

The WATCHTOWER

The Blessing of Freedom of Assembly in Greece!

Do You Appreciate Your Blessings?

Have You 'Stopped Storing Up Treasures on Earth'?

SEPTEMBER 15, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

September 15, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 18

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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The Blessing OF **FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY IN GREECE!**

HEADLINES on the front pages of daily papers in Athens heralded the news: Jehovah's Witnesses are holding a large public assembly in Greece!

Often accompanied by photographs of the gathering, headlines such as the following declared: "20,000 ATTENDING INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS," "A CROWDED GATHERING OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES!" "A PEACEFUL GATHERING!"

But what was so unusual about that? Jehovah's witnesses are known throughout the world for their large conventions. Hundreds of these have been held in major cities all over the world for decades. The largest baseball stadiums, soccer fields, racetracks, auditoriums and various other places that can accommodate large crowds have been the scenes of many public assemblies by Jehovah's witnesses.

Why, then, did this event make headline news in Athens this past July?

WHY FRONT-PAGE NEWS?

This gathering was front-page news because it represented a remarkable reversal! This was the first time that authorities had ever permitted Jehovah's witnesses to have a large assembly in Greece! Previous governments had forbidden these Christians to have such gatherings, gatherings that in other countries are welcomed as normal events each year.

But for Greece, the organizing and successful convening of the assembly this year was an event of extraordinary importance.

It meant a big change in attitude on the part of the government. And because this four-day assembly represented a milestone in Greece, it was given wide publicity by the press.

Why were such assemblies not possible before? Because the dominant Greek Orthodox Church had successfully pressured previous governments so that these assemblies were forbidden. Indeed, religious intolerance and persecution by the clergy was such that even the marriages of Jehovah's witnesses were refused legal recognition. And the offspring of such marriages were regarded as illegitimate.

EVENTS LEADING TO ASSEMBLY

Months before the event, Jehovah's witnesses in Greece decided to try to hold an assembly in or near Athens about mid-July. But since no such convention had been allowed by previous governments, there were doubts as to whether permission would be granted.

However, certain events provided some hope that this peaceful gathering of sincere Christians might be possible. First, in 1974 a new government came into power in Greece, followed by the adoption of a new democratic-type constitution. This constitution became operative on and after June 11, 1975.

The new constitution safeguarded, among other things, the right of peaceful assembly. Also, it guaranteed freedom of religious conscience, and the performance of

religious services of any known religion without hindrance. These basic rights were to be protected by law.

Another significant event was that, on July 8, 1975, the Athens newspapers published the judgment of the Council of State, No. 2106/1975. This judgment declared that the religion of Jehovah's witnesses is a known and recognized one, and that any solemnized marriage unions between Jehovah's witnesses were to be recognized by law. Any children coming from these marriages were to be regarded as legitimate.

These new developments created a favorable atmosphere. They raised hopes that at last a trouble-free assembly could be convened. That would truly be a milestone in the fight for freedom of worship in Greece. For, although once labeled as the "cradle of democracy," Greece had lost many fundamental democratic rights because of clergy interference and dictatorial-type rule. Yes, for a long time that "cradle" proved to be empty!

Application had been made to the proper authorities for a four-day assembly. The application was considered by the authorities—and approved!

The site of this "Divine Sovereignty" Assembly was the Apollo Stadium located at Rhizupolis, near Athens. The program would be similar to that of the many other assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses being held this year in scores of different cities throughout the world.

ASSEMBLY PREPARATIONS

Before the assembly began, many of Jehovah's witnesses with various skills came to work, free of charge, to prepare the stadium. With enthusiasm they undertook the task, very appreciative of the privilege to be a part of this important history-making occasion.

For one thing, a stage had to be constructed for the various program parts.

Loudspeaking units had to be set up in many places around the stadium. In addition, toilet facilities for men and women had to be constructed, since the stadium lacked these. Parking areas nearby were arranged. Much other work was done so that those who attended would be comfortable and have their needs cared for, physical as well as spiritual needs.

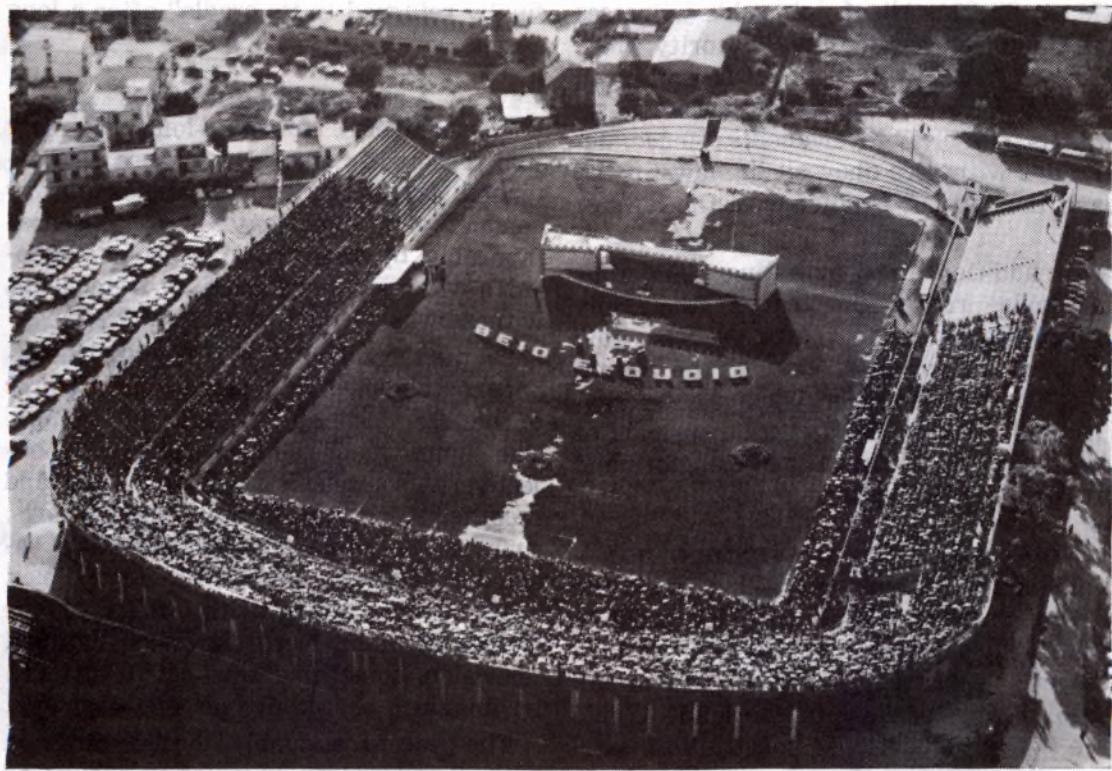
When the time came for the assembly to begin, on Thursday, July 10, throngs of conventioners peacefully entered the stadium and occupied their seats. It was a marvelous, thrilling spectacle, in view of the past history of clergy opposition and intolerance. Tears flowed freely from many eyes.

In other lands where Jehovah's witnesses regularly convene, assemblies are well advertised, through the press, radio and television, as well as by means of printed invitations left at the homes of people living in the area. But here, in an attempt to avoid any possible problem, all such pre-assembly publicity was avoided.

VAST PUBLICITY

But vast publicity was given the occasion anyhow! The Greek Orthodox Church and related organizations began a full-scale publicity campaign of vilification and insult.

Metropolitan Augustine of Florina, Macedonia, said, as reported by the daily Athens newspaper *Hellenikos Vorras* on July 6: "It is imperative to convene the whole hierarchy extraordinarily in order to face social and religious facts of enormous importance. The Church will betray itself if it continues inactive. We very strongly protest against [the assembly of Jehovah's witnesses], and wish to hope that it will be cancelled at the last moment; otherwise, by order of the *Synod*, all priests of Athens should get up to the steeples and mournfully ring the churches' bells, all during this satanic congress. For,



The "Divine Sovereignty" Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses
at the Apollo Stadium, near Athens, Greece, July 10-13, 1975

without exaggeration, something is dying in Greece, and what is dying is its soul, which soul is the orthodox faith."

Church organizations followed the lead of the clergy. For instance, hundreds of thousands of handbills containing false accusations against Jehovah's witnesses were distributed to homes and shops in the Athens-Piraeus areas. One handbill, sponsored by six religious magazines, contained statements such as these about Jehovah's witnesses: "Agents of International Zionism are on the move with dollars of the American Jews." "They . . . disown Christ." "They preach . . . domination of Israel over the whole world." The handbill concluded: "GREEK PEOPLE! Will you allow the gathering of such people?"

Yet, persons with even an elementary knowledge of the beliefs of Jehovah's wit-

nesses know that such charges are totally false. It is absurd to claim that American Jewish dollars are financing Jehovah's witnesses when the Witnesses today declare that Jewish Zionism will fail.* Also, anyone who examines the publications of Jehovah's witnesses can see that the highest respect is given to Jesus Christ because of his relationship to the Creator, Jehovah God, and because of the part that Christ plays in God's purposes.

As for the attitude of Jehovah's witnesses toward governmental authorities, it is well known that they are law-abiding and peaceful. They obey Jesus Christ's command 'to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to give to God what is God's.'

* See *Man's Salvation Out of World Distress at Hand!*, published in 1975 by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Note particularly chapter 13 entitled "When Christendom and Judaism Are No More!"

(Matt. 22:21) All of Jehovah's witnesses are taught to respect civil authority, since Romans 13:1 says: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities," that is, the civil governments. Hence, Jehovah's witnesses obey all the laws of the land that do not conflict with the laws of God.

In addition to distributing slanderous handbills, representatives of the Holy Synod took steps to try to pressure government authorities to cancel the assembly. To this end, clergymen and clergy-inspired persons dispatched thousands of telegrams to the Ministry of Religions and to the Premier's Bureau.

WHAT WOULD THE GOVERNMENT DO?

The question now was: What would the Greek government do? Would it yield to the clergy's pressure? Would it forbid a peaceful Christian gathering held in full accord with the laws of the land? Would the newly voted Greek constitution, safeguarding the freedom of assembly, prove effective?

Newspapers widely noted the protests against the assembly from church leaders and their related groups. Also, it was noted that Archbishop Seraphim personally pressured the Ministers of Interior and of Public Order to try to cancel the assembly. As the daily *Vradyni* observed, these objections were "being considered on the part of the Government."

