

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

JULY 15, 1971

Semimonthly

DELIVERANCE FROM THE
AUTHORITY OF DARKNESS

WHAT KIND OF BREAD
FOR A HUNGRY WORLD?

THE APOSTLE WHO BECAME A THIEF

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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"CHRISTIANS are plundering Christians" is the title of a speech by Helder Câmara, the Catholic archbishop of Recife in Brazil.

Very similarly, German theologian Helmut Gollwitzer in the book *The Rich Christians and the Poor Lazarus* writes that "baptized ones are plundering unbaptized ones."

What do these churchmen mean?

English Methodist minister Colin Morris explains his view of the matter in this way: "The Church bears unlimited responsibility [toward the world's poor], for has she not for centuries trumpeted her guardianship of the little people of the earth?" Referring to "the small white Christian and Western minority" as the rich 20 percent of the world's population, while the remaining 80 percent are subject to famine and poverty, he writes:

"Compared with those hungry millions, the Church is as rich as Croesus and as money-conscious as Midas. We are a rich Church in a hungry world. That is why our message rings hollow and our influence declines."*

Have you personally heard churchmen

* *Include Me Out!*, Confessions of an Ecclesiastical Coward, by Colin Morris (London; 1968), pp. 57, 67, 89, 90.

WHAT KIND OF BREAD for a HUNGRY WORLD?

voice such criticism? More and more persons today have. They are hearing sermons saying that 'it is time the churches stop debating and start to act.' 'It is deeds that are wanted,' says minister Morris; the poor and hungry 'cannot eat our words,' so give them bread. Yes, more and more churchmen are saying that this is the primary way 'to follow Jesus in our day.'

Is it? What would you say? Surely you long to see poverty and hunger erased from the earth, do you not? But could there be a better, more effective way to help the world's poor and hungry than the way these churchmen urge?

If you want to be a true follower of Jesus Christ, you need to know. What can you do, what *should* you do as a real Christian? Consider first some of the methods that those calling themselves "revolutionary theologians" or "secular theologians" are advocating today.

METHODS OF MODERN THEOLOGIANS

Often they refer to German theologian Bonhoeffer, who, before he was executed by the Nazis in 1945, suggested "that the first step is for the Church to dispose of all its property for the benefit of those in dire need." Ordinary church charity,

called "caritas," will not do anymore, they say. "Caritas in the traditional sense, that is, relief of distress by means of charity, is not sufficient . . . because the distress is far too big."—*The Rich Christians and the Poor Lazarus*.

Is that all? No, something else is needed, they say, and that is political effort. Writes Catholic Archbishop Helder Câmara: "If we Latin-American Christians would accept our responsibility for the underdevelopment in this continent, then we can and must work to promote radical change everywhere in the community, especially in politics and education." At the conference of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala, Sweden, in July 1968, the same signal was heard.

The aim is to change the unjust society. Archbishop Câmara prefers nonviolent actions, such as those of the movement for racial integration of which Martin Luther King was a leader. Other ministers and theologians, however, say violent revolution may be necessary. German theologian Gollwitzer writes in his book that "the normal and most obvious attitude for the Christian is absolute pacifism." But as a secondary alternative he states: "Out of responsible love to those that suffer, he will in a given situation decide to use revolutionary violence."

How do they try to support such methods as being Christian? By asserting that Jesus Christ was a revolutionary! Methodist clergyman Morris states that the Church is 'on the wrong side of the barricade in the revolution of our time,' by not taking a stand for the underprivileged classes. He claims that 'Jesus is on the opposite side of that barricade, there can be no doubt about it, for he is a revolutionary.'

Are these conclusions and the methods based on them sound? Or is it a case of mixing truth with error? The Bible shows

that Christians must love, not just with words, but "in deed and truth." (1 John 3:18) But what kind of deeds? Changing an unjust society by political action or even by "revolutionary violence"? Was Jesus a 'revolutionary' principally concerned with providing material food for people or did he do an even more vital work with a nobler purpose? What are the facts?

SEPARATING TRUTH FROM ERROR

That "plundering" has been done and that Christendom's churches bear a responsibility cannot honestly be denied. History shows that in many lands Christendom's churches and church leaders leagued with and favored the wealthy over the poor. It shows that often the churches themselves became very wealthy. In Mexico, for example, the Catholic Church at one time owned by far the majority of the land in the entire country. Perhaps you have read in the newspapers reports on the great wealth of certain church organizations in your own land. Now some churchmen are confessing the responsibility that lies at the door of their churches and on the shoulders of their church members for much of the world's poverty. They feel guilty and rightly so.

But, even though such plunderers can be counted among the "baptized," are these churchmen right in calling them "Christians"? Do *genuine* Christians share their guilt? And is the distribution of 'bread instead of words' what will correct the 'hollowness of the churches' message' and the worldwide 'decline of their influence' that these churchmen are so worried about? Is that the example Christ Jesus set?

A WRONG INTERPRETATION

It is only by drastically twisting the content of many Biblical passages that these theologians can give this impression of Je-

sus' purpose and example. For instance, they often (as at the world conference in Uppsala), refer to Jesus' words at Matthew 25:40: "To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

They interpret those words to mean that the 'least of Jesus' brothers' are all the people in the world who suffer distress. And so, they believe, the Christian is obligated to give them food, drink, clothes, medical help and so forth. The best way to do this, some believe, is through a political effort, through help to the developing countries and the like. They say Jesus is to be identified with every needy person that one might happen to meet, even if such a distressed person is "prone to say and do what by any Biblical standard is plain evil."*

But who does Jesus say his brothers are? At Matthew 12:50 he says: "Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother." Jesus' "brothers," including even the "least" ones, are, of course, his disciples; consequently they are the Christian congregation.

Now, read for yourself Jesus' words at Matthew 25:31-46. Who are the ones gathered in front of the throne of the king, to be separated into two flocks, the "goats" and the "sheep"? Yes, who are those being judged according to the help they gave Christ's brothers? Not Christ's congregation but the nations of the earth, persons *outside* the Christian congregation, who are judged by the way they act toward the congregation, formed of Christ's brothers.

That this is the correct understanding of Jesus' words is very clearly shown by what he said on another occasion, as related at Matthew 10:40-42: "He that receives you receives me also, and he that

receives me receives him also that sent me forth. . . . whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, I tell you truly, he will by no means lose his reward." So, it is not simply a matter of helping a poor person because he is poor, but is one of helping a Christian disciple "because he is a disciple." It is, then, a matter of recognizing the disciple for what he is, accepting his message, taking sides with him by also becoming Christ's disciple.

So rather than describe the Christians as "the rich" who are to help the poor people in the world in a material way, Jesus' words at Matthew 25, on the contrary, show it is the people in the world who have an opportunity to help Christ's spiritual brothers who are in need. In this way these non-Christians can show they are on the side of the true Christian message.

People who are not Christ's spiritual brothers, then, can, in other words, help these Christian witnesses in a quite literal way with food, drink, clothes, and medical aid and by visiting them in prisons. For true Christians will very often be in situations where such help is highly welcome, especially in countries where they are persecuted and imprisoned. Jesus' words cannot be used to prove that the Christian ministry should aim primarily at supplying the material needs of the poor people of the world.

WRONG VIEW OF CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION

Why do the theologians interpret these words of Jesus incorrectly? Is it not because they assume that "the small white . . . and Western minority" made up of the rich in the world are the true Christian congregation? Is the error not that they believe that the churches of Christendom and all their members are true Christians?

* *Include Me Out!*, p. 81.

Some of these theologians can see that there has been a turning away from true Christianity, but apparently they do not draw the full consequence of this knowledge.

One of them, Methodist Colin Morris, understands that such turning away possibly took place back in history when "whole communities [could] be baptized into the name of Jesus." Then the Church became "a powerful institution, instead of remaining a small minority of personal witnesses in whom word and act were perfectly joined." But he does not accept the consequence of this train of thought, namely: that the churches of Christendom are not identical with the Christian congregation.

The attempt by these theologians to renew and awaken the churches of Christendom thus rests on a wrong foundation. The large passive laity they are trying to activate are not true Christians. So the job is not merely one of making them active. It is to make them real Christians.

NOT WITH BREAD

Previously, the churches of Christendom made entire nations "Christian" by political means. But they did not make the individuals true Christians, for real Bible knowledge and genuine appreciation of what Christianity really means was usually missing. These people became Christians only in name. Many people today are church members because they have been christened as babies and not because they have taken a personal stand for the teachings of the Bible. They are Christians in name only. Some have become church members because of the social advantages connected with it. They too are Christians only in name.

When the efforts of Christendom's missionaries consisted of giving medical help, distributing food and giving advice with

regard to agriculture, their converts often became "rice Christians," that is, people who have pretended interest in Christianity in order to get rice or other help. A well-known religious weekly, *The Christian Century*, wrote in 1960: "New Roman Catholic churches which were built in places [in Formosa (Taiwan)] where there was no Catholic population were equipped for storage and distribution of relief supplies. . . . Priests used the U.S. surplus commodities that came to them so cheaply as come-ons for converts and stay-ons for the come-ons."

The same religious weekly wrote on February 20, 1960, that there were, at that time, no more "rice Christians" on the Chinese mainland. Judging from this information, you can conclude that since it is now Mao Tse-tung who gives people rice, they now believe in him. "Rice Christians" are not real Christians. These or similar methods do not produce true Christians.

JESUS' EXAMPLE

Only by following Jesus' example can Christians help others to become true Christians. Jesus was primarily a preacher and a teacher. He said: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (John 18:37) His miracles, his healing the sick, his feeding the hungry and resurrecting dead ones, were to serve as signs that he was the Messiah, the One who was sent by God and whose words people should listen to. The miracles were at the same time evidence of what he as King in God's kingdom in due time will do, to the everlasting good of mankind.

But apart from his offering his life as a ransom, the most important part of Jesus' ministry nineteen hundred years ago was what he *said*, the words he spoke. He spoke life-giving words that he had heard from God, words, which, if heeded, could

lead one, not simply to bread for a meal or two, but to the greatest of goals—ever-lasting life. To some, to whom he had miraculously given bread on the previous day, Jesus said: "Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for life everlasting."—John 6:27.

