

# The **WATCHTOWER**

*Announcing*  
**JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM**

AUGUST 15, 1971  
Semimonthly

**WHY HAS GOD ALLOWED THE  
RIGHTEOUS TO SUFFER?**

—  
**PERFECTION—WHAT DOES IT  
REALLY MEAN?**

—  
**HOW RELIGIOUS EXPENSES ARE MET**

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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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Vol. XCII

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Number 16

## **NEWS REPORTS SHOW GREAT CONTRAST IN RELIGIOUS ADVANCE AND DECLINE**

**F**ROM all over the world come reports of churches in deep trouble. Clergymen and laymen are abandoning the churches in growing numbers, deep discord exists in many church systems. Does this reflect adversely on the Bible or on Christianity? No, for there is clear evidence that the Bible has not lost its power and that Christianity does work when really practiced. Reports thus show great contrast.

### **WITNESSES PROCLAIM "ALL NATIONS SOON TO COLLIDE WITH GOD"**

On June 30 a series of "Divine Name" District Assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses began. Of keen interest is the public talk, "When All Nations Collide, Head On, with God." The speaker at New York's Yankee Stadium, N. H. Knorr, president of the Watch Tower Society, declared that all nations of the world will very shortly collide, head on, with God. Why is that collision inevitable? Because the nations have opposed God's will, he explained. The point at issue is world domination. The nations want this for themselves. God has given that right to the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ. So the nations are on a collision course with God. The speaker asked: "Will any humans be able to survive the collision?" He showed from God's Word, the Bible, that only those who side with God will avoid that fatal collision, and warned: "Do not walk with the nations in a course contrary to God to that unavoidable collision ahead." He noted that God has promised to those who do side with him everlasting life in perfect health and happiness in a never-fading paradise on

earth. This stirring information has already been heard by audiences at twelve of the forty-five assemblies to be held in the United States and Canada this year. At those twelve assemblies so far, the combined attendance for the public talk was 212,217. Many other assemblies are being held in other countries throughout the world.

There is a sharp contrast between the increasing numbers of persons associating with the Christian witnesses of Jehovah and the decline in so many churches of Christendom. What accounts for this? The persons associating with the Witnesses say the answer lies in the faith-strengthening Biblical information they are receiving concerning God's purposes.

### **"CHURCHES IGNORE CHRIST'S TEACHING"**

That was the headline of an article by Charles King, writing in the Ottawa, Canada, "Citizen." He expressed continual amazement over the "depressing inability of the churches to come to grips with the concept that all men are brothers." This is evidenced by the fact that people of the same religion, those called "Christian" as well as "pagan," kill one another in wartime. King noted the religious disturbances, often violent and bloody, going on in Northern Ireland, East Bengal, South Vietnam, the Middle East and southern Africa. He quoted the Bible's teaching at 1 John 4:16-21, which says: "God is love . . . If anyone makes the statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar. . . . the one who loves God should be loving his brother also." This the churches are not doing.

### CHURCH APPROVES ABORTIONS

At a general synod in Michigan, the United Church of Christ approved abortions. It called for the repealing of all prohibitions against abortions performed by physicians. Yet, God's Word shows that such taking of human life is murder. The scope of what this church now approves can be seen by what is happening in New York city alone. Abortion was legalized there on July 1, 1970. In the year since then, 165,000 abortions have been performed. By June 1971 the number had risen so rapidly that 950 abortions were being performed for every 1,000 live births. It is expected that the total will soar yet higher in the next year. This wholesale slaughter is what the United Church of Christ now sanctions.

### BISHOP RESIGNS

Bishop Bernard Kelly of Providence, Rhode Island, stunned Catholics by resigning from the Catholic priesthood. He said that he took the step because of an "abiding sense of frustration" with the attitudes and policies of American bishops. Asked which event contributed most to his decision, he said it was the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Detroit. He was grieved that the bishops reaffirmed the "status quo" in the church and had ignored recommendations for change by priests. Kelly's resignation, Catholic officials said, could have a serious effect on priests and those studying for the priesthood. He is the second American bishop to resign, the first being James Shannon of St. Paul-Minneapolis in 1959.