But to the credit of the Greek government, it did not give in to this religious pressure! Neither the religious groups, nor the metropolitans, nor Archbishop Seraphim could prevail! The Greek government proved that it respected and applied the recently approved Greek constitution. It was determined to protect the rights of all its people, not just some of them. Hence, as one observer commented, it could be said that in this matter "democracy has

finally returned to its cradle" after a long absence.

A TREMENDOUS WITNESS

The peaceful, four-day-long assembly was thoroughly enjoyed by those who attended. And the orderliness and exemplary conduct of the delegates were observed favorably by many who were not Jehovah's witnesses. As a result, a tremendous witness was given throughout Greece.

On the second day of the assembly, newspapers published fine panoramic pictures of the assembled multitudes in the stadium. The comments of the newspapers were objective. Also, television teams came and recorded scenes of different program parts, such as the Bible dramas that were enacted to illustrate various Bible principles. These scenes, along with others of the packed stadium, were shown on national television, something that could not even be imagined as recently as one year ago!

The peaceful assembly, the fine program with its upbuilding information about God and his purposes, and the orderliness of the Witnesses, were contrasted in the minds of many people with the ungodly conduct of the clergy and their religious organizations. Fanatical religionists distributed their slanderous handbills right along the roads leading to the stadium, trying to instigate people to hostile action against the Witnesses.

Other fanatics took out icons, such as the "crucifix" and the "six-winged cherubs" from a nearby church, and, under the leadership of a priest, arranged themselves opposite the stadium. They chanted, and made menacing gestures to the passing Witnesses. And all during these noisy demonstrations the bells of the neighboring churches rang mournfully.

However, no serious incident occurred. Jehovah's witnesses had been instructed to continue their usual calm and unprovocative behavior in all situations. They

paid no attention to the troublemakers and avoided any discussion that could irritate anyone and possibly lead to a disturbance.

On the next-to-the-last day of the assembly, over 400 priests gathered at St. Irene Church. The Athens daily *Akropolis* reported: '400 PRIESTS CONDEMN ASSEMBLY—PREPARED FOR ANY COST AND FIGHT IF REPEATED.' The newspaper printed a resolution passed by the priests. It said, in part: "We the Greek Orthodox priests, convened in an extraordinary pan-clerical gathering today . . . express our vivid uneasiness . . . The granting of a permit [for the assembly] in spite of the steps taken by the Holy Synod of Monsignor Seraphim, Archbishop of Athens and of all Greece, and of the Right Reverend Metropolitans, constitutes a hostile action against the Church, since [Jehovah's witnesses] are not merely of another creed, but they are avowed enemies and persecutors of the Church . . . We forewarn the Government, the country's Parliament and all governmental administrations, that we the curates, leaders, assistants and friends of our honor-conscious, gentle and pious Greek people, are ready for any fight and cost on all similar future actions of the Government."

But, of course, unprejudiced observers could easily see that it was not Jehovah's witnesses who showed disrespect for the government, nor did they persecute the Church in any way. Instead, the Greek Orthodox clergy clearly demonstrated their hostility against the government and its constitution, engaging in unchristian political meddling. It was the clergy that engaged in persecution, trying to prevent the assembly of Jehovah's witnesses, by their slanderous accusations, and by trying to incite the people against these peaceful Christians.

The police acted in a very commendable way. They saw to it that the rights of the people were upheld. Commendation

was properly expressed for this fine attitude of the Greek police. When a few disturbers caused some damage to the parked automobiles of several of Jehovah's witnesses, the police suggested taking action against the perpetrators. But seeking to avoid any difficulty on this occasion, the Witnesses felt that it would be better not to take action against these lawless elements. Happily, one of Jehovah's witnesses who owns an automobile service station offered to repair the damaged cars at his own expense.

During the four days of the assembly, and in the days after, the subject of this gathering was in the forefront of the newspaper reports. Discussions were held everywhere about the event. Many honest-hearted people expressed their disgust at the ugly demonstrations and improper protests of the religious organizations.

A well-known parliament deputy of Athens, and commentator of a leading Athenian daily newspaper, wrote: "I could not understand the unrestrained wrath of the [church] organizations, who want the heads of Jehovah's witnesses upon a platter." (*Daily To Vima*, July 16, 1975) Another Athenian paper published a fine picture of the assembly. And when some of its readers protested this newspaper's coverage of the assembly, the paper answered: 'So many thousands of people gathering somewhere for any purpose whatever makes up news. How can this be ignored by a newspaper, dear readers, whatever you are as respects this manifestation—whether enemies, friends or indifferent?' —Athens daily *Kathimerini*, July 12, 1975.

One newsman asked a Witness who was in charge of public relations: "The church bells that are ringing mournfully—what do you have to say about them?" The Witness answered: "For us, this gathering is a time of joy and gladness. But for those people it is a time of lamenting, so they ring their bells mournfully."

The spirit of the two peoples was indeed sharply contrasted, calling to mind that God's Word says that where the spirit of God is there are also to be found "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) Also called to mind was what God, through the prophet Isaiah, said long ago: "Look! My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart, but you [opposers] yourselves will make outcries because of the pain of heart and you will howl because of sheer breakdown of spirit."—Isa. 65:14.

OBSERVERS COMMENT FAVORABLY

The order and cleanliness that prevailed throughout the assembly impressed observers favorably, even those who previously held opinions that were unfavorable.

The officers and men of the police in charge of traffic and law enforcement around the stadium expressed great satisfaction with the prompt obedience of Jehovah's witnesses when given instructions by the police. An officer said: "If all gatherings held were so orderly, we policemen would not be needed for anything."

The men of the stadium's management expressed their appreciation for the peace, order and cleanliness of the Christians who filled their stadium. They declared that the facilities "will always be at the Witnesses' disposal."

A visitor who came to the assembly commented: "Not a small bit of paper is in this stadium. What a clean people Jehovah's witnesses are!" A journalist wrote: "The stadium was packed, but . . . no smoke was there." He was impressed by the fact that no one was smoking tobacco. An engineer of a nearby electric factory, after attending some of the sessions, declared: "Now I will be regularly attending your meetings."

Truly this assembly was a momentous, never-to-be-forgotten occasion. It was cer-

tainly a milestone in the activity of Jehovah's Christian witnesses in Greece. The freedom to enjoy peaceful assembly in this way for the first time was greatly appreciated.

The crowd of 19,211 who listened to the concluding comments on Sunday evening expressed their profound thanks to the Sovereign Lord Jehovah and to his Son Jesus Christ for this marvelous occasion. With prolonged applause they also expressed their thanks to all those who made this fine assembly possible.

AN ENJOYABLE ASSEMBLY IN THESSALONICA TOO!

Three weeks after the successful assembly of Jehovah's witnesses in Athens, a similar four-day assembly was held in the historical city of Thessalonica, Macedonia. On the final day of this assembly, August 3, an enthusiastic throng of 10,124 heard the encouraging information that God's righteous new order will soon be a reality.

The reaction of the Greek Orthodox clergy and their religious organizations was similar to what took place during the Athens assembly. However, the responsible officer in charge of the gendarmerie in Central Macedonia told the assembly organization: "The Constitution, and the laws of the State, protect you and we are here to grant you protection during your assembly and wherever it will be necessary." And the Police Director of Thessalonica added: "Our men will be at your disposal to protect you. I personally know that you are law-abiding people and you do not need policemen around you. But our men will be there." So in Thessalonica, as previously in Athens, the authorities demonstrated their respect for the new Greek constitution.

All who attended greatly enjoyed this blessing of freedom of assembly to hear God's Word, just as their brothers had three weeks before in Athens.

False Shepherds

DISMISSED FROM GOD'S SERVICE

WHEN God established the Christian congregation he provided, through Christ, for shepherds and teachers. (Eph. 4:11) The apostle Peter, himself a Christian shepherd, strongly admonished: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock."—1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

Shepherds in the Christian congregation are not rulers. However, in the nations professing to be Christian, there are rulers, both religious and governmental, who claim to care for the people as shepherds. And they are spoken of as shepherds in the Scriptures. Whether these stand in their position by God's appointment or not, God holds those presenting themselves as shepherds highly responsible to him, because the lives and well-being of people are involved. If any such responsible men prove to be false, they will receive heavy judgment. (Jas. 3:1) For our comfort and to provide warning to those in such positions, God caused his prophet Zechariah to enact a drama foreshadowing things to come.

A PROPHETIC DRAMA

At that time Jehovah God had a "flock," namely, his covenant people Israel. He made direct appointment of Zechariah as shepherd, saying: "Shepherd the flock meant for the killing, the buyers of which

proceed to kill them although they are not held guilty. And those who are selling them say: 'May Jehovah be blessed, while I shall gain riches.' And their own shepherds do not show any compassion upon them."—Zech. 11:4, 5.

The flock belonging to God had been brought into a very bad condition by their shepherds, who had no interest in the flock's welfare, nor compassion for their oppressed state. At the time that Zechariah was appointed he gave attention to some of these shepherds. He tells us: "I finally effaced three shepherds in one lunar month, as my soul gradually became impatient with them, and also their own soul felt a loathing toward me." (Zech. 11:8) Just who these three shepherds were, we are not told. But because he had been appointed by the Most High God, Zechariah had the superior authority among them, so that he could dismiss the three men.

Zechariah was carrying out his shepherding job, as he said, "in your behalf, O afflicted ones of the flock." (Zech. 11:7) He loved God's flock. So when he became impatient, it was not with the afflicted sheep, but with the three delinquent shepherds. On their part, they "felt a loathing" toward Zechariah because of his faithfulness and compassion in shepherding the flock. On his part, he disapproved of their ways and schemes.

In being appointed as a shepherd, Zechariah foreshadowed the "fine shepherd," the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus was sent by his Father to be a shepherd of God's flock of Israel, their rulers, particularly the religious leaders, had been sadly mistreating the people. What situation did Jesus find? We read: "On seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd."—Matt. 9:36.

