

The WATCHTOWER

SEPTEMBER 15, 1968

Semimonthly

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

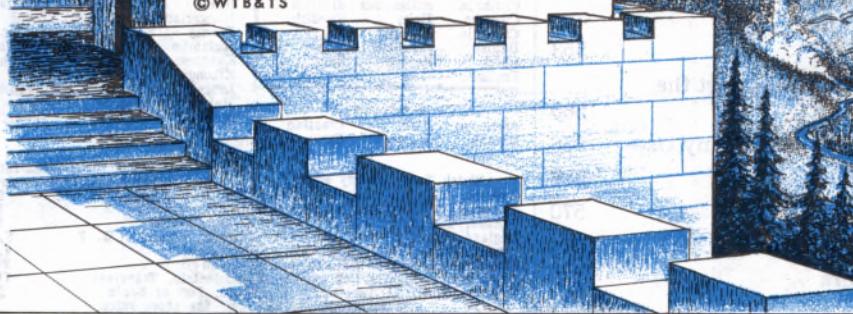
"THIS IS THE LAND"
OF THE WORD OF TRUTH

—
ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE LAND
SUPPORT THE WORD OF TRUTH

—
THE ART OF CORRECTING ANOTHER

—
GRAND BLESSINGS FROM GOD
NEAR AT HAND!

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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AS — American Standard Version
AT — An American Translation
AV — Authorized Version (1611)
Dy — Catholic Douay version
JP — Jewish Publication Soc.

Le — Isaac Leeser's version
Mo — James Moffatt's version
Ro — J. B. Rotherham's version
RS — Revised Standard Version
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The ART of CORRECTING ANOTHER

ANYONE can correct another. But to correct another in a way that does some good is an art. It is necessary to know, not only what to say, but when to say it and where and how.

Take, for example, this true-life incident. In a certain living room there was a group of what might be called well-educated people. All were listening intently as one of their number, a man, told an interesting story. At one point his wife interrupted to correct him on a slight mistake in grammar. Clearly displeased, the husband repeated his grammatical error with added emphasis and proceeded with his story. Obviously, his wife had not learned the art of correcting another.

Most important in the art of correction is the question of motive. The motive

should never be a negative one, to belittle, to embarrass another, or out of resentment or spite. The very best motive for offering correction is love. No doubt the wife who corrected her husband in the matter of grammar did so because of her love for him. She probably would not have thought of saying anything if another man had made that mistake, because it probably would have meant little to her. No doubt about it, among the ways that love can be shown is by offering correction. As God's Word says: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."—Prov. 27:6, RS.

However, one who is truly a friend, and who really loves others, also needs to cultivate empathy. More is needed than good intentions. They might be likened to the power needed to run machines. Important as the power is, it is also important for machinery to be finely adjusted, with gears and bearings not too loose nor too tight, and essential also is enough of the right kind of lubrication. Otherwise, in spite of all the power available, the machine will soon grind to a halt. Similarly when correcting another, you need, not only good intentions, but also the wisdom of empathy, that is, the ability to put yourself in the other's place, so as to know how to go about it, that the correction might do some good.

Important in the art of correcting another is being certain of your facts. You may think you know, and then find out

you were mistaken and so suffer embarrassment for having presumed to correct. Not to be overlooked is the need to take into consideration circumstances that might have a bearing on whether a thing is wise or unwise, whether a certain course of action should be criticized or not. A person may make a very poor showing along a certain line of activity, but if you knew all the facts, all the obstacles he had to contend with, you might be less inclined to correct him. Under the circumstances he might be doing very well indeed.

There is also the matter of correcting trifles. One young husband complained to his very bright young wife: "Dearie, within just two minutes you have corrected me four times, and that in regard to sheer trifles. Did it really matter whether these little things were done in just a certain way?" No, it would not have mattered, and in mentioning them she betrayed a lack of empathy. Apparently she was letting herself get into the bad habit of correcting her spouse in regard to trifles, unessential details, and so was in danger of becoming a nagger.—Prov. 21:9; 27:15.

Why did she do it? Why do so many others like her do it? It could well be because of some unconscious discontent with their lot of submission as defined in the Scriptures. Or it might be a feeling of rivalry of which not even she herself was aware. This, in turn, might be due to thoughtlessness on the part of her husband. A wise and loving husband can do much to remedy matters by ever showing appreciation for what his wife is and for all she contributes to his comfort, pleasure and well-being, physically, emotionally and intellectually.—1 Cor. 11:3, 9.

WHEN AND WHERE?

If it seems advisable to give correction, it is well to keep in mind that, whenever

possible, it is best to correct another in private. Illustrating this is still another true-life incident.

A mature Christian was training another Christian, a motherly person, in the house-to-house ministry in one of the low-income housing projects in Brooklyn, New York. As was his custom, from time to time he would offer suggestions on how she could improve her ministry, correcting her. Afterward he felt he had done quite well in giving thought, time and effort to help this beginner. But that was the last time he saw her for months. What had gone wrong?

When another mature Christian called to find out why she had stopped attending the congregation's meetings he learned that she had been greatly hurt because she had been corrected in the presence of others, fellow Christians. It took considerable patient explaining to help her get over her hurt and see matters in their right light. After that she again began to associate with her fellow Christians at the local Kingdom Hall. What a lesson that was for the minister who had tried to help her in the first place! Unless we are careful and display empathy, we can do more harm than good, even with the best intentions in the world.

Married couples in particular do well to keep this principle in mind. As one Christian marriage counselor well observed: "It is good for man and wife to give counsel to each other, but always do it in private. Have regard for each other's feelings. Do not belittle your mate before others. Nor is it wise to do it in the form of teasing." This includes parents' not correcting each other in the presence of their children.

But it must be added that at times those in authority might be required to give correction in the presence of others, even as noted at 1 Timothy 5:20: "Re-

prove before all onlookers persons who practice sin." However, that is done, not over minor matters, but when one makes a *practice of sin*. And it is not so much for the sinner's benefit as for the benefit of onlookers, even as the apostle Paul goes on to say: "That the rest also may have fear."

HOW AND TO WHOM?

Except for such rare occasions, it is always wise to put the one to be corrected in a receptive frame of mind. One of the ways this can be done is by first giving some praise or commendation. By first having something favorable to say you can make a person more amenable to correction. It will help him to appreciate that you are not prejudiced, that you take note of the strong and good points as well as the weak points and, more than that, that you have empathy and appreciate that receiving correction is not likely to be pleasant.

If you would master the art of correcting another you must be concerned with how you give the correction. Unless the error is very serious and there is willfulness or indifference associated with it, it is best to proceed in offering correction in a gentle manner, with kindness and mildness. Wise is the inspired advice: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to restore such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted." (Gal. 6:1) Yes, kindness and mildness make it so much easier for another to accept your correction. This, however, requires self-control, for correcting another in mildness, in kindness and calmly is not following the line of least resistance.

The art of correcting another includes taking into consideration the matter of position. Certainly those in authority need not feel apologetic when they, in wisdom and with mildness, offer correction to those in their charge. Administering correction is part of the duty of husbands, fathers, teachers and Christian shepherds. True, these themselves might at times err and have need to have an error called to their attention. This, of course, should be done in a most respectful manner.

All these principles governing the correcting of another can well be applied by Christian ministers to their preaching and teaching activity. It might be said that they have been commissioned by Jehovah God to offer correction to all with whom they come in contact in their ministry. How so? In that they have been commanded to warn the world of mankind of the impending destruction of this system of things. To carry out this commission effectively requires their mastering the art of correcting others.

So they also must, first of all, be fully informed so as to know what to say; they must also have the right motive, giving the warning out of the goodness of their heart, because of love, even though others may not appreciate it. They must consider the time and place, not insisting upon being heard when it is not convenient for others to listen. Neither do they press their message on those who do not appreciate sacred things; they 'do not throw what is holy to dogs.' And in doing all this they give with mildness and kindness a reason for the hope that is in them. By thus mastering the art of correcting another they can hope to do the most good in their Christian ministry.—Matt. 7:6; 1 Pet. 3:15.

DO YOU want to live in peace and happiness? Do you desire good health and long life for yourself and your loved ones? Do you long to see wickedness and suffering end? Every honest-hearted person wants these things. But today, in all parts of the earth, violence, crime, hunger and sickness are increasing. Why is the world so filled with trouble? What does it all mean? Is there any sound reason to believe that conditions will really get better in our lifetime?

Yes, there is reason for such hope, and it is clearly set out in a book that is published in more languages than any other book in the world. That book is the Bible. It tells us of God's purpose to set up an entirely new system of things for mankind. If you had the power to do so, would you not bring to an end the conditions that cause so much sorrow? Of course you would! Should we think that the Creator of mankind will do any less? The Bible tells us that "God is love." (1 John 4:8) Surely this loving heavenly Father knows what mankind needs. He has the power to fill those needs, and he will most certainly do so, for Psalm 145:16 says of God: "You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing."—See also Deuteronomy 32:4.

When will God satisfy man's desire for true peace and happiness, along with lasting health and life? Must mankind wait for thousands of years more? No! The time is near at hand! But how can this be? Conditions in the world are getting worse, not better. True, but the Bible clearly showed, long in advance, that these very conditions would come. It prophesied that 'in the last days critical times hard to deal with would be here.' In describing

GRAND BLESSINGS FROM GOD



those "last days" it said: "Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection . . . betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." Does this not describe perfectly conditions existing today? Yes, the existence of these very conditions is proof that we are living in the "last days" of the present wicked system of things.—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Soon the loving Creator will bring to their end both wickedness and those who cause it. But God will richly bless honest-hearted ones who want to do what is right, for he promises: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

WHAT GOD WILL DO FOR MANKIND

What a change this earth will experience! There will be no more war, nor will there be any of the suffering that war brings. Hatred, selfishness, crime and violence will all be things of the past. Instead,

there will be perfect peace and security on earth. God's own Word declares: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; . . . the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Ps. 37:10, 11) Such peace will exist, not only between nations, but among neighbors and in every household. Think what a grand blessing that could be to you! And how reassuring to know that the fulfillment of this heart-warming promise does not depend on men! It is God who will bring it about. How? By destroying the wicked and by educating his people in the ways of peace.—Prov. 2:21, 22; Isa. 54:13.

