

July 15, 1990

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**SOON - A WORLD
WITHOUT PAIN!**

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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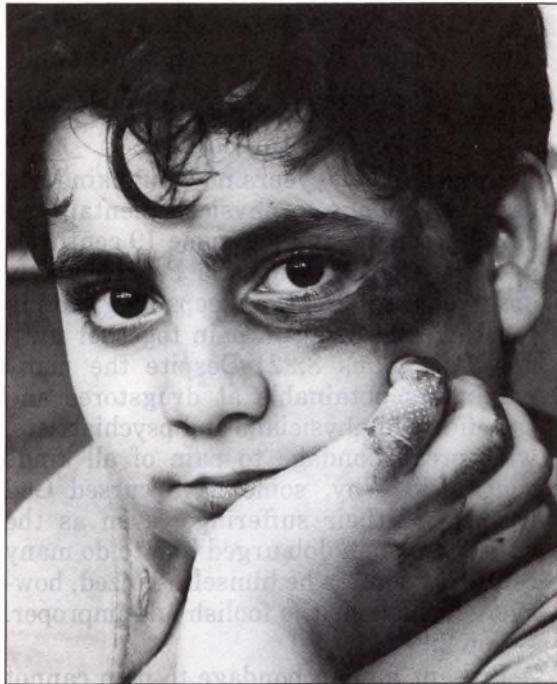
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SOON—A WORLD WITHOUT PAIN!

A WORLD without pain coming soon? What welcome news that would be to chronic sufferers—whether their pain is physical, mental, or emotional! For instance, millions would be overjoyed at the removal of the intense physical pain caused by some types of cancer, the affliction tic douloureux, and the heart disease angina pectoris. Those afflicted with severe mental problems would welcome relief from their often indescribable sufferings. And millions more would rejoice if only their emotional pain caused by such feelings as fear, grief, guilt, worry, and frustration were to end. But do we really want to see the end of *all* pain?

"Not to have pain at all is a disaster," states anatomist Allan Basbaum of the University of California at San Francisco. He made this statement with good reason. As an alarm factor, physical pain lets us know that something harmful is happening.

Inability to feel physical pain can really be disastrous. This is illustrated in this



Time magazine report: "The twelve-year-old boy's sweet smile makes a poignant contrast to his otherwise pitiful appearance. His arms and legs are deformed and bent, as though he had suffered from rickets. Several fingers are missing. A large open wound covers one knee, and the smiling lips are bitten raw. He looks for all the world like a battered child . . . He was born with an extremely rare genetic defect that makes him insensitive to pain. His fingers were either crushed or burned because he did not pull his hand away from things that were hot or dangerous. His bones and joints are misshapen because he pounded them too hard when he walked or ran. His knee had ulcerated from crawling over sharp objects that he could not feel. Should he break a bone or dislocate a hip, he would not feel enough to cry out for help."

Some people are quick to hold God responsible for such afflictions and for the misery experienced by millions. However,

can we rightly blame God for mankind's painful sufferings?

Is God to Blame?

For some 6,000 years now, mankind has been in bondage to physical, mental, and emotional pain. In fact, some 19 centuries ago, the Christian apostle Paul correctly observed: "All creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now." (Romans 8:22) Despite the many painkillers obtainable at drugstores and the efforts of physicians and psychiatrists, widespread bondage to pain of all kinds continues. Why, some have cursed God because of their sufferings, even as the wife of the man Job urged him to do many centuries ago! As he himself realized, however, such a spirit is foolish and improper.

—Job 2:9, 10.

Present human bondage to pain cannot rightly be blamed on God. Rather, the blame rests with an invisible liar and with our first parents. How so?

The Scriptures indicate that although originally righteous, a spirit creature became greedy for power and prominence. At the dawn of human life on earth, he envisioned a race of mankind on a paradise earth, all giving full devotion to Almighty God, Jehovah. Driven by a heart that had become malicious, this spirit creature rebelled against the Creator, wanting human worship and devotion for himself. His wicked intentions manifested themselves when he cunningly lied. This, in turn, brought sin into the world.

Jehovah God told the first man, Adam, that eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad would result in death. (Genesis 2:15-17) But Adam's wife, Eve, was induced to disobey. Using the serpent as a mouthpiece, the spirit Deceiver told her: "You positively will not die. For God knows that in the very day of your eating from it your eyes [those of Eve

and of her husband] are bound to be opened and [both of] you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad." (Genesis 3:1-5) That was the first lie, and it branded this wicked spirit creature as 'the father of lies.' (John 8:44) His use of the serpent on that occasion in the garden of Eden finds a parallel in his Scriptural identification as "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan."—Revelation 12:9.

Sin brought groaning and bondage to pain upon mankind. True to God's word, on the very day of Adam's sinning, God pronounced the sentence of death on the transgressors. Judicially, from Jehovah's standpoint, Adam and Eve died that day. (Compare Luke 20:37, 38.) In Eden, Jehovah told the then sinful first woman: "I shall greatly increase the pain of your pregnancy; in birth pangs you will bring forth children." (Genesis 3:16) Adam would eke out a painful existence outside the garden of Eden in an earth far from paradisaic in nature. Said Jehovah: "In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:17-19) Bondage to pain thus had its start for the human race.

So, then, bondage to pain is linked with imperfection, sin, and death inherited from Adam. As the apostle Paul put matters: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Romans 5:12) But God's Word helps us to bear pain, for it tells us why Jehovah has permitted it and assures us that it will soon end. God permitted the serpentine 'father of lies,' Satan the Devil, to afflict righteous Job and thus test his integrity. The Devil's contention was that Job served God out of selfishness, not love. (Job 1:8-12) But Job remained faithful to

God, proving that imperfect humans can serve Him out of love and can loyally uphold His sovereignty despite severe tests of their faith. Job's endurance as an integrity keeper contributed to the sanctification of Jehovah's name, proved that Satan is a liar, and brought rich rewards to that exemplary patriarch. (Job 42:12-17; James 5:11) From Job's experience, we can conclude that when God's purpose has been served, mankind's bondage to pain will end. But how can we be sure about that?

How Pain Will End

Actually, Jehovah has provided a completely effective means to end human bondage to pain. This he has done on the basis of the ransom sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) He came to the earth, "not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul [his perfect human life] a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28) Through disobedience, Adam lost perfect human life, with all its rights and prospects. And that is exactly what is redeemed by means of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Hebrews 7:26) Indeed, "God loved the world [of mankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

God has also specifically promised that bondage to pain will end. Foretelling a time when pain associated with sin will be no more, the Christian apostle John was divinely inspired to write:

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. . . . I heard a loud voice from the throne say: 'Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them,

and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.' And the One seated on the throne [Jehovah God] said: 'Look! I am making all things new.' Also, he says: 'Write, because these words are faithful and true.'"—Revelation 21:1-5.

Obedient humans will soon receive the full benefit of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. This will occur under the rule of the Kingdom for which the upright have long prayed, saying: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:9, 10) In the heavenly Kingdom, Jesus Christ will reign until he has put all enemies under his feet, including bondage to pain and the last enemy, death.—1 Corinthians 15:25, 26.

Yes, as far as obedient humans are concerned, soon God 'will wipe out every tear, and neither death, mourning, outcry nor pain will be anymore.' (Revelation 21:4) Then the following prophetic words that now have a spiritual application will also have a literal fulfillment: "Bless Jehovah, O my soul, . . . him who is forgiving all your error, who is healing all your maladies." "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'" —Psalm 103:1-3; Isaiah 33:24.

When an End of Pain?

The end of bondage to pain is imminent. Yes, it will occur in our day, and this very generation will see it. Fulfillment of Bible prophecy shows that we are living at the end of this wicked system of things. The unparalleled wars, famines, and earthquakes, as well as the earth-wide preaching of the good news by Jehovah's Witnesses, are part of a composite "sign"

of Jesus' invisible "presence" in heavenly Kingdom glory.—Matthew 24:3-14, 21, 34.

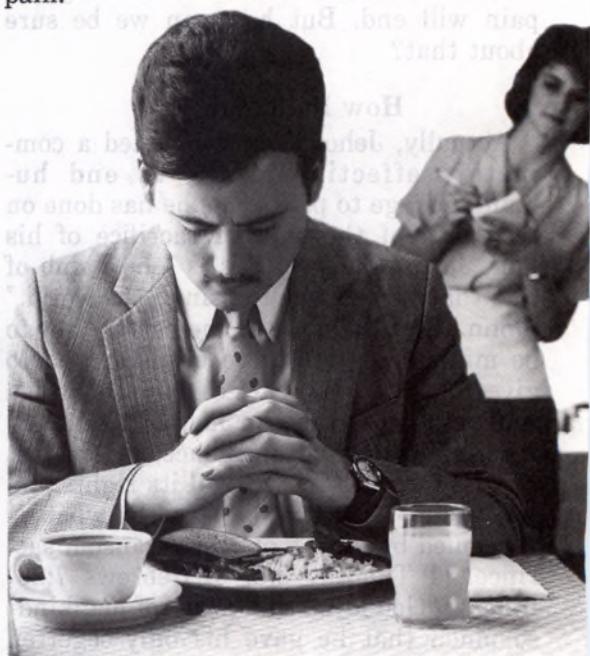
Soon, "the former heaven and the former earth," Satan the Devil's organized system of things with its governmental structure, will pass away. The turbulent "sea" of wicked mankind will cease to exist. We therefore stand at the very threshold of a divinely blessed governmental "new heaven" over "a new earth," a righteous human society. In these "righteousness is to dwell."—Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13.

