

Awake!

Does God Care?

If he does, why is there so much suffering on earth?

What purpose does life really have?



OCTOBER 8, 1974

THE REASON FOR THIS MAGAZINE

News sources that are able to keep you awake to the vital issues of our times must be unfettered by censorship and selfish interests. "Awake!" has no fetters. It recognizes facts, faces facts, is free to publish facts. It is not bound by political ties; it is unhampered by traditional creeds. This magazine keeps itself free, that it may speak freely to you. But it does not abuse its freedom. It maintains integrity to truth.

The viewpoint of "Awake!" is not narrow, but is international. "Awake!" has its own correspondents in scores of nations. Its articles are read in many lands, in many languages, by millions of persons.

In every issue "Awake!" presents vital topics on which you should be informed. It features penetrating articles on social conditions and offers sound counsel for meeting the problems of everyday life. Current news from every continent passes in quick review. Attention is focused on activities in the fields of government and commerce about which you should know. Straightforward discussions of religious issues alert you to matters of vital concern. Customs and people in many lands, the marvels of creation, practical sciences and points of human interest are all embraced in its coverage. "Awake!" provides wholesome, instructive reading for every member of the family.

"Awake!" pledges itself to righteous principles, to exposing hidden foes and subtle dangers, to championing freedom for all, to comforting mourners and strengthening those disheartened by the failures of a delinquent world, reflecting sure hope for the establishment of God's righteous new order in this generation.

Get acquainted with "Awake!" Keep awake by reading "Awake!"

PUBLISHED SEMIMONTHLY BY

WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

117 Adams Street

Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.

N. H. KNORR, President

GRANT SUITER, Secretary

Average printing each issue: 8,300,000

Now published in 31 languages

Five cents a copy

Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency
Offices America, U.S., 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 \$1.50 Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135 \$1.50 Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6A 1Z5 \$1.50 England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN 90p New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3 \$1.50 Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila D-406 P8 South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein 1406 R1.10 (Monthly editions cost half the above rates.) Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn. Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.

Semimonthly—Afrikaans, Cebuano, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Zulu.
Monthly—Chinese, Cinyanja, Hiligaynon, Indonesian, Malayalam, Melanesian-Pidgin, Polish, Sesotho, Tamil, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Yoruba.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, U.S.A.

Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A.

The Bible translation regularly used in "Awake!" is the "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures." When other translations are used, this is clearly marked.

CONTENTS

Does God Care About Mankind?	3	How God Has Actively Shown His Care	18
Human Suffering—Due to Whose Failure to Care?	4	How Much Do You Care?	23
When and Where Things Went Wrong	9	Faith in God's Care Affects Lives for Good	26
A Long Time, but No Longer than Necessary	14	Watching the World	29

Awake!

"It is already the hour for you to awake."

—Romans 13:11

Volume LV

October 8, 1974

Number 19



DOES the answer to that question matter to you? It should. Why? Because this fact is undeniable:

In your life there are things of serious concern that are beyond your power to control, solve or change. This truth can be brought home to any of us with alarming suddenness and tragic effect. It can leave us severely shaken—if we do not know whether God really cares.

When a fatal illness affects a friend, someone in your family, or you yourself—to whom can you turn? In times like that, even the most powerful rulers, the wealthiest men, cannot ransom, through medical help, their lives or the lives of those they love.

Tornados, earthquakes, landslides, flash floods—all of these can strike without warning. In minutes a family's every possession can disappear. Some call these disasters "acts of God." Are they? Does

Does God Care ABOUT MANKIND?

God not care about those whom such disasters ruin financially, or physically maim or kill?

Today millions of persons face starvation. A recent report says: "In Africa, the drought is such a vast calamity that our statistical machinery is unable to measure it meaningfully." Eight hundred million on earth now survive on about thirty cents a day, according to World Bank president Robert McNamara. Well-fed and well-clothed persons elsewhere may not feel particular anxiety now. But when hunger touches us, when our own children suffer, the question, "Does God care?" can quickly become very real.

What of the insecurity that is so much a part of life today—the crime, muggings, murders, rape and violence? If God cares, why has he not done something about this?

Yes, and why have wars filled the pages of history with blood for thousands

of years? Why do world affairs right now seem to be on a steady downward trend, with growing political instability, economic shakiness and inflation, and with marked failures to cope with national and local problems everywhere?

Finding the Answer

Have you found a sound explanation for these things, one that genuinely satisfies your mind and heart?

Some will say that they have. They say, "I know that God cares for me. I pray to him and he answers me." As proof of their being blessed by God, they may point to certain successes in life, a good financial standing or other benefits.

But what about the many millions on earth who daily face poverty and hunger? Do none of these pray to God? Are those for whom God cares all to be found in wealthier, industrialized countries?

Because of these apparent contradictions, many arrive at the conclusion that God does not care. Often what they really mean is that they doubt the existence of God. Seeing so many bad conditions on earth, they cannot understand how an all-powerful God could permit such a situ-

ation. Young people, seeing so much hypocrisy, corruption and injustice, and the evident futility of the world's systems, also feel doubts and ask, "Is there really a God?"

Some who claim to believe in God say that the present state of affairs is God's will for mankind, that the earth was meant to be a place where people would suffer, with the possibility of their later enjoying heavenly bliss. Such an idea is difficult to harmonize with the Bible statement that "God is love." (1 John 4:16) It would make it appear that God's promise of the 'meek inheriting the earth' had been forgotten and that the other Bible promises were just meaningless words of an ancient but unreliable book. (Compare Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5.) If this crime-ridden, mixed-up, insecure world represents God's will, then the prayer for 'God's kingdom to come so that His will might be done on earth' need no longer be offered, for the answer is already here. But, honestly, can you believe that is the case? —Matt. 6:10.

What, then, is the explanation? It is worth your while to know, for the right answer can bring peace of mind and heart now and a solid hope for the future.

HUMAN SUFFERING

**-Due to Whose
Failure
to Care?**

HUMAN suffering has been and still is a harsh reality of life. But is it evidence of a lack of caring on God's part?

A reasonable person, before placing blame on anyone, seeks to have full information, to see 'the whole picture.' Considering the evidence, you will see that

there is much that obviously contradicts the idea of God's not caring.

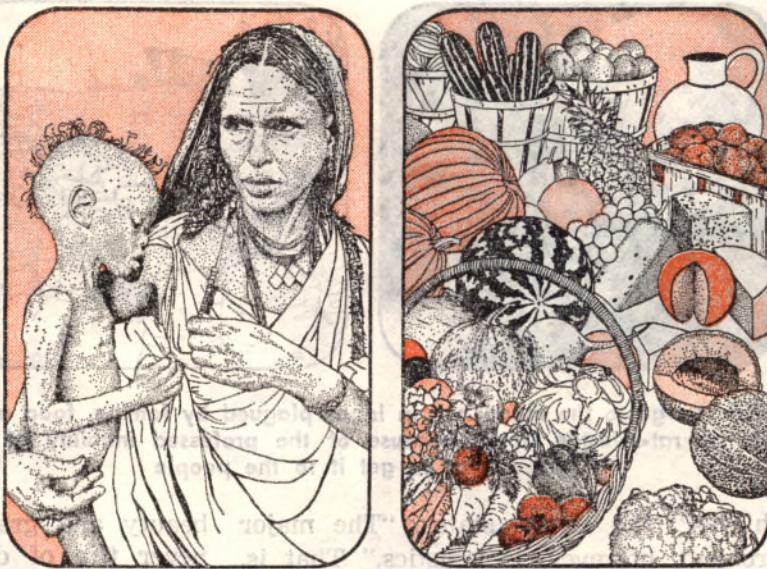
A Contrasting Picture

It is true that today, through newspapers and television, you can see human suffering because of famine—starving children with bloated bellies and toothpick-like arms and legs; desperate parents on whose faces are written frustration and hopelessness.

And yet, in dramatic contrast to this, you can see that this earth produces an incredible variety of foods—fruits, grains, nuts and vegetables—with an amazing diversity in tastes and qualities for preparing delicious, nourishing meals. If we blame God for the suffering because of famine, whom do we credit for the loving thoughtfulness and care manifest in earth's bounty of foods? Or, if we say that God is responsible for both, then how do we explain the apparent contradiction?

What about man's own responsibility in the matter? How much care and neighbor love has he shown for fellow humans? The fact is that even now there is enough food to feed all the human family, world wide. A publication of the United Nations World Health Organization points to the real problem, saying:

"The world is rich but not making good use of the wealth within its reach. Millions live in the shadow of chronic hunger and malnutrition, while others eat too much and are thus malnourished in a different sense."

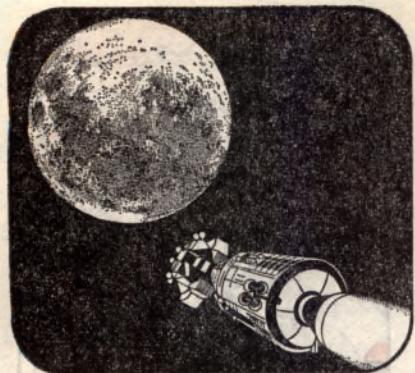


If we blame God for suffering due to famine, whom do we credit for the loving thoughtfulness manifest in earth's varieties of delicious foods?