Among the many blessings that people will enjoy in the new system of God's making is good health. Even death, which brings much sorrow to all of us, will be no more. The Creator's promise is: "And [God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more. . . . Look! I am making all things new." (Rev. 21:4, 5) That is something that no human ruler, no scientist, no doctor can do; but it is something that God will do.

Is it reasonable that God's only purpose for man is that he spend twenty years growing up, perhaps another twenty or thirty years gaining knowledge and experience, and shortly thereafter begin to grow old, suffer from sickness and die? Why should man's life be so short when even a turtle may live to the age of two hundred years and a tree may live far longer? God made man to live, not to die. The Creator promises that soon it will be possible to enjoy life everlasting, right here on earth. His Word says: "He will actually swallow up death forever." And it also explains: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will

reside forever upon it." (Isa. 25:8; Ps. 37:29) With peace-loving neighbors, good health and satisfying activity to fill our lives, what a pleasure that will be!

How can you be sure that this new system will come? How can you be sure it is not just a dream? You can be confident because Almighty God has promised it. The One who created and sustains the universe has given his guarantee that it will come. "God . . . cannot lie." (Titus 1:2) As a man of faith rightly said to his fellowmen: "Not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed."—Josh. 23:14.

These thrilling truths about a new system of things are found in God's Word, the Bible, the Holy Scriptures. There is no other source of information available to man that explains in a truly satisfying way the reason for what has happened on earth and God's purpose for mankind. While men were used to write the Bible, they did so under the direction of God's powerful active force or holy spirit, so that "all Scripture is inspired of God." (2 Tim. 3:16) Just as an invisible radio beam can carry information to you, so God's invisible active force directed the writers of the Bible to put down what he wanted mankind to know. That is why one of those writers, the apostle Paul, could say: "When you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God." —1 Thess. 2:13.

WORLDWIDE CHANGE NEAR

God's Word of truth tells us very clearly that we are fast nearing a worldwide change. It shows us that our time is the one Jesus Christ had in mind when he foretold the end of this wicked system.

Jesus foretold many things that his future followers should watch for so they would know when the end was near. He said that the last days of this wicked system would be marked by such things as world wars, food shortages, increasing lawlessness and a growing loss of faith in God. (Matt. 24:3-12) He said there would be "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out," and that men would "become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." (Luke 21:25, 26) We have seen the fulfillment of these prophecies in our lifetime.

Many men who study world events are convinced that a great change is definitely in the making. The famous writer Walter Lippmann said: "For us all the world is disorderly and dangerous, ungoverned and apparently ungovernable. Everywhere there is great anxiety and bewilderment." He added that all this "marks, I believe, the historic fact that we are living through the closing chapters of the established and traditional way of life."* Also, as reported back in 1960, a former United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, declared that our time is "a period of unequaled instability, unequaled violence." And he warned: "I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in fifteen years from today, this world is going to be too dangerous to live in."†

All the many things foretold in God's Word of truth indicate that the time for world change is upon us right now! What we see going on throughout the world today in fulfillment of Bible prophecy shows that our time is the one that will see the destruction of this entire wicked system. Present-day governments will be removed to make way for the rule of all

the earth by God's government. (Dan. 2:44; Luke 21:31, 32) Nothing can stop this change, because God has purposed it.

TRUTH THAT LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE

The coming world change will affect every person on the face of the earth, including you. If you love life and want to live, you should hasten to take in accurate knowledge of God, his purposes and his requirements. That is what God wants you to do, for it is his will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Tim. 2:4) Accurate knowledge from God's Word of truth will enable honest-hearted persons to survive the end of the present wicked system. As the Bible says: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth . . . Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zeph. 2:3.

Accurate knowledge of God will show you how to find protection during the end of this system. It will also reveal the way to eternal life in God's grand new system. Jesus Christ said in prayer to God: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3; see also John 4:14.

How encouraging it is to know that soon we will see the end of all the world's troubles! How thrilling it is to know that we have the hope of shortly entering a new system where we can forever enjoy life to the full! This should give every one of us strong reasons for wanting to learn the truth from the Bible. By seeking this truth we begin to lay "a fine foundation for the future, in order [to] get a firm hold on the real life," "eternal life" in God's new system of things.—1 Tim. 6:19, AV.

* Newsweek, October 9, 1967, p. 21.

† U.S. News & World Report, June 13, 1960, pp. 116, 119.

"This Is the Land" OF THE WORD OF TRUTH

"Jehovah went on to say to him: 'This is the land about which I have sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, "To your seed I shall give it." I have caused you to see it with your own eyes!'"—Deut 34:4.

SINCE you are blessed with life on this wonderful earth where man resides, you may be interested in geography, at least to some extent, because men are interested in their home. Geography truly is a fascinating, descriptive science of the earth and its life. It deals especially with the description of the land surface and the areas occupied by water, the seas and other bodies of water. It studies the air, the distribution of plant, animal and human life, as well as the natural resources of the land, and also, to a degree, man's industries and the records of these various elements and their mutual relation to one another.

² In giving consideration to the earth, you can, of course, actually see many of its features. Also, maps are available in considerable detail. So you do not have to go to every part of the earth to learn something about it, but it is physically possible for you to verify what you learn from study by actually visiting and seeing the various regions of earth. All of this results in what could be referred to as a fine geography lesson, personal firsthand study of the science of the earth and its features.

³ Familiarity with sections of the earth is also gained through news items report-

ing current events. During the summer of 1967 the attention of the world was centered upon a small portion of the globe that lies just east of the Mediterranean Sea. In June of that year a brief, violent war was waged and the news media of the world carried detailed accounts of the conflict and the territory where it took place. These printed reports included maps, diagrams, pictures, photographs and drawings, indicating to readers the geographical features of the area, indeed a lesson in the geography of that part of the earth, enabling people to have a clearer understanding of the area than prior to these published reports.

⁴ The accounts of this Israeli-Arab conflict, which erupted into war June 5, 1967, included a feature that is true of no other part of the earth. They made innumerable references to facts that are applicable exclusively and distinctively to this area. This is very significant. It confirms the fact that this land was the locale for past events of greatest importance that concern you. Notice some of the points made in the reports:

⁵ Jerusalem was referred to as "this historic city," "revered by Christians because it was the site of many major events in the life of Jesus." Reference was made to "the ancient Biblical roads between

1. Geography is of what interest to us?
2. Explain two ways of becoming familiar with regions of the earth.
3. What unusual "geography lesson" did the summer of 1967 provide?

4, 5. (a) In the accounts of the Israeli-Arab war of 1967, how is the battleground shown to be unique? (b) Of what heightened interest is this to us?

(Tel Aviv) and Jerusalem," "the Christian holy places," the Mount of Olives, Calvary, the site of King Solomon's temple, to Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus, "Damascus . . . founded by Uz, son of Aram . . . already a city by the time of Abraham. . . . Paul was converted to Christianity on his way to the city."

⁶ Emphasizing the historical nature of the battleground, a Jewish rabbi is reported to have said excitedly: "We are now realizing the dreams of the Jews for two thousand years! We are entering the messianic era." The area was referred to in the war reports as "the land of Canaan which the Arabs call by its Roman name Palestine and the Jews call Israel," and the combatants as "the descendants of Isaac and the descendants of Ishmael." "Jews and Arabs have a historic association going back 3,500 years, both being Semitic peoples. Jews trace their ancestry to Abraham through his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. Arabs also claim to be descendants from Abraham through another son, Ishmael."

⁷ Relative to a map published with a war bulletin: "The map . . . gives, at a glance, the extent of the Israeli victory. Israel now holds strategic positions that make its frontiers far more defensible than in the past—the Old City of Jerusalem and the Judean Hills; the Samarian Hills of Jordan; the Golan Heights of Syria; the Gaza Plain; positions dominating the Strait of Tiran, and key communications junctions in Sinai running right to the east bank of the Suez Canal."

⁸ The Wailing Wall, the Mount of Olives, Mount Scopus, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee, the Syrian bluffs above the waters where Peter fished, the Mount of Beatitudes, the site

of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Mount Hermon, all these figured in the geography of the war and, impressively: "It was in this cruel and lovely land, 2,000 years ago, that peace and mercy were first preached by a Jew of Nazareth as universal doctrine."

⁹ The One who made the earth, Jehovah the Creator, arranged matters so that in this particular section of the earth, in a relatively small area, events took place that are of great importance to you. This portion of the earth is that referred to in Deuteronomy 34:1-4: "Then Moses proceeded to go up from the desert plains of Moab into Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which fronts toward Jericho. And Jehovah went showing him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, and the Negeb and the District, the valley plain of Jericho, the city of the palm trees, as far as Zoar. And Jehovah went on to say to him: 'This is the land about which I have sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, "To your seed I shall give it." I have caused you to see it with your own eyes, as you will not cross over there.'

¹⁰ A further description of this land is: "From the wilderness and this Lebanon to the great river, the river Euphrates, that is, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun your territory will prove to be." (Josh. 1:4) In showing the land to Moses, Jehovah God made reference to his promise to Abraham, and it was to Abraham that Jehovah gave this description of the land: "On that day Jehovah concluded with Abram [Abraham] a covenant, saying:

6. State additional facts emphasizing the history of this region of the earth.

7, 8. (a) Relative to a map published with a war bulletin, to what points is interest directed? (b) Give additional direct ties of modern events with Bible history.