### MORE CLERGYMEN THINKING OF QUITTING

The number of clergymen quitting is likely to grow. A Gallup poll taken in the United States revealed that 43 percent of Jewish rabbis, 32 percent of Protestant ministers, and 23 percent of Catholic priests are seriously considering leaving religious life. The poll also noted a growing disinterest in religion by church members, they being more concerned now about materialistic pursuits.

### DECLINE CONTINUES

The 1971 Official Catholic Directory for the United States reports the continued decline of Catholic religious bodies during 1970. According

to its figures, which differ only slightly from those of other Catholic sources, a net decline of 7,286 nuns was experienced from 1969 to 1970, leaving 153,645. That total is over 26,000 fewer than were reported in the 1965 directory. Also the decline in seminary enrollment grows more severe, as a drop of 3,256 from the 1969 figure was recorded. This leaves 25,710 seminary students, a striking decline from the 48,992 reported in the 1965 directory. The total number of priests fell by 1,031, leaving 58,161. Many expect this figure to drop sharply in the immediate future due to the huge decline in seminary enrollment and the growing number of priests who are quitting. The number of Catholic educational institutions declined by 529, including 51 seminaries.

### SUNDAY-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SINKING

Canadian church officials reveal sharp losses in the number of children attending Sunday school. The United Church of Canada said that eight years ago it had an enrollment of 757,388 in Sunday school. By 1969 enrollment had dropped to 425,467, and in 1970 it fell to 369,959. The Anglican Church had 186,000 in 1967, but only 150,300 in 1969. The Presbyterians recorded 102,730 in 1967, but 89,373 in 1969. And 1970 and 1971 are expected to be lower yet. The chief reason cited is the loss of interest in religion by parents.

### IRISH YOUTH SHUNNING PRIESTHOOD

The Limerick "Weekly Echo" reported that Ireland's youth has become disinterested in the priesthood. The 1971 Irish Catholic Directory showed a decline of 39 percent in ordinations for the priesthood between 1965 and 1970. The number of seminary students declined 45 percent from 1960 to 1970. The newspaper noted: "It can be seen that the falling rate of vocations in Ireland is part of a world wide phenomenon."

However, while this is taking place in the major religions of Christendom all over the world, Jehovah's witnesses are experiencing the largest growth in their history. They have baptized over 500,000 persons in the past four years, and before baptism all of these had completed a prescribed course of Bible study and were able to explain what they believe.

**S**ERVANTS of God have suffered at the hands of the wicked since the time of Abel. They do not want to suffer. Persecution and torture are just as unpleasant to them as to anyone else of rational mind. They would much rather live in peace. However, the servant of God knows that a certain amount of suffering is unavoidable in this evil world, because of his desire to maintain integrity to God. He is assured, however, that the end result of a life of integrity to God will be an eternally happy one indeed! But knowledge alone of this fact does not make suffering any more pleasant or desirable. In fact, the very undesirability of pain and suffering may cause the servant of God to break integrity, to his eternal regret and loss. Integrity to God, no matter what the cost may be, is a principle from which the servant of God cannot and must not deviate.

<sup>2</sup> The Holy Scriptures and history prove that suffering for integrity's sake is the lot of those who have chosen to serve God faithfully. The Christian apostle Paul wrote to God-fearing Thessalonians: "Troubles are our lot, you know that well." (1 Thess. 3:3, Moffatt) From righteous Abel down to the present time that has been the case. Abel was murdered by his brother Cain, because Cain's "works were wicked, but those of his brother were righteous." (1 John 3:12) The three Hebrews were tossed into a fiery furnace, because they refused to bow before King Nebuchadnezzar's golden image and thus break integrity to Jehovah their God. Paul tells us what happened to others for holding fast integrity: "Yes, others received their trial by mockings and scourgings, indeed, more than that, by bonds and prisons. They were stoned, they were tried, they were sawn asunder, they died by slaughter with

1. (a) What is the Christian's view toward suffering, and does the end result make suffering any more desirable? (b) What is the principle from which a servant of God cannot deviate?  
2. (a) What is the lot of those who have chosen to serve God faithfully? Give proof. (b) What proves that such persecutions were not justified?