After showing that some 100,000,000 children today suffer from serious malnutrition, the publication goes on to say:

"The tragic fact is that if all the food now available were distributed equitably in proportion to need among countries and socio-economic groups, not one single child would be suffering from malnutrition. There is enough food in the world today; it is just not distributed according to need."—*World Health*, February-March 1974, pages 3, 6.

Even when distribution of food is made to famine-stricken areas, what often happens? Reporting on shipments to drought-affected nations in Africa, *Time* magazine says that inefficiency and corruption slow the distribution and divert some of the grain to commercial channels for sale at enormous profits. "Much of the donated food remains heaped high on the docks where it is prey to rats, locusts and



Men can go to the moon, yet in lands plagued by famine, food often sits on rat-infested docks because of the professed inability of the government to get it to the people

thieves," the report states. "The major problem, however, is logistics." That is, governments have not been able to provide needed transportation to get the materials out to the hardest-hit areas on account of bad roads, lack of equipment, and so forth.

Strange, isn't it? The world now spends some \$200,000,000,000 a year on war equipment. Nations can efficiently deliver bombs to any point on earth and drop these by the tons, even send men to the moon. But food they find hard to handle.

So, too, today we can see huge, ugly slum areas in many places, people living in cramped, dark, foul-smelling buildings or occupying rude huts or shacks in barren regions. Often these sections become breeding grounds for disease and crime.

Yet at the same time we can see vast areas of this earth that are truly lovely, even breathtaking in their beauty—verdant woodlands, rich, rolling pastures and meadows, majestically rugged mountains, crystal-clear lakes and sparkling streams and waterfalls, sun-drenched beaches

beauty and grandeur that human eyes never tire of drinking in and that no human artist has ever matched?

In all fairness we must recognize the heavy responsibility that men themselves bear for so much of life's unpleasantness and the ugliness that faces us today. Sheer greed, commercial exploitation and ruthlessness lie at the root of many of man's problems, including poverty. Shoddy workmanship and employee dishonesty drive up costs for everyone. Even the most basic things of life are misused, abused and brought to the brink of ruin by human pollution. As Professor Donald R. Scoby observes in his book *Environmental Ethics*:

"Man, created to breathe clean air, drink and enjoy pure water, and enjoy the adventure of his natural surroundings, has changed his environment and finds he cannot adapt. He is preparing his own mass execution."

Amazing Contrasts in Our Own Bodies

We see the same contrast in case after case. On the one hand, we see cancer, heart disease and other ailments afflicting mankind. On the other, we are faced with

fringed with palm groves, cloud-decorated skies that are pastel pink and blue at sunrise, fiery-red, purple and gold at sunset.

Again, if we charge the first—the scenes of human misery and squalor—to God, then to whom do we credit the second? Who is the source of the

the human body's marvelous abilities and makeup.

We rightly marvel at the heart's capacity, in the course of one day, to pump the equivalent of 7,000 quarts of blood through a network of 60,000 miles of blood vessels and supply oxygen and nourishment to some 30,000,000,000,000 cells—each cell containing over a quarter of a million protein molecules, each molecule consisting of about 20,000 atoms.

We cannot help feeling amazement at the body's natural defenses against disease and infection—the way that any penetration of germs triggers an unseen and immediate counterattack by the body: first, an increase of blood-flow to the site of the invasion; the arrival of antibodies that fasten on to the invading bacteria, in effect identifying them as enemies and causing white blood cells called neutrophils to surround the bacteria and break them down by digestive enzymes; accompanying this, an immediate speedup in production by the bone marrow of these defending antibodies and neutrophils; the activity of the blood plasma's clotting agent (called fibrinogen) to form a network of strands around the infection and seal off the area; then the arrival of slower-moving lymphocytes and monocytes to feed on and clean up

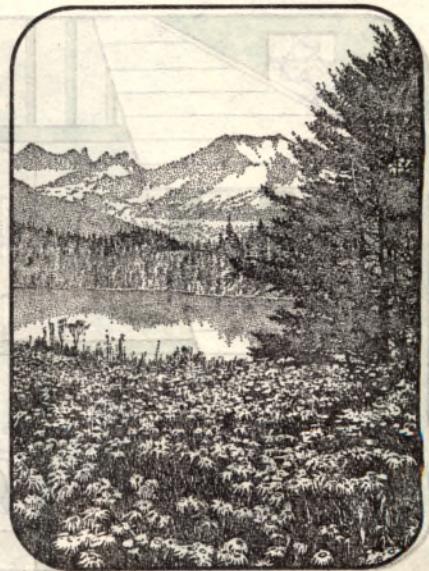
the debris resulting from the battle waged; and, finally, the growing of new cells and tissues to restore the damaged area.

So complex and numerous are the human body's defenses that the late Harvard University physiologist Walter Cannon was moved to say: "When you understand a great deal about the human body and its resources for health, you wonder why anyone is ever sick."

Yet people do get sick, and loved ones die. Why? Is it because God does not care? Then why all the provisions for maintaining health?

The Problem That Remains

Clearly, to attribute human suffering to a lack of God's care raises as many questions as it answers, or more. It makes life on earth a paradox, full of contradictions. To say that God does not exist only makes the problem worse. Why are we here in the first place if there is no Creator?



If human squalor is to be charged to God, who is to be credited with earth's grandeur and beauty?

What purpose does life have in such a case?

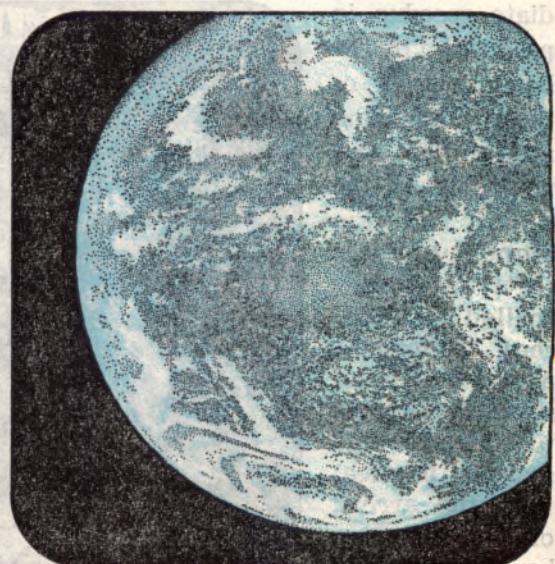
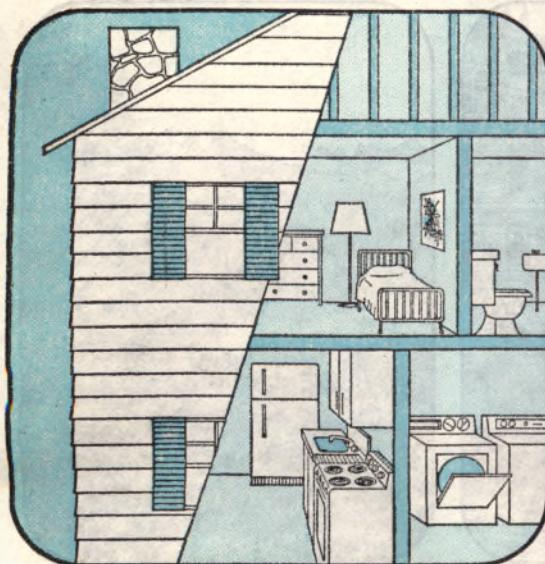
When we see a house with its doors, windows, rooms and other features that are obviously designed for human use, we recognize that the house had a builder. This entire planet has many more features that fit it for human habitation than any house that man has ever made, for houses need outside sources to provide them with such things as food, water and fuel. With good reason, the inspired apostle Paul wrote: "Of course, every house is constructed by someone, but he that constructed all things is God." (Heb. 3:4) If someone commits a crime in a house, or individuals in that house get sick, does that deny the existence of the builder?

The facts force us to recognize that man himself is responsible for so much of the suffering experienced on earth. Human selfishness, nationalistic and racial pride, prejudice and hatred, along with dishon-

esty, lust, impatience and anger are what cause the disagreeable things in life, bring oppression and poverty, wreck marriages and ruin family life, provoke violence and war. Man has seriously misused this planetary home, the earth.

You may recognize the truth of this. Yet you may still wonder: "Why is it, then, that God lets it keep on this way? Why does he not step in and put a stop to all the wrongdoing and oppression and violence? Why do the innocent often suffer along with the guilty? And what of the things that are clearly beyond mankind's power to change, including the suffering of sickness that sooner or later hits us all?"

All of this points up the necessity of tracing the problem back to its very beginning, its initial source. Without this we can never know the answer to our questions. Fortunately for us, there is a means for doing this. Consider what the evidence reveals.



The earth is far more equipped for sustaining life than a house. If a house has an intelligent designer and maker, how much more so this planet?

WHEN AND WHERE

THINGS WENT WRONG

THIS earth could be a

delightful place in which to live. Even with all the problems of today, most people get a measure of enjoyment out of life. That is why they will do almost anything to avoid losing it. Those who "give up" and prefer death because they find life too hard are still only a fraction of earth's nearly 4,000,000,000 population.

