



MAY 1, 1979

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



BAPTISM— ONLY A BEGINNING

does it
mean the
same
today?

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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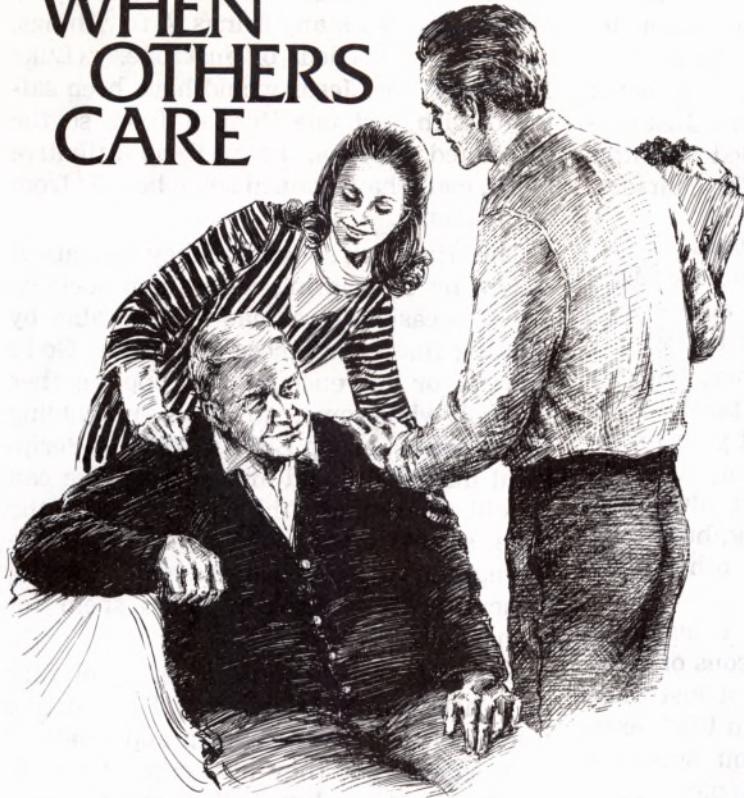
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WHEN OTHERS CARE



IHAVE no fleshly family at all. . . . I take care of myself and have no help from anyone, and, believe me, there is many a time that I could use it. . . . Any attention, no matter how small, touches us very much. It is humbly appreciated."

So wrote an elderly woman. Like her, older persons often are very grateful when others care.

But that also is true of many younger individuals. To her dear friends, one youthful person wrote: "I'd like to thank you both for being so kind and considerate, for taking us 'young ones' along, taking your time for us to have such a good time." A small group had spent a day in pleasant and upbuilding association. Obviously, it had been a memorable occasion, and the note expressed gratitude to the considerate married couple "for caring so much."

CARING REALLY HELPS

Those shown consideration often benefit greatly when

others care. For instance, they may receive *encouragement*. Addressing her spiritual sister, another young person wrote: "You encouraged me when I got in a sewing mood, or a cooking mood, and you never criticized . . . I really love you as a Christian sister." Yes, encouragement in wholesome activities—especially in spiritual pursuits—can benefit others.—Acts 11:23; 1 Pet. 5:12.

Yet, caring really helps in other ways too. *Guidance* may be needed, and surely it is much easier to accept sound advice when the recipient knows that the giver really cares. One Christian elder was pleased, indeed, to receive a note, saying: "Thanks for all the . . . guidance and time and caring." The apostle Paul certainly cared about fellow believers, for he wrote: "Besides those things of an external kind, there is what rushes in on me from day to day, the anxiety for all the congregations. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I am not incensed?"—2 Cor. 11: 28, 29.

But when others care, there may be added benefits—those that are not so obvious. To the married couple mentioned earlier, a young woman wrote: "No matter how much I do for you, it could never be enough. I hope I never hurt

either one of you." Yes, kindness begets kindness, and it draws people closer together. Moreover, when you know that others care, undoubtedly you will never want to disappoint or hurt them. Just caring in return may supply added incentive to persevere in a loving, godly course.

SHOWING THAT YOU CARE

How can you show that you care about others? Doubtless, the ways are beyond numbering. But consider just a few.

"Become *kind* to one another, tenderly *compassionate*," wrote the apostle Paul. (Eph. 4:32) He also said: "Let your *brotherly love* continue. Do not forget *hospitality*." (Heb. 13:1, 2) Indeed, always do the kind, compassionate, loving, hospitable thing. Such action will show others that you care.

In showing hospitality, for example, is it not desirable to include persons of varying ages and circumstances, not just those of your own age and station in life? Jesus Christ once said: "When you spread a feast, invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind; and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous ones." (Luke 14:13, 14) By all means, remember the less fortunate, among them perhaps widows and widowers who would find pleasure in your company.

Of course, your means may not permit you to spread a feast. But do not let that trouble you. An inspired proverb says: "Better is a dish of vegetables where there is love than a manger-fed bull and hatred along with it." (Prov. 15:17) On a certain occasion, when Jesus Christ visited his good friends Mary and Martha of Bethany, he stressed the excelling value of spiritual things. But what about a meal? "Martha,

"Throw all your anxiety upon him,
because he cares for you."

—1 Pet. 5:7.

Martha," said Jesus, "you are anxious and disturbed about many things. A few things, though, are needed, or just one." (Luke 10:38-42) Yes, Jesus would have been satisfied with just one item of food, so the distracted Martha, as well as attentive Mary, could have gained some benefit from his teaching.

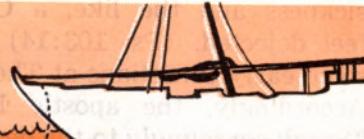
Christians can show that they care about others by associating with them socially. These occasions are made memorable by relating fine experiences enjoyed in God's service, or by encouraging one another through wholesome, spiritually upbuilding conversation, group Bible reading or Scriptural discussion. Old and young alike can benefit from these things, and often the time seems to fly by. Friendships are strengthened and those present may long remember such pleasant hours spent together.

But what about recipients of hospitality or other acts of kindness? How fitting that they express their keen appreciation! This shows that they also care. "In view of the times we live in," wrote a young person to cherished friends, "I don't think we as Christians should waste (lose) any opportunities to tell each other how much we appreciate each other's friendship. You . . . have been a help to me in many ways, some you may not even realize."

Those who are properly motivated in showing concern for others do not seek praise for their efforts. Nevertheless, for giving of themselves they are rewarded because, as Jesus said, "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) So both the giver and the recipient benefit from thoughtful words and deeds. What blessings result when others care!

HOPE—

THE POWER FOR ENDURANCE



HOW valuable endurance is! Without it the well-known violin player would never have become famous and the renowned soprano would not have been able to captivate her audiences. Yes, endurance is not only desirable but necessary in attaining a goal. This is especially true for a Christian who is running in the race with everlasting life in view. "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," urged the Christian apostle Paul. Without endurance the "finish line" will not be reached.—Matt. 24:13; Heb. 12:1.

Seeing the importance of endurance, certain questions may arise. Can a godly person endure in his own strength? Why should Christians help one another to endure? How can they provide such aid?

A NEED TO "SPEAK CONSOLINGLY"

We are living in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Tim. 3:1) Many factors now make it very difficult for a Christian to endure. He can do so only if he heeds the Scriptural admonition to "go on acquiring power in the Lord and in the mightiness of his strength." Above all, godly persons must fight "against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly plac-

es," the demons under Satan's control. (Eph. 6:10, 12) Their influence can become so powerful that a Christian may lose his confidence in God's power and become weak in faith. Prompt spiritual assistance then becomes necessary. But what can be done?

Consider how a certain Christian elder rendered spiritual aid on one occasion. He visited a married couple who had been very active members of the congregation. Due to sickness in the family and great stress at the man's place of employment, they had almost given up in the Christian race. But at the end of his visit the elder was pleased to hear these words: "I am so glad you came to talk to us. My wife and I have renewed strength to continue to serve Jehovah." A similar expression was heard from another Christian family, one in which pressures and problems had resulted in a nervous breakdown and very low spirituality. What caused these families to say, 'We have renewed strength to serve Jehovah'?

The visiting elders had encouraged their fellow believers to view matters as Jehovah does. God knows that his people are made of dust and that, due to pressures,

sickness and the like, a Christian may feel dejected. (Ps. 103:14) That is how some early Christians at Thessalonica felt. Accordingly, the apostle Paul advised: "Speak consolingly to the depressed souls." —1 Thess. 5:14.

To "speak consolingly" means to talk soothingly, to cheer, to encourage, to uplift another's spirit with gladdening assurance. Yes, to speak consolingly means to fortify the listener's heart so that his horizon widens out. In the case of the two discouraged families cited earlier, it was as if bright sunshine had wiped away an early morning mist that had obscured their spiritual vision. Their hearts were lifted up with renewed hope. What is this hope?

THE HOPE THAT "DOES NOT LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT"

"To hope" means to desire with expectation of fulfillment. Hope, therefore, has sustaining power, a driving force, because it *looks ahead* to its fulfillment. Of course, a person could easily cherish a false hope, one lacking a real basis. To illustrate: For millenniums mankind has hoped for the realization of perfect human government. But this expectation has not been fulfilled because humankind is imperfect, sinful, selfish and subject to death.—Rom. 5:12; 7:14.

Reliable hope must look to God, the first Cause of everything visible and invisible. (Rev. 4:11) Indeed, true hope finds its basis in God's unfailing purpose for mankind, and, therefore, this "hope does not lead to disappointment." (Rom. 5:5) For instance, the prophet Isaiah pointed out that God created the earth for human habitation. (Isa. 45:18) This is God's purpose, and it will be accomplished. God will clear the way for paradise to be restored to this earth. (Luke 23:43) This restoration will come about by means of God's kingdom, the theme of Jesus' preaching

and the government for which he taught his followers to pray.—Matt. 4:17; 6:10.

What this kingdom of God will bring about is almost beyond comprehension. It will restore perfect health and everlasting life. Yes, death will be no more and this means that even sin will be done away with, because death is the result of sin. (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:4) Gone, too, will be sin's harmful effects that have plunged man into physical and mental distress. What a relief! This hope does not lead to disappointment, because it is based on God's promise, and he cannot lie. (Titus 1:1, 2) Why, then, do some Christians become so depressed that the future seems hopeless?

HOPE MUST BE MAINTAINED AND MADE STRONGER

The start of the loss of hope may hardly be noticeable. Perhaps fulfillment of the hope seems to drag and this makes the heart sick. (Prov. 13:12) Or, circumstances in someone's life may cause a person to become preoccupied with himself instead of his relationship with God. The individual may become discouraged because of sickness, mistreatment or just because of negative thoughts. Maybe he becomes somewhat jealous of the material or spiritual prosperity of others. Gradually being overtaken by these things, he may cease throwing his burden upon Jehovah. (Ps. 55:22) Soon the Christian finds himself thinking negatively, so that the reality of the Kingdom hope fades in his heart and mind. Yes, hope can be lost and then individuals stop enduring in the race for life.