When Jesus sent out his disciples, he did not send them out with material bread but with spiritual food, the word of life. He said: "The sayings that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (John 6:63) It would become known that they were the true Christian congregation because they followed Jesus' example. Jesus' congregation of true disciples still exists and still consists of "a minority of personal witnesses." As regards the world of man-

kind, its task, its assignment, is this: "In all the nations the good news has to be preached first," and "make disciples of people of all the nations . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Mark 13:10; Matt. 28:19, 20.

Only this congregation can make genuine Christians out of people, and only it can make them active in the true Christian ministry. Only in cooperation with this congregation will the individual be able to do proper acts of love, in harmony with God's will and to the eternal good of the needy of the world. The most important thing for each individual is to find the true Christian congregation, to take a personal stand for true Christianity and to associate with this congregation.

How

the True Church Helps

TRUE Christianity has survived in a "minority of personal witnesses," a true Christian congregation that has kept in mind what its commission of work means. Thereby it has been able to make true disciples of Christ out of people instead of merely making them "rice Christians" or Christians in name only.

The true Christian congregation is not a "rich Church." And since its members, each and every one, are witnesses who serve personally by going directly to the people in their homes, as Jesus and his apostles did, they are able to reach people's hearts with their message, even those who are afflicted with hunger and poverty.

The Christian witnesses usually share

the circumstances of the people among whom they serve. Yet they expend their very limited funds to bring God's Word to the common people. The popular claim: "One cannot preach to a hungry man; he wants bread, not words," is not universally true. Jesus Christ himself declared: "*Everyone* that is on the side of the truth listens to my voice."—John 18:37.

In any emergency situation, of course, the Christian witness will help if he is personally able to do so, as Jesus taught in the parable of the neighborly Samaritan. (Luke 10:29-37) But the true Christian will not forget that he has a commission to preach God's kingdom.

THE REAL SOLUTION

So, then, what should you do if you want to follow the example of God's Son? You must be merciful and compassionate, true. But how can you best show that mercy and compassion? Would you, for example, throw a matchstick to a man drowning in the middle of a stormy sea? Hardly. Yet the efforts of churchmen to solve the problems of the world of mankind by concentrating on material giving are very much like that. They only scratch the surface as to bringing true relief. For, as long as selfishness and greed continue, poverty and hunger will follow.

Yes, an entire world system needs to be changed. But how? Political action may change governmental structures. But can it change the hearts of men? Is that not where the problem lies?

Churchmen who urge their parishioners to join in political activity and reform movements are simply trying to sew patches on an old worn-out garment. But Jesus showed that true Christianity is not a case of patching up an old garment. (Matt. 9:16, 17) And, instead of patching up this present world system with all its injustices, its inequalities, its greed and oppression, God is going to discard it as no good, worthy to be destroyed. In its place he will bring in a new system, founded on righteousness and justice. Of his Son, who will head that righteous rule over earth, the prophecy says: "And with righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with uprightness he must give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth. . . . and with the spirit of his lips he will put the wicked one to death." Then and then only will poverty and hunger disappear from the earth.—Isa. 11:4, 5; 2 Pet. 3:13.

SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL ASSISTANCE

The help that the Christian is able to give, then, is not just of a temporary nature, but is of more lasting value, since

it is true that "man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth or through Jehovah's mouth." —Matt. 4:4.

The one who receives the word of life brought to him by a Christian witness will gain something to live for. He gets a hope. He sees meaning in life. He understands that he himself can be of some value and that he can be used to help others. This gives him the desire to live a decent life. He gains self-respect. Before hopelessness may have made him apathetic, made him neglect his family, disregard his duties or perhaps even caused him to give himself up to self-destroying vices—a situation that material help alone cannot remedy—but he now gets a purpose in life.

He may still be poor, but he will not be miserable. He has started a completely new life where spiritual values are the most important thing and 'the seeking of God's kingdom and of his righteousness' comes first. (Matt. 6:33) He will associate with the Christian congregation and he will get friends there. He will learn the importance of industriousness and cleanliness. He will learn moderation, and instead of wasting his money, he will learn to do good with it.

If he should find himself in real need, the congregation will help. (Jas. 2:15, 16) Yes, even if their brothers in a whole country come into need the Christian witnesses in other lands will do all they can to help them. In this way the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia in the first century helped the needy Christians in Judea, where there was a famine. (Acts 11:28, 29; Rom. 15:26) And after the same pattern Jehovah's Christian witnesses, for example, in the United States in 1945 sent large quantities of clothes and food to their fellow believers in Germany who had been freed from the concentration camps.

In like manner, on numerous occasions

the Christian witnesses of Jehovah have given physical and humane help when catastrophes and disasters have struck, as when they supplied aid for their Christian brothers in Peru after the earthquake in May 1970.

Giving such material help, however, is not the *main* commission of the congregation. The main commission of the congregation is to be a light to the world of mankind, by the lives they live and by preaching God's kingdom and helping those who seek that kingdom to become true Christians.

CORRECT VIEW OF DISTRESS IN WORLD

The true Christian congregation thus keeps clearly in mind its main commission and maintains the right view of the distress in the world. It does not close its eyes to the misery and does not act deaf toward the cry for merciful help, but with confidence in God it gives the help that it is able and is commissioned to give.

Christians must serve lovingly in the world and help where they can. Trusting in God, they must, however, keep their commission clearly in mind. If they take on a task other than the one they have been given, they will fall short in two ways: In the first place, they will not be able to fulfill the task they have taken on themselves, since their work will not be blessed by Jehovah. (Ps. 127:1) And in the second place, they will neglect the work that they should have been doing and thereby prove to be false Christians. No, to be true Christians they must never lose from sight the fact that the good news about God's kingdom is the most vital provision they can give the people.

True, they see much distress and misery that they are not able to do anything about. How can they stand the sight of all this? The same question was asked by the late news editor Niels Jørgensen, writ-

ing about Jehovah's Christian witnesses whom he met in the German concentration camps. He said:

"Without losing courage and without compromising their conviction, these men had lived for years in German concentration camps. . . . The Bible Students who were generally respected in the concentration camps . . . submitted to their trials patiently and with a peculiar gladness of heart because they had been found worthy of walking in the footsteps of Christ and of bearing the same sufferings as their Lord and Master had once borne in a wicked world. There is only one thing about the attitude of these people that I cannot understand—and even less today than at the time when I first met them in deep respect for their mental strength. That is how they could bear to see others suffer so terribly without being weighed down to the ground with the burden of sympathy."

The answer is: They have confidence that someday very soon now Jehovah will intervene and in a perfect way do away with all misery and distress. Millions who have died in our time and in years past, "both the righteous and the unrighteous," will come to life again and get the opportunity during Christ's thousand-year reign to show their attitude toward Christ and his Messianic kingdom.—Acts 24:15.

Now, if you are not convinced that God will and is able to intervene, your only trust will be man's own groping efforts. Then everything will, indeed, look purposeless and hopeless. But that need not be the case. Avail yourself of the help God's Christian witnesses give. Learn the truths of God's Word, the Bible, and you will have a firm foundation for a strong faith.

God's true church or congregation will remain a minority of personal witnesses. It does not have a passive laity. All are active, absorbed in serving others in a

loving way. This congregation is keeping free of this world, in accordance with Jesus' words: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) Its Christianity is not "of the world," worldly or "secular." Therefore, it will not take on political tasks. It will not allow itself to be sidetracked or employed with other tasks than the one with which it has been entrusted. It must all the time hold the true hope of God's kingdom before people of the world.

The most important thing for you, for every individual—including the poor and afflicted—is to enter into a right relationship with God and Christ. To that end the Christian witnesses of Jehovah are sent into the world, not with material bread, which would be only a temporary help, but with spiritual food, the word of life. These words from God will open the way to peace with Him, and at the same time the way to eternal life in God's new order, when there will be plenty for all.

THE APOSTLE WHO BECAME A THIEF

JAS anyone ever stolen anything from you? How did you feel about it? Whoever stole it was a thief, and nobody likes a thief.

Did you know that one of Jesus' apostles became a thief? His name was Judas Iscariot.

Judas knew the things it was right to do. Even when he was a small boy he had heard the law of God. He knew that once God had even spoken from heaven with a big voice and told his people: "You must not steal." Judas knew that God's law was right.—Ex. 20:15.

When he grew up he met the Great Teacher. Judas liked the things that Jesus said. Judas became a disciple of Jesus. Later, Jesus even picked Judas to be one of his twelve apostles.

Jesus and his apostles spent much time together. They traveled together. They ate together. And money for the group was

An article specially designed for parents to read with their children

kept together in a box. Jesus gave that box to Judas to take care of.

Of course, the money did not belong to Judas. Jesus was the one who would tell him how to use it. But do you know what Judas did after a while? He started to take money from the box when he wasn't supposed to. He would take it when the others were not looking. He became a thief. Now he began to think about money all the time. He tried to find ways to get more of it.

One day a woman took some very fine oil and used it on Jesus' feet to make him feel good. But Judas complained. He said that the oil should have been sold so they would have more money to give to poor people. Really he wanted to get more money in the box so he could steal it. What do you think of a person like that?—John 12:1-6.

Jesus did not tell Judas right then that he was a thief. But he did tell him not

to make trouble for the woman who had been so kind. Judas did not like that. What would he do?

He should have felt sorry. He should have told Jesus that he had been stealing, and he should have put the money back. But, instead, he did something terrible.

He went to the chief priests, who were enemies of Jesus. They wanted to arrest Jesus. But they wanted to do it at night so people would not see them. Judas told them: 'I will tell you how you can get Jesus, if you give me money. How much will you give me?' The priests said: 'We will give you thirty pieces of silver!' That was a lot of money.—Matt. 26:14-16.

Wicked Judas took the money. It was just as if he was selling the Great Teacher to those men. Can you imagine anyone doing such a terrible thing? Well, that is the kind of thing that happens when a person becomes a thief. He loves money more than he loves God.

Now, let's be sure that we understand this matter clearly. To understand what a thief is, we need to know what it means to own something. People own things because they have worked for them. Or they bought them with money. Or maybe they were given to them as gifts.

When your father works he gets paid money for it. Does he own that money? Yes, because he worked for it. It is not yours; it is his.

With that money he buys the things in your home. He owns them. Because he owns them, he has the right to say who may use them. He tells you if you can play with them

or not. And he probably lets your mother tell you this too.

