

The WATCHTOWER



**What
Does
the FUTURE
Hold For
YOUR CHILD?**

Also In This Issue:

Who Qualifies to Be an Elder?

AUGUST 1, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

August 1, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 15

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. A minister of Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's witnesses locally.

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IN THIS ISSUE

What Does the Future Hold for Your Child?	451
Divine Backing Removes Fear	453
Kingdom Preaching—What Impact in Catholic Spain?	456
Why Are Some Sins Not Forgivable?	459
Youths, Make Your Life Worth Living	461
Insight on the News	464
Who Qualifies to Be an Elder?	465
Elders Presiding in a Fine Way	470
Faithfulness—Not Martyrdom	475
The Endearing Quality of Goodness	476
Clergymen Who Recognized the Truth	478
Questions from Readers	478

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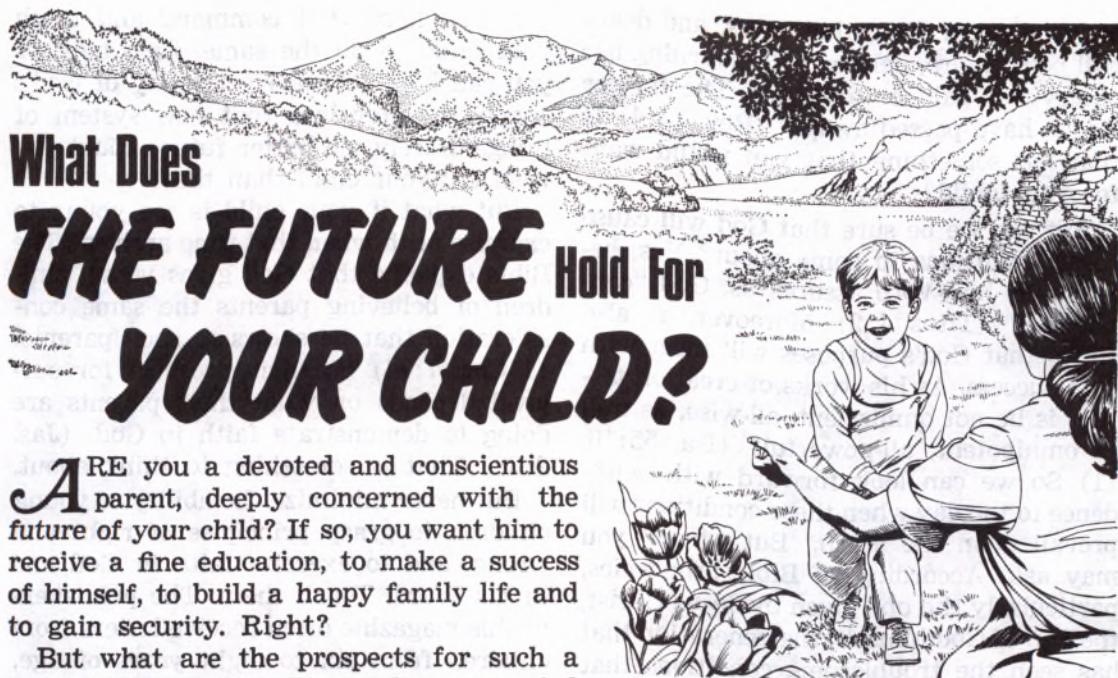
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What Does **THE FUTURE** Hold For **YOUR CHILD?**

ARE you a devoted and conscientious parent, deeply concerned with the future of your child? If so, you want him to receive a fine education, to make a success of himself, to build a happy family life and to gain security. Right?

But what are the prospects for such a future? Is not everything today uncertain? For one thing, do you have in mind a college education for your child? What are the prospects for a fine college education in an environment that is largely marked by sexual promiscuity and drug addiction? Add to that the fact that many school administrations do not really seem to care whether the students learn or not. The situation greatly concerns conscientious parents.

Look beyond school to a career. What does the world hold for your child? Does he want to be a lawyer? But how frustrating a career in law must be when many lawyers themselves admit that generally it is futile to expect justice to win out in the courtroom! Is your son preparing to be a doctor? Facts show that the more able a medical specialist *he becomes*, the more likely he is to be plagued with malpractice suits! Really, what future does *any* business career hold in view of the current economic situation? Everything in this old world is in upheaval. Is there any reason to expect the future to be any better?

There is no escaping it, the future that

this world has to offer to your child is bleak indeed. But when you think of the future, do not leave God out of account. Yes, there is a God in heaven, the Supreme Being, for how else could this marvelous universe, including the earth and man, have come into existence? (Rom. 1:20) Without the shadow of a doubt, He is greatly interested in what goes on here upon this earth, even as an inventor is interested in the success of his invention and even as you as a parent are interested in the future of your child. What his purpose is regarding the earth and mankind he explains in his Word the Bible.

For one thing, the Bible tells us that God created the earth to be inhabited. (Isa. 45:18) Also, that it is his loving purpose that man should live forever in peace, righteousness and happiness. Thus the apostle John was given a preview of the time when God's purpose for the earth will be fully realized. In vision John saw the time when God "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." (Rev. 21:4) Is that not something that you would want for your child?

But can we be sure that God will cause these conditions to come about? Yes, because, as his Word assures us, God "cannot lie." (Titus 1:2) Moreover, it also states that God's purposes will meet with sure success. As his works of creation testify, is he not omniscient, all-wise, as well as omnipotent, all-powerful? (Isa. 55:10, 11) So we can look forward with confidence to the day when these conditions will prevail upon the earth. 'But when?' you may ask. According to Bible prophecies, particularly the one given by Jesus Christ, the Son of God himself, the generation that has seen the troublesome conditions that have prevailed since 1914 will see this change come about. "This generation," said Jesus, "will by no means pass away until all these things occur."—Matt. 24:34.

Think what that will mean! All the distressing conditions that now afflict humankind—wars, famines, earthquakes, diseases, injustices, economic hardship and poverty—all will be done away with. That change, the Bible foretells, will come about by an act of God so catastrophic that Jesus likened it to the great deluge of Noah's day. At Revelation 16:14, 16, the culmination of that great tribulation is described as "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," at Har-Magedon.

For your child, as well as for yourself, to survive that catastrophe and to enter that righteous, peaceful and happy world, what must you do now? God's prophet answers: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth . . . Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zeph. 2:3.

If you heed that command and teach your child to do the same, then both of you can hope to survive the day of God's anger, to enter into that new system of things. Surely, no better future could you wish for your child than that!

But what if your child is too young to exercise faith when that time arrives? The Bible explains that God gives young children of believing parents the same consideration that he shows to such parents. (1 Cor. 7:14) So their prospect for survival depends on what their parents are doing to demonstrate faith in God. (Jas. 2:26) That is something to think about.

But never minimize the ability of young children to grasp principles of right and wrong, and to exercise faith in God and in his Word. Teach them. The publishers of this magazine often receive letters from children from six to eight years of age, expressing their appreciation for what they are learning about God and his Word. In this regard they might be likened to the early Christian minister Timothy who was taught about God's Word from infancy onward. Yes, if, as the newspapers show, children of tender years are capable of imitating adults in committing all manner of crimes, then certainly children of tender years are also capable of imitating adults in following a course of rectitude.

—2 Tim. 3:14.

But what about a youth whose parents ignore the command to 'seek Jehovah, to seek righteousness and to seek meekness'? Can a mere youth do so on his own? Absolutely! In fact, many youths from ten to twelve years of age have taken their stand for God and for righteousness independently of their parents.

Clearly, this world has no bright future to offer to your child. However, God's Word has, and not only to your child, but also to all, young and old, who will 'seek Jehovah, righteousness and meekness.' To heed those commands you must buy out

time for yourselves so as to learn what God requires of you and then apply in your daily life what you learn. Today some two million Christian witnesses of Jehovah are

helping others to do that very thing, and, at your request, the Witnesses living in your own community will be glad to render such assistance to you.

DIVINE BACKING MOVES FEAR

HOW would you feel if you had been directed by Almighty God to do a work, but were forbidden by human official decree to do so? And what if the decree came from the World Power of your time? Would you shake with fear, especially if that work had to be done in the open, where all could see? Would you stop your work, or would you boldly go on with it?

Christians declaring the good news of God's kingdom have experienced such a situation many times and in many places. They know that their commission to preach is a divine one. Their Leader Jesus Christ, who spoke what he had heard from God, said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." Also: "Make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them." (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; John 8:28, 29) But rulers in some countries have issued commands that such preaching be stopped, and laws have been designed, even by major world powers, to ban this work. Nevertheless, true Christians have gone ahead fearlessly in the face of such oppo-

sition. How could they do it with real confidence?

A PROPHETIC ILLUSTRATION

Centuries ago this was prophetically illustrated. It was during Persia's rule as the Fourth World Power of Bible history.

God, by means of Cyrus, king of Persia, had broken Babylon's power and had liberated Israel from its slavery. All who desired to return to Jerusalem to rebuild Jehovah's temple and to restore true worship were allowed to do so. Under their appointed governor, Zerubbabel, a crowd of about 50,000 people demonstrated the faith and zeal to make the long journey. On arriving, they erected an altar and later laid the temple foundation. But opposition from the neighboring peoples was fierce. A new ruler had come into power in Persia, and these enemies were able to get a royal order to see to it that the temple building was stopped immediately.—Ezra 3:8-10; 4:17-22.

In fear, the temple builders stopped. For about sixteen years no work went on. But the command to build had been given, not by the order of a mere earthly power, but by the Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah God himself. Would he let fear on the part of his servants make his command of no effect? Or would he strengthen them and back them up with divine power?

God was patient with his people, for he recognized the powerful opposition they faced. However, they should not have been

cowed into neglecting their divine commission. To carry out his own purpose and in mercy to them, he sent his prophets Haggai and Zechariah to correct, encourage and stir them to activity. Governor Zerubbabel responded, taking a bold step, apparently in defiance of the mighty Persian Empire. This was a good and right step in obedience to Jehovah God. Through Haggai, Jehovah comfortingly assured Zerubbabel:

"I am rocking the heavens and the earth. And I shall certainly overthrow the throne of kingdoms and annihilate the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariot and its riders, and the horses and their riders will certainly come down, each one by the sword of his brother."

—Hag. 2:21, 22.

Zerubbabel, through his obedient action, had been assured that the power of Jehovah of armies was on his side. So what did the disapproval or objections of men matter? This God as divine Ruler was to be obeyed rather than man-made rulers. Why, he could rock both the heavens and the earth! What, then, could anyone do to thwart or successfully oppose his declared purposes? Nothing!