The very nature of hope makes it something that can easily vanish if not constantly kept before the mind's eye. Therefore, we must fight hard to keep our hope strong. This is because we hope for something that is invisible. (Compare Romans 8:24, 25.) But this does not mean that hope is necessarily weak.

Hope has such power that it is compared to an anchor that can hold a ship so secure that it will ride out a terrible storm. In fact, hope is called "an anchor for the soul." (Heb. 6:19) When Paul wrote these words, he was discussing God's promise to bless Abraham. This promise is the basis for hope in the kingdom of God, for Jehovah assured that faithful patriarch: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Gen. 22:18) Jehovah added his sworn oath to this promise so that "through two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to the refuge may have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before us." (Heb. 6:18) Keeping in mind this sworn promise of God strengthens the Christian's hope and makes it indeed "an anchor for the soul." It stabilizes, makes strong, gives the power to endure.

Our hope is strengthened from day to day when we make expression of the hope within us. The more we speak about it, the more we treasure it and the stronger it becomes. In a comparable way, the expressions made by the Shulammite maiden regarding her beloved shepherd boy doubtless strengthened her love for him. (Song of Sol. 5:10-16) Concerning such love, it could be said: "Its blazings are the blazings of a fire, the flame of Jah. Many waters themselves are not able to extinguish love, nor can rivers themselves wash it away."—Song of Sol. 8:6, 7.

The same is true regarding warm expressions about the Christian hope. Therefore, Paul admonished his Hebrew brothers to "hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering." (Heb. 10:23) This public expression of hope, this talking about it, will strengthen our hope, making it very real to us. Such vivid men-

tal reality forges the chains that make hope a strong anchor for the soul.

THE POSITIVE APPROACH

To revive hope, positive help is needed. Knowing that hope is such a driving power for endurance, the visiting elders mentioned earlier turned the attention of the discouraged families away from themselves and talked about the reality of the kingdom of God. Hope is something of a spiritual nature. Therefore, the mind and heart must be filled with the spiritual things of God's Word, the sure promises of God and the sayings of Jesus. Strong communication with Jehovah God must be restored, and this will surely lead to joy. Is that not what Paul shows as the positive result of prayer? "Do not be anxious over anything," said the apostle, "but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:6, 7.

To endure under tribulation, we must "*rejoice in the hope*" and "*persevere in prayer*." (Rom. 12:12) And we will be happy, even during trials, if we realize that Jehovah God is not trying to find fault and 'does not forget our work and the love we show for his name.'—Heb. 6:10.

Hope-inspiring, too, are Paul's words: "We desire each one of you to show the same industriousness so as to have the full assurance of the hope down to the end, in order that you may not become sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. 6:11, 12) May this strengthening assurance that God is on our side help us to make the Kingdom hope our power for endurance.

HANNAH

*—a woman who
found comfort
in prayer*



CHILDLESS Hannah lived at a time when women regarded barrenness as a terrible curse. Their feelings were like those of Rachel who, in desperation, said to her husband Jacob: "Give me children or otherwise I shall be a dead woman." (Gen. 30:1) Hannah, too, felt her womanhood unfulfilled because of having no children. The fact that she was only one of Elkanah's two wives added to the problem. This was especially so because, by his wife Peninnah, Elkanah had sons and daughters.

When Elkanah and his family traveled to the sanctuary at Shiloh for worship, Peninnah would take advantage of the situation to vex Hannah, taunting her respecting her barrenness. Hannah would give way to weeping and would not eat her portion of the sacrificial meal. Her husband would then try to comfort her, saying: "Hannah, why do you weep, and why do you not eat, and why does your heart feel bad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"—1 Sam. 1:2-8.

Finally, Hannah committed all her concerns to Jehovah God. While at Shiloh on one occasion, she left the table and "began to pray to Jehovah and to weep greatly." (1 Sam. 1:9, 10) With real earnestness, Hannah pleaded: "O Jehovah . . . if you will without fail look upon the affliction of your slave girl and actually remember me, and you will not forget your slave girl and actually give to your slave girl a male offspring, I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head."—1 Sam. 1:11.

Since only her lips were moving as she inwardly poured out her distress before Jehovah God, high priest Eli mistakenly concluded that she was drunk and reproved her. But Hannah quickly explained: "No, my lord! A woman hard pressed in spirit I am; and wine and intoxicating liquor I have not drunk, but I pour out my soul before Jehovah. Do not make your slave girl like a good-for-nothing woman, for it is out of the abundance of my concern

and my vexation that I have spoken until now."—1 Sam. 1:15, 16.

Recognizing his mistake, Eli wished her God's blessing, saying: "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of him."—1 Sam. 1:17.

How did Hannah's prayer, along with the words of Eli, affect her? She found real comfort. Hannah resumed eating, and "her face became self-concerned no more." (1 Sam. 1:18) Having committed the matter to Jehovah God, she was freed from deep inward sorrow. Hannah realized that the Most High was interested in her as a person, and she confidently looked to him for help. Though not knowing just what the outcome would be, Hannah enjoyed an inner peace. She must have recognized either that her period of childlessness would end or that Jehovah God would in some other way fill the lack resulting from her barrenness.

Hannah's trust in the Almighty God was certainly not misplaced. She gave birth to a boy and named him Samuel. After weaning him, Hannah turned Samuel over for sanctuary service. (1 Sam. 1:19-28) Since the Bible mentions a genealogical enrollment for Levites "from three years of age upward," it may well be that the boy was at least three years old at the time.—2 Chron. 31:16.

Appreciative of Jehovah's kindness toward her, Hannah offered up a prayer of thanksgiving. This prayer glorified Jehovah as the One who is without equal. Hannah said: "There is no one holy like Jehovah, for there is no one but you; and there is no rock like our God." (1 Sam. 2:2) In her own case, Hannah had experienced that the Most High is like a firm rock, that is, dependable and stable. On him one can indeed rely.

Additional blessings were ahead for Hannah. Once, when she came with her husband to Shiloh, Eli blessed both of them, saying: "May Jehovah appoint to you an offspring from this wife in place of the thing lent [Samuel], that was lent to Jehovah." (1 Sam. 2:20) Hannah had the joy of seeing that blessing fulfilled. Eventually she became the mother to three more boys and two girls.—1 Sam. 2:21.

Just as Hannah found comfort in prayer, we too can find encouragement in committing all our cares to Jehovah God. He will answer all requests that are in harmony with his purpose. Hence, when we pour out our hearts to our heavenly Father, may we, like Hannah, become "self-concerned no more," confident that he will remove our burden, whatever that may be, or enable us to bear it.

A Drastic Change

IN THE time of the prophet Isaiah, the women of Jerusalem were very haughty and arrayed themselves in showy dress and with lavish ornamentation. When it came to marriage, there was then no shortage of eligible males. (Isa. 3:16-24) However, through Isaiah, Jehovah indicated that a drastic change was at hand: "By the sword your own men will fall, and your mightiness by war." (Isa. 3:25) This circumstance was to affect the women of Jerusalem as follows: "Seven women will actually grab hold of one man in that day, saying: 'We shall eat our own bread and wear our own mantles; only may we be called

by your name to take away our reproach.'" —Isa. 4:1.

There would be so few marriageable males that seven women would take the initiative to ask the first man that came along to marry them. All they wanted was to be known by his name, to be freed from the reproach of being without a husband. According to the Mosaic law, a husband was required to provide sustenance and clothing for his wife. (Ex. 21:10) But, because the situation of these women would be so desperate, they would be willing to release the man from his legal obligations. They would 'eat their own bread and wear their own clothing.'

Psalms



A Riddle with a Comforting Answer

Psalms



THROUGHOUT human history, many people have been perplexed at seeing the prosperity of lawless men. Often unprincipled persons gain a position of great authority and then exploit and oppress the poor and afflicted. But should we fear corrupt men? This question is a basic element of the riddle that is answered in Psalm 49, written by a Levite of the "sons of Korah."

The opening statement reads: "Hear this, all you peoples. Give ear, all you inhabitants of the system of things, you sons of humankind as well as you sons of man, you rich one and you poor one together." (Ps. 49:1) With these words, the psalmist calls upon all to pay attention—the "sons of humankind," the 'earthlings of lower station in life,' as also the "sons of man," those of higher station. Yes, all, both rich and poor, could benefit from what would be set forth.

The psalmist continues: "My own mouth will speak things of wisdom, and the meditation of my heart will be of things of understanding. To a proverbial utterance I shall incline my ear; on a harp I shall open up my riddle." (Ps. 49:3, 4) What the psalmist was about to express originated from meditation under the guidance of God's spirit. It was not mere human wisdom, for the psalmist spoke of himself as 'inclining his own ear to a proverbial utterance,' an utterance from a divine source. On receiving this inspired expression, he would present his riddle or perplexing problem, doing so to the accompaniment of a harp.

Then comes the puzzling question: "Why should I be afraid in the days of evil, when the very error of my supplacers surrounds me?" (Ps. 49:5) Yes, should he give way to dread when days of suffering come to him on account of oppressive supplacers, men who would deprive him of his God-given rights? As the following verses indicate, these "supplacers" were wealthy individuals. While such ones may use their position to make unjust gain at the expense of others, we should

not yield to panicky fear, nor should we become envious of the prosperity that self-seeking men might enjoy. All they have is their material wealth. They boast about what they own and, instead of looking to the Creator for protection and security, trust in unstable material riches. The psalmist goes on to show clearly why we should not fear or envy any of such men. They will not live to time indefinite, nor is their wealth a lasting possession. He writes:

"Those who are trusting in their means of maintenance, and who keep boasting about the abundance of their riches, not one of them can by any means redeem even a brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; (and the redemption price of their soul is so precious that it has ceased to time indefinite) that he should still live forever and not see the pit. For he sees that even the wise ones die, together the stupid one and the unreasoning one perish, and they must leave to others their means of maintenance."—Ps. 49:6-10.

As the psalmist pointed out, riches are of no value in saving a brother from death. The world's combined wealth would not provide a ransom price of sufficient value even for one human life. There is no way to hold off death. As far as humans are concerned, such a ransom price is beyond their reach. No one can pay a particular sum that would save a person from going down into the pit of death and enable him to continue living. The wise, the stupid and the unreasoning—all must die. Whatever possessions may have been acquired during a lifetime must be left behind for others to enjoy.