9. As to this particular section of the earth, what does the Creator's Word say?

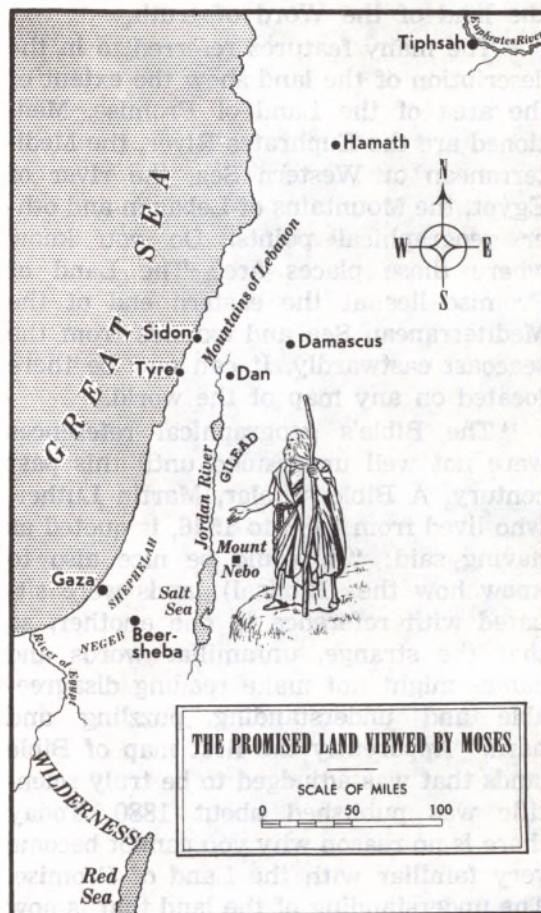
10. (a) From the further description of the land given in Joshua 1:4 and Genesis 15:18-21, point out on the map herewith included areas and the boundaries. (b) So when Jehovah told Moses, "This is the land," to what did he refer?

'To your seed I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites and the Kenizzites and the Kadmonites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Rephaim and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Gergashites and the Jebusites.' (Gen. 15:18-21) Moses was interested in all the land. He very much wanted to go to the northern part of the land of promise in the region of the Mountains of Lebanon, but God did not allow him to do so. Rather, eventually God showed him the land from the vantage point on the top of Pisgah on Mount Nebo. (Deut. 3:23-28) So you see, this was a very specific and definitely described territory that God selected for his purpose; and to his covenant people, the Israelites, Jehovah God gave as a gift this delightful land. This wonderful Promised Land was the setting for many events recorded in God's Word the Bible, and largely it was the location for the recording of the Word of truth. So the Promised Land of which Jehovah said, "This is the land," is the land of the Word of truth, the land of the Bible, the land of the book that is today the religious book of Christians.

¹¹ The land of the Word of truth demonstrates that reliance upon the Word is completely reasonable. The land supports the Word. Persons question the existence of places to which the Bible makes reference and they question events that the Bible says occurred. We cannot doubt the fact of the existence of the Bible, because we have the book of Holy Scriptures, but these persons deny the accuracy of the Bible. Are they going to try to deny the existence of the land? Hardly; the land is there!

¹² The land and what it contains today you and anyone else can see. The descrip-

tion of the Promised Land as contained in the Bible is not vague but, on the contrary, descriptions provide specific names



and specific places. Christians should take an interest in these details because they are a part of the Word of truth. In his farewell, the servant of Jehovah, Joshua, stated: "I am going today in the way of all the earth, and you well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed." (Josh. 23:14) In his farewell Joshua made

11. How does the land support the Word?

12. Give reasons why Christians today are especially interested in this land.

reference to the 'good land that Jehovah has given you.' Christians rely on the Word of truth and, in doing so, are aided and strengthened by their knowledge of the land of the Word of truth.

¹³ The many features referred to in the description of the land show the extent of the area of the Land of Promise. Mentioned are the Euphrates River, the Mediterranean or Western Sea, the river of Egypt, the Mountains of Lebanon and other geographical points. Do you know where those places are? The Land of Promise lies at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and extends from the seacoast eastwardly. It can now be there located on any map of the world.

¹⁴ The Bible's geographical references were not well understood until this past century. A Bible scholar, Martin Luther, who lived from 1483 to 1546, is quoted as having said: "It would be nice also to know how the (Biblical) lands were situated with reference to one another, so that the strange, unfamiliar words and names might not make reading disagreeable and understanding puzzling and hard." Apparently the first map of Bible lands that was adjudged to be truly scientific was published about 1880. Today there is no reason why you cannot become very familiar with the Land of Promise. The understanding of the land that is now available will be helpful to you in your understanding of the Bible itself. This land, the setting for the events of the Word of truth, is real and not mythical. It is a land you can visit today.

¹⁵ The Bible, the Word of truth, itself constitutes an invaluable gift from Jehovah, a gift not to the Israelites alone but

to all interested believers. These two great gifts, the land and God's Word, are still with us. Neither can be obliterated. The Word directs us to pay attention to the land. This land of Palestine, the land of Jehovah's worship of old, means more to Christians than it does to other persons. The Bible's extensive use of definite locations makes the land and the locations important to us. While surface features of the land have changed throughout the centuries, the land is still there and your use of it in pinpointing events emphasizes the truthfulness of the Biblical account and makes the Word of truth live for you.

¹⁶ It is natural and it is proper for you to relate events mentioned in the Bible to the location when this is given in the account. When the setting is known, interest is added to the event and meaning is appreciated more fully. There are many reasons why we should become acquainted with the land itself, so we may know as fully as possible what it was that Jehovah referred to when he said to his servant Moses, "This is the land."

A SMALL STAGE FOR TREMENDOUS EVENTS

¹⁷ "Jehovah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of torrent valleys of water, springs and watery deeps issuing forth in the valley plain and in the mountainous region, a land of wheat and barley and vines and figs and pomegranates, a land of oil olives and honey, a land in which you will not eat bread with scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land the stones of which are iron and out of the mountains of which you will mine copper. When you have eaten and satisfied yourself, you must also bless Jehovah your God for the good land that he has given you." (Deut. 8:7-10) The land is thus described in the Bible as be-

13, 14. (a) Have the Bible's geographical references always been well understood? (b) What did Martin Luther say on this? (c) How recent are scientific maps of Bible lands? (d) To what extent can we come to know the Bible territory?

15. (a) Included in Jehovah's gifts to man are what two that are still with us for our benefit? (b) How are they of benefit to us?

16. To what extent do we relate events to locations?
17. What paradisaic description once applied to this land?



THE LAND OF THE WORD OF TRUTH
(where many events referred to
in the Bible took place)

SCALE OF MILES
0 10 20 30

ing at that time a veritable paradise. The ancient land serves as a pattern of the earth under the reign of Jehovah's heavenly kingdom by Christ Jesus, paradise.

¹⁸ The area of the ancient Land of Promise is determined by the descriptions that have been previously set out herein and also by the one found in Numbers 34: 1-12. We will not set out the text here but recommend that you read it from your copy of the Bible. On the map herewith you will see the extent of this land that constitutes the small stage for the important events enacted thereon. Speaking strictly, it was only about 35 miles in width from east to west and 300 miles in length in a general northerly and southerly direction. Actually about 150 miles of it was settled, amounting to an area of approximately 6,000 square miles. This was in the days of the power of the kingdom under Solomon, "For he was holding in subjection everything this side of the River, from Tiphrah to Gaza, even all the kings this side of the River; and peace itself became his in every region of his, all around. And Judah and Israel continued to dwell in security, everyone under his own vine and under his own fig tree, from Dan to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon."—1 Ki. 4:24, 25.

¹⁹ In addition to this the Israelites settled east of the Jordan over a considerable area, and this in addition to the area above described as being under Solomon gives a total of about 10,000 square miles. So that is the size of the stage for dramatic events.

²⁰ The variety and the extremes that are found in this geographic area are easily visualized and it will be helpful for us to do so. The Promised Land has some

18. Using the map on page 555, describe the Land of Promise further.

19. The stage for Bible drama assumed what proportions?

20. State the general geographical characteristics of the land along the Mediterranean Sea, referring to the map on page 557.

general characteristics that are quite easy to remember. The land as actually occupied by the Jews extended from the Lebanon Mountains shown on the map herewith in the north to the wilderness in the south, the Negeb. Along the Western Sea or the Great Sea, now known as the Mediterranean, which constituted the western boundary of the Land of Promise, there is a series of plains, the area of the plains extending along the seacoast through Cae-sarea and Sharon.

²¹ East of there, between the seacoast and the mountains, is the Shephelah ("Lowland") or the hill country. On the map you see the Shephelah toward the south above the Negeb. In this hill country, the Shephelah, you see on the map the city of Lachish, referred to twenty-three times in the Bible.

²² Lying generally east of the Shephelah or hill country are the mountains of Samaria and of Judah. They include the territory in which the city of Jerusalem is located. You see Jerusalem, also called Zion, on the map, west of the northern end of the Dead Sea, and you see the Mount of Olives and Bethany. To the north of there are the mountains of Samaria, including Mount Gerizim. There is Jacob's Well, the village of Sychar and also the city of Samaria. This area was in the territory of the ten tribes of Israel following the division of the nation of Israel into two parts.

²³ Look to the right of Jerusalem and to the north, that is, to the northeast of Jerusalem, and you see the city of Jericho. Jericho is located on the western side of the next important geographical feature of the Promised Land. This outstanding geographical feature is the great Rift Valley, which runs north and south from the

21. Eastwardly, what is the next characteristic?

22. On the map, where are the other points here named?

23. Point out on the map the Rift Valley and related locations mentioned here.

mountains in the north and contains the Jordan Valley, the river Jordan, the Sea of Galilee, the Salt Sea or Dead Sea and extends down to the Arabah and the Red Sea.

