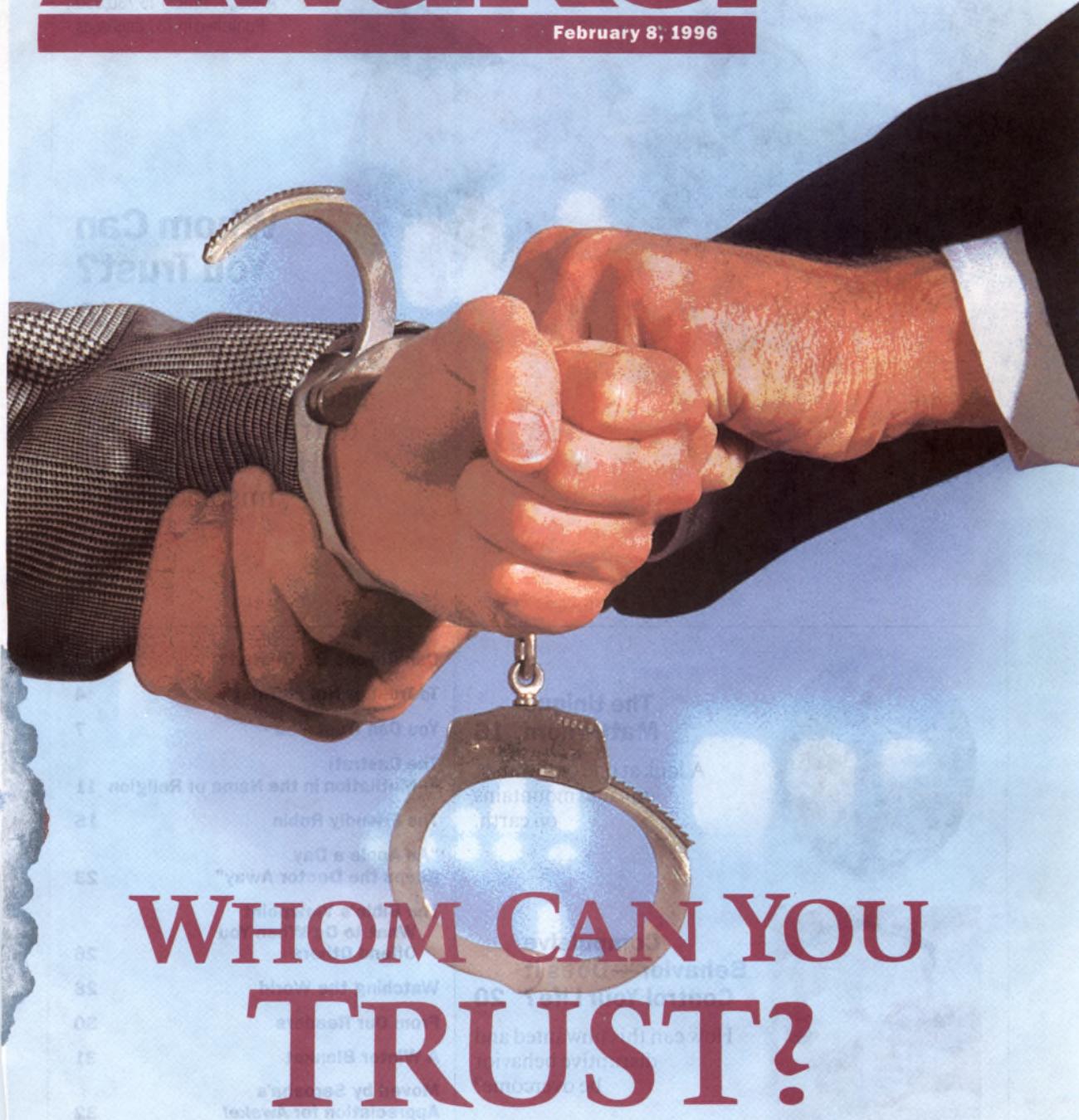


# Awake!

February 8, 1996



**WHOM CAN YOU  
TRUST?**



## **Whom Can You Trust?**

**3-10**

More and more people find it difficult to trust others. Why? How can we avoid misplacing our trust?



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A look at one of the most unusual mountains on earth.



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# CAN ANYONE BE TRUSTED?

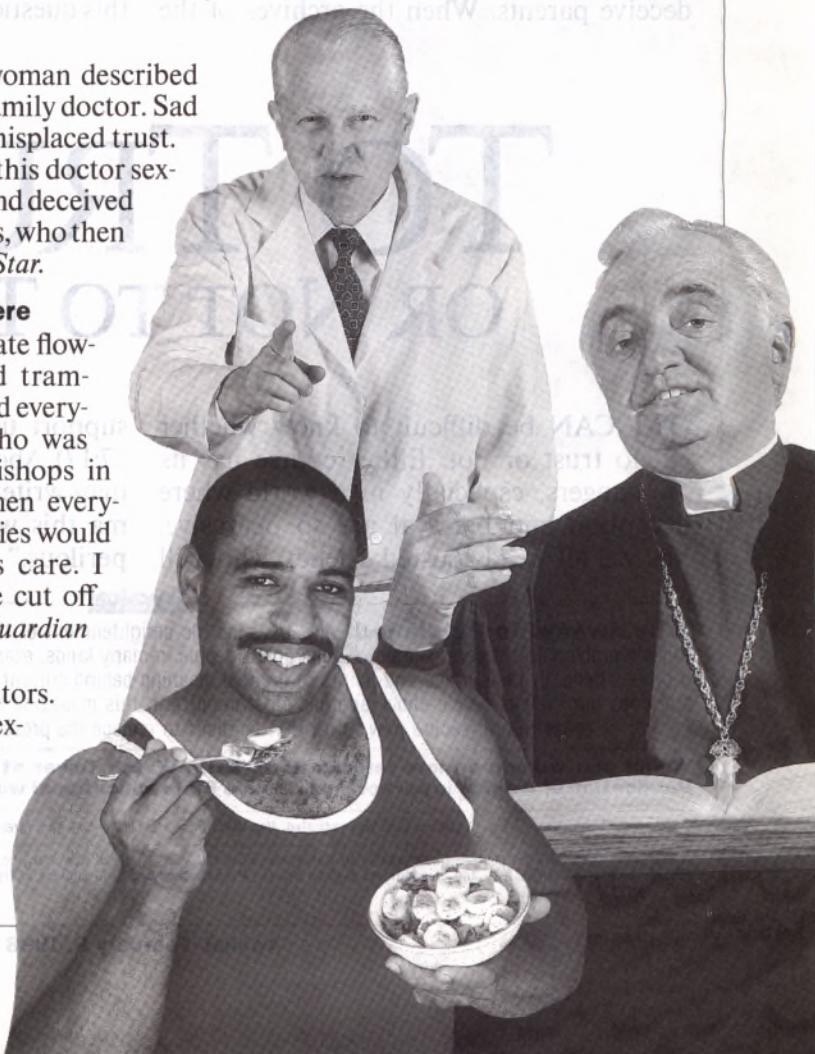
"He was one of the few people outside the family that my parents put absolute trust in. . . . He portrayed himself as a good and caring person who would never do anything to hurt us. . . . He was one of the few people in my life I came to trust implicitly."

**T**HAT is how one young woman described the trust she had in her family doctor. Sad to say, it was a seriously misplaced trust. From when she was 16 years old, this doctor sexually abused her. "He lied to me and deceived me," she told the court authorities, who then meted out justice.—*The Toronto Star*.

#### **Trust Destroyed Everywhere**

Trust, like a beautiful yet delicate flower, can be easily uprooted and trampled underfoot. It is being crushed everywhere! Said Michael Gaine, who was secretary to two cardinal-archbishops in England: "There was a time when everybody trusted a priest. When families would entrust their children into his care. I wouldn't expect that now. We're cut off from that trust forever."—*The Guardian Weekend*.

Business people cheat competitors. Crafty advertisers mislead and exploit consumers. One callous official plundered his own companies' pension funds, robbing his employees of their nest eggs. Employees regularly rob their



employers. A report noted, for example, that "Canadian businesses lose an estimated \$20 billion a year from internal thefts." —*Canadian Business*.

Not all politicians are untrustworthy. But reports like the following surprise very few people: "Two weeks after the assassination of one of France's most controversial woman politicians, the police are ripping to shreds the veils of political deceit and criminal conspiracy that have long masked the business of government on the Mediterranean coast." —*The Sunday Times*, London.

Often, in close relationships trust is shattered. Husbands and wives cheat on their spouses. Parents abuse children. Children deceive parents. When the archives of the

*Stasi*, the secret police in former East Germany, were opened, they revealed a "pervasive system of deceit" by people considered friends. In a network of betrayal, says one report, "Stasi tentacles extended into the schoolroom, the pulpit, the bedroom, even the confessional." —*Time*.

In Ireland a columnist wrote: "We have been lied to, we have been misled and we have been used and abused and have been held in contempt by those who we placed in positions of power." (*The Kerryman*) Because they so often have been betrayed, many people trust no one. What can we do to ensure that our trust is not misplaced? The next two articles will examine this question.

# TO TRUST OR NOT TO TRUST

IT CAN be difficult to know whether to trust or not. Either course has its dangers, especially in a world where deception and betrayal are so pervasive. Yet we all need trusted friends who will

support us in time of trouble. (Proverbs 17:17) About two thousand years ago, Roman writer Phaedrus expressed the dilemma this way: "To trust or not to trust is perilous."

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## Trusting Can Be Perilous

Why might trusting someone else be perilous? Well, consider the warning given in *Psychology Today* magazine. It describes some who exploit people's trust as "predators" who "use charm and chameleon-like coloration to deceive and manipulate those around them and damage their lives." Obviously, with such deceivers around, being overly trusting is decidedly dangerous.