Yet genuine happiness eludes mankind as a whole. Even in the most favorable circumstances the bad keeps cropping up, cutting into people's joys, creating anxiety, uncertainty, frustration and, at times, bitter disappointment, cruel heartbreak and depression. These evils are persistent, seemingly defiant of elimination. They know no bounds, reaching into the lives of people everywhere. Today, bad conditions of enormous proportions pose a grave threat to all of us.

Something seems to be 'out of kilter,' out of order, with mankind itself. What is it? Obviously it had to begin somewhere, sometime. Where and when did it begin?

A Family Problem

If we read history books and go back, century by century, we find evidence of violence, crime, war, oppression, poverty, hunger and disease all along the way, until those history books finally run out in the distant past. Though they weave around from one nation to another, from one race

to another, these histories, nevertheless, show that we are all of just one family. Modern science recognizes this. As anthropologist M. F. Ashley Montagu states:

"All varieties of man belong to the same species and have the same remote ancestry. This is a conclusion to which all the relevant evidence of comparative anatomy, paleontology, serology, and genetics, points. On genetic grounds alone it is virtually impossible to conceive of the varieties of man as having originated separately."

Yes, the human family is one; we all have had the same parents somewhere in the past. As a publication by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states:

"All of us, if we went back far enough, hundreds of generations, would arrive at the same place—the base of the human family tree . . . Our common ancestor could as well be called Adam, which also means man in Hebrew, for the familiar Biblical story foreshadowed the evidence of science that present men derive from a common stock."

The One Historical Source

Going Back to the Beginning

Secular history books do not take us back to man's beginning. Their records peter out toward the third millennium before the Common Era. But there is a historical record that does reach all the way back. That is the Bible. Perhaps you have never examined it. If so, you may not

realize that it gives a connected, dated history unequaled in other ancient records or in other so-called sacred writings. Its record is so complete and comprehensive that a first-century historian such as Luke, a doctor, was able to trace the genealogy of Jesus of Nazareth back through four thousand years, step by step and name by name, all the way to the first man, Adam. —See Luke 1:1-4; 3:23-38.

The Bible also tells us how all human suffering got its start and how and why it came to be a continuing, humanly inerasable, common inheritance of the whole family of mankind. No other history tells us this; no other sacred writing does. In the absence of any other source, where will we look for the answer to the question of the origin of human suffering and disorder? If we do not seek the answer from a historical source, what are we left with? Only human opinion, conjecture—with wide differences and disagreement. Surely in view of the magnitude of the question—the most perplexing in life—we ought to be willing to consider the information supplied by Biblical history. Consider the reasonableness of what it says.

A Perfect Start for Mankind

The Bible shows that God created the first human pair, Adam and Eve, as per-

fect creatures in body and mind. Would we expect anything different from the One of whom the Bible says, "Perfect is his activity"? (Deut. 32:4) The Scriptural record shows God's fatherly care and interest in that original pair. Human parents today make advance preparation for the arrival of their offspring, getting things ready for the new family member. Similarly the Bible recounts God's careful preparation for his first human son and daughter. He started them off in life—not in a swamp, cave, wilderness or jungle—but in a parklike area, a true botanical garden of fruit-bearing and other trees, where there was no need for them to feel hunger. He gave them purposeful work to do. He set before them realizable and stimulating goals—the extending of parklike conditions throughout the whole earth, with the aid of the multiplying offspring they were to procreate.—See Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7-9, 15.

There is certainly no basis here for accusing God of any lack of care. Nor is there

anything unreal about the account. Must we not honestly admit that, right till this day, the goal God set out in Genesis is what mankind has long strived to achieve—namely, a parklike earth, free from hunger or want and occupied by healthy people engaging in rewarding activities? But why has that goal not been



The Bible shows that God's purpose was to make the whole earth a beautiful park for humankind. Is that not what mankind still wants?

reached? Why have mankind's efforts "boomeranged" on them, causing the earth to be polluted and its ecological balance to be thrown seriously out of order? Again the Bible shows why, and in a realistic, reasonable way.

A Test for Mankind's Good

Most persons know that the Bible account shows that God set one of the trees in the garden home "off limits" to them, and that violation of his prohibition, by eating of the tree's fruit, would bring the penalty of death. (Gen. 2:9, 16, 17) But few persons stop to think of the wisdom shown in this arrangement. Consider:

How do we as human parents show genuine care for our children? Is it just by providing material needs? Or is it even more so by helping them to develop right standards of conduct, helping them to learn sound principles, basic truths that cannot be ignored if they are to be happy in life? If a son or a daughter is pampered and allowed to do just whatever he or she feels like doing, is such permissiveness a case of caring or of not caring? We know what happens when parents abandon responsibility, failing to educate and train their offspring. Rampant juvenile delinquency today causes enormous heartbreak and disappointment for fathers and mothers and is largely a result of such lack of parental caring and firm direction.

God took care to impress upon his first human son and daughter standards of righteousness. He was their Life-Giver. Disrespect for him and for his word could bring them nothing good. It would actually be senseless, because it would be out of harmony with reality, a 'flying in the face' of the facts of life. Such disrespect would foster—not happiness and peace—but egotism, selfishness and ingratitude. Deep re-

spect for him, on the other hand, could bring unending benefit. It would keep them receptive to God's superlative wisdom, power and love. It would keep humans living harmoniously, fostering respect and concern for the interests and feelings of others. Today, when we see how many of mankind's troubles result from people's being self-centered, with so little concern for the rights and interests of their neighbors, we should be able to appreciate the value of what God did for the first human pair in stressing the vital need to respect his rights and interests as the Universal Sovereign. The "tree of the knowledge of good and bad" that he set "off bounds" to them was used to represent or symbolize his sovereign right to decide for his creatures what is "good" and what is "bad" for them.

The means used by God to make such test of their respect showed considerateness and also granted mankind a natural dignity. It was fitting for their circumstances. How so? Well, though created as mature adults, the human pair were still new as to life. To give them the opportunity to demonstrate respect and loyalty to his sovereignty, their Creator used, not something complicated or confusing, but something simple and straightforward, something involving a daily activity, namely, eating. In this way, too, God was not making a prohibition that implied suspicion of depraved tendencies or malicious inclinations in man, for eating in itself was a normal, proper action. Though the prohibition of eating of that one tree placed limits on the human pair, those limits certainly did not hem them in or cramp them in their full enjoyment of life. They had no need to feel any sense of being deprived of anything essential to their happiness in view of all the other fruit-bearing trees available. (Gen. 2:9) And,

finally, though simple, this test of their obedience and respect would be in harmony with the wise principle spoken later by God's Son, that "the person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much."—Luke 16:10.

The Freedom to Choose

The Bible also shows that God gave to his human son and daughter the freedom of choice, free moral agency. Why? Because God cared about them and had feeling for them. He had shown love by bringing them to life and by his preparations for their earthly happiness. If God had created them so that they were automatically obedient and incapable of doing otherwise, then they could never show genuine love in return to their Creator. Their obedience would be mechanical. Real love requires a *wanting* to do things that please another or that are in his interests. (Deut. 30:15, 16) And we ourselves know that we get our greatest joy out of doing things for others when we sincerely *want* to do them because we care about them. And we are made happy at heart by others' doing things for us only when we know they did so spontaneously, freely.

Our first parents chose disobedience to God, as the account shows. Does it seem incredible that they would turn against God in view of all that he had done for them? It might seem incredible if we ourselves did not know of the almost unbelievable things that humans have been capable of in the past and at present. We have seen individuals turn against faithful and loving mates, children turn against



Nations do not take lightly an intrusion by outsiders. Why should God allow his rightful rulership to be treated disrespectfully, as was done in Eden?

parents, parents against children, often for no sound reason whatsoever. We have seen people in various nations express vicious hatred against their neighbors and fellow citizens, persecuting and even engaging in mass slaughter of them with no just cause. Usually they have been stirred up by false propaganda that incited distrust, resentment and that worked on selfish desires.

The Bible shows that the first woman, Eve, was subjected to similar propaganda from a rebellious spirit son of God. She could have resisted this, even as we today, though imperfect, can resist such poisonous propaganda. Instead, she allowed distrust of God's love and wisdom and fairness to develop—as if he were withholding something from mankind. She trespassed on his property, his sovereign rights, by breaking his law concerning the "tree of the knowledge of good and bad" and its fruit. Under her persuasion her husband joined her.

The Consequences of Disloyalty

We know that simple acts in our own day can have enormous consequences. Human carelessness by one person in handling a relatively small safety factor in the construction of a building can result in a disaster that may cost the lives of scores of persons. Failure to care for a similar feature in a dam could lead to its rupture and unleash a destructive flood that could cause enormous damage and destruction. A single act of dishonesty or corruption by a ruler may open the way for a chain reaction of wrongdoing in a government and lead to great injustice and harm for thousands, even millions of people.

The outcome of our first father's disloyalty to God was the plunging of the human family into sin and imperfection. The inescapable rule set out in God's Word is that "God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit." (Gal. 6: 7, 8) Mankind's forefather, Adam, put fleshly desire above spiritual interests, just as today a global wave of materialism has practically drowned peo-

ple's concern for spiritual matters and God's guidance. Adam reaped imperfection and corruption and could not avoid passing these on to his offspring as an inheritance. As God's inspired Word states at Romans 5:12: "That is why, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."