Of course, the wealthy oppressors want this to be otherwise. At least, they desire to keep their memory alive for generations to come. But can they succeed? Note the psalmist's answer:

"Their inward wish is that their houses may be to time indefinite, their tabernacles to generation after generation. They have called their landed estates by their names. And yet earth-

ling man, though in honor, cannot keep lodging; he is indeed comparable with the beasts that have been destroyed. This is the way of those who have stupidity, and of those coming after them who take pleasure in their very mouthings. . . . Like sheep they have been appointed to Sheol itself; death itself will shepherd them; and the upright ones will have them in subjection in the morning, and their forms are due to wear away; Sheol rather than a lofty abode is for each one."—Ps. 49:11-14.

Consider what the psalmist is saying. Inside themselves, the wealthy who have accumulated riches by devious means hope that their property might last for endless years to come, being handed down from generation to generation. Since they have called their holdings by their own names, they think to perpetuate their memory. Yet they fail to see that they are mere earthlings, made of dust. Though they may be held in honor on account of their riches, self-seeking men cannot reside on the earth indefinitely. All attempts to keep their names alive are doomed to failure. They are no better off than unreasoning animals that perish.

Despite their wealth, lawless men come to an end that is no different from that of animals killed for food or to prevent their depredations. There is nothing in their life that elevates such men above the brute creation, for their life totally ignores the Creator, the eternal God. Hence, it is stupidity on their part to imagine that they can perpetuate their names. Those who adopt the philosophy or "mouthings" of self-seeking men are likewise stupid and will come to the same inglorious end. They must go down into Sheol, being shepherded, or led there, by death.

But what of those who put their trust in Jehovah? These faithful servants of God will gain the upper hand "in the morning." This will be at the start of the new day after their deliverance from affliction and oppression.

Then, while righteous persons are enjoying divine favor, the wicked, though they had enjoyed wealth and power, will molder in the dust. Thus their 'forms will wear away.' Instead of enjoying a palatial dwelling place, they will rot in the depths of Sheol.

The "upright ones," the remnant of Kingdom heirs and the "great crowd," will survive the war at Har-Magedon and experience the promised deliverance, whereas the lawless ones will have been destroyed. During the millennial

reign of Christ all the dead in Sheol will have a resurrection.

Contrasting his lot with that of unprincipled men, the Levite psalmist continues:

"However, God himself will redeem my soul from the hand of Sheol, for he will receive me. . . . Do not be afraid because some man gains riches, because the glory of his house increases, for at his death he cannot take along anything at all; his glory will not go down along with him himself. For during his lifetime he kept blessing his own soul; (and people will laud you because you do well for yourself,) his soul finally comes only as far as the generation of his forefathers. Nevermore will they see the light. Earthling man, although in honor, who does not understand, is indeed comparable with the beasts that have been destroyed."—Ps. 49:15-20.

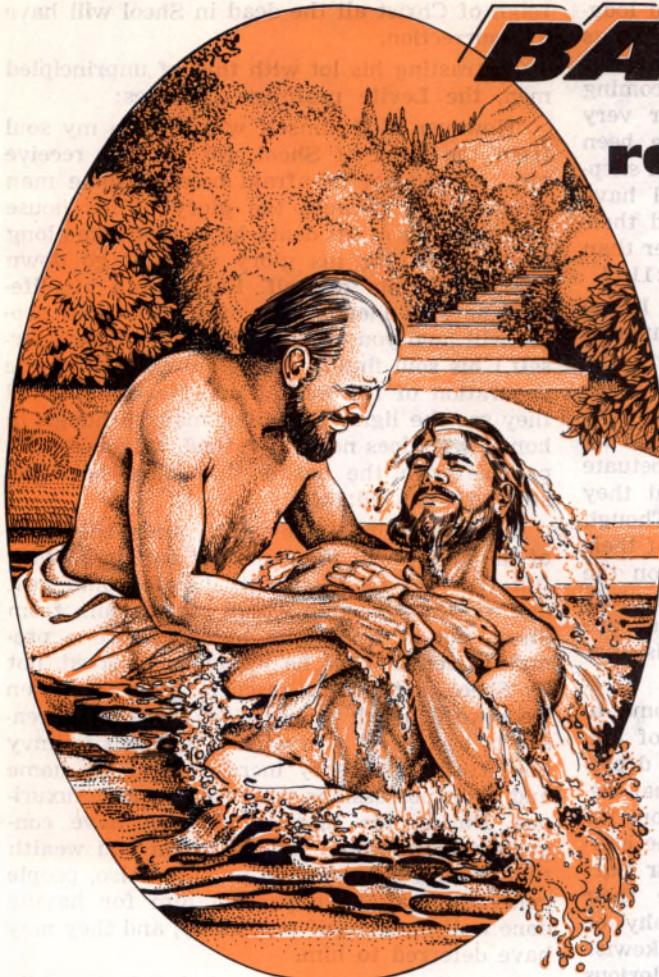
Like the psalmist, we rightly make the doing of the divine will the center of our lives. With full trust in his God, this Levite could rest assured that Jehovah would redeem him from Sheol, not allowing him to experience a premature death. Thus he would be received, not by Sheol, but by his rescuer, Jehovah. When we have Jehovah as our God, there is no reason to be fearful of a wicked man nor to envy him. His wealth may increase, and his home and other possessions may become more luxurious. During his lifetime he may have congratulated himself on the position and wealth that he had been able to procure. Also, people generally may have praised him for having done well for himself materially, and they may have deferred to him.

In the final analysis, though, he attains nothing more than did his forefathers, namely, death. Thus he has only a world of darkness, not light. So, regardless of how greatly honored he may be in this system of things, the earthling who does not understand or appreciate spiritual things and makes no room for the Creator in his life is like a beast that has no capacity to worship the Creator. Thus the wealthy, self-seeking man lives like a beast and perishes like a beast.

The answer to the perplexing problem about fearing the oppression by the wicked should certainly help us to see what should continue to come first in our lives. Nothing of a material nature has any permanence. If we want an abiding future, we need to put our trust in the eternal God who can restore even the dead to life.

BAPTISM

a Christian requirement



BAPTISM has been part of Christianity since its beginning. What does baptism signify? How important is it that persons be baptized? Let us consider some basic information about baptism and its significance from the standpoint of the Holy Bible.

The Scriptures indicate that the correct method of baptism is complete immersion. The word "baptize" is taken from the Greek word *baptizein*, meaning "to dip, to plunge." When one is immersed in water, one is temporarily buried from sight and then lifted out of the water.

The first mention of baptism in the Bible concerns the activity of John the Baptist. In the year 29 C.E., God authorized John to do baptizing. The

Scriptures state that John "came into all the country around the Jordan, preaching baptism in symbol of repentance for forgiveness of sins."—Luke 3:1-3.

Going under and coming up out of the water symbolized that a person had sincerely repented, or felt sorry for sinning against God's law given through Moses. He was, so to speak, dying to such a course and coming alive to renewed efforts at observing that Law. Since the Mosaic law was to serve as a "tutor leading to Christ," John's baptism was an important step in preparing Israelites for meeting the promised Messiah.—Luke 1:16, 17; 3:4-6; Gal. 3:24.

Jesus himself submitted to baptism by John. On that occasion God's holy spirit came down upon Jesus, anointing him as the promised Messiah. (Mark 1:9-11) Though not a sinner in need of repentance, Jesus entered on a new course of life at that time. (1 Pet. 2:22) Thereafter he was to do his Father's special "will" that would involve offering his life as a ransom sacrifice for the sins of mankind.—Ps. 40:6-8; Heb. 10:5-10.

Jesus did not put a stop to the baptizing activity of John the Baptist. In fact, we read that early in his ministry "Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John—although, in-

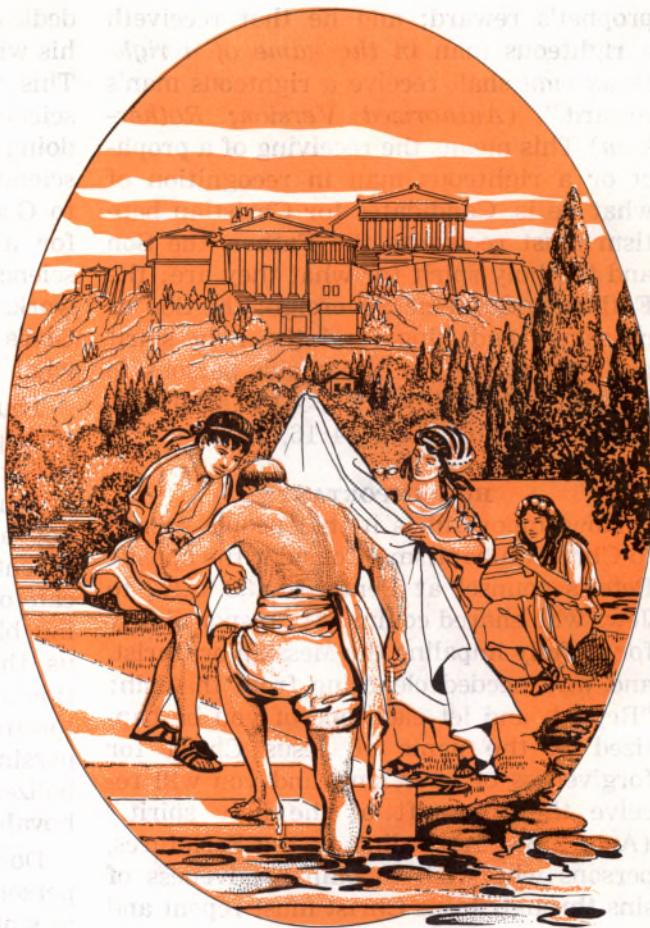
deed, Jesus himself did no baptizing but his disciples did." (John 4:1, 2) This baptizing directed by Jesus was in symbol of repentance in the manner of John's baptism.

A CHANGE OF MEANING

After Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension to heaven, the Mosaic law came to its end. (Rom. 10:4; Eph. 2:15) Did that do away with the need for baptism? No, but now, for the Jews, it symbolized a presentation of themselves to Jehovah God on the basis of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus as the Messiah. However, just before Jesus ascended to heaven, he gave his disciples the commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matt. 28:19, 20.

Did you notice that now baptism would include not only Jews but also "people of all the nations"? During his earthly life Jesus had foretold that God's special favor toward the Jews would end. (Matt. 8:11, 12; 21:43) This happened in 36 C.E. when God directed the apostle Peter to enter the house of Cornelius, a non-Jew, and declare the Christian message to him and his household. After these Gentiles accepted the truth about Jesus Christ, they received the miraculous gift of the holy spirit and were baptized.—Acts 10:1-48.

Since God was no longer dealing with a nation of people specially dedicated to him from birth,



from that time on baptism became a fitting symbol of wholehearted dedication to God. Going under the water would indicate that a person was dying to a course of life centered around himself. Coming up from the water would symbolize coming alive to putting God's revealed will in first place. (Compare Matthew 6:33; Philippians 1:10.) Jesus showed this to be a requirement when he said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me."—Matt. 16:24.