Someone who trusts too much may be gullible and, as a result, easily deceived and manipulated. One classic example of gullibility was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the originator of the clear-thinking master detective Sherlock Holmes. In 1917 two young girls, Elsie Wright and her cousin, Frances Griffiths, claimed that they had played with fairies in the garden of their home in Cottingley, England. They even produced photographs of the fairies to try to prove it.

Conan Doyle, who was deeply interested in spiritism following his son's death, trusted them and believed the stories about the fairies—as did many people at the time. It was not until some 55 years later that the two girls admitted that it had all been a hoax and that they had cut the "fairies" out of a book before taking the photographs. Frances Griffiths expressed amazement that anyone believed their story. She said: "How on earth anyone could be so

gullible as to believe that they were real was always a mystery to me."—*Hoaxers and Their Victims*.

Can you see the trap that Conan Doyle fell into? He blindly trusted the story purely because he wanted it to be true. Says author Norman Moss: "We can be fooled simply because our perceptions are dulled by habit, and we look at things through half-closed eyes. . . . Sometimes, we accept a thing as true because it is something we want to be true." (*The Pleasures of Deception*) That echoes the warning given by the famous Greek orator Demosthenes about 350 years before our Common Era: "The easiest thing of all is to deceive one's self, for what a man wishes he generally believes to be true." Trusting just in our feelings can be dangerous.

Of course, you might think that this is an extreme example and that Conan Doyle was more foolish than you would ever be. But it is not just the gullible who are in danger of being deceived. Many careful and normally cautious people have been fooled and deceived by seemingly trustworthy people.

## Not Trusting Can Be Perilous

There are dangers, though, in not trusting anyone or anything. Distrust is like corrosive rust. It can erode and destroy what otherwise might be happy, close relationships. Deep-rooted cynicism and unyielding distrust can make you a very unhappy,

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friendless person. It can be so damaging to relationships with other people that English writer Samuel Johnson wrote, "it is happier to be sometimes cheated than not to trust."

Distrust can even endanger your physical health. You may be aware that strong emotions like anger can expose you to the danger of heart attack. But did you know that some research suggests that being distrustful can do the same? Says *Chatelaine*

## **"Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps."**

**—Proverbs 14:15**

magazine: "People who fly off the handle easily aren't the only ones who may increase their chances of developing heart disease because of their behavior. New research indicates that even subtle forms of hostility, such as a tendency to be cynical and distrustful, can put you at risk."

### **Consider Your Steps Carefully**

What can you do? The Bible gives some good advice on this matter. "Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word," says Proverbs 14:15. This is not destructive cynicism. It is a realistic reminder of the need for caution. Only a very naive, inexperienced person is going to trust blindly every word he hears. With good reason the Bible proverb continues: "But the shrewd one considers his steps." English playwright William Shakespeare wrote: "Trust not to rotten planks." Anyone who thinks that the planks on a bridge over a deep drop

may be rotten would be very foolish to step on them. How, then, can you 'consider your steps' so that you do not misplace your trust?

The Bible encourages us to test out what people say rather than just blindly accept everything we hear. "The ear itself makes a test of words, just as the palate tastes when eating," it says. (Job 34:3) Isn't that true? Don't we usually taste food before we swallow it? We should also make a test of people's words and actions before we swallow them. No one who is genuine will take offense if we check his credentials. That we should check to see that something is genuine is supported by the Scottish proverb that says: "He that deceives me once, shame fall him; if he deceives me twice, shame fall me."

The apostle Paul advised: "Put all things to the test." (1 Thessalonians 5:21, *Today's English Version*) The word used by the apostle Paul for "test" was also used in connection with testing precious metals to see if they were genuine. A prudent person always tested to see if what he was buying was genuine. Otherwise he might have ended up with what was called fool's gold —something that looked like gold but that was, in fact, worthless.

### **Be Reasonable and Balanced**

Of course, we want to be reasonable in this matter and not be unduly suspicious of others. (Philippians 4:5) Do not be quick to impute bad motives to anyone. Misreading motives can be the quickest way to wreck fine, close relationships. It is usually best to assume that your friends *want* to do what is best for you rather than attribute bad motives to them when difficult situations arise.

Make allowances for the imperfections and mistakes of others. "Betrayal by a

friend means a violation of trust," says writer Kristin von Kreisler. However, such betrayal might be unintentional or may have been the result of weakness now deeply regretted. Therefore, she continues: "Don't dwell on the betrayal—or let it keep you from trusting others." Do not let bitter, negative experiences rob you of the joys that can come from building trusting relationships with others.

Be balanced. You do not need to wear blinders when evaluating people; a cautious person keeps his guard up. On the other hand, Doctor Redford Williams suggests that we try to assume that others are doing the best they can, try to understand their point of view, and "practise trusting others" whenever possible. It may be better to trust too much than never to trust at all.

The writer of the Bible book of Proverbs acknowledges that "there exist companions disposed to break one another to pieces"—that is, people who will try to exploit your trust. The world is full of them. But give others the time and the opportunity to demonstrate that they are trustworthy,



***Make allowances for the imperfections and mistakes of others***

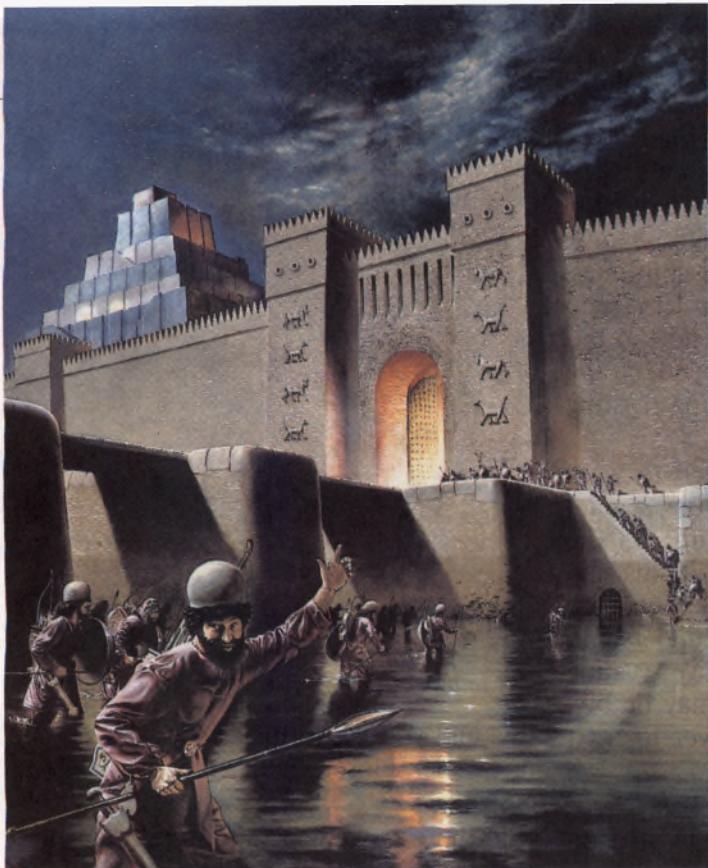
thy, and you will find friends who will, in fact, 'stick closer than a brother.'—Proverbs 18:24.

Is there anyone or anything, then, that you can trust totally, without any fear that your trust will be exploited or betrayed? Yes, there certainly is. The next article will briefly consider where you can place your trust with complete confidence.

## YOU CAN TRUST GOD

**Y**OU can trust God and his Word, the Bible, absolutely. After a lifetime of trusting God, one man, past 100 years of age, gave this reason for his confi-

dence: "Look!" he said, "I am going today in the way of all the earth, and you well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that *not one word out of all the good words that*



**Some 200 years in advance,  
God's prophet predicted how  
Babylon would be overthrown**

of those who claim to be his representatives and who then deal treacherously with others. People like that are identified by the Bible as untrustworthy. Religious hypocrites say one thing but do the opposite. As the apostle Peter warned, they exploit their flocks. Peter wrote: "On account of these the way of the truth will be spoken of abusively. Also, with covetousness they will exploit you with counterfeit words."—2 Peter 2:2, 3.

Such people do not represent God. They dishonor his Word. Why not examine for yourself God's own record

and testimony as revealed in the Bible? 'But,' you might ask, 'why should I trust the Bible any more than any other book?' It is true that there have been countless religious frauds throughout history, but the Bible is different. Consider the following reasons for trusting the Bible.

#### **Reasons for Trusting the Bible**

*You can trust the Bible because its promises and prophecies always come true.* Here is just one example. Unbelievable though it might have seemed to captive Israel, Jehovah God, the author of the Bible, had promised that he would liberate them from captivity to mighty Babylon and restore them to Jerusalem. It seemed an unlikely hope because Babylon was the dominant world power of the day and had totally devastated Jerusalem. But about two hundred years in advance, Jehovah had even named the Persian

*Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed."*—Joshua 23:14.

This man, Joshua, a leader of ancient Israel, experienced the total reliability of God and his Word. Everything God promised Israel came true. If you get to know more about the Creator and his Word, you can develop that same trust. A later worshiper of God, King David, expressed it this way: "Those knowing your name will trust in you, for you will certainly not leave those looking for you, O Jehovah."—Psalm 9:10.

#### **God Will Never Let You Down**

The more you get to 'know God's name' and what that name implies—his purposes, activities, and qualities—the more you will trust him. He is a dependable Friend who will never let you down or break his word. And do not be put off by the hypocrisy

ruler Cyrus as the one who would overthrow Babylon and free His people and predicted how the river defenses of Babylon would fail. You can read the account at Isaiah 44:24–45:4.