Who, in that time, were the "three shepherds" whom Jesus Christ effaced, cut off, dismissed from their assumed positions? The record of Jesus' life shows no three individual men as fulfilling the prophetic pattern. Evidently the three shepherds whom the prophet Zechariah discharged picture three *classes* of men in Jesus' time. Three classes do appear in the record, who had governmental as well as religious power in Israel. These were (1) the Pharisees and (2) the Sadducees, both of which classes were represented in the Jewish Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. That judicial body had governmental functions to some extent under the Roman governor, as well as religious functions. Thus a certain Nicodemus, a Pharisee member of the Sanhedrin, was "a ruler of the Jews." (John 3:1, 2; 7:50-52) The Sanhedrin was quite divided between Pharisees and Sadducees. (Acts 23:1-9) Besides such Jewish sectarians, there were also (3) the Herodians, the "party followers of Herod."—Mark 12:13.

JESUS CHRIST DISMISSES "THREE SHEPHERDS"

Similar to the feeling of the "three shepherds" toward Zechariah as a shepherd, these three groups quickly "felt a loathing" toward Jesus Christ as the Messianic shepherd. They plotted or cooperated together against Jesus to discredit him in the eyes of the flock of Israel. (Matt. 22:15, 16, 23; Mark 3:6) From the very start of his

earthly ministry Jesus refused to have anything to do with those self-seeking ruling groups, that is, as far as joining in with them is concerned. Finally, toward the close of his ministry, his soul did become "impatient" with them. On public occasions he put all three groups to silence as far as government and doctrine were concerned. The symbolic 'one month' in which Jesus dismissed these groups actually marks a short period of time at the close of his ministry.

The 'effacing' was climaxed on Nisan 11, 33 C.E., only a few days before they brought about Jesus' death at the hands of the Romans. The apostle Matthew (22:15-46) reports the thoroughness with which Jesus refuted, exposed and silenced each of these three classes, in turn, as being unqualified and unfit to shepherd the flock. Matthew writes concerning the Pharisees and the Herodians:

"Then the Pharisees went their way and took counsel together in order to trap him in his speech. So they dispatched to him their disciples, together with party followers of Herod, saying: 'Teacher, we know you are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and you do not care for anybody, for you do not look upon men's outward appearance. Tell us, therefore, What do you think? Is it lawful to pay head tax to Caesar or not?' But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: 'Why do you put me to the test, hypocrites? Show me the head tax coin.' They brought him a denarius. And he said to them: 'Whose image and inscription is this?' They said: 'Caesar's.' Then he said to them: 'Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God.' Well, when they heard that, they marveled, and leaving him they went off."

Later the Sadducees came, to receive their dismissal:

"On that day Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came up to him and asked him: 'Teacher, Moses said, "If any man dies without having children, his brother must take his wife in marriage and raise up offspring for his brother." Now there were

seven brothers with us; and the first married and deceased, and, not having offspring, he left his wife for his brother. It went the same way also with the second and the third, until through all seven. Last of all the woman died. Consequently, in the resurrection, to which of the seven will she be wife? For they all got her.'

"In reply Jesus said to them: 'You are mistaken, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God; for in the resurrection neither do men marry nor are women given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. As regards the resurrection of the dead, did you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob"? He is the God, not of the dead, but of the living.' On hearing that, the crowds were astounded at his teaching."

Finally, Jesus completed his dismissing of the "three shepherds" by showing the Pharisees their error in denying that he was the Son of God:

"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together Jesus asked them: 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?' They said to him: 'David's.' He said to them: 'How, then, is it that David by inspiration calls him "Lord," saying, "Jehovah said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies beneath your feet'"? If, therefore, David calls him "Lord," how is he a son?' And nobody was able to say a word in reply to him, nor did anyone dare from that day on to question him any further."

Here God's direct representative, his Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, publicly exposed these classes as shepherds of no value, as disapproved by Jehovah God. Shortly after that he uttered a scathing denunciation of them.—Matt. chap. 23.

ALL FALSE SHEPHERDS SOON TO DISAPPEAR

Inasmuch as Jehovah took action against the false shepherds in the days of Zechariah and again when Christ was on earth, we can be assured that he will take action against the modern-day false shepherds. Zechariah was inspired to prophesy about the deserved judgment to come upon the

"valueless shepherd": "To the sheep being effaced he will give no attention. The young one he will not seek, and the broken sheep he will not heal. The one stationing herself he will not supply with food, and the flesh of the fat one he will eat, and the hoofs of the sheep he will tear off. Woe to my valueless shepherd, who is leaving the flock! A sword will be upon his arm and upon his right eye. His own arm will without fail dry up, and his own right eye will without fail grow dim."

—Zech. 11:15-17.

What is the situation among the people today? Are they not like sheep "effaced" or lost out of the picture, broken and unhealed, fed upon by corrupt, graft-taking shepherds, who devour them even to their "hoofs"? Jehovah says that, because they do not really represent him and do not have his blessing, their "arm" of power and ability will wither up and their "right eye," their best eye for discerning remedies and for governmental oversight, will grow dimmer and dimmer. We can see that even now men in "shepherding" positions are greatly confused and embarrassed. In the coming "great tribulation" upon this world Jehovah will destroy that "valueless shepherd" class altogether.

The destruction of the false shepherds will mean deliverance from oppression for those who look to Jesus Christ as the "fine shepherd." (John 10:11) God says, through his prophet Isaiah: "By the ways they will pasture, and on all beaten paths their pasturing will be. They will not go hungry, neither will they go thirsty, nor will parching heat or sun strike them. For the One who is having pity upon them will lead them, and by the springs of water he will conduct them." (Isa. 49:9, 10; compare Revelation 7:9-17.) Let all who desire life in peace and happiness look into the Bible, discern the leading of God's "fine shepherd" and follow in the way of life as he directs.

DO YOU APPRECIATE

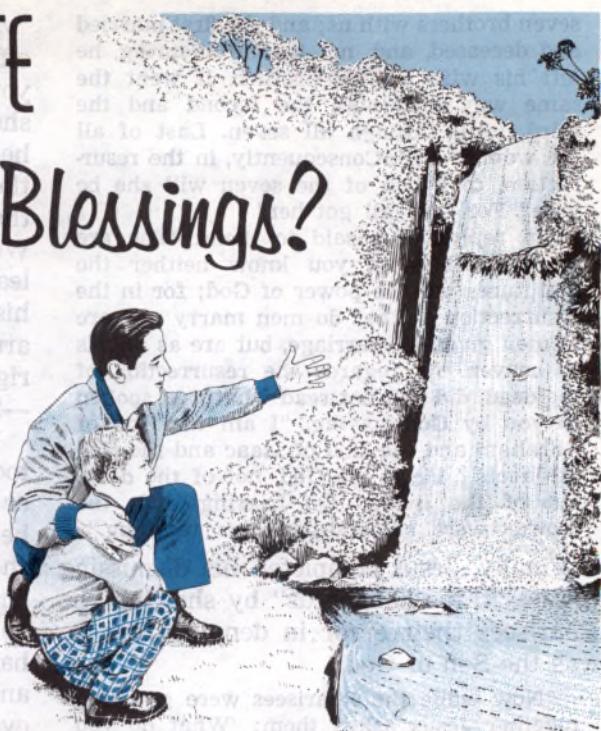
WE ALL enjoy many blessings. But do we ever stop to add them up? Do we appreciate them, or do we just take them for granted? Appreciating one's blessings can often mean the difference between good health and poor health, the difference between contentment and discontentment, between peace of mind and frustration, or between happiness and unhappiness. Failure to appreciate their blessings accounts for the fact that many persons turn to alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling and pornography.

True, in this present system of things there is nothing perfect; we all have trials of one kind or another and none of us have all our wants fully satisfied. There is always the bitter with the sweet. But how does this affect us?

As one elderly Christian minister put it: "Some people grumble because rosebushes have thorns; others are thankful that thornbushes have roses."

We need to give thought to the blessings we daily receive because the human tendency is to take good experiences for granted, while harping on the unpleasant or negative ones. Thus we read in the press: "Families Richer But Frustrated." Although incomes have increased, "the frustrations, the fears, the anxieties of the American family . . . cut across income levels," those of the ones enjoying affluence as well as of those on relief. Yes, "job and career dissatisfaction are rampant throughout the executive and managerial suites of American business." Among factory workers a typical complaint is: "I

Your Blessings?



feel like a guy running hard just to keep in the same position."

Is all this discontent and frustration justified? That it might largely be a matter of one's mental attitude can be seen from the way one family looks at things. The husband works on an auto assembly line, and this type of work is generally marked by a high rate of turnover and absenteeism, which is said to be due to the boredom and frustration connected with it. But does this mean that such workers have few, if any, blessings that can be appreciated? The wife explains:

'My husband, although a college graduate with a college degree, prefers to work on an assembly line, having turned down jobs with status. Why? Among our blessings are these: (1) a very high paycheck; (2) medical coverage (it saved us \$2,000 when I gave birth to a premature baby); (3) his job is protected by his union; (4) his pay rises when the cost of living

rises; (5) he has liberal holiday and vacation benefits; (6) when he is through with a night's work (he prefers the night shift), he is free from all worries; (7) when he comes home we get the whole man, and so forth.'

In sum, she says: "Not everybody is driven by ambition and the pursuit of status. . . [Some are] more interested in . . . free time for reading, conversation and recreation . . . Success depends on what kind of a human being you are, not on your job description or bank balance. . . We thrive on the free time, security and freedom from stress and pressure that is our lot as a blue collar family."—*New York Daily News Magazine*, Sept. 16, 1973.

Knowingly or unknowingly, this blue-collar family is going by the principle enunciated by the apostle Paul: "If we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare." However, we should not overlook the fact that the apostle also shows that for "great gain" we need "godliness with contentment."—1 Tim. 6:6, 8, 9, *Revised Standard Version*.

RESULT OF FAILING TO APPRECIATE BLESSINGS

According to official estimates, in the United States, annually, about one million children run away from their homes. Their average age at present is fifteen years, and is getting lower. True, some of these may have good reasons for running away. However, it is apparent that, for the most part, these children do not appreciate the blessings they might have at home, compared with the conditions they find and face in the cold outside world. The press even tells of runaway girls' being violated and murdered and of runaway boys who were among those tortured and murdered by a homosexual ring in Houston, Texas.

Today there are women in many lands who are complaining about the inequalities of their lot. In the United States, these women have formed the National Organization of Women (NOW, for short). Indicative of their extreme position is the book written by one of the group's leaders attacking the 'maleness' of God, objecting to his being called "Father." But these do not speak for all women. In fact, to counteract the NOW propaganda some women have formed the HOW organization—short for "Happiness of Womanhood." Appreciatively they enumerate some of their blessings—family life, love of a husband, a home of their own, being able to rear children, and the security that goes with a dependable, breadwinning husband. They also appreciate that while their lot is not perfect, neither is that of their husbands.