What is the idea behind being baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit"? (Matt. 28:19) We can better understand this from considering Jesus' words as recorded at Matthew 10:41: "He that receiveth a prophet *in the name of a prophet* shall receive a

prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man *in the name of a righteous man* shall receive a righteous man's reward." (*Authorized Version; Rotherham*) This means the receiving of a prophet or a righteous man in recognition of what he is. Candidates for Christian baptism must recognize the Father, the Son and the holy spirit for what they are: the Father as Supreme Sovereign; the Son as ransomer and king; and the holy spirit as God's active force that aids persons to do the divine will.—Ps. 83:18; Matt. 20:28; Rev. 19:16; John 14:16, 17.

HOW IMPORTANT?

How important is it that people submit to Christian baptism? Consider the apostle Peter's counsel at Pentecost, 33 C.E., to Jews who shared community responsibility for sinfully impaling the Messiah or Christ, and who needed cleansing from that sin: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit." (Acts 2:38) According to the Scriptures, persons who wish to gain forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ must repent and be baptized.

Does this mean that the waters of baptism wash away sins? It would be wrong to draw such a conclusion. When commenting on the flood of Noah's day, Peter gives baptism a deeper meaning, saying: "That which corresponds to this [the passing of eight persons through the Flood waters in an ark] is also now saving you, namely, baptism, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the request made to God for a good conscience,) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." —1 Pet. 3:21.

How, then, do we make a request to God for that good conscience? By doing as Noah did, dedicating ourselves before passing through the water. Like Noah, we

dedicate ourselves to Jehovah God to do his will and from then on proceed to do it. This results in our getting a good conscience, for when we know that we are doing God's will we enjoy a good conscience. Thus the dedication of ourselves to God is really a "request made to God for a good conscience." The good conscience results, not from doing our own works of self-righteousness, but from doing God's prescribed works, God's will. This is what we dedicate ourselves to do.

Thus our dedication of ourselves to God through Christ constitutes a "request made to God for a good conscience." Of ourselves, in our imperfect, sinful condition, we are not acceptable to God. So, because we repent of sin and turn around and dedicate ourselves, Jehovah applies the cleansing blood of Christ's atoning sacrifice to us, thereby relieving us of the condemnation of sin and giving us a good conscience toward Him. Therefore, our obediently passing through the baptismal water symbolizes our dedication of ourselves to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ.

Does this suggest that after baptism a person should no longer recognize himself as sinful? Not at all. Even Paul, a baptized Christian and an apostle of Jesus Christ, lamented: "So, then, with my mind I myself am a slave to God's law, but with my flesh to sin's law." (Rom. 7:25) However, dedicated, baptized Christians can have a good conscience in that they know that the sin-atoning value of Jesus' sacrifice blots out past sins and those they may commit from day to day through human imperfection. (1 John 2:1, 2) Therefore, Christians need not feel weighed down with guilt feelings because of their former course of life and inherited sinful state.

ONLY A BEGINNING

Should persons view their baptism as evidence that they have finally "made it" and are all set to receive life everlasting?

That would be unwise, for the Bible portrays baptism as only the beginning of a person's dedicated sacred service to God. Remember, Jesus' baptism occurred at the start of his Messianic service. With his apostles and other early disciples too it was a preliminary step. Did you notice the apostle Peter's expression that baptism "is also now saving you?" (1 Pet. 3:21) The commentary by G. F. C. Fronmüller notes: "The Present [tense of the Greek word for "saving"] is used because the saving has only begun and is not yet completed."—Matt. 10:22; Rom. 13:11; Phil. 2:12; Rev. 2:10.

Showing that more is required for salvation than just baptism are the following words of the apostle Paul: "For if you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." (Rom. 10:9, 10) It is evident from this that besides faith

and baptism, "public declaration" to the effect that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God raised him up from the dead is a requirement for salvation.

While this public declaration is made at the time of one's baptism, this does not mean that thereafter there is no need for further declaration of one's hope before others. To the contrary, the Bible shows that we must continue to declare such at congregational meetings, before governmental or judicial authorities who may demand an explanation of our Christian hope, and in publicly proclaiming the "good news" of God's kingdom.—Heb. 10:23; 1 Pet. 3:15; Matt. 24:14.

Clearly, for all who wish to gain an approved standing with God, Christian baptism is a requirement. In view of what it symbolizes, baptism is not to be taken lightly or entered into without careful advance preparation. Are you thinking of getting baptized soon? If so, reflect seriously on its meaning. Be determined forever to live up to the dedication to God that it represents.

God's Word Exerts Power

The apostle Paul wrote: "The word of God is alive and exerts power." (Heb. 4:12) A recent experience from Spain confirms that statement.

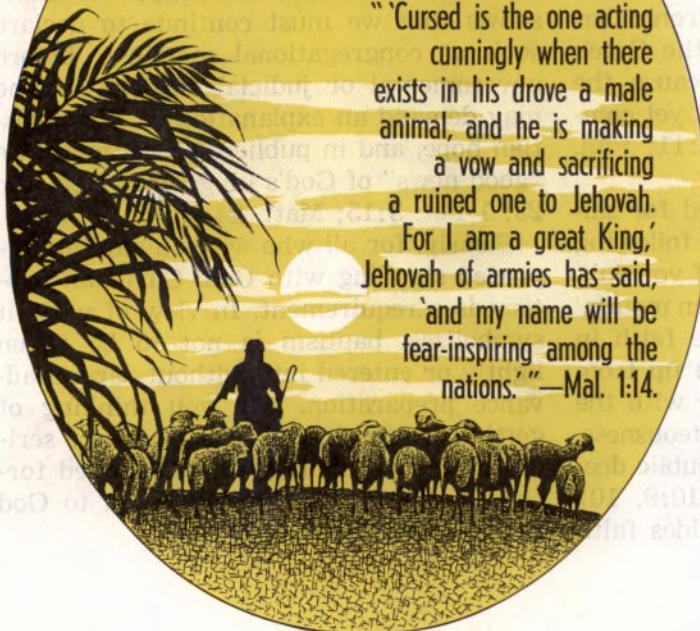
While engaging in witnessing on the street, a Christian elder approached a young man who identified himself as a Buddhist. Although he preferred observing people instead of reading, the man accepted an older issue of **The Watchtower**. Also, he was invited to attend a meeting at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

A few days later, the young man appeared at the hall. After being introduced to some individuals present, he was

invited to sit down. But he declined and stood for two hours without moving. In conversation afterward, he said that he did not care to read, preferring to listen and observe.

However, on one occasion the elder asked the young man if he had ever read the Bible through. He had not, but was encouraged to do so, the Witness mentioning that the Bible is an Oriental book. This Buddhist read the entire Bible in just a few days. From then on, Jehovah helped him to grow spiritually. Today, he is a baptized Christian. God's Word truly does exert power.

GIVING OUR BEST TO JEHOVAH



"Cursed is the one acting cunningly when there exists in his drove a male animal, and he is making a vow and sacrificing a ruined one to Jehovah. For I am a great King,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'and my name will be fear-inspiring among the nations.'—Mal. 1:14.

God has no need of gifts from anyone, for he is complete in himself. He is the self-existent One.

² As a youth who had been taught the Mosaic law, David the son of the Judean Jesse knew that Jehovah owns the whole earth. (Ex. 19:5) In later years, when making contributions for the temple to be built at Jerusalem, David prayerfully addressed the Most High in these words: "Who am I and who are my people, that we should retain power to make voluntary offerings like this? For everything is from you, and out of your own hand we have given to you. O Jehovah our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build for you a house for your holy name, from your hand it is, and to you it all belongs."—1 Chron. 29:14, 16.

³ So David recognized that we humans cannot enrich the Almighty in any way. Indeed, whatever we may give is merely a returning of a small part of what we have received from the Source of "every good gift and every perfect present." (Jas. 1:17) But does this mean that the bringing of gifts to our Creator has no value? Does he spurn the offerings of his devoted servants? The answer of God's Word is, No. Jehovah God invites humble worshipers to

DOES it not seem strange that imperfect humans should even think about giving anything to the Great Creator, Jehovah? Why, there is not a thing in the whole universe that does not already belong to him! In his Word, he himself declares: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine." (Hag. 2:8) "To me belongs every wild animal of the forest, the beasts upon a thousand mountains. I well know every winged creature of the mountains, and the animal throngs of the open field are with me. If I were hungry, I would not say it to you; for to me the productive land and its fullness belong. Shall I eat the flesh of powerful bulls, and the blood of he-goats shall I drink?" (Ps. 50:10-13) Surely Jehovah

1. Can humans really give anything to Jehovah?

2. What did David recognize about voluntary offerings made to Jehovah?
3. (a) What questions might be raised about the gifts made to Jehovah?
(b) What is the Scriptural answer to such questions?

bring their gifts. At Psalm 96:8 we read: "Ascribe to Jehovah the glory belonging to his name; carry a gift and come into his court-yards."

⁴ Of course, Jehovah wanted fine offerings that were prompted by appreciative hearts. These would be gifts that involved self-denial as well as prayerful and thoughtful preparation. For example, while the Mosaic law was in force, an Israelite could not bring just *any* animal to the gate of the tabernacle courtyard and expect to receive favorable recognition from God. The Law stated: "In case a man should present a communion sacrifice to Jehovah in order to pay

4. What kind of gifts are pleasing to Jehovah?

ALL MAY SHARE IN:

COMMENTING
AT
MEETINGS



PREACHING
AND
TEACHING

ENCOURAGING
OTHERS
SPIRITUALLY
AND
MATERIALLY

INCITING
OTHERS TO LOVE AND
FINE WORKS



a vow or as a voluntary offering, it should prove to be a sound one among the herd or the flock, in order to gain approval. No defect at all should prove to be in it. No case of blindness or fracture or having a cut or wart or scabbiness or ringworm, none of these must you present to Jehovah.”—Lev. 22:21, 22.

⁵ As for grain offerings, these were to be of *fine flour*. (Lev. 2:1, 4; 6:14, 15; Num. 15:4) This requirement would have ruled out all coarse flour, flour that was not sifted well. Yes, only the best was appropriate as an offering to the Holy One, Jehovah.