The book *Reasoning From the Scriptures* explains how the promise was fulfilled: “Cyrus had not been born when the prophecy was written. . . . In detail the prophecy was fulfilled starting in 539 B.C.E. Cyrus diverted the waters of the Euphrates River into an artificial lake, the river gates of Babylon were carelessly left open during feasting in the city, and Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians under Cyrus. Thereafter, Cyrus liberated the Jewish exiles and sent them back to Jerusalem with instructions to rebuild Jehovah’s temple there.”\* Every promise like this made by God, every prophecy contained in the Bible, has unerringly come true.

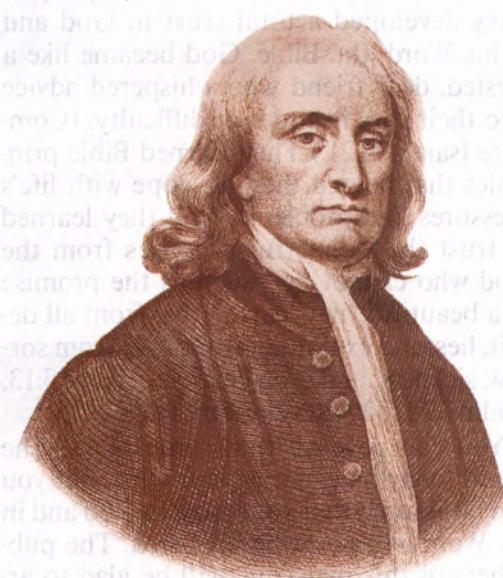
Another example of fulfilled prophecy is the very fact that trust has diminished in our

century. The Bible foretold this as a characteristic of the time we live in, for it calls the era that began with World War I in 1914 “the last days” and says they would bring “critical times hard to deal with.” It made known that in our day people would be “lovers of themselves, . . . self-assuming, haughty, . . . unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, . . . betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride.” And it also predicted: “Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse.” (2 Timothy 3:1–4, 13) That is just what we have seen in our time.

*You can trust the Bible because it is totally authentic.* No one has ever successfully challenged the Bible’s authenticity. Renowned scientist Sir Isaac Newton said: “I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatsoever.” No forgery like the Hitler “diaries” here! And how does the Bible compare with other ancient writings? *The Bible From the Beginning* says: “In the number of ancient MSS. [manuscripts] attesting a writing, and in the number of years that had elapsed between the original and the attesting MSS., the Bible enjoys a decided advantage over classical writings [those of Homer, Plato, and others]. . . . Altogether classical MSS. are but a handful compared with Biblical. No ancient book is so well attested as the Bible.” Everything about the Bible points to its being completely genuine.

*You can trust the Bible because it is totally accurate in all its statements.* The Bible says that God “is stretching out the north over the empty place, hanging the earth upon nothing.” (Job 26:7) Rather than repeat the fanciful theories of the day, such as the earth being supported by elephants, the Bible stated what has since been established as scientific truth—that the earth is “hanging” in space. In addition to that, over two thousand years before the time of Columbus, the Bible

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**Sir Isaac Newton found the Bible to be trustworthy**

clearly stated that the earth is round.—Isaiah 40:22.

*You can trust the Bible because of its honesty and candor.* The Bible writers falsified nothing. Even when what they said reflected badly on themselves, their compatriots, and their rulers, they honestly reported the facts. In his gospel the apostle Matthew, for example, openly admitted that Jesus Christ's apostles at times showed a lack of faith, fought among themselves for prominence, and even abandoned Jesus when he was arrested.—Matthew 17:18-20; 20:20-28; 26:56.

Another outstanding reason for trusting the Bible is that *the Bible's advice has always proved practical and beneficial whenever people trusted it enough to apply it.* (Proverbs 2:1-9) The Bible's advice contrasts dramatically with the often fickle advice of "experts" on coping with problems of life. Regarding columnists who offer such advice in many national newspapers, *The Sunday Times* of London asks: "Are thousands of people every year baring their souls to gifted amateurs who are really just making it up as they go along?" The Bible writers were not just making it up as they went along. They recorded trustworthy, God-inspired advice that has stood the test of time.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

"The Bible's advice protected me from a direction that could have ruined my life," says Ellen, now in her 30's and happily married. "My parents, who were divorced, showed little faith in the marriage arrangement, and they actually encouraged me just to live with someone rather than marry him. When I think of the stability that following Bible principles has given to my life, I am glad that I trusted the Bible even above the advice of my own parents."—See Ephesians 5:22-31; Hebrews 13:4.

"I was only 14 when I began to learn what the Bible said about things," says Florence. "Now when I think back to the 1960's and

the trouble that my peers caused themselves by following the values and morals of the day, I am so grateful for the protection that the Bible's advice afforded me as a young, inexperienced woman."—See 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

"In my case," says James, "I was caught up in the gambling, smoking, and drinking scene." He goes on: "I know the damage this has caused to so many people and to their families. At first I could not see the relevance of the Bible to my problems. But I now see clearly how it influenced my thinking for good and helped me to maintain a much healthier life-style."—See 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Mary Anne contemplated suicide because of the pressures of life and emotional difficulties stemming from a troubled background. "Suicide seemed the only way out at the time," she says. "But the Bible adjusted my thinking. It was only because of what I read in the Bible that I didn't commit suicide."—See Philippians 4:4-8.

What was it that helped all these people? They developed a total trust in God and in his Word, the Bible. God became like a trusted, dear friend who whispered advice into their ears in times of difficulty. (Compare Isaiah 30:21.) They learned Bible principles that helped them to cope with life's pressures and problems. And they learned to trust the wonderful promises from the God who cannot lie—such as the promise of a beautiful "new earth" free from all deceit, lies, and exploitation and free from sorrow, sickness, and even death!—2 Peter 3:13; Psalm 37:11, 29; Revelation 21:4, 5.

You can develop that same trust. The world today may betray your trust, but you can be assured that your trust in God and in his Word will never be breached. The publishers of this magazine will be glad to arrange for someone to help you get to know God and his Word, the Bible, better.

# The Castrati

## MUTILATION IN THE NAME OF RELIGION

*The castrati—they were male singers with the power of a man's body but with a boy's voice. The era of the castrati was indeed a sad one. Who were they? The answer has to do with a shocking practice—mutilation in the name of religion.*

EUNUCHS can be born as such, but many are made so by men. In body form and stature, they are males, yet they cannot procreate. At some stage in their physical development or even later in life, either by choice or by force, they have been castrated.

Why would males choose to mutilate themselves or other males in this fashion? Often, they have done so in the name of religion.

### Eunuchs in Ancient History

Thousands of years ago, castration was used as a form of punishment by the Assyrians. In Egypt it was the penalty for adultery. A robber found stealing from a temple in ancient Friesland, now part of the Netherlands, was emasculated before being put to death.

In Rome castration was prohibited during the reigns of Emperors Domitian and Nerva in the first century C.E. but was restored in the declining years of the empire. Laws enacted in the ninth century by England's king Alfred the Great called for punishing a servant in this way if he raped a female servant.

Eunuchs also featured prominently in religious rites. Eunuchs as well as virgins served the goddess Artemis in the city of Ephesus. Men castrated themselves in frenzied cere-

monies to honor the Syrian Astarte of Hierapolis, after which they wore women's clothing for the rest of their lives.

"He who castrates himself or another does not belong to my followers," Muhammad proclaimed. Despite this prohibition, however, eunuchs were prized as slaves in Muslim countries, as guardians of harems and sanctuaries. As a result, this slave trade was perpetuated. Young men drawn from Sudan and neighboring North African countries provided enormous profits for the slave traders.

Early in the 19th century, Johann L. Burckhardt visited Upper Egypt, where he saw castrated boys prepared to be sold as slaves. The operations were performed on boys between 8 and 12 years of age. The operators were two monks of the Coptic Church. "Their profession," commented Burckhardt, "was held in contempt."

This prompts the question, To what extent has Christendom been involved in this practice, and for what reasons?

### Eunuchs in Christendom

Origen—best known for his *Hexapla*, versions of the Hebrew Scriptures arranged in six columns—was born about 185 C.E. By the age of 18, he was already well-known



**A decision by Pope Sixtus V opened the way for castration**

for his lectures on Christianity. Yet, he was concerned that his popularity among women should not be misconstrued. So, taking literally the words of Jesus, "there are eunuchs that have made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens," he castrated himself. (Matthew 19:12)\* It was an immature, impulsive act—one he deeply regretted in later years.

Interestingly, the very first canon of the Council of Nicaea in the year 325 C.E. expressly excluded from the priesthood men who had emasculated themselves. Dr. J. W. C. Wand says of this resolution: "It is possible that some had shown a desire to follow the example of Origen in this respect and to make themselves eunuchs . . . , and it was essential that Christians should not

\* Regarding Jesus' words, the footnote to the Roman Catholic *Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures: The New Testament* explains: "Not physically by carnal mutilation, but spiritually by purpose or vow." Likewise, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, by John Trapp, states: "Not gelded themselves, as Origen and some others in the primitive times, by mistake of this text . . . but live single, that they may serve God with more freedom."

be encouraged to follow a custom that was much more characteristic of the devotees of some pagan religions."

By making such an important decision, the religious leaders of Christendom sought to banish for all time the abhorrent issue of castration. As we shall see, it turned out otherwise. Consider first the following well-known account.

In the year 1118, Peter Abelard, a philosopher and theological student, fell in love with Héloïse, a young girl he was privately tutoring. Abelard was not yet ordained and therefore not under a vow of celibacy, so they married secretly and had a son. But because her uncle, Fulbert, a canon in the Roman Catholic cathedral of Paris, felt Héloïse had been seduced, he had Abelard forcibly castrated. This barbarous act, conceived by such a high-ranking church official, led to two of its perpetrators being punished similarly in retribution.

Thus castration was still acceptable as a punishment in certain circumstances. However, this ungodly practice was soon to be promoted in the Roman Catholic Church on account of church singing.