A man today who willfully engages in immoral conduct and contracts a venereal disease or who suffers chromosome damage as a result of drug addiction will bring forth defective children. His lack of caring about the suffering this brings his offspring cannot rightly be charged to God. Nor can our first father's lack of caring and its consequences be charged to God. Showing where the blame rests, the inspired writer tells us: "See! This only I have found, that the true God made mankind upright, but they themselves have sought out many plans."—Eccl. 7: 29.

But, even though free of responsibility for the start of human suffering, why has God not brought it to an end before now? His reason for waiting until our day is one that reveals, not an uncaring attitude, but real care for mankind's everlasting good. What is that reason?



When seemingly small safety factors are ignored, even a great structure such as a dam can collapse. Some persons view the sin of the original man in Eden as something small, yet it let loose a flood tide of wickedness and suffering.

ALONG TIME,

But No Longer Than Necessary

NEARLY six thousand years have passed since mankind struck out on a course of independence from God. The amount of suffering felt by millions during those thousands of years—by wars, famine, crime and injustice—is difficult to conceive.

Even though we accept the fact that mankind's course has been contrary to God's will as set forth in the Bible, the question remains: Why has God let matters go on like this for so long? Why has he not intervened before now to end human suffering? Why has he even allowed persons seeking to do his will to suffer along with the rest? There is a reason, a serious one.

An Issue Demanding Settlement

The reason is that an issue had arisen that demanded a settlement. The rebellion that had been spawned within Jehovah God's universal family put in question the rightness and rightfulness of God's rule. Could mankind, or even spirit sons of God, find happiness and success in such a course of independence? Would their lot actually improve in this way? Or would time prove such a course to be a disastrous one, a dismal failure, and that God's way is the right, best and only way to life in peace, security and happiness?

Such a question would take, not days

or years, but many generations for the answer to be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt. But its settlement would be worth whatever time it required, for it involved the whole universe and its future peace and good order.

The time that God allowed for settling this question would also grant all his intelligent creatures the opportunity to make clear on what side of the issue they would take their stand. Those taking God's side would have the opportunity to prove just how unbreakably devoted and loyal his creatures can be to his rule, under all kinds of circumstances, even unjust persecution and death. He would let them show that love for Him and for righteousness is a far stronger force than selfishness, even as was demonstrated in the case of his faithful servant Job.—Job 1:7-12; Rom. 5:3-5.

In this way there will be no halfway settlement of the question but a full, complete answer, one that will need no repeating at any future time. Jehovah God will accept nothing less than this. And we can be glad that this is so, since only that kind of settlement can open the way for unending peace and security for all his universal family, in heaven and on earth. Now the evidence is that time is running out and that the time for God to intervene decisively is at hand. What has been the

result of his allowance of time till now? What has it proved?

The Results of Mankind's Independent Course Now Evident

Mankind has now had ample opportunity to show what it can do in ruling and running this planet, trying to do it apart from God. True, some governments may use expressions like "In God We Trust," and many individuals may exclaim "God help us!" when faced with crises. But in reality mankind as a whole has paid little heed to God's Word and has not concerned itself with knowing his will. As was true of the ancient nation of Israel, God has "let them go in the stubbornness of their heart; they went walking in their own counsels." (Ps. 81:12) Where has it brought them?

During the past half century in particular men have done things never before imagined. They walk on the moon, girdle the earth with communications networks, build giant factories, giant planes, giant ships, harness atomic power, devise amazing computers that perform complex mathematical operations in fractions of seconds. But what has it all meant in the way

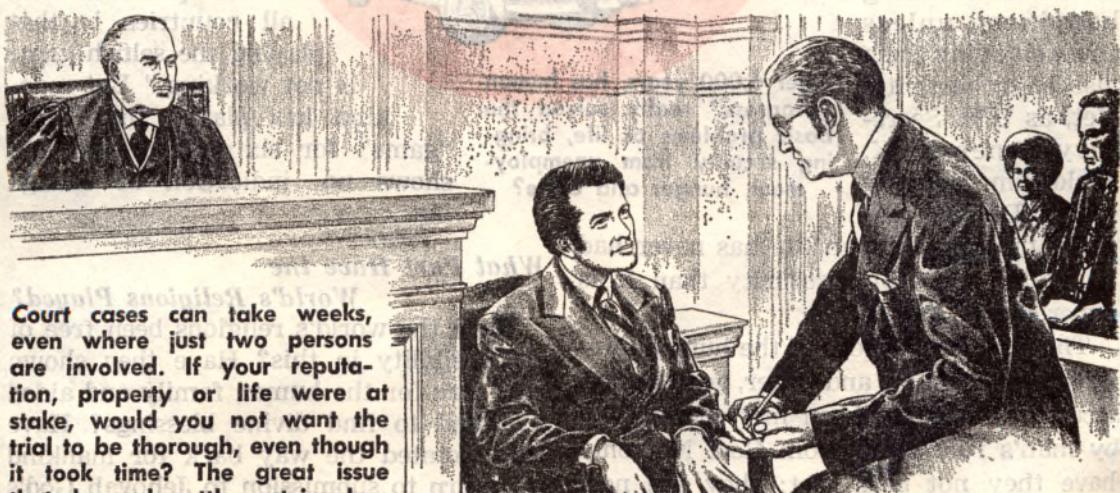
of relief for mankind? Is the human family today better fed, better housed, safer and happier?

What about food? A report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization says: "The world situation in 1974 remains more difficult and uncertain than at any time since the years following the devastation of the Second World War." In simple terms, one out of every four persons on earth today suffers serious malnutrition. Is this success?

What of the wealthier, industrialized lands? A recent report in the United States answers: "The sad and tragic truth is that, over the past several years, we have moved backwards in our struggle to end hunger, poverty and malnutrition."

—*New York Times*, June 20, 1974, pages 1, 17.

Men boast of their "conquest" of the earth. But Swedish scientist Georg Borgstrom says: "Man's impact on the face of the earth has been truly formidable. . . . However, he has created more deserts than he ever irrigated new land; he has cut down more than half of the world's forest cover; he has denuded vast lands, exposing them to the destructive forces



Court cases can take weeks, even where just two persons are involved. If your reputation, property or life were at stake, would you not want the trial to be thorough, even though it took time? The great issue that demands settlement involves all intelligent creatures in the universe. Logically a long period of time is needed to resolve it

of water and wind; and through excessive cropping he has destroyed many times more acres of top-soil than he has ever built up or newly produced."

More and more warnings are issued by scientists that man's misuse of energy and fouling of the air can produce serious changes in weather and climate. Really, does the present situation not show how much mankind needs the guidance of the Maker of the earth to bring this planet to the pleasant and productive state that will make it a truly pleasant home, yes, one free even from destructive storms?

Man has developed amazing methods for rapid construction of homes and enormous skyscrapers. Yet slums around the world are not receding, they are mushrooming. And the human family is now growing at the rate of about 78 million each year.

Even abundant food and good homes cannot bring happiness unless those enjoying them also enjoy security. Yet, as U.N. Secretary-General K. Waldheim recently said: "Despite material progress, human life has never had a greater sense of insecurity than it is experiencing today."

The most basic needs of the human family—food, clean air and water, good homes, security—have not been met successfully by man's rule apart from God. Not only have they not been met; they are now more critical than ever before. As the

president of Roosevelt University, Rolf A. Weil, acknowledges: "It is an understatement to say that old problems have not been solved . . . to the contrary, [they] have only become more global and more critical. . . . we face major world-wide problems of unprecedented magnitude." —*Vital Speeches of the Day*, February 1, 1974, page 236.

While some try to blame God for these conditions, even men of the world acknowledge that the source lies elsewhere.

Pointing to the real problem, New York *Times* editor James Reston says: "You can hardly take a casual look at today's headlines without wondering where the world is going. . . . see what happens when men, institutions and nations put their selfish interests ahead of everything else. . . .

The plain fact in all countries is that playing the selfish game is not working." But mankind has played that same "game" for six millennia and shows no indication of changing.

What Part Have the World's Religions Played?

Have the world's religions been free of responsibility in this? Have they shown real care for the human family and aided mankind to find divine blessings? Have they pointed the way back for mankind to return to submission to Jehovah God's sovereignty?



After 6,000 years, has human "progress" really solved the basic problems of life, bringing security from unemployment, hunger and crime?

History testifies that the world's religious organizations have worked, often 'hand in glove,' with the political powers, helping to build huge empires, keeping people favorable to domineering and corrupt rulers. In addition to their own violent crusades and inquisitions, the religious leaders have blessed political and commercial wars, whitewashed official corruption. For this, the religious organizations have reaped profit and prominence. They also bear a heavy share of responsibility for mankind's suffering.

Consider but one illustration in our own time. An article in the *New York Times Magazine* dealing with the drought afflicting Ethiopia states:

"Drought or no drought, the church, owning one-third of all the land, has demanded its rents from the impoverished peasants. And so has the aristocracy. The peasant farmers of Ethiopia have paid about 90 per cent of their crops in rents and taxes."

The world's religions have failed to bring about a climate of honesty, morality, decency and neighbor love among their members. Immorality, delinquency, employee dishonesty and racial disunity are on the increase. As the *Saturday Review/World* of May 18, 1974, comments: "Wherever one looks, the evidence of an unraveling in moral fiber seems inescapable."