## WHY HAS GOD ALLOWED

# THE *Righteous* TO *Suffer?*

"Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens; for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you."—Matt. 5:11, 12.

the sword, they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, while they were in want, in tribulation, under ill-treatment; and the world was not worthy of them. They wandered about in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth." (Heb. 11:36-38) They suffered such atrocities because they insisted on keeping integrity to God. The apostle Paul was right: "The world was not worthy of them."

<sup>3</sup> With the advent of Christianity, the servant of God has fared no better. Jesus Christ himself said to his followers: "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:20) On another occasion he told them: "People will lay

3, 4. (a) What words of Jesus show that Christians would not fare any better than the Hebrew prophets? (b) What proves that Christians were persecuted?

their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, you being haled before kings and governors for the sake of my name. It will turn out to you for a witness. . . . Moreover, you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death; and you will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name. And yet not a hair of your heads will by any means perish. By endurance on your part you will acquire your souls." (Luke 21: 12-19) These words found their fulfillment early in the first century.

<sup>4</sup> Paul himself admitted that Christians were persecuted and that he himself, as Saul of Tarsus, was one of the persecutors. As recorded at Acts 26:9-11, he said: "I, for one, really thought within myself I ought to commit many acts of opposition against the name of Jesus the Nazarene; which, in fact, I did in Jerusalem, and many of the holy ones I locked up in prisons, as I had received authority from the chief priests; and when they were to be executed, I cast my vote against them. And by punishing them many times in all the synagogues I tried to force them to make a recantation; and since I was extremely mad against them, I went so far as to persecuting them even in outside cities."

<sup>5</sup> Later when Saul of Tarsus became the Christian apostle Paul he in turn suffered persecution at the very hands of those whom he once served. As a Christian he wrote to Timothy: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted."

(2 Tim. 3:12) To the Philippians he said: "To you the privilege was given in behalf

of Christ, not only to put your faith in him, but also to suffer in his behalf." (Phil. 1:29) Early Christians not only were persecuted for their faith, but considered it a privilege to suffer for Christ, according to Paul. Do you feel the same way? Are you willing to suffer, yes, die for what you believe about Christ? Why should one suffer at all? Why does God allow his people to be persecuted? What good purpose does persecution serve, if any?

#### WHY PERSECUTION?

<sup>6</sup> In the first place, let it be noted that God's permitting of persecution does serve a worthy purpose; and, secondly, that God is not to blame for the suffering of his people, because persecution is due to the entrance of sin into the world of mankind. (Rom. 5:12) This can be illustrated in the following way: When a boy breaks his leg while doing something his father told him to do for him, certainly the father is not to blame. When the boy's physician father comes home to set the broken limb, he may tell his son: 'This will hurt you, but in time the limb will heal and your leg will be as good as new. You will not be a cripple because I was *too* tender to take care of you in your hour of need.' As the father sets them in place, the bones grate and crack. The child screams and pleads with his father because of the pain, but the father holds firm until the operation is completed. He disregards the child's outcries and entreaties, not because he does not care for him, but because he does care for him. Something similar happened in the beginning in the relationship between man and his God.

<sup>7</sup> When the first human pair, Adam and Eve, willfully disobeyed God's law, they fatally injured themselves. God expelled

5. (a) What did Paul say would be the lot of those who desired to live with godly devotion in association with Christ? (b) How did early Christians look upon persecution? (c) What questions present themselves?

6, 7. (a) Does persecution serve a worthy purpose, and is God responsible for the suffering of his people? Illustrate. (b) How is God proved blameless?

the rebellious couple from Eden. They thus lost for themselves and their descendants the special protection and blessing of their Creator. For the effects of sin, namely, pain, sorrow and death, they had only themselves to blame, as the Bible states: "They have acted ruinously on their own part; they are not his children, the defect is their own." (Deut. 32:5; Rom. 6:23) God immediately, however,

made arrangements to repair the fracture. Through Christ Jesus he made a way possible for man to gain everlasting life on a paradise earth—the very prospect opened to Adam in Eden.—John 3:16; Rev. 21:4.