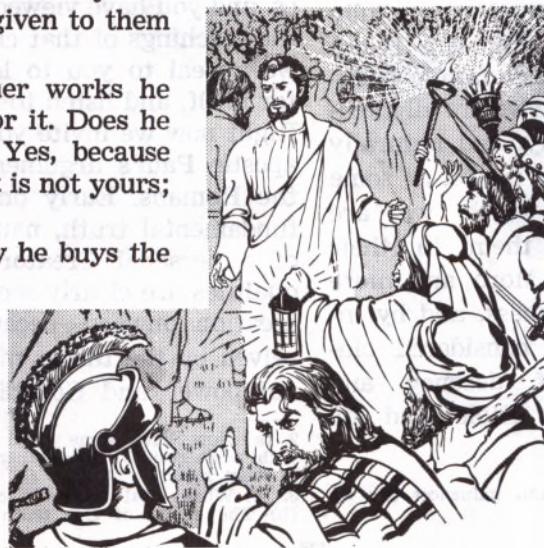
Sometimes you go to play with other children in their house, don't you? The things in their house belong to their father. Would it be all right to take something from their house and carry it to your house? Not unless their father or mother tells you that you can. If you carry something home without asking them, that would be stealing.

Why does a person steal? Well, he may see something that belongs to another person. Perhaps it is a bicycle. The more he looks at that bicycle and thinks about it, the more he likes it. If he is not a loving person, he does not care how the other person feels. So he may hit the other person and try to take the bicycle away from him. Or he may wait until the other person is not looking. Then he takes the bicycle away. What is he really doing? He is stealing.

Maybe the other person doesn't see him steal the bicycle. But someone sees him do it. Do you know who? Jehovah God sees him do it. God sees that he is a thief.

It does not make any difference if the other person has many things or just a few. Some people go to a store and see lots of things there. They see something that they want very much. They may tell themselves that nobody will miss just one. So they take it, but they do not pay for it. Is that right? No, it is stealing.

When people do that, they are being like Judas. Because Judas was a thief! Let's be sure that we are never like him.



Deliverance

FROM THE AUTHORITY OF DARKNESS

"He delivered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love."
—Col. 1:13.

MOST people, whether aware of it or not, are very much affected by the surroundings and influences of their childhood, including all their inherited traits. Because of the prevailing spirit of independence and rebellion against established authority and those in control, many young people today feel that they can kick over the traces and successfully resist all such influences. But this is not true. Besides our immediate family background, in the wider sense we are all members of the human family, and naturally tend to go along with the crowd, or some particular section to which we are attached, and imitate them in their attitudes and behavior. More and more this is marked by selfishness, and by indifference to what are considered old-fashioned standards of decency and morality, including the Bible and its standards.

1. What kind of surroundings and influences are we up against?

Thus, by nature and through birth, we are all children of the one large family and, humanly speaking, it seems impossible either to avoid or to overcome its many bad influences. Some have tried to start a new way of life, one that is entirely good, only to find themselves copying and falling in line with one or another of the prevailing patterns of thinking and of conduct. So you might well ask: "Is there no hope? Is there nothing I can do to change things, at least for myself?" Yes, there is hope. There is something you can do. Strange as it may seem, you can transfer to a different family. You have the choice of a different parent. Instead of brushing this aside as fanciful and incredible, we invite you to consider with us the reasons given as a basis for making these statements. At the outset, however, we can truly and sincerely say that many hundreds of thousands from all nationalities and walks of life have already done just that. They have transferred to a new family, and chosen a new parent, with tremendous benefit to themselves. How have they done this?

You may, or may not, be familiar with the Bible. Perhaps your only contact has been through one of Christendom's churches, and you have viewed the Bible through the teachings of that church. In any case, we appeal to you to let the Bible speak for itself, and listen to what it has to say. Right now we invite your attention to the apostle Paul's argument in his letter to the Romans. Early on, he establishes a fundamental truth, namely, the existence of a personal Creator, whose "invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." Unless this is

2. (a) How have some tried to change things, and with what result? (b) Is there a basis for hope, and of what kind?
3. (a) What vital truth is of primary importance? (b) The denial of this truth leads to what results?

acknowledged, there can be no transfer as above mentioned. This vital truth is often disputed and denied today, as Paul warned. Speaking of God, he tells of those who "did not glorify him as God nor did they thank him, but they became empty-headed in their reasonings and their unintelligent heart became darkened . . . who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and venerated and rendered sacred service to the creation rather than the One who created." Paul then tells of the outcome: "That is why God gave them up to disgraceful sexual appetites . . . And just as they did not approve of holding God in accurate knowledge, God gave them up to a disapproved mental state, to do the things not fitting." How true those words are today! Surely all of such are under the authority of darkness.—Rom. 1:20-28.

⁴ The apostle stressed the same truth when speaking to the Athenians on Mars Hill, but notice the hope he gave us in these words: "He [God] made out of one man every nation of men, . . . and he decreed the appointed times and the set limits of the dwelling of men, for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us." (Acts 17:26, 27) To help us in our groping, God has given us his Word, the Bible, as a 'lamp to our feet, and a light to our roadway.' (Ps. 119:105) The Bible is not just a collection of good books by good men. It is of divine authorship in its entirety. It is the Word of the personal, living Creator. Yes, God is alive, and "the word of God is alive." It will guide and protect us, lest we "should fall in the same pattern of disobedience," as described at Romans 1:21-28. With these things in mind, let us follow the argument further in the letter to the Romans.—Heb. 4:11-13.

4. What provision has God made for those seeking him, and how should it be viewed?

⁵ As members of the human family, we are all imperfect, due to our first parent, Adam. Created in the image of God, and recognized as his earthly son, he lost that happy relationship for himself and his offspring by his willful disobedience. (Gen. 1:26; Luke 3:38) As Paul says: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Rom. 5:12) But, as just reminded, we have grounds for hope. Is it possible that God has made the way open for a restoration, or transfer, back to a peaceful relationship with him, as children of his family? We are encouraged to entertain this hope when Paul next tells of God's "free gift." He makes a series of fine contrasts, and commences by saying: "But it is not with the gift as it was with the trespass. For if by one man's trespass many died, the undeserved kindness of God and his free gift with the undeserved kindness by the one man Jesus Christ abounded much more to many." (Rom. 5:15-21) How this works out is explained earlier at Romans 3:23-25: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus. God set him forth as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood."

—See also 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

⁶ To whom is this "free gift" made available? Who are these who are "declared righteous . . . through faith in his [Christ's] blood"? To appreciate this, we must keep in mind that Paul, in his letters, was writing to Christians, who collectively made up the "congregation of God." (1 Cor. 11:22) He knew that for centuries his own kinsmen, the Israelites,

5. (a) Why is the human family in desperate need?
(b) What free gift has been provided, and how does it work out?

6. Why was Paul disturbed over the Israelites, and was their rejection total?

"my relatives according to the flesh," had been God's chosen people, and had been brought into covenant relationship with God. With the advent of their Messiah, Jesus Christ, they could expect to enter into still closer relationship, as Paul intimated when he said of them: "To whom belong the adoption as sons." But this very thing gave Paul "great grief and unceasing pain." (Rom. 9:2-5) This was because, as a nation, they "stumbled on the 'stone of stumbling,'" Christ Jesus. (Rom. 9:32; see also 1 Peter 2:7-10.) They violently rejected God's beloved Son as their Messiah, causing him to be impaled on the torture stake, and put to open shame. Hence God cast them off, but not with a total rejection. "God did not reject his people, whom he first recognized." After Paul refers to Elijah, at the time when God reminded Elijah, saying: "I have left seven thousand men over for myself, men who have not bent the knee to Baal," then Paul continues: "In this way, therefore, at the present season also a remnant has turned up according to a choosing due to undeserved kindness."—Rom. 11:2-5.

THE TRUE ISRAEL

⁷ Was God's purpose to fail because the great majority of the Jews were so lacking in faith, and so bitterly opposed to God's means of salvation through Christ Jesus? "Never may that happen!" (Rom. 3:3, 4) Paul gives the vital key as to who actually comprise God's chosen people, and the conditions that must be met in order to be recognized as his children, members of his family. He does this from both the individual and the national viewpoints. First, he explains that "he is not a Jew who is one on the outside, nor is circumcision that which is on the outside upon the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that

of the heart by spirit, and not by a written code." (Rom. 2:28, 29) Paul later applies the same principle to the nation as a whole, saying: "For not all who spring from Israel are really 'Israel.' . . . That is, the children in the flesh are not really the children of God, but the children by the promise are counted as the seed," as was illustrated in the case of Isaac. (Rom. 9:6-8) In other words, the time had come when being members of God's chosen people, forming the true "Israel," did not depend on fleshly descent in the normal course. Rather, God purposed to have a *spiritual* Israel, the members of which are transferred into his family by a special operation of his holy spirit, and on meeting certain requirements. Only a few, a remnant, of fleshly Israel showed faith in accepting Jesus as God's anointed One. Therefore, as Paul shows, God turned to the "people of the nations," the non-Jews, to give them the opportunity of making up the predetermined number of spiritual Israel, the Christian congregation.—Rom. 11:12.

⁸ Membership in the Christian congregation is strictly limited in number. Jesus spoke of them as a "little flock," and three times in the book of Revelation the actual number is given as 144,000. (Luke 12:32; Rev. 7:4; 14:1, 3) Are these the only ones who make up God's family? Are no others spoken of in the Bible as God's children? If so, there would not seem to be much purpose in further discussing this comparatively small body of people, unless one had definite evidence of one's membership therein. Paul, at Romans 8:14-17, tells of this evidence, saying that "all who are led by God's spirit, these are God's sons. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out: 'Abba, Fa-

7. To aid in identifying the true Israel, what deep truth did Paul disclose?

8. Is membership limited in the spiritual Israel, and what is the evidence of membership?

ther!" He then goes on to tell of their heavenly hope of being "joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together."—See also Revelation 20:6.

⁹ Happily, however, Paul does not leave the matter there. The calling and selection of those who make up the true church, and leaving all the rest of the human family to be written off as lost, if not also as consigned to eternal torment, as taught by many of Christendom's creeds—this is certainly not the Bible teaching. In proof of this, notice what Paul goes on to say after mentioning the above-mentioned heavenly hope. He says that "the eager expectation of the creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God . . . [and] that the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." Showing that by the word "creation" he has the entire human family in mind, as distinct from the Christian congregation, Paul next says: "For we know that *all creation* keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now. Not only that, but we ourselves also who have the first fruits, namely, the spirit, yes, we ourselves groan within ourselves, while we are earnestly waiting for [the final] adoption as sons, the release from our bodies by ransom."—Rom. 8:19-23.