Because He Prayed

AT 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18, the apostle Paul said: "Pray incessantly. In connection with everything give thanks. For this is the will of God in union with Christ Jesus respecting you." However, do you sometimes find yourself reluctant to give thanks when enjoying a meal in a public place, such as a restaurant? In view of Jesus' caution against ostentatious prayer, it is understandable that one may wish to avoid attracting undue attention to oneself. (Matthew 6:5, 6) Nevertheless, a discreetly offered prayer may well attract favorable notice.

This was the experience of one young minister serving at Brooklyn Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses. He was eating breakfast at a restaurant, planning to go to his local congregation and meet with a group that would be participating in Kingdom-preaching activity. When his breakfast arrived, he offered a prayer in his usual manner. Upon opening his eyes, he looked up to find a waitress standing there staring at him.

With such blessings under a new government—God's Kingdom—so close at hand, take heart. Seek further knowledge of the new world without pain and death. Indeed, look forward to the blessed day now so near when all who love and obey Jehovah God will live in a world without pain.



"You're praying, aren't you?" she asked. When he answered in the affirmative, she said: "You must be one of Jehovah's Witnesses. My parents are too. I never really got involved in their religion, but I know I should. Maybe I should get a subscription to *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* Can I get them from you?"

"I nearly choked on my food," the young brother recalls. Nevertheless, he was able to place two subscriptions and the latest two magazines with her and to arrange for a return visit—all because he prayed.

FOR decades, archaeologists have tried to cast doubt on the Bible's account of Joshua and the battle of Jericho. According to the Bible, Joshua and the Israelite army marched around Jericho for seven days, until God made the city's formidable walls fall down. This allowed the Israelites to enter and 'burn the city with fire and everything that was in it.'—Joshua 6: 1-24.

But many archaeologists, swayed by the highly esteemed work of Kathleen Kenyon in the 1950's, were convinced that Jericho did not even exist during the time of the Israelite invasion. Why, they held that the city had been destroyed well over a century earlier! Thus, the Biblical account of Joshua and the Israelites was widely dismissed. Recently, though, Dr. Bryant G. Wood, an archaeologist from the University of Toronto, Canada, has taken a fresh look at the evidence from Jericho. According to *The New York Times*, he has concluded that Dr. Kenyon "had been looking for the wrong kind of pottery, and in the wrong places," and that the evidence is actually in "remarkable agreement" with the Bible.

Dr. Wood cites a three-foot-thick layer of ash laden with pottery sherds, fragments of bricks from a fallen wall, and timbers, all blackened as if by a citywide fire. The ceramic fragments have been dated (with the admittedly inexact methods available) at 1410 before our Common Era, give or take 40

The Battle of JERICHO Myth or Fact?

years—not at all far from 1473 B.C.E., the date for the battle of Jericho derived from the Bible.

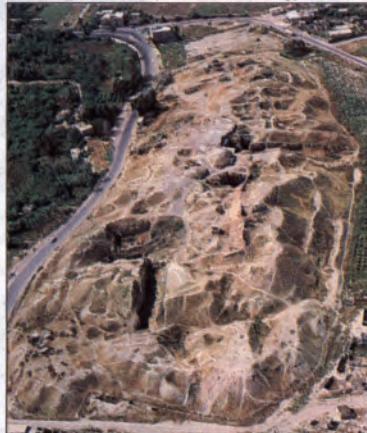
Excavators have found that the houses in ancient Jericho had abundant supplies of stored grain. This is interesting, since the Bible indicates that Jericho fell shortly after the spring harvest and without a drawn-out starvation siege. (Joshua 3:14-16) Both are good reasons why Jericho's houses would have been well-stocked with grain when the city was destroyed.

Scientists are rather grudging when it comes to admitting the accuracy of the Bible. Thus, the *Times* quotes one eminent scholar as saying in response to Wood's findings: "There is no doubt that a good deal of information found in the Bible has a grain of truth in it." Yet, as more and more Scriptural accounts are supported by modern scientific and archaeological discoveries, it is clear to the unbiased that the Bible is far from a collection of falsehoods interspersed with occasional grains of truth. As the Bible itself says: "Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar."—Romans 3:4.

While current interpretations of archaeological excavations at Jericho are of interest, true Christians 'walk by faith, not by sight.' (2 Corinthians 5:7) Their faith does not depend on archaeology. With or without archaeological evidence, the Bible repeatedly proves to be a reliable source of information regarding the past, the present, and the future.—Psalm 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

*The ruins of Jericho,
where Jehovah granted the
Israelites victory*

Pictorial archive (Near Eastern History) Est.



An Argument Erupts

EARLIER in the evening, Jesus taught a beautiful lesson in humble service by washing his apostles' feet. Afterward, he introduced the Memorial of his approaching death. Now, especially in view of what has just taken place, a surprising incident occurs. His apostles become involved in a heated argument over which one of them seems to be the greatest! Apparently, this is part of an ongoing dispute.

Recall that after Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, the apostles argued over who among them was the greatest. Moreover, James and John

requested prominent positions in the Kingdom, resulting in further contention among the apostles. Now, on his last night with them, how saddened Jesus must be to see them bickering again! What does he do?

Rather than scold the apostles for their behavior, once again Jesus patiently reasons with them: "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those having authority over them are called Benefactors. You, though, are not to be that way. . . . For which one is greater, the one reclining at the table or the one ministering? Is it not the one reclining at the table?" Then, reminding them of his



example, he says: "But I am in your midst as the one ministering."

Despite their imperfections, the apostles have stuck with Jesus during his trials. So he says: "I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom." This personal covenant between Jesus and his loyal followers joins them to him to share his royal dominion. Only a limited number of 144,000 are finally taken into this covenant for a Kingdom.

Although the apostles are presented with this marvelous prospect of sharing with Christ in Kingdom rule, they are at present spiritually weak. "All of you will be stumbled in connection with me on this night," says Jesus. Telling Peter that He has prayed in his behalf, Jesus urges: "When once you have returned, strengthen your brothers."

"Little children," Jesus explains, "I am with you a little longer. You will look for me; and just as I said to the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come,' I say also to you at present. I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves."

"Lord, where are you going?" Peter asks.

"Where I am going you cannot follow me now," Jesus responds, "but you will follow afterwards."

"Lord, why is it I cannot follow you at present?" Peter wants to know. "I will surrender my soul in your behalf."

"Will you surrender your soul in my behalf?" Jesus asks. "Truly I say to you, You today, yes, this night, before a cock crows twice, even you will disown me three times."

"Even if I should have to die with you," Peter protests, "I will by no means disown you." And while the other apostles join in saying the same thing, Peter boasts: "Although all the others are stumbled in connection with you, never will I be stumbled!"

Referring to the time when he sent the apostles out on a preaching tour of Galilee without purse and food pouch, Jesus asks: "You did not want for anything, did you?"

"No!" they reply.

"But now let the one that has a purse take it up, likewise also a food pouch," he says, "and let the one having no sword sell his outer garment and buy one. For I tell you that this which is written must be accomplished in me, namely, 'And he was reckoned with lawless ones.' For that which concerns me is having an accomplishment."

Jesus is pointing to the time when he will be impaled with evildoers, or lawless ones. He is also indicating that his followers will thereafter face severe persecution. "Lord, look! here are two swords," they say.

"It is enough," he answers. As we will see, having the swords with them will soon permit Jesus to teach another vital lesson. **Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:24-38; John 13:31-38; Revelation 14:1-3.**

- ♦ Why is the apostles' argument so surprising?
- ♦ How does Jesus handle the argument?
- ♦ What is accomplished by the covenant Jesus makes with his disciples?
- ♦ What new commandment does Jesus give, and how important is it?
- ♦ What overconfidence does Peter display, and what does Jesus say?
- ♦ Why are Jesus' instructions about carrying a purse and a food pouch different from those he gave earlier?

DIFFUSING THE FRAGRANCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

"Thanks be to God who always leads us in a triumphal procession in company with the Christ and makes the odor of the knowledge of him perceptible through us in every place!"—2 CORINTHIANS 2:14.

SNIFF, sniff! M-m-m-m! Do you smell the sweet fragrance? We do not here refer to the fragrance of blossoming flowers but, instead, to a figurative fragrance emanating from the choicest writings on earth. These writings are not those originating with mere men but are the figurative bouquet inspired by the One who also created the fragrant flowers that adorn the earth. The privilege of

1. What fragrance are we here discussing, and how is the privilege of diffusing it to be viewed?

diffusing this fragrance of the knowledge of God is a great treasure. Yes, it is a service that is especially valuable—not possessed by all, not shared by mankind in general.

² This precious treasure was conferred upon the disciples of Christ when they were introduced to an active service to Jehovah God on the day of Pentecost in the year 33 of our Common Era. Filled

2. When did the disciples of Christ begin to diffuse a figurative fragrance, and with what result?



with holy spirit, they began to diffuse a figurative fragrance, expounding "the magnificent things of God." (Acts 2: 1-4, 11) Through them the fragrance of the knowledge of God would go to others, not only to natural circumcised Jews but also to uncircumcised nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. (Acts 10:34, 35) The true disciples looked upon this service as more valuable than all the material wealth that men heap up for themselves.

³ Today, the grand work of diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God is being carried on earth wide—on a scale greater than ever before in human history. It involves witnessing to all mankind about the now established Kingdom of God under his appointed King, Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:10; Acts 1:8) Do you look upon the service of advertising the King and his Kingdom as a priceless treasure? Jesus Christ, who spearheaded the preaching of the good news of that Kingdom, appreciated it that way, setting the pattern.—Matthew 4:17; 6:19-21.