### Church Choirs

Singing has played an important role in Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic liturgy, the mainstay of a church choir being boy sopranos. A boy's voice, though, breaks in his early teens. How could the church overcome the constant change in personnel and the training it entailed? True, a somewhat colorless higher range of voice known as falsetto was often employed, but this was not an acceptable replacement for the boy soprano.\*

Women sopranos were the obvious alternative, but from early times the pope had forbidden women to sing in church. An added problem was that church singers could be

\* Falsetto begins where the more natural tones leave off and is said to be produced by the mere edges of the vocal cords.

called upon to assist their priest, a duty reserved exclusively for men. So women could not be used to augment church choirs.

In 1588, Pope Sixtus V banned women from singing on stage in any public theater or opera house. This ban was reiterated by Pope Innocent XI about 100 years later. "The disapproval of female theatrical performers and the coupling of their name with that of prostitution and licentiousness was an ancient tradition, going back to the days of St Augustine and even earlier," observes researcher Angus Heriot. By taking this inflexible stand, however, the church opened up the way to another, more serious problem—castrati!

Who were the castrati, and how did Christendom become involved with them?

### Mutilation for the Sake of Music

Opera and public theaters needed sopranos, but so did the papal choir. What could be done? It had long been known that if a boy was castrated, his voice would not break. The vocal cords grow only a little, whereas the chest and diaphragm grow normally. As a result, the castrato has the power of a man's body but has a boy's voice—"the kind of voice angels were imagined as possessing," comments Maria Luisa Ambrosini in *The Secret Archives of the Vatican*. It is also possible to regulate to some extent the type of voice by varying the age at which the child is castrated.

The Greek Church had employed castrati as choristers from the 12th century onward, but what would the Roman Catholic Church do? Would it now also sanction and employ castrati?

Padre Soto, a singer in the papal choir in 1562, is listed in the Vatican records as a falsetto. But Soto was a castrato. Thus at least 27 years before 1589, when the bull of Pope Sixtus V reorganized the singers of St. Peter's Basilica to include four castrati, the Vatican had quietly set aside the authority of the Council of Nicaea.

From 1599 the existence of castrati in the Vatican was acknowledged. Once the highest authority in the church had openly sanctioned the practice, castrati became acceptable. Gluck, Handel, Meyerbeer, and Rossini are among those who composed both sacred and secular music specifically for castrati.

### Popularity, Parents, and Public Opinion

Castrati rapidly gained popularity. Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605), for example, was greatly impressed with the flexibility and sweetness of their voices. Even though anyone known to have connection with the act of castration was supposed to have been excommunicated, a steady influx of young boys became available as the musical needs of the church prevailed.

Shops were said to advertise, "*Qui si castrano ragazzi* (Boys are castrated here)." One barbershop in Rome proudly proclaimed: "Singers castrated here for the papal chapel choirs." It is claimed that during the 18th century, some 4,000 Italian boys may have been castrated for this purpose. How many died in the process is not known.

Why did parents permit their sons to be mutilated in this way? Generally, castrati were born of poor parents. If a son showed any aptitude for music, then he could be sold,

### The Highest Standard

No eunuch was allowed to become part of the congregation of Israel, as the Law of Jehovah clearly stated. (Deuteronomy 23:1) Under this Law castration was not allowed. "Jewish law," notes the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, "abhorred such operations." As a result, no Israelites or alien residents were made eunuchs for service in the palace of Israelite kings, as they were in other royal courts, such as that of the Persian king Ahasuerus.—Esther 2: 14, 15; 4:4, 5.

sometimes outright, to a musical institution. Others were drawn from the choirs of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and similar church academies. The parents naturally hoped their castrato would become famous and provide well for them in their old age.

So often, however, tragedy ensued when it became apparent that the boy had no voice to train. Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz, writing *A Picture of Italy* in the late 18th century, explained that such outcasts, along with any surplus of castrati, were "allowed to take [holy] orders" and were permitted to say Mass. This followed the extraordinary precedent set in St. Peter's itself when, in violation of church canon, two castrati were admitted as Roman Catholic priests in 1599 and others subsequently.

Pope Benedict XIV himself referred back to the Council of Nicaea's decision and acknowledged that castration was unlawful. But in 1748 he firmly rejected a suggestion from his own bishops that castrati be banned, for he feared that churches would become empty if he did. Such was the appeal and importance of church music. So castrati choristers continued to sing in Italian church choirs, in St. Peter's, and in the pope's own Sistine Chapel.

In 1898 with the buildup of public opinion against castration, Pope Leo XIII discreetly pensioned off the Vatican's castrati, and his successor, Pope Pius X, formally banned castrati from the papal chapel in 1903. But the bull of Pope Sixtus V that introduced them has never been formally repealed.

The last professional castrato, Alessandro Moreschi, died in 1922. Recordings of his singing were made in 1902 and 1903 and can still be heard. On the labels of these recordings, he is described as "*Soprano della Cappella Sistina* (Soprano of the Sistine Chapel)." "The voice," writes music critic Desmond Shawe-Taylor, "unquestionably a soprano, resembles that of neither boy nor woman."

Thus ended the wanton mutilation of boys

for the sake of art. An "abominable practice," says *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, yet one condoned by the Roman Catholic Church for centuries.

### Castration—In the 1990's?

So the castrati are no more. But does that mean castration in the name of religion has ended? Sadly, no! *The Independent Magazine* reports that India has as many as one million eunuchs, living in religious communities. Who are they? The *hijras*.

Most *hijras* are Muslims by birth—although there are many Hindus among them—and all worship Bharuchra Mata, a Hindu goddess from Gujarat. Even though the majority choose to be castrated, it is claimed by some that each year as many as one thousand Indian males are forcibly emasculated to coerce them to join the *hijras*, after which they are auctioned to the highest bidding guru.

The *hijras* are controlled by a hierarchy of gurus, different *hijra* clans dividing cities into territories. The *hijras* live by temple begging and prostitution. They are generally despised, but they are also feared because they are thought to possess a sinister magic. For this reason people will pay them to bestow blessings on babies and newlyweds.

It is said that some *hijras* do run away. But "the *hijra* mafia which reportedly controls the castrations," reports *India Today*, "operates under a veil of secrecy and terror."

### The End!

Will the world ever be free of such evils? Yes, because the sins of the world empire of false religion—identified in the Bible as a harlot, "Babylon the Great"—"have massed together clear up to heaven." How faith-strengthening it is to learn that all such God-dishonoring practices will soon come to a dramatic end! Why not read this for yourself in the concluding book of the Bible, Revelation, chapter 18? Check particularly verses 2 and 5.

**L**ONG before the russet tones change our Northumberland woodlands into the mellow setting of autumn, the robin makes his presence felt. His bright red breast and the silvery cadences of his song add color and joy to our garden. What a delightful fellow he is!

The robin is easily recognizable by his olive-brown shoulders and head; his orange-red breast, throat, and forehead; and his whitish belly. This rotund bird, ever alert, stands jauntily erect, measuring five and a half inches from tip to tail. In 1961 the robin was chosen, not surprisingly, to be Britain's national bird.

The British robin is smaller than his American counterpart, which early colonists from England gave the name robin, a name familiar to them. The British robin, however, has a character all his own.

When autumn approaches, the robin comes into his own in a British garden. He will stand close to a per-



## *The Friendly* ROBIN

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN BRITAIN

son digging in the soil and watch for a worm to come to the surface. At times, when the gardener rests, the robin will perch on the spade to survey the scene. This cheeky bird has even been known to follow the track of a mole to explore its newly excavated mounds. The robin's diet is varied—insects, seeds, and berries, as well as worms.

What a delight it is to find a robins' nest! Any open shed door or window is an invitation to the mating pair. Nests can be built quickly in old flowerpots or discarded kettles, on coils of wire, or even in the pockets of a gardening coat! Robins' ingenuity in finding unusual nesting sites knows no bounds.

The robin is one of the easiest birds to train to feed from your hand. As winter approaches and his natural food supply dwindles, place some food on your open palm—pieces of cheese or mealworms—and some on a stationary object close by. After two or three feedings during which the robin consumes this latter food supply, he will gain confidence and take samples from your outstretched hand. Although he may never alight on your fingers, the robin will from then on always view you as his friend. He will not have forgotten you when he returns next season—just as you will not have forgotten your friend, the robin!

# *THE UNIQUE* *Matterhorn*

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT  
IN SWITZERLAND

**“T**HREE is only ONE Matterhorn in all the earth; only ONE mountain with such balanced proportions. A wonderful sight!” So said Guido Rey, Italian Alpinist.

Indeed, the Matterhorn is an extraordinary peak, one of the best-known mountains in the world. The photograph on these pages is probably not the first picture you have seen of this striking mountain.

The pyramidlike Matterhorn is situated on the border of Italy and Switzerland, six miles southwest of the village of Zermatt, Switzerland, the town after which the peak was named. It reaches 14,692 feet into the sky and has two peaks about 330 feet apart.

Though it is part of the Central Alps, the Matterhorn stands alone, without immediate neighbors. This accounts for the splendid view of the mountain from all directions and makes it very photogenic.

Some have fittingly described the Matterhorn as being shaped like an obelisk. It exposes its four sides to the four cardinal points, each side distinctly separated by a crest.





The Matterhorn, in spite of its height, is not always covered with snow. In late spring its steep rocky walls in the upper part yield their mantle of snow and ice to the warmth of the sun. Lower down, glaciers to the east and northwest nestle against the mountain like a white girdle around its waist all year round.

Many an admirer has wondered how this unequaled mountain originated. No rubble piles around its foot can be seen as remains of the material from which it was sculptured. Any such rubble must have been washed away during the untold thousands of years of its existence. What powerful forces of nature must have contributed to this beautiful sight!