¹⁰ What a glorious conception and description of the outworking of God's purpose! At the same time, it recognizes the pressures and sufferings that cause all of us to groan. In addition, what makes this a matter of intense interest is the fact that this "eager expectation" is about to be fulfilled! In 1914 the great change in the sovereignty of this world took place. "Loud voices occurred in heaven, saying: 'The

kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever.'" Next, there was announced the arrival of "the appointed time for the dead to be judged." (Rev. 11:15, 18) As other scriptures show that judgment starts with the house of God, this meant the resurrection from the sleep of death for those of the Christian congregation who had 'proved faithful even to death.' Shortly, these will be closely associated with Christ Jesus in heaven in bruising the head of the serpent, Satan the Devil, after God's war at Armageddon. Thus these "sons of God," with Christ Jesus, the foremost "Son of God," will be revealed.—1 Pet. 4:17; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7, 10; Rev. 2:10; 16:14-16; 19:11-20:3; Rom. 16:20; John 1:34.

¹¹ Following that, during the thousand-year reign of Christ, and his "bride" (the 144,000) sharing with him, all mankind will be "set free from enslavement" of every kind, including even death. They will realize that they have been restored to a family relationship with God, as John heard announced: "The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them." (Rom. 8:21; Rev. 21:1-4) At the same time, they will realize that the immediate rulership of the kingdom is in the hands of Christ Jesus, and that their release from the domination of Satan, the ruler of 'the authority of darkness,' and from sin and death, has been made possible "through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:2; Col. 1:13; John 1:29; Rom. 3:24) Instead of inheriting death from their first parent, Adam, they will receive perfect human life from "the last Adam," Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:45) He

9. (a) Is there any hope for the rest of the human family? If so, what? (b) Whom did Paul refer to when speaking of "creation" at Romans 8:19-23?

10. What "eager expectation" is about to be fulfilled? By what events since 1914?

11. (a) What freedom from enslavement will mankind enjoy during Christ's reign? (b) How will Christ Jesus prove to be the "Eternal Father"?

will be their life-giver, their father. As foretold: "The princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called . . . Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." All of this will be accomplished by the "very zeal of Jehovah of armies." This is a thrilling prospect indeed, but you do not have to wait.—Isa. 9:6, 7.

A PRESENT DELIVERANCE

¹² In reply to the disciples' question: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" Jesus foretold certain activities that would take place under his direction, following his enthronement in 1914. Since that time there has been a remnant of the Christian congregation still on earth, who, through the ministry of the angels, and a trumpetlike call, have been gathered into a close unity. This has led to the clear identification of "the faithful and discreet slave" class, appointed over all Christ's Kingdom interests. Also, since his enthronement, attended by "all the angels with him," he has, through the Kingdom message given as a witness to all the nations, caused a separation of the people "one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." (Matt. 24:3, 14, 31, 45-47; 25:31, 32) In other words, there has already occurred an identifying "of the sons of God," those with the heavenly hope. So growing numbers of "all creation" have gladly recognized these spiritual "brothers" of Christ Jesus, and have ministered and done good things to them, as Jesus foretold at Matthew 25:34-40. These growing numbers constitute a "great crowd . . . out of all nations," pictured as "before the throne of God," enjoying his favor, and "rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple," that is, at the spiritual temple

12. (a) What events have already led to an identifying of the sons of God? (b) Who have recognized this, resulting in what blessings?

that God pitched, and in close unity with the "temple" class of Christ's "brothers." This is the happy experience of Jehovah's witnesses, and is in full harmony with Jesus' words at John 10:16: "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold [of the "little flock"]; those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, [under] one shepherd."—Rom. 8:19, 22; Heb. 8:2; 9:11; Rev. 7:9, 15; Eph. 2:21, 22.

¹³ How can you become one of these "other sheep"? First, as Jesus said, you must listen responsively to his voice, and become one of his disciples. The big step, as far as you are concerned, is that of whole-souled dedication to Jehovah God, following Jesus' example. (Ps. 40:8; Rom. 12:1) You are encouraged, but not forced or pressured, to take this step. It must be your choice, your freewill expression of faith in the provision of the ransom sacrifice, and of your gratitude and devotion to Jehovah. In this way you are transferred to a new family, and become one of God's children. It might be said that you have chosen a new parent, for with deep appreciation you can join with others of God's "sheep" in addressing him as "Our Father." (Matt. 6:9) The clergy and people of Christendom regularly repeat the Lord's Prayer, and talk about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, but it is largely a formality, and a mockery in view of the prevailing conditions and spirit throughout Christendom.

¹⁴ As to freedom from enslavement, it is important to appreciate the true position in this regard. Sometimes Paul's words are quoted as being the Christian's actual experience in hard fact, when he said: "I really delight in the law of God according to the man I am within, but I

13. How can one become one of Christ's "other sheep," leading to what new relationship?

14. (a) How might a negative view be taken of Paul's words at Romans 7:18-23? (b) How does the context help to give a more balanced view?

behold in my members another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my members." (Rom. 7:22, 23) If this is the last word on the subject, then the position is indeed negative and frustrating. Let us, however, take a look at the context. Though Paul is writing to Christians with the heavenly hope, the same principles hold true for all Jehovah's dedicated people. At Romans 5:21 Paul says: "Just as sin ruled as king with death, likewise also undeserved kindness might rule as king through righteousness with everlasting life in view through Jesus Christ our Lord." Paul then shows that our present life is closely linked with Christ in heaven, and that "just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, we also should likewise walk in a newness of life," here and now. Paul later speaks of the "fruit that you used to have [as slaves of sin] . . . things of which you are now ashamed," and then Paul adds: "However, now, because you were set free from sin but became slaves to God, you are having your fruit [not mere wishful intentions] in the way of holiness, and the end everlasting life."—Rom. 6:4, 20-22.

¹⁵ Then, with empathy, Paul puts himself in the position of those Jewish Christians who argued that God's favor, for themselves and for Gentiles, finally depended on meeting the requirements of the Law given through Moses, including circumcision. Paul argues very strongly here and elsewhere, to show the hopelessness of such a position, and he cries out: "Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death?" Is there a rescuer? Yes! "Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"—Rom. 3:20; 7:1, 18-21, 24, 25; Gal. 3:10-14.

15. From whose viewpoint does Paul argue in Romans, chapter 7, and elsewhere?

¹⁶ Now notice how Paul goes on to describe the Christian's true position, with great emphasis on *life*, saying: "For the law of that spirit which gives life in union with Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death . . . the minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace . . . If, now, the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his spirit that resides in you." (Rom. 8:2, 6, 11) What a strong and positive position! Though God's spirit can operate in a special way, giving some the hope of life in heaven, yet that same active force can and does operate on behalf of all of Jehovah's dedicated witnesses. It sustains and strengthens the "other sheep" today to share in the ministry with the anointed remnant who are in the new covenant, "making the truth manifest" to all peoples, invigorating even their mortal bodies with the "power beyond what is normal." (2 Cor. 3:6; 4:2, 7) Granted, it is a daily battle with the flesh, but it need not be and should not be a losing battle. (Rom. 8:13) Granted, we are imperfect and daily need to ask for forgiveness of our shortcomings, but Jehovah has kindly made ample provision so that we can all maintain a clean standing before him. It is so effectual that it will "cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God." (Heb. 9:14; see also Revelation 7:14; 14:5.) These are among the benefits enjoyed by the many hundreds of thousands of Jehovah's witnesses, who, by dedication and water baptism, have come into God's family and, in a preliminary way, are enjoying the "glorious freedom of the children of God." All of

16. (a) How does Paul describe the Christian's true position, and with what emphasis? (b) In what way, and to what extent, can we take a positive outlook and course of action?

these can truly join with the apostle Paul in his cry of exultation, that nothing "will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"—Rom. 8: 21, 39.

¹⁷ It surely has been a great help and encouragement to pay heed to Paul and

17. From what other servant of Jehovah can we expect guidance and encouragement?

follow his line of reasoning, inspired by God's spirit. There was, however, another faithful servant who also enjoyed a unique relationship with Jesus, though with a different background and personality, and we will look forward to receiving further up-building counsel by paying attention to the apostle John and what he wrote under inspiration.

GOD'S CHILDREN IMITATE WHAT IS GOOD

WHAT child is there who does not love to get a seed of some kind, and put it in a jar, and watch the start of a new life? Every day the child will peer into it, viewing attentively the signs of growth. Grown-up people also take the keenest interest in learning all they can about how a new life gets started. The initial germ, or cell, is microscopic, yet it contains a complex code, or pattern, governing its future development. As the Bible says of each form of life, it produces "according to its kind." (Gen. 1:11, 12, 21, 24) The tremendous amount of energy stored up in that minute cell, with its potential of being endlessly renewed, also excites wonderment. Though much has been discovered, giving evidence of purpose and design, life is still a mystery. No wonder we love to peer at the beginning of a new life, whether human, or animal, or in plants. If it comes from good stock, it will follow the same pattern, and will imitate what is good.

¹⁸ The Bible reveals a similar attitude on the part of the angels. We can imagine

"Be an imitator, not of what is bad, but of what is good. He that does good originates with God."—3 John 11.

their intense interest in what Jehovah, the Creator, was causing to be done on our tiny planet, microscopic compared with the universe, when it was being prepared to sustain life in endless variety and beauty. It is recorded that, at that time, they "joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause." And what a thrill when they saw the climax of it all, the creation of man, "in God's image"—Job 38:7; Gen. 1:27.

¹⁹ That creative work was carried out through the "master worker," Jesus, in his prehuman existence, and he, too, found it to be of absorbing interest. God's Word speaks of him as then saying: 'I was glad at the productive land of his earth, and the things I was fond of were with the sons of men.' He has never lost that interest in the human family. Likewise with the angels. Speaking of God's purpose,

1. In what particular thing do old and young take keen interest, and why?

2. Did the angels show a similar interest? How is this indicated?

3. Was God's "master worker" likewise interested? Has this been maintained?

centered in Christ and his footstep followers, Peter says that "into these very things angels are desiring to peer."—Prov. 8:30, 31; Heb. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:12; see also Colossians 1:15, 16.