²⁴ Then east of the Jordan River and east of the Salt Sea are the hills and tablelands of Moab. On the map you see Mount Nebo and Pisgah indicated. At this high elevation Moses stood and surveyed the land, looking north and west and south, being able to see across the countryside toward the Mediterranean Sea, and he viewed the great area and heard Jehovah's words to him: "This is the land."

²⁵ Thus you have some general features of the Promised Land: the plain along the Mediterranean seacoast, the hill country or Shephelah, the mountains of Samaria and of Judah, where Jerusalem is located, the great Rift or Jordan Valley including Jericho, and then there are the hills and tablelands east of the Jordan River including the country of Moab.

²⁶ Many physical features mentioned in the Bible can be located on this and other maps, including the Kidron Valley, the Valley of Hinnom, the Arabah, Arnon River, Jordan River, Mount of Olives, Plain of Esdraelon, Mount Carmel, Mount Hermon, river Jabbok.

²⁷ Here is something important to us: in each of these areas there is an abundance of discovered archaeological support of the Bible involving places mentioned in the Word of truth. Why should this be so important? Because of the fact that, while there are many places mentioned in the Bible that have been known

and located throughout the centuries, there are many other places that the Scriptures name but the locations of which have not been known over the years; and critics of God's Word have said in effect that, since the locations of these sites are not known, it follows that the Bible accounts are not true and the Scriptures are therefore not reliable. The facts of archaeological support prove something essential to us in this connection. They prove that, when persons claim that places mentioned in God's Word never existed, the persons making these claims are wrong. "Skeptical criticism" of the Bible on the basis of nonidentification of Bible sites has especially come forth from the eighteenth century onward. In the language of one archaeological authority, William Foxwell Albright: "The patriarchal narratives of Genesis and the Mosaic tradition of the following books of the Pentateuch have been discredited by the modern higher criticism . . . Some treat Moses as a legendary figure." This criticism has been characterized as "the hypercritical attitude which previously obtained" but which is now overwhelmed by the facts of more recent discoveries in the Promised Land.

²⁸ So the situation is that we have the land before us; we can visit it. The geographical surface features of the land itself are plain and evident and can be identified by even the casual visitor as being those referred to in the Word of God. However, in respect to people and places that have heretofore been identified by the Bible itself, critics who oppose God's Word and attempt to discredit it have claimed that such persons and places were fictitious and therefore, be-

24. Where did Moses stand to view the land?

25. Using the map, review the five general geographical features of the land.

26. Locate on the map other Bible sites.

27. (a) What fact is important to us? (b) Why is this of importance? (c) What now overwhelms certain criticism?

28, 29. The land is of what advantage to the truth seeker?

cause of this, the Bible account is mythical, unreliable and not to be taken as a sure guide.

²⁰ We have said that the facts of archaeological support prove such Bible

critics to be wrong. Are you not interested in noticing just a few of these archaeological discoveries that confirm the Bible? The following article deals with some of such.

Archaeology and the Land

SUPPORT THE WORD OF TRUTH

"You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed."—Josh. 23:14.

THE Land of Promise, which Jehovah God gave to his people Israel, supports and confirms his Word of truth, the Bible, which he has given as an invaluable gift, not to the Israelites alone, but to all who would worship him. The Word refers to the land; the land supports the Word and particularly conquers the evil Bible criticism with the good facts from archaeology. We feel you will be interested in some of these facts and in the comments relative to them made by authorities in the field of archaeology.

² "It is perfectly true to say that Biblical archaeology has done a great deal to correct the impression that was abroad at the close of the last century and in the early part of this century, that Biblical history was of doubtful trustworthiness in many places." So states J. A. Thompson in *The Bible and Archaeology*.

³ "In Palestine, places and towns that are frequently mentioned in the Bible are

being brought back once more into the light of day. They look exactly as the Bible describes them and lie exactly where the Bible locates them." This is the view of Werner Keller in *The Bible As History*, Introduction, and he continues, "There kept hammering in my brain this one sentence: 'The Bible is right after all!'"

⁴ Have you heard of the Bible account of the great deluge, the Flood, being called in question? It has been ridiculed by some Bible critics who have thereby dishonored God and Christ Jesus, doing injury to those whom they succeeded in influencing. Yet archaeological excavations are interpreted as confirming the Bible account of the Flood, appearing in the seventh chapter of the book of Genesis. There is archaeological support of the truthful Scriptural account of the "tower with its top in the heavens."—Gen. 11:3, 4.

⁵ Places referred to in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the Genesis account,

1. To whom are Jehovah's gifts of the land and the Word given?

2, 3. Give experts' opinion that evil Bible criticism is conquered by good from archaeology.

4. Is there evidence outside the Bible of the great deluge?

5. Point to the maps to locate sites now determined as here listed.

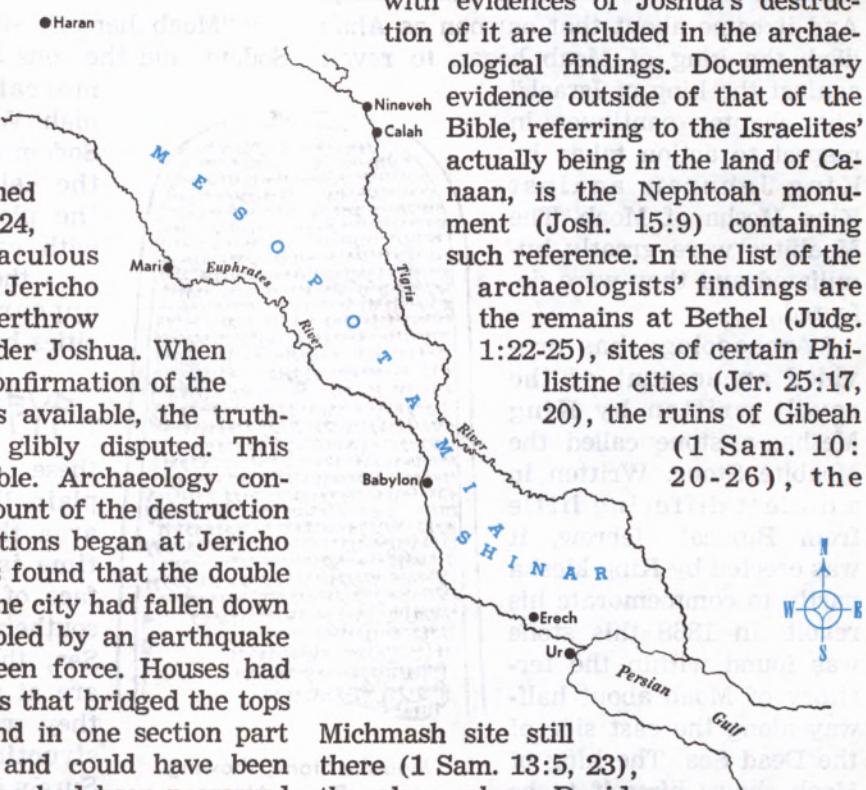
the existence and location of which are confirmed by the reports of archaeology, include the site of Calah, Erech, Ur of the Chaldeans, Haran, cities all of them; and the persons of Genesis chapter eleven, namely, Peleg, Serug, Nahor, Terah and Haran, referred to in cuneiform writings that were found in the ruins of the palace of Mari. The ancient site of Shechem and of the wells at Beer-sheba are likewise so indicated.

⁶ The destruction of the ancient city of Jericho, located on the west side of the great Rift Valley, is mentioned in Joshua 6:20, 24, showing the miraculous fall of the walls of Jericho and that city's overthrow by the Hebrews under Joshua. When no archaeological confirmation of the Bible's account was available, the truthfulness of it was glibly disputed. This is no longer possible. Archaeology confirms the Bible account of the destruction of the city. Excavations began at Jericho in 1930. Excavators found that the double walls surrounding the city had fallen down the slope as if toppled by an earthquake or some other unseen force. Houses had been built on rafters that bridged the tops of the two walls and in one section part of the wall stood and could have been where Rahab's house had been preserved in the Biblical catastrophe. The excavators found evidence of intense fire. The city had been burned. This was no ordinary burning, because the layer of ashes was unusually thick and it appeared that all available fuel had been gathered to accomplish a thorough destruction. The city had not been looted, neither had there

6. State the confirmed facts regarding Jericho, and locate the site on one of our maps.

been any substantial rebuilding of the city until hundreds of years thereafter, about the time of King Ahab, when the Bible tells us that it was rebuilt. Today you can go to the Rift Valley, to the site of the excavations of the ruins of that ancient city of Jericho and see this archaeological support of the Bible account.

⁷ As in the case of the ruins of Jericho, so the ruins of another city taken by the Israelites under Joshua, Hazor, together with evidences of Joshua's destruction of it are included in the archaeological findings. Documentary evidence outside of that of the Bible, referring to the Israelites' actually being in the land of Canaan, is the Nephtoah monument (Josh. 15:9) containing such reference. In the list of the archaeologists' findings are the remains at Bethel (Judg. 1:22-25), sites of certain Philistine cities (Jer. 25:17, 20), the ruins of Gibeah (1 Sam. 10: 20-26), the



Michmash site still there (1 Sam. 13:5, 23), the place where David conquered Goliath (1 Sam. 17:2, 3), the ruins of Beth-shan and the house of Ashtoreth (1 Sam. 31:10), Megiddo in the north plain of Jezreel with its great stables (1 Ki. 9:15), Ezion-geber with its copper and ship works (1 Ki. 9:26), the site of Gebal (Ezek. 27:9), the stronghold at

7. Here many other sites claim attention. What is each, and where is it on the large map?

Mizpah (1 Ki. 15:16, 22) and the palaces of Samaria with their ivory and other luxurious furnishings (1 Ki. 22:39).

⁸ The book of the Word of truth states at 2 Kings 1:1: "Moab began to revolt against Israel after the death of Ahab." In 2 Kings 3:4, 5 this is verified: "As regards Mesha the king of Moab, he became a sheep raiser, and he paid to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand unshorn male sheep. And it came about that as soon as Ahab died, the king of Moab began to revolt against the king of Israel." The chapter continues in respect to action taken by King Jehoram against King Mesha of Moab. The Moabites were greatly humiliated and they were defeated.