Perfuming the Way of the Triumphal Procession

⁴ Why is serving God something to be treasured? One reason is that even now those who serve Jehovah have the remarkable privilege of being led by God in a grand triumphal procession. According to the *New International Version*, 2 Corinthians 2:14 says: "Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads

3. To what extent is the work of diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God being carried on, and what question do we need to ask ourselves?

4. According to 2 Corinthians 2:14, how is God now leading his servants on earth, and to what ancient practice do Paul's words allude?

everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him [“makes our knowledge of him spread throughout the world like a lovely perfume!” *Phillips*.]” Those words of the apostle Paul appear to allude to an ancient practice of having victory processions.*

⁵ In the days of the Roman republic, one of the highest honors the Senate could bestow upon a conquering general was to allow him to celebrate his victory with a costly procession of triumph. The Roman procession moved slowly along *Via Triumphalis* and up the winding ascent to the temple of Jupiter atop Capitoline Hill. The kings, princes, and generals taken captive in the war, with their children and attendants, were led along in chains, often stripped naked, to their humiliation and shame.

⁶ As the procession passed through the city of Rome, the populace threw flowers before the victor's chariot, and burning incense perfumed the entire route. This sweet fragrance signified honors and a more secure life for the victorious soldiers. But it signified death to the unpardoned captives who would be executed at the end of the procession. This throws light on Paul's spiritual application of the illustration at 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. That picture presents Paul and fellow Christians as devoted subjects of God, “in company with the Christ,” all following in God's victorious train and being led by Him in a grand triumphal procession along a perfumed route.

* For more details, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 1128-9, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

5, 6. (a) What took place during ancient Roman triumphal processions, and what did the sweet fragrance signify to various ones? (b) What is the spiritual application of the illustration at 2 Corinthians 2:14-16?

Fragrance of Life or the Smell of Death

⁷ By spreading abroad everywhere the truths of the Bible concerning God's Kingdom under Christ, Jehovah's Witnesses are diffusing, displaying, and making manifest everywhere the sweet fragrance of the knowledge of the gracious God whose truth has set them free from false religion. They march triumphantly along in Jehovah's service. Their offerings of service as Witnesses of him and his King are like pleasing incense to Jehovah. Thus, we can appreciate what the apostle meant when he said: "To God we are a sweet odor of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the latter ones an odor issuing from death to death, to the former ones an odor issuing from life to life [‘a vital fragrance that brings life,’ *The New English Bible*; ‘the refreshing fragrance of life itself,’ *Phillips*

⁸ Honest people of sheeplike disposition sense the sweetness of the knowledge of Jehovah as diffused by his Witnesses. To such people the witness work has the smell of health and life, of living, life-giving truth. They render thanks to Jehovah and his King, whose triumphal procession they join, and loudly cry out: “Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:10) They breathe in the atmosphere of Kingdom truth, which is a refreshing fragrance of life that leads to life. But Satan and his demons have perverted the smelling powers of those hanging on to false religion, so that they hold their noses and disdainfully refuse the truth. To “those who are perish-

7, 8. (a) How are Jehovah's Witnesses diffusing the sweet fragrance of the knowledge of God? (b) As the Witnesses diffuse the figurative fragrance, what is the reaction of those who are being saved? (c) What reaction is there from those who are perishing?

ing,” the truth and its faithful bearers diffuse an odor of death that leads to death. Or as the *New International Version* puts it: “To the one we are the smell of death.” Phillips translation renders it: “To the latter it seems like the deathly smell of doom.”

⁹ “And who is adequately qualified for these things?” the apostle then asks. (2 Corinthians 2:16) That is to say, “and who could be qualified for work like this?” (*The Jerusalem Bible*) “And for such service as this who is competent?” (*Weymouth*) The Scriptural answer is: Jehovah's Witnesses! Why? Because only dedicated ones who are honest, sincere, and seeking no selfish gain and who speak forth truth, plainly and without compromise with false religion, are qualified for this work of spreading the fragrance of the knowledge of God.—Colossians 1:3-6, 13; 2 Timothy 2:15.

¹⁰ Christendom's clergy, who seek a good standing with this world, fail to be qualified and competent for this unselfish service. Why? Because they fail to meet the requirement indicated by Paul's statement: “We are not peddlers of the word of God as many men are, but as out of sincerity, yes, as sent from God, under God's view, in company with Christ, we are speaking.” (2 Corinthians 2:17) Or as the *New International Version* puts it: “Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.”

¹¹ Jehovah's Witnesses are sent from God, and they are doing their witnessing

9. What question does Paul now ask, and how would you answer, and why?

10. Why do the clergy not qualify for the work of diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God?

11, 12. (a) Why are the Witnesses not “peddlers of the word of God” because of accepting donations? (b) In contrast with the adulterated version of Christianity purchased by many, what do Jehovah's Witnesses present?

work under God's view. While they provide interested persons with valuable books and other publications that explain God's Word and accept voluntary donations for the worldwide Kingdom-preaching work, such practice is not peddling or adulterating the Word of God. In fact, such donations are simply an aid toward the spreading of the knowledge of God to still others.

¹² A great many today, knowingly or unknowingly, have purchased an adulterated version of Christianity, for it suits their selfish desires and does not cramp their life-style. They believe that God accepts them because of their claim that they have love for him in their hearts. However, when God's Word is shown to conflict with their beliefs and conduct, they twist the Scriptures so as to elevate personal opinions above the proper Biblical understanding. (Matthew 15:8, 9; 2 Peter 3:16) But Jehovah's Witnesses present the pure, unadulterated truth from the Bible, thus producing a sweet fragrance acceptable to God and to his true worshipers. Thereby they drive away all the religious traditions and impediments to having the true knowledge of God.

¹³ Truly, being in God's triumphal procession in company with the Christ is an incomparable privilege enjoyed by not only the anointed Christians but also the "great crowd" of "other sheep" even now, for the Kingdom's triumph is at hand. (Revelation 7:4, 9; John 10:16) As we anticipate further triumphs of our conquering King, everywhere we go we diffuse the life-giving knowledge of God like perfume, or precious incense, to those whose hearts are yearning for truth and righteousness. What a privilege for those qualified for this remarkable work!—John 17:3; Colossians 3:16, 17.

13. Who, besides the anointed Christians, are in God's triumphal procession, and what are they doing everywhere they go?

Authorized to Be Human Perfumers

¹⁴ But do those who diffuse the fragrance of the knowledge of God and of his Kingdom need a diploma or a certificate of authorization from men? No! We are already commissioned, or appointed, as Witnesses for the Supreme One of the universe. Hence, we need not hesitate to go forth into the field spreading the fragrance of the good news of God's Kingdom. Keep in mind that Jehovah leads us. Jesus' ministry was carried out in the face of "contrary talk by sinners." (Hebrews 12:3) Yet, Jesus' record of field activity, as found in the Bible, still stands true, and his work in the field speaks in commendation of him and argues in support of his being a true minister of Jehovah God.

¹⁵ The apostle Paul met a similar challenging situation in his day by submitting this argument: "Are we starting again to recommend ourselves? Or do we, perhaps, like some men, need letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, inscribed on our hearts and known and being read by all mankind. For you are shown to be a letter of Christ written by us as ministers, inscribed not with ink but with spirit of a living God, not on stone tablets, but on fleshly tablets, on hearts."—2 Corinthians 3:1-3.

¹⁶ Worldly authorities do not acknowledge our commission as Jehovah's Witnesses. But let our work of diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of Jehovah speak for itself! This work cannot be erased, though some men refuse to read this testimonial evidence of our ministry.

14. Why do those who diffuse the fragrance of the knowledge of God not need a certificate of authorization from men?

15. How did the apostle Paul show that true Christians do not need "letters of recommendation"?

16. What kind of letter do Jehovah's Witnesses present as testimonial evidence that their ministry is from God?

Clergymen present their documents of certification from clerical ruling bodies. Such, however, are scraps of paper, man's word. Jehovah's Witnesses, besides quoting support from God's Word, stand as testimonials in flesh and blood. The great crowd of other sheep who have been reached by the good news of the Kingdom have also been gathered to the right side of Jehovah's King. (Matthew 25:33, 34) All of these are our letter of recommendation, a letter that we as Jehovah's Witnesses carry everywhere on our hearts and minds and can display with confidence. Those who take a stand for God's universal sovereignty and take part in serving God in company with Jehovah's Witnesses are themselves a document of recommendation that cannot escape being read and known by all men.

¹⁷ Of course, this makes the false religionists angry and envious when they read it. Nevertheless, the increasing great crowd of other sheep are a letter of recommendation from Jesus Christ, the Fine Shepherd, who is using all of Jehovah's Witnesses in his pastoral work. We are the pen, or human instrument, that he uses to write this letter. The letter is not written in ink that can be rubbed out, but it is inscribed by and with the active force, or spirit, of God, which works in us. It is not as in the case of Moses when the law of the Ten Commandments was written with the finger of God on two tablets of stone. Our letter is written on the fleshly tablets of human hearts, since our spiritual ministry produces a change of mind and heart in the recipients of the fragrant good news.

¹⁸ Our work with God's Word has made an impression upon appreciative recipients of the good news and has brought about

17. How is our "letter of Christ" written, and why does Paul say that it is inscribed on hearts?
18. What result makes the recipients of the good news a letter of recommendation?

remarkable changes. Their decision to serve God has proved to be no mere spur-of-the-moment stand due to some fervor stirred up in them by an emotional evangelist. Rather, it represents a permanent transformation of their lives based upon the crystal-clear truths of the Holy Bible. Love for the true God, Jehovah, motivates them to 'strip off their old personality with its deceptive desires and put on the new personality,' which displays "the fruitage of the spirit." (Ephesians 4:20-24; Galatians 5:22, 23) The result, therefore, makes them a letter of recommendation. It speaks more plainly than any handwritten letter by us or by any visible organization that could send us.