THE APOSTLE JOHN

⁴ Did the apostle John show a similar interest? Listen to the opening words of his first letter: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have viewed attentively and our hands felt, concerning the word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard we are reporting also to you, that you too may be having a sharing with us. Furthermore, this sharing of ours is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." There is no doubt of his interest, is there? And what a kindly invitation! He wants us, he wants you, to share with him. He desires that we should feel drawn to him, for he has worthwhile things to tell us, things that have warmed his heart, and will warm ours, and will help us in setting matters straight. As he says: "We are writing these things that our joy may be in full measure." Surely it will help us to look at these good things through his eyes, that we may learn to evaluate properly, and imitate, what is good.—1 John 1:1-4.

⁵ Will John's letter help us to get a deeper appreciation of our relationship with Jehovah? Will it help us to maintain that relationship in the face of adverse pressures, and subtle enticements? Why, his introduction, just quoted, indicates that very thing. But, first, let us introduce the writer himself. This will aid us to get a better understanding of what he wrote, and why he wrote it.

4. (a) How did John express his interest in the "word of life"? (b) Why should we feel drawn to John?

5. In what way do we expect to be helped by John's first letter?

⁶ What kind of man was John? He is often called the apostle of love, and rightly so, for the theme of love permeates his writings. Does this mean, as is sometimes said, that he had a gentle, serene disposition, with never a hard word? If you have that idea, you are in for a surprise. John thought in accord with his heart, as well as with his mind. He held strong views, accompanied with strong feelings, and was not afraid to express himself. He did not mince his words, or put on the soft pedal. To impress the force of his argument, and drive the point home, he often made use of a strong contrast. The question is, Are you prepared to take it, and face up to it? He wrote his three letters somewhere about 98 C.E., when he was well advanced in years, and could write with authority as a mature Christian. As a background, he had enjoyed extremely close association with Jesus during Jesus' entire ministry. John came closer to Jesus than anyone else. (Mark 1:19, 20; 5:37; John 13:23; 19:26, 27; 21:20) John was far from being gentle by natural disposition. Once, when the Samaritans refused to entertain Jesus, then John and his brother, James, asked him: "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and annihilate them?" Not for nothing did Jesus give those two brothers the surname "Boanérges, which means Sons of Thunder." There is no contradiction in this. True love, besides being kind and long-suffering, is marked by loyalty. John was intensely loyal. He wrote his letters when, as foretold, there were many who were proving disloyal.—Luke 9:54; Mark 3:17; Matt. 13:25; Acts 20:29, 30; 1 John 2:18.

6. (a) As indicated by his style of writing, what kind of man was John? (b) What was John's relationship with Jesus, and what surname was given John, and why?

GOD IS LIGHT

⁷ After his introduction, John comes straight to the point, saying: "This is the message which we have heard from him . . . that God is light and there is no darkness at all in union with him." (1 John 1:5) How did John hear this message? In his Gospel, John testified regarding Jesus: "The light is shining in the darkness, but the darkness has not overpowered it," and that Jesus gave authority to those exercising faith in him to become God's children. These were not born again by human birth, but were born from God by his spirit. (John 1:5, 12, 13) John then recorded how Jesus himself had confirmed this when talking to Nicodemus, who came, unseen, to Jesus at night. Jesus spoke to him about being "born from the spirit," and that "unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He also spoke of the "basis for judgment, that the light has come into the world but men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were wicked," and went on to contrast the one who hates and avoids the light with the one who "comes to the light, in order that his works may be made manifest as having been worked in harmony with God." This would disturb Nicodemus, for, though he had a certain love for the truth, his loyalty to it was overshadowed by the fear of man.—John 3:1-8, 19-21.

⁸ Thus we learn that light stands for truth and righteousness, in contrast with darkness, which stands for error and falsehood, and things wicked and unclean. We have also learned more about our deliverance from darkness, and being transferred into God's kingdom, and into his family, this signifying the start of a new life.—Col. 1:13.

7. (a) What was the message John heard, and from what source? (b) How did Jesus relate light and darkness to the basis for judgment?

8. What can we learn from John's Gospel respecting light and darkness, and our deliverance?

⁹ Following the principle laid down at 1 John 1:5, John proceeds to apply it as a direct challenge, saying: "If we make the statement: 'We are having a sharing with him,' and yet we go on walking in the darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth." He drives the point home, saying: "He that says: 'I have come to know him,' and yet is not observing his commandments, is a liar [Greek: *pseustes*], and the truth is not in this person." (1 John 1:6; 2:4) These repeated expressions: "If we make the statement," and "he that says," as at 1 John 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 6, show that John was keenly aware of the worsening conditions within the Christian congregation. The enemy had lost no time in sowing "weeds in among the wheat," men who "speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Matt. 13:25; Acts 20:30; see also James 4:1-4.) These ones claimed to be in the truth, but their actual deeds and course of action belied their claims, and proved them to be counterfeit, pseudo Christians, antichrists. John uses the words "lie" and "liar" a number of times, commencing at John 8:44, and on to Revelation 22:15. A liar is not one who, by mistake, utters a falsehood unintentionally. A liar is one who knowingly utters an untruth, designed to deceive and mislead. Lies and truth do not mix. John was intensely loyal to the truth. He knew that "no lie originates with the truth."—1 John 2:21.

¹⁰ How do these things apply to us today? It is not difficult to see how Christendom is composed largely of those who make a mere profession of being Christians. Jehovah's witnesses, however, take their stand entirely separate from Chris-

9. (a) Regarding 1 John 1:5, how did John apply this to his day? (b) With what significance did John make references to lies and liars?

10. (a) Why do we not expect a general falling away among true Christians? (b) Why does a careful watch still need to be kept?

tendom, a stand based solely on God's Word and its principles of truth and righteousness. We are assured that in this harvesttime, referred to by Jesus, there will not again be a large-scale falling away into apostasy. (Matt. 13:30, 43; 2 Thess. 2:3, 8) But we cannot afford to be indifferent. The same enemy, Satan, the dragon, is on the warpath, more wrathful than ever. The modern-day history of Jehovah's witnesses shows that attempts have been made by some, making up an "evil slave" class, to assume control over Jehovah's work and his people. This was especially seen during the World War I period. Jehovah, however, has cleansed his organization, and made it wholly theocratic. The credit is due to him, not to man. Individually, careful watch has still to be kept. The records show that, in our congregations, some need to be warned, others put on probation, and others have to be disfellowshiped. Why? Because, while claiming to be in the truth, they do not practice the truth. This often starts in a small way, but, if persisted in, it leads away from the light into the darkness outside.—Rev. 12:17; Matt. 24:48; 25:30.

¹¹ We need to be on guard. None of us are physically perfect. John says: "If we make the statement: 'We have no sin,' we are misleading ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This can be done because "we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, . . . [who] is a propitiatory sacri-

fice for our sins, yet not for ours only [of us with the heavenly hope] but also for the whole world's." (1 John 1:8-2:2) Yes, those with an earthly hope, the "great crowd" from all nations, "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14) John later makes the distinction between the "brother sinning a sin that does not incur death," for whom we can pray, and the deliberate, willful "sin that does incur death," for which we do not pray. "All unrighteousness is sin; and yet there is a sin that does not incur death." This shows that John was not an extremist, but was well balanced as a mature, older man.—1 John 5:16, 17.

GOD IS LOVE

¹² Closely linked with the definition that "God is light," John also says that "God is love." (1 John 4:8, 16) John first learned about this from the same source as previously mentioned. He recorded that Jesus said to Nicodemus: "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) The same truth is expressed at 1 John 4:9, 10. As before, John makes a direct application of this vital truth, saying: "Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another." He later drives the point home by way of a forceful contrast, saying: "If anyone makes the

11. How can an acceptable standing with Jehovah be maintained?

12. (a) Why are we under obligation to love one another? (b) Why is one who hates his brother in a dangerous position? What course should he take?

THE NEXT ISSUE

- How Christian Morals Are Viewed.
- The Christian Ministry—What Does It Include?
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statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar." (1 John 4:11, 20) In other words, if you have got your knife into your brother, if only one, deliberately avoiding and refusing to speak to that one, or to acknowledge him, or her, as a member of the congregation, then you are putting yourself in a very dangerous position. You are really acting as a judge, over and above the congregation. If Jehovah accepts that one as one of His family, can you afford to treat him, or her, as disfellowshiped as far as you are concerned, your face hardening if that one comes in sight? Could you afford for Jehovah to treat *you* on that basis? Perhaps you say that, in the first instance, it is your brother who has his knife into you. Well, painful though that may be, if it is admitted, it remains to be said that you must be the first to take your knife out of him. Do not imitate what is bad. If it is a matter of a strong dislike and bad feeling, keep looking for opportunities, perhaps in small ways, to show your desire to be friendly. If there is some grievance, not yet settled, then the course to be followed is clearly laid down at Matthew 18:15-17. John says: "By this we have come to know love, because that one surrendered his soul for us; and we are under obligation to surrender our souls for our brothers." That is the good example to imitate.—1 John 3:16.

¹³ This does not mean that we must treat all the brothers exactly alike. Jesus did not. It was manifest that there was a special bond between himself and John. But Jesus did not cold-shoulder any one of his followers, not even Judas Iscariot, right to the end. In evidence of this, none of his disciples had any idea, as far as Jesus' manner was concerned, as to who would betray him. Do not let us be too quick to be too right in our own eyes, too stubborn

13. Did Jesus cold-shoulder any of his followers? How can such a tendency be overcome?

in our own judgments. "He that hates his brother is in the darkness . . . and he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." To counteract any such tendency, let us practice what John says about being unselfish, thorough and practical, not shutting the door of our tender compassion when we see our brother in need. "Let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue [only], but in deed and truth."—1 John 2:11; 3:17, 18.