Furthermore, Jehovah said to Zerubbabel: "I shall take you, O Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, my servant, . . . and I shall certainly set you as a seal ring, because you are the one whom I have chosen."—Hag. 2:23.

Zerubbabel became something very precious to Jehovah, like a seal ring on the right hand of Jehovah of armies. Because of his keeping Jehovah's commandments and displaying courageous devotion to Jehovah's clean worship at his temple, he was like a living seal ring, serving Jehovah of armies in an official way, for the glory and praise of His holy name. Zerubbabel did not need to fear that he would be deposed by the king of Persia. God would certainly not rock Zerubbabel from

an honored position of service to Him, even though the entire Persian Empire should be shaken from its stability, as it actually was years later. Zerubbabel would receive full divine backing. This proved to be true. About five years later the temple was finally completed amid great rejoicing.

—Ezra 6:14, 15, 22.

DIVINE BACKING TODAY

Zerubbabel's position over God's people back there, and the work that he did, foreshadowed the activity of Jesus Christ as heavenly Governor of spiritual Israel. He is the leading Promoter of the work in connection with Jehovah's great spiritual temple. Despite the opposition of this world, Jesus, when on earth, fearlessly preached the good news of the Kingdom. Now, exalted in heaven as the Governor of spiritual Israel today, he has the same spirit. He leads and directs true Christians, enabling them to preach and to gather people together to the pure worship of God, to Jehovah's spiritual temple, as foretold at Isaiah 2:2, 3:

"And it must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it all the nations must stream. And many peoples will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.'

This heavenly Governor like Zerubbabel is most precious to Jehovah God, like a seal ring on his right hand, one that bears the divine name. An ancient seal ring was used to affix the name of its owner to a document, thus to prove that it genuinely originated with him and that it expressed his will, purpose or instructions. Similarly, Jesus Christ is used to fulfill the divine prophecies and promises and thereby to

prove that those recorded pronouncements really originated from the divine, infallible Source and are divine truth.

An official would back up what was written in a document bearing his seal. Just so, Jehovah of armies backs up Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, God's name and purposes are vindicated, and we can be absolutely sure of divine backing if we follow the commands and example of Jesus Christ. He is the *truth*, that is, he is the One in whom all God's purposes toward his people find their culmination. (John 14:6) The apostle Paul said of him: "For no matter how many the promises of God are, they have become Yes by means of him. Therefore also through him is the 'Amen' said to God for glory through us [Christian disciples]."—2 Cor. 1:20.

Christ is therefore the central or key figure in the outworking of all Jehovah's purposes. When we pray to God in Jesus' name, we can say "Amen," being assured that we will have divine backing in answer to the things requested according to God's will. (Rev. 3:14) Even in the face of violent opposition, we can be confident, because, even if we should die, we have a sure hope of a resurrection from the dead. This is because God has "furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him [Christ] from the dead." (Acts 17:31) It is as if God had given us a document to this effect, bearing his seal. In fact, the Bible is just such a document. "The bearing witness to Jesus is what inspires prophesying," because Jesus is the *truth*.—Rev. 19:10.

Since the close of the Gentile Times in 1914 C.E., the nations of the world of mankind are rocking because Jehovah has asserted his sovereignty by means of his Messianic Kingdom and has notified the nations of this by the preaching of the Kingdom message. It is Jehovah of armies, therefore, who is doing the rocking, just as he told Governor Zerubbabel of olden

times. The rocking, humanly uncontrollable, will reach its peak of agitation in the "great tribulation" that now appears to be very near. (Matt. 24:21, 22) But the greater Zerubbabel, Jesus Christ, has nothing to fear from the rocking. His position of heavenly governorship is unshakably fixed. His is "a kingdom that cannot be shaken." (Heb. 12:28) It will not be moved. After it removes all false religion and the world powers of today, it will bless all the surviving worshipers of Jehovah God at his spiritual temple with good rulership forever.

Consequently, though it is natural to fear a power greater than our own, true Christians have the backing of the Source of all power in the universe. He is the Creator of the tremendous heavenly bodies, some a million times as large as our sun, and also is the Commander of the mighty invisible hosts of the heavens, before whom the kingdoms of this world are as nothing. With such divine backing Christians should have no morbid, paralyzing fear or dread and should certainly not let fear of what man can do cause them to slack up or stop in their obedience to God's commands. (Prov. 29:25) With such backing they are perfectly safe and secure in ordering every step of their lives according to his commands.

Having this backing, they are of great confidence and are unstoppable by any power as they carry on the Kingdom preaching. Jehovah's backing has been demonstrated in his deliverance of them through opposition and hatred in all the nations, as Jesus foretold. (Matt. 24:9) Moreover, Jehovah has actually assigned angelic forces to direct the Kingdom declaration and the gathering of sincere persons to His spiritual temple. (Rev. 14:6) Knowing, observing and experiencing these things, how can true Christians be intimidated to slacken up or to stop their divinely backed lifesaving work?

KINGDOM PREACHING

ON Saturday, May 11, 1974, a crowd of 22,417 Christian witnesses of Jehovah assembled in the Monumental Bull Ring at Barcelona, Spain. This was truly a significant gathering, the largest yet that the Witnesses had enjoyed in Spain. In fact, they have held assemblies in this country only since 1971.

In previous years the Spanish government refused to permit the Witnesses to hold meetings for Bible study or to carry on their public preaching activities. They suffered harassment, confiscation of belongings, physical abuse, unjust imprisonment and many other indignities, especially fomented by the Catholic clergy.

Despite this opposition, however, the Christian witnesses of Jehovah in Spain kept speaking to their neighbors about the 'good news of God's kingdom,' in imitation of Jesus Christ. (Luke 8:1) They firmly believed that many inhabitants of this country earnestly desired to know accurately about God and to do his will. The results of their determined efforts to preach in predominantly Catholic Spain are heartwarming.

"GREAT EXPANSION" DESPITE OPPPOSITION

A report published in the 1949 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* revealed only 34 Witnesses active in Spain at that time. The report noted, however, that they were determined to "continue, by the Lord's grace, to sing Jehovah's praises. They are anxious to share in the great expansion program."

And they did so. At the close of 1958, there were, on an average, 894 of Jehovah's witnesses in Spain. The following year the

-WHAT IMPACT IN CATHOLIC SPAIN?

Spanish Minister of the Interior issued a series of circulars ordering the complete extirpation of the Christian work of Jehovah's witnesses in that country. This led to a rash of fines, imprisonments and other terrorism. Nevertheless, the number of Witnesses continued to grow, reaching 4,302 by the end of 1966. Further expansion went on during all the years of governmental ban on their activity.

Then came July 10, 1970. On that day the Spanish government announced that it had granted legal recognition to the "Association of Jehovah's Witnesses." This made it possible to import Bible literature into Spain, to open Kingdom Halls and to hold large assemblies. Now there are more than 31,000 of Jehovah's witnesses in Spain.

This growth resulted in formation of many new congregations. By September of 1972, these numbered 162. The following year there were 294, and by May of 1975, there were 494 congregations.

So that all might have a place to hold meetings for Bible study, hundreds of Kingdom Halls were opened. One can now locate a Kingdom Hall in forty-nine of Spain's fifty provinces. This is impressive, especially when one remembers that the very first Kingdom Hall was opened in December 1970. "Great expansion" has indeed occurred in Spain. How was this possible under intense opposition?

THE "SPIRIT" OF TRUE WORSHIP

Jesus Christ said concerning "true worshipers" of God: "The hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth." (John 4:23) Serving God "with spirit" includes doing so out of heartfelt motivation. Expression of this spirit sometimes involves considerable self-sacrifice.

For example, Spain is a country where many must work at more than one job to meet rising food prices and high rent. Yet, from 1973 to 1974 the number of Jehovah's witnesses who engage in Kingdom preaching activity full time rose from 1,690 to 2,786, though they receive no salary for this.

Jehovah's witnesses are willing to go out of their way to reach as many persons as possible with Bible truth. For instance, there are some 90 Witnesses in Albacete, a city of 100,000 in the southern part of the country. The question arose as to what could be done to reach the inhabitants of some two hundred outlying towns and villages in Albacete Province. Few local Witnesses own automobiles; and since meetings and preaching activities were both scheduled for Sunday, little time was available for visiting these distant areas.

In view of this, the congregation decided to buy two inexpensive used cars. Meetings were rescheduled to Saturday, leaving all of Sunday for preaching in these towns and villages. What was the effect of this?

During seven months, 4,644 books explaining Bible truths were placed with residents of these areas. Many accepted the offer of a free home Bible study each week. In fact, so much interest was shown that it was necessary to arrange for five separate groups to hold meetings there.

The spirit of true worship has motivated persons from a number of other countries to move to Spain with their families. Some have come from the United States, Canada,

Germany, the British Isles, and one from even Japan. Among them are individuals who did not learn the Spanish language until after their arrival in Spain, yet they now engage in preaching work full time.

STILL SOME OPPOSITION

Though Jehovah's witnesses are now legally recognized in Spain, opposition still occurs at times, especially in small towns and villages. For example, an elderly couple were distributing Bible tracts in the town of La Calahorra, Granada. A priest came out onto the street and challenged them, shouting so that onlooking parishioners could hear. Then a gang of children showed up, shouting: "Out with the demons! Get out of town!"

The couple, therefore, left the area for the time being, but returned the following day to finish their tract distribution without further incident. They noted: "We recognized that the children acted out of ignorance and were not to blame."

Recently in Las Cuevas de Fátima, Granada, a priest struck one of Jehovah's witnesses and stirred up a mob against him. Both Catholic and Protestant clergymen continually publish books, booklets and articles in an effort to counteract the work done by Jehovah's witnesses.

A CHANGED ATTITUDE—WHY?

On the whole, though, a changed attitude toward the work of Jehovah's witnesses is evident among the Spanish people. Many now readily listen when a Witness calls at their door to discuss the Bible, especially in larger cities, where people are less worried about what their neighbors think.

Even persons who do not agree with Jehovah's witnesses see the wisdom of allowing them freedom to share their beliefs with others. After a flare-up of opposition in the town of Munera, a news-

paper writer commented in *La Voz de Albacete*:

"We have to realize that there is religious liberty in Spain and that they [Jehovah's witnesses], because of that liberty, can preach . . . And what is more, what they are doing is what we are not doing: Trying to teach people the things of God. We have abandoned the field . . . We must reconsider our conduct. Jesus Christ was never in favor of violence, and on the other hand, was always willing to teach, even when the Pharisees came asking trick questions."