Why a God Who Cares Could Permit This

Mankind can never erase all the pain, heartache and damage that rule independent of God has caused through the past nearly six thousand years. But Jehovah God can. He can bring not only human suffering to an end, wiping out selfish human mismanagement and rule of this earth. (Dan. 2:44) He can also make all the damaging effects become as if they had never occurred. How?

As the Creator of life he is able to restore to life those who have died. His Word shows that during the Kingdom reign of his Son he will empty the graves of their dead and grant to these resurrected ones the opportunity to take a course leading to life everlasting. (John 5:26-29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:11-13) Thereby it will be as stated in the inspired prophecy at Isaiah 25:8: "He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces."

By restoring paradisaic conditions on earth and bringing peace, justice and unity earth wide through the rule of his Son's righteous government, God can erase from the minds of those living any bitter memories of the past. As was true when he restored ancient Israel to their homeland after years of captivity in Babylon, so it will be true of obedient mankind restored to a paradisaic earth, "the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart. . . . exult, you people, and be joyful forever in what I am creating." (Isa. 65:17, 18) Through God's heavenly kingdom by his Son, God promises to "wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."—Rev. 21:2-4.

To believe this requires faith. The Bible states that "without faith it is impossible to please [God] well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Heb. 11:6) Blind faith is of no value. But faith based on evidence can give solid hope. God has provided us ample evidence to believe, not only that he exists, but that he is "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." Consider what he has already done in the past as evidence of his care and concern for the good of mankind.

HOW GOD HAS ACTIVELY SHOWN HIS CARE



JEHOVAH GOD has not left mankind to grope around blindly for relief, with no sure hope of finding it. Thousands of years ago he began revealing his purpose and causing that revelation to be written down as his Word, his message for all mankind.

We have that message today in the Bible, God's inspired Word. In it we can learn what kind of person Jehovah God is, what his qualities are, how he deals with people, what standards he goes by. From its prophecies we can learn what he is determined to do and what course we can take for our own future protection and good.

Within the pages of the Bible we find abundant evidence of God's care and interest in all mankind. We find that he respects the dignity of every individual; that he does not want forced service or worship but desires willing service from hearts moved by love. (Deut. 30:15, 16) His Word shows there is no difference in God's eyes between people of different nationalities, races or social orders. Any one choosing to do so can serve him and receive great blessings for himself and his family.—Acts 10:34, 35.

Consider some of the ways in which the Bible reveals that Jehovah God showed his keen interest in all mankind and his blessing of those who did put trust and faith in him.

Dealings with Abraham Show that God Is Not Racist

In Abraham, the father of both the Jewish race and the Arabic races, put faith in Jehovah God's word and willingly served him. Because of this, God blessed Abraham and his family. So much did God appreciate Abraham's faith that he determined to use a nation springing from one branch of Abraham's family in a special way, to represent Him and His worship in the earth. He gave this nation, descended from Abraham's grandson Jacob or Israel, his laws. He established them firmly in the land called Canaan. (Deut. 4:7, 8) Also, by means of this nation God kept his name before the peoples of the earth, and through that nation he brought forth his Messiah, the one anointed to act as mankind's Redeemer.—Gal. 3:24; 4:4.

Was this simply a case of favoring a certain nation? As Creator of all, why should God confine his goodness to one nation? Far from selfish favoritism, he actually was laying a preliminary foundation for 'blessing all families of the earth.' (Gen. 12:3; 22:18) By his dealings with this one nation and by setting up a government over them, he revealed many personal qualities of himself as both God and King, his loving-kindness and mercy, as well as his firm principles of government. He laid the foundation for the future coming of the Mes-

siah. The Messiah's lineage or line of descent and an advance prophetic outline of his life were recorded and preserved to enable people to establish faith in him as one really sent from God. Yes, during these centuries of God's dealing with that nation, the Bible was being written, presenting a factual, historical record along with prophecies and prophetic pictures and 'shadows of better things to come,' all for our benefit.—1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 10:1.

God's Care Shown Toward an Imperfect People

When God selected that nation descended from Abraham, they were a minority group and enslaved. Through the prophet Moses, he told them: "It was not because of your being the most populous of all the peoples that Jehovah showed affection for you so that he chose you, for you were the least of all the peoples. But it was because of Jehovah's loving you, and because of his keeping the sworn statement that he had sworn to your forefathers, that Jehovah brought you out with a strong hand, that he might redeem you from the house of slaves." (Deut. 7:7, 8) Thereby God could show not only that he appreciates and rewards faithful service and devotion, such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob showed, but also that he is a keeper of his word.—Deut. 7:9.

That nation had every reason to believe in God's care for them. Many times they



By his dealings with Abraham, God was not showing partiality but, rather, was expressing his care for mankind; he promised to bless people of all nations through Abraham's "seed"

were brought under murderous attack and faced overwhelming odds. As long as they put their trust in him, Jehovah came to their rescue. (Judg. chap. 7; 2 Chron. 14:9-15) Even when the nation turned away from God and committed serious sin, God exercised patience and mercy toward them. He disciplined them severely on occasion, but, when they turned back to him, he forgave and blessed them, giving them prosperity, health and peace. (Jer. 7:13,

14; 30:18, 21, 22) His fifteen-centuries-long record of dealings with them is one of amazing long-suffering and endurance of human imperfection, backsliding and sheer obstinacy.

Finally Israel completely rebelled against Jehovah God, rejecting his Son and turning this one over to the Roman governor for execution. In spite of all of this, God kept sending his servants to them and declaring the good news to them exclusively for another three and a half years. Only then did he bring to an end his special care of them and begin sending his messengers to all the Gentile peoples of earth. (Acts chap. 10) His purpose in using Israel as his particular instrument had been completed and the nation's special relationship with him ceased; yet individuals from among that nation could always gain his favor and blessing by becoming obedient to his Word and showing faith in his provisions.—Rom. 10:12; Gal. 3:28.

By these dealings God showed that he

does indeed care and, in fact, has great love for those who serve him. He demonstrated what he will do if people sincerely listen to him. The law he gave that nation was so fine that, even though keeping it very imperfectly, they remained an independent nation for some nine centuries.

God's Care for

All the Nations

During all this time, God did not forget the other nations. Speaking to a crowd of idol-worshiping Gentiles in the Asian city of Lystra, the apostle Paul urged them to "turn from these vain things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them." He then said: "In the past generations [God] permitted all the nations to go on in their ways, although, indeed, he did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:15-17) God has kept on giving that "witness" even until our day.

God's concern for all human creatures is strikingly manifest in his dealings with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These had sunk into extreme debauchery. God said: "The cry of complaint about Sodom and Gomorrah, yes, it is loud, and their sin, yes, it is very heavy." (Gen. 18:20) Evidently neighboring peoples were shocked and grieved at the corrupt conduct and cried out to God. He respected their dismayed attitude and their right to be free from the danger that the debauchery of the Sodomites posed to them. For that reason he determined to destroy those



God's use of one nation, ancient Israel, allowed for his showing the results of his unified direction and his righteous principles of government

two cities and associated ones. Even then, however, if as many as ten righteous men could have been found there, he would have spared the cities for the sake of the ten.—Gen. 18:22-33.

God's dealing with Sodom and Gomorrah shows that he takes no pleasure in the death of anyone, but wants all to live, if they will just live respectfully toward their fellowman and in obedience to righteous principles. (Ezek. 33:11; Mic. 6:8) Moreover, God's undeserved kindness and care are so great that he will bring back the people of Sodom by a resurrection, with opportunity to learn and turn around to the way of life, even as his Son stated. —Luke 10:11, 12; Matt. 11:24.

God's Concern for Planet Earth

as Home, policy of his as Man's Home
God showed his real concern for his creation, the earth, in the laws he gave the nation of Israel. These provided for the utmost good to the land and to the people and animals living on it. For ex-

ample, he commanded that every seventh year be a year of rest. All were free from agricultural labor, domestic animals included. Today, every farmer knows that for his ground to lie uncultivated for a time restores its fertility.—Lev. 25:2-7.

Besides this, every fiftieth year was not only such a sabbath year but also a "Jubilee" year, a year when all debts were canceled. All members of the nation who, due to financial reverses, had sold their land were restored to their own land inheritance, free of debt. Even those Israelites in bondage or servitude were set free. What far-reaching and considerate care! As long as the nation kept these laws there could never be an economic crisis such as today faces many nations.—Lev. 25:8-19.

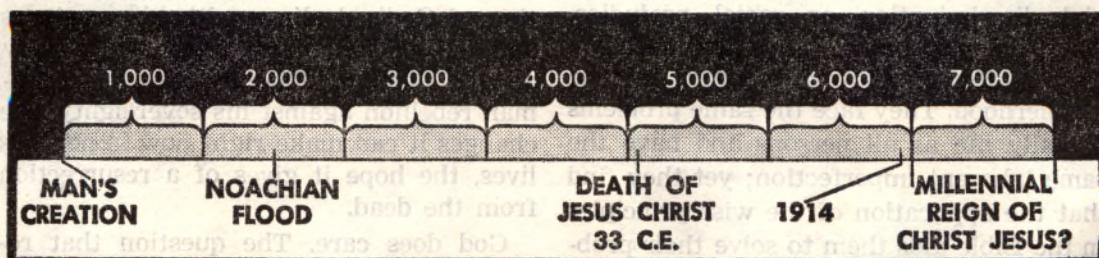
Foregleams of a Coming Government for All the Earth

The inspired apostle writes at Romans 15:4: "For all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." That hope centers around the coming righteous government that God has purposed for restoring mankind and this earth into full harmony with himself. As the same apostle points out, the laws that God gave through his government over ancient Israel were "a shadow of the good things to come," fore-

gleams of the benefits of a heaven-based government through which God will administer a program for earth's inhabitants that will result in the lasting blessing of all those with love of righteousness in their hearts. (Heb. 10:1) Thus we read in the Bible at Ephesians 1:9, 10: "It is according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth."