¹⁹ At 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 Paul continues: "Now through the Christ we have this sort of confidence toward God. Not that we of ourselves are adequately qualified to reckon anything as issuing from ourselves, but our being adequately qualified issues from God, who has indeed adequately qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant." Though only those of the anointed remnant are "ministers of a new covenant," their work has had an effect upon the great crowd of

19. How does Paul describe the qualifications of the "ministers of a new covenant," and what effect has their work had on the great crowd?

How Would You Answer?

- What illustration does Paul use at 2 Corinthians 2:14-16?
- What is the effect on others of diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God?
- Who only are qualified for this work, and why?
- Why do the human perfumers not need handwritten letters of recommendation for their work?

other sheep, and it will yet affect countless numbers of such other sheep still to be gathered. This is the confidence that all of Jehovah's Witnesses have through Christ Jesus toward Jehovah God. The remnant gratefully encourage the great crowd of other sheep to participate wholeheartedly in the 'letter-writing' ministry that Jesus Christ foretold at Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19, 20.

²⁰ That is what they have done, as is evident from the 1990 Yearbook report in which Jehovah's Witnesses are shown to be diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God in 212 countries. They number more than 3,787,000 active publishers, and last

20. (a) What does the Yearbook report indicate about those diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God? (b) What can all of us say about our qualifications for the letter-writing ministry?

year alone they put in about 835,000,000 hours in preaching this good news of the Kingdom. At the Lord's Evening Meal last year, 9,479,064 were in attendance. Both the anointed remnant and the members of the great crowd of other sheep can say: "Our being adequately qualified issues from God." Or as *The Jerusalem Bible* words it: "All our qualifications come from God."

²¹ Therefore, spread the sweet, life-giving fragrance of God's knowledge in every place! Make the atmosphere of your congregation's territory heavy with fragrance of the knowledge of Jehovah. Then, as a triumphant theocratic General, he will lead you in his victorious procession as all of his Witnesses press forward in this modern-day ministry of glory!

21. What should all of us be doing, and why?

OUR TREASURE, A MODERN-DAY MINISTRY OF GLORY

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not that out of ourselves."—2 CORINTHIANS 4:7.

THE ministry of preaching "this good news of the kingdom" during the conclusion of the system of things is indeed a treasure, a possession most valuable. Because Jehovah is a God of glory, the

service to God is a ministry of glory, thus a treasure. (Matthew 24:14; 2 Corinthians 3:18-4:1) Concerning the glorious delivery of the Mosaic Law, it is written at Exodus 34:29, 30: "Now it came about when Moses came down from Mount Sinai that the two tablets of the Testimony were in the hand of Moses when he came down from the mountain, and Moses did not know that

1. (a) What glorious treasure may we have, and why? (b) How does the Bible describe the delivery of the Mosaic Law?

the skin of his face emitted rays because of his having spoken with [Jehovah]. When Aaron and all the sons of Israel got to see Moses, why, look! the skin of his face emitted rays and they grew afraid of coming near to him."

² Verses 32 to 34 add: "After that all the sons of Israel came near to him, and he began commanding them all that Jehovah had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. When Moses would finish speaking with them, he would put a veil over his face. But when Moses would go in before Jehovah to speak with him, he would take away the veil until his going out." The service of the Mosaic Law foreshadowed the ministry of the new covenant by the Mediator, Jesus Christ. Hence, if the former ministry was glorious, how much more must the latter, "the administering of the spirit," exceed it in glory! (2 Corinthians 3:7-11) It is more glorious because it has a glory that remains, and the followers of Jesus Christ share in it.—Romans 12:11.

³ It follows, therefore, that the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses is a glorious one. This, however, is not apparent to the many people who have been blinded by false religion. Though many have the Bible and may read it, they do not have 'seeing eyes.' (2 Peter 1:5-9) To get the veil removed from before their eyes, they must turn to Jehovah God in faith, for when Moses went before the presence of Jehovah, he removed the veil that hid his face from the Jews. (2 Corinthians 3:16) The Israelites were fearful of seeing God's glory in the face of their mediator and asked that it be veiled from their eyes. Just as a phosphorescent

2. What was foreshadowed by the service of the Mosaic Law, and why is the latter ministry more glorious?

3. (a) What must be true about the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses, but why is this not apparent to many people? (b) What proved that Moses had been in the glorious presence of Jehovah?

substance that has been exposed to light emits an afterglow in the dark, so Moses, their go-between, reflected Jehovah's glory, proving that he had been before Jehovah.

⁴ Moses foreshadowed God's great Prophet, Jesus Christ. Like his prototype, this Greater Moses is not afraid to behold Jehovah's glory directly. To this day, however, unbelieving people blinded by the Devil and his Babylonish religion imitate those Jews of old and refuse to see, or discern, the glory of the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:12-15) Yet, his true followers do not fear to look at the reflection of Jehovah's glory as shed forth from the face of Jesus Christ. Freed from Babylonish influence, they are emboldened to show forth God's glory. "Therefore," wrote Paul, "as we have such a hope, we are using great freeness of speech."—2 Corinthians 3:12.

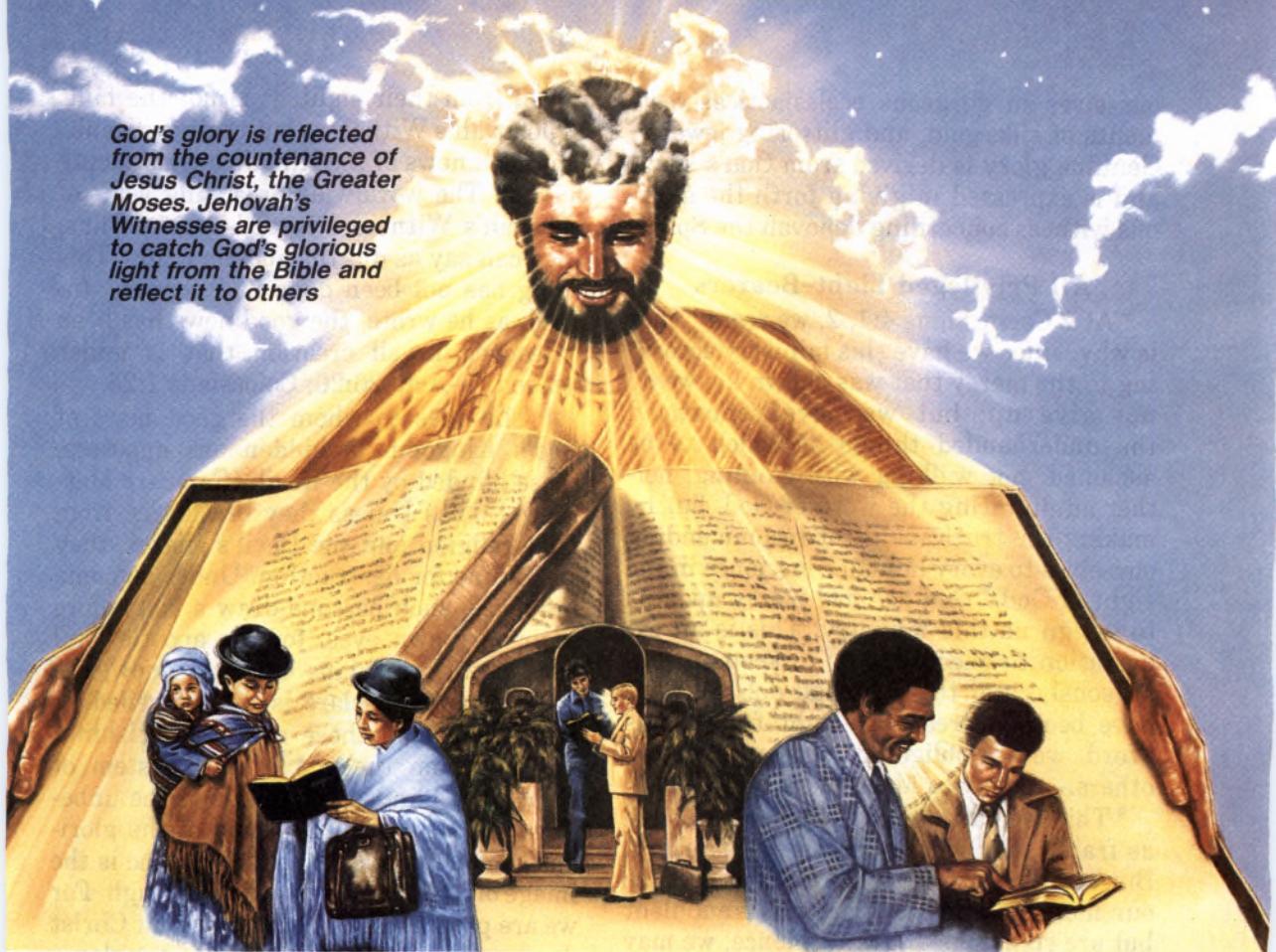
Reflectors of God's Glory

⁵ Jesus Christ has taken away the veil by revealing and declaring Jehovah God to us. (John 1:14, 17, 18) So we must shine, and thus God's glory shines through "the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God," which we must proclaim. Its radiance is "the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ." We must reflect this glory by speaking of the glory of Jehovah and the glory of his Kingdom by his Son. (2 Corinthians 4:4-6) Like Moses on the mountaintop in Jehovah's presence, His Witnesses on earth do not veil their hearts from Jehovah's glory. They admire the glory reflected in the face of Jehovah's Son and King, Jesus Christ. Thus, they must

4. How do unbelieving people today imitate the Jews of old, but what do the followers of the Greater Moses not fear?

5. How can we reflect God's glory and be like Moses on the mountaintop in Jehovah's presence?

God's glory is reflected from the countenance of Jesus Christ, the Greater Moses. Jehovah's Witnesses are privileged to catch God's glorious light from the Bible and reflect it to others



shed forth to others the light concerning God's glory.