### Early Settlements

The alpine valley that leads up to the foot of the Matterhorn was already inhabited at the time of the Roman Empire. History reports that in the year 100 B.C.E., the Roman general Marius crossed the Theodul Pass, east of the Matterhorn, at a height of 10,899 feet. This mountain trail was also used during the Middle Ages for transporting goods from south to north.

In those times the inhabitants looked up to the Matterhorn with great respect, even with superstitious fear. Never would they try to climb the mountain, which they thought to be inhabited by the Devil himself! Who else would throw down ice and snow avalanches and rocks as big as houses?

## Growing Interest in Natural Science

What those humble people shied away from later became very fashionable in England's high society. Scientific interest began to grow, causing explorers to climb mountains for studies in such fields of knowledge as geology, topography, and botany.

In fact, in 1857 the Alpine Club was founded in London, and many a well-to-do Englishman traveled to France, Italy, or Switzerland to participate in the conquest of the Alps. The adventurers climbed peak after peak, including Mont Blanc. Though this mountain is the highest in Europe at 15,771 feet, it presents less difficulty to mountaineers than the Matterhorn.

Not all these efforts were purely in the name of natural science. Ambition crept in. Fame for being the first, the most courageous, the hardest, was a big factor. At that time in England, the word "sport" meant nothing but mountaineering.

The summer of 1865 was one of the busiest in mountain climbing, especially with respect to the Matterhorn. This fascinating pyramid was one of the last peaks to remain unconquered. It was considered inaccessible, and local guides refused even to try. Their attitude was, 'Any other peak—but not the Horn.'

However, the conquest of the Matterhorn was inevitable. In the early 1860's, a number of alpine peaks were conquered. The climbers learned from experience and developed new techniques. At age 20, Edward Whymper from England was sent to Switzerland by a London editor to draw pictures of alpine sights for illustrating a book on the subject. Whymper was fascinated by the mountains, and mountain climbing became his passion. He conquered many a peak both in France and Switzerland and made several attempts to climb the Matterhorn. But the Horn resisted.

## Matterhorn Conquered!

Finally, in July 1865 three different climbing parties happened to meet in Zermatt—all three set on climbing the Matterhorn. Pressed for time because of an Italian party that might get ahead of them, the three groups decided to combine into one *cordée*, or line of roped mountaineers. The group was made up of seven men—Edward Whymper and Lord Francis Douglas, Charles Hudson and his young friend Hadow—all Englishmen—plus two Swiss and one French guide whom they succeeded in engaging.

Leaving Zermatt the morning of July 13, they unhurriedly approached the mountain from the east and found that the lower parts were relatively easy to climb. They pitched their tent at a height of about 11,000 feet and leisurely enjoyed the rest of that sunny day.

The next morning, July 14, before daybreak, they started climbing. The rope was needed only occasionally. Some parts were more difficult than others, but often they found a way around the more serious obstacles. After two rest periods, they reached the most crucial part. The last 230 feet consisted of a snowfield, and at 1:45 p.m., they reached the summit. The Matterhorn was conquered!

The summit did not show any trace of human visitors, so apparently they were the first. What a feeling! For about an hour, the victorious party enjoyed the breathtaking view in every direction, then they got ready to descend. The Italian mountaineers attempting the ascent on that same day remained far behind and turned back when they realized that they had lost the race.

### A Very High Price

The victory of the climbers, however, was going to cost them a very high price. Reaching a difficult passage on the descent, they roped together, the most experienced guide

taking the lead. Despite their caution, the youngest participant slipped and fell onto the man below, dragging with him the ones above. Alarmed by a scream, the last three men were able to hold onto some rocks. But the rope tore, and in a split second, the first four men disappeared down the precipice.

Benumbed, Edward Whymper and the two Swiss guides remained in a very critical position. They had to bivouac for the night and make their return to Zermatt the next day. Thus the glory of the day turned quickly into a disaster that marked the survivors for the rest of their lives.

Three of the four corpses were later retrieved from a glacier 4,000 feet down from the site of the accident. The fourth, Lord Douglas, was never found.

These were not the last victims on the slopes of the Matterhorn. In spite of the fact that many ropes have been solidly fixed into the rock on the various routes up or across the rocky walls and narrow clefts and in spite of increased experience and the greatly improved equipment of the mountaineers, there have been about 600 deaths on this mountain alone.

### Dangers

One thing that contributes greatly to the danger is the weather. It can change very quickly. A day may start out being beautiful, but before a person is aware of it, thick fog or heavy dark clouds can envelop the pyramid and a frightening storm can break out. This may be accompanied by fearsome lightnings and thunderbolts, along with a squall, and end up in heavy snowfall. And all of this on a beautiful summer day!

If climbers are overtaken by such a turn of events, they may have to pass the night in the open, perhaps on a small platform that barely allows them to stand. Temperatures can be well below the freezing point. Beneath is the

abyss. Then one might wish he had greeted the Matterhorn only from afar!

Another danger is falling stones. Sometimes thoughtless climbers themselves cause stones to fall. In most cases, however, the causes are natural. Changes of temperature, ice and snow, pouring rain, and hot sun, as well as strong winds chasing around the Horn, all act on the rocks, causing big pieces to break loose. They sometimes remain in place for years, like a big pile of plates, but snow avalanches may finally cause them to move and fall.

Many climbers have marveled that this development has gone on for thousands of years and yet the mountain has kept its slender obelisk form, showing no signs of change in its shape. Compared, though, to its calculated 88.3 billion cubic feet of rock, the falling stones are not significant enough to change its shape. Nevertheless, they do cause injury and loss of life.

Meanwhile, climbing the Matterhorn has become the thing to do for many. Some guides have been on its top hundreds of times. Also, many men and women repeat the feat, choosing a different route each time.

But there are also those giving it a try who come to recognize that either the circumstances are unfavorable or their own ability, physical condition, or training is insufficient. So they do not continue the climb, but they let reason triumph over the fame of having "made" the Matterhorn.

Nevertheless, whether you have seen this striking mountain in photographs or movies or have stood nearby in awe admiring its gorgeous hues at sunrise or sundown, you may have been reminded of the Great Sculptor. With deep respect for his handiwork, your heart may well have echoed the words at Psalm 104:24: "How many your works are, O Jehovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions."

# COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR

## DOES IT CONTROL YOUR LIFE?

"I wake up at 6 o'clock every morning," says Keith.\* "My alarm clock is automatically set for 6 o'clock. I know that it's set. I never change it. Yet, I have to keep checking it. Each night I look at it at least five times before I go to bed. And the knobs on the stove—I have to make sure that each one is turned off. I can see that they're off, but I have to go back and look once, twice, three times—just to make sure. Then I have to check the refrigerator door, again and again, to make sure it's closed. Then there's the screen door lock, and the two locks on the main door of the house . . ."

KETH suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), defined as a debilitating condition characterized by uncontrollable thoughts (obsessions) and actions (compulsions).<sup>#</sup> A person with OCD feels that these obsessions and com-

\* Some names in this article have been changed.

<sup>#</sup> Awake! does not endorse any particular treatment. Christians having this disorder would want to be careful that any treatment they pursue does not conflict with Bible principles.

pulsions are completely involuntary. It is as if they force their way in and take over.

Every human occasionally experiences unwanted thoughts and urges. But with OCD these become so persistent and repetitive that they disrupt normal life and cause severe discomfort, sometimes resulting in depression. "The constant mental battle prompted me to contemplate suicide," says one sufferer. Consider some symptoms of this baffling malady.

### Seeing Is Not Believing

When Bruce drives his car over a bump, a sickening dread overwhelms him. "What if I just ran over a pedestrian?" he asks himself. The feeling grows until he simply must return to the scene of the "crime" and check—not just once but *repeatedly!* Of course, Bruce does not find an injured pedestrian. Still, he is not sure! So when he gets home, he watches the news for reports of a hit-and-run accident. He even calls the police to "confess."

Like Bruce, many with OCD are plagued by doubts: 'Did I hurt someone? Did I turn off the stove when I left the house? Did I lock the door?' Most people may at times have similar thoughts, but the person with OCD will check and recheck and still not be satisfied. "My checking patients appear to say 'knowledge comes from the senses only,'" writes Dr. Judith Rapoport. "Hence the door knob must be turned again and again; the light switched on and off. These acts bring immediate information, yet it doesn't get through."

### Clean Isn't Clean Enough

A 14-year-old boy named Charles was obsessed with the fear of being contaminated by germs. His mother had to clean everything he might touch with rubbing alcohol. Furthermore, Charles feared that visitors would bring in contamination from the street.

Fran had fears while washing her clothes. "If clothes touched the side of the washing machine when I was taking them out," she says, "they had to be washed all over again."

Like Charles and Fran, many with OCD have obsessions that center on germs and contamination. This may result in excessive showering or hand-washing, sometimes to the point of producing blisters—yet the sufferer still does not feel clean.

### Tormented by the Mind

Elaine is plagued by involuntary disrespectful thoughts toward God. "These are things that I could never mean and would rather die than mean," she says. Yet, the thoughts persist. "Sometimes from fighting this every day, I am literally exhausted at night."

Steven makes "vows" to God that are motivated by guilt feelings over his faults. "This tendency grieves me because it seems to come against my will," he says. "Afterward, my conscience stabs me to carry out what I promised. Because of this, I was once compelled to destroy something of great sentimental value."

Both Elaine and Steven have obsessions that are largely carried out in the mind. Although their symptoms are not readily observable, those with obsessive thoughts are imprisoned in a cycle of guilt and fear.

These are just some of the many symptoms of OCD.\* What causes this disorder? How can it be relieved?

### Controlling the Uncontrollable

One doctor describes OCD behavior as the result of "a cerebral short circuit" in which sensory information does not register and "the program gets played again and again." What causes this loop? No one is sure. The neurotransmitter serotonin seems to be involved, but other aspects of the brain

are being considered as well. Some say that early life experiences may awaken OCD, perhaps in combination with a genetic predisposition.