⁹ Archaeology has provided an account of the revolt written by King Mesha, a stone called the Moabite Stone. Written in a dialect differing little from Biblical Hebrew, it was erected by King Mesha partly to commemorate his revolt. In 1868 this stone was found within the territory of Moab about half-way along the east side of the Dead Sea. The king of Moab shows himself to be a worshiper of the god Chemosh. In his account he mentions the name of Israel's God, Jehovah. The false god Chemosh could not save Moab. The writing of Mesha on the Moabite Stone could not cover up Jehovah's victory over Moab. Said Jeremiah: "The people of

Chemosh have perished." And Zephaniah prophesied: "Moab herself will become just like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah." (Jer. 48:46; Zeph. 2:9) This has been the case with Mesha and his people, the Moabites. The Moabite Stone not only uses the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew-Phoenician characters but it mentions fourteen *places* found in the Bible record. This stone has long been available to Bible researchers.

¹⁰ "Moab herself will become just like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah," stated Zephaniah. What was the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities of the plain? "We can say with certainty today that . . . the riddle of the disappearance of the two cities has been solved," declares Werner Keller. The solution is that

these corrupt cities of the plain lie in ruins in the area that at the present time is beneath the surface of the waters of the southern end of the Dead Sea, the waters of which are at a level higher than they were before the destruction of these cities. Surely it is true that "from . . . when Israel consolidated

its occupation of . . . Palestine . . . Biblical tradition is increasingly illuminated by archaeological and documentary material of all kinds." "To sum up, we can now again treat the Bible from beginning to end as an authentic document of religious history," says archaeologist Albright.

8. Relate the Bible account concerning King Mesha.
9. What has archaeology contributed to the Mesha account in support of the Bible?

10. Where lie the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah, and this according to what authority?



Moabite Stone, showing the Divine Name

¹¹ The fulfillment of Jehovah's prophetic pronouncements of destruction upon his enemies as they were centered in the various cities of their times is shown in the ruins of those cities. Such ruins are wonderful confirmations of the accuracy of the pronouncements of God's prophets. These "wonders" are listed by one authority as including Tyre, Sidon, Bethel, Samaria, Jerusalem, Babylon and the nations of Egypt, Edom and the Philistines. Sites that have been the scene of excavation for archaeological research include: Hazor, Chorazin, Nazareth, Caesarea, Samaria, Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel, Jericho, Gibeon, Gibeah, Jerusalem, Qumran, Bethzur, Lachish, Debir and Ezion-geber, and this does not complete the list by any means.

¹² On the large map in this issue in the Shephelah you will find located Lachish, near which was Azekah. The ruins of both of these cities have been excavated. From these excavations have come archaeological treasures that establish a multitude of details in confirmation of the Bible accounts. In 1935 in the ruins of a guardroom of the Double Gatehouse there were found eighteen pieces of pottery inscribed with writings. These turned out to be a number of letters, and the collection is now known as the "Lachish Letters." They confirm the Bible's mentioning fire signals in Jeremiah 6:1, and Lachish as a neighboring town of Azekah referred to in Jeremiah 34:7. They

11. Name the "wonders" here listed and locate each one that is shown on the accompanying maps.

12. What are Lachish and Azekah, where are they located, and what support do they now give to the Word of God?

confirm the Scriptures in mentioning Lachish and Azekah as the last two fortified cities left remaining. They confirm the fact that Judah went down to Egypt for assistance in violation of Jehovah's commands. We have in the "Lachish Letters" the record of this military outpost holding out against Nebuchadnezzar. Furthermore, they show that the Jews at that time did not object to using the name Jehovah. The four Hebrew letters, the Tetragrammaton, of the name of God, Jehovah, are included in the "Lachish Letters."

¹³ In the eighth chapter of Joshua the account states that Mount Ebal was the place where Joshua built an altar to Jehovah, and the people of Israel, their old men, officers, judges, priests, Levites, alien residents and the natives, all gathered there in front of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. To Israel were read the blessing and the malediction. Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal are there today. You can visit them. In

1963 hundreds of Jehovah's witnesses went to this geographical site and to other sites in the Land of Promise, and there in the southern part of the land of Samaria in the vicinity of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal many of them, as Jesus did, drank water from Jacob's Well near the village of Sychar where the cool, refreshing underground stream still flows. The Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee, towns of Bethlehem and Hebron, the Val-

13. (a) What are some of the Bible-supporting sites found today in Samaria? (b) What other points can travelers now see? Where are they on the map?



One of the "Lachish Letters," containing ancient Hebrew letters for "Jehovah"

ley of Hinnom, with many, many other geographical locations, are still there and you can see them. Anyone can see them, and, inasmuch as they are still observable today, they serve as support for the Word of truth.

¹⁴ These last-mentioned examples are quite obvious and so is this one establishing the accuracy of the Scriptural setting of Jesus' great prophecy. Mark 13:3 says: Jesus "was sitting on the Mount of Olives with the temple in view." The Mount of Olives is still there today. From it you look to the west, past the Garden of Gethsemane, over the Kidron Valley to the easterly walls of the present city of Jerusalem and you see the location where, in Jesus' day, the marvelous temple was standing as depicted on the Watch Tower Society's 1968 calendar. The location previously occupied by the temple is now occupied by a Mohammedan mosque, the Dome of the Rock. The place is there, the land is there, the geography verifies Mark 13:3. As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives he had the temple in view and the temple site is in view today from the Mount of Olives.

¹⁵ Pontius Pilate figured in the ministry of Jesus, as that ministry drew to a close, and quite recently Caesarea on the coastal plain contributed a valuable archaeological find in respect to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Jerusalem in the time of Christ Jesus. Pilate was known only by the record concerning him in the Bible and the writings of ancient historians, particularly Josephus, but archaeological evidence concerning him has been unknown. However, in 1961 an Italian archaeological expedition from the University of Milan found near Caesarea a stone

slab thirty-one by twenty-three inches in size bearing writings including the Latin names of Pontius Pilate and Tiberius. This



Partial inscription found at Caesarea, second line of which reads "[Pon]tius Pilatus"

is archaeological proof of Pilate's existence. Jehovah's witnesses know Pilate existed because of what is stated in the Bible. As for those who deny the Bible: what are they going to do about the Pontius Pilate inscription?

¹⁶ The record of the support that the land gives to the Word of truth continues and here is set out but a small portion of it. What effect should this knowledge have on us? What benefit is it to us? What benefit is there to us in the support of the Bible provided by archaeology? Wherein is the wonderful gift of Jehovah in the Promised Land an aid to us at this late date? Knowledge of the Bible and the land, support of the Bible by archaeology and by the land itself should increase our appreciation for the Word of truth. As the discovery of ancient manuscripts has helped restore the pure, original text of the Bible, so the discovery of the multitude of artifacts has brought convincing confirmation that the things stated in the Bible text are historically, chronologically and geographically reliable right down to the minutest detail.

14. Today, what corresponds to the view Jesus had when he sat on the Mount of Olives?

15. In addition to the Bible, what is proof of the existence of Pontius Pilate? Where was it found?

16. What benefit is there for us in the support of the Bible provided by archaeology?

¹⁷ Thus archaeology confounds the critics of the Bible. A noted British scholar, director and principal librarian of the British Museum for many years, said concerning the Bible: "The evidence of archaeology has been to re-establish its authority and likewise to augment its value by rendering it more intelligible through a fuller knowledge of its background and setting. Archaeology has not yet said its last word; but the result already

achieved confirms what faith would suggest, that the Bible can do nothing but gain from an increase of knowledge."

¹⁸ Archaeologist Nelson Glueck in his book, *Rivers in the Desert*, says (1959, p. 31): "As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference."

¹⁹ Let us list or relist benefits brought to the cause of truth and the Word of God by the facts of archaeology. Archaeology: confirms the patriarchal narratives, the rule of Saul, the reign of David, aids in the location of geographical places, helps fix the chronology of Bible events, informs us regarding the customs and the culture of Bible times, gives historical background to the Bible and aids in the understanding of the meaning of some Bible words. Undeniably the land of the Word of truth is existing; it is there. So are we going to become as well acquainted with it as we can? When places and

17, 18. (a) What is the published view of the principal librarian of the British Museum? (b) of archaeologist Glueck?

19. (a) What does archaeology confirm? (b) How can we familiarize ourselves with the Promised Land?

areas are mentioned in the Bible account or in our study of the Word of God, will we consult maps that we have in our Bibles or other maps and locate these places? Do we wish to increase our understanding of what we read in the Bible? We certainly do. Visualizing the geography enhances our understanding of the written word (something that we should desire). We can gradually familiarize ourselves with the Promised Land and thereby gain more familiarity with the Bible itself.

²⁰ The land exalts its Creator. We are glad for his exaltation. The gift vindicates the Giver. We rejoice in Jehovah's vindication. We love and appreciate the gift of God's Word. We say with Psalm 119: 130, 140: "The very disclosure of your words gives light, making the inexperienced ones understand. Your saying is very much refined, and your own servant loves it." We are Jehovah's servants. We love his Word of truth!

²¹ The critics and contraditors of God's Word have nothing to offer but falsehood, doubt, perplexity, perversion. That is not for us. Rather, the truth expressed by Joshua is recognized by Jehovah's witnesses, who join in saying: 'We well know with all our hearts and with all our souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah our God has spoken to us has failed. They have all come true for us. Not one word of them has failed.'

—Josh. 23:14.