Also, there has been an easing up of the grip of Roman Catholicism in Spain. The clergy themselves have caused many individuals to turn away from the Catholic Church. People notice, for example, that priests become involved in politics. Some have turned to the liberal "left" in a display of favor toward the working classes. However, this belated tactic has not fooled the majority of people. A lady remarked to one of Jehovah's witnesses preaching near Nijar, Almeria: "The priests make us lose faith by their conduct. They show up with their sleeves rolled up, their shirts all open—and smoking. They themselves stop us from believing in them."

There is also lack of agreement among many priests with regard to Christian doctrine. Two full-time preachers of Jehovah's witnesses from San Javier, Murcia, explain: "We have spoken to the majority of priests in the area. Each one has ex-

pressed ideas that differ from those of other priests. The priest of San Pedro del Pinatar even agreed that it is wrong to use images in worship."

THEY HUNGER FOR BIBLE TRUTH

Thousands of Spanish people hunger for Bible truth. During just two years ending in late 1974, Jehovah's witnesses placed with these God-fearing people 1,022,576 books and Bibles, as well as 500,000 booklets and 4,000,000 copies of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. From the fall of 1972 to the fall of 1973, there were 3,486 persons baptized by Jehovah's witnesses in Spain. The following year 7,070 were baptized. These were not indiscriminate baptisms of curious people or of infants. Baptism by Jehovah's witnesses symbolizes dedication to Jehovah God and comes only after months of Bible study.

Among persons in Spain who have shown a desire to learn more about the Bible are some Catholic priests. One priest wrote requesting an interview with Jehovah's witnesses, who then started a regular Bible study with him. Recently priests have attended meetings at Kingdom Halls in Málaga and Barcelona. And in the northern mining region of Asturias, one priest told his flock to treat the Witnesses with kindness and to listen to them.

To date, however, there is only one of Jehovah's witnesses for every 1,124 people in Spain. A report from the Watch Tower Society's office there explains: "There are whole groups of towns, some comprising 50,000 to 70,000 inhabitants, that Jehovah's witnesses have not yet reached."

Do you speak Spanish? Do you have the freedom and financial means to move to Spain? If so, feel free to write for information to the office of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in Barcelona. It may be that you can have a direct share in Kingdom preaching in Catholic Spain.

IN COMING ISSUES

■ How the Bible Can Help Your Marriage.

■ Do Not Let Your Faith Be Shipwrecked by Discouragement or Personalities.

WHY ARE SOME SINS NOT FORGIVABLE?

WHEN the German poet Heinrich Heine was lying on his deathbed and looking back over the profligate life he had led, he assured himself with the thought: "God will forgive me. That's his business." In saying that, Heine was but echoing what the English poet Pope said a century earlier: "To err is human; to forgive, divine."

It is true that Jehovah God delights in forgiving. Thus the prophet Micah wrote: "Who is a God like you, one pardoning error and passing over transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? He will certainly not hold onto his anger forever, for he is delighting in loving-kindness." Moses and David similarly testified to God's willingness to forgive.—Mic. 7:18; Ex. 34:6, 7; Ps. 103:2, 3.

But we should not conclude from such scriptures that God so delights in mercy that he is ready to forgive all sins, regardless of their nature. Why not? Because Jehovah is a God not only of love but also of wisdom and justice. For him to forgive *all* sins would be neither wise nor just, and God's laws are precisely that, so that there may be peace and order in his universe.

For God to forgive all sins would be for him to encourage sinning. In fact, it would make his laws futile, meaningless, useless. How so? For example, if all who violated traffic laws were graciously forgiven, why bother making any such laws?

Jehovah God made man a free moral agent; that is, he made him with the ability to distinguish between doing what is right by obeying God's law and doing what is

wrong by disobeying it, and doing either thing with the freedom to choose. However, with the freedom of choice also went accountability for one's actions. That is why, when Jehovah God spoke to Moses about His great loving-kindness and His willingness to forgive, He went on to say, "but by no means will he give exemption from punishment." Jehovah, however, was not here referring to the punishment of eternal destruction.—Ex. 34:7.

Yet, the apostle John states that there are sins that "incur death," that is, that do merit eternal destruction, and that it would be futile for others to pray for the forgiveness of such sins. (1 John 5:16, 17) What governs whether a certain sin is forgivable or not? Its nature and circumstances. Among the sins that Jehovah undoubtedly did not forgive were those of Adam and Eve. As a test of their appreciation God gave them a simple command; they were not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree; and he warned them of the consequences if they did eat of it. They were created perfect in mind and in body. They willfully and deliberately disobeyed. They could neither plead ignorance, as later the apostle Paul was able to do, nor claim inherited imperfection and the tendency to sin, as King David was able to do. So what basis was there for forgiving Adam and Eve's sins? Absolutely none!

No doubt one of the most notorious examples of an unforgivable sin was that committed by Judas Iscariot. Judas had accompanied Jesus for two or more years, had heard Jesus' teaching, saw him perform miracles, and knew that Jesus was

the Son of God. He also must have noted that the entire band of evangelizers were sincere, honest, unselfish. Yet in the face of all of this Judas was a hypocrite, a willful and deliberate thief. And he betrayed Jesus not merely out of greed but out of spite, because Jesus approved of His being anointed with costly ointment. He was chagrined because this use of the money for ointment deprived him of another opportunity to steal, as he was the treasurer for the group of Jesus' disciples. Having so hardened his heart, he had gone too far to express any regret to God, too far to make any request for divine forgiveness. For these reasons Jesus referred to him as the "son of destruction."—Matt. 26:6-16; John 12:1-8; 17:12.

Among other sins that were not forgivable were those of the scribes and Pharisees in persecuting Jesus and having him put to death. They could see from what Jesus taught and the miracles he performed that he was sent from God. (John 3:2; 14:11) But because he exposed their hypocrisy and threatened their selfish hold on the common people, they maliciously attributed his works to Satan the Devil. Speaking of their sin, Jesus said: "Whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, no, not in this system of things nor in that to come."—Matt. 12:31, 32.

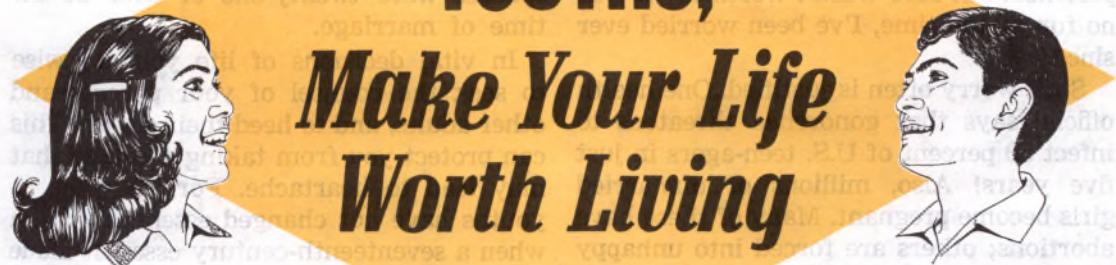
Yes, when these men saw God's holy spirit at work in Jesus—casting out demons, curing the sick and raising the dead—and they sneered that he was doing it by the power of the Devil himself, they were indeed blaspheming God's holy spirit. Fittingly Jesus castigated them: "Serpents, offspring of vipers, how are you to flee from the judgment of Gehenna?"—Matt. 23:33.

That true Christians must be on guard against committing unforgivable sins is

clear from the apostle Paul's words: "For it is impossible as regards those who have once for all been enlightened, . . . and who have become partakers of holy spirit, . . . but who have fallen away, to revive them again to repentance, because they impale the Son of God afresh for themselves and expose him to public shame." And again: "For if we *practice sin willfully* after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, but . . . there is a fiery jealousy that is going to consume those in opposition."—Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26, 27.

The fact that a Christian can commit sins that God does not forgive should serve as a wholesome warning to all Christians to guard their hearts so as never to become guilty of such. But note that, except in the case of perfect Adam and Eve, such sins invariably involve not just one sin but the *practice of sin*. Thus some Christians who compromised when put under pressure in Nazi Germany and in Liberia, afterward repented and gave evidence of having been forgiven by Jehovah God. Both King David and the apostle Peter were forgiven although committing serious sins, but they did not make a practice of such.

As long as we are deeply cut at having sinned and are sincerely repentant and strive to do better in holding to God's standard, we can take comfort from the assuring words: "If we are walking in the light as he himself is in the light, . . . the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." From *all sin*? Yes, from *all sins* that we might commit while walking in the light, for while doing so we could not be guilty of practicing willful, unforgivable sin. (1 John 1:7) And we can also take comfort in the fact that Jehovah is understanding and delights in showing mercy through Christ.—Ps. 103:8-14; Mic. 7:18, 19.



YOUTHS, *Make Your Life Worth Living*

YOUTHS, have you given thought to making your life worth living? What will you do with your life? What goals and plans do you have? Now is the time to think about this.

As a teen-ager, however, you may feel that opportunities to make decisions and to do what you want seem limited. It may even seem that restrictions are placed upon your 'having a good time.' Your parents may try to cultivate in you other interests besides engaging in various forms of recreation. Or, you may be eager to get married, but they may tell you that you are too young and immature for this.

Do you feel as though efforts are being made to curtail your opportunities and to hinder your enjoyment of life? There are often differences of opinion as to how youths can make life worth living.

YOUTH—A TIME FOR WHAT?

Youth obviously is a transition period in which one develops from a child into an adult. Those who have studied the matter say that we do not reach complete physical maturity until sometime between the ages of twenty and twenty-three. Emotional maturity may take even longer to achieve. So youth, basically, is a preparatory period, when the groundwork or foundation is being laid for the type of adult you will become. Your parents may

recognize how various forms of physical recreation can help in your development and therefore allow time for you to enjoy these things. (1 Tim. 4:8) However, it is not *play* that will particularly prepare you for adult life, with its usual responsibilities of providing for a family. Rather, it is proper guidance and instruction in maintaining a home, and in feeding and caring for a family that does this.

So can you see why your parents may try to control your recreational activities? They want you to spend time in really worthwhile activities that will prepare you to handle adult privileges and responsibilities. Do you know what often happens when a person overconfidently tries to do something for which he is not prepared? He gets hurt. You, too, may seize an opportunity that you are not ready for and may get seriously hurt. How so?

READY FOR SEX AND MARRIAGE?