APPRECIATING YOUR BLESSINGS

To the extent that you have a measure of health and strength, you have blessings for which you can be thankful. Do you have the use of your five senses? This is a blessing to be appreciated. By reason of the sense of vision you can enjoy many beautiful sights—the faces and forms of people, lovely flowers, trees, shrubs, birds, animals and fish, beautiful valleys, lakes and sunsets.

What about the pleasures that go with the sense of hearing—the many captivating human voices, including those of children, the sounds of creation, the strains of delightful music well played? And consider all the pleasures that go with the senses of taste, of smell and of feeling. Do you appreciate these blessings, or do you take them for granted? Does it take your seeing a cripple for you to appreciate your sound limbs? Does it take your seeing a blind man for you to appreciate your blessing of sight?

WHY THE FAILURE TO APPRECIATE BLESSINGS

What causes people to ignore, disparage or be blind to their blessings, taking them for granted rather than appreciating them?

There are a number of reasons. One is simply thoughtlessness. For example, some young children may give little thought to all the time, energy and provisions, as well as consideration, love and affection that their parents bestow upon them. They just take things for granted—unless their parents inculcate in them sentiments and mental attitudes of appreciation, gratitude and contentment.

With others, the failure to appreciate their blessings may well be due to greed or selfishness. Such persons always want more. They are never content with what they have. Of them, the Bible says: "The man who loves money can never have enough." (Eccl. 5:10, *New English Bible*) Always wanting more, such persons are blind to the blessings they already have.

Still others fail to appreciate their blessings because of envy. Being uneasy because others have more than they have, or have what they would like to have, envious persons fail to appreciate the blessings that they themselves already have. The Bible repeatedly warns against coveting or desiring what another may have, and also against competing with one another. (Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:5) Such persons may readily become embroiled in the "rat race" or in trying to "keep up with the Joneses."

But a fundamental reason why many fail to count their blessings, to appreciate the good things in life, the advantages they have, is that they let the great Benefactor, the Creator, Jehovah God, play so small a role, if any, in their lives. Their ignoring God is usually due to their ignoring God's Word, the Bible.

THE BIBLE'S COUNSEL

The opening pages of the Bible show that God is the great Creator of all things.

(Genesis chaps. 1 and 2) We are indebted to him for all that we enjoy. In particular, the book of Psalms calls upon humankind to give thanks to Jehovah God and supplies reasons for doing so.

The psalmists took note, not only of material blessings, but also of spiritual ones: "Bless Jehovah, O my soul, . . . Him who is forgiving all your error . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, his loving-kindness is superior toward those fearing him. As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions. As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him."—Ps. 103:2, 3, 11-13.

Similarly, we find God's servants in apostolic times appreciating God's blessings. Thus the apostle Paul told the pagans at Lystra who wanted to worship him: "Indeed, [God] 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) The same apostle keeps stressing the need to thank God for blessings received. Typical is his expression: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ *giving thanks always for all things* to our God and Father."—Eph. 5:20.

MODERN-DAY EXAMPLES

Those today who take God's Word and his requirements seriously are likewise appreciative of their blessings. This can be seen by the fact that their lives are free from such "escape" expedients as materialism, alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling and pornography. It is even more apparent from the fact that they are such law-abiding and happy people.

For example, there is a paraplegic in Vancouver, British Columbia, who is hap-

py in spite of the fact that he has no use whatever of his arms or legs. He counts among his blessings the ability to make a living by painting—holding a brush with his mouth—thus being able to provide for himself. And, in particular, he appreciates among his many blessings his knowing the truth about God and His purposes, having the wonderful Kingdom hope and being able to associate with fellow Christians in worship and in sharing the things he learns with others.

Another example of one who appreciates his blessings is a certain man who had been arrested twenty-five times in nine years, and who had been convicted five times. He had fourteen felonies charged against him and was facing a total sentence of 250 years in prison. Then he came in touch with the Bible and later with someone able to help him to understand it. What a change this made in him!

"My old associates, the local police, are wondering what happened to me. . . . My parole officer sees the wonderful change in my life. . . . I have become accustomed to good work habits, which I never had before. I supply my family with honest money. I enjoy and appreciate the things in life more. I give thanks especially to Jehovah himself for helping me. In one year my life has been completely renewed. I have put on a new personality. I have come to know the trueness of the Creator in my life, and I have a wonderful hope when I go to bed and when I get up." No question about his appreciating his blessings!

Then there was the Texas youth who had been a drunk, a drug addict and who

spent time in prison because of being a drug "pusher." As a result of his getting to know Jehovah and his Word he became one that appreciates his blessings: "My past life was leading to certain death, but now I have hope. I have the privilege of meeting and knowing many brothers and sisters in many places who really care. This gives me something to live for. The difference between my life before and my life now is like the difference between a desert and an ocean."

A young Hawaiian man, because of a swimming accident, was confined to a wheelchair. For seven years he felt cheated in life, sorry for himself and depressed. But on coming in touch with Jehovah's witnesses and acquiring the Bible hope all of this changed: "Now I have a happy, worthwhile and satisfying life. Knowing that Jehovah promises an everlasting life with perfect health and vigor in the new order so near at hand, plus the fact that I am able to help others to eternal life, has brought me the greatest happiness possible."

No question about it. Regardless of your situation in life, whether your circumstances are normal, or even as difficult as those of the paraplegic, you have blessings that can be appreciated. You will appreciate them if you do not take them for granted, if you do not let selfishness, greed or envy blind you to them. And there is no better way to come to a full appreciation of your blessings than by gaining a knowledge and understanding of God's Word the Bible. Jehovah's witnesses in your community will be glad to help you to acquire that knowledge and understanding.

END OF WAR

- It has been said that war leaves a country with three armies: an army of cripples, an army of widows and an army of thieves. How satisfying it is to have the Bible's assurance that under God's kingdom wars will cease forever!—Ps. 46:9; Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3.

Insight on the News

- Among the Hebrews in Bible times wine was a common accompaniment of food. (Gen. 27:25) It became a regular feature of the Jewish Passover celebration. Did this lead to a high incidence of drunkenness among the Jewish people? No, the evidence

Alcoholism and Jews
is to the contrary, and that remains true till this day. Thus a recent report tells of a university study made on the rate of alcoholism among Jews in the U.S.A. It shows that, whereas alcoholism affects one in 14 among the general population, it affects only one out of every 200 Jews. The report states, among other things, that the study attributed the low rate of Jewish alcoholism to "close family ties and the fact that wine is a religious symbol and is first drunk early in life."

- Under the heading "Democratic Savior?" columnist James A. Wechsler of the New York "Post" reported that preacher Billy Graham had agreed to appear on a fund-raising "telethon" for the Democratic Party. A party spokesman gave Graham's

Wavering Standards
previously close connection with ex-president Nixon as "one of the better reasons to have him on the program." Columnist Wechsler takes that to mean that Graham's participation in the telethon would imply that the preacher viewed "this Republican Administration as the wave of the past, or [had] at least decided to hedge his spiritual investments," by showing interest in both major parties. The columnist himself characterized this as an example of the "blandness and moral compromise" that makes for success in "public show business."

About the same time, a United Press International dispatch from Brussels appeared, stating: "Evangelist Billy Graham said today that he was in favor of ordaining qualified homosexuals, but that he preferred to decline comment at present on the ordination of women." The evangelist is quoted as saying that homosexuals should be "considered on individual merit" and that they should "accept Jesus Christ and turn away from their sins." It was left to an aide to explain later what this meant and he said that the turning away

from sins would include abandoning the practice of homosexuality. But why was this not stated clearly in the first place? The Bible, of course, does very straightforwardly condemn homosexuality.—Rom. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 1 Tim. 1:10.

As to the ordaining of women, the evangelist said that he was "not prepared to take a stand one way or [the] other." Again, the Bible is very clear in its position regarding women teaching in the Christian congregation. (1 Cor. 14:33, 34; 1 Tim. 2:12) Surely in times like ours there is need for clarity and conviction rather than ambiguity or a vacillating approach to moral issues. For "if the trumpet sounds an indistinct call, who will get ready for battle?"—1 Cor. 14:8.

- "Sputnik," a Russian magazine digest, describes scientists' efforts to develop instruments that will duplicate certain amazing abilities of the animal creation.

Learning from Creation

Their studies show, for example, that a grasshopper's "ears" (located in its front paws) are so sensitive to sound waves that "a grasshopper in Moscow is capable of 'hearing' tremors caused by an earthquake on the shores of the Pacific." One instrument that scientists developed copies the hearing organ of the jellyfish and it can reportedly predict the coming of a storm some 12-14 hours earlier than can an ordinary barometer. Bee honeycombs are formed of thousands of hexahedral (six-sided) prisms. The acute angles of each prism's pyramidal base always equal $70^{\circ} 32'$. "Sputnik" says "the scientists demonstrated that in the case of hexahedrons it is precisely this size of the angles that ensures the greatest volume of the honeycomb cell with minimum expenditures of building material for construction." Using this knowledge, they developed honeycomb-type grain elevators with considerable savings of concrete.

Strangely, however, these men who see such astounding examples of instinctive wisdom built into these creatures would give the credit to blind, chance "evolution" rather than to an infinitely wise Creator.—Compare Romans 1:22, 23.



tising, advertising, advertising. With what end in view? In order to create in you a desire, the desire for their products, that they may exploit you. Once you have entered into the way of not only satisfying your actual needs, but also trying to satisfy these created desires, you find yourself on an interminable path that will consume the major part of your time, energy, attention and interest without giving you, in the end, the satisfaction that you desire. How true the words of the wise man Solomon, who wrote: "A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with in-

HAVE YOU ‘Stopped Storing Up Treasures On Earth?’

"Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal."
—Matt. 6:19.

come [proceeds]. This too is vanity!"—Eccl. 5:10.

² In his Sermon on the Mount the Greater Solomon, Jesus Christ, showed that those who were seeking the blessings of God's Messianic kingdom would occupy themselves with treasure far more important. Accordingly, how opportune today is his counsel to his disciples: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal!"—Matt. 6:19, 20.