20. How should we respond to Jehovah's gift of the land and the Word?

21. For us, Joshua 23:14 has what import?

IT WAS back in 1922 that I saw my privilege and opportunity to serve my God Jehovah more fully. A call had gone forth for more workers at the headquarters of the Watch Tower Society in Brooklyn, New York, as it was beginning to print its own Bible literature. I wrote for an application, and among the questions it contained was: "How long can you stay?" After giving that question serious thought I wrote down: "As long as I can be of any use." I am truly thankful to Jehovah that, by his undeserved kindness, I have been able to 'be of use,' serving him full time for the past forty-six years and that I can still look forward to further years of use in his service.

I was privileged to hear of God's purposes seventy years ago, in 1898, at the early age of six. My mother first gleaned a measure of understanding of God's glorious purposes from a tract that had been used in wrapping a holiday gift parcel sent to her by her sister, my aunt. However, as the top of the tract was missing, there was nothing to identify the author or publisher of it.

Two years later my mother came across a copy of *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, Volume I of "Millennial Dawn," written by Charles Taze Russell. She at once recognized it as being the same teaching as that of the tract that had been used as wrapping paper. Mother eagerly devoured

Serving AS LONG AS I CAN BE OF ANY USE

As told by William T. Hannan

the book and read it to us. It presented strong reasons for believing that God exists, that the Bible is indeed his inspired revelation, and that soon God's kingdom would come and his will be done upon earth as in heaven.

We continued to attend the Presbyterian church even though mother frequently found fault with what the preacher said. Then in 1905 we moved to a farm my father had purchased some six miles out of Bridgeton in southern New Jersey. Now for the first time we came in touch with the Bible Students, as Jehovah's witnesses were then known. We met with them every Sunday for Bible study and from them obtained the rest of the Bible helps published for the Bible Students. From this time, at the age of thirteen, I had my own set of these books and began to apply my heart to the acquiring of wisdom.

I SEE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HIGH CALLING

As the years went by, my knowledge and understanding of Bible truth increased, but I felt diffident about trying to meet the requirements for the heavenly calling, which was the goal of all of the Bible Students in those days. Then in 1914 the Photo-Drama of Creation, a production consisting of slide and motion pictures and telling the story of the Bible in four evening presentations of two hours each,

came to Bridgeton. It made a deep impression upon me and gave me a tremendous boost in Bible truth. One day, not long thereafter, I came to the conclusion: Perhaps there is an opportunity for me also to run for the heavenly high calling. So, early in 1915, at the age of twenty-three, I made my dedication to do Jehovah's will and was baptized that summer at an assembly in Bridgeton. From then on I really began to experience the joy of serving Jehovah, being used by him. Among those joys were taking my mother and my sisters to the meetings each week in a new Model-T Ford I had bought.

In 1915 I had the pleasure of hearing Pastor Russell for the first and only time as he spoke in Wilmington, Delaware. I have never forgotten his striking introductory remarks. After viewing his audience he said: "Well, have you gotten rid of the old doctrines and superstitions of the Dark Ages? If you haven't, then take an emetic and get rid of them!" He then proceeded to administer the emetic! Late the next year he finished his earthly course, and I had the privilege of attending his funeral in New York City. There had just been a flower show at Madison Square Garden and a Bible Student who was a florist brought his whole display over to the funeral. It was truly a beautiful sight to behold, and the remarks on that occasion left a lasting impression upon me.

THE TURBULENT WAR YEARS

In 1917 the United States entered World War I, and I was drafted and called up for physical examination. Being opposed to killing a fellowman, I filled out the form for conscientious objectors, as provided by the government, but the draft board refused to consider it. When the examining officer read my paper, he asked: "Do you know what's on here?"

I answered: "I ought to, I wrote it." He was highly incensed, and I knew that the board would not honor my request to be deferred as a conscientious objector. However, with legal help I was able to be deferred on the basis of essential farm work and so was placed in Class 4. Later I was again notified to report for military duty, but the Armistice came first and so I never had to report.

In 1918 the officials of the Watch Tower Society were arrested and wrongly convicted of interfering with the war effort and sent to the federal prison at Atlanta, Georgia. It was my privilege to attend the annual business meeting of the Watch Tower Society held on January 4, 1919. What a thrill it was to me to see Jehovah looking out for his work! About three months later we were glad to hear that J. F. Rutherford and his seven companions were released from the Atlanta penitentiary, and still later that they were fully cleared of all charges.

In July of 1917 the Society published *The Finished Mystery*, Volume VII of the "Studies in the Scriptures," as the books came to be called. While some were critical of it, to me it seemed to be just what we had been waiting for. Later during the war it was suppressed. After the war it was released and in its magazine, 'paper-back' form, it was the first publication explaining the Bible that I presented in preaching from house to house. I still remember clearly the first door I approached. I thought I had my presentation well prepared, but when the lady of the house appeared, I just stood there speechless. Finally she said: "Well, what do you want?" That gave me the assist I needed, and that day I was able to place twenty of these publications commenting on the Bible books of Ezekiel and Revelation.

The first big convention I was privileged to attend was held at Cedar Point,

Ohio, in 1922. There we learned that, far from the preaching work drawing to a close, as some had thought, it was, in fact, really just beginning. During one discourse by the president of the Society, J. F. Rutherford, a banner was unfurled and we saw and heard the command: 'Advertise! Advertise! Advertise! the King and Kingdom.' I felt a tingling in my spine. That talk made me want to hurry home and get busy in Jehovah's service.

ANSWERING THE CALL

It was at that assembly where I learned about the need of full-time workers at the Watch Tower Society's headquarters. I answered the call. The Friday before I was to leave for Brooklyn my father, brother and I were digging potatoes late in the evening, and there were just a few short rows left. My father looked up at the sky and said: "I don't think it will rain tonight and so we can finish tomorrow."

To this I replied, "But we won't be here tomorrow."

When my father asked, "What are you going to be doing?" we told him we were going to Bridgeton to help distribute the Resolution that had been adopted at the Cedar Point convention. Father flew into one of his violent rages and let us have a barrage of profanity, ending up by saying, "You had better hunt a new job!"

I had not as yet told him that I was going to work at the Watch Tower Society's printing plant in Brooklyn, so this gave me a good opportunity. I replied: "Dad, I have already found a new job. I am going to the Watch Tower headquarters in Brooklyn on Monday morning." He turned away and did not say another word. He had nothing against our religion. In fact, when discussing religion with others he would defend our beliefs. But he did have a bad temper and he did

not want anything to interfere with his farming business.

How happy I was to be in the full-time service of Jehovah God, where I knew that my labors would not be in vain! Later when I came to visit the folks, my father took me aside and said: "If you will come back home and run this place, you can have it and all you can make from it." He had recently lost \$30,000 gambling in stocks and was getting weary.

But I replied: "No, Dad, I feel I have already wasted far too many years of my life, so from now on I am going to lay up treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break in and steal."

JOYS OF FULL-TIME SERVICE

In the Watch Tower Society's printing plant I was able to be of use on the magazine trimmer until 1925. Then I was of use as a truck driver for fifteen years. The little Model-T Ford pickup truck depicted on page 98 of the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* is the one I started with.

About a year after I came to the Society's headquarters my roommate invited me to spend a weekend with his folks. It proved to be most enjoyable, and among others, I was introduced to his sister, a fine young Christian woman. We enjoyed each other's company and began a correspondence that has continued to this day. At one point the question of marriage did come up, but we decided that we both were in position to take the advice of the apostle Paul and choose the better way as well as make room for the words of Jesus regarding remaining single for the sake of the kingdom of the heavens. So our friendship has remained just that over the years. We have proved Paul's words true in our case, and we are both happy and contented that we were

able to do so.—Matt. 19:10-12; 1 Cor. 7: 25-38.

Beginning in 1923 it was my privilege to help in building radio station WBBR on Staten Island on weekends. I was used to hard work and this was indeed hard work, such as digging out green stumps by hand; but since it was Jehovah's work, I was glad to be of use in this way. Later when we heard the good news of God's kingdom going out over WBBR we felt well repaid. Soon an orchestra was organized to furnish music for the radio programs, and, as I played the violin, I volunteered. However, they needed a bass fiddler and so I took lessons on the bass, and, according to my teacher, I was an apt pupil. We rehearsed two evenings during the week and put on a program every Sunday. As I was very fond of good music, I greatly appreciated this privilege, which lasted for four years.

Among other happy experiences and milestones in my life was that of attending the convention in Columbus, Ohio, in 1931, where we Bible Students embraced the name "Jehovah's witnesses." What an honor to bear that name! A few years after that the Society bought a farm near Ithaca, New York, so as to feed the headquarters family better. As I had been a farmer I was asked to help on this farm, going there in December 1940, and I served there for eighteen more years.

After a few years I began to suffer intense pains in my abdomen, necessitating surgery for cancer of the lower bowel in July 1947, since which time I have been

a colostomy case. I recovered rapidly and for eleven more years was able to do heavy farm work. Then my strength began to fail and so I was transferred to Brooklyn, where I could both get better medical treatment and do lighter work. While the average life extension of those having had this operation is but ten years, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness I have been able to keep going, to be of use, for twenty-one years since then. Though somewhat handicapped by sciatic rheumatism, I am still able to work full time in the parcel-post department at the Society's shipping department.

Since I am unable to do much walking, I preach evenings and weekends by means of letter writing, such as writing bereaved ones about the Bible's resurrection hope. Among my replies was one from a widow who sincerely thanked me for the comfort my letter had brought her and asked for help in answering Bible questions. I sent her a copy of "*Make Sure of All Things*." Another who has shown appreciation and who is making fine progress is an American soldier stationed in Europe.

In looking back, my seventy-six years now seem very short, although, as the poet says, "they seemed not always short." I am truly thankful for the privilege of still being of use in preaching this good news of God's kingdom and grateful also that Jehovah's people can look forward to never-ending joyful service to their great Creator in the coming system of things.
—Mark 10:29, 30; 13:10.