Youths commonly believe that, since they are physically capable of having sexual intercourse, and since it reportedly is 'a lot of fun,' this is something for them to do. But is it really? Is sex prior to marriage proper? Does it help to make life worth living?

The Journal of the American Medical Association reported this conclusion of a youth who had premarital sex relations

with many misled girls: "I have learned that this did not bring me happiness." Also, a tearful young co-ed said of such an experience: "It sure wasn't worth it—it was no fun at the time, I've been worried ever since."

Such worry often is justified. One health official says that gonorrhea threatens to infect 50 percent of U.S. teen-agers in just five years! Also, millions of unmarried girls become pregnant. Many of these have abortions; others are forced into unhappy marriages, and still others face a long, unhappy struggle to rear an illegitimate child. How wise the Bible's command is: "Flee from fornication"!—1 Cor. 6:18.

Is it not clear that premarital sex relations are *not* a legitimate activity for youths? Such relations by unmarried persons amount to stealing that which does not belong to them, and will, if continued, bring God's adverse judgment upon them. Do you want that?—Heb. 13:4.

Youths who love God may say, "No, I don't want God's displeasure." So they may want to marry, viewing this as a legitimate opportunity open to them. But are you, as a teen-ager, really ready for marriage? Do you have a realistic view of what it costs to provide for a family? Have you paid your own bills, done your own shopping, handled insurance and taken care of other family matters? Are you ready to give up the freedom of singleness for the responsibilities of marriage? As a girl, do you know how to wash, iron, cook, clean the house, and to do the many other things that are so necessary to maintain a pleasant home? Are you emotionally ready to take on the obligations of a wife and a mother?

Furthermore, are you sure that the mate you have chosen in your youth will be the one that you will want when you are a fully developed person? This is something to consider seriously, especially in view of the report of one investigator that

the divorce rate is six times as high in marriages where both spouses were under twenty-one as in marriages in which both spouses were twenty-one or over at the time of marriage.

In vital decisions of life you are wise to seek the counsel of your parents and other adults, and to heed their advice. This can protect you from taking a course that may lead to heartache. For, the fact is, youths have not changed essentially from when a seventeenth-century essayist made the sad observation: "The greatest part of mankind employ their first years to make their last miserable." Does that sound like making life worth living?

However, by availing yourself of opportunities generally open to youths, you can avoid such miseries and learn to handle adult responsibilities. What are some of these opportunities?

USE OF TIME AND STRENGTH

Youths generally have two valuable assets—time and strength. You can waste them. Or you can use them wisely with a view to making life worth living.

For example, you have time to study, probably several hours a day being provided for this purpose in school. What a treasure this is! Ask adults. Most will tell you that they wish they had more fully appreciated this opportunity when they had it. While *they* cannot go back and live their life over, *you* can learn from their experience and heed their encouragement to use your time wisely.

Perhaps you can include various types of vocational courses in your school program, and thus be better equipped to care for the responsibilities that will come with maintaining a home and a family. Courses in agriculture, carpentry, mechanics, cooking, sewing, and so forth, have proved a real asset to many. Do not just put in time, but get all the benefit you can from the time you spend taking these courses.

However, you may feel that some required courses are not worth your effort. If so, why not talk the matter over with persons of more experience? They may give you insight, broadening your view as to the genuine value of such subjects as language, mathematics, history and various sciences. Remember, what you get out of your schooling will depend upon the time and strength you put into it.

NEED OF A GOAL

It is helpful if you have a set goal or purpose in life. Have you done so? What do you want out of life? Money? Material things? While they can provide a measure of protection, they rarely, if ever, in themselves bring real happiness. (Eccl. 7:12) Rather, it has proved true time and again, as the Bible says: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin."—1 Tim. 6:9.

You need more of a goal in life than simply seeking to provide materially for yourself and the family you may hope to have. What else is necessary in order to make life meaningful and worth living?

YOUTH'S GREATEST OPPORTUNITY

You need to seize the greatest opportunity open to you, which is to develop a close relationship with your Creator, Jehovah God. The best counsel you could ever follow is that in the Bible addressed to youths: "Remember, now, your grand Creator in the days of your young manhood." (Eccl. 12:1) Experience has proved that heeding this advice is what will bring you real happiness and give meaning to your life. But how can you remember your Creator?

God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to show us how. He explained that the identifying feature of a Christian's life

would be the love the Christian demonstrated. (John 13:35) But how is love shown? Is it not by doing things for others? Do you show love? Think about it.

What do you do for others? What can you do? You can take an interest in them. You can offer an encouraging word, a compliment. You can make a sincere inquiry regarding how they are, or volunteer to run errands for neighbors. There are really many things you can do. But it requires thought, a taking of genuine interest in others. However, if we grasp opportunities to show love we will begin to see the truth of Jesus' words: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

Such a course of life will result in a molding of your personality. You will be developing a life pattern that is in keeping with God's admonition to keep an eye, "not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." (Phil. 2:4) And it is this Christian personality that will cause you to become precious to Jehovah God, and will also make you a desirable companion to all those who love God. This is what, particularly, will make your life successful, a real pleasure.

So, youths, exert yourselves to make your life worth living. Use your time and strength in study and activity that will prepare you for handling adult responsibilities. Set a goal in life. Best of all, make it your goal to gain a close, warm relationship with your Creator and with others who are serving Him. Work on developing your personality, conforming it to that of God's Son Jesus Christ.

If you grasp these opportunities open to you, you will not be numbered among the many whose life has either been scarred or ruined by the foolish things they did in their youth. Rather, yours will be a life really worth living—a rich, rewarding life blessed by Jehovah.—Prov. 10:22.

Insight on the News

- 'His food was insect locusts and wild honey,' says the Bible of John the Baptist. (Matt. 3:4) Does eating insect locusts as a regular diet sound farfetched to you? In reality,

Insects—

Rare or

Well Done?

as one means to cope with a world food crisis. Among these is University of Wisconsin Professor Gene De Foliart. The San Francisco "Examiner" quotes him as saying that some insects, such as termites, "have a higher protein content than beef or fish." He acknowledges, however, that most Americans would take a lot of persuading before they would eat insects directly. The desert locust, doubtless similar to those John the Baptist ate, consists of 75-percent protein, according to an analysis made at Jerusalem. Those who have tried locusts compare their taste to that of shrimp or crab.

- Bible history points to Babel, on the Plains of Shinar in Mesopotamia, as the place where human language became divided by divine action. (Gen. 11:1-9) A New York "Times" review of the recent book

Confusion of Tongues

"After Babel," by University of Geneva Professor George Steiner, reveals something of the enormity of language difference today. It points out that there are more than 5,000 distinct tongues used by mankind earth wide. Notable is the fact that the languages of some of the "primitive" peoples of earth are actually very complex, in some aspects more complex than those of people considered better educated. Thus the book shows that "starving bands of Amazonian Indians" in describing their situation may use more verb tenses than the famous Greek scholar Plato had at his disposal.

The how and why of all these language differences remain a puzzle to the language scholars. The review of "After Babel" comments that, after pages and pages of questions on the underlying causes, the statement "no one knows" is a typical interjection."

In reality, the Bible's explanation remains the only credible historical account of how the confusion started.

- "The head of every man is Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man." (1 Cor. 11:3) Since so many men today do not act in harmony with the headship of Christ Jesus, it is not hard to see why some women are inclined to reject male headship. But what is the result when they do?

Among other things noted since the growth of the women's liberation movement is an increase in crime among women. An Associated Press report quotes Dr. Gerhard Mueller, head of the U.N. crime prevention unit, as saying that, in the so-called "advanced countries," "female criminality in all categories is rising between three and five times as fast as male criminality." In the United States robberies by females rose 300 percent in the past five years, as compared to a rise of only 20 percent in robberies by males. The increase in female homicides was two to three times greater than that among males.

Dr. Mueller pointed to the liberation movement as an evident factor in this growing involvement of women in crime. "As they are immersed into more progressive life styles," he said, "they adopt the same antisocial responses as males." Female criminality still ranks far lower than male criminality, but the women are beginning to catch up.

A series of articles by Los Angeles "Herald-Examiner" staff writer Linda Bernier points in the same direction. She quotes one jail inmate, a woman who had been arrested ten times, as saying: "I think the women's movement has had an effect on women totally—not only out there in society, but in here, too. . . . since women are more aggressive and assertive in society, that's what they are in prison." Rising crime among women is only part of a larger picture that includes spiraling juvenile delinquency and soaring divorce rates. It all stems from rejection—by both men and women—of Bible standards that are the very foundation of true happiness.

WHO QUALIFIES to be *An Elder?*

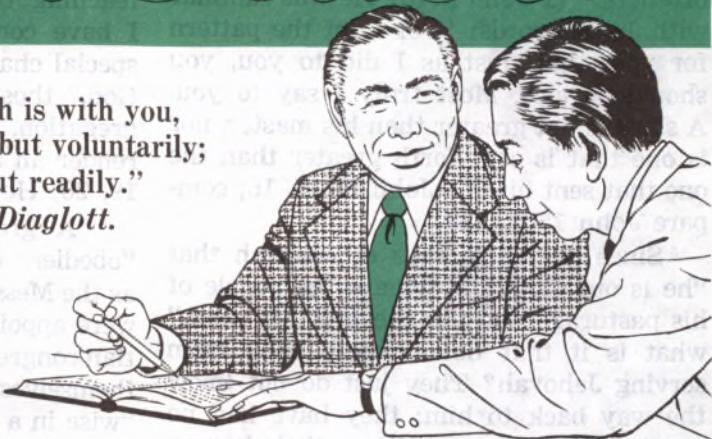
"Tend the flock of God which is with you,
overseeing not by constraint, but voluntarily;

neither for base gain, but readily."

—1 Pet. 5:2, *Emphatic Diaglott.*

DOES GOD consider his flock important, merit-ing special consideration by those appointed by him as undershepherds? How important does God consider his "sheep" to be? His Son stated: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be de-stroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) His interest was sufficient for him to allow his Son to leave heaven for a period of thirty-four and a quarter years to come to earth as a man and to open the way for his "sheep" who strayed to come back into the fold.

We are part of that "world" that God loved so much and that requires reconcilia-tion with God. His plea to the Israel-ites who returned from foreign bondage applies with equal force to us today: "Re-turn to me . . . and I shall return to you." (Zech. 1:3) The apostle Peter wrote to the early Christian congregation: "You were like sheep, going astray; but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of



your souls." (1 Pet. 2:25) For those re-turning to him, God provides protection: "Like a shepherd he will shepherd his own drove. With his arm he will collect together the lambs; and in his bosom he will carry them. Those giving suck he will conduct with care." (Isa. 40:11) He has also ap-pointed as his aide the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who surrendered "his soul in behalf of the sheep."—John 10:7-15.