Yes, to free mankind from the inheritance of sin, imperfection and death that our first father Adam left us, and to satisfy His own superior standards of justice, God had his own Son give his life to ransom us from our enslaved condition. (Rom. 3:23-26) As Romans 5:7, 8 states: "For hardly will anyone die for a righteous man; indeed, for the good man, perhaps, someone even dares to die. But God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

For nearly six thousand years now mankind has labored and struggled. But now the Bible shows that a grand sabbath of rest for the earth and its inhabitants has drawn near. The Bible tells us that with Jehovah 'a thousand years is as one day.' (2 Pet. 3:8) And his Word foretells a thousand-year-long day of rest from suffering, war, crime, famine and injustice under his Son's Kingdom rule. Yes, it will



Now after some 6,000 years of human existence, according to Bible prophecies, a thousand-year Jubilee is near—a time of rest from suffering and oppression

be a thousand-year-long Jubilee when even the enslavement to sin, imperfection, sickness and death will be broken and the Kingdom's willing subjects will come out of bondage and will enter into the long-awaited and "glorious freedom of the children of God."—Rom. 8:19-21; Heb. 4:9, 11; Rev. 20:6.

Then, as foretold, "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples . . . a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes filled with marrow, of wine kept on the dregs, filtered." (Isa. 25:6) Then it will be true, in a global sense, that "they will not do any harm or cause any ruin . . . because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."

—Isa. 11:9.

Perhaps the most powerful example of God's care is seen in those who today put their full trust in his promises of such a righteous government. They provide visible evidence of what his Word can accomplish in people, the change in their lives that the hope he gives can bring.

Millions of persons today have declared themselves for Jehovah God's kingdom as the real and only hope for mankind. These are found in over 200 lands and islands of the sea. They represent a tremendously wide range of nationalities, languages, races and social backgrounds. Yet they are at unity, not divided up by politics, sectarianism, commercial competition, social discrimination or racial prejudice. They enjoy genuine peace and freedom from strife, associating together in true brotherhood. They face the same problems of daily life as all persons and have the same inherent imperfection; yet they find that the application of the wise principles in the Bible aids them to solve their problems and find real joy in living. They are known as Jehovah's Christian witnesses

because they bear witness of their faith in Jehovah God and testify to his purposes and his care for mankind.—Isa. 43:10, 11.

True, they have suffered persecution at the hands of dictators and powerful religious organizations in many lands. But they know why this comes and count it a privilege to be able to demonstrate their unbreakable adherence to the right standards of God's Word and unwavering loyalty to his sovereignty. They have confidence like that of the inspired disciple James, who wrote: "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him."—Jas. 1:12.

Love for neighbor has caused them to risk imprisonment, and even worse, in order to keep on extending to others the hope that they have found through the good news of God's kingdom. They know God's concern for mankind, that "he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance," and they seek to show like concern.—2 Pet. 3:9.

The evidence of God's care for mankind is therefore undeniable; it surrounds us on all sides. It is abundantly evident in the earth and its provisions for life that is interesting and rewarding, also in our own bodies with their amazing qualities.

But, most of all, it is evident in God's Word—the explanation it gives as to the cause of mankind's suffering, its revelation of God's dealings with his creatures and his unchanging purpose to remedy all the damage done by spirit and human rebellion against his sovereignty, the changes it can make right now in people's lives, the hope it gives of a resurrection from the dead.

God does care. The question that remains is, Do we? We may say we do, but what really proves whether we do?

DO YOU really care about life? Are you concerned about living with your family and neighbors in peace, free from fear? Do you appreciate what a blessing good health can be? Do you enjoy the natural beauties to be found on this earth, its bird and animal life?

Your caring about these things indicates Godlike qualities. For God made man "in his image," and His Word shows that He himself highly values life, peace and freedom. He created man to recognize and appreciate beauty, even as He does.—Gen. 1:27; Eccl. 3:11.

The question is: *How much do you care?* And how can you show the genuineness of your concern?

Some today criticize God for a lack of care toward mankind. Yet they themselves treat life as if it were cheap. Knowingly, they misuse and, in effect, slowly poison their own bodies, as with tobacco or other drugs; they invite sickness by indulging in

HOW MUCH Do You Care?

excesses in food, drink, sex; they take unnecessary risks for thrills or because of a love of speed or just out of impatience; and at the same time they place the life or health of others in jeopardy.

Doubtless, for many this is simply because they have no real hope, no real goal in life to make it genuinely worth living. They say with the ancient Greeks of Corinth, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die."—1 Cor. 15:32.

But if we really care about life and appreciate it, we will be willing to investigate the hope of life that the Bible sets before us. We will not say we are "too busy" or have no time for making the effort needed to find out what that Word really contains. We will recognize, too, the "danger" signs now visible over all the earth and that are fulfilling Bible prophecies that point to *our generation* as the one in which an old order of suffering and corruption will end and be replaced by a



Some persons slowly poison their own bodies with tobacco or other drugs; some take unnecessary risks. Though they themselves show a lack of care for the preciousness of human life, they criticize God.

righteous new order. (Matt. 24:3, 7, 8, 21, 22, 34; Luke 21:25-33) We will not take lightly Jesus' counsel found at Luke 21: 34-36:

"But pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."

Sincere Concern for Others

How much do you care about other people? How keenly do you feel their sufferings and regret the oppression or injustices they endure?

Some blame God for being coldhearted and unconcerned about the sufferings of people, and yet their own daily lives often show them to be self-centered or concerned about only their own families or their own race. In their businesses or employment they may follow the world in general in a "dog-eat-dog" way of dealing, using "sharp" practices at the expense of others, misrepresenting, falsifying. Many are nationalistic or highly prejudiced toward people of a different skin color or language. All of this is totally contrary to the personality and ways of God, as shown in his Word, the Bible.



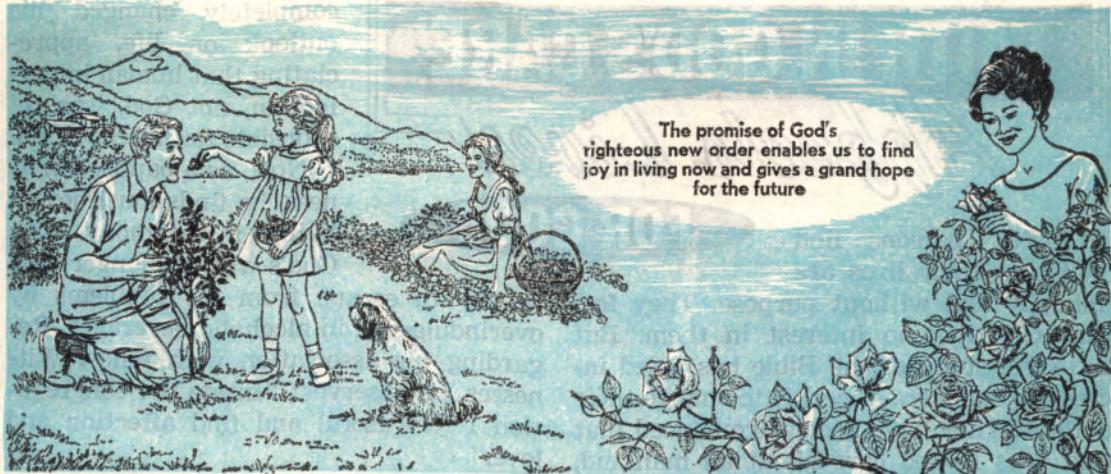
How many persons who complain about a lack of care by God have sincere concern for others? Many of them practice dishonesty and show a self-centered attitude

One may say, "What does it really matter how much I care? What can I do about it?" True, you cannot feed and clothe the hungry and poor of the world, you cannot abolish crime, end sickness, stop pollution or bring enduring world peace.

But you can show that you are not in harmony with the selfish view of life that is responsible for so much human suffering and show that you recognize the failure of human rule independent of God. You can put yourself firmly on the side of God, who is fully able to remedy all these things and who promises that he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth," doing so for his own name's sake and for the benefit of all righteous-hearted persons. Then, indeed, the meek or mild-tempered ones will "inherit the earth" and be able to enjoy it free from oppression.—Rev. 11:18; Matt. 5:5.

God has already demonstrated on a small scale his ability to bring health and life to the ailing people of mankind. He showed this through his Son Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who healed people of all kinds of diseases and even raised persons from the dead.—Matt. 8:13; Luke 6:18; John 11:38-44.