Why Man Dies

◆ The science editor for the *New York Times*, Walter Sullivan, observed: "The cells of our bodies (with a few exceptions, such as brain cells) are constantly replenishing themselves. It would seem that, barring accident or disease, this should continue indefinitely, but because of some subtle influence the replacement process is imperfect. This, the essence of aging, is now under intensive study. It is not inconceivable that it can be controlled." What is that influence that results in death? The Bible shows that it is sin. (Rom. 5:12) Only God can relieve obedient ones of its effects.

THE SERIOUSNESS OF IT

LITTLE things mean a lot." Those words, the title of a popular American song, are true in so many situations. Little things often betray the condition of the heart, not to say anything of their frequently leading to big things.

The truth inherent in that song title might be said to be included in the more weighty principle stated by Jesus Christ, the Son of God: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much."—Luke 16:10.

Jesus spoke those words to Jews who were under the law of Moses. That law concerned itself not only with the big things of life, such as the Ten Commandments, which forbade idolatry and murder, but also with seemingly little things. For example, the Israelites were not permitted to eat certain sea creatures, certain mammals and certain winged creatures.—Lev. 11:4-20.

It might have been argued, what difference does it make whether a fish has fins and scales so long as it has been procured honestly and tastes good? Or what difference does it make whether a mammal chews its cud and has its hoof split? These were apparently little things, but they had to be taken seriously by the Israelites. No doubt the Creator and Lawgiver of Israel, Jehovah God, had more than one good reason for giving these laws back there, not least of which was to keep his people

from unduly fraternizing with their pagan neighbors.

That Jesus Christ appreciated the importance of taking apparently little things seriously can be seen from his remarks to the religious leaders of his day. He reproached them for paying the tithes of spices, very little things, and yet disregarding the far more weighty things, such as "justice and mercy and faithfulness." But did he mean by that reproof that if one did the more important things he could ignore the apparently little things? By no means! For Jesus went on to say: "These things"—justice, mercy and faithfulness—"it was binding to do, yet not to disregard the other things," the little things, the paying of the tenth of the spices such as the mint and the dill.—Matt. 23:23.

The same principle applies today. There are the weightier matters for God's people to do: Study His Word and the literature that helps one to understand it; attend Christian gatherings, in particular the meetings of the local congregation; preach and teach the good news of God's kingdom at every opportunity, in favorable season and in unfavorable season, and bring forth the fruits of God's holy spirit, such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering and self-control. Without a doubt these are the "weightier matters" and should receive a Christian's prime concern. But while caring for these things Jehovah's people may not ignore the seemingly little things.

These also must be taken seriously.—Gal. 5:22, 23; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 10:23-25.

What might these be? Included in them is keeping free from all customs that are either directly or indirectly condemned in the Scriptures as being rooted in false religion or that are part of Satan's system of things, such as the celebration of holidays, political and religious. While not celebrating these may, to some persons, seem to be a little thing, that does not make it less important in the sight of God, and mature Christians appreciate that fact. No faithful Israelite in ancient times could have been forced to violate God's law by eating pork even on pain of death. And just as Jehovah God had good reasons for forbidding his people back there to eat certain things, such as blood, so there are good reasons why Jehovah's people should refrain from celebrating worldly holidays today.—John 18:36; 1 Cor. 2:12.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Do we want to keep in step and in tune with the faithful men of God or with the pagans? According to Hastings' *Encyclo-pædia of Religion and Ethics*, birthday celebrations go back to ancient times and in particular were those of prominent and important pagans highly regarded and observed. Was there any more prominent and important person ever to walk this earth than Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Yet God did not see fit to have the exact date of Jesus' birth recorded, nor does the Bible report that Jesus' apostles celebrated his birthday. The Lord Jesus himself commanded that his death be commemorated, not his birth.—1 Cor. 11:20, 23-26.

The only birthday celebrations mentioned in the Bible are of two pagan rulers and each of these events was marred by an execution. Pharaoh's was marred

by the execution of his chief baker, and King Herod's by the execution of John the Baptist. (Gen. 40:20-22; Mark 6:21-29) Taking their cue from these facts, the early Christians refused to celebrate birthdays. Thus Augustus Neander, noted historian, says in *The History of the Christian Religion and Church During the Three First Centuries*: "The notion of a *birthday festival* was far from the ideas of the Christians of this period in general." And the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1911 Edition) quotes Origen as saying: "Of all the holy people in the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a great banquet on his birthday. It is only sinners who make great rejoicings over the day they were born into this world."

From these facts we can ascertain God's will in the matter, so what should we personally do? We should show that we are concerned about conforming to God's will by refusing to share in any way in birthday celebrations, whether our own, or those of our friends or relatives or of some prominent persons. If we are to be pleasing to God, we must learn to be faithful in all things. To illustrate the principle in another way, faithfulness in the marital tie obligates each not only in big things but also in seemingly little things.

Testifying to the truth of the principle stated by Jesus about faithfulness in little things leading to faithfulness in big things is the experience of the three Hebrew companions of Daniel in ancient Babylon. When faced with the problem of eating foods forbidden by the law of Moses, they could have tried to excuse themselves on the basis that they were captives in a foreign land and so had no choice in the matter. But what a blessing they received for taking seriously even what might have seemed to be little things! They, to-

gether with Daniel, proved to be both healthier and wiser than all the other captives who kept on eating the king's dainties, some of which most likely had been offered to the gods of Babylon. Faithfulness in these "little things" without a question strengthened them so that when faced with the greater test of bowing down to the image the king had erected on the plain of Dura, they were able to stand, courageous, firm and bold.—Dan. 1:3-21; 3:1-30.

More than that, their taking a firm stand resulted in a great witness to Jehovah God; and this has also been proved true in modern times. Thus the 1968 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* tells the following experience in its report on Brazil: "A mother told of sending her small son to kindergarten, but first explained in detail some of the things that might come up that are not approved in God's Word. She also visited the teacher and explained the Scriptural view of these things. One day when she went to get her little boy, the teacher called to her and told her she admired the child very much, for he stood up for his beliefs. One of the children brought a cake to school to celebrate his birthday, and the teacher had been given the Bible reasons why Jehovah's witnesses do not celebrate birthdays, so she wondered what the child would do. When the other children sang the birthday song, the little boy sat silent. When the cake was cut and he was offered a piece he politely refused and ate the lunch he had with him. The mother was especially proud of her son's understanding, for she said: 'He likes cake very much.'" Such faithfulness in what may, to some persons, seem to be little things, taking them seriously, can aid one in being faithful to God when confronted with even more difficult tests of faith.

RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

There are other customs that are common among the nations too. Some of them are fundamentally religious. What is the attitude of faithful Christians toward them? Of the religious customs of the nations surrounding them, Jehovah God commanded his people in ancient times: "Do not learn the way of the nations at all."—Jer. 10:2.

Today it is generally recognized that Christmas has pagan antecedents. The Christmas tree, the yule log, the mistletoe and even the date December 25 are all admittedly of pagan origin. And the same must be said about Easter eggs and the Easter rabbit.* The celebration of Christmas and Easter therefore are forbidden by the words of the apostle Paul: "You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of 'the table of Jehovah' and the table of demons." "Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves," says Jehovah, "and quit touching the unclean thing; 'and I will take you in.'"—1 Cor. 10:21; 2 Cor. 6:17.

Wise Christian parents will not let sentimentality cause them to compromise in the matter of Easter and Christmas holidays. Early in life Christian parents should warn their children against the snare of conformity with the world, wanting to be like everyone else, fearing to stand out as different because of Bible principles. Christians are admonished not to be conformed to this system of things but to be transformed by making their minds over. (Rom. 12:2) Children that are properly reared will be glad at the fact that they are different, that the world is puzzled at them. (1 Pet. 4:3, 4) They should be taught to see these celebrations for what they are: of pagan origin, God-

* Alexander Hislop in *The Two Babylons* produces an abundance of proof showing the pagan origin of both Christmas and Easter.

dishonoring, marked by sham and commercial exploitation. Then they will tend to pity those who practice such things rather than envy them! At the same time the parents themselves need to be on guard that they do not compromise, do not send out greeting cards or have Christmas decorations in their homes just to be considered 'reasonable' or 'good fellows.'

In particular must any Christian who is in business for himself be on guard lest he let the fear of financial loss cause him to decorate his place of business with pagan holiday trimmings and stock pagan holiday goods, all of which are directly related to false religion. For anyone who is a dedicated witness of Jehovah to let profit or any other motive cause him to compromise in these matters would make him guilty of apostasy. And, as the Bible makes clear, such persons who turn back to 'eating at the table of demons' cannot continue to eat at "the table of Jehovah."

There may also be a temptation to share in holiday festivities because they are designed to appeal to the fallen flesh. Christmas music and decorations and those associated with Easter may appeal to one's emotions. And parties, with their abundance of food, drink and dancing, are appealing to the flesh regardless of the occasion. But let no Christian forget that to choose to follow the leading of sin's law means death, for those "in harmony with the flesh cannot please God."—Rom. 8:8.

In the same way St. Valentine's parties and celebrations must be viewed. Because of its associations the St. Valentine's holiday is something to be avoided. It is named after one or more Roman Catholic "saints," "saints" made such by men and not by God, and the practices associated with it are of pagan origin. Thus we are told regarding its origin: "A practice in

ancient Rome at the festival of Lupercalia, during the month of February, when, among other ceremonies, the names of young women were placed in a box, from which they were taken by young men as chance directed. The pastors of the early church, finding it impossible to extirpate this pagan ceremony, changed its form."* The actual purpose of the feast was to ensure fertility of people, flocks and fields.

There certainly is no objection to having wholesome good times together as a family, giving gifts and sending greetings to one's friends to let them know that they are loved. But it should be evident that it shows no real love for others if these things are done in a way that encourages them to practice customs that you yourself know to be pagan. Nor does such a course please God, and true Christians do want to please him!