Whatever the cause, however, one fact is clear: Simply telling those with OCD to stop washing or to stop checking will likely fail. More than willpower is involved.

Medication has proved helpful to many. Another approach involves exposing the patient to the feared situation and then preventing the usual response. A person with washing rituals, for example, would be required to hold something that is dirty and then refrain from washing. Of course, such treatment does not cure one overnight. But with persistence, some feel that it can provide relief.

Experts have also explored the possibility that, at least in some cases, OCD might be rooted in early life experiences. It has been noted that many mistreated children grow up feeling inherently worthless or dirty, and

### **Excessive washing and checking —two symptoms of OCD**



\* A few of the numerous other symptoms involve counting or hoarding or an obsession with symmetry.

some of these have subsequently developed compulsive washing rituals.

### Relief From Obsessions and Compulsions

If you suffer from OCD, do not feel that you are different or perhaps going insane. "Except for their particular fears," writes Dr. Lee Baer, "people with OCD remain in touch with reality in all other areas of their lives." You can be helped! Remember, OCD

### To Provide Support

AS A friend or a family member, you can do much to support a person battling with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

- *First, check your own attitude.* If you believe that the sufferer is weak, lazy, or stubborn, he or she will invariably perceive this and will not be motivated to improve.

- *Talk with the sufferer.* Learn what he or she is contending with. Having a confidant who is open and honest is often the sufferer's first step toward controlling OCD symptoms.—Proverbs 17:17.

- *Do not make comparisons.* OCD produces overpowering urges that are not like those felt by nonsufferers. It is therefore usually ineffective to relate how you cope with your impulses.—Compare Proverbs 18:13.

- *Help the sufferer set and meet realistic goals.* Choose a symptom, and outline a series of goals to overcome it. Start with the goal that is least difficult to reach. For example, one goal might be to shower for no longer than a specified amount of time.

- *Give commendation for improvement.* Praise reinforces right behavior. Every step of progress—no matter how small—is significant.—Proverbs 12:25.

Living with an OCD sufferer can be emotionally draining on family members. Therefore, friends should be understanding and supportive in whatever practical ways they can.—Proverbs 18:24b.

is a product of imperfection. *It is not a sign of moral weakness or spiritual failure!* Nor does it indicate God's disfavor. "Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust."—Psalm 103:8, 14.

But what if obsessive thoughts seem irreverent or blasphemous? With OCD, repulsive thoughts fuel guilt, and guilt may fuel even more repulsive thoughts. "It makes me very irritable," says Elaine. "It makes me uptight—thinking all the time that Jehovah may be angry with me." Some may even feel that their thoughts are tantamount to the unforgivable sin!

However, Jesus' remarks concerning the unforgivable sin, sin against God's holy spirit, were clearly not referring to rash, obsessional thoughts. (Matthew 12:31, 32) Jesus directed his comments to the Pharisees. He knew that their attacks were fully intentional. Their deliberate actions came from hearts filled with hatred.

Indeed, concern about one's having offended God may well be evidence that one has *not sinned unforgivably*. (Isaiah 66:2) Furthermore, it is reassuring to know that the *Creator understands this disorder*. He is merciful and "ready to forgive." (Psalm 86:5; 2 Peter 3:9) Even when our own hearts condemn us, "God is greater than our hearts and knows all things." (1 John 3:20) He knows the extent to which thoughts and urges result from a disorder over which one has limited control. The OCD sufferer who realizes this can thus refrain from badgering himself with undue guilt.

How thankful we can be that Jehovah promises a new world in which there will be relief from all physical, mental, and emotional afflictions! (Revelation 21:1-4) Meanwhile, those who must endure this disorder can take practical steps to alleviate their suffering.



# **"AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY"**



**L**OOK at those lovely red apples. Do they not look tempting? They certainly do—and no doubt for good reason. Apples were designed to contribute to your well-being and good health. Among the many kinds of fruit beneficial for food, the apple is one of the foremost. Thus, they tempt you into being good to yourself.

The apple tree belongs to the rose family (Rosaceae), as do the pear, the quince, the whitethorn, and the service tree. The sap of all these trees is rich in sugar. Their very fragrant fruits come in various shades of green, yellow, and red, with flavors ranging from tart to sweet.

Worldwide about two billion bushels of apples are produced each year—between 17 and 18 million tons. In the United States, about half are eaten fresh. The rest go into such items as apple butter, apple juice, applesauce, apple jelly, apple brandy, apple cider, apple pies and other pastries, apple vinegar, and apple wine. In Europe a larger fraction of the crop goes into cider, wine, and brandy. Of the total world production, about one fourth goes into cider.



**The apple tree in full bloom delights the eyes**

can colonists brought apple seeds and apple trees with them from England.

By much experimenting, generations of cultivators have improved the quality of apples through breeding. This, however, is not a speedy process. Producing a marketable new brand of apple may take as long as 20 years. But today, thanks to the perseverance of cultivators, we have a great variety of juicy and colorful apples from which to choose.

### **Harvesting**

The apple season starts in July or August in the Northern Hemisphere. But the first varieties to ripen, such as the James Grieve or the Transparent, cannot be stored for long. They should be eaten soon, either raw or stewed. However, they sharpen our appetite for what is to follow: Summerred, Gravenstein, Cox's Orange, Jonathan, Boskop, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, McIntosh, Granny Smith—to name just a few of the thousands of varieties.

Apples should be harvested in dry weather. They should be picked carefully so that the new shoots and their leaves are not damaged. When apples are really ripe, turning the fruit slightly will easily break it loose from the branch. It is important to watch that the stalk is not broken off the apple, as this would cause a lesion, impairing the life of the fruit.

But long before the fruit becomes pleasant to our palate, the apple tree in full bloom is a delight to our eyes. It is decked with rosy-edged white blossoms in such profusion that if all of them developed into apples, the tree would be incapable of supporting the weight. An early summer storm will usually see to it that some of the blossoms are carried away.

### **Apple Cultivation**

The apple tree grows best in Temperate Zones. And it has been cultivated since time immemorial. Apple trees and apples are mentioned six times in the Bible.\* The Romans enjoyed them, and in their numerous military conquests, they spread various kinds of apples throughout England and other parts of Europe. The early Ameri-

\* Apple tree: Song of Solomon 2:3; 8:5; Joel 1:12. Apples: Proverbs 25:11; Song of Solomon 2:5; 7:8.

Late varieties should be left on the tree as long as possible—weather permitting. If because of an early frost the apples freeze on the tree, picking should be postponed until they have thawed. Apples can stand temperatures a few degrees below the freezing point, depending on their level of ripeness and their sugar content, but once frozen and thawed, they cannot be stored. They should soon be processed into juice, stewed fruit, or vinegar; they cannot be dried.

#### **Storage**

An interesting feature of apples is that they breathe. They absorb oxygen from the air and exhale carbon dioxide as well as water. Therefore, the warmer the environment, the sooner they dehydrate and shrivel. Through breathing they also absorb odors from their environment. Therefore, it is best to store them by themselves at a temperature of about 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Storing apples in a cellar together with potatoes will cause the apples to lose some of their fresh flavor. Moreover, the different varieties should be kept separate. And it is best if apples are individually wrapped in paper. This slows down dehydration and reduces the danger of contamination by rotting neighbors.

#### **Health Value**

It has been said that “an apple a day keeps the doctor away.” While that is not always the case, the apple does have this favorable reputation. Why? Because of the things it contains that can affect one’s health for the good.

Each single apple is a small storehouse of important nutrients. When ripe, it contains vitamins B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>6</sub>, C, and E. It also offers a variety of sugars, such as dextrose, fructose, and sucrose. The combination of acids in it is responsible for the flavor. In addition, it contains a number of mineral substances, such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, and oth-

ers, as well as pectin and fiber. About 85 percent of the apple is water.

Another substance found in apples is ethylene, which functions especially as a natural growth regulator that promotes the ripening of the fruit. This gaseous substance can be put to good use if you have green tomatoes or hard avocados. Put them in a paper bag with a few ripe apples, and they will ripen more quickly.

Since apples have health value, it is important to know when and how to eat them. First of all, they should be ripe. And it is better not to eat cold apples; let them sit at room temperature for a while. It is also important to chew them well.

Interestingly, apples have properties that are said to be beneficial for cleansing the digestive system. These same properties aid in curing both constipation and diarrhea.

#### **A Word of Caution**

Apples, as well as other fruits, are susceptible to mold. Because of this, a measure of caution is appropriate. Resulting toxins can cause discomfort and nausea. Therefore, watch out for mold, and cut out not just the moldy portion but a section around the spoiled area as well, for the toxin tends to spread out.

Nevertheless, apples contribute to your good health. So if you want to “keep the doctor away,” then try eating an apple each day!

#### **IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

**Killer Diseases—The War Between Man and Microbe**

**Fascinating Ethiopia**

**The Child of a Frog**

# What to Do When You Offend Others

**S**OMETHING is wrong. You just know it. Your Christian brother is giving you the cold shoulder. He has not said what is bothering him, but he barely says hello—and then only if you first greet him! Should you approach him to find out what is wrong?

'That's *his* problem,' you may think. 'If he has something against me, he should come and talk to me about it.' Indeed, the Bible encourages a person who is offended to take the initiative to make peace with his brother. (Compare Matthew 18:15-17.) But what about the offender? What responsibility, if any, rests on his shoulders?

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and you there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away; first make your peace with your brother, and then, when you have come back, offer up your gift." (Matthew 5:23, 24) Notice that Jesus' words here are aimed at the *offender*. What responsibility does he have to settle the matter? To answer that, let us consider what Jesus' words meant to his first-century Jewish listeners.