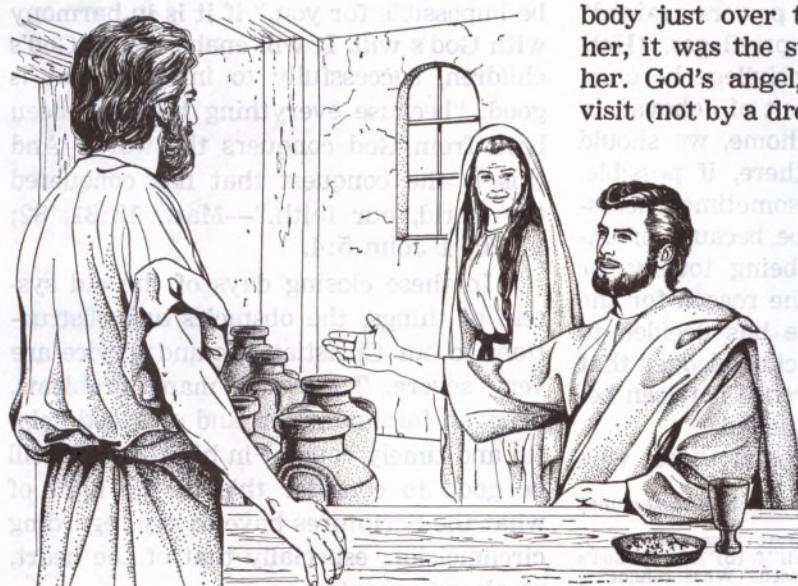
¹⁴ For our encouragement, note this grand word of John: "God is love, and he that remains in love remains in union with God and God remains in union with him. This is how love has been made perfect with us." (1 John 4:16, 17) To remain in love means to be determined and consistent in pursuing a course of action always governed by true, Godlike love. Due to imperfection and wrongful desires, one may stumble, but "the wicked one does not fasten his hold on him," causing him to abandon that course. Never may that happen! Rather, by proving steadfast, he "remains in union with God and God remains in union with him." How stimulating! To know that the true God, Jehovah, is in union with you, on your side, training you, making you firm and strong, leading you on to the finish, why, that gives you unshakable confidence and courage.—1 John 2:16; 5:18; see also John 10:27-30; 1 Peter 5:9, 10.

¹⁵ "So now, little children, remain in union with him." (1 John 2:28; see also John 17:20-26.) That theme runs throughout John's letter. We remain in union with God "when we are loving God and doing his commandments." (1 John 5:2) This requires determination. Jesus was deter-

14. What does it mean to remain in love, and what rich blessing does this bring?

15. (a) To prove our love for God requires what good qualities? (b) What is the distinction between being sensitive and being touchy? (c) When and how were the good qualities shown by Jesus and his mother?

mined. He was also keenly sensitive. Nothing escaped his notice. Though sensitive to a perfect degree, he was in no way touchy, or easily offended, because he was in no way proud, or self-opinionated. He had no self-pity. These qualities were shown in an interesting way by Jesus, also by his mother, Mary, when at a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. (John 2:1-11) To everyone's embarrassment, the wine ran short. Jesus' mother said to him: "They have no wine." She did not drop her voice, speaking in a matter-of-fact way. She evidently raised her voice in question form, and Jesus was at once fully aware of what was in her mind: "They have no wine. Are you not going to do something?" Though overstepping the mark in attempting to direct Jesus in his ministry, he did not take it as a personal offense. Instead, he firmly, yet kindly, replied: "What have I to do with you, woman? My hour has not yet come." What was her reaction? Did she bridle up and



When the wine ran out at a wedding feast, both Jesus and his mother showed determination and sensitivity without being touchy—and Jesus performed his first miracle

say: "That is not a very nice way to speak to your mother, in front of these servants"? Instead, showing her determination, she went right ahead with what was in her mind, and said to the servants: "Whatever he tells you, do." Ah! now, was it Jesus' turn to be deeply offended? Did he angrily turn on her, and say: "I told you just now to keep your place. Why do you not pay heed?" Instead, he did an amazing thing. Although his hour had not yet come, he did exactly what his mother had indicated. He did tell the servants to do something. Surely he could have performed a miracle, and produced all the wine required, without saying a word to the servants.

¹⁶ However the matter may be viewed, both Jesus and Mary showed determination and sensitivity, yet without being touchy. Remember that no one had stronger reason than Mary for expecting Jesus to perform miracles as soon as he started his ministry, considering the wonderful miracle she had experienced in her own body just over thirty years before. For her, it was the start of a new life within her. God's angel, Gabriel, on a personal visit (not by a dream), had explained that, by holy spirit, she would conceive in her womb, and that "what is born will be called holy, God's Son." (Luke 1:26-38) From that moment, she was keenly sensitive to the fact that she was indeed "highly favored" of Jehovah. In a most unique and intimate way she was brought

16. (a) Why did Mary have good reason for expecting Jesus to perform miracles? (b) In what ways was Mary brought within an inner circle?

within the inner circle of his favor, and she was determined to stay there. She could not accompany Jesus during his ministry, but when the end came, and her Son was on that terrible torture stake, she was there, close enough for Jesus to speak to her. Though in great mental and physical agony, Jesus very kindly arranged for his mother to be taken within the inner circle of the home of John, "the disciple whom he loved." More than that, a few weeks later, when that even more wonderful inner circle was being formed with that little company at Jerusalem, she was there and was included in their number. That small band was chosen by God to form the nucleus of the Christian congregation, the start of a "new creation."—John 19:25-27; Acts 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:17.

¹⁷ It is good to be determined and sensitive to privileges that come our way. To be brought within God's family circle is truly a great favor, and we should always be keen to take in the spiritual "solid food" so as to maintain our sensitivity, by keeping our "perceptive powers trained" in order to retain these privileges. (Heb. 5:14) Should a special privilege be ours, in being a full-time servant of Jehovah in a missionary or Bethel home, we should be determined to stay there, if possible. Of course, a change is sometimes necessary, and this may not be because of unfaithfulness, or due to being touchy, or offended. For example, the reason for the change may be that one has decided to marry, and it is readily acknowledged that there is a world of difference between being touchy, and being touched.

¹⁸ John sharply contrasts those who

17. In what way is it good to be both determined and sensitive?

18, 19. (a) How does John contrast "the children of God and the children of the Devil"? (b) How is God's spirit, also faith, likened to a seed? What confidence does this give us, yet with what need for our day?

'originate with the Devil,' with those who "originate with God," or who have been "born from God." Though at one time we may have been part of the world, "lying in the power of the wicked one," we can, by responding to God's invitation, be transferred, or passed over, into his family. Says John: "We know we have passed over from death to life, because we love the brothers." This is "owing to the spirit which he [God] gave us." That spirit, like a seed, if planted within a good heart, will be the start of a new life. As John writes: "Everyone who has been born from God does not carry on sin, because His reproductive seed remains in such one, and he cannot practice sin, because he has been born from God." (1 John 3:8, 9, 14, 24; 5:19) This must be coupled with faith, which Jesus likened to a mustard grain, "the tiniest of all the seeds." Though microscopic to begin with, if properly nurtured, it will grow with endlessly renewed energy, and you will be able to remove, or surmount, all obstacles. "Nothing will be impossible for you," if it is in harmony with God's will. It will enable us, as God's children, successfully to imitate what is good, "because everything that has been born from God conquers the world. And this is the conquest that has conquered the world, our faith."—Matt. 13:31, 32; 17:20; 1 John 5:4.

¹⁹ In these closing days of the old system of things, the obstacles and obstructions to our Christian life and service are very severe. There are many problems. Jehovah foreknew this, and provided helpful and timely counsel in his Word. It will be good to consider this in the light of what the Scriptures have to say regarding circumcision, especially that of the heart, as already mentioned.

CIRCUMCISED IN HEART AND EARS

"Obstinate men and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you are always resisting the holy spirit."—Acts 7:51.

CIRCUMCISION has been known and practiced for about as long as records have been kept. It has been a subject of much interest, both from the viewpoint of health, also the viewpoint of religion. Circumcision probably became necessary, in the first place, on medical grounds, due to the effect of man's fall from perfection. In any case, whenever it began to be practiced, evidently it was soon given a religious significance. This is understandable in view of the Bible record. Fallen man "venerated and rendered sacred service to the creation rather than the One who created." (Rom. 1:25) This logically led to improper attention, even worship, being given to sex and fertility, and anything related thereto. Circumcision, which literally means "cutting around," pertains to the organ of sex and procreation, and serves as a permanent mark of identification, also as proof of initiation into a social or religious group. But, we ask, does circumcision find a proper place in true religion? If so, we want to give it proper attention, based on a correct understanding. To obtain this, we must go to God's Word, the Bible, the only source of reliable information.

² The first mention of circumcision in the Bible is when God made, or confirmed, his covenant with Abraham, who was then ninety-nine years old. God said to Abraham: "This is my covenant that you men will keep, between me and you men, even your seed after you: Every male of yours must get circumcised . . . in the flesh of

your foreskins, and it must serve as a sign of the covenant between me and you." Further details were given: "Every male of yours eight days old must be circumcised . . . Every man born in your house and every man purchased with money of yours must without fail get circumcised . . . And an uncircumcised male who will not get the flesh of his foreskin circumcised, even that soul must be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant." Hence deliberate refusal meant death, not just dismissal from the household, for either a son or a male slave.—Gen. 17:10-14, 22-27.

³ Two questions arise here. There is no question as to God's right in the matter, but perhaps we wonder why *circumcision* was chosen as the sign, especially as, humanly speaking, the operation involves some pain and embarrassment. When God gives a sign, or symbol, to be observed, usually its fitness can be seen quite readily, such as water immersion as a symbol of one's dedication to Jehovah. The other question is, Why was the entire household involved, including all the male slaves? Was it not just Abraham and his descendants who were actually in the covenant? We will be interested to see if God's Word throws any light on these questions.

⁴ The Hebrew Scriptures show that Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, continued to observe the above requirement. It was incorporated in the Law given through Moses, though not given as a new

3. What two questions arise from the record at Genesis 17:10-14?

4. (a) What situation arose requiring God's command given at Joshua 5:2-7? (b) How does Jehovah's word at Joshua 5:9 have special significance?