OTHER CELEBRATIONS

Of course, religious celebrations are not the only ones. Some are held in honor of nations and their heroes. How do Jehovah's witnesses view these? They do not interfere with what other people may want to do, but they are keenly aware that Jesus Christ said that his true followers would be "no part of the world." (John 17:16) They know too that the Bible says that, when a person becomes spotted up with participation in the affairs of the world, his worship is not clean and acceptable to God. (Jas. 1:27) Why is this?

Because, as Jesus showed, "the ruler of the world" is not Jehovah God, but Satan the Devil, the enemy of God. (John 14:30) The Devil is the one who offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for his worship, and right down to this day he continues to exercise a powerful control over the nations. (Matt.

* *The American Cyclopaedia*, Vol. 16, p. 244 (1883).

4:8-10) Conditions on earth today bear out that Scriptural fact. Jehovah's witnesses believe what the Bible says, and for that reason they avoid participation in the holidays that tend to glorify any part of the old system of things. They know that God's kingdom will soon crush out of existence all the kingdoms of this world, and it itself will endure forever. (Dan. 2:44) They, too, want to endure forever, and so they put their full confidence in God's provision for the blessing of obedient mankind.

We cannot escape it. If we want to be pleasing to Jehovah God, if we are re-

solved to love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we cannot view the festivities of this system of things as harmless. We must realize the seriousness of avoiding them. Faithful early Christians refused to yield in the slightest to perform acts savoring of idolatry, not even to save their lives. Those who would be pleasing to Jehovah today must follow their example. In all such matters let Christians keep in mind the principle: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much."—Luke 16:10.

A READY AND FITTING DEFENSE

AT A circuit assembly of Jehovah's witnesses in Texas some time ago, this interesting experience was related. It shows how opposition can be met and successfully overcome.

"Another Witness and I were preaching from house to house in a rural section. As I approached the first house two men were sitting on the porch. The householder was not interested but his guest, George, was very hateful toward us. He said we were peddlers of God's Word and that he did not need those 'old magazines' as he had all he needed. He said he read the King James Bible and believed every word of it. With that he left.

"When I approached the second house, there was George on the porch talking to the householder. Yes, he had already done his under-handed work. The householder said he was not interested. George left by now. Coming to the third house, there he was again; this time with a married couple.

"What George did not know was that last fall I had left some literature with this couple. At that time they were leaving to spend the winter in Florida. They had kindly let me show them how to study the literature. This was my first return visit to them since they came back from Florida. I did not know what they thought about the literature we left them.

"When George began his sermon against us, I watched the couple to see their reaction to it. Immediately I noted that the husband was visibly embarrassed because he liked what he had read in the Watch Tower Society's books. I quickly asked George a direct question: 'How much of the literature have you read?'

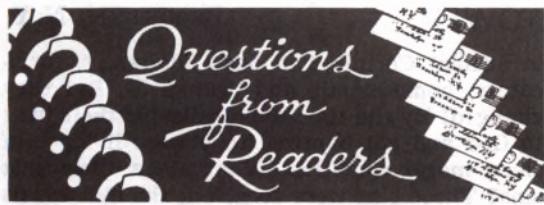
"'Nary a page,' he replied scornfully, 'nor do I intend to!'

"'Do you mean to tell us,' I asked, 'that you have not read any of this literature and yet you have decided on the matter and are now trying to influence others to your way of thinking?'

"'Yes, ma'm,' he answered.

"'And you believe the King James Bible?' I asked. He again replied that he did. I then asked him to read Proverbs 18:13, which says, 'He that answereth a matter before heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.'

"'That is the Bible, all right!' cried the householder, 'and I do not judge any man because I do not want any man to judge me.' They asked me to sit down, and George left. The man then told me that he enjoyed our method of searching the Scriptures, and right there I started a home Bible study with him and his wife. The next house I visited—yes, no George."



Questions from Readers

- If Isaac was willing to serve as a sacrifice victim, why did Abraham have to tie him hand and foot?—J. D., U.S.A.

The Biblical account tells us about Abraham and Isaac: "Finally they reached the place that the true God had designated to him, and Abraham built an altar there and set the wood in order and bound Isaac his son hand and foot and put him upon the altar on top of the wood. Then Abraham put out his hand and took the slaughtering knife to kill his son."—Gen. 22:9, 10.

Both Abraham and Isaac are listed in Hebrews chapter 11 as men of faith and true worshipers of Jehovah God. So if Jehovah directed them to do something, those faithful men would obey voluntarily. Thus, we can conclude that Isaac was willing to give himself to be a sacrifice, since that was what Jehovah instructed.

The fact that Genesis 22:9 mentions that Abraham bound Isaac hand and foot does not change this conclusion; rather, it supports it. According to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, Isaac was twenty-five years old when this incident took place. (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book I, chap. XIII, par. 2) If that is correct, then Abraham was about 125 years old. Plainly, aged Abraham did not overpower his young and healthy son in order to bind him. If Isaac had been unwilling to be sacrificed in obedience to God and his father, there is little question that he could have resisted. That he allowed himself to be bound establishes his willingness to serve as a sacrifice. He knew that Jehovah had performed a miracle in restoring his parents' reproductive powers, and so he no doubt rested his hope in a resurrection as his father did.—Heb. 11:19.

Even if a person were willing to serve as a sacrifice, there might be violent involuntary reactions when the slaughtering knife was used. Abraham's binding of Isaac hand and foot would prevent or control such involuntary reaction. Interestingly, in describing the sacrifice of a lamb in Herod's temple courtyard, Dr. Edersheim writes: "Then the sacrificing priest, surrounded by his assistants, fastened the lamb

to the second of the rings on the north side of the altar. . . . The sacrifice was held together by its feet, the fore and hind feet of each side being tied together." (*The Temple*, p. 132) And the real "Lamb of God," foreshadowed by Abraham's sacrifice, was nailed to the torture stake even though offering himself willingly as a sacrifice.—John 1:29; Heb. 10:9, 10.

- I would like to become one of Jehovah's witnesses, but some years ago I got divorced and remarried. What steps must I take to be acceptable for baptism?—D. C., U.S.A.

We regularly receive inquiries of this type. It is fine to see that the truth recorded in the Bible has touched the hearts of the ones inquiring and has moved them to want to live in harmony with God's righteous requirements so as to be able to serve him acceptably. Such individuals are to be commended.

The past circumstances of those coming to an accurate knowledge of God vary greatly. Some have been married, divorced and remarried (even a number of times) before learning of God's will and moral requirements as to marriage. Not attempting to deal with each particular situation here, we will set out some general comments that probably will cover most cases.

In regard to marriage, Christians are responsible to live in accord with two sets of law. The first, and most important, is the law of God. Obviously, Jehovah as the Creator and Lawgiver has the right to direct how his creatures should conduct themselves. (Isa. 33:22) The other is the law of the land where one lives. By direct statement and by example the Bible indicates that the legal requirements for registration of marriage are to be complied with by those desiring God's favor. (Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; Luke 2:1-5) Neither law can be ignored by Christians.

Thus, a person who gets married must do more than acknowledge that he is taking on responsibility before God; he must also conform to the legal requirements of the land where he lives. In a Christian sense he is not really married and entitled to the privileges of marriage until he has done so.

Now let us turn this matter around and consider divorce. In view of the above, it should be clear that the requirements of both God and the state must be met as to divorce. The law of the land may permit divorce on many grounds, but God's law allows for divorce only

on the ground of adultery. (Matt. 19:9)* If a person obtains a divorce on any ground other than adultery (because no adultery has been committed), he is not free, according to God's law, to marry again. Carrying this further, if a person with such a legal, but unscriptural, divorce then marries another person, this would be a serious violation of God's law; it would be adultery. (On the other hand, if adultery has been committed, the innocent mate is not free to seek another mate until a legal divorce has been completed. The requirements of both God and the state must be met.)

So if a person in ignorance as to God's law got a legal divorce on some unscriptural ground and then remarried, the requirements of the law of the land would have been met, but by remarrying the person would have committed adultery according to divine law. This adultery terminates the former marriage according to God's law, but it does so by a serious violation of Jehovah's own law. What is to be done in such a case?

Many persons committed sins prior to learning of God's requirements. Before becoming Christians, some in the Christian congregation

in ancient Corinth had been adulterers, fornicators, homosexuals and drunkards. But they changed! By the time they dedicated their lives to God and got baptized they were living in a clean moral condition. What about their past sins? Those sins were forgiven; the individuals were "washed clean" by faith in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. 6:9-11.

Consequently, if a person today learns God's law and realizes that in the past he committed the serious sin of adultery, he ought to go to God in prayer and seek forgiveness on the basis of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As the apostle Peter declared: "Everyone putting faith in him [Jesus] gets forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:43; Eph. 1:7) Then he ought to prove the sincerity of his repentance. But how? He cannot go back to his former mate. He no longer has any claim legally or Scripturally on that person. Nor can he go back and live his life over again. But he can live in harmony with Bible laws and principles from this time onward. He can show that he now appreciates the sacredness of marriage by living up to the responsibilities that he now has as a married person, and he can move forward in learning God's will and doing it.

—Col. 1:9, 10.

* For details, see chapter 8 of *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



to put one's trust in Christ's ransom sacrifice and then to follow closely in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Only then can one say with the psalmist: "You yourself alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in security." (Ps. 4:8) Jehovah's witnesses want to show imperiled mankind God's provision for security, and during September they will do this in their ministry by offering one of their latest books for Bible study, and then arranging to provide free home Bible instruction for anyone who wants to understand God's Word.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

October 13: "This Is the Land" of the Word of Truth. Page 553. Songs to Be Used: 30, 95.

October 20: Archaeology and the Land Support the Word of Truth. Page 560. Songs to Be Used: 69, 100.

FIELD MINISTRY

Mankind today is imperiled. How so? Because of the destruction that Almighty God will soon bring upon this system of things and upon all who share in its bloodguilt. To escape being destroyed and to find security, one needs