Jehovah has also arranged for under-shepherds interested in caring for the "sheep." The apostle Paul is one of such, and he said: "We became gentle in the midst of you, as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, having a tender affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not only the good news of God, but also our own souls, be-cause you became beloved to us." The ex-tent to which he was willing to impart his soul is shown by what he wrote to the Corinthian congregation: "For my part I

1. How important does God consider his flock?
2. Can we have confidence in Jehovah and Jesus as shepherds? Explain.

3. How did Paul prove to be a responsible shepherd?

will most gladly spend and be completely spent for your souls.”—1 Thess. 2:7, 8; 2 Cor. 12:15; 11:28.

⁴ We can pattern our lives after those shepherds, namely, the Great Shepherd, the Fine Shepherd, and the apostle Paul. The apostle John says that “we are under obligation to surrender our souls for our brothers.” (1 John 3:16) He was familiar with Jesus’ words: “For I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also. Most truly I say to you, A slave is not greater than his master, nor is one that is sent forth greater than the one that sent him.”—John 13:15, 16; compare John 15:12, 13.

⁵ Since the Bible says of Jehovah that “he is our God, and we are the people of his pasturage and the sheep of his hand,” what is it that holds people back from serving Jehovah? They just do not know the way back to him; they have had no one to lead them, or, rather, their human leaders, supposedly shepherds, have led them astray. Jesus identified as false shepherds those of his day that would “come to you in sheep’s covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves.” On the other hand, the people “were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd.” They needed proper shepherding, and Jesus accepted the job.—Ps. 95:6, 7; Matt. 7:15; 9:36.

SPECIAL CHARGE TO SHEPHERDS

⁶ When Jesus returned to his heavenly home, he arranged for undershepherds to care for his “sheep.” Today, a special obligation to feed Jesus’ “sheep” rests upon those whom the Fine Shepherd appoints. Peter, whom Jesus specially commissioned to do this (see John 21:15-17), relays the same command to Christian overseers today, saying: “Therefore, to the older men

4. Because of our view of those shepherds, what should be the aim and obligation of Christians today?

5. Why have some not yet found the way back to Jehovah?

6, 7. (a) Who constitute the flock that must be shepherded? (b) What accounting is required of the shepherds?

[spiritual overseers in the congregation] among you [the congregation] I give this exhortation, . . . Shepherd the flock of God in your care, . . . willingly . . . eagerly.”—1 Pet. 5:1, 2.

⁷ While all dedicated Christians are required to “make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them . . . [and] teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you,” the shepherds’ special charge is to care for “the flock of God,” those already members of the congregation. Concerning these, they must render an account to Jehovah.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Heb. 13:17; 4:13.

⁸ “A great crowd of priests” became “obedient to the faith” by accepting Jesus as the Messiah. But no scribes or Pharisees were appointed as shepherds in the Christian congregation because they had “seated themselves in the seat of Moses.” Those “wise in a fleshly way” who gloried in being greeted in public places and being called “Rabbi” were not called. That type of “leader” is not found in the Christian congregation of Jehovah’s witnesses. Jehovah’s witnesses recognize but one leader, Christ. They shun any kind of title that would call for adulation. Jesus said: “All you are brothers.”—Acts 6:7; Matt. chap. 23; 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

⁹ To care for the interests of the Christian congregation of Jehovah’s witnesses properly, “God has set the respective ones in the congregation,” including teachers, overseers, shepherds. In the early congregation all who qualified Scripturally so served. No specified number of persons was designated; there were several in Ephesus, as is evident by Paul’s sending word to the “older men” to meet him at Miletus in order to receive instructions as to their duties. Likewise, no specified num-

8. Who are chosen, and who not, as shepherds of the flock of God?

9. How many elders should there be in a congregation, and from among whom are they selected?

ber is designated in the modern Christian congregation. They do not need, as in Christendom's churches, to be graduates of some man-made seminary. But they should be diligently engaged in the preaching work, regular and active students of God's Word, and exercising what is stated in the two great commandments, namely, love of God and of neighbor.—1 Cor. 12:28; Matt. 22:36-39.

¹⁰ In 1 Timothy the third chapter, Paul sets out Scriptural qualifications for one reaching out for the office of overseer. He must be *irreprehensible*. Is this possible for an imperfect human creature? Would this not call for perfection? So is Paul being unreasonable, too exacting? We may not so conclude, for Paul was undoubtedly aware of Jesus' statement at Matthew 5:48: "You must accordingly be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Paul also knew that King David was unable to be entirely irreprehensible, but Paul recognized, as part of the inspired Scriptures, David's plea to Jehovah: "Judge me, O Jehovah, for I myself have walked in my own integrity."—Ps. 26:1; compare 2 Kings 20:3.

¹¹ It is clear that it is impossible for man to be like God in an absolute sense, to an infinite degree, without limitation. If that were not true, the office of an overseer in the Christian congregation would remain vacant. The fact that the Scriptural requirements are set high means, therefore, that each one aspiring for or occupying such office would earnestly strive to meet them. In the matter of being irreprehensible, for example, an elder would certainly not be in position to care for those in his charge were he sadly lacking in this respect. An overseer must be able to "keep on exhorting the younger men to be sound in mind, in all things showing [himself] an example of fine works; show-

ing uncorruptness in [his] teaching."

—Titus 2:6-8.

¹² The overseer should be "a husband of one wife." This does not mean that a widower or a bachelor is disqualified. It means now, as it did in Paul's day, that one practicing polygamy or living with a woman without benefit of marriage may not serve as overseer in the Christian congregation. Indeed, the right hand of fellowship may not be extended to him. Coupled with the further requirement in verse 4 (1 Timothy 3), it would indicate that to be an overseer one would have to be no longer a teen-ager, but old enough to have a family.

¹³ Today's youths and even older ones are often infected with the outlandish habits of the present system of things. Rubbing shoulders at school or in business with those so inclined tends to tempt Christians to conform. Christians in the first century must have had the same thing to contend with, for Paul's further counsel (1 Tim. 3:2) to be "moderate in habits" was to be considered in making appointments of older men. Conforming to the habits of the old world would preclude one's having God's approval and being considered eligible for an assignment that calls for exhorting younger men. The apostle Peter says that there may have been a time when we ignorantly went along with such customs but that now we must live for God's will. It may puzzle our former associates and cause them to be speaking abusively of us, but Jesus said that this should not disturb us.—John 15:19; 1 Tim. 4:11, 12; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4; Rom. 12:2.

SOUND THINKING REQUIRED

¹⁴ An older man in the congregation occupies no elevated position. One's being an elder should not cause one to "think more

12. Need one be married to qualify as an overseer? Explain.

13. Why must the extreme habits of the day be shunned by elders?

14. How should an older man view his position?

10, 11. How is it possible for one to be "irreprehensible," and why is such a high standard set?

of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind." *The New English Bible* renders this statement as not to be "conceited" but have a "sober estimate" of oneself. This would prevent one from expecting to be treated as are the "pastors" of Christendom, who love to have, and who expect, people to fawn over them.—Rom. 12:3.

¹⁵ Overseers must be "orderly, hospitable." (1 Tim. 3:2) The false shepherds were not orderly in any sense of the word. Jehovah condemned them, saying: "Woe to the shepherds [in Israel] who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasturage!" (Jer. 23:1, 2) Their claim to being shepherds did not save them from Jehovah's judgment. Jesus also condemned the false shepherds of his day. So Christian shepherds must be orderly, working for the peace of the congregation. At times they may be called on to "admonish the disorderly," those "not working at all but meddling with what does not concern them." (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:11) In order for their admonition to be acceptable they must themselves set the pattern by strictly adhering to Bible laws and principles, never propagating ideas not in harmony with the truth.—1 Cor. 4:6; 14:33; Titus 2:6-8.

¹⁶ When King Solomon prayed for prosperity at the time of the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, he referred to the 'foreigners,' non-Israelites coming to worship there. Undoubtedly he made provision for them. Today Jehovah is blessing us with a large increase of 'foreigners,' that is to say, those not heretofore worshipers of Jehovah. Adequate provision must be made to welcome them. This places a burden on the overseers, not in merely greeting them at the Kingdom Hall, but in assisting them to progress in the Christian

way. This is true hospitality, a requirement for one to be an overseer.—1 Ki. 8:41-43; Mic. 4:1, 2; Matt. 9:37; Heb. 13:1, 2; 3 John 5.

¹⁷ "It is written in the Prophets," Jesus said, "And they will all be taught by Jehovah." (John 6:45; Isa. 54:13) This becomes increasingly important as we near the close of the old system of things and the ushering in of the new under the direction of the anointed Priest and King, Jesus Christ. Jehovah God is the Foremost Teacher, but Jesus said that his disciples properly addressed him also as Teacher. Additionally, the glorified Jesus Christ "gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers, [why?] with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work."—Eph. 4:11, 12.

¹⁸ Elders must be teachers of God's Word, therefore. They are not to 'tickle the ears' of the congregation, but to reach the minds and hearts of their sheeplike congregation. This does not place them on a pedestal like a "professor" or "doctor of divinity." The Christian elder's teaching is, not necessarily from the platform, but more properly on a personal basis. It is *Bible* teaching.

¹⁹ An elder cannot be "a drunken brawler." Overuse of alcohol deadens the senses so that one's judgment is impaired, and one loses control of one's mind. An elder may not be a "smiter," either physically or with his tongue. He must not be belligerent or a lover of money or unreasonable. Such would disqualify him to be a person taking the lead in the congregation of Christians. While it may not foreclose his serving in a church of Babylon the Great, these "works of the flesh" would bar him from serving in a congregation of Jehovah's witnesses.—1 Tim. 3:3; 6:10.

15. What does being "orderly" entail?
16. Is being hospitable confined to merely welcoming new ones at the Kingdom Hall?

17, 18. (a) Is teaching confined to the platform?
(b) What is the aim of the overseer as a teacher?
19. What "works of the flesh" would bar one's appointment as an overseer?

²⁰ Paul raises a question, after stating that an elder must be a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection, namely, "If indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?" (1 Tim. 3:5) Paul recognized that in God's household more lives are at stake than in the man's household. So there is need that he be well qualified in his ability to handle matters in his own household in the general interest of all. But does this mean that his household will necessarily be an ideal model in every respect? Possibly not. He may be doing all he reasonably can, and yet someone in his household may not respond as he would like him to. His wife may be very rebellious, even one opposed to Jehovah and his Word. (Matt. 10:36) But the important questions are: To what extent is the man of the house responsible for her rebellion, and is the disunity in the household due to any delinquency on his part? The congregation's view of the situation must also be considered.