1. What significance was given early on to circumcision, and why?

2. When and with whom did God make circumcision a requirement? What details were given?

commandment. (Lev. 12:3) However, during the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, the baby boys then born were not circumcised. It was a new generation that finally crossed the river Jordan into the Promised Land. Jehovah then gave the order to Joshua to circumcise all the sons of Israel. When completed, Jehovah said significantly: "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." (Josh. 5:2-9) Since the evidence indicates that the Egyptians practiced circumcision, this may mean that now the Egyptians would have no basis for reproaching Israel due to the uncircumcision of so many of its males. Also, there was now a younger generation of Jehovah's people, from whom the last trace had been cut away, in symbol at least, from having any connection with Egypt, along with its false gods and unclean worship. Now we can begin to appreciate that circumcision, the "sign of the covenant" given to Abraham, was a fitting symbol of pure worship also in Abraham's case, marking those in covenant relationship with Jehovah as a distinct people. From Gilgal on, this requirement has continued to be observed by the Israelites, who became known as the Jews.

⁵ Turning to the Christian Greek Scriptures, we find adherence is still given to a like requirement, and now we read about circumcision of the heart, as at Romans 2:29. You might think this is the first reference, and feel a certain relief in getting away from the literal aspect, the letter of the law, and hoping now to get the inner significance, the spirit of the law. But, no. The first mention of circumcision of the heart was made by Moses, where we get the root meaning.

⁶ Moses wrote: "You must circumcise the foreskin of your hearts and not harden

5. Should the Bible be divided into two parts as between the letter and the spirit of the law?

6. (a) In what connection does Moses mention circumcision of the heart? (b) How does Moses show the ears are involved, teaching what lesson?

your necks any longer." This was necessary in order to carry out, not the ceremonial requirements, the letter of the law, but the fundamental requirements, based on true love, as expressed in the appeal: "And now, O Israel, what is Jehovah your God asking of you but to fear Jehovah your God, so as to walk in all his ways and to love him and to serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul." Later, Moses again appeals, showing how both the heart and the ears are involved, saying: "Jehovah your God will have to circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, that you may love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul for the sake of your life." He puts the choice before them: "If you will listen to the commandments of Jehovah your God," so as to love and obey him, they would have his rich blessing. "But if your heart turns away and you do not listen, and you are actually seduced and bow down to other gods and serve them, . . . you will positively perish." In other words, circumcised heart and ears mean a humble heart, wholly sincere, ready and eager to listen and observe, thus preserving one in the way of pure worship. But if one has a heart that is inclined to turn away, to turn a deaf ear, due to pride, as implied by a hardened, stiff neck, then that one is bound to be entrapped in false religion, and lose out.—Deut. 10:12, 16; 30:6, 15-18; see also Joshua 24:14, 15, 19.

⁷ Notice Jeremiah's pointed words on this subject: "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Look! Their ear is uncircumcised, so that they are unable to pay attention. Look! The very word of Jehovah has become to them a reproach." When both Judah and Israel had become very unfaithful, Jeremiah, contrasting fleshly and spiritual circumcision, reports Jehovah's message: "I will

7. How does Jeremiah speak respecting this same thing?

hold an accounting with everyone circumcised [in the flesh] but still in uncircumcision, upon Egypt and upon Judah . . . for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.”—Jer. 6:10; 9:25, 26.

⁸ Centuries later, when Stephen, the Christian martyr, was giving his defense before the San’he-drin, he spoke of Abraham, saying that God “gave him a covenant of circumcision.” He then mentioned Moses, and that “to him our forefathers refused to become obedient, but they thrust him aside and *in their hearts* they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, ‘Make gods for us to go ahead of us.’” Finally, linking those forefathers with the Jerusalem San’he-drin (his immediate hearers), Stephen said: “Obstinate men and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you are always resisting the holy spirit; as your forefathers did, so you do.” Stephen spoke of the “righteous One [Jesus], whose betrayers and murderers you have now become.” What was the reaction of the Sanhedrin? “They felt cut [not as in circumcision, but “sawn through,” *Kingdom Interlinear*] to their hearts.” As for their ears, there was no excess of flesh, calling for literal circumcision, and so what did they do? They “put their hands over their ears and rushed upon him with one accord,” and stoned him to death.—Acts 7:8, 39-43, 51-58.

⁹ What a terrible indictment of those religious leaders! Uncircumcised hearts and ears signify those who are callous, obstinate, unyielding, and are connected with a bold, hard face, a hard heart, and a hardened neck. (Prov. 21:29; 28:14; 29:1) Pride is the root cause, leading one on from bad to worse, as Daniel said of Nebuchadnezzar: “His heart became haughty

8. When and how did Stephen review Israel’s history, leading to what accusation and outcome?

9. Uncircumcision in heart and ears is due to what? With what results?

and his own spirit became hard, so as to act presumptuously.” The same was true of Pharaoh.—Dan. 5:20; Ex. 7:22; 9:7; see also Hebrews 3:7-13.

¹⁰ How important, and how desirable, it is to have a circumcised heart! How can we do this? As distinct from the mind, that thinks and reasons on information taken therein, the heart is closely identified with affection and desire, and becomes the source, or seat, of motivation. It has a great emotional power, and can impel, or incite, to a certain course of action. (Ex. 35:21) It can easily sway the mind. The heart is the very center, or mainspring, of your whole makeup, your personality. It is the real, inner self, the “secret person of the heart,” “the man I am within.” (1 Pet. 3:4; Rom. 7:22) How can the heart be circumcised? We can be guided by what happens in literal circumcision. When this becomes necessary, because of a hazard to health, the flesh that is cut off is viewed as excessive, or as an obstruction, standing in the way of maintaining a clean and healthy condition. Thus circumcision of the heart means getting rid, or making a clean cut, of anything in our desires or motives, that is contrary to Jehovah’s desires. It means a complete removal of anything that is acting as an obstruction, such as pride, causing one to become unresponsive to Jehovah, to his appeals and to his Word.

¹¹ A fine example of circumcised heart and ears was shown, as Luke reports, by a “certain woman named Lydia, . . . a worshiper of God, [who] was listening, and Jehovah opened her heart wide to pay attention to the things being spoken by Paul.” (Acts 16:14) There certainly was no obstruction. We cannot perform this spiritual operation in our own strength

10. (a) How can we distinguish between the mind and the heart? (b) How can the heart be circumcised?

11. (a) What fine example is recorded of circumcised heart and ears? (b) How can this spiritual operation be performed?

and wisdom. Paul speaks of the true Jew, whose "circumcision is that of the heart by spirit." Yes, we need God's spirit, and he told us how to pray for a new attitude: "Create in me even a pure heart, O God, and put within me a new spirit, a steadfast one."—Rom. 2:29; Ps. 51:10.

A NEW PERSONALITY

¹² God does not automatically put his spirit, his invisible, active force, within us. We must cooperate, by submitting our own spirit, or mental and emotional inclinations, to the influence and working of his spirit, which operates through his Word. Thus you have a new and steadfast spirit in your clean heart, based on accurate knowledge, "just as truth is in Jesus." You will be "made new in the force actuating your mind," and will be helped to "put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct." In its place, you will learn how to "put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." Those who pursue this course "become imitators of God," imitating what is good.—Eph. 4:20-24; 5:1.

¹³ You might feel this is easier said than done, and we wish to consider certain aspects. For one thing, putting on the new personality does not mean an entirely different personality, thus losing our identity. True, we must impale, or deaden, those things that are bad, both in our hearts and in our lives. (Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5) However, some qualities and abilities, though harmful if uncontrolled, can accomplish much good when brought under control, and directed into right channels. For example, a quick temper is the working of a quick mind, together with strong feelings, both uncontrolled, and soon doing

much damage. But that same ability to think quickly, and to express spontaneous sympathy, or enthusiasm, when controlled by a good motive, can be a great help, especially when witnessing to others. In all this, including self-control, perseverance is required. As James says: "He who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and who persists in it" becomes, "not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, [and] will be happy in his doing it." —Jas. 1:25.

¹⁴ Or you might feel that a natural gift, such as music or poetry, should be repressed as being a distraction, making one a daydreamer, when there is so much work to be done. That may well be true, if the gift is uncontrolled, but the special ability coupled with that gift can be turned to a good use. For example, a symphony is made up of various movements, carefully built up, forming a balanced contrast, beautifully and harmoniously expressed, and well modulated throughout, free from dull repetition. Well, exactly the same can be said as regards preparing and giving a talk on the truth. The more you appreciate God's Word in its composition, also the Watch Tower Society's Bible study aids, the more you get out of it for yourself, and in helping others. The reward, too, is much greater. Whereas in music the emotional appeal predominates, when one is expressing the truth, the Kingdom message, there is a proper balance between the intellectual and emotional appeals. Above all, it honors Jehovah, the Great Composer.

¹⁵ Sometimes we get discouraged in our efforts to put on the new personality. The old one, with its deep-rooted habits, and internal pressures, not to mention the external ones from Satan's world—these

12. What is involved in putting off the old personality, and putting on the new?

13. Does this require an entirely different personality? How can this be illustrated?

14. How can the abilities prompting a natural gift be turned to a good use?

15. (a) What are some of the causes for discouragement? (b) Who doubtless had similar feelings, and what can we learn from them?

things are allowed to get the upper hand. Though Paul said that the spirit and the flesh are "opposed to each other, so that the very things that you would like to do you do not do," he also said: "Keep walking by spirit and you will carry out no **fleshy** desire at all." (Gal. 5:16, 17) Hence, when overcome in a wrongful course, we feel brokenhearted. We are not alone in this. Imagine how Peter felt on realizing he had done the very thing he had promised he would never do, that is, disown his beloved Master. Imagine, too, how he must have felt when, after years of service in a responsible position, he had to be openly rebuked by Paul. As for Paul, just imagine how he felt when, as Saul, "breathing threat and murder against the disciples of the Lord," the real situation was suddenly and forcefully brought home to him. (Matt. 26:35, 75; Gal. 2:11-14; Acts 9:1-9) Those servants, however, did not lose heart. More importantly, they did not harden their hearts. Neither should we. How comforting to read what John wrote: "By this . . . we shall assure our hearts before him as regards whatever our hearts may condemn us in, because God is greater than our hearts and knows all things." How is this true?—1 John 3:19, 20.