³ What excellent advice this is for the remnant of the anointed disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who have the prospect of an "unfading inheritance" in the spiritual heavens! (1 Pet. 1:4; Eph. 1:18) For in the long run, at the end of their earthly career, they have to leave ALL their material possessions behind them. They cannot transport these with themselves to heaven. In the same manner with

1. (a) What is the aim of commercial men today? (b) Why is there no satisfaction in fulfilling 'created desires'?

2, 3. (a) What excellent advice did Jesus give regarding earthly treasure? (b) How can both the "remnant" and the "other sheep" benefit from this counsel?

regard to the "great crowd" of "other sheep" who have the prospect of surviving the "great tribulation" that is just ahead, to live eternally on a paradise earth. (Rev. 7:9-14; Matt. 24:21, 22; Ps. 37:29) Jehovah God has not promised these "other sheep" that he will preserve *all* their material possessions here on earth through that "great tribulation" to be used thereafter.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

⁴ For a certainty, we have no reason to doubt Jehovah's ability to preserve and deliver. This power has been demonstrated on many occasions and in many ways in times past. The apostle Peter reminds us of this and assures us that "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial." (2 Pet. 2:9) In this connection he gives us some striking examples, such as when Jehovah "did not hold back from punishing an ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people." (2 Pet. 2:5) Clearly and accurately God's Word preserves this account for us, going back over four thousand years to the time when Jehovah delivered this faithful patriarch, Noah, and his family through the global flood in an ark that he was privileged to construct according to God-given instructions. (Gen. 6:14-16) However, we must note that no mention is made that God preserved the home, the fixed abode, of Noah and his family on earth. Undoubtedly, these earthly, material possessions were swept away when "all the springs of the vast watery deep were broken open and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And the downpour upon the earth went on for forty days and forty nights."

—Gen. 7:11, 12.

4. How does Peter show Jehovah's ability to deliver, and what do we learn from the example of Noah?

⁵ Peter next refers to the time of Abraham's nephew Lot. When God brought the wicked, immoral cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to a fiery end, "he delivered righteous Lot, who was greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people in loose conduct—for that righteous man by what he saw and heard while dwelling among them from day to day was tormenting his righteous soul by reason of their lawless deeds." (2 Pet. 2:7, 8) Here, also, we observe that, when Lot fled with his wife and two daughters, there is no record of their bringing their material possessions with them. They could not do so. The angelic instruction to them was: "Escape for your soul!" But Lot's wife undoubtedly still retained a "longing" for the material things left behind. She disobeyed the angelic instructions by looking back, which resulted in her becoming a pillar of salt.—Gen. 19:17, 23-26.

⁶ Likewise, in the first century of our Common Era, after the temporary siege of the Holy City of Jerusalem by the Roman legions under the leadership of the Roman general Cestius Gallus, the Christianized Jews had to obey the advice of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had to abandon their properties and possessions in Jerusalem and Judea and "flee" to the mountains outside the province of Judea, leaving practically everything behind them. Those who were at the time outside this district were not to come in to claim anything that they may have had there of a material nature. —Luke 21:20-24.

⁷ Going back farther in history, we find a similar situation. God's Word shows that in the year 607 B.C.E. there were two men whom Jehovah God particularly named and who would have his special blessings at the time when the Holy City of Jeru-

5. How does Lot's deliverance further stress the point?
6. What instructions were given the Christianized Jews regarding Jerusalem?

7, 8. In 607 B.C.E., what two men received Jehovah's special blessing, and how?

salem would be destroyed by the Babylonian armies. One of these men was an Ethiopian by the name of Ebed-melech. He was the one who interceded with King Zedekiah of Jerusalem for the prophet Jeremiah, in order that the king might rescue Jeremiah, who was in danger of dying in a cistern. (Jer. 38:6-13) Speaking of the reward for Ebed-melech's consideration of Jehovah's servant, Jehovah said to him: "I shall without fail furnish you an escape, and by the sword you will not fall; and you will certainly come to have your *soul* as a spoil, because you have trusted in me," is the utterance of Jehovah."—Jer. 39:18.

⁸ The other man named by Jehovah was Baruch, the faithful secretary of the prophet Jeremiah. He had the wonderful privilege of writing two scrolls, at the dictation of Jeremiah, pronouncing the prophetic message of Jerusalem's doom. During the writing of the first scroll, which was later burned piece by piece by Jehoiakim, Baruch complained of weariness. Jehovah cautioned him: "But as for you, you keep seeking great things for yourself. Do not keep on seeking." However, due to his faithfulness he was promised preservation and safety, not only during this terrible siege of Jerusalem but also later when the rebellious escapees compelled him and Jeremiah to go down to Egypt with them. (Jer. 36:4-32; 43:4-7) But note of what this preservation would consist: "'For here I am bringing in a calamity upon all flesh,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I will give you your *soul* as a spoil in all the places to which you may go.'" (Jer. 45:1-5) So both Baruch and Ebed-melech were promised nothing more than their "souls," their bare lives, during the time of siege and destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES

⁹ As we consider these fine examples and appreciate today that "the end of all things has drawn close" (1 Pet. 4:7), that we are living in a much more serious time period with a far greater destruction impending, it causes us to ask ourselves seriously: Is it sensible for us to spend much time and effort on specialized training for some professional job in this worldly system of things, that we may increase our income? Is it reasonable for us to want to increase our earthly possessions beyond our actual needs so that we may feather the bed of our future life here on earth and live more comfortably and luxuriously in the short remaining time before the "great tribulation"? Do we fail to see that there is something far more important and valuable about which we should now be concerned? Do we lack faith that, if we put Him first in our lives, our Great Preserver will look after us in the days to come? These are questions that each of us, individually, must consider. Our lives depend upon it!

¹⁰ Living in a generation where there are so many things that can consume our time, interest and attention, how we need to keep clearly in mind Jesus' prophetic words! He said: "Moreover, just as it occurred in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of man: they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying, women were being given in marriage, until that day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood arrived and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it occurred in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. But on the day that Lot came out of Sodom it rained fire and

9. In view of the time in which we are living, what questions should we seriously consider?

10. Why should we be concerned with Jesus' words at Luke 17:26-30?

sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all. *The same way it will be on that day when the Son of man is to be revealed.*"

(Luke 17:26-30) Having this advance knowledge, where do you find yourself? Are you being submerged with the affairs of everyday living? Is this where your treasure is, where your heart is? (2 Pet. 3:17; Matt. 6:21) How appropriate, therefore, it is that Jesus Christ has counseled all of his disciples, including those of us today who are living at the end of this system of things, to store up for themselves treasures in heaven! What a blessing it will be to us if we do this!

¹¹ But you may ask, What does this mean, to store up treasures in heaven? Just how can this be done? It means this: That we endeavor to obtain and maintain a good standing with our Creator, Jehovah God. It means pursuing a course in life of being "rich toward God." (Luke 12:21) An individual's record of "fine works" is like riches deposited with the Creator in heaven, assuring him of everlasting benefits that even death itself cannot take away. (Heb. 10:24; Jas. 3:13; John 11:25) This standing is maintained by our continuing steadfast in faith and loyalty to our God, Jehovah, and in doing the divine will.

—Rom. 11:20; 2 Cor. 1:24.

¹² Jesus continually emphasized these heavenly treasures and set the pattern for us. (1 Pet. 2:21; Heb. 10:5-10) After counseling his disciples on earthly treasures, he urged them: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matt. 6:33) So for us to store up these heavenly treasures, it is of utmost importance that we live our lives and act now with a view to gaining

a record of approval with our Father in heaven, Jehovah God.—Ps. 5:12; Prov. 12:2; John 6:27.

¹³ In the first century of our Common Era we have an example of a man who did that, who abandoned his treasures here upon the earth that he might devote himself to the interests of the Messianic kingdom. Who was this? It was a very rich man by the name of Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector who lived in the city of Jericho. To this day the district around Jericho, which is just west of the Jordan River, is very fertile and productive. Undoubtedly, in ancient times it yielded considerable tax returns. In the manner of many tax collectors of his time Zacchaeus employed questionable practices in connection with his position to procure part of his notable wealth.—Luke 19:2, 8.

¹⁴ Jesus came to Jericho in the spring of 33 C.E., just before going to Jerusalem and to his death. Zacchaeus, desiring to see Jesus, but being short in stature and unable to see over the crowd, ran ahead and gained a vantage point by climbing a tree. Apparently this attracted Jesus' attention and he called him down and informed him that he would stay with him while in Jericho. This disturbed the townspeople, who complained: "With a man that is a sinner he went in to lodge." (Luke 19:3-7) However, Jesus' association had a dramatic effect on Zacchaeus. Listening to Jesus, he evidently gained appreciation of the real treasure, for he exclaimed: "Look! The half of my belongings, Lord, I am giving to the poor, and whatever I extorted from anyone by false accusation I am restoring fourfold." Yes, he expressed his desire to dispense with his wealth and to become a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful joy Zacchaeus

11, 12. (a) What does it mean to 'store up treasures in heaven'? (b) How is it possible?

13, 14. Who was Zacchaeus, and what dramatic change took place in his life?

must have experienced when Jesus said to him: "This day salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham"!—Luke 19:8, 9.

MODERN-DAY EXAMPLES

¹⁵ So today, it is with joy that we note modern-day examples of individuals who have seen fit to fix their attention on the things of the Kingdom and to turn their backs on accumulating further wealth here on earth. One such example is that of a brother whose life story was reported in *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1968, a very successful businessman. His natural abilities enabled him to become highly successful in the field of buying, selling and management of real estate. On one occasion some business associates who were well acquainted with his business acumen approached him with a seemingly tantalizing business offer. What was that? It was a proposition by which he could clear \$1,000,000 for himself in just one year! What did he do? He turned his back on it! Why? Because he would have to devote all his time for that period to intensive business matters. As he said: "It is not possible for me to give up my wonderful privileges of serving Jehovah here for even just one year, no, not for ALL the money in the world. Serving my brothers here in Washington, D.C., is more precious to me, as here I know I have Jehovah's blessing. I no doubt would make a million dollars but at the end of the year of that kind of life what would I be like spiritually or even physically?" Would you make a similar decision if such an offer was temptingly placed before you?