## "Bringing Your Gift to the Altar"

Jesus here paints a vivid picture: A Jewish worshiper has come to Jerusalem for one of the annual festivals. He has a gift—likely an animal—to sacrifice to Jehovah.\* Offering a sacrifice was far from a meaningless ritual. Explains the book *Judaism—Practice and Belief*: "Selecting fat, unblemished victims, seeing them inspected by experts, walking with them to within a few yards of the flaming altar, handing them over, laying hands on the head, confessing impurity or guilt, or otherwise dedicating the animal, slitting its throat, or even just holding it—these guaranteed the meaningfulness and awesomeness of the moment. . . . No one who believed that God had commanded the entire service . . . could go through it without being caught up in it."

Jesus' words at Matthew 5:23, 24 thus transport his listeners to a moment filled with meaning and awe to the Jewish worshiper. One Bible scholar describes the scene this way: "The worshipper has entered the Temple; he has passed



\* The usual time for bringing sacrificial offerings was during the three seasonal festivals—Passover, Pentecost, and Booths.—Deuteronomy 16:16, 17.

through its series of courts, the Court of the Gentiles, the Court of the Women, the Court of the Men. Beyond that there lay the Court of the Priests into which the layman could not go. The worshipper is standing at the rail, ready to hand over his victim to the priest; his hands are on [the animal's head] to confess."

At that crucial moment, the worshiper remembers that his brother has something against him. It may be that his own conscience tells him this, or it may be that he has sensed from his brother's attitude toward him that there is some feeling of offense. What is he to do?

#### **"Leave Your Gift . . . , and Go Away"**

"Leave your gift there in front of the altar," Jesus explains, "and go away." Why? What could be more important at that moment than offering up a sacrifice to Jehovah? "First make your peace with your brother," Jesus further explains, "and then, when you have come back, offer up your gift." So the worshiper leaves his offering *alive* at the altar of burnt offering and goes off to search for his offended brother.

Since it is a festival, the offended brother is no doubt among the pilgrims who have flocked to Jerusalem. With narrow streets and houses crowded closely together, Jerusalem has a sizable population. But this is a festival, and the city is packed with visitors.\*

Even if people from the same town traveled and camped together, getting through the crowded city to find someone would take some effort. For example, during the Festival of Booths, visitors set up booths all over the city and in the roads and gardens around Jerusalem. (*Leviticus 23:34, 42, 43*) Nevertheless, the Jewish worshiper is to search

\* Estimates vary as to the number of pilgrims that flocked to ancient Jerusalem for the festivals. First-century Jewish historian Josephus estimated that nearly three million Jews were present for the Passover.—*The Jewish War*, II, 280 (xiv, 3); VI, 425 (ix, 3).

for his offended brother until he finds him. Then what?

"Make your peace with your brother," says Jesus. The Greek expression rendered "make your peace" comes from a verb (*di-al-las'so*) that means "to effect an alteration, to exchange," and hence, "to reconcile." Having gone to considerable effort to find his offended brother, the Jewish worshiper seeks to make peace with him. *Then*, says Jesus, he may return to the temple and offer up his gift, for now God will accept it.

Jesus' words at Matthew 5:23, 24 thus teach a crucial lesson: Reconciliation, or peace, comes *before* sacrifice. The way we treat fellow worshipers has a direct bearing on our relationship with God.—1 John 4:20.

#### **What to Do When You Offend Others**

What, then, if you find yourself in the situation described at the beginning of this article—you sense that you have offended a fellow worshiper? What should you do?

Applying Jesus' counsel, take the initiative to approach your brother. With what objective? To convince him that he has no reason to feel offended? Absolutely not! The problem may be more than a simple misunderstanding. "Make your peace," said Jesus. Remove, if possible, ill will from his heart. (*Romans 14:19*) To that end, you may need to acknowledge, not deny, his hurt feelings. You may also need to ask, "What can I do to make amends?" Often, a sincere apology is all that is needed. In some cases, however, the offended person may need some time to resolve his feelings.

What, though, if despite repeated efforts you are not able to effect a reconciliation? *Romans 12:18* says: "If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men." You can thus be confident that once you have expended yourself to make peace, Jehovah will be pleased to accept your worship.

## WATCHING THE WORLD

### The Secret of Happiness?

Although Britons are healthier and wealthier than they were 25 years ago, they are generally less happy, according to a survey reported in *The Daily Telegraph* of London. One American sociologist, agreeing with these findings of the Social Trends Report from the Central Statistical Office, maintains that real happiness comes from having a "meaning in life" including "the pursuit of worthwhile goals." After interviewing nearly 400 people, two New Zealand researchers came to a similar conclusion—that most attribute happiness to "a recognition of order and purpose in their existence." Married people and those with strong religious convictions are more likely to experience contentment. In view of the decline of marriage and religious faith in Britain, the newspaper concludes that "as a nation, we shall continue to grow more unhappy."

### DNA and the Dead Sea Scrolls

Deciphering the ancient Dead Sea Scrolls began shortly after their discovery in the Judean desert in 1947. So far, about 15 scrolls have been translated. Remaining are some 10,000 thumbnail-size fragments from hundreds of other scrolls. Piecing the fragments together has proved frustrating. The edges are too decayed to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, and since each fragment contains only a few characters, they cannot be linked by meaning. Now, according to the *International Herald Tribune*, science is coming to the rescue. How? The writing was done on animal skins,

so DNA-typing can identify the species, herd, and individual animal each fragment came from. This, scholars hope, will make it easier to classify and match the fragments.

### Widespread Family Decay

"Around the world, in rich and poor countries alike, the structure of family life is undergoing profound changes," states *The New York Times*, commenting on a recent report. "Upheaval in the family is no respecter of class or geography." The report, based on a study of dozens of countries by the Population Council, points to trends like rising divorce rates and



increasing numbers of unwed mothers. "The idea that the family is a stable and cohesive unit in which father serves as economic provider and mother serves as emotional care giver is a myth," says Judith Bruce, one of the authors of the study. The dissolution of marriages, either by separation, abandonment, or divorce, is rapidly increasing, and unwed mothers have become common almost everywhere. For example, as many as a third of all births in Northern Europe are by unwed mothers. Researchers point to "the liberation of women," involving their economic status and in-

creasing role in the work force, as a prime factor for many of the changes in the family. A notable exception to the general trend is Japan, where unwed mothers and single-parent households are still relatively rare. However, three quarters of divorced fathers there do not pay child support.

### Sins of the Fathers

Israel's Religious Affairs Ministry has acknowledged that it keeps a secret blacklist on several thousand Jewish people who are prohibited from marrying other Jews because of being the offspring of forbidden relationships. Some prospective couples claim that they learn of this only as their wedding plans near completion. The Orthodox rabbinate has the final word. When Shoshana Hadad and Masoud Cohen tried to register their four-year-old son at the Interior Ministry, they found their 1982 marriage invalidated "because of a sin committed by the wife's family some 2,500 years ago," reports the *Times Union* of Albany, New York. It adds: "The ruling is based on a historic rumor. Rabbis believe a distant ancestor of Hadad . . . illegally married a divorcee in about 580 B.C." Since then, no one in Hadad's family has been allowed to marry anyone named Cohen. Cohens are considered descendants of the original temple priests and must abide by special restrictions. "If some great grandfather did something during the days of the First Temple, do we have to suffer for it to this very day?" asked Shoshana. The Religious Affairs Ministry says the couple could also face crimi-

nal charges for supposedly misleading the rabbi who married them.

### Coming Up: First Asian Country Without Forests

The Philippines faces total deforestation, warns the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). "Population pressures and unsustainable logging practices" are swallowing up more and more of the tree-covered land in the Philippines. Before the second world war, 60 to 70 percent of the country was covered with forests. Today, only 15 percent is. "By the year 2000," reports *Update*, the UNDP newsletter, "the Philippines may become the first Asian country to lose all of its forested land and tree-cover."

### "Blessed Are Jehovah's Witnesses"

As in many other countries, a blood scandal has erupted in Italy. It is claimed that thousands of liters of blood were distributed to transfusion centers without adequate screening or without proper safety precautions being taken, thereby exposing thousands of people to the risk of contracting illnesses such as AIDS and hepatitis. Commenting on the shocking situation that put profits above personal health, Luigi Pintor, editor of the Italian newspaper *Il Manifesto*, began his article with these words: "Blessed are Jehovah's Witnesses, who . . . refuse blood transfusions for religious reasons. As they read the newspapers these days, they will be the only ones who will not have to worry about what is going on . . . in the blood industries and clinics that sell and administer blood, plasma, and related derivatives to their fellowmen."

### Beautician for Elephants

Elephants in the south Indian state of Kerala carry heavy loads, often on their long tusks. But many of the elephants are also used in temple processions and at religious festivals. Prior to these occasions, a professional beautician gives them, not a face-lift, but a tusk-trim. The sole person in Kerala doing this exacting work, P. K. Sasi-dharan, acquired his skills from his grandfather. How does he decide how much to trim? The



specifications—based on the elephant's height, size, and body shape—are a well-guarded family secret. If the animal cooperates, the treatment takes about three hours, but a cantankerous elephant poses a danger and could require longer. Aside from cosmetic reasons, the tusks of working elephants require trimming every two years to keep their length convenient for carrying loads.

### The Young Victims of War

At one time, the victims of wars were mostly soldiers. No longer. During the past ten years, wars have disabled and killed far more children than soldiers. About two million children have died in wars over the past decade, says *The State of the World's Children 1995*, a report by the United Nations Children's Fund. An additional 4 to 5 million children have been maimed,

more than 5 million forced into refugee camps, and over 12 million left homeless. States the report: "These are statistics of shame. And they cast a long shadow over future generations and their struggle for stability and social cohesion."