⁶ To all fellow witnesses of Jehovah's glory, the apostle Paul describes it in these words: "And all of us, while we with unveiled faces reflect like mirrors the glory of Jehovah, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, exactly as done by Jehovah the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18) The more of the glory of this light we receive, the more thereof we must radiate forth, and thus the more we are transformed. Minds are renewed and renovated,

although no bodily or facial changes may be discernible. It is the light of the glorious message that we shed forth that produces the difference in us. Our lives are transformed to be like Christ, as we set ourselves to carry out the privileged service of spreading this glorious light abroad to others.—Hebrews 13:15.

⁷ All such transformation is due to the spirit, or active force, of God. Christendom's clergy do not reflect the glory of Jehovah God but have to resort to a put-on show so as to create a spectacle. The glory is not our glory, and we need not adorn

6. How does Paul describe our ministry of glory at 2 Corinthians 3:18, and in what ways are we thus "transformed"?

7. From what source is genuine glory, and how may we express such glory?

ourselves in gorgeous ecclesiastical vestments of silk, gold, and glittering jewelry. Genuine glory is derived from God's spirit and is expressed in giving forth the glorious witness concerning Jehovah the Spirit.

All Privileged Light-Bearers

⁸ At 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2, we read: "That is why, since we have this ministry according to the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up; but we have renounced the underhanded things of which to be ashamed, not walking with cunning, neither adulterating the word of God, but by making the truth manifest recommending ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God." God has had mercy upon us to assign us this ministry. This is an exhortation to encourage us to keep on courageously, and this we shall do! Since we have been favored with light from God's Word, we are obligated to beam it out to others.—Compare Matthew 5:14-16.

⁹ Things that men are ashamed of, such as fraud, they hide by deceit and trickery. But we have no cause for shame because our message and work are not fraudulent but are righteous and true. Hence, we may beam forth the full glory of the light. We do not handle God's Word deceitfully. To do so would mean handling it selfishly for personal gain, glory, advantage, and worldly power and to escape opposition and persecution from the world. Those who do not fear to come to Jehovah with unveiled faces and to gaze into the glorious light of truth will likewise not fear to face their responsibility. They will let the light be reflected from them.

¹⁰ If any have the Kingdom good news

8, 9. What encouragement does Paul give us at 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2, and what determination on our part does it call for?

10. Why is it not the fault of Jehovah's Witnesses if the Kingdom good news is veiled from the sight of some people?

veiled from their sight, it is not the fault of Jehovah's Witnesses but their own fault. The good news of the Kingdom is not being hidden. The worldwide preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses is well-known. Thus, they can say as did the apostle Paul: "This thing has not been done in a corner." Indeed, as he wrote, the good news has been "preached in all creation that is under heaven."—Acts 26:26; Colossians 1:23.

¹¹ The ones to whom the good news of God's Kingdom is hidden are opposers, those blinded by the Devil. (Compare Matthew 12:30.) Unless they break free from false religion and the Devil's snares, they are in line for destruction. Under demonic influence, such persons draw a veil before their very own eyes, for the apostle Paul says at 2 Corinthians 4:3-5: "If, now, the good news we declare is in fact veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, among whom the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through. For we are preaching, not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake."

¹² Mentally blinded ones do not want to believe. Their unbelief opens up their mind to invasion by the demons. (1 Timothy 4:1) They cannot see Jehovah's glory or its reflection from the countenance of Jesus, the Greater Moses. Jehovah's people catch the glorious light from the Bible and radiate it to others. So all of God's servants are light-bearers, and God commands the light to shine. The light must reflect from God's people and flash upon others who are in

11. Why is the glorious good news veiled among so many of mankind?

12. In contrast with the mentally blinded ones, how do Jehovah's people respond to the words at 2 Corinthians 4:6?

darkness and in danger of destruction. This is just as 2 Corinthians 4:6 puts it: "For God is he who said: 'Let the light shine out of darkness,' and he has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ." In view of this, Jehovah's Witnesses obey the divine command and let their light shine forth to others, to God's glory.

Glorious Treasure in Frail Vessels

¹³ In this unspeakably grand privilege of service, it is of prime importance that the light-bearers prove worthy of having the light by keeping their integrity to God. To perform this wondrous privilege of service, God has not used the holy angels, who desire to peer into these things, but he has bestowed this blessed service upon creatures of flesh. (1 Peter 1:12) This he has done to the magnifying of his own power amid human weakness. As 2 Corinthians 4:7 states: "However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not that out of ourselves."

¹⁴ Vessels in ancient times were often used as receptacles for valuables. What is this glorious treasure that Jehovah's Witnesses possess in frail, earthen vessels—themselves, as weakling creatures from the dust of the earth? This treasure is not merely the light that has shone into their hearts. It is the ministry of that light, which ministry, or service, must be performed in their earthly bodies. The ministry is the sending out of the light that God has shed upon their hearts. This ministry is a good treasure inasmuch as it is a valuable privilege of service shared in to-

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13. Bestowing the blessed service of being light-bearers upon creatures of flesh results in what?
14. (a) What is "this treasure in earthen vessels"? (b) Why are Moses and Jesus Christ wise examples for us with regard to treasure?

day not only by the anointed remnant of the "little flock" but also by the "great crowd" of "other sheep" of the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ. (Luke 12:32; John 10:14-16; Revelation 7:9) Moses and his anti-type, Jesus Christ, are wise examples for us, to fix our hearts on this treasure of divine service, "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."—Matthew 6:19-21; Hebrews 11:26.

¹⁵ How, then, is the power beyond what is normal shown to be from God and not that out of ourselves? In this way: Such frail, earthen vessels as we who hold this treasured service and commission are unworthy and could never bear such honor of ourselves. Moreover, we Witnesses of Jehovah are subjected to all kinds of enemy pressure to try to crack us and make us burst so as to make us unfit to bear the commission from God. Hence, it must be the power of the Great Commissioner that helps us withstand the great mishandling by this world and to hold fast the commission and prove worthy of being retained in his service. Thus, all the world's opposition will fail to break God's earthen vessels and rob them of their precious treasure, for it is written at 2 Corinthians 4:8-12:

¹⁶ "We are pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement; we are perplexed, but not absolutely with no way out; we are persecuted, but not left in the lurch; we are thrown down, but not destroyed. Always we endure everywhere in our body the death-dealing treatment given to Jesus, that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our body. For we who live are ever being brought face to face with death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our mortal flesh. Consequently death is at work in us, but

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- 15, 16. (a) How is the power beyond what is normal shown to be from God and not that out of ourselves? (b) Why will all the world's opposition fail to break God's earthen vessels?

life [through the preaching of the Kingdom good news] in you."

Great Crowd Highly Prize "This Treasure"

¹⁷ "Death is at work in us, but life in you." This statement applies to spirit-anointed Christians. Yet, it may well make us think about the relationship of God's anointed remnant with the great crowd of other sheep. The anointed know they must eventually finish their earthly course in death as Jesus did, but they have companions to share with them the glorious treasure of service, to help them by doing the bulk of the work of the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom. Like the anointed remnant, the great crowd of other sheep today appreciate that the only treasure that will survive the fiery battle of Armageddon and continue unsinged and unconsumed into the new world is this treasure of the blessed ministry, the service unto Jehovah God and his glorious King, Jesus Christ. The great crowd will hold it fast, "rendering [God] sacred service day and night in his temple."—Revelation 7:15.

¹⁸ Shortly, God will put an end to the false glory of this present evil system of things—a "glory" that has continued since Satan the Devil took Jesus up into the high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and "the glory of them." (Luke 4:5, 6) Jesus refused the offer of glory from such a source as that and kept pursuing the course of action on earth that God approved. For doing so, he would be crowned with a glory superior even to the glory that he, the only-begotten Son of God, had enjoyed in heaven before under-

17. How do the great crowd evaluate "this treasure" of the ministry of glory?

18. (a) What will soon happen to the false glory of this world? (b) What "glory" did Jesus refuse, and by doing what did he gain a superior glory?

taking his earthly assignment as outlined by Jehovah.—John 5:36; 17:5; Philippians 2:9-11.

¹⁹ The predicted end of this diabolic system of things will not come before the Kingdom witness has been given in all the earth as a grand finale to the activity of the followers of Jesus Christ, the Witnesses of Jehovah. (Matthew 24:14) The Kingdom witness has been given now for three quarters of a century, and as indicated by the world developments of our times, that foretold end must be near. Consequently, the honorable privilege of sharing in the ministry of the royal, holy government should be nearing its full accomplishment. (Matthew, chapters 24, 25; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21) Our privilege of participating in giving the earth-wide witness to the established Kingdom is indeed a glorious treasure that the Witnesses of Jehovah, as followers of his enthroned Son, Jesus Christ, highly prize. They earnestly desire to hold on to it until the Kingdom witness is completed and Almighty God, Jehovah, crowns the universal situation with his own personal witness to his universal sovereignty.—Zephaniah 3:8.