Of God's Son, the Bible says, "On seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matt. 9:36) What did he do on their behalf? The parallel account at Mark 6:34 says: "And he



The promise of God's righteous new order enables us to find joy in living now and gives a grand hope for the future



started to teach them many things." He taught them about the Kingdom, the government that God will use to accomplish his will on earth; he built up their faith and confidence in God's care for them. (Matt. 6:9, 10, 25-33) We today can help others in similar ways. There is no greater or more enduring source of comfort.

By getting better acquainted with the Bible you can equip yourself to care for the most vital needs of your family. Applying its principles can contribute measurably to the family's peace and happiness, protect it from being steadily torn apart by the divisive influences that are on the increase today. These same principles can help you to live more peacefully with your neighbors, even in these unsettled times. (Heb. 12:14) Knowing why conditions are as they are and knowing what the future holds can give you the patience, long-suffering and forbearance that make for peaceful, pleasant relations with others.

Most importantly, a knowledge of God's purpose toward this earth and mankind on it can enable you to develop a genuine

love for God. Coming to appreciate his qualities, you can develop the faith, not only that he is, but "that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Heb. 11:6) You can then put yourself in position to be among those who really take hold of the provision that God spoke of to Abraham, saying: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Gen. 22:18) The receiving of that blessing is up to you.

Jehovah's witnesses place themselves at your service to aid you in finding the answers to your questions as to the contents of God's Word the Bible. They will gladly and freely give of their time to assist you to learn of God's provisions for life in his new order of peace and life. Rather than follow an independent course or rely on the wisdom of imperfect human leaders of this world, follow the counsel of the inspired apostle when he urges: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, . . . while you throw all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you."—1 Pet. 5:6, 7.

FAITH IN GOD'S CARE

Affects Lives

FOR GOOD

MANY persons find

that their lives are unhappy and without purpose. They feel that God has no interest in them. But a careful study of the Bible has aided increasing numbers of people to change their outlook. They have become convinced that God does indeed care about all mankind, and this has brought them many joys.

Freed from Gloom and Despair

An eighteen-year-old youth in Costa Rica was stricken with a disease that doctors were unable to diagnose. His condition progressively worsened. While at first able to walk with crutches, he soon had to use a metal support and finally was confined to a wheelchair.

As to the effect this had on him, this young man says: "Finding myself in such a desperate condition, I would often get drunk. I felt bored with life and, frankly, didn't have real faith in God. I thought that he was the One responsible for my condition. Many times I would say, 'My God, let me die.' Often I thought about taking my own life, and on one occasion even attempted this. I ground up glass and was about ready to swallow it with something when a friend arrived and stopped me."

Later this young man went to live with his brother. Through his sister-in-law, one of Jehovah's witnesses, he had his attention directed to the Bible and the grand hope of life free from sickness and death that it sets forth for lovers of righteousness. He then began to study the Holy Scriptures with the Witnesses. In time he

completely changed his outlook on life, appreciating that human imperfection, not God, was responsible for his condition.

Now, as a baptized Witness, he finds much joy in living in harmony with God's will. No longer does

he try to escape from his problems by overindulgence in alcoholic beverages. Regarding his association with fellow Witnesses, he observes: "Inside the congregation I feel useful and find affection and love."

Helped to Stop Living a Life of Crime

Though not afflicted with disease, some people set out on a course that is completely lawless and that brings only trouble to them. This happened to a young man in the state of Minnesota. He reached the point where he felt that he had nothing for which to live. He relates:

"At the age of sixteen I started working in restaurants and began using and selling drugs. Through my restaurant work I also got to know members of a crime syndicate. Impressed by the power they had over other people, I made it my aim to become a Mafia leader. I directed everything toward that goal, even getting a gun and always carrying it on me.

"In time I got my brother involved with taking drugs. The two of us would steal cars and clothes. I reasoned that those from whom we were stealing didn't really need what we took. At the same time I felt that I was actually doing good, for I would give stolen items to my mother, sister and friends.

"Later I started dealing in 'fake' drugs and came under pressure from both pushers and buyers. Discovering the deception, they demanded money. This led to my having a nervous breakdown at the age of seventeen.

"But I still did not give up my criminal activity. Not only did I continue stealing, but I thought nothing of beating others up so that they had to be hospitalized. Finally, I was arrested for attempted murder and assault. As most of my friends were in jail, imprisonment did not disturb me. But I was soon out on bail and was not afterward convicted.

"Eventually my criminal activity put my life in danger. During one drug party several young men who were not usually at such parties came. I got the feeling that they were there to kill me for revenge. So I decided to slip away and commit suicide. An attempt to take an overdose of drugs failed when, because of nervousness, I couldn't hit the vein. Then I quickly left the house. After giving the matter more thought, I was sure that life wasn't worth living. I got on a nearby highway, thinking I would hitchhike to the middle of nowhere, there to starve or freeze to death.

"I was picked up by a group of young people who dropped me off just as I had planned. But the barks of big dogs from nearby farms frightened me, causing me to change my mind about staying there. So I flagged down a truck and, by continued hitchhiking, eventually made it to the West Coast. I had in mind again taking up a life of crime. But before making contacts in Los Angeles, I decided to get in touch with my aunt in another city.

"This aunt was one of Jehovah's witnesses and I really felt that she was deceived by her religion. Arriving at her home, I began asking her many questions.

For days thereafter I discussed the Bible with her, keeping her up until the early hours of the morning. What really impressed me was the happiness she expressed when answering my questions from the Bible. The answers made sense. I learned that, despite my very bad course of action, by God's undeserved kindness and mercy, I could become one of his people, the happiest people I had ever met.

"Today, as one of Jehovah's witnesses, I rejoice in having already spent over four years in helping others to appreciate that God cares

about mankind. I am very thankful to him for letting me see just how rewarding life can be when lived in harmony with his Word, the Bible."

Finding Real Satisfaction in Life

Of course, many people do not, as was the case with this young man, experiment with a course of crime. Still they may be leading lives showing that they lack purpose and direction. All they may see is their routine of life and its diversions.

This was the experience of an American woman living in Tokyo, Japan. Her Japanese neighbor began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses and, therefore, their neighborly conversations would often turn to religious subjects. But nothing made a deep impression on the American woman. She was too distracted with her regular routine. She was very busy in church activities—a steady stream of fellowships, luncheons, adult nights and programs. There were dinners and parties to give and to attend. Yet she really was

not happy. Her life seemed to have a certain emptiness.

Returning to the United States, she found that things had changed for her. No longer distracted by a host of diversions, she began to think seriously about her life. She remarks:

"I became interested in seeking a deeper meaning for life. My home situation was a very unhappy one, and daily I was getting more desperate, more hopeless, with nothing really important to live for. In the back of my mind I suppose I knew that my relationship with God wasn't a satisfactory one. I prayed for happiness, begged, tried to bargain with God for just a little less misery and anguish. I felt that my life had become a dark, empty hole. I was mentally exhausted, with no relief in sight."

Then, last winter something took place that led to a fine change in this woman's life. A young person handed her a tract. Opening it later, she recognized it as a publication of Jehovah's witnesses and thought to herself, 'Well, why not try this? It certainly can't hurt. I don't have anything to lose if I just call the phone number on the back.'

She continues: "Well, it certainly didn't hurt. It was the beginning of the most beautiful, wonderful feeling of peace and security and hope for the future. There, in Jehovah's Word, was the most excellent guide for living—for real living, for everlasting living, for life in a perfect environment. All the questions that had been roaring about in my mind for years had an answer in the Bible. How much this meant to me! Very soon I came to realize that my previous Bible 'knowledge' was shallow, and most of it was incorrect. No wonder I hadn't known which way to turn to straighten out my life."

Religious Hypocrisy, a Hindrance to Recognizing God's Care

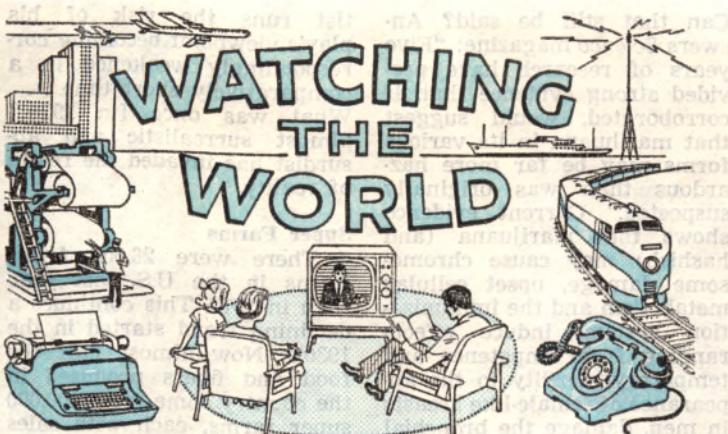
At times what people see among members of their religious organizations greatly disappoints them and causes them to forget about God.

A married couple in the state of Michigan found that this had happened to them. They were disturbed by religious hypocrisy among members of their own church. They learned that many fellow members of the local Methodist Church were engaging in wife swapping. In disgust, they quit attending church. But, as they said, 'In leaving the church, we felt that we had left God and knew that we shouldn't have done that.'

However, in time their experience caused them to think about Jehovah's witnesses. This was because the conduct of the Witnesses impressed them. The man and his wife even told friends and neighbors that they would like to become Jehovah's witnesses, saying: "They all seem so wholesome and so well versed in the Bible." Later, they gladly accepted the offer to study the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. On the basis of increased Bible knowledge, the man, despite his being a thirty-second degree Mason, severed his connections with the Masonic Lodge and she with the Order of the Eastern Star.

