news of God's kingdom, declared: "Nevertheless, the word of God is not bound."—2 Tim. 2:9.

You may also wish to express your concern to the government of the Republic of Singapore, expressing to them your plea for a judicious and fair-minded re-evaluation of the action taken. Certainly the "new nation" of Singapore has nothing to fear from people who hold to the high

standards of Christian conduct as set forth in the Bible. Their insistence on neutrality in worldly conflicts is surely no reason for locking Christian men, women and children out of their place of worship.

May the newspaper headline of 1967, "SINGAPORE LEADS WORLD: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM," yet prove true in 1972. Yes, may the governmental leaders of the Republic of Singapore set an enlightened example and dignify themselves as men of wise judgment by restoring to this small minority, Jehovah's Christian witnesses, their religious freedom. Following are the names and addresses of members of the government of the Republic of Singapore to whom you may wish to write:

His Excellency Dr. B. H. Sheares
President of the Republic of Singapore
The Istana
Singapore 9
Republic of Singapore

Mr. Lee Kuan Yew
Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore
Prime Minister's Office
City Hall
Singapore 6
Republic of Singapore

Dr. Goh Keng Swee
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
Pearl's Hill
Singapore 2
Republic of Singapore

Dr. Wong Lin Ken
Minister for Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
Pearl's Hill
Singapore 2
Republic of Singapore

Mr. Jek Yeun Thong
Minister for Culture
Ministry of Culture
City Hall
Singapore 6
Republic of Singapore

Mr. S. Rajaratnam
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
City Hall
Singapore 6
Republic of Singapore

Mr. E. W. Barker
Minister of Law and National Development
National Development Building
Maxwell Road
Singapore 2
Republic of Singapore

Mr. Michael Chai
Acting Controller of Immigration
Immigration Department
Empress Place
Singapore 6
Republic of Singapore

At about sixty-two years of age he succeeded to the kingdom of Chaldean King Belshazzar following the conquest of Babylon by the forces of Cyrus.—Dan. 5:30, 31.

During the reign of Darius the Mede, the prophet Daniel was granted a high governmental position. Later, when Darius contemplated making Daniel prime minister, other high officials devised a scheme that led to Daniel's being cast into the lions' pit. But Daniel was miraculously delivered, whereas the conspirators and their families were themselves thrown to the lions. King Darius then had a proclamation made throughout the realm that "in every

Who was "DARIUS THE MEDE"?

THE Bible record tells us that a certain Darius was the "son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes." (Dan. 9:1)

dominion of [his] kingdom, people are to be quaking and fearing before the God of Daniel."—Dan. 6:4-27.

Aside from the information contained in the Holy Scriptures, nothing is definitely known about Darius the Mede. Not even the name has been found in ancient inscriptions. It might therefore be asked: If Darius did indeed exist, why is he not mentioned in extra-Biblical sources? Might he have been known by another name?

Certain scholars believe that Darius the Mede is referred to in ancient historical writings under another name. But their identifications often do not correspond precisely with the details of the Bible. Some have endeavored to associate Darius with Cyrus' son Cambyses II, but this would not agree with Darius' being "about sixty-two years old" when Babylon fell. Likewise the view that Darius is perhaps another name for Cyrus himself would not harmonize with the fact that Darius' father was a Mede. In the Scriptures Cyrus is definitely called "Persian." (Dan. 6:28) While his mother may have been Median (as some ancient historians claim), his father, according to the Cyrus Cylinder, was Cambyses I, a Persian.

Other scholars would identify Darius with a supposed "uncle" of Cyrus, presented by Greek historian Xenophon as "Cyaxares, son of Astyages." But whether Astyages had a son named Cyaxares is subject to question, for the historian Herodotus claims that Astyages died sonless.

More recently a number of scholars have favored an identification of Darius with Gubaru (Gobryas), who became governor of Babylon after the Medo-Persian conquest of that city. Basically the evidence that they present is as follows:

After telling of Cyrus' entering Babylon, the Nabonidus Chronicle states that "*Gubaru, his governor, installed (sub-) governors in Babylon.*" Other cuneiform

texts indicate that Gubaru ruled over a region that basically embraced the former Babylonian Empire. Darius the Mede is spoken of as being "made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans" (Dan. 9:1), but not as "the king of Persia," the regular form for referring to King Cyrus. (Dan. 10:1) The region ruled by Gubaru would therefore at least appear to be the same as that ruled by Darius.

Since Gubaru is nowhere called "Darius," the suggestion is made that "Darius" was his title or throne name. In answer to the objection that the cuneiform tablets nowhere speak of Gubaru as "king," those advocating Gubaru's identification with Darius point to the fact that the title king is likewise not applied to Belshazzar in the cuneiform tablets, although the kingship had been entrusted to him by his father Nabonidus.

Along this line, Professor Whitcomb calls attention to Gubaru's 'installing (sub-) governors in Babylon,' even as Daniel 6:1, 2 shows that Darius "set up over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps." Whitcomb therefore concludes that Gubaru, as a governor of governors, was likely addressed as king by his subordinates.—*Darius the Mede*, pp. 31-33.