19. What honorable privilege of service is nearing its full accomplishment, and what is our determination in this regard?

What Are Your Answers?

- Why is the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses a glorious one?
- Why is the good news veiled among so many today?
- What is "this treasure in earthen vessels"?
- Why has God used frail, earthen vessels for his treasured service?
- How do Jehovah's people evaluate "this treasure," and why?

'AGAINST KNOWLEDGE —FALSELY SO CALLED'

HOW important is truth to you? Does it disturb you that falsehood has distorted, even concealed, the truth about the Creator of heaven and earth? This greatly disturbed Irenaeus, a professed Christian of the second century of our Common Era. He endeavored to expose the dangerous inaccuracies of Gnosticism, an apostate form of Christianity. Earlier, the apostle Paul warned Timothy to turn away from such 'falsely called knowledge.'—1 Timothy 6:20, 21.

Irenaeus boldly spoke out against erroneous doctrine. For instance, consider what he said in the introduction to his extensive literary work entitled "The Refutation and Overthrow of the Knowledge Falsely So Called." He wrote: "Certain men, rejecting the truth, are introducing among us false stories and vain genealogies, which serve rather to controversies, as the apostle said [1 Timothy 1:3, 4], than to God's work of building up in the faith. By their craftily constructed rhetoric they lead astray the minds of the inexperienced, and take them captive, corrupting the oracles of the Lord, and being evil expounders of what was well spoken."

The Gnostics (from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge") claimed superior knowledge through secret revelation and boasted that they were the "correctors of the apostles." Gnosticism intertwined philosophy, speculation, and pagan mysticism with apostate Christianity. Irenaeus refused to share in any of this. Rather, he embarked on a life-long struggle against heretical teachings. No

doubt he was well aware of the need to apply the apostle Paul's warning: "Look out: perhaps there may be someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ."—Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 4:7.

Early Life and Ministry

Little is known of the early life and personal history of Irenaeus. It is generally supposed that he was a native of Asia Minor, born between 120 C.E. and 140 C.E. in or near the city of Smyrna. Irenaeus personally testifies that in his early youth, he was acquainted with Polycarp, an overseer in the Smyrna congregation.

While learning under the tutelage of Polycarp, Irenaeus apparently befriended Florinus. Polycarp was a living link to the apostles. He expounded copiously on the Scriptures and strongly recommended adherence to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles. In spite of this fine Scriptural training, however, Florinus later lapsed into the teachings of Valentinus, the most prominent leader of the Gnostic movement!

Irenaeus wanted his friend and former associate Florinus to be restored to sound Scriptural teaching and rescued from Valentinianism. Therefore, Irenaeus was moved to write a letter to Florinus, saying: "These doctrines, Florinus, . . . are not of sound understanding; these

doctrines are not consistent with the church, and involve those who follow them in the greatest impiety; . . . these doctrines those presbyters who were before us, and who were conversant with the apostles, did not hand down to thee."

Endeavoring to remind Florinus of the fine training received at the feet of the distinguished Polycarp, Irenaeus continued: "I remember the events of those times . . . so that I am able to tell even the place in which the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse . . . Also how he would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord; how also he used to recount their words."

Florinus was reminded that Polycarp taught what he had received "from the eye-witnesses of the Word of life, [and had] related all in harmony with the Scriptures. These things, through the mercy of God vouchsafed to me, I then heard, noting them down, not upon paper but in my heart; and continually by the grace of God I recall these things accurately to my mind. And [regarding Valentinianism] I am able to bear witness in the sight of God that if that blessed and apostolic presbyter [Polycarp] had heard such a thing, he would have cried out and stopped his ears . . . He would have fled from the place in which, sitting or standing, he had heard such words."

There is no record that Florinus ever responded to the touching and forceful letter of Irenaeus. But the words of Irenaeus reveal his genuine concern for a dear friend who had left the way of truth and succumbed to apostasy.—Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7-12.

It is not known when Irenaeus took up residence in Gaul (France). In the year 177 C.E., he was serving as an overseer in the congregation at Lyons. It is report-

ed that his ministry there was very fruitful. In fact, historian Gregory of Tours reported that Irenaeus had in a short time succeeded in converting all Lyons to Christianity. Doubtless, this was an overstatement.

Against Heresies

Irenaeus' principal work, "The Refutation and Overthrow of the Knowledge Falsely So Called," was commonly referred to by the name "Against Heresies." It is divided into five books. The first two contain a critical description of the beliefs of various heretical sects, particularly the Valentinian heresy. In the remaining three books, Irenaeus attempts to set forth "arguments from the Scriptures."

In the introduction to his third book "Against Heresies," Irenaeus writes: "Keep in mind therefore what I have said in the two previous books; and by adding this to them you will have from me a full reply against all heretics, and will be able to resist them faithfully and boldly on behalf of the one true and life-giving faith, which the Church has received from the apostles and imparts to her children. For the Lord of all gave to his apostles the power of the gospel, and by them we also have learned the truth, that is, the teaching of the Son of God—as the Lord said to them, 'He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me, and him who sent me.'"

Although Irenaeus admitted that he was not a good writer, he was determined to expose all aspects of the "evil teachings" of Gnosticism. He quotes and comments on many scriptures and argues masterfully against the "false teachers" of the "destructive sects." (2 Peter 2:1-3) It appears that Irenaeus had difficulty compiling his work into a satisfactory form. Why? Because he had amassed material of enormous proportions.

Irenaeus' exposé was manifestly brought to birth after great pains and much study. His lengthy arguments supply a wealth of information on the sources and phenomena of Gnosticism. The writings of Irenaeus are also an invaluable index of at least some of the Scriptural views still held by professed adherents to God's Word at the end of the second century C.E.

Irenaeus repeatedly reaffirms belief in "one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven, and the earth, and the seas, and all that is in them, and in one Christ Jesus, the son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation." These facts the Gnostics denied!

Speaking against Gnostic Docetism (the teaching that Christ never came in human form), Irenaeus wrote: "Christ must be a man, like us, if he would redeem us from corruption and make us perfect. As sin and death came into the world by a man, so they could be blotted out legitimately and to our advantage only by a man; though, of course, not by one who should be a mere descendant of Adam, and thus himself stand in need of redemption, but by a second Adam, supernaturally begotten, a new progenitor of our race." (1 Corinthians 15:45) On the other hand, the Gnostics were Dualists, believing that spiritual things were good but that all matter and flesh were evil. Consequently, they rejected the man Jesus Christ.

Reasoning that all flesh is evil, the Gnostics also rejected marriage and procreation, claiming that Satan originated these. They even ascribed divine wisdom



to the serpent in Eden! This viewpoint resulted in extreme life-styles, either asceticism or fleshly indulgence. Claiming that salvation came only through mystical Gnosticism, or self-knowledge, they left no room for the truth of God's Word.

In contrast, Irenaeus' arguments included belief in the Millennium and indicated some comprehension of the prospect of peaceful future life on earth. He endeavored to unite the growing factions of his time by wielding the powerful Word of God. And he is generally remembered for his clear thinking, acute perception, and sound judgment.

Although some credit Irenaeus (who died about 200 C.E.) with fostering the true doctrines of the Christian faith, it must be remembered that his was a time of change and foretold apostasy. At times, his arguments are somewhat vague, even contradictory. Nevertheless, we highly value the testimony of men who boldly spoke out in favor of the inspired written Word of God rather than the traditions of men.

MALTA'S HOSPITALITY BRINGS BLESSINGS

MALTA provided a welcome land-fall for the apostle Paul when he was shipwrecked in the first century C.E. The island's inhabitants received him and his fellow voyagers "helpfully." In fact, the Maltese showed the travelers "extraordinary human kindness."—Acts 28: 1, 2.

Later, the island's principal man, Publius, received Paul and his companions hospitably and 'entertained them benevolently for three days.' When news spread that the apostle had cured Publius' father of fever and dysentery, "the rest of the people on the island who had sicknesses also began to come to him and be cured." (Acts 28:7-9) But Paul did more. He sowed seeds of truth in the hearts of the people, and this resulted in many blessings for these hospitable islanders. Today, the same thing is taking place on Malta. Come and see how.

Visitors Bring Good News

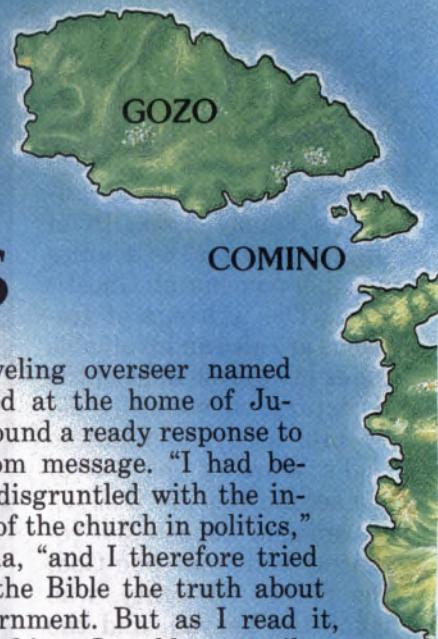
Viewed from the air, sunlit Malta shines like a jewel set in the blue Mediterranean. Upon approaching Luqa Airport, a visitor sees a sun-drenched land with seemingly little vegetation. When on the ground, he learns that this seven- by ten-mile island is the home of an estimated 347,000 inhabitants. The domes and spires of Malta's numerous churches and cathedrals reveal its religious background. But in this 20th century, how have the Maltese people benefited from visits of Jehovah's Witnesses?