²¹ Weighty decisions need to be made by overseers. Such decisions may involve lives or the prosecution of the all-important work of preaching the good news. Bans may be imposed. So good, mature judgment will be needed. Consequently an overseer should not be "a newly converted man." (1 Tim. 3:6) He may possess all the enthusiasm and zeal of those long in the faith but may lack "perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." (Heb. 5:13, 14) Newly associated ones need to be "seasoned." In the meantime, observe "those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith."—Heb. 13:7.

20. (a) Why should presiding over one's own household enter into the consideration of one for appointment as an elder? (b) But what may be taken into account? 21. Why is it wise not to designate "a newly converted man" as an overseer?

CARE FOR "OTHER SHEEP"

²² Being "no part of the world," Jehovah's witnesses do not copy prevalent fads that would identify them with people viewed as rebels against society. So young brothers in the congregation should have in mind the exhortation of Peter that shepherds of the flock of God must set the proper example. Paul was such a good example. He said: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." People notice that Jehovah's witnesses are different; Christian deportment, especially on the part of the overseers, should provide basis for the needed "fine testimony from people on the outside" of the congregation.—1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Tim. 3:7; John 17:16; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

²³ In the first chapter of the book of Titus, Paul gave counsel as to what to look for in elders. One must be "free from accusation," of unimpeachable qualities. No one may be able to point the finger at him as being of questionable personal traits. He must not be "self-willed" or overbearing; not "prone to wrath," short-tempered; "not greedy of dishonest gain," but, rather, outstandingly honest in his dealings inside and outside the congregation.—Titus 1:6, 7; see also 1 Peter 5:2, 3.

²⁴ Being "loyal" is especially important for an overseer, in imitation of Jesus Christ. His loyalty to right principles may require him to administer reproof to "those who contradict." (Titus 1:9) This may not be a pleasant task, but his withholding reproof where it is required may indicate that he is taking sides with the one sinning, thus becoming a partner with him. (Prov. 29:24) The reproof administered is a kindness to one who may take a false step unawares. (Gal. 6:1) Some improper actions may easily be forgotten, overlooked

22. How should fads be viewed, and, in this, whose example should we follow?

23. What other things should be looked for in overseers?

24. How is an overseer's loyalty demonstrated?

or ignored; not so those that may grieve the holy spirit by causing divisions and sects in the congregation. So, in some instances, loyalty demands giving reproof.
—Luke 17:3, 4; Eph. 4:30.

²⁵ As Paul gave his farewell to the elders of Ephesus, he pleaded with them to pay attention to themselves and “to all the flock . . . [and] shepherd the congregation of God . . . [because now] oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness.” (Acts 20:28, 29) These “wolves” would be, in effect, flaying the flock, tearing away their garments of Christian identification.

25, 26. (a) Why is it especially necessary for shepherds to pay attention to themselves and the congregation of God? (b) Can new ones expect good shepherding in God’s congregation today?

Elders Presiding

“Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God.”—Acts 20:28.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES are grateful to Him that the Scriptural arrangement of elders in the congregation has been instituted by the “faithful and discreet slave” class at this time when there has been such a large number of persons taking their stand for God’s kingdom. During the past five years over three quarters of a million persons have been baptized as Christian witnesses of Jehovah, 90,519 of these during the “Divine Purpose” assemblies in 1974. The congregational elder arrangement makes for better care of these new ones in dire need of shepherding than did the former temporary “congregation ser-

1. What circumstances make the elder arrangement timely?

The admonition, at this crucial time, is more timely. No overseer wants to be responsible, through dereliction, for the loss of any of Jehovah’s “sheep.”

²⁶ The *Yearbook* shows to what extent many of Jesus’ “other sheep” have associated themselves with Jehovah’s Christian witnesses. There remain others whom Jesus “must bring” because they “will listen” to his voice. In this “final part of the days” of the old system of things those streaming into the one flock of the one shepherd are receiving instruction in the ways of Jehovah. They can have assurance of receiving loving, tender care from those to whom Jehovah has seen fit to entrust shepherding work.—John 10:16; Luke 12:32; Mic. 4:1-4; Isa. 32:1, 2.

IN A FINE WAY

vant” arrangement, because tens of thousands of elders are now busily engaged in giving aid to the flock.

² The congregations are benefiting from this Scriptural arrangement in several ways. With a body of elders, more of the congregation are encouraged to make full use of their teaching abilities, personal initiative is encouraged and there is no longer reliance on just one individual to set the pace. It has an enriching effect as a result of the pooling of knowledge and experience of the elders. All can learn from the others and gain a better understanding

2. (a) How do the congregations benefit from this arrangement? (b) What is the advantage of group decisions?

of their responsibilities to Jehovah and to the congregation. The rotation of the elders in assigned duties also allows for good distribution of the load of responsibility. A body of elders produces a balancing effect as to judgment of matters. While group decisions may seem to take longer, they are more solidly based and, in the end, save time. Truly, "in the multitude of counselors there is salvation." Other men of the congregation are also encouraged to cultivate the needed qualities, to 'reach out' for the office of overseer and to share in the work.—Prov. 24:6; 1 Tim. 3:1.

³ At 1 Timothy 5:17 the apostle Paul refers to the older men as presiding in the congregation in a fine way. In what way does the elder "preside"? According to the Greek word used, "to preside" literally means "to stand before," to lead, conduct, direct, to care for others as when one stands before someone or something to protect or shield. While one of the body of elders is designated the "presiding overseer," all the elders should preside in this Scriptural sense, as shown by 1 Thessalonians 5:12: "Have regard for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you."—1 Tim. 3:5.

⁴ While the elders preside by literally 'standing before' the congregation, giving Bible talks and conducting meetings, in a broader sense they preside when they give the right lead and guidance by their thoughtful care of the interests of the congregation as a whole and the spiritual interests of each member of the congregation. This harmonizes with their being both overseers and shepherds, as Paul shows at Hebrews 13:7, 17: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct

turns out imitate their faith. Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you."

⁵ While presiding, as shepherds, they must render their account to God's Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. So they must preside in "real earnest." (1 Pet. 5:4; Rom. 12:8) They respect Christ's headship by reflecting his personality in dealing with others, by imitating his humility. (Matt. 20:24-28; John 13:13-16) Their being elders gives no justification for exalting themselves. Rather, "in brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Rom. 12:3, 10) This protects one from falling into the snare of seeking personal prominence, being possessive or wanting the 'chief places,' as did the Pharisees. (Matt. 23:6) Prominence is due only to Jehovah and to the appointed Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ, and so elders should seek prominence for *Them*. Seeking to "be somebody" is being stupid. Having humility enables elders to manifest empathy, to bear burdens of others willingly and to listen patiently to problems, so as to be able to render assistance. Having humility will also aid them to show flexibility when no Scriptural issue is at stake. The brothers in the congregation will then find it easy to "have regard" for the elders and to give them "more than extraordinary consideration" in love for their fine work.
—1 Thess. 5:12, 13.

WORKING TOGETHER

⁶ In taking the right lead and caring for the congregation's welfare, it is vital

5. (a) What quality does presiding call for in elders? (b) To whom are they accountable? (c) Who only should be the prominent ones in the congregation?
6. 7. (a) Is the chairman of the body of elders their "head"? (b) Who is the "head," and what does the chairman endeavor to do?

3, 4. (a) Literally, what is meant by "presiding"? (b) What is the enlarged meaning?

that the elders work together in unity and harmony. They must show the same humility among themselves as they show in the congregation as a whole. The one serving as the presiding overseer and chairman for a year does not become the "head" over the other elders. Note that there is a difference between presiding and being "head." A family head, for example, has the right to overrule the rest of the family members; as "head" he can make decisions that may differ from what the other members of the family favor. But the chairman of the body of elders, at least where matters of major importance are involved, does *not* make the final decisions. He is only *one* of the body and submits to the decisions of the group. The occasions should be rare when those in the body do not "all speak in agreement."—1 Cor. 1:10.

A chairman presides for one year by agreement of the body of elders and the others accord him certain initiative, so that the congregation matters are promptly cared for and the activity of the meetings moves along smoothly. Thus Jesus Christ remains the one Head of the congregation, and the chairman will not assume the attitude that now, since "he" is

presiding, things will be done "his way." Rather, he seeks to serve his fellow elders and the entire congregation by coordinating the theocratic activity for smooth functioning.—Col. 1:18; 1 Pet. 5:4.

At the quarterly meeting of the elders, all should work together harmoniously. To assist in this, the chairman needs to recognize his position in relation to the others. He ought to apply the Bible rule of 'taking the lead in showing honor' to others, 'considering that they are superior to him.' He should listen to them and solicit their views. He should be careful not to "condition" the opinions of the elders. This danger may exist if he always insists on giving his opinion first. The others will listen to what he says, but may hesitate to express a different view. So when various matters are considered, the chairman can ask others for their opinions first. At the same time he does not want to give the impression that what he has to say is the final word on the matter and nothing more need be said. So he may choose not to give his opinion last. He also should take care not to call on the same elder first each time, especially if that one has a strong personality and tends to want to shape others' opinions. Each elder should be given equal opportunity to comment first. If the chairman remembers that all are equals and his duty is merely to keep order, the meeting should progress smoothly and accomplish



At their meetings, elders discuss the welfare of the congregation

8. What can the chairman do to ensure a harmonious acting together of the body of elders?

its purpose. Also, if he can keep the meeting informal, that too will minimize *his* importance.

PREPARATION FOR MEETINGS IMPORTANT

⁹ The meetings of the elders are important, so the chairman should make proper advance preparation. This gives evidence that he is presiding in earnest. "The plans of the diligent one surely make for advantage." (Prov. 21:5) When possible, the other elders should be informed in advance of what matters will be discussed so they can give due thought to them and be in position to contribute to the discussion. If the chairman waits until the meeting starts, the others may not be properly prepared to speak. Of course, other matters may be brought before the meeting by other elders, and, when possible, the chairman should be informed of these ahead of time so that he can include them on the meeting's agenda. He does not want the discussion to get "bogged down" or to ramble; hence, he should see that each matter is disposed of before another is discussed. Thus he can keep the meeting orderly. That does not mean that the meeting should be so formal that spontaneous comment is discouraged. He needs to remember, too, that some may not be able to express themselves fluently, so he must exercise patience and allow these time to express their opinion.