### Poor Penny

"Many people won't even stop to pick up a penny these days," said a spokesman for Britain's Royal Mint. But Britain is not alone. In the United States, so many pennies are being lost or discarded each day that the banks are running short. Recently, the Key Bank of New York offered 55 cents to anyone who brought in 50 pennies. As a result, five million coins were collected in two weeks. In Massachusetts one large garbage treatment center collects \$1,000 every day in small change—mostly pennies—by sifting through the ashes, reports *The Sunday Times* of London.

### Hope for Heart-Attack Victims

"It was thought before that progression toward heart failure was inevitable following extensive heart injury, but reversing the damage is doable with exercise," claims Dr. Peter Liu, director of cardiology research at the Toronto Hospital. Following a promising study on rats, the hospital's Cardiac Function Clinic had heart patients "walk for gradually increasing distances each day," reports *The Globe and Mail*. "Initial results show walking at least a kilometre daily can reverse the 'downward path' to heart failure in humans as well." However, the pace should be relatively vigorous, and the walking done under supervision, said Dr. Liu.

## FROM OUR READERS

**Witness Assemblies** Thank you for the experience entitled "A Day That Changed Her Life." (March 22, 1995) The experience of the young woman whose aunt invited her to a special assembly day of Jehovah's Witnesses reminded me that the same thing happened to me. I attended my first assembly in the summer of 1985, after being invited by my brother. My initial distrust was soon replaced by a feeling of warmth; I felt as if I was in the middle of one big family. I decided to continue studying the Bible, and today I am a regular pioneer, a full-time evangelizer.

E. F., Italy

**Debt** Thank you for your article "Does It Pay to Go Into Debt?" (June 8, 1995) I am only 13 years old, but I was not handling my money well. I think this article will help me a great deal.

C. A., United States

**Slavery** As an African-American woman, I appreciated very much the June 8, 1995, series of articles "The Chains and Tears of Slavery." The cover photo brought tears to my eyes. I was touched that you had the courage to address these shameful historical facts. The article was presented with much sensitivity and was most informative.

B. M., United States

The article came at just the right time since we were discussing the topic in history class. I used the article to complete some optional homework, and I got good marks. I also felt very sorry for the slaves.

M. C., Germany

**Life Story** "My Successful Search for the Meaning of Life" (May 22, 1995) was a very moving article. Harold Dies' story helped me decide whether to enter the full-time ministry. I also had opportunity to visit Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, and I was very im-

pressed. There's no question about my entering the full-time ministry now!

A. C., United States

**Forgive and Forget** Thank you for the excellent article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Forgive and Forget—How Possible?" (June 8, 1995) I used to wonder if the Bible was demanding something impossible from imperfect people. But now I understand what it means to forgive and forget. The article has contributed to my conviction that God's commandments are not burdensome.

C. I. C., Nigeria

I just had to write and let you know how much I appreciate the article. As a young child, I was sexually abused by two of my uncles. Later, I was abused and mistreated as a wife. Upon becoming a Christian, I tried to show love and be forgiving. However, I have never been able to say honestly that I forgave these three people who caused me deep pain for many years. I realize now that there are some things that must be left in Jehovah's hands, and I can get on with my life. Revelation 21:4 assures me that this deep hurt that has affected me will soon be gone.

A. B., United States

I have just finished reading the article, and I have never felt closer to Jehovah God than I do at this very moment. A while ago I was involved in a serious sin for which I sought the help of the congregation elders. Even though I received kind, loving counsel from them, I still felt inhibited in speaking to Jehovah in prayer. This article has given me the clearer understanding that I so desperately needed of how our heavenly Father forgives and forgets. It has enabled me to approach him freely in heartfelt prayer—a privilege that I had foolishly been avoiding. Thanks to Jehovah for giving me my "food at the proper time."

—Matthew 24:45.

D. J. S., United States

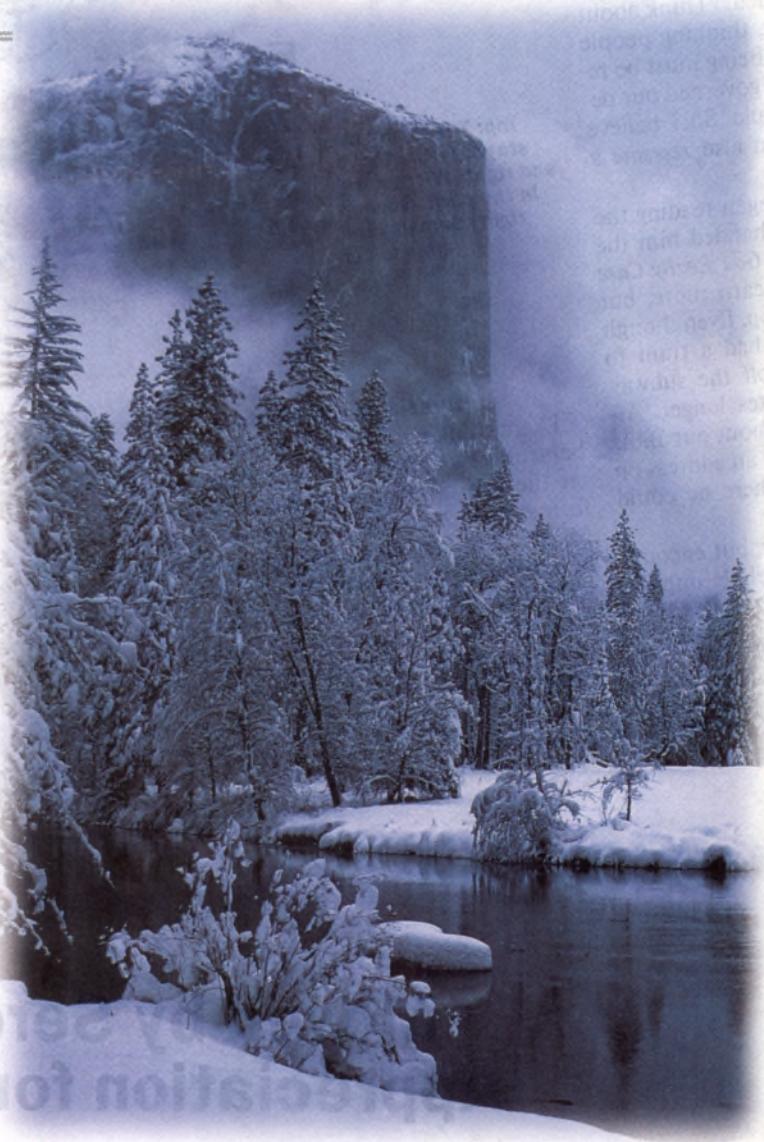
# A Winter Blanket

HAVE you ever gazed, mesmerized, at falling snow? If so, no doubt you will agree that this is one of the most beautiful and tranquil of sights—particularly if you are safe and warm indoors and have no pressing need to travel. As the white blanket thickens, it seems to spread a profound peace and quiet everywhere. Even the din of the city is dampened as the gentle flakes fall in their millions.

Isn't it amazing, though, how something as seemingly gentle as a snowfall can become destructive? Such bustling cities as New York—often billed as "the city that never sleeps"—can be brought to a humiliating halt if the snow piles up high enough.

Little wonder, then, that God asked the faithful man Job: "Have you entered into the storehouses of the snow, or do you see even the storehouses of the hail, which I have kept back for the time of distress, for the day of fight and war?" (Job 38:22, 23) In the hands of its Creator, Jehovah God, snow can be a formidable weapon indeed.

However, snow often plays a role in preserving life rather than in bringing destruction. For example, the Bible says that God "is giving snow like wool." (Psalm 147:16) How is snow like wool? The Bible uses both snow and wool to represent whiteness and purity. (Isaiah 1:18) But there is another important similarity. Both snow and wool act as insulators. *The World Book En-*



cyclopedia says: "Wool . . . insulates against both cold and heat." And of snow, *World Book* notes that it too "serves as a good insulator. Snow helps protect plants and hibernating animals from the cold winter air."

So the next time you watch the snow falling from the sky, you may want to think of God's awesome power. Or you may choose to think of the gentle protection he provides as he spreads a white blanket over his creation, much the way a loving parent might tuck a child safely into bed.

on, I replied: "I really added: "Think about gent, thinking people ter Being must be re-hat governed our de-people. So I believe can also recreate a n."

h began reading the , I handed him the does God Really Care o learn more, but stop. Even though er had a train to ot off the subway inutes longer. Af-s about our Bible im an address on where he could i. day, but encoun-indelible impres-ble and Tract Society

**Top:** The family we stayed with. **Above** and right: Witnessing in the park. **Bottom right:** Serosha and his letter



### Russia on Our Minds

I kept thinking about the incredible numbers of new ones who were baptized after the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses in the former Soviet Union was finally lifted in March 1991. Seven conventions were quickly organized for the summer of 1991, and 7,820 were immersed in water. Then, at the 1993 summer conventions—including the one we attended in Moscow—11,238 were immersed.

*Awake! February 22, 1995*



Письмо из России в Америку Сторожевая Газета № 4. Читай урок ходу с папой или же не ходи рассказывай бояться Господа. Люди читают. Победите! Коня также он приводит в один раз в английской языке 2 раза. Я очень хотел этого журнала в месяц. Но я его очень люблю. О единственном Это 28 марта 1994 года. Серёжа.

## Moved by Serosha's Appreciation for Awake!

A young person from the state of Washington, U.S.A., wrote: "In English class we had to write to either a magazine or a newspaper. So I started looking at articles in magazines that I could reply to."

"I decided to look at the articles in the *Awake!* magazine that came in the mail yesterday. I am very glad that I did. The article 'A Return Visit to Russia,' in the February 22, 1995, issue, was very encouraging. It was especially encouraging to read about seven-year-old Serosha's zeal

for God's Kingdom. His love and appreciation for the *Awake!* magazine made me think of *Awake!* articles I haven't read. I now hope to make an extra effort to read all the wonderful articles in both the *Awake!* and *The Watchtower*."