INVITED TO COME

¹⁶ How delightful and uplifting it is when you are invited to come to someone's home for the first time, opening the way for a closer friendship. The invitation itself puts new heart into you, and you feel like a different person. Is that not true, especially if you are having a difficult time? Well, in these "critical times hard to deal with," Jehovah is extending the most appealing invitation. (2 Tim. 3:1) No one is compelled to respond. As mentioned earlier,

the choice is yours. In the first place, however, the choice is Jehovah's, and rightly so. As David wrote: "Happy is the one you choose and cause to approach, that he may reside in your courtyards." For one thing, Jehovah makes the choice by stating the conditions that must be met. (Ps. 65:4; 24:3, 4) For another thing, the invitation is so made that it appeals only to those who are sincere and humble at heart, even brokenhearted. This shows that Jehovah is greater than our hearts. As he says: "In the height and in the holy place is where I reside, also with the one crushed and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly ones and to revive the heart of the ones being crushed."—Isa. 57:15; see also 2 Chronicles 16:9.

¹⁷ We need to be humble when approaching Jehovah. Surprisingly, this works both ways. Have you ever thought it requires humility on God's part to bend low, as it were, to peer at the sin-stricken human family? "Who is like Jehovah our God? . . . He is condescending to look on heaven and earth, raising up the lowly one from the very dust." "Your own right hand will sustain me, and your own humility will make me great." Even to those who have gone astray, Jehovah appeals: "I have spread out my hands all day long to a stubborn people." Listen too to Jesus: "How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks together under her wings! But you people did not want it!" Such long-suffering and undeserved kindness surely require humility.—Ps. 113:5-7; 18:35; Isa. 65:2; Matt. 23:37.

¹⁸ Have no doubt. You are invited to come. Where? The choice is Jehovah's. "Jehovah has chosen Zion; he has longed

17. In what way is humility required on God's part, and how has he shown this?

18. Where has Jehovah invited us to come, and how can we identify this today?

16. (a) Who is now inviting us to come, and are we obliged to respond? (b) How does Jehovah have priority in choosing, giving what encouragement?

for it as a dwelling for himself." David had in mind earthly Zion, the center of pure worship. (Ps. 132:8, 13-18) This finds its modern fulfillment in the heavenly Mount Zion, where Jehovah installed his Son as king in 1914 C.E. In vision, John saw the Lamb standing there, "and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand," the complete Christian congregation. There is a remnant of this Zion class still on earth, representing God's organization. This is where he invites those to come who realize their need for a place of safety, similar to the provision God made at the time of the Flood. He then provided the ark, wherein he "kept Noah . . . safe with seven others."—Ps. 2:6; Rev. 14:1; Gen. 7:1; 2 Pet. 2:5.

¹⁹ When this remnant of spiritual Israel had been regathered, after being disciplined during the 1914-1918 period, then these grand promises were fulfilled, with the emphasis on cleanliness and humility: "Wake up, wake up, put on your strength, O Zion! Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For no more will there come again into you the uncircumcised and unclean one." "I shall certainly let remain in the midst of you a people humble and lowly, and they will actually take refuge in the name of Jehovah." (Isa. 52:1; Zeph. 3:12) All those coming to God's organization, into close association with the Zion class, must be circumcised in their hearts and ears. Ah! now we can understand why even the slaves in Abraham's household had to be circumcised. That entire household pictured God's organized people today. It must be kept clean, with all the "reproach of Egypt" rolled away from off it.—Josh. 5:9.

²⁰ How thankful we are that Jehovah

19. (a) Since her restoration, what condition obtains in Zion? (b) What requirement is laid on all who come to God's organization?

20. How has a permanent transfer been made possible, and at what cost?

has kindly invited us to come to Zion, not just on a visit, but on the basis of a permanent transfer. In the world of sport, such as football, a tremendous sum will be paid for the transfer of a specially talented player from one team to another. However high the sum, it does not begin to compare with the price sponsored by Jehovah, and willingly paid by his Son in his costly human sacrifice. As Paul says: "You were bought with a price."—1 Cor. 6:20.

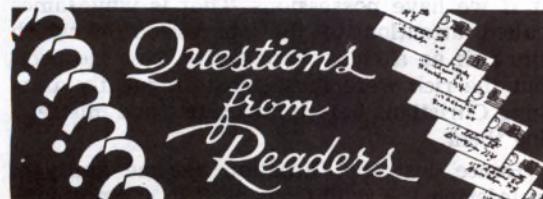
²¹ We can, and should, show our appreciation of Jehovah's invitation by extending it to others. Like Lydia, who, after being baptized, entreated Paul and his companions to come and stay in her home. Luke says: "She just made us come." Isaiah foretold this grand work, saying that "many peoples will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah' . . . For out of Zion law will go forth, and the word of Jehovah out of Jerusalem." Listen also to this free invitation: "Hey there, . . . come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk even without money and without price." When on earth, Jesus invited: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you." He foretold that on his return he would invite the sheeplike ones: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world." In fact, God's Word concludes with this fine appeal, encouraging those who respond to pass it on to others: "And the spirit and the bride keep on saying: 'Come!' And let anyone hearing say: 'Come!' And let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free. He that bears witness of these things

21, 22. (a) How can we show appreciation for Jehovah's invitation? (b) In what different ways is the invitation to come expressed in God's Word, and how should it affect us?

says, 'Yes; I am coming quickly.' [And John responds:] 'Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.'"—Acts 16:15; Isa. 2:3; 55:1; Matt. 11:28; 25:34; Rev. 22:17, 20.

²² The invitation to come is expressed so

often in God's Word, and with such appeal, it can truthfully be said that it is indeed a most pressing invitation. Will you not respond? Will you not come, and invite others to come?



● Addressing "rich men," the disciple James said: "You have murdered the righteous one." (Jas. 5:1, 6) Since his letter was written to Christians, what did he mean by this?—U.S.A.

Appearing in the singular, the expression "righteous one" evidently refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is confirmed by the apostle Peter's words directed to Jews: "You disowned that holy and righteous one, and you asked for a man, a murderer, to be freely granted to you, whereas you killed the Chief Agent of life." (Acts 3:14, 15) Similarly, the disciple Stephen told those listening to his defense before the Sanhedrin: "Which one of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? Yes, they killed those who made announcement in advance concerning the coming of the righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become."—Acts 7:52.

It is noteworthy that the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court which sentenced Jesus to death, was composed of wealthy and prominent men. (Compare Matthew 26:59, 66; 27:57; Mark 15:43; John 3:1; 7:45-51.) Hence "rich men" were definitely involved in the murder of Jesus Christ.

But the act of murdering the "righteous one" need not be limited to this murder of God's Son. According to Jesus' words found at Matthew 25:40, the Son of God views the treatment given to his "brothers," his spirit-begotten followers, as being meted out to him himself.

When James wrote his letter (before 62 C.E.), the Christians were being persecuted primarily by the Jews. The first Christian martyr, Stephen, was killed by a Jewish mob after he made his defense before the Sanhedrin.

(Acts 6:15; 7:57-60) Persecution of Christians by the Roman governmental authority did not begin until 64 C.E. after the great fire ravaged Rome, destroying about a fourth of the city. So it logically follows that the "rich men" whom James had in mind were the rich men among the Jews, who were directly or indirectly (by their persecution of Christians) implicated in the murder of Jesus Christ.—Matt. 27:24, 25.

James' addressing himself to the rich as a class somewhat parallels what Jesus Christ did when speaking to his disciples on one occasion. After describing several happinesses, Jesus said: "Woe to you rich persons, because you are having your consolation in full." (Luke 6:20-24) Though the rich as a class obviously would not read his letter, James, by employing the literary device of direct address, was helping Christians to get the right viewpoint. The fact that the rich class were to 'howl over the miseries to come upon them' would serve to warn Christians against becoming materialistic. (Jas. 5:1; compare James 4:13-15.) It would also be encouraging for them to know that oppression by the rich class would cease in God's due time.

We as Christians must exercise care so as not to become guilty of murdering the "righteous one." In another part of his letter it was, in fact, to Christians that James said: "You go on murdering." (Jas. 4:2) How was this? Obviously these Christians had not actually killed anyone. But they evidently had failed to do good to their brothers. Perhaps though being in a position to help needy brothers, they had refused to do so. They may have looked down on some lowly ones, despised them, or they may have allowed covetousness, envy or pride to lead them into hating certain ones of their brothers. In any of these ways they could become guilty of murder. (Jas. 1:27; 2:15, 16) Another Bible writer, the apostle John, made the same point: "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer, . . . we are under obligation to surrender our souls for our brothers.

But whoever has this world's means for supporting life and beholds his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him?"—1 John 3:15-17.

Yes, this murderous attitude was even reflected by some Christians in the favoritism that they showed toward the rich. Though God had chosen generally poor persons to become Kingdom heirs, certain Christians would see to it that a rich person who attended their meetings got a fine seat, but they would direct a poor person to sit in a very lowly position. Thus they judged the worth of a person on the basis of his possessions. They failed to recognize the poor person as a neighbor who was fully deserving of their love. Pointing out the wrongness of such action, James wrote: "You . . . have dishonored the poor man. The rich oppress you, and they drag you before law courts, do they not? They blaspheme the fine name by which you were called, do they not? If, now, you practice carrying out the kingly law according to the scripture: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing quite well. But if you continue showing favoritism, you are working a sin."—Jas. 2:1-9.

Do any of us as Christians show favoritism to persons on the basis of their position in the world, their superior educational background

or financial standing? Do we favor them over others at our 'gatherings'? Surely this would be out of harmony with the counsel of James. While there are exceptions, a hard, unloving attitude is all too common among the rich and influential members of human society today. Surely, then, none of us should feel that persons merit being shown favoritism merely because of their possessions; nor should we expect it if we have possessions. That is why James called attention to the oppression of which the rich as a class were guilty. Not the poor, but the rich were those most frequently dragging Christians before law courts and mistreating them.

Hence, lest the Christian become guilty of murdering the "righteous one" in a representative sense, he must cultivate intense love for fellow believers. He should not look down upon any of his brothers regardless of how lowly they may appear to be. If Jehovah God considers these worthy of his love, surely none of his servants should imply that they are greater than He is by refusing to love those whom He loves. Rather, they desire to use their time, talents and assets unselfishly in behalf of their brothers, all of them. As the apostle Paul said: "For my part I will most gladly spend and be completely spent for your souls."—2 Cor. 12:15.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS
August 15: Deliverance from the Authority of Darkness. Page 428. Songs to Be Used: 40, 32.

August 22: God's Children Imitate What Is Good. Page 434. Songs to Be Used: 45, 49.

August 29: Circumcised in Heart and Ears. Page 441. Songs to Be Used: 31, 88.