In harmony with the foregoing, some scholars consider it likely that Darius the Mede was a viceroy who, as a subordinate of the supreme monarch, Cyrus, ruled over the kingdom of the Chaldeans. Those who hold this view point to the fact that Darius is stated to have "*received the kingdom*" and that he was "*made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans*" as evidence that he was indeed subordinate to a superior monarch.—Dan. 5:31; 9:1.

Though possible, the identification cannot be considered conclusive. The historical records do not tell us Gubaru's nationality nor his parentage, thus providing

no basis for confirming whether Gubaru was indeed a "Mede" and the "son of Ahasuerus." They do not show that, as indicated at Daniel 6:6-9, he had authority to the extent of being able to make an edict that made it unlawful to petition any god or man other than himself for thirty days. Moreover the Scriptures seem to indicate that Darius' rule was comparatively brief and that Cyrus thereafter assumed the kingship over Babylon. (Dan. 6:28; 9:1; 2 Chron. 36:20-23) Gubaru, though, continued in his position for fourteen years according to cuneiform inscriptions.

That Darius the Mede cannot now be positively identified should not be surprising. The hundreds of thousands of cuneiform tablets unearthed in the Near East still present a very imperfect history having various gaps and blanks. And the accounts of the historians Herodotus, Xenophon, Ctesias and Berossus (as quoted by Josephus) all differ and in various points contradict one another concerning the reign of Cyrus and the events surrounding and subsequent to the fall of Babylon.

Another strong reason for such lack of information about Darius is provided by

the book of Daniel itself. Darius' favoring Daniel and his ordering that all in the kingdom should 'fear before the God of Daniel' doubtless caused deep dissatisfaction and resentment among the powerful Babylonian priests, under whose direction the scribes recorded the events of history. So it would not be strange that, if Darius' reign was relatively short, the records were subsequently altered and evidence concerning him eliminated. Similar actions are known to have been taken in the history of those times. Such things are even done in our own time in some lands.

The historicity of Darius the Mede, of course, does not depend upon confirmation by secular sources. The Bible's historical reliability has repeatedly been demonstrated by additional discoveries and stands out in sharp contrast with the often contradictory accounts of secular history. As noted by Assyriologist D. J. Wiseman about Daniel's record of Darius: ". . . the narrative has all the appearance of genuine historical writing, and in the absence of many historical records of this period there is no reason why the history should not be accepted."—*The New Bible Dictionary*, p. 293.



- Why did the beginning of World War I not coincide with the early part of October, when the "appointed times of the nations" ended?
—U.S.A.

As has often been shown in this magazine, the conferring of kingship over the nations on Christ Jesus took place in 1914 C.E., at the expiration of the "appointed times of the nations" or the Gentile Times. (Luke 21:24; Dan.

4:16, 17, 31, 32) Those "appointed times" began 2,520 years earlier, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. and the assassination of the Jewish governor Gedaliah. The murder of Gedaliah in the month of Tishri (September/October) ("at the seventh new moon," Byington translation) prompted those Jews left remaining in the land of Judah to flee. (Jer. 41:1, 2; 43:2-7) By the time the fearful Jews fled to Egypt it must have been at least the middle of Tishri, to allow enough time for the events mentioned in the Bible as taking place between the assassination and the flight. (Compare Jeremiah 41:4, 10-42:7.) This would place the start of the Gentile Times about Tishri 15, 607 B.C.E.

At the end of the Gentile Times, about Tishri 15 (October 4/5), 1914 C.E., Revelation 11:15

was fulfilled: "The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." By enthroning his Son Jesus Christ, Jehovah God took his power to rule as King over the world of mankind. The rulership of the great Adversary, Satan the Devil, was due to end.

Being the 'ruler of the world' of mankind alienated from God, Satan certainly did not want to see the Kingdom take full control of earth's affairs. (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) Over nineteen centuries earlier he maneuvered matters in such a way that, had it not been for divine intervention, Herod the Great would have killed the infant Jesus. (Matt. 2:13) Similarly, even before the birth of the heavenly kingdom, Satan readied himself and his demons for an attack. This is symbolically described at Revelation 12:3-5, where we read: "Another sign was seen in heaven, and, look! a great fiery-colored dragon, with seven heads and ten horns and upon its heads seven diadems; and its tail drags a third of the stars of heaven, and it hurled them down to the earth. And the dragon kept standing before the woman who was *about to give birth*, that, *when she did give birth*, it might devour her

child. And she gave birth to a son, a male, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod. And her child was caught away to God and to his throne."

It should not be surprising, then, that World War I broke out about two months *before* the end of the Gentile Times, and hence *before* the birth of the symbolic "son" or heavenly kingdom. Satan the Devil did not need to wait until after kingship over the nations had been placed in the hands of Jesus Christ to maneuver the nations into a large-scale war. The start of that sanguinary conflict was doubtless part of his scheme to blind persons to what had happened in the heavens in fulfillment of Bible prophecy and also, if at all possible, to hinder the Kingdom from ruling over the world of mankind.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

July 9: Never "Too Busy to Pray." Page 328.
Songs to Be Used: 5, 42.

July 16: Take Time to Pray Every Day. Page 334. Songs to Be Used: 18-87.