⁶ Another important requirement for making acceptable offerings to Jehovah was that of a person's having the right heart motivation. Without a deep inward desire to please his Creator, an Israelite would be making sacrifices in vain. Note how this is stressed in the following words: “‘Of what benefit to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?’ says Jehovah. ‘I have had enough of whole burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed animals; and in the blood of young bulls and male lambs and he-goats I have taken no delight. When you people keep coming in to see my face, who is it that has required this from your hand, to trample my courtyards? Stop bringing in any more valueless grain offerings. Incense—it is something detestable to me . . . Your new moons and your festal seasons my soul has hated. To me they have become a burden; I have become tired of bearing them. And when you spread out your palms, I hide my eyes from you. Even though you make many prayers, I am not listening; with bloodshed your very hands have become filled.’” (Isa. 1:11-15) When genuine de-

votion and a spirit of generosity were lacking, the outward forms of worship were comparable to bribes designed to buy divine favor. They were wholly unacceptable.

OUR GIFT TO JEHOVAH

⁷ Unlike the Israelites, we disciples of Jesus Christ do not present sacrifices on some material altar. The Law covenant that commanded such offerings was canceled on the basis of Jesus' death on a stake. (Col. 2:13, 14) This gives rise to the question, What sacrifices can we offer?

⁸ The Christian apostle Paul encouraged spirit-anointed believers who would give up their body of flesh and receive a glorious spiritual body on being raised from the dead: “I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason.” (Rom. 12:1) Thus, they were encouraged to use their energies and capabilities in serving the Creator. The body members are the instruments through which a person can speak and act. Hence, ‘to present their bodies a living sacrifice,’ these Christians had to be active, ‘doing all things to God’s glory.’ (1 Cor. 10:31) For that sacrifice to be “holy,” they had to maintain moral and spiritual cleanliness. And only by letting unhypocritical love motivate their actions would such presenting of their bodies be “acceptable to God.” (1 Cor. 13:3) When they led a life of full devotion to God in attitude, word and action because of deliberate choice, appreciating that it was right in view of the divine compassion that has been shown them, they were performing sacred service with their “power of reason.” Regardless of what our present hope may be, whether

5. What did the Law stipulate regarding grain offerings?

6. What bearing did heart motivation have on the acceptability of an Israelite's sacrifices?

7. Why do we today not offer animal sacrifices?

8. At Romans 12:1, what did the apostle Paul write about sacrifice, and how are we to understand his words?

heavenly or earthly, can we not likewise be whole-souled in our service to God?

⁹ In the letter to the Hebrews, we learn still more about acceptable sacrifices. Hebrews 13:15, 16 says: "Through [Christ] let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name. Moreover, do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."—Compare Hosea 14:2.

¹⁰ Our offering "the fruit of lips" would include sharing in the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations." Are we truly giving our best to this important preaching work? Do we eagerly seize opportunities to give a witness? Is our life as Christians exemplary so that "the fruit of lips" constitutes an acceptable sacrifice of praise?—Rom. 2:21, 22.

¹¹ Public expressions at Christian meetings are also a part of our sacrifice. Obviously, this necessitates our being present when fellow believers are assembled for worship. Do we really long to be with others of like precious faith? Or, do we allow other activities and interests needlessly to occupy the time that we could be with our brothers? We do well to imitate the example of the psalmist who compared his intense desire for communion with Jehovah God in association with fellow worshipers to the longing of a hind for water. Without water, a deer simply could not survive. (Ps. 42:1, 2) Do we really appreciate that we cannot live without Jehovah, "the source of living water"?—Jer. 2:13.

¹² While at meetings, we would certainly

want to derive the greatest benefit. This we can do by seeking to apply the following inspired advice: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, . . . encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." (Heb. 10:24, 25) Since the great day of Jehovah for executing his judgment is bound to come, do we not have good reason to give prayerful consideration to what we can do to strengthen and encourage our brothers? Surely we do not want any of them to be found in a disapproved state when that day comes. (Luke 21:34-36) Do the expressions we make reveal that we are genuinely concerned about their spiritual well-being? Through our comments at meetings, are we promoting love, an unselfish interest in the eternal welfare of others? Do our statements encourage all to continue performing fine works, being zealous in proclaiming the "good news" and being exemplary in all aspects of daily living?—Compare Titus 2:1-14.

¹³ By inciting others "to love and fine works," we also arouse ourselves, impressing on our minds and hearts the importance of works that are consistent with faith. This can have a highly beneficial effect on us, causing us to examine ourselves and to make improvement in Christian living and activity. And when we listen to what others say and then apply the Scriptural encouragement, we gain the happiness that comes from being "doers of the word."—Jas. 1:22-25.

¹⁴ The letter to the Hebrews encourages sharing, responding to the needs of others. Those to whom this letter was directed were told: "Keep on remembering the former days in which, after you were enlightened, you endured a great contest under sufferings, sometimes while you were

9. At Hebrews 13:15, 16, what encouragement are we given?

10. What does "the fruit of lips" include, and what questions might we ask ourselves in this regard?

11. Why is it beneficial to examine our attitude about Christian meetings?

12, 13. How can we derive the greatest benefit from Christian meetings?

14, 15. Besides spiritual giving, what else do our "sacrifices" include?

being exposed as in a theater both to reproaches and tribulations, and sometimes while you became sharers with those who were having such an experience. For you both expressed sympathy for those in prison and joyfully took the plundering of your belongings, knowing you yourselves have a better and an abiding possession." (Heb. 10:32-34) Do we likewise express sympathy to those who are suffering and do we come to their aid?

¹⁵ The situation in which God's servants find themselves varies considerably. Some may be poverty-stricken. Others may be sad and depressed, in sore need of comfort and fellowship. Still others may be discouraged on account of serious personal problems. It is true that Jehovah God will see to it that the righteous are not entirely forsaken. (Ps. 37:25) But should we not personally feel the responsibility of being God's agents for extending kindness and help? Our being neglectful in this respect is a serious matter. The apostle John wrote: "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? Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth."—1 John 3:17, 18.

WHY WE ARE INVITED TO BRING OUR GIFTS

¹⁶ In order for us to be faithful in offering our spiritual sacrifices, we need to appreciate why Jehovah God invites us to do so. Our heavenly Father already knows our inmost thoughts and attitudes. But he wants us to express our love for him by the positive good that we do for others. It is his desire that his servants be like him in showing kindness and generosity. (Matt. 5:43-48) This provides the means

for him to draw humans to himself. How so? By observing our laudable way of life, others may come to recognize that real happiness comes from doing God's will. —Matt. 5:16.

¹⁷ Since Jehovah God made us, he knows what is in our best interests. This is another reason for his inviting us to bring our gifts to him. A generous spirit contributes toward our enjoying peace of mind and heart as well as genuine happiness now. The Bible states: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) Additionally, we can rest assured that our heavenly Father will reward us richly both now and in the eternal future. The Son of God said: "When making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, that your gifts of mercy may be in secret; then your Father who is looking on in secret will repay you." (Matt. 6:3, 4) "When you spread a feast, invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind; and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous ones."—Luke 14:13, 14.

¹⁸ So, taking a comprehensive view of our sacrifices, we must admit that at meetings, when sharing the "good news" with others, and in attitude, word and action, yes, in all areas of life, we should be prepared to give our very best. We should not be halfhearted about such vital matters. What is at stake is Jehovah's approval and our being granted life. May we, therefore, live in harmony with the Scriptural assurance: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering."—Heb. 6:10.

16, 17. Why does Jehovah invite us to make "sacrifices"?

18. What should be true of our giving, and why?

MAINTAINING CLEANNESS WHEN BRINGING GIFTS



"Ascribe to Jehovah the glory belonging to his name; carry a gift and come into his courtyards. Bow down to Jehovah in holy adornment."—Ps. 96:8, 9.

THE holiness, purity or cleanliness of Jehovah requires that his people remain pure. (1 Pet. 1:14-16) This fact was deeply impressed on the Israelites by the provisions of the Mosaic law. They were to remain separate from the immoral and degrading practices of surrounding nations, and avoid, if possible, touching a dead body or anything else that would defile them, and not eat animals that were unclean.—Lev. 11:4-8, 10-20, 24, 25; 18:3-24.

² When on military expeditions, the Israelites were under command to maintain cleanliness in their camp. The Law stated: "Your camp must prove to be holy, that [Jehovah] may see nothing indecent in you and certainly turn away from accompanying you." (Deut. 23:14) If an Israelite did become defiled in some way, he had to 'wash his garments, and he was unclean until evening.' (Lev. 11:40) Even the washing was insufficient. Not until a new day came at sunset, according

1, 2. Why must God's people be pure, and how was this impressed on the Israelites?

to the Hebrew manner of counting days, would the person again have a proper standing with Jehovah. During the period of Israel's wandering in the wilderness, when the camp numbered into the millions, upholding the divine standard for cleanliness was no small matter.

³ To offer an acceptable sacrifice, an Israelite had to be ceremonially clean. (Lev. 15:31) It was the duty of the priests to uphold God's standard of cleanliness, maintaining purity themselves and helping their fellow Israelites to be in an acceptable condition to present offerings that would be divinely approved.—Mal. 2:7.

⁴ When the Israelites ignored the divine requirements for proper conduct, their sacrifices not only became meaningless but were actually detestable to Jehovah God. The Scriptures tell us: "The sacrifice of the wicked ones is something detestable to Jehovah, but the prayer of the upright ones is a pleasure to him." (Prov. 15:8) "The one slaughtering the bull is as one striking down a man. The one sacrificing the sheep is as one breaking the neck of a dog. The one offering up a gift—the blood of a pig! The one presenting a memorial of frankincense is as one saying a

3. In matters of cleanliness, what responsibility did the Aaronic priests have?

4. How did Jehovah God view the sacrifices of the Israelites who were not measuring up to his requirements?

blessing with uncanny words. They are also the ones that have chosen their own ways, and in their disgusting things their very soul has taken a delight.”—Isa. 66:3.

⁵ The righteous principles incorporated in God’s law to Israel have not changed. They apply at all times, in all situations and under all conditions. That is why Christian witnesses of Jehovah today would want to consider soberly their own standing before God. Each one might ask himself: ‘Am I striving to remain clean mentally, morally, physically and spiritually? Do I contribute personally to the cleanliness of the Christian congregation—a cleanliness that causes it to stand out in contrast to a wicked, unclean generation? Does the way in which I care for and use my home and other possessions, including my fleshly body, demonstrate close adherence to Jehovah’s way? Is this true of my whole way of life?’ Our affirmative answer to these questions would be an evidence that we are striving to heed the inspired exhortation to guard against “every defilement of flesh and spirit.”

—2 Cor. 7:1.

LEARNING ABOUT ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE FROM OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE LAW

⁶ The stipulation regarding the anointing oil contained in the Mosaic law also makes clear the importance of upholding God’s standard of holiness. When given the special recipe for making the anointing oil, Moses received strict rules governing the use of this substance. We read: “This is to continue as a holy anointing oil to me during your generations. It is not to be rubbed in the flesh of mankind, and with its composition you must not make any like it. It is something holy. It is to continue as something holy for you. Anyone who makes an ointment like it and who puts some of it upon a stranger must be

cut off from his people.” (Ex. 30:31-33) A failure to respect the sacred purpose of anointing oil constituted a capital offense.