One traveling overseer named David called at the home of Juliana and found a ready response to the Kingdom message. "I had become very disgruntled with the involvement of the church in politics," says Juliana, "and I therefore tried to find in the Bible the truth about God's government. But as I read it, there were things I could not easily understand. Imagine how intrigued I was when this caller at my door asked if I knew what God's Kingdom was! Immediately, I asked him to show me the answer in my Catholic Bible. He did. That very day I knew I had found the truth."

A local Witness arranged to study the Bible with Juliana. When David returned to Malta six months later, what a pleasant surprise to have Juliana welcome him into the Kingdom Hall! She was soon ready to be a publisher of the good news of the Kingdom.

Juliana's husband, Francis, had also been confused by church teachings. While visiting her on an occasion when she was in the hospital, he found her listening to tape recordings of public Bible talks delivered at the Kingdom Hall. Upon hearing a presentation on the subject of the family, Francis noted how sound the Biblical advice was, and as a result, he decided to begin attending Christian meetings. Soon he became aware of a problem that had to be solved. What was it?

For some 20 years, Francis had worked as a croupier at the casino. He now real-





ized that employment that involved gambling was incompatible with Christian principles that condemn greed and covetousness. (Romans 13:9, 10; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) "Though at first I lacked the faith needed to change my job," admits Francis, "I prayed for Jehovah's help. Finally, I found other work that enables me to care for my wife and son, Sandro." Today, Francis serves as an elder in the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Comfort From the Scriptures

Rose had been happily married to George for six years when he was tragically killed in an accident. She found no comfort at all in the priest's contention that God had taken George because of being jealous of the love she had for her husband. Rose became so depressed that she contemplated taking the life of her three children and then committing suicide.



But what a change came over Rose when a neighboring Witness named Helen started to conduct a Bible study with her! Rose was soon comforted by the Scriptural teaching of the resurrection. (John 5:28, 29) At the same time, encouragement came from Peter, another visiting overseer. She benefited greatly from his talks about the resurrection. Spurred on by this hope, Rose joined Helen in public witnessing, and both of them now serve as regular pioneers, or full-time Kingdom preachers.

Encouragement to Be Zealous

Joe comes from a large family, for he has 12 brothers and sisters. Encouraged by a traveling overseer, he zealously witnessed to his many relatives. "In the beginning," he says, "my family knew that what I explained to them from the Bible made sense. But when they saw that my interest in becoming a Witness grew, they changed their mind, and all of them were against me—especially my father." Did their attitude quench Joe's zeal?

Not at all! For instance, when the baby of one of his sisters was ill and about to die, Joe witnessed to her, speaking to her about the resurrection hope. Now this sister is a baptized Witness of Jehovah. Next, one of Joe's older brothers and his family showed interest in the truth. Then

the eldest brother and his family took a stand for God's Kingdom. Meanwhile, Joe's father was becoming more and more angry. When Joe's youngest sister also started to study the Bible, the father put Joe out of the family home. Undeterred, Joe used every occasion to visit his relatives and talk about the Bible's message. Still, his father reacted angrily and said: "Why don't you speak to the priest? He knows the Bible best!" Joe replied that he would gladly do so if his father would accompany him. How did their visit turn out?

"We arranged a day and time," Joe recounts, "but the priest wanted to know the subject to prepare for, explaining that since he had left the seminary seven years earlier, he would now need to do some research.... But after a week, a month, and even two months, the priest had not kept any appointment. When my father observed this, he changed his mind about the church and gradually realized that what I had learned from the Bible was true." Joe's father finally accepted the truth, bringing to 29 the number of his family members engaged in Jehovah's service.

Helpful Advice Brings Blessings

Speaking enthusiastically of yet another visiting overseer, a married pioneer minister named Ignatio explains: "Paul and his wife came to stay with us. They helped both of us in our marriage relationship as well as in the field ministry. He always emphasized the importance of preaching."

Ignatio recalls what happened when Paul met with the congregation elders and ministerial servants during his last visit. "When I said I had to take time from the preaching work that morning to prepare my part on the program at a meeting," says Ignatio, "Paul said that he would go out in the field service as arranged even if

I could not accompany him. At that, I decided to go too. How Jehovah blessed my decision! That morning I started a Bible study, and from it, there are now six people in the truth."—Compare 3 John 4.

An Interchange of Encouragement

Each time a traveling elder visits fellow Witnesses on Malta, they receive him hospitably and are eager to benefit from his encouragement and exhortation. (Compare 3 John 5-8.) As a result, more and more Maltese people are taking a firm stand for Jehovah God and his Kingdom. By the end of the 1989 service year, 389 of these hospitable islanders had done so. Now organized into five thriving congregations (four on Malta and one on the nearby island of Gozo), they proclaim the good news with boldness.

All traveling overseers assigned to visit Malta in recent years have felt as did the apostle Paul, who told Roman Christians: "I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you in order for you to be made firm." Their visits truly have resulted in a refreshing "interchange of encouragement." (Romans 1:11, 12) Moreover, the Kingdom-preaching activities of Jehovah's Witnesses are bringing rich spiritual blessings to the hospitable people of Malta.

In Our Next Issue

■ Serving God During Youth

■ Do You Appreciate What God Has Done?

■ We Brought Up Eight Children in the Discipline of Jehovah

Do We Really Need the Originals?

SOME 3,500 years ago, an elderly man in the Middle East compiled a history of the world up to his time. That work, which came to make up five lengthy books, must have been a huge effort. The man was more than 80 years old when he began his account. Neither he nor his nation had a settled home but wandered from place to place in the Sinai Desert. Eventually, however, what that elderly man wrote became a part of the most important literary production the world has ever known.

That man was Moses, who was privileged by God to lead the ancient nation of Israel out of bondage in the land of Egypt. The five books he wrote are known today as the Pentateuch, the first part of the Holy Bible. Moses was guided by God's holy spirit, or active force. Hence, even today we can read his writings with great personal benefit. But sometimes people ask: 'Can we really have confidence in the words of Moses and the other Bible writers? Do we have their original manuscripts? If not, what happened to them? And how can we be sure that what is in the Bible is really what its writers originally wrote?'

The Materials

There are many reasons to be confident that the Bible has not changed in substance since it was first written. True, we do not have the Bible writers' original manuscripts. But we really should not expect to have those manuscripts. Why? Because of the materials on which they were written, a certain ancient Jewish custom, and the history of the times since the writing.

First, please consider the materials. Some things still exist that were written

when the Bible was being compiled. But most of these were written on stone or clay, which can survive for long periods. However, it seems that the Bible was originally written on something more perishable. For example, some writings of the Bible writer Jeremiah were burned by King Jehoiakim. (Jeremiah 36:21-31) Stone or clay tablets would not readily have been destroyed in that way.

So, what writing material was used by Bible writers? Well, "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and the most common writing material in Egypt was papyrus. (Acts 7:22) Possibly, therefore, Moses wrote on this perishable material. Another common writing material in the Middle East was animal skin—leather or vellum. Perhaps Jeremiah wrote on leather. Either leather or papyrus would have burned when King Jehoiakim threw Jeremiah's roll into the fire.

True, in the hot, dry climate of Egypt, many papyrus manuscripts have survived for thousands of years. But that is exceptional. Usually, both papyrus and leather deteriorate easily. Says scholar Oscar Paret: "Both of these writing mediums are in the same strong measure endangered by humidity, by mold, and by various maggots. We know from daily experience how easily paper, and even strong leather, deteriorates in the open air or in a damp room."

In ancient Israel, where most of the books of the Bible were produced, the climate was not favorable for preserving manuscripts. Hence, most of the original manuscripts of the Bible probably disintegrated long ago. Even if they did not, there is an ancient Jewish custom that makes it unlikely that they would have survived to our day. What is that custom?

Manuscript Burials

In 1896 a scholar rummaging through a genizah in Cairo discovered 90,000 ancient manuscripts that revolutionized the study of Middle Eastern history. What is a genizah? And what does this have to do with the original manuscripts of the Bible?

A genizah is a room where Jews of earlier times placed manuscripts worn out from use. Writes scholar Paul E. Kahle: "The Jews used to deposit all sorts of written and printed material in such rooms which were provided in or near their synagogues; they were not intended to be kept as in archives, but were to remain there undisturbed for a certain time. The Jews were afraid lest such writings which might contain the name of God should be profaned by misuse. So such written—and in later times also printed—matter was taken from time to time to consecrated ground and buried; thus it perished. It was by mere chance that the Cairo Geniza was forgotten and its contents so escaped the fate of other Genizas."—*The Cairo Geniza*, page 4.

What if an original Bible manuscript had survived until the time when this custom developed? Doubtless, the manuscript would have been worn out from use and would have been given a burial.

Historical Developments

In considering what may have happened to original Bible manuscripts, a final factor that should be remembered is the tumultuous history of Bible lands. For example, consider what happened to those books written by the aging man Moses. We are told: "It came about that as soon as Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book until their completion, Moses began to command the Levites, the carriers of the ark of Jehovah's

covenant, saying: 'Taking this book of the law, you must place it at the side of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God.'"—Deuteronomy 31:24-26.

The ark of the covenant was a sacred chest symbolic of God's presence among the Israelites. It was carried into the Promised Land (along with Moses' manuscripts), where it was kept at various locations. For a time, it was seized by the Philistines. Later, Israel's king David brought the Ark into Jerusalem, and eventually it was placed in the temple that King Solomon built there. But King Ahaz built a pagan altar in the temple and eventually closed it. King Manasseh filled it with pagan worship.