¹⁶ Consider, also, another example from sometime earlier, that of a man who was

15. What modern-day example do we have of one's putting heavenly treasures first in one's life?

16. What other example can we appreciate today? Why?

entering his twenties back in the 1870's, in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. He was in business with his father, operating a chain of stores in men's furnishings and was on his way to becoming a millionaire. This was before John D. Rockefeller started out in the oil business to become a multimillionaire. But what did this young man of Allegheny do? He saw the priority of studying the Bible, of finding out what it had to teach and what was its message for today. In 1879 he saw the need to publish a new religious magazine, *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* (now *The Watchtower*). Later on he became the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. His name was Charles T. Russell, and his entire fortune he invested in the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom. Yes, what excellent examples we have, past and present, of putting Kingdom interests first in their lives! Are you making such wise decisions to store up for yourself treasures in heaven?

¹⁷ What if someone made an offer to you of \$10,000 if you would give up your faith in Jehovah and your privilege of serving him? Would you accept? How about \$100,000 or \$1,000,000? "Why, that is unthinkable," you say. "No amount of money in the world would permit me to do that!" The only proper decision to make, is it not? Yet, how many, in order to have a "little extra" or something that they greatly desire, have taken on greater responsibilities, perhaps an additional job or just working a "few" evenings a week or weekends! This, of course, prevents them from attending the regularly scheduled meetings of the congregation and profiting by the fine association there. It also

17, 18. (a) How is it possible, before we are aware of it, to be robbed spiritually? (b) What course of Jesus helps us to appreciate the true value of this world's riches?

hinders their preaching activity and it affects the influence of God's spirit in their lives. Before they realize it they have been robbed spiritually, losing their love and appreciation of Jehovah and his organization. They are materially richer, yes, but so much poorer spiritually. What a price to pay for a "little extra" or some additional possession, and they even had to work hard for it at that!

¹⁸ When the Devil took Jesus up on a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and said they would all be his if he would just "fall down and do an act of worship to me," Jesus said: "Go away, Satan! For it is written, 'It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'" (Matt. 4:8-10) May we, likewise, appreciate the value of heavenly treasure, making decisions that bring credit with God and gain his approval.

THE VALUE OF HEAVENLY TREASURE

¹⁹ Let us always appreciate the wisdom of Jesus' words in respect to material possessions. He said that they corrode, they are in continual danger of being lost, stolen or destroyed. The more one has, the more one has to worry about. How often this is an unnecessary burden! One's giving too much attention to these material possessions can also cause one to lose out on the "real life." (1 Tim. 6:19) We have a first-century example of this.

²⁰ About the year 33 C.E. Jesus was on his way through the Province of Peraea, on the eastern bank of the Jordan River. A man, a rich young ruler, came running up to Jesus and asked: "Teacher, what

19. In what way is it a course of wisdom to heed Jesus' advice respecting material possessions?

20-22. (a) What advice did Jesus give a rich young ruler, and what did the young man show to be first in his life? (b) If he lived on to 70 C.E., what probably happened to this young ruler?

good must I do in order to get everlasting life?" (Matt. 19:16) Jesus told him what to do and advised him not to let his material possessions on earth prevent him from gaining the everlasting treasure in heaven. Jesus said: "Go sell your belongings and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, and come be my follower." (Matt. 19:21) Being under the Law he was obligated to help needy Israelites. (Lev. 25:35; Deut. 15:7-11; Isa. 58:6, 7; Ezek. 18:5, 7-9) But did he appreciate this advice of Jesus? No! (Matt. 19:22) What happened then to this young man? Did he go on to continue successful with greater wealth? If he lived thirty-seven years more to 70 C.E., he was in for some drastic changes.

²¹ As mentioned, he was living in the province that the majority of the Christianized Jews fled to in 66 C.E., in order to escape with their lives from the destruction of Jerusalem, which was just at hand. The Roman soldiers did not find themselves obligated to invade the Province of Peraea in order to put down a rebellion of Jews there. But what about this rich young ruler who was living in that province with all his earthly possessions? He was a very conscientious observer of the law of Moses. (Matt. 19:20) If he survived to 70 C.E. this conscientious Law keeper would probably be crossing the Jordan River to the western side, entering into the Province of Judea and going up to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate the annual Passover to God.—Deut. 16:1, 2.

²² Being then in the city, he would be trapped by the Roman legions that surrounded the Holy Place. So he would either perish in the destruction of Jerusalem or survive to be taken captive by the Roman soldiers and to be led off into slavery somewhere in the Roman Empire.

In any event, he would have to leave everything behind him upon this earth, but not for the sake of Jesus Christ, not as being one of his followers. What stupidity upon the part of that young man! With each one of us, how we need a credit, a good standing, with God up there in the heavens! And our credit or standing with him is something most valuable and it will endure forever.

²³ The governments of this earth cannot guarantee that our material possessions will not lose their value in the course of time, either by an economic depression, inflation, revaluation of currency or by a disastrous crash in the stock market. God's Word assures us, in Proverbs 23:4, 5: "Do not toil to gain riches. Cease from your own understanding. Have you caused your eyes to glance at it, when it is nothing? For without fail it makes wings for itself like those of an eagle and flies away toward the heavens."

²⁴ How true when we consider the economic conditions within just this generation! "In Germany at the end of 1923 it took 1,200,400,000,000 paper marks to buy what only 35 marks could purchase just two years earlier, and in Hungary it took 1.4 nonillion pengoes to buy in 1946 what only one pengo could obtain in 1938. (One nonillion equals 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.)" (See *Money and Economic Activity* by Houghton Mifflin.) In Uruguay, South America, during a recent year, the cost of living rose about 500 percent. In the neighboring country of Chile the figure was 375 percent. Certainly if we store up treasures in heaven, they will not undergo such alterations in value, becoming cheapened and finally be of no worth.
—Luke 12:33.

23. In what way can the wisdom of Proverbs 23:4, 5 be seen?

24. What illustrates the folly of trusting in earthly treasures?

²⁵ So, then, it behooves us today to follow the counsel of the Lord Jesus Christ and, instead of submerging ourselves in the game of acquiring further riches for ourselves, let us submerge ourselves in the most urgent work of all time: preaching the good news of God's kingdom and making disciples of people of all the nations. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8) Let us remember that no amount of material riches will carry us through the coming "great tribulation." Just as it is written in Proverbs 11:4: "Valuable things will be of no benefit on the day of fury, but righteousness itself will deliver from death."

²⁶ Let us make it our decision to look heavenward and to put the kingdom of God and its concern first in our lives. If we do this, we are assuring ourselves of countless blessings, indescribable blessings, both material and spiritual, for ourselves now and also, after Armageddon, eternal life in God's new system of things. That is something that all the money in the world cannot buy. Is that what you desire? Then know that everlasting life, peace and happiness in God's righteous new order under Christ's kingdom are the reward of all those who today stop storing up for themselves treasures on earth.—Isa. 9:7; 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

25, 26. (a) In view of the time, what course should we be pursuing? (b) What future is there for those who store up "treasures in heaven"?

IN COMING ISSUES

- The End of 6,000 Years of Man-Rule Approaches
—What Has Been Accomplished?
- Flight to the True Kingdom Refuge.

"Having Nothing and Yet Possessing All Things"

"As poor but making many rich,
as having nothing and yet possessing all things."

—2 Cor. 6:10.

FOR a certainty money is essential for daily living. Without it, how could you live in this present system of things? How could you obtain the necessities of life? In many parts of the earth it can buy hospital care, transportation, electricity, heat and piped-in water, things that are useful to man. But if you did not have money, how could you feed and clothe yourself and your family? How could you obtain a place in which to live and maintain it? As Ecclesiastes 10:19 so wisely expresses it: "Bread is for the laughter of the workers, and wine itself makes life rejoice; but *money* is what meets a response in all things."

So, as long as this present system of things remains, money can be very well utilized by Christians to meet their daily needs, especially in respect to carrying on their Kingdom service. However, due to its usefulness and the multitude of things that it can obtain, a Christian has to exercise self-control continually, always keeping money (wealth, material possessions) in its place, that is, as an instrument, a servant. Never should it be allowed to become an object of one's love, one's "heart's desire." How necessary it is, therefore, for a Christian today, in view of the time in which we are now living, to acquire and

maintain the proper view toward riches!

³ Because of being from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew and, as respects Judaism, one of the Pharisees (who had the reputation of being 'lovers of money'), the apostle Paul could speak from a background of experience in helping us to obtain the proper spiritual balance. (Phil. 3:5; Luke 16:14) Due to his abilities and education, being instructed from the learned Pharisee Gamaliel, he could undoubtedly have been highly successful in accumulating material wealth. (Acts 5:34; 22:3) However, Paul demonstrated where true riches were. After spending more than twenty-five years in the full-time preaching work, and being thrown into prison because of it, he wrote respecting his conviction, his decision in giving up a life of perhaps great material gain, saying: "I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. On account of him I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ and be found in union with him . . . to see if I may by any means attain to the earlier resurrection from the dead." Paul showed where he had placed his heart, and what really was of value in his life. (Phil. 3:8-14; Heb. 6:10-12) Since his attitude toward material

1. In what way does money fill a need?
2. Against what should a Christian continually be on guard? Why?

3. (a) How does Paul help us to view material riches?
(b) Where did he place his heart?

riches was wholesome, he could maintain a healthy view. During his life he observed the damaging effects that the love of riches had upon many.—2 Tim. 4:10.

THE SNARE OF SELFISH DESIRE

⁴ Having genuine concern for the young man Timothy, Paul wrote to him when Timothy was in Ephesus, Asia Minor, which, at the time, was a very wealthy commercial city. Alerting him to the danger of cultivating a craving for material wealth and the disastrous results, he cautioned: “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. For the *love of money* is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for *this love* some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains.” (1 Tim. 6:9, 10) Do you appreciate this counsel? Are you heeding it? Have you seen its truthfulness in the lives of many today?

⁵ When your interest for money in providing for the necessities of life changes into a consuming desire to be rich, or to acquire things beyond your needs, money will cease to be your instrument, your servant. Instead, it becomes your master! It now becomes a “snare.” Jesus said: “*No one* can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches.” (Matt. 6:24) The Bible does not condemn riches; it condemns your becoming a slave to it. Why? Because when your covetous desire for material gain becomes so great that you become its slave, you no longer have Jehovah God as your Master. You cannot then “love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.”

4. To what danger was Timothy being alerted?
5. (a) How can a desire for material wealth become a “snare”? (b) Why can one not serve two masters?

(Matt. 22:37) Some say that “money talks.” But, when you become its slave, it will even do your thinking!