⁷ This furnishes vital lessons for us. The Bible identifies the oil as being representative of Jehovah’s holy spirit. (Compare Zechariah 4:2-6.) It was, not with anointing oil, but with holy spirit that the great King-Priest Jesus Christ was anointed. (Matt. 3:16, 17; Luke 4:18; Heb. 1:8, 9) Truly, then, we want to have the highest regard for God’s spirit, doing our utmost to follow its leading. This includes preserving a good conscience so that we do not slight or ‘grieve the spirit.’ (Eph. 4:30) Moreover, since it is by means of his spirit that Jehovah God is building up the Christian congregation, we need to guard against giving credit to men for what is being accomplished. (1 Cor. 3:5, 6) Our firm faith in the inspired prophecies also is a confirmation of our having a proper attitude toward the spirit that is responsible for those prophecies. (2 Pet. 1:21) Do our words and actions demonstrate that we are awaiting “new heavens and a new earth” and want as many others as possible to learn about this grand hope?—2 Pet. 3:13, 14.

⁸ As in the case of the anointing oil, God’s law to Israel outlined specific instructions regarding the incense. After listing the ingredients and the method to be used in preparing the incense, the Bible says: “It should be most holy to you people. And the incense that you will make with this composition, you must not make for yourselves. For you it is to continue as something holy to Jehovah. Whoever makes any like it to enjoy its smell must be cut off from his people.” (Ex. 30:34-38) In this way, profane use of the holy incense was strictly forbidden. What can we learn from this?

5. Why should we today be concerned about our standing with God?

6. What did the Law say about the anointing oil?

7. What vital lessons can we draw from the divine commands about the anointing oil?

8. What did the Law prescribe regarding the incense?

⁹ The incense was pictorial of the acceptable prayers offered up by God's faithful servants. This truth is expressed at Psalm 141:2: "May my prayer be prepared as incense before you, the raising up of my palms as the evening grain offering." Also, in the book of Revelation (5:8), we read that "the incense means the prayers of the holy ones." How important it is that we highly value the privilege of prayer! We can show such appreciation by praying regularly, making our requests in harmony with God's will. (1 John 3:21, 22; 5:14, 15) Selfish, wrongly motivated prayers would be comparable to the misuse of incense and would not be given a favorable hearing by our heavenly Father.—Jas. 4:3.

¹⁰ Because prayer is such a vital part of true worship, men who represent the congregation in prayer should be exemplary. The apostle Paul directed this inspired advice to Timothy: "I desire that in every place the men carry on prayer, lifting up loyal hands, apart from wrath and debates." (1 Tim. 2:8) Untainted by acts of disloyalty toward God and men, and free from feelings of ill will, such men could properly represent the congregation. In keeping with the seriousness of prayer, we would seek to keep our minds from wandering when others are petitioning Jehovah God in our behalf.

¹¹ Closely linked with the arrangement of making sacrifices was the Law's provision about vows. The Israelites were commanded: "You must render up an offering made by fire to Jehovah, a burnt offering or a sacrifice to perform a special vow." (Num. 15:3) Many vows were made as an appeal to God for his favor and

help. Provided that the Most High granted the request, the one making the vow voluntarily obligated himself to do something special or to refrain from some activity in which he otherwise had the right to engage.

¹² In effect, a vow carried the force of an oath. A failure to follow through on the vow was a very serious matter, as can be seen from the following statement in the Law: "In case you vow a vow to Jehovah your God, you must not be slow about paying it, because Jehovah your God will without fail require it of you, and it would indeed become a sin on your part. But in case you omit making a vow, it will not become a sin on your part." —Deut. 23:21, 22.

¹³ The principle that we can learn from this is that our heavenly Father expects us to be honest and upright in all aspects of life. Like that of the psalmist David, our desire should be: "Let the sayings of my mouth and the meditation of my heart become pleasurable before you, O Jehovah my Rock and my Redeemer." (Ps. 19:14) When this is the case, we will be heeding the admonition of the disciple James: "Let your Yes mean Yes, and your No, No, so that you do not fall under judgment." (Jas. 5:12) Yes, our word should be as good as a signed document. Others should have confidence that our word is reliable, trustworthy. Since Jehovah expects his servants to 'speak truth each one with his neighbor,' a person lacking in truthfulness or honesty could hardly expect the Most High to view his gifts favorably.

¹⁴ There is yet another field of Christian activity in which we do well to reflect on what the Law prescribed. Jehovah enjoined on his people Israel the observance of three annual festivals. Every Israelite male

9. (a) What do we learn from Psalm 141:2 and Revelation 5:8 about the significance of incense? (b) How can we show that we appreciate the privilege of prayer?

10. What counsel do the Scriptures provide as to who may represent the congregation in prayer?

11, 12. (a) What is a vow? (b) According to the Law, how serious was a failure to fulfill a vow?

13. In harmony with God's law on vows, what should be true of our word as Christians?

14, 15. (a) What arrangement for festivals did the Law outline? (b) Do these festivals find their parallel in Christian assemblies today, and what does 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8 reveal in this regard?

was required to attend these. (Deut. 16:16) For many, this meant considerable travel, with the inconvenience of being away from home. Today we may attend two or three assemblies annually, and our attendance may involve a measure of sacrifice. Do we put forth the needed effort to attend conventions because of wanting to enjoy association with our brothers and the generous provision of spiritual food?

¹⁵ Of course, more is involved than our appreciating assemblies of God's people. Why? Because we are not limited to the observance of specific days and festivals as were the Israelites. (Col. 2:16, 17) The apostle Paul wrote: "Clear away the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, according as you are free from ferment. For, indeed, Christ our passover has been sacrificed. Consequently let us keep the festival, not with old leaven, neither with leaven of badness and wickedness, but with unfermented cakes of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5:7, 8) Jesus Christ, as the reality of the Passover lamb, was sacrificed only once. Hence, our entire life course as Christians is comparable to the festival of unfermented cakes. Are we willing to remove what is sinful to maintain personal and congregational purity? Day-to-day observance of God's righteous requirements is absolutely essential for our service to be acceptable to him.

JEHOVAH'S DEEP CONCERN FOR US

¹⁶ Since Jehovah's inviting us to bring our offerings is not for his benefit but, rather, for our eternal welfare, we do well to take note of his kindly warnings about what makes our gifts acceptable. In the fifth century B.C.E., it was by means of his prophet Malachi that Jehovah God provided strong admonition about this to those professing to worship Him. At that time the Persian World Power was ruling.

16. (a) Through whom did Jehovah provide strong admonition in the fifth century B.C.E.? (b) At that time, what were the circumstances as to rulership?

Areas that had once been controlled by petty kingdoms were under provincial administration, with governors representing the Persian monarch. To enable governors to maintain imperial rule and to gather the taxes for the imperial treasury, these officials were granted life-and-death power over the citizens of their respective provinces. In view of the governor's great authority, citizens, for the most part, would pay their taxes and even bring an extra gift for him. They did not want to arouse his displeasure and jeopardize their own lives.

¹⁷ Against this background, we can appreciate the appropriateness of Jehovah's word through Malachi. The Most High remonstrated with the Israelites. Through Malachi, he pointed out how sinful it was for the people to bring blind, lame and sickly animals as sacrifices and for the priests to accept such blemished offerings. Next came the challenge: "Bring it [your gift offering] near, please, to your governor. Will he find pleasure in you, or will he receive you kindly?" (Mal. 1:7, 8) It took no great imagination on the part of the Israelites to realize the undesirable result of such a course in dealing with a human governor. How, then, could they hope to receive the approval of the great King Jehovah? They simply could not do so. It was in their best interests to act in harmony with Malachi's encouragement: "Now, please, soften the face of God, that he may show us favor." (Mal. 1:9) Only by living up to Jehovah's requirements could they regain divine approval.

¹⁸ Today we must make sure that we are benefiting from the instructive examples written in the Holy Scriptures. (Rom. 15:4) We cannot afford to put on a pretense of making generous gifts, as did

17. In Malachi's time, how were the people of Israel and their priests failing in the matter of presenting acceptable gifts to Jehovah?

18. How might Christians become guilty of a failure like that of the Israelites in the time of Malachi?

Ananias and Sapphira, while actually pursuing our selfish interests. (Acts 5:1-11) It would not be appropriate to use our energies, assets and abilities to such an extent for our own pleasures that practically nothing is left for rendering material and spiritual aid to others. This would be like saying to Jehovah: 'Here I am giving you what is left over.' Would that not be insulting? Could we really expect him to view such token service with favor? How clear it is that our whole way of life, our day-to-day living, our attitudes and motives, are tied in with our offerings to Jehovah! We must maintain purity in all respects.

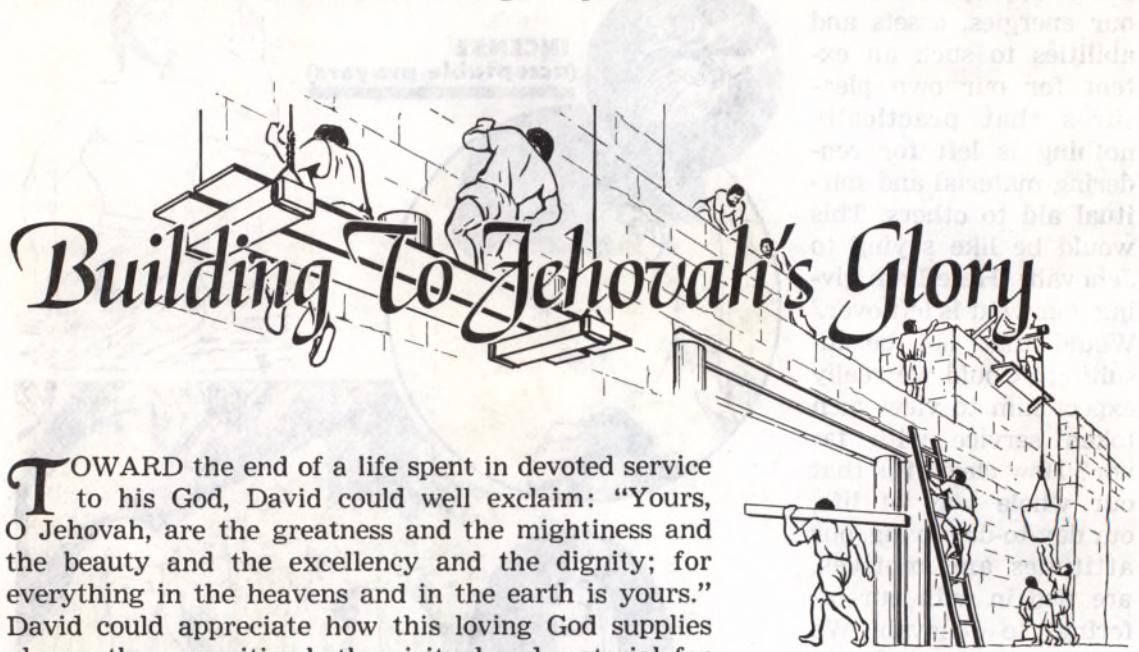
¹⁹ As with the Israelites, so with us, may 'the gift of each one's hand be in proportion to the blessing of Jehovah.' (Deut. 16:17) Let us appreciatively count the blessings that our heavenly Father has conferred on us, overlooking none of them. Then we can determine individually whether we are rendering to Jehovah in proportion to his gifts to us. How wonderful it is that he

¹⁹. What can help us to determine whether we are giving our best?



knows our capabilities and yet does not specifically spell out for each one of us what we must render to him! He permits us to express our appreciation from the heart. And do we not want to give

him what he deserves, namely, our very best? Anything less than that would not be good enough. Our best, then, let us give to him who has given us all we possess!