Meanwhile, what happened to the ark of the covenant and to Moses' writings? We do not know, but at least some of them were lost. In the time of King Josiah, temple workmen unexpectedly found "the very book of the law," perhaps the actual document written by Moses. (2 Kings 22:8) Much of what it contained was previously unknown to the king, and the reading of it spurred a great spiritual revival.—2 Kings 22:11-23:3.

After Josiah's death, the people of Judah became unfaithful once again and eventually were deported to Babylon. The temple was destroyed, and everything of value in it was carried off to Babylon. There is no record of what then happened to the Ark or the valuable document discovered in Josiah's time. Years later, however, when many Jews who had returned to their homeland were being encouraged to rebuild Jerusalem and restore clean worship, the priest Ezra and others read to them publicly from "the book of the law of Moses." (Nehemiah 8:1-8) Hence, there were copies of the original writings. Where did they originate?

Copying God's Word

Moses foretold the time when Israel would be ruled by a king and recorded this special command: "When he takes his seat on the throne of his kingdom, he must write in a book for himself a copy of this law from that which is in the charge of the priests, the Levites." (Deuteronomy 17:18) Hence, some copies of the Scriptures were to be made.

Copying the Scriptures eventually became a profession in Israel. Indeed, Psalm 45:1 says: "May my tongue be the stylus of a skilled copyist." Such copyists as Shaphan and Zadok were mentioned by name. But the best-known copyist of ancient times was Ezra, who also contributed original writings to the Bible. (Ezra 7:6; Nehemiah 13:13; Jeremiah 36:10) Even while later portions of the Bible were being written, those books already completed were being copied and distributed.

When Jesus Christ was on earth, copies of the Hebrew Scriptures (Genesis to Malachi) were available not only in Jerusalem but also apparently in synagogues of Galilee. (Luke 4:16, 17) Why, at distant Berea in Macedonia, noble-minded Jews were able to 'examine the Scriptures daily!' (Acts 17:11) Extant today are some 1,700 manuscript copies of Bible books written before Jesus' birth, as well as some 4,600 of those compiled by his disciples (Matthew to Revelation).

Were the copies accurate? Yes, extremely so. Professional copyists of the Hebrew Scriptures (called Sopherim) were very concerned about avoiding any mistakes. To check their work, they counted the words and even the letters of each manuscript they copied. Therefore, Jesus, the apostle Paul, and others who often quoted the ancient Bible writers had no doubt about the accuracy of the copies they used.—Luke 4:16-21; Acts 17:1-3.

True, Jewish copyists and the later Christian copyists were not infallible. Errors crept in, but the many copies that still exist help us to trace these errors. How? Well, different copyists made different errors. Hence, by comparing the work of different copyists, we can identify many of their mistakes.

Why We Can Be Confident

In 1947 there was an unexpected discovery of some ancient scrolls in caves near the Dead Sea. These scrolls showed just how accurate the copying of the Scriptures had been. Among the scrolls was a copy of the Bible book of Isaiah that was about a thousand years older than any manuscript previously available. Yet, a comparison showed that the only differences between the Dead Sea manuscript and later copies were in such things as word order and grammar. The meaning of the text was unchanged after a thousand years of copying! Concerning the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, scholar William Henry Green could therefore say: "It may be safely said that no other work of antiquity has been so accurately transmitted." Similar comments have been made about the accuracy of transmission of the Christian Greek Scriptures.

True, it would be exciting to find the actual document that Moses or Isaiah wrote. But we really do not need the originals. The important thing is not the document but its contents. And miraculously, despite the passing of many turbulent centuries and much copying and recopying, we can be confident that the Bible still contains the information found in those ancient original manuscripts. Hence, this Scriptural statement has proved true: "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like a blossom of grass; the grass becomes withered, and the flower falls off, but the saying of Jehovah endures forever."—1 Peter 1:24, 25.

Insight on the News

"Most Dangerous Substance"

Lawsuits filed by patients who have contracted a deadly disease via blood transfusions have introduced a new level of concern to many blood banks. By mid 1989 upwards of 300 lawsuits had reportedly been filed against blood banks in the United States. Gilbert Clark, executive director of the American Association of Blood Banks, acknowledged that "the public wants perfectly safe blood," but he admitted that it cannot be guaranteed.

Similarly, *The Boston Globe Magazine* reports that blood specialist Dr. Charles Huggins admits that blood "must be considered unavoidably non-safe." He describes blood as "the most dangerous substance we use in medicine." Since early 1989 the number of infectious diseases blood banks typically test for has increased to five (HTLV-I, associated with adult T-cell leukemia, syphilis, hepatitis B, AIDS, and hepatitis C). However, according to American Red Cross authority S. Gerald Sandler, "it seems that it's only a matter of time until we find another rare disease spread by blood transfusion." Despite such lethal potential, about four million North Americans are expected to receive blood transfusions during 1990. According to newspaper columnist W. Gifford-Jones, the problem is that "except for Jehovah's Witnesses, most patients never discuss the possibility of blood transfusion."

For decades Jehovah's Witnesses have faithfully 'abstained from blood' in any form as God's Word commands at Acts 15:

28, 29; 21:25. The protection this has afforded them from dreadful diseases transmitted through blood transfusions only exemplifies the correctness of their obedience to Jehovah God's laws.

Disappear Unnoticed?

Joachim Cardinal Meisner, a controversial figure when he was installed last February as the new archbishop of Cologne, Germany, recently said that his greatest fear is that the church might one day "disappear—and perhaps go unnoticed by society." According to the German newspaper *Rheinische Post*, Meisner said: "My soul is depressed that society has come to view the church as insignificant." A possible reason, he noted, is that "we talk too much about the earth and not enough about heaven, too much about the present and too little about eternity."

By allying themselves with the political and commercial elements of the earth instead of trusting in heavenly power to solve the world's problems, the religions of Christendom have indeed belied their claim of representing God's interests. This will have serious consequences. According to the Bible, all false religion will soon disappear—an event that will not go unnoticed by "the kings of the earth" and "the traveling merchants of the earth," who will weep as a result of this development. Hence, lovers of righteousness need to heed the words: "Get out of [false religion] . . . if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues."—Revelation 18:4, 9, 11.

An End in Sight

"State slaughter" is how some newspapers describe murders committed by governments or organizations protected by them. In fact, in 1988, says Amnesty International spokesman Gerry O'Connel, "there was an escalation of violations of human rights, which has continued in 1989." He then adds: "Killings in violation of universally recognized laws have reached an all-time high."

According to Amnesty's annual report, the figures are spine-chilling: During 1988 between 50,000 and 100,000 people in 29 nations were slaughtered under the complacent gaze of the State. Among these were children, old people, and women, whose only crime was that of belonging to political or ethnic minorities or living in areas contested by opposing factions. Those responsible for such killings include death squads, revolutionaries, traffickers in narcotics, and other groups using violence for political purposes. "Often the State itself hides behind armed groups in order to eliminate physically opponents and awkward elements," states *La Repubblica*.

It is not without reason, therefore, that Jehovah's inspired Word likens human government to a "wild beast." (Revelation 13:2) However, such politically motivated ferocity will not last indefinitely. As Psalm 92:7 says: "When the wicked ones sprout as the vegetation and all the practitioners of what is hurtful blossom forth, it is that they may be annihilated forever." God's heavenly Kingdom in the hands of Christ Jesus, the "Prince of Peace," will do this.—Isaiah 9:6; Daniel 2:44.

SINCE Mary's children were now grown, she had time on her hands and decided to get part-time secular work. When she told her husband, Enos, however, he made it clear that there was no need for her to do so. "If I could provide for you and the children, I can certainly keep the two of us now," he said. Instead of having his wife work secularly, he suggested that she prayerfully consider becoming a pioneer, a full-time Kingdom proclaimer.

A Wise Step Before Calamity

ing four home Bible studies with interested people. Within a year she had become a regular pioneer, conducting ten Bible studies. Christine, a Witness of Jehovah with two children still in school, enthusiastically joined Mary as her pioneer partner. Newly interested people began to attend meetings at the local Kingdom Hall, where a fine pioneer spirit was growing. And Mary's greatest joy came when her own son, Christopher, chose to follow her example and became a pioneer too.

Then, suddenly, in 1985 tragedy struck. Mary collapsed. An aneurysm in her head led to a severe brain hemorrhage, and within three days 45-year-old Mary was dead.

During those four years of pioneering, however, Mary had built up a fine standing in her community. Her funeral service was attended by over 300 people, including many neighbors. One of those present had been a school friend who had been impressed by Mary's faith, wanted to learn more about it, and asked for a Bible study. Mary's ministry was still bearing fruit.

"I am an auxiliary pioneer myself now," says Enos, "but I only wish I had joined Mary when she was pioneering. She was always talking about her experiences and was so happy. In fact, those few years were the happiest ones of our life together, but it is only now that I appreciate why."

Nobody can predict when "time and unforeseen occurrence" may exact its toll, as it did so unexpectedly in Mary's case. However, those who remain faithful as Kingdom proclaimers ensure for themselves favorable recognition by both God and man, even in the face of calamity.—Ecclesiastes 9:11; 11:1, 2.



Sharing in the ministry is time well spent

Although Mary enjoyed sharing the Kingdom message with her neighbors, she was shy and lacked confidence. Yet, she wanted to follow her husband's counsel. So, with mixed feelings, she enrolled as an auxiliary pioneer in April 1981.

Mary quickly developed a love for the Kingdom-preaching work that she had never before experienced. Soon, she was conduct-