¹⁰ If the chairman is prepared so that there is something definite to discuss and decide, and if he conducts the meeting properly, the length of the meeting can be controlled, and also the number of meetings can be held to a minimum; probably the suggested four in a year will be sufficient. This emphasizes good planning.

9. (a) Why is preparation for the elders' meetings important? (b) Who are involved in the preparation? (c) How can the meeting be kept orderly?

10, 11. (a) How can the length of the meetings and the number of meetings of the elders be controlled? (b) What should all the elders keep in mind in dealing with one another?

Much depends on the chairman's handling of the meeting, so he should be alert. But not *all* depends on him.—1 Cor. 14:40.

¹¹ Time is valuable. So that it is not wasted, all the elders should be as brief and to the point as possible. Those who are naturally wordy should practice curbing that tendency for the good of all. King Solomon's counsel at Proverbs 10:19 is appropriate: "In the abundance of words there does not fail to be transgression, but the one keeping his lips in check [under restraint] is acting discreetly." Some have more ability to speak than do others (sometimes colloquially called "the gift of gab"), and so they should guard the tendency to "wear down" a different view by much talking or eloquence. (Compare Romans 16:18.) If they cannot get the others to adopt their views it will not result in a calamity! Rather, meekness and a quiet spirit are evidence of true wisdom. (Eccl. 9:17; Jas. 3:13-17) The elders should guard against the danger of making matters a personal issue just because some "pet idea" of theirs is not adopted. Paul counsels: "I desire that in every place the men carry on prayer, lifting up loyal hands, apart from wrath and debates ["divided reckonings"—*Interlinear*; "quarrelsome thoughts"—*New English Bible*]."

—1 Tim. 2:8; 6:4.

¹² At their meetings to discuss the welfare of the congregation, the elders petition Jehovah to guide their hearts and minds to reach conclusions that are in harmony with Jehovah's will, and that the wisdom from above may prevail. Such wisdom, says James, is chaste, peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and not hypocritical. (Jas. 3:17) If the elders keep this in mind, as well as the fact that Jesus is there in their midst (Matt. 18:20), it will result in Jehovah's blessings on their deliberations. They ap-

12. What must elders, using wisdom, recognize as to individual conscience?

preciate that there are areas in life that the Bible shows we leave up to an individual's conscience. If the Bible and the publications of the "faithful and discreet slave" do not clearly outline a course, the elders should not impose their personal likes and dislikes, as if these were rules to be followed by the others. Thinking too much of one's own opinion could lead one to speak of one's own ideas and achievements beyond what the Scriptures allow.

—2 Cor. 10:12, 18.

GOVERNING BODY

¹³ The governing body of the first-century Christians was careful not to impose any unnecessary burden or rule on the congregations. We do well to follow that example. The Scriptures must be the guide of the elders, so that there is always a Scriptural basis for counsel and decisions. This will have the benefit of giving unified teaching as well as correct teaching. Then one elder will not say one thing and another elder something else, in contradiction, leading to confusion. Unity must exist among the elders, and they should see "eye to eye" if their service is to be effective. This does not mean that every elder at the meeting must comment on every point. Solomon wisely counseled that there is a time to keep silent. (Eccl. 3:7) If a person can add something constructive, fine; if not, he can just listen and learn, and see how to improve his own contributions to the meeting.

¹⁴ All the elders should appreciate their position in relation to the other brothers and sisters in the congregation. They are not spiritual bosses or spiritual policemen. They do not have to pry into the lives of other members of the congregation or concern themselves with the personal prob-

lems of every brother and sister. The brothers and sisters are dedicated to Jehovah God and usually can work out their salvation in integrity. The elders are available to help when they are called upon, but they should not go beyond proper limits. (Phil. 2:12, 13) The other brothers and sisters have rights and privileges, and so the elders must respect their free moral agency. It is not the business of the elders at their meetings to review all the good points and all the bad points of every publisher. About the only time that it would be appropriate to do this would be when qualifications of brothers to serve as elders or ministerial servants are being considered, or when there is a serious problem involving one in the congregation that calls for careful scrutiny of that particular person.

¹⁵ The meetings of the elders are not secret gatherings. But there is no need to tell everybody, or anybody not concerned, what is discussed at the meetings that is of a confidential nature. Why burden or upset others with matters with which they are not individually concerned? There are confidential matters that are disclosed to the elders that should not be publicized. Others, especially the wife or other members of the elder's family, can help by not probing elders for information on such matters. Matters not of a confidential nature, especially concerning the progress of the Kingdom work, that were discussed will eagerly be shared with the congregation by the elders.

¹⁶ The elders should not feel that they must *always* be counseling or reproving other individuals directly, especially when the individuals are doing reasonably well. They can, though, do much good by friendliness, kindness, encouragement, commen-

13. Using the Scriptures as a guide serves what important purpose?

14. (a) What should the elders understandably avoid doing? (b) When only would it be proper to discuss together the good points and the bad ones of a brother or a sister?

15. Why are the discussions at the elders' meeting not made public?

16. Instead of always counseling or reproving individuals, how can the elders make use of their time to the good of the congregation?

dation and association with all in the congregation. An especially fine way to do this is by making friendly "publisher" calls, not merely on those who are newly interested, or those considered spiritually weak, but on every "sheep" in the flock, including even those who are engaging in the preaching work full time. They likewise need shepherding and could, through neglect, stray away from the fold. Elders therefore recognize the need of accepting and discharging their responsibilities as shepherds as set out in the Bible.

¹⁷ Elders 'become fathers through the good news' by making disciples. Hence, although they do not let themselves be addressed as "Father," they must exercise the same patience, endurance and consideration that the head of a family does. A father of a family manifests love for those under his care; he does not exasperate them but upbuilds them. (1 Cor. 4:15; Matt. 23:9) Paul was outstanding in this regard, as shown at 2 Corinthians 12:15 and 1 Thessalonians 2:8. So elders do not mind being "put out," inconvenienced or imposed upon. As shepherds, they recognize this as all part of their

commission.—John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

¹⁸ Does one, after attaining the position of elder, no longer need to advance or improve? We are counseled not to think of ourselves more highly than is necessary, "so as to have a sound mind." (Rom. 12:3) So all the elders can continue to improve in that prime quality, namely, teaching ability accompanied with humility. Does the elder believe he is efficient and effective? Then he should strive for more effectiveness in teaching. He also can always improve in showing humility. By improvement on the part of the elders (and of ministerial servants, who are reaching out for the office of overseer), they will continue to advance in their ability to serve the interests of their brothers in harmony with Jehovah's requirements. They also will be a greater blessing to those who are now associated with Jehovah's organization and those making their way into it. To all who are unstintingly serving as overseers of the flock of God, we say: "Become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord."—1 Cor. 15:58.

17. (a) What quality is required in dealing with others? (b) How can elders imitate the apostle Paul, as shown at 2 Corinthians 12:15 and 1 Thessalonians 2:8?

18. Should elders be satisfied with their present service, and what is an incentive to them?

Faithfulness—Not Martyrdom

From time to time one sees a newspaper article relating a case involving one of Jehovah's witnesses who objects to a blood transfusion even though doctors say that his or her life is in danger. Some might wonder whether the Witnesses are doing this because they desire to be martyrs, with acclaim from others.

The American Journal of Surgery (Volume 116, July 1968) commented in this regard: "The Jehovah's Witnesses as individuals are apt to prove more reasonable than their public image projects them to be. They defy being pressured because force is reprehensible to them. Sainthood is not one of their ambitions, however, and their resistance to transfusion is not motivated by a desire for self sacrifice."

No, the Witnesses are not seeking to be martyrs. Rather, they conscientiously refuse blood transfusions, though being willing to accept other forms of medical treatment, because the Bible itself says that Christians must abstain from blood. —Acts 15:19, 20, 29.

THE ENDEARING QUALITY OF *Goodness*

GOODNESS is moral excellence, virtue or the state of being good, wholesome. This quality can have real heart appeal. It has tremendous power to move people to do what is good and beneficial for others. According to the Bible, goodness is a fruit of God's spirit. (Gal. 5:22) Rightly, then, God is the ultimate standard of goodness.

An incident in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry emphasizes this important fact. A rich young man addressed him as "Good Teacher," and then asked, "What must I do to inherit everlasting life?" In reply, Jesus Christ directed the young man's attention to God, saying: "Why do you call me good? Nobody is good, except one, God."—Mark 10:17, 18.

As the perfect Son of God, Jesus Christ did possess moral excellence or goodness. However, he did not accept "Good" as part of a title, for he himself was only conforming to the ultimate standard of goodness, that originating with his Father. In refusing to accept "Good" as part of a title, Jesus Christ glorified his Father as the real standard of goodness.—Compare John 7:16-18.

IMITATE GOD'S GOODNESS

Like Jesus Christ, we should be concerned about imitating God's goodness. This we can do only if we appreciate how

Jehovah God has shown goodness to mankind.

The very fact that the human race exists testifies to God's goodness. This earth is marvelously equipped to sustain life. Even thankless and unappreciative people benefit from God's generous provisions.—Matt. 5:45; Luke 6:32-35; Acts 17:25.

The Bible shows that Jehovah God could withhold vital sunshine and rain from those not serving him. Yet, in his goodness, he has very rarely used this power, and then only for a limited time and for a specific purpose. (Ex. 10:23; Amos 4:7; Jas. 5:17, 18) As the apostle Paul pointed out to inhabitants of ancient Lystra: "He did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:17) Not God, but imperfect human systems are responsible for hindering millions of persons today from benefiting to the full from his bountiful provisions.

Besides making it possible for mankind to live, Jehovah God provided the basis for freeing us from sin and death. This he did at tremendous cost to himself, giving his firstborn Son in our behalf and allowing him to give his life as a ransom. Jehovah God was certainly under no obligation to do this. No human was entitled to this redemption and its benefits as something earned. This is so because, despite

our best efforts, we fall short of God's standard of goodness and righteousness.

Emphasizing God's great love and goodness in providing his Son as a ransom, the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans (5:6-8): "Christ, while we were yet weak, died for ungodly men at the appointed time. For hardly will anyone die for a righteous man; indeed, for the good man, perhaps, someone even dares to die. But God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

From the way in which Jehovah God has manifested goodness, we can see that this is a positive quality. It involves doing good and beneficial things even toward those who may be thankless and unappreciative.