TOWARD the end of a life spent in devoted service to his God, David could well exclaim: "Yours, O Jehovah, are the greatness and the mightiness and the beauty and the excellency and the dignity; for everything in the heavens and in the earth is yours." David could appreciate how this loving God supplies always the necessities both spiritual and material for his servants on earth. In joyful recognition of Jehovah's loving-kindness in providing for his people Israel, the entire nation had united in bringing together their contributions toward building a glorious temple for Jehovah's worship. Yes, the people had given way "to rejoicing over making their voluntary offerings, for it was with a complete heart that they made voluntary offerings to Jehovah." The attitude of that entire nation was as David now expressed it: "Now, O our God, we are thanking you and praising your beauteous name."—1 Chron. 29:9-13.

In the closing decades of this 20th century, we also have plenty for which we must thank Jehovah. We are happy to render our gifts at his spiritual altar. And he has blessed us, too, on account of the material gifts that we have brought to his worship. Throughout the earth, many thousands of bright, clean Kingdom Halls testify to the generosity of Jehovah's Witnesses in financing such projects. The Watch Tower Society is happy, too, that this corporate body has been able,

in many instances, to assist with loan arrangements that have made such building projects possible.

In recent years, other building projects have also been completed by Jehovah's Witnesses. Outstanding among these have been the construction of new buildings, or extensions to existing buildings, at the location of many of the worldwide branch offices of the Watch Tower Society. These buildings are far different from the imposing churches and temples that are often erected inside and outside of Christendom for the purpose of "show" and for attracting people to a formalistic

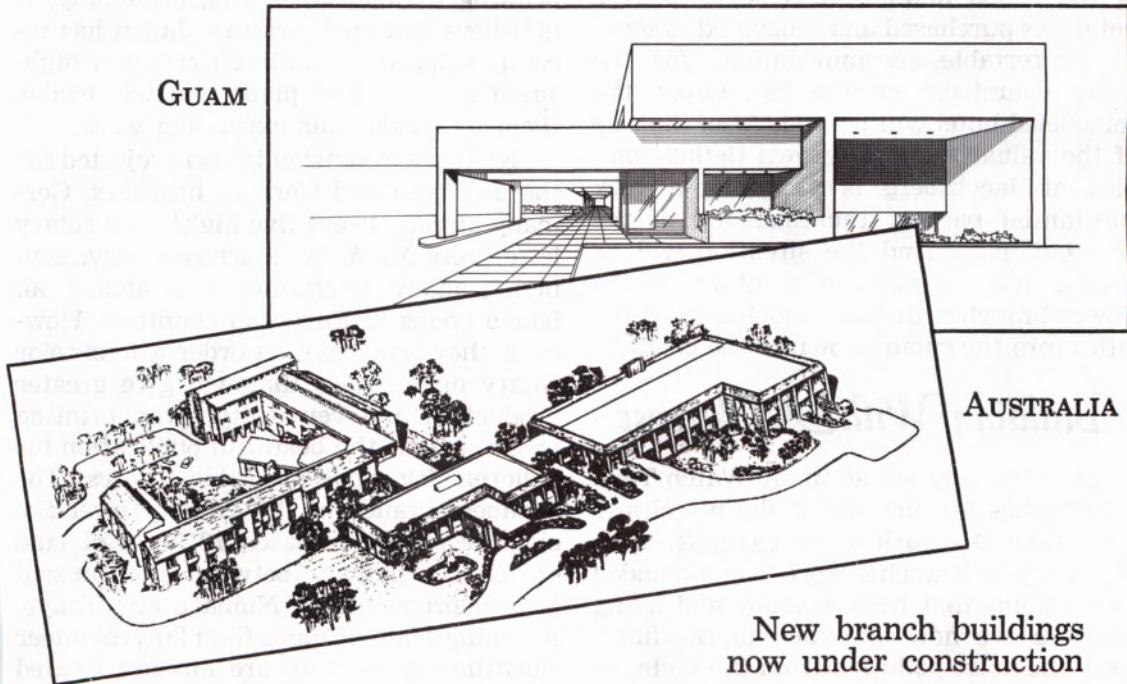
religion. To the contrary, Jehovah's Witnesses build with utility in mind, and with a view to giving support to the worldwide work of proclaiming the "good news" of Jehovah's kingdom. Generally, these buildings combine factory and shipping work areas with dormitory and dining areas for the happy families of volunteer workers who are giving wholehearted service to Jehovah at these locations. Repeatedly, *The Watchtower* has reported joyful gatherings held for dedicating such new structures, to Jehovah's praise.

Building For The Future

The work in connection with God's kingdom, of preaching and disciple-making, has made remarkable progress throughout the earth during the past 60 years. Initially, the printing of Bibles, Bible literature and magazines in the United States was started at the eight-story factory that was built in Brooklyn, New York, in 1927, and added to during the years that followed.

However, the demand for these publications was great, and other factories were established, such as at Berne, Switzerland (1925), and Wiesbaden, Germany (1948). Other installations have followed until, today, there are 39 printing branches of the Watch Tower Society earth wide.

In recent years, particularly, an effort has been made to decentralize the manufacture of literature and magazines from Brooklyn. In 1975, construction of a large factory was completed at Wallkill, New York State, and here 15 high-speed rotary presses now take care of the production of English-language magazines and other magazines for the United States and many other countries. Bible and book production remains mainly at the Brooklyn factory. Today, some 1,830 volunteer workers at Brooklyn and 650 others at Watchtower Farms handle the factory work, as well as the work in supplying food, furnishings and many services for all who serve so zealously at these two headquarters installations.



New branch buildings
now under construction

This decentralization has also affected many other branches of the Watch Tower Society. Printing of magazines is now being carried out, or is being planned, for many more locations throughout the world. Thus, if a future world crisis should shut down shipping lanes, supplies of essential spiritual "food" will still be available to the brothers. Thus, at this writing, new branch facilities are just being completed at Bogotá, Colombia, to accommodate 60 workers. A large farm property, of 284 acres has been procured at Cesario Lange, S.P., Brazil, and a start is being made to erect a Bethel home-factory complex there that will provide for 288 workers.

In northern Europe, factory and home facilities will be greatly expanded in Sweden when, in the spring of 1980, a new building housing 126 Bethel workers is completed near Arboga. Here, as with many others of the current projects, the entire construction work is being done by dedicated witnesses of Jehovah as part of their contribution toward the furtherance of the "good news." At Arboga, a large hotel was purchased and renovated to serve as comfortable accommodations for the many volunteers on the job. Later, the remodeled hotel will be sold. Also, the sale of the valuable but outgrown Bethel complex at Jacobsberg is providing a very substantial part of the financing of the new buildings. And the situation will be similar with a number of other Watch Tower branches that are moving from the cities into the suburbs or into the country.

Building With A Purpose

However, why are so many Watch Tower branches moving out of the big cities? Well, take Denmark as an example. Here the printing branch's work has expanded to the point that both working and living quarters are now crammed to the limit. Also, the noise pollution from the highway

adjoining the building has become almost unbearable. The Society is therefore in the process of purchasing a farm of 12 acres near Holbæk, about 45 minutes' distance by car from Copenhagen. Construction of the new Danish Bethel is to commence there shortly. These new home and factory complexes, world wide, are generally being erected with spacious surroundings, so that there will be no further problem with expansion during the years to come.

Lack of room for expansion, as well as the crescendo of noise, day and night, from the highways that pass the present building on either side, are also principal reasons for relocating Canada's branch premises on a recently acquired farm property near Halton Hills, Ontario. Volunteer workers there are now proceeding with the construction of a dormitory-factory complex that will house 264 workers. Cramped quarters are one reason, too, that the South African branch plans to move to the countryside; also, there will be more space to take care of their multilanguage printing of magazines and, eventually, it is believed, other literature. Japan has recently shipped to South Africa a new high-speed rotary offset press that will enable them to handle this expanding work.

Extensive expansion is also projected for the Japanese and German branches. Germany already keeps five high-speed rotary letterpress M. A. N. machines busy, supplying many magazines and almost all bound books to European countries. However, they now have on order a four-color rotary offset press that will give greater production and versatility, even printing books such as the beautiful publication for children *My Book of Bible Stories*. The Japanese branch of the Watch Tower Society recently purchased 12 acres of land at Ebina, midway between the present branch properties at Numazu and Tokyo. A willing team of more than 200 volunteer construction workers are already located

on the site, foundations are laid and a two-year project of erecting a spacious factory, together with a Bethel home accommodating 360 persons, is under way. The Numazu factory and Bethel have been outgrown, and now the new facilities will also include a four-color offset rotary press that should prove to be a "powerhouse" in turning out Kingdom literature for the Orient.

The Watch Tower Society has many other expansion projects under way throughout the earth. Australia is well along with plans for a new Bethel and factory at its Ingleburn Kingdom Farm site, about one hour's drive out of Sydney. London, England, is extending its fine facilities. And not to be overlooked are all the smaller branches, many of them without extensive printing operations, that are expanding or relocating their operations, with a view to giving the Kingdom witnesses better service in their area.

New branch buildings with fine facilities have recently been completed at Dublin, Ireland; Nairobi, Kenya; Athens, Greece; Rome, Italy, and branch buildings or extensions are in course of planning or construction in Guam, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Zambia, Curaçao, Puerto Rico, Solomon Islands and other places. It is hoped that all these new branch facilities will contribute much to the expansion of Kingdom interests, both before and possibly after the "great tribulation."