Both the man and his wife are now very happy to be able to help others to appreciate that there is a group of Christians who show appreciation for God's care by striving to do his will.

If you have been disappointed by religious hypocrisy and at times have felt that God does not care about mankind, why not examine what the Bible says? See for yourself the evidence that God is interested in you. We are confident that you will find that living in agreement with what you learn will affect your life for good even now.



Global Problems

◆ More men are recognizing that world problems are intertwined. Says U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim: "The majority of the great issues that confront mankind are profound, complex, and, above all, long-term problems. They cannot be resolved swiftly or dramatically; they are closely interrelated; and they bear directly upon the lives of all. For the great problems are the global problems, and they require a concerted global approach . . . Our future on this earth will depend to a large degree on our ability to develop a new economic and social system which recognizes and balances the rights, interests, and aspirations of all peoples. This is a problem of such magnitude and complexity that it can only be dealt with by a degree of global cooperation far greater than anything we have hitherto achieved."

Deep-Sea Beauty

◆ Mid-Atlantic explorations by French and American crews recently came to a close. Their findings impress the appreciative person with the fact that creation's beauty is found in even remote places. To the surprise of the explorers, submarine dives revealed that 9,000 feet below the sur-

face the ocean was teeming with fish. Dr. Robert D. Ballard of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution was puzzled by the appearance of many smaller fish whose coloring is normally invisible. They live in perpetual darkness. Yet when the lights of the submarines shone on them they suddenly appeared brilliantly colored.

The "Ethics" of Famine

◆ Professor of biology Paul Ehrlich is known for his predictions of impending population and food disasters. He is so certain of imminent worldwide danger that he suggests: "Anybody who has any spare capital at all is a . . . fool if he or she does not put away as large a store of food as he or she can afford at the present time." But would this keep a person safe? Not really, as even Ehrlich acknowledges: "Don't think that your problems are all solved as soon as you've stashed away a year's supply of food for yourself and your family. . . . When the crunch gets here . . . are you ethically bound to share your supplies with a neighbor who didn't take your precaution, or are you justified in shooting that neighbor when he comes around and tries to get some of your food for himself?"

Welcome Jehovah's Witnesses

◆ Jehovah's witnesses recently had two large conventions in New York city. Wrote the local *Amsterdam News* in an editorial about their visit: "At a time when the morality of our nation is being seriously questioned, and our major religions find themselves faced with revolts against long established moral codes, it is a pleasure to welcome the convention of the Jehovah's Witnesses. This is a religious group which has, over the years, unswervingly held to its beliefs by precept and example and rigidly practices what it preaches in a world where such things are rare."

Poor Man's Viewpoint

◆ Westerners assume that to conquer the population problem the "poorer nations" of the earth should stop having so many babies. But the poor nations also have a viewpoint in this matter. *New Internationalist* of London recently explained: "Most poor people want large families . . . Children are necessary for protection . . . In sum, the whole of the 'population problem' has been plagued by the almost subconscious assumption that poor people have many children because they don't know any better . . . The most important lesson of the last ten years has been that poor people are not stupid."

Herpes-Virus and Pregnancy

◆ In recent years the dangers of herpes-virus, a form of venereal disease, has become more apparent. According to a current article in *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality*, it presents a particular threat to pregnant women. In many cases of the recurrence of the disease, it reveals no obvious symptoms. It can thus be easily passed on to a newborn baby. With what consequences? The article answers: "Herpesvirus infection in the

newborn . . . may be expected to result in a 75 to 90% mortality rate . . . Of those newborns who survive, approximately 60 to 80% will be left with some neurologic deficit."

Evolution and the Evidence

◆ Recent diggings by such evolutionists as Richard Leakey do not support, but, rather, greatly damage their own argument. As a result, fewer people can swallow the evolution theory. One man expressed the view of many when he wrote to *Newsweek*: "In my search to understand the truth about man's origins, I am encountering an increasing amount of evidence that is difficult if not impossible to correlate with the evolution theory. The recent Leakey finds . . . are just one example. That three man-like creatures could coexist in the same location, with the most intelligent of the three preceding the others in the evolutionary process, is hardly credible."

As Economists See It

◆ Like the weather, the U.S. economy is hard to predict. But there is at least one current pattern among the economists. Says *Industry Week*: "An unusual number of economy probbers are arriving at a four-letter outlook: doom." It cites the observations of New York's Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company: "Now, there is more than the usual number of Chicken Littles warning us that the sky is falling . . . What has brought these Chicken Littles out into the open, perhaps, is that we are facing many problems today—many of them new, and many of them so far beyond what we're used to that they tend to increase the pessimists' credibility."

How Safe Is Marijuana?

◆ Youngsters used to describe marijuana as "safe."

Can that still be said? Answers *Science* magazine: "Five years of research have provided strong evidence that, if corroborated, would suggest that marihuana in its various forms may be far more hazardous than was originally suspected." Current evidence shows that marijuana (and hashish) may cause chromosome damage, upset cellular metabolism and the immunization system, induce effects ranging from impotence and temporary sterility to the appearance of female-like breasts in men, damage the bronchial tract and lungs, bring about severe personality changes and trigger potentially irreversible brain damage.

Pagan "Christians"

◆ Ted Noffs, a Methodist minister in Sydney, Australia, recently spoke out strongly against some of the pagan practices carried on by the Australian clergy. Says the *Daily News*: "He accused churchmen of tolerating superstition and black magic in their churches . . . He said the churches presented lies as truths, pagan practices as liturgy and superstition as theology . . . He said clerical collars were a carry-over from the ancient Athenian orators . . . And the black robes that clergymen wore, he said, were a carry-over from ancient witchcraft ceremonials." Noffs also observed: "They accept the fourth century pagan practices and preach from the pulpit about crosses . . . The Cross itself is an ancient fertility symbol."

Playwrights' Dilemma

◆ The rapid slide in American morality is reportedly making it hard on playwrights. Says a Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* review of a play that premiered in 1970, only four years ago: "Moral values are declining so rapidly that the drama-

tist runs the risk of his play's viewpoint becoming correspondingly weakened in a comparatively short time . . . What was once [in 1970!] almost surrealistic and absurd has invaded the realm of reality."

Super Farms

◆ There were 26,000 fewer farms in the U.S. last year than in 1972. This continues a declining trend started in the 1930's. Now almost half the food and fibers produced in the country come from 109,000 super farms, each with sales of \$100,000 or over.

Children Are Costly

◆ What does it cost to raise a child? *Esquire* magazine gave some figures recently on the costs involved in raising "one good-to-superior-quality child in a major city" of the U.S. It concludes that a boy through the age of seventeen bears a total price tag of about \$141,000. Add another \$3,000 for a girl. If parents support their offspring for another four years through college, tally up another \$47,000 to \$56,000. Just conception to the age of one year costs over \$5,400. Obviously, some people are forced to get by much cheaper. But, overall, the magazine notes: "It's safe to believe that in the long run the actual price of raising a child will be more, not less, than the sufficiently astonishing sums shown here."

Notes or Not?

◆ Who is likely to learn better, the notetakers or the non-notetakers? An article in *Human Behavior* magazine relates that two University of New Mexico researchers asked a group of 83 students to listen to a lecture and then, after a ten-minute review period, to take a test on the speech. Some students made and reviewed their own notes. Some

used notes prepared by the lecturer. Some had no notes at all. But who did the best? The ones who took and reviewed their own notes.

Woman's Work

◆ A woman's work, it has been said, is never done. Now, *The Use of Time* (edited by A. Szalai), a carefully documented new book discussing the daily activities of urban and suburban populations in twelve countries, lends some support to this old proverb. Of women who are employed outside the home, the book says: "The working woman is much busier than either her male colleagues or her housewife counterpart. After her day's obligations are done, she finds herself with an hour or two less time than anyone else, and this pattern again appears 'universally' at all of our survey sites."

"Convenience" Costs You

◆ Ready-mixed foods may seem "convenient" but they are also expensive. How much do they cost? Cleveland's Union Commerce Bank claims that a frozen beef dinner costs 23 percent more than one fixed entirely at home, while a frozen turkey dinner is 65 percent higher. And frozen waffles cost almost 200 percent more than those made from home-mixed batter!

Fertilizer Costs

◆ Fertilizer costs have been extremely high for farmers this year. For the average buyer this, of course, has contributed to higher food costs at the market. What does the future hold? Says *Farm Journal*: "If you think your fertilizer bill was steep this year, wait until next year! All predictions point to 20% higher price tags for nitrogen sources; 20% more costly phosphates;

modest 5% to 10% price hikes for potash."

Private Aircraft Soar

◆ When the petroleum crisis hit the U.S. late last year, private aircraft manufacturers anticipated large financial losses. But their fears have not been realized. The reverse has happened. Why? Because of the advantages offered by private aircraft over the regularly scheduled airlines, which suffered because of the crisis. Says *Business Week*: "Cutbacks in airline schedules, elimination of less-traveled routes, crowding of airplanes, and airport inconveniences such as security checks played into the hands of corporate aviation salesmen, who have always sold business aircraft as business machines . . . The industry, in fact, is looking at its biggest dollar year in history."