One who imitates God's goodness goes beyond what mere justice would require of him. While being just, impartial, honest and morally upright, the "good man" is also warm, understanding and sympathetic. He really cares about people. He looks for opportunities to express kindness and consideration, willingly and eagerly aiding those in real need. Appreciating that Jehovah God gave his Son in behalf of the world of mankind, the "good man" wants others to receive the benefits of the ransom provision and, therefore, exerts himself vigorously in efforts to help others to come into an approved relationship with the Creator.

A "good man" stands out in sharp contrast to a stickler for rules and regulations. This is well illustrated in the case of Jesus Christ and the religious leaders of Judaism in the first century C.E. For example, on seeing a man with a withered hand on the sabbath, Jesus Christ took pity on him and restored his hand. The religious leaders, however, were enraged, viewing this cure as a violation of traditional sabbath observance. Adherence to their view of right made them hard and

unfeeling toward a man in need. (Luke 6: 8-11) Obviously the self-righteous attitude of the religious leaders had no warmth, no appeal. In fact, it violated the spirit of God's Word.

But what of the person who simply fulfills his obligations out of a sense of duty? As is evident from Romans 5:6-8, even when he is right, he does not especially endear himself to others. People may respect his fairness, perhaps even admire his standing on principle. But they would not be moved to sacrifice for him, let alone give up their life in his behalf.

It would be different with a "good man." He is actively interested in others and works unselfishly in their behalf, not looking for any reward nor according to himself special considerations. His unselfishly giving of himself appeals to the hearts of others. It makes them want to do good things for him. As Jesus Christ pointed out: "Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing."—Luke 6:38.

The apostle Paul certainly applied these words. Reviewing his activity with elders of the Ephesus congregation, he said: "Bear in mind that for three years, night and day, I did not quit admonishing each one with tears. I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands have attended to the needs of me and of those with me. I have exhibited to you in all things that by thus laboring you must assist those who are weak, and must bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said, 'There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.'"—Acts 20:31, 33-35.

By his example in displaying goodness, Paul had endeared himself to those elders. Faced with the possibility of never seeing him again in the flesh, they wept profuse-

ly as they "fell upon Paul's neck and tenderly kissed him."—Acts 20:37, 38.

When considering what Jehovah God has done for us, we, like the apostle Paul, should want to imitate his goodness. To

Clergyman Who Recognized the Truth

● In 1961 one of Jehovah's witnesses gave a public Bible discourse in one of the villages situated in a bush area of the Solomon Islands. Among those who heard the talk was the local clergyman. That night the Witness and the clergyman talked about the Bible for many hours. After further study the next day, this clergyman stood up before his people in church and said that he was going to become one of Jehovah's witnesses. Although he pleaded with his people to join him in studying the Bible, the whole village turned against him.

At that time he had to travel for about four or five hours over mountains and through rivers to get to the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses. Later he moved a short distance from his village and built a house off by himself. He progressed well and finally became a baptized witness of Jehovah. As the years went by, two men went to live near this former clergyman and agreed to study the Bible with him. But they often missed their studies and so did not make much progress. All this started to discourage the former clergyman.

In 1968 the Witness who had originally contacted the former clergyman suggested that it might be better for him to move into the village where Jehovah's witnesses held their

this end, may we look for opportunities to work for the good of others, unselfishly giving of ourselves to help those in physical and spiritual need. Thus we, too, can make ourselves dear to others.

meetings so that he could share more fully in their work. Happy with this suggestion, the former clergyman returned to his village and announced that he was leaving. How this shocked the inhabitants! He had always been a very fine help to them and they did not want to see him leave. They pleaded with him to stay.

His fleshly brother, previously indecisive, left the church and soon began sharing the Bible's message with others. Taking advantage of the situation, the former clergyman invited the villagers to the next district assembly of Jehovah's witnesses. Many attended. Impressed with what they saw and heard, quite a number wanted to have a Bible study. A married couple serving as full-time special pioneers were sent to this area to help the former clergyman care for the thirty people who wanted Bible studies. A short time later a Kingdom Hall was built. Twelve persons have already joined the former clergyman in teaching Bible truth to others.

Thus it can be seen that even men who teach religious error may actually want to do what is right. In such cases, once they see the truth, they respond favorably and actively begin to share with others the good things they have learned.



● Was Jesus Christ resurrected bodily as a man of flesh and blood?

According to the inspired Scriptures, Jesus Christ was not raised to life in the flesh. At 1 Peter 3:18 we read that he was 'put to death

in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.' (New World Translation; American Standard Version; C. B. Williams' translation) Other scriptures confirm that Jesus simply could not have been raised bodily as a man of flesh and blood.

It was God's purpose for his Son to resume heavenly life and not to continue living as a man on earth. This necessitated Jesus' being raised as a spirit person, for persons of flesh and blood cannot live in the heavens. The apostle Paul wrote: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom, neither does corruption inherit incorruption."—1 Cor. 15:50.

In the case of the man Jesus Christ, his flesh was a barrier that prevented access to the heavenly realm. Jesus' "flesh" is, therefore, spoken of at Hebrews 10:20 as being represented by the "curtain" that separated the Holy from the Most Holy in the tabernacle. Before he could enter heaven, the real "Most Holy," Jesus had to give up his fleshly existence and receive spirit nature. His body of flesh would have been a barrier to his going beyond the "curtain" as a spirit person.

Another factor that should not be overlooked is that the goat and the bull offered on the day of atonement represented the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Law, which prescribed these sacrifices, served as "a shadow of the things to come." (Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1) As we know, a shadow gives the general shape or design of the reality that casts it. Hence, for the shadow to be fulfilled in the reality, Jesus could not have taken back his sacrificed body of flesh and blood, since the bodies of those sacrificial victims were thoroughly disposed of by burning. (Heb. 13:11, 12) So it logically follows that Jehovah God disposed of the sacrificed body of his Son. Moreover, if Jesus had taken back his body of flesh, his sacrifice would have been temporary, without continuing atoning value.

That Jesus was not raised in the flesh explains why two of his disciples and Mary Magdalene did not recognize him by his post-resurrection physical appearances. They only discerned who he was by what he said or did.—Luke 24:13-31; John 20:14, 15.

True, for the benefit of doubting Thomas, Jesus did appear with the physical evidence of nail prints in his hands and a spear wound in his side. (John 20:24-29) Yet, even in connection with that manifestation, there is proof that Jesus must have momentarily materialized a physical body of flesh. An eyewitness, the apostle John, reported: "Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and he stood in their midst." (John 20:26) Manifestly, the apostle John would not have made a point of this if Jesus had simply opened the door and then physically entered the room. Evidently Jesus appeared suddenly in the midst of the disciples; the locked door did not obstruct his entry. This was something a man of flesh could not have done. But it is something that spirit persons in materializing could do. For example, the angel Gabriel appeared physically to priest Zechariah in the holy of the temple. (Luke 1:11) And

the angel who appeared to Samson's parents ascended in a flame of fire.—Judg. 13:19, 20.

The case involving the angel who spoke to Samson's parents also sheds light on Jesus' ascension to the heavens. To the parents of Samson, that angel remained visible as he ascended in a flame of fire but then evidently dematerialized and vanished from sight. Similarly, when Jesus was ascending to heaven he remained visible until a cloud caught him up from the physical sight of the disciples. He then must have dematerialized the fleshly body in which he was seen, as had materialized angels on other occasions.—Acts 1:9-11.

That Jesus simply took on a body to be seen by his disciples, as had angels in the past, is also evident from the fact that he appeared fully clothed. When Jesus was laid in the tomb he was not dressed but was simply wrapped up in fine linen bandages. After his resurrection, these bandages remained in the tomb. So, just as Jesus had to materialize clothing, he also had to take on flesh to make himself physically visible to his disciples.—Luke 23:53; John 19:40; 20:6, 7.

Against this background, we can appreciate that Jesus' being called the "Son of man" even after his going to heaven could not refer to his having a body of a human in the heavens. (Acts 7:56) A Messianic prophecy that speaks of his receiving kingly power from his Father refers to him as "someone like a son of man." (Dan. 7:13, 14) Hence, although having offered the required sacrifice by surrendering his human nature, Jesus Christ retains the Messianic designation "Son of man." Similarly, Jesus Christ bears the title "the Lamb" on account of his having laid down his life in sacrifice. (Rev. 21:22) That title obviously is not descriptive of his appearance or nature in the heavens.

Thus the Scriptures as a whole testify to Jesus' having been resurrected, not as a man of flesh and blood, but as a glorious spirit person.

- What is the meaning of scriptures that speak of the "kidneys" as being 'seen,' 'refined,' 'tested' or 'examined' by Jehovah God or by his Son?

In such texts, the kidneys are evidently referred to as representative of or linked with the deepest emotions or inmost feelings. (Ps. 7:9; 26:2; Jer. 11:20; 20:12) While humans are

unable to determine another's deepest emotions and inmost feelings, these cannot be hidden either from the great Tester and Refiner, Jehovah God, or from his Son. That is why we read: "I, Jehovah, am searching the heart, examining the kidneys, even to give to each one according to his ways, according to the fruitage of his dealings." (Jer. 17:10) Quoting the Son, Revelation 2:23 states: "I am he who searches the kidneys and hearts, and I will give to you individually according to your deeds." So, then, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ examine the deepest emotions, which may be hidden from humans just as the literal kidneys are buried deep in the human body.

Our living in harmony with God's will, therefore, leads to great spiritual rewards, as He and His Son will find that even our deepest emotions reveal that we want to serve Him. We may also receive physical benefits. It is noteworthy that emotional upsets affect the kidneys. For example, sustained emotional strain may bring on *diabetes insipidus* (not "sugar diabetes"), kidney pains and absence of or defective urination. Hence, a person's

cultivating self-control, as the Bible recommends, may spare him physical suffering.—Gal. 5:22-24.

The Bible does not reveal to what extent the literal kidneys (perhaps including the adrenal glands situated on the upper surface of the kidneys) affect the emotions or contribute to the development of certain emotions. We should keep in mind that the human body is a harmonious whole, with all the members thereof being dependent on one another. (Compare 1 Corinthians 12:14-26.) Therefore, emotions, feelings, desires and the like cannot entirely be limited to any one specific organ such as the brain, heart or kidneys. It may well be that, in some cases at least, the Bible simply speaks of the affected organ as though it itself originated the emotions or attitudes that affect it.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

August 31: Who Qualifies to Be an Elder?

Page 465. Songs to Be Used: 14, 94.

September 7: Elders Presiding in a Fine Way.

Page 470. Songs to Be Used: 67, 85.

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