In Coming Issues

- **Prayer in These "Last Days"**
- **Recreation That Genuinely Refreshes**
- **It Is Not My Fault!**

A Word Of Thanks

How has all this Kingdom expansion been financed? Largely by the willing donations of many thousands of interested persons, just as back in David's day. Also, individual countries with building projects have at times set up loan arrangements, whereby Jehovah's Witnesses in those countries have made short-term loans, which have been repaid after the financing of the project is completed. As this magazine has clearly stated many times during its 100 years of publication, Jehovah's Witnesses never solicit contributions. However, those who are interested in sharing financially in expanding the interests of Jehovah's kingdom are always free to forward voluntary contributions to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in their country. In the United States, such contributions may be sent to the Watch Tower Society, 124 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201. This information is supplied so that any persons who have the means, and who are moved by God's spirit to share in the worldwide forward movement of Jehovah's Kingdom activities, may know how to do so. Such donations are gratefully acknowledged.

At this point we want to say "thank you" to all who have contributed so generously during the past year to the advancement of Kingdom interests. It is hoped that this article will be of encouragement to you, in showing some ways in which your goodwill contributions have been used. Also, we want to say a big "thank you" to all those devoted brothers and sisters who have given so generously of their time and hard work in getting these many construction projects under way or completed, so that Jehovah's name may be praised all the more.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● In recent years a number of Roman Catholic priests in different countries have become involved in political activities supporting what are called "terrorist" or "guerrilla" groups.

Priest

Answers Such has been referred to as the 'liberation theology.' When Pope John Paul II visited Mexico he denounced priestly involvement in such causes. He acknowledged a need to help the poor, but said that priests must not become involved in political activities that lead to violence.

In this regard, the pope said: "The idea of Christ as a political figure, a revolutionary, as the subversive man from Nazareth, does not tally with the church's catechism. The Gospels clearly show that, for Jesus, anything that would alter his mission as the Servant of Yahweh was a temptation."

Similarly, other high church leaders say that priests should not align themselves with political activities that result in killing. But has this been the policy of the Church throughout history? Will it be in the future, if nations again become involved in war? Or is it a case of "they say but do not perform," as Jesus observed?—Matt. 23:3.

Priest Ernesto Cardenal, a backer of one such "liberation" movement in Latin America, says it is the latter. He says that it is inconsistent for the Church to tell priests not to become involved in such political disputes when 'the church for centuries has been blessing governments that kill.' This contradiction also has been noted in a New York "Times" article that said: "In the past local Catholic hierarchies almost always supported the wars of their nations, blessing troops and offering prayers for victory, while another group of bishops on the other side publicly prayed for the opposite outcome."

● For centuries the churches of Christendom have dominated the lives of many people in

Germany a Missionary Field Germany. However, the Lutheran State Church, supported by a number of independent religious groups, is now making preparations for 1980 to be a "missionary year" in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Why? Because, as the "Swiss Evangelical Press Service" states: "Germany has become a missionary field."

The press service notes that the Lutheran Church has been treating the work of evangelizing like a "stepchild" for centuries, taking for granted that Christian faith can be handed down from generation to generation automatically. But this is not happening now. The report observed: "Family, school, and society are by no means any longer dependable intermediaries or satellites of Christian faith. The internal and external emigration from the Church and from Christianity has taken on unexpected dimensions."

● In the past, children were usually spanked when that became necessary. True, the practice

Should Children Be Spanked? has been abused by incompetent parents. One result of this is that most modern child psychologists are against spanking. While some now question this view, the majority opinion is still as New York columnist Brenda Woods writes: "It's obvious that none of the experts feels spanking is a good idea, but they no longer want you to feel quite so bad about doing it occasionally."

However, the enormous increase in juvenile delinquency is one evidence that the 'no spanking' view has not helped matters. Who, then, knows best what the balanced view is? Surely it is God, who created humankind. His inspired Word states: "Foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy; the rod of discipline is what will remove it far from him." (Prov. 22:15) The Bible is clear that discipline includes good teaching and example, but does it exclude spanking? No, for Proverbs 23:13 says: "Do not hold back discipline from the mere boy. In case you beat him with the rod [or hand], he will not die."—See also Proverbs 13:24.

Such discipline should not be administered in anger and hate, but out of loving concern, with appropriate explanations to children old enough to understand. Parents who have such a balanced, godly view find that as the discipline takes effect, it becomes less and less necessary to spank.

QUESTIONS from READERS

- Is baptism necessary for a person who wants to be immersed but whose very poor health or old age would make that risky?

The Bible shows that baptism by complete immersion is very important. So even when unusual steps are necessary because of a person's condition, he should be baptized if at all possible.

The resurrected Jesus told his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them . . . , teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20) Yes, those who learned the will of God and dedicated themselves to serve him were to be immersed completely in water, just as Jesus himself was baptized. (The Greek word *baptizein* means "to dip, submerge, immerse.") Concerning the army officer Cornelius and his family, we read: "[Peter] commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."—Acts 10:48.

In modern times Jehovah's Witnesses have arranged for baptisms at conventions. The actual baptism might be in a nearby pool, lake or river where there is enough water for complete immersion. (Compare Acts 8:38.) But some persons, though wanting to be thus baptized, have been unable physically to attend an assembly. So, fully valid baptisms have even been performed locally in large home bathtubs. This has been helpful to those with a heart condition, of advanced age or with especially frail health. The tub water could be warmed and thus present no strain on the person. And the candidate could very calmly and gradually be placed in the water. Once acclimated to it, the actual baptism could occur.

But what about extraordinary cases? Even in many of these immersion has been possible. Persons with open wounds or permanent holes in the throat have been baptized. The wound was covered with a piece of plastic and briefly sealed at the edges with tape. Also, there have been baptisms of persons who need to use a mechanical respirator. Arrangements were

made for a doctor or a trained nurse to help. The paralyzed person was moved into the water while he breathed through a tube and mouthpiece. Then, for the moment of baptism, the mouthpiece was taken out, the rest of the body submerged and, immediately upon coming above the surface, the mouthpiece was replaced. Such cases illustrate that, even though special care or precautions may be needed, in almost all cases baptisms can be performed.

Of course, it might be that in some extreme case baptism would seem absolutely impossible for the time being. Then we trust that our merciful heavenly Father will understand and approve of that willing person who has made a dedication in his heart. (Ps. 103:13, 14; Lam. 3:22) "Jehovah himself examines the righteous one. . . . The upright are the ones that will behold his face." (Ps. 11:5, 7) Thus we can be confident that, where it is physically impossible to baptize a newly dedicated person, Jehovah will regard the situation mercifully.

- If Peter was never in Corinth, why did some there claim to 'belong to Cephas (Peter)', and why is that account in the Bible?

It is true that the Bible gives no indication that the apostle Peter was ever in Corinth. Yet the apostle Paul wrote to that congregation: "Each one of you says: 'I belong to Paul,' 'But I to Apollos,' 'But I to Cephas,' 'But I to Christ.'"—1 Cor. 1:12.

Paul had heard that some there were giving way to dissension, lining up behind the names of prominent Christians. Both Paul and Apollos had been in Corinth. So some there may have championed one or the other of them because of having learned much from them, because of their personality or because of their teaching abilities.

But why would some say that they belonged to Peter, who apparently was never in Corinth? It is not impossible that some had learned about Peter and his use of the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens." (Matt. 16:18, 19) Hence, certain ones in Corinth may have taken up Peter's name as if his view of Christianity was closer to Judaism and different from Paul's, who emphasized that Christians are not under the Mosaic law. (Gal. 2:15-21; 4:8-11) Peter had been prominent in introducing Jews and Jewish proselytes to Christianity before the Way was opened to Samaritans and Gentiles. And at one time in Antioch Peter did

manifest an unbalanced concern for the attitudes of Jewish Christians, for which Paul had to correct him. (Gal. 2:11-14) Thus in the climate of dissension that existed in Corinth, some may have espoused Cephas as if that was a brand of Christianity different from those who took up Paul's name.

Under inspiration Paul rightly condemned such dissension. He helped the Corinthians to reason on the fact that Christ was not divided. Though Paul was especially 'entrusted with the good news for those who were uncircumcised and Peter for those who were circumcised,' the former concentrating on the Gentiles and the latter on the Jews, their basic message was the same. (Gal. 2:7, 8; Eph. 4:4-6) They were not divided as to their teaching nor their objectives. Both Peter and Paul had contributed to the conference in Jerusalem (49 C.E.), where it was seen that Gentile converts did not have to get circumcised and keep the Law. (Acts 15:7-14) And Peter even termed Paul "our beloved brother" whose writings were important along with "the rest of the Scriptures." (2 Pet. 3:15, 16) Hence, there was no justification for the dissension in Corinth.

It is to be noted that the apostle Paul did not consider the Gentiles to be inferior to the Jews. He said, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, for you are all the sons of God through Christ Jesus, who has made us all one." (Gal. 3:28)

Long before the time of Christ, the Apostle Paul had written to the church at Corinth concerning the matter of eating meat offered to idols. A man named Chloe had given his slaves permission to eat meat offered to idols, thinking it was wrong to do so. Paul had written to him, telling him that he was right to do so, but that he must not do so in a way that would offend others.

But Paul was very lenient with regard to meat offered to idols. He said, "It is better to eat meat offered to idols than to let your body be defiled by uncleanness." (1 Cor. 10:25) Paul also said, "If we eat meat offered to idols, we sin against our brothers, who weak in faith are. We might easily cause them to sin." (1 Cor. 8:9) Paul also said, "It is good for us not to eat meat offered to idols, lest we sin against our brothers." (1 Cor. 8:13)

This account was included in the Bible as warning counsel. Today, too, little cliques or groups could develop in a congregation. For instance, some may be evaluated as liberal thinkers and may associate mainly with one another or with a Christian elder who they feel exemplifies their outlook. Others could be considered by the first group as more conservative in their approach to matters, or to seek the counsel and espouse the view of elders whose style they like. Such a situation can generate an unhealthy spirit of division and disunity. Imperfect humans are all too prone to lean toward those who will tickle their ears or egos. But God's advice is that wisdom rests in the *multitude* of counselors, who should contribute their knowledge of God's Word and their experience in applying it.—Prov. 15:22.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

June 3: Giving Our Best to Jehovah. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 58, 28.

June 10: Maintaining Cleanliness When Bringing Gifts. Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 50, 48.

June 17: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 26. Songs to Be Used: 51, 52.

June 24: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 33. Songs to Be Used: 53, 54.

July 1: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 39. Songs to Be Used: 55, 56.

July 8: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 46. Songs to Be Used: 57, 58.

July 15: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 53. Songs to Be Used: 59, 60.

July 22: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 60. Songs to Be Used: 61, 62.

July 29: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 67. Songs to Be Used: 63, 64.

August 5: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 74. Songs to Be Used: 65, 66.

August 12: The Watchtower—A Witness to the World. Page 81. Songs to Be Used: 67, 68.