⁶ This craving for money (riches) can become so soul-consuming that it can eat away Christian qualities. It can degrade one to become beastlike. It can cause one to lose sight of justice, truth, honesty, of being generous and showing mercy. (Deut. 16:19, 20; Ex. 23:8) Having a strong desire for material abundance easily leads to indulging in the world’s dishonest business practices. “A man of faithful acts will get many blessings, but he that is hastening to gain riches will not remain innocent.” (Prov. 28:20) But you say, “This is not the situation with me; I can control it. How could I ever develop an affection for it? After all, money is only paper!” True, but how much time and effort are you spending to acquire it? Is it proving to be your master? David T. Bazelon, in his book *The Paper Economy*, makes an honest confession: “Money is a dream. It is a piece of paper on which is imprinted in invisible ink the dream of all the things it will buy . . . Most of us who are not outright losers in the Great American Scramble love money much more than any of the things it will buy. It is not a means to an end for us, it is a passion.” We are living in a time that Paul prophetically pointed to at 2 Timothy 3:1, 2, and about which he said: “In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be . . . lovers of money.” So, how important it is for a Christian to maintain the proper balance, guarding against this insatiable appetite for material wealth!

⁷ This toiling for and love of riches have caused no end of heartache, misery, suffering, unhappiness, frustration and bloodshed. Pitiful are the examples of those who

6. (a) What damaging effects can the love of money have on a Christian? (b) How is money viewed by some?

7. In what has the toiling for riches often resulted?

have lost balance, who have cultivated covetous hearts. Let us appreciate, like Paul, that "the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction" and that they are "for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived."—Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11.

"THE DECEPTIVE POWER OF RICHES"

⁸ Let us remember the time when Jehovah God was leading the Israelites through the wilderness and they were about ready to take possession of the Promised Land. As firstfruits of the conquest, the city of Jericho "must become a thing devoted to destruction . . . it belongs to Jehovah," they were told. God's instructions forbade the looting of it, as was the usual procedure when capturing a city, but it was to be burned with fire. The silver and gold were to be given "into the treasure of Jehovah." (Josh. 6:17-19) However, Achan, from the tribe of Judah, allowed his heart to become covetous. Later he confessed: "When I got to see among the spoil an official garment from Shinar, a good-looking one, and two hundred shekels of silver and one gold bar, fifty shekels being its weight, then I wanted them, and I took them." (Josh. 7:21) The love for riches moved Achan to disloyalty, to dishonesty, to stealing from Jehovah. When Israel was attempting to capture the next city, Ai, Jehovah withdrew his spirit from Israel until Achan the wrongdoer was exposed. When singled out, Achan, his family and his entire livestock were stoned to death and burned with fire. What a price to pay for corruptible treasure!—Josh. 7:1-26.

⁹ Take, too, the attendant of Elisha, Gehazi. After Elisha's curing the Syrian general Naaman of leprosy, Naaman de-

8. (a) What heart attitude was manifested in Achan?
- (b) What lesson do we learn from this?
9. (a) How did Gehazi show his "love of money"?
- (b) Similarly, what caused Ananias and Sapphira to lose their lives?

sired to express appreciation and make a gift to Elisha, but he refused it. Gehazi, however, had a love for riches. He tried to turn this miraculous event into one of personal gain. It led to his fabricating a lie both to Naaman and to Elisha. With what outcome? Elisha said: "So the leprosy of Naaman will stick to you and your offspring to time indefinite." (2 Ki. 5:20-27) There was also Ananias and his wife Sapphira who "played false . . . to God" and secretly held back part of the price of their field, and lost their lives as a result.—Acts 5:1-10.

¹⁰ Then we have the example of one who had the marvelous privilege of being one of Jesus' apostles, Judas Iscariot. Undoubtedly faithful and dependable at first, he undertook caring for the common finances of Jesus and the twelve; but later on he became a greedy, practicing thief. (John 12:6) For just thirty pieces of silver his covetous heart prompted him to betray his Master. To what end? After seeing that Jesus had been condemned, he went out and "hanged himself." (Matt. 27:3-5) That is the danger with those who become slaves to riches!

¹¹ The Bible speaks of "the deceptive power of riches." (Matt. 13:22) The reason it is deceptive is that the one who seeks or pursues it usually fails to realize its limitations. He becomes deceived because, in these riches that he so diligently seeks, he never really finds the satisfaction for which he hungers so much. He continually feels that what a little wealth fails to accomplish, a greater wealth will. So there is a constant hungering for more and more and more, one never being satisfied. Of interest is the fact that this hunger increases the more it is indulged in. As American statesman Benjamin Franklin once so truthfully recognized: "Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it."

10. To what extremes can a covetous heart move one?
11. In what way are material riches deceptive? Explain.

There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of filling a vacuum it makes one. If it satisfies one want, it doubles and trebles that want another way. That is a true proverb of the wise man, rely upon it. 'Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.'”—Prov. 15:16, AV.

¹² Realizing the limitations of material riches will help us to maintain balance. Material wealth fails when the human needs are the greatest. As Jesus said, a person's life does not depend on his material possessions. (Luke 12:15-21) When one loses a loved one in death, can money ease the pain of sorrow? Is there any amount you can give to buy that one back from Sheol, the grave? When one loses one's youth and old age sets in, can stocks and bonds get rid of the wrinkles, make one young and strong again? When one's health fails, what happiness is gained by having a whole bank full of money? If you were born blind, would all the money in the world cause you to see expressions of love on the face of your parents, a beautiful sunset or young animals at play? If born deaf, could mountains of gold substitute for hearing a beautiful symphony, the sound of the ocean or even your own voice? How limited are the powers of material treasures!

¹³ Obtaining the approval and blessing of Jehovah does not depend upon what we may or may not have, but on how we use and view what we have. "Give me neither poverty nor riches. Let me devour the food prescribed for me, that I may not become satisfied and I actually deny you and say: 'Who is Jehovah?' and that I may not come to poverty and I actually steal and assail the name of my God." (Prov. 30:8, 9) Whether we have little of

12. How will our understanding the limitations of material riches help in maintaining the proper view toward them?

13. What view does Proverbs 30:8, 9 give us?

this world's possessions or an abundance, either can be dangerous if we do not keep balanced and maintain the proper view.

¹⁴ An individual who lacks in material possessions can manifest a very strong love for riches. Having nothing, he may feel justified in stealing, or being dishonest in other ways in obtaining what he craves. Envyng what others have, he may feel completely justified in spending his entire time and effort toward acquiring the thing desired. Or, perhaps, like many today, he may feel that the world owes him a living. However, it is a matter of viewpoint. This very one who feels poor may, in the eyes of another living in a different country, appear to be rich in comparison. We must appreciate what we have and use it properly. "Let not the wise man brag about himself because of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man brag about himself because of his mightiness. Let not the rich man brag about himself because of his riches." (Jer. 9:23) Here the right attitude is expressed regardless of whether one is wise, mighty or rich. Not that one has to be any of these, but that one needs to be balanced. Let him brag over knowing Jehovah.—1 Cor. 1:31.

¹⁵ God's Word does not condemn one for having an abundance of this world's goods. Acknowledging the fact that some were rich in his day, Paul did not instruct Timothy to advise these rich brothers to divest themselves of their wealth, to become poor and live a life of poverty. No! Rather, he urged them to maintain the right attitude toward riches. "Give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment; to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share,

14. (a) What viewpoint do some who are poor in this world's goods take? (b) Is this reasoning correct?

15. (a) How does Paul show that having an abundance is not wrong? (b) What dangers, however, face those who have such?

safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life." (1 Tim. 6:17-19) Paul warns of the danger of possessing too much. One may have the tendency to put one's hope in riches. They can distract one from spiritual things. One could become a slave in taking care of them, protecting them. Whether one is rich or poor, there is a limit to how much one can eat and wear. Whatever we have, we should be content, using it to further the interests of the Kingdom, getting "a firm hold on the real life."

SEEKING TRUE RICHES

¹⁶ To what extent, then, should we be concerned about material things? Paul counseled: "We have brought nothing into the world, and neither can we carry anything out. So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." (1 Tim. 6:7, 8) Instructing his disciples on how to pray, Jesus said: "Give us our bread *for the day* according to the *day's requirement*." (Luke 11:3) No mention is made of stockpiling. Just be concerned with your daily requirements, not making an issue of what you will have in the future. Why store up wealth for a time that may never come for you? Why store up treasures in a world that is passing away?—1 John 2:15-17.

¹⁷ You can be assured that Jehovah will see to it that you will have material necessities if you put the interests of his kingdom first in your life. Jesus presents the proper view: "On this account I say to you: Stop being anxious about your souls as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear. Does not the soul mean more than food and the body than clothing?" (Matt. 6:25) Jesus emphasizes the impor-

16. What view of the future should we take respecting material possessions?

17, 18. (a) How do we guard against anxiety? (b) What is the point of Jesus' illustrations?

tant matters, spiritual ones, the "soul," one's life, not the material things that can cause such anxiety! He tells us to "observe intently the birds," how Jehovah "feeds them," and to "take a lesson from the lilies of the field, . . . not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these." Striking at the very basis for anxiety, he says: "So never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. 'Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you.'" (Matt. 6:26-33) Do you have such faith?

¹⁸ This does not mean that we are to sit back, do nothing, and wait until God gives us food and clothing. Jesus' illustration shows how the birds search for what they require. Jehovah gives them the ability and strength to do so. He will do the same for us. (Phil. 4:13) What is stressed is our not being overly concerned with material matters, but to make our service to God our treasure. Doing this will bring innumerable blessings. This is one's going beyond the limitations of material riches and receiving the reward of things that money cannot buy, riches without comparison!—Rom. 11:33.

¹⁹ The surpassing value of these riches is well defined for us at Proverbs 3:13-18: "Happy is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment, for having it as gain is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself. It is more precious than corals, and all other delights of yours cannot be made equal to it. Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand there are riches and glory. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its roadways

19. Why are spiritual riches not to be compared with material ones?

are peace. It is a tree of life to those taking hold of it, and those keeping fast hold of it are to be called happy." From these riches come true peace and happiness, in fact, our very future life!

²⁰ Do you appreciate these treasures? Jesus did! His treasure was the doing of the will of his Father. In fact, he said: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34; 6:38) Everything else in his life took second place. He properly evaluated true riches. Although he was the Son of God, we do not read of Jesus as having an abundance of material riches while on earth. But to the contrary! "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (Luke 9:58) Though poor, however, he was rich. Consider his life and you will find that he was happy, peaceful, contented. He was as one with little of the world's goods, yet he was able to redeem the entire human race, making available the greatest riches, namely, the prospect for his followers to become "sons of God." Additionally, other spiritual riches became available to them.—2 Cor. 8:9; Rom. 8:14, 19; Jas. 2:5; Col. 1:27; 2:2, 3.

²¹ The same fact held true respecting the apostles. They, too, maintained the correct view by putting heavenly treasures first. Peter and his brother Andrew were fishermen, but, at Jesus' invitation, they responded and "at once abandoning the nets, they followed him." (Matt. 4:20) John and James responded similarly. "At once leaving the boat and their father, they followed him." (Matt. 4:22) How they appreciated the opportunity to serve Jehovah God with his sent-forth Son! If you were there at the time, what would you have done? Would you have abandoned your

nets right then and there? Or would you have delayed your decision, reasoning that, since the fishing business was so profitable, you would continue on a little while longer until you were in a better financial position to follow? How we need today to appreciate where the real treasure is! Are you proving by your course of life now that these spiritual treasures are the most important thing in your life? (Matt. 13:44-46) Are you growing in appreciation of the spiritual treasures, of seeking Jehovah's favor and blessings? Do you recognize all the spiritual benefits flowing to us through God's organization and are you taking full advantage of them?

KEEPING OUR "EYE" IN FOCUS

²² Jesus said: "The lamp of the body is the eye. If, then, your eye is simple [sincere; all one way, in focus, generous], your whole body will be bright; but if your eye is wicked [selfish, *Moffatt*], your whole body will be dark. If in reality the light that is in you is darkness, how great that darkness is!" (Matt. 6:22, 23) How appropriate this counsel is! Can we not all appreciate a light in a dark place to prevent us from stumbling or walking into something, doing damage to ourselves? To have proper vision, our eye must be simple, that is, all one way in performing its function. It must be in focus, faithfully catching all the light rays it can from an object and being able to register them in such a way that objects are seen as they really are. Likewise with the 'eyes of our heart.' (Eph. 1:18) They too must be in focus, must be all one way. We must consider matters in their proper perspective to make proper decisions. Having a sincere (generous) eye will help us not to be overly concerned with ourselves. We will desire to share with others. (Phil. 2:4) Having a 'bad eye' or one that is out

20. (a) What example did Jesus set in respect to material possessions? (b) What did he make available?

21. (a) How did Jesus' apostles show appreciation for heavenly treasure? (b) What questions could we consider?

22. (a) How is our eye "the lamp of the body"? Explain. (b) What does it mean to have the 'eyes of our heart' in focus?

of focus will result in our pursuing a course of self-indulgence, making wrong choices. Our whole body will be totally "dark."

²³ Possessing this 'generous eye,' we are able to appreciate Paul's statement that he was "as poor but making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things." (2 Cor. 6:10) Paul had no financial obligations that required him to maintain regular employment at tent-making, but at times he made tents so as to be no financial burden to local congregations. No amount of money can compare with the treasure of serving Jehovah with your complete attention. Like Paul, there are thousands today who, by keeping their eye "simple," are able to devote all their time to preaching and teaching as pioneers, special overseers and workers in Bethel homes. Having the proper perspective toward money, they consider these spiritual blessings of far greater value than the material possessions that they could have if they were spending most of their time in secular pursuits.

²⁴ Having our eye 'in focus,' we can appreciate the unsurpassed joy of aiding others to learn God's wonderful truths and of witnessing the change that it brings in their lives. Here is the basis for real happiness! As Jesus said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) The joy and blessing of aiding others, especially in a spiritual way, make one richer than any amount of material wealth does. Do you "see" and appreciate this?

²⁵ Consider, also, the treasure of God's holy spirit. It cannot be bought. (Acts 8:18-20) Neither can any amount of money buy the fruitage of God's spirit. Describing this treasure, the Bible says: "The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mild-

23. (a) How can we, as being poor, make many rich? (b) What view can we take toward full-time service?

24. How can giving be a treasure?

25. In what way is the "fruitage of the spirit" a treasure? Why so, especially today?

ness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) In this day of worldwide strife, think how valuable these qualities are! How precious it is to have the "peace of God that excels all thought." It "will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7) By shunning the money-loving spirit of this world, by conforming to God's will, by constant prayer, by asking for his spirit and understanding and by letting it be the dominant force in your life, you can also realize the blessings of this treasure.

²⁶ Having your spiritual vision clear, can you see this other treasure—the prospect of everlasting life? Yes! Imagine, living forever on a paradise earth! This is the reward for those "other sheep" who now keep their eye "simple," all one way. (John 10:16; Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:17; 1 Tim. 6:12) No amount of material riches could ever obtain this. (Luke 12:15-21) For "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) This is God's promise to those who love him and do his will, including the "other sheep."

²⁷ May we all, then, keep our spiritual vision clear by maintaining the proper view of riches, remembering that all the money of this system of things is destined to become a thing of the past, worthless. (Ezek. 7:19; Luke 16:9) Soon, when the "great tribulation" puts an end to all the nations of the earth, gone will be the value of this world's riches, both for the dead and for the "tribulation" survivors. Let us heed the counsel of Jesus and use what we have to glorify God. (John 15:8) May we show, not only by our words, but through our actions that we are putting

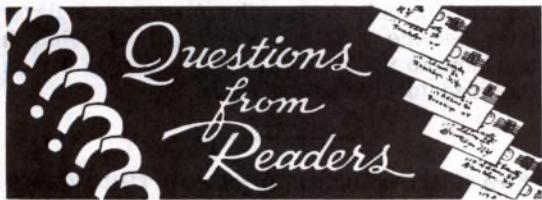
26. What is the reward for those "other sheep" who keep their eye "simple"?

27. (a) In view of the time in which we are living, what view of material wealth should be maintained? (b) What joy and privilege are ours?

spiritual riches first by fully taking advantage of the many provisions Jehovah has made. Let us share with others the good news of the Kingdom, helping them to obtain spiritual riches, and continually keeping our material possessions in their

place and building up a record with our Father in the heavens. May it be ours to have the joy and privilege of being "as poor but making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things."

—2 Cor. 6:10.



- If an unbelieving mate separates from the believing mate, would there not be a basis for dissolving the marriage Scripturally, in view of 1 Corinthians 7:15, where Paul says: "... a brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace"?

No, the apostle is not discussing divorce here, but merely reassuring the Christian that he or she need not feel disapproved if the unbeliever deliberately departs despite the conscientious efforts of the believer to dwell with the unbelieving mate in peace.

Paul had just encouraged the believing mate not to leave if the unbelieving one "is agreeable to dwelling with" the Christian. Why? "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in relation to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in relation to the brother; otherwise, your children would really be unclean, but now they are holy."—1 Cor. 7:12-14.

In view of this, the question naturally would arise as to what situation this would leave the believer in, if the unbelieving mate departed despite the good efforts of the believer. Should he or she now feel disapproved by God or feel that the children are unholy because of the forced separation over which the believer has no control?

No, for the apostle answers: "But if the unbelieving one proceeds to depart, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace." Having done all that is reason-

ably possible to avoid a separation, the believing one need feel no responsibility to chase after the unbeliever in an attempt to fulfill a "servitude" to that one. If the unbeliever had stayed and was willing to dwell with the believer in peace, the believer would be in "servitude" to fulfill the marriage responsibilities. But the apostle recognizes that the forced separation makes it impossible for the believer to do so.

The Christian now has a measure of peace in which to serve Jehovah, even though the separation will normally cause some emotional and physical adjustments. Moreover, trying to force a reconciliation would likely increase the strained relations. Perhaps the unbeliever will desire to return in time. This would be desirable, with the goal of living together peacefully and with the hope that the unbeliever will become a fellow believer. This would be in accord with the general instructions given earlier in verses 10 and 11, that, in the event of separation, they should "remain unmarried or else make up again."

Meanwhile, this would not prevent the wife, if she is the believer, from taking legal action for the support of herself and her children, if she felt this advisable and necessary. The Scriptures, and often the law of the land, place upon the father and husband the responsibility to support his family.

Jesus did not say that it would be all right for the believer to remarry if the unbelieving mate departed from the believer and obtained a legal divorce. And the apostle Paul does not go beyond what Jesus said by giving here what Catholic authorities call the "Pauline privilege." Paul is arguing strongly in favor of preserving the marriage tie, not breaking it. Death obviously breaks the marriage bond. But while both mates are alive, only "fornication" (Greek, *por-nei'a*) gives the faithful mate a basis for

true divorce and freedom to remarry.—Matt. 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:39.

Thus, contrary to the way some translators interpret them, Paul's next words, in verse 16, are not an encouragement to the believer to view the departure as an opportunity to get completely free from the unbeliever. There he says: "For, wife, how do you know but that you will save your husband? Or, husband, how do you know but that you will save your wife?" These rhetorical questions are not designed to suggest, as some claim, that the believer is taking too much of a risk in trying to preserve the marriage with the hope of aiding the unbelieving one to salvation, and that it would be wiser to divorce the unbeliever while circumstances make it possible because of his departure. To the contrary, Paul is emphasizing the benefits of remaining with the unbeliever.

In verse 16, then, he is actually summing up his counsel to those in an unequal yoke by showing that, if a mate stays with the believer, if he is willing, this may result in his becoming a believer and gaining salvation. What a strong and loving reason for not departing! And this is in harmony with the letter and spirit of the

rest of the Christian Greek Scriptures, including the admonition of Peter to Christian wives that their unbelieving husbands "may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives."—1 Pet. 3:1-6.

As living proof that this is the correct understanding of the apostle's counsel, consider God's blessing upon the many cases among Jehovah's Christian witnesses where the believing mate has remained with the unbelieving mate. Yes, there are quite a few instances where the believer even endured temporary separation, only to see the former unbeliever later become a fellow worshiper of Jehovah and now to walk together with him or her on the road to everlasting life.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

October 19: Have You 'Stopped Storing Up
Treasures on Earth'? Page 561. Songs to
Be Used: 74, 79.

October 26: "Having Nothing and Yet Possessing All Things." Page 568. Songs to Be Used: 58, 80.