<sup>8</sup> But not all pain is the result of internal imperfection stemming from Adamic sin. God's servants suffer greatly from external abuse heaped upon them by wicked persecutors. Why has God allowed this to happen? The answer lies in a moral issue that was raised in Eden by Satan the Devil, the rebel angel that caused Adam and Eve to sin. The issue involves the integrity of man toward God and his Word. This is shown in the case of righteous Job. Satan boasted that he could turn all men away from God, even as he did Adam and Eve. Yes, he could turn away even the one of whom God would say: "There is no one like him in the earth," namely, the patriarch Job.—Job 1:8.

<sup>9</sup> At a meeting of the angelic sons of God in heaven Jehovah asked Satan: "Have you set your heart upon my servant Job, that there is no one like him in the earth, a man blameless and upright,

fearing God and turning aside from bad?" The fact that God called Job's faithfulness to Satan's attention indicates there was a contention as to whether human creatures would keep integrity to God. Satan's reply proves that there was such an issue, for

right away he made excuses for Job's faithfulness. He asserted that Job served God because of the material blessings received and not because he

loved Him. He suggested: "For a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch everything he has and see whether he will not curse you to your very face." Accordingly Jehovah said to Satan: 'Look! Everything that he has is in your hand. Only against him himself do not thrust out your hand!' "—Job 1:7-12.

<sup>10</sup> Job maintained a righteous course despite everything the Devil could do; he proved that he served God because he loved him and wanted to be pleasing in his sight. Job believed in the integrity of his course, and so proclaimed to his accusers: "Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity from myself!" (Job 27:5) Integrity to the sovereignty of God and to his righteous principles as expressed in his inspired Word is what the present struggle against the servants of God is all about. That is why righteous men from Abel down to the present time have preferred to die rather than to break integrity to their God Jehovah. They believe in the righteousness of God and his Word and would prefer to die rather than to break that confidence. But where do you stand in this issue? Are you prepared to die for

8, 9. (a) Why has God allowed the wicked to persecute the righteous? (b) What is established in the book of Job?

10. Job's maintaining integrity proved what? And what questions arise?

#### THE NEXT ISSUE

- Fortify Yourself So as to Maintain Integrity.
- Building for the Future During Youth.
- Is Fasting for Christians?

the sovereignty of God and his Word? How you face this issue will determine eventually whether you will live or die. It is as important as that.

#### EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE TRIED

<sup>11</sup> When Jesus Christ was on earth, Satan desperately tried to get Jesus to do just one act of worship that would be a breach of integrity to God. (Matt. 4:8-11) Even when slapped around by Roman soldier guards and then nailed to the torture stake to die, Jesus held fast his integrity. The Devil tried his best, but he could not induce Jesus to become disloyal to God. (Phil. 2:8) By Jesus' maintaining integrity as a perfect man, he established for all time that Satan's boast that he could turn all men away from God is a lie. Jesus thus set a perfect example of integrity-keeping for his followers to imitate.—1 Pet. 2:21.

<sup>12</sup> The followers of Christ were not spared from trials of integrity-keeping even while Jesus was alive. Peter was told by Christ: "Simon, Simon, look! Satan has demanded to have you men to sift you as wheat. But I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out; and you, when once you have returned, strengthen your brothers." Then confident Peter said to Jesus: "Lord, I am ready to go with you both into prison and into death." But Jesus knew Peter better: "I tell you, Peter, A cock will not crow today until you have three times denied knowing me." (Luke 22:31-34) The Master was right. Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. Peter wept bitterly for failing in integrity at such a crucial time. But he recovered his spirituality to become an encouragement and a tower of strength to his brothers. His two letters (First

and Second Peter) testify to that fact.

<sup>13</sup> Paul, too, was sifted by the Devil and his agents. He faced false apostles, deceitful workers who transformed themselves into apostles of Christ. Paul tells what he endured in the Christian ministry. He writes: "In labors [as a minister] more plentifully, in prisons more plentifully, in blows to an excess, in near-deaths often. By Jews I five times received forty strokes less one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I experienced shipwreck, a night and a day I have spent in the deep; in journeys often, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from highwaymen, in dangers from my own race, in dangers from the nations, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers among false brothers, in labor and toil, in sleepless nights often, in hunger and thirst, in abstinence from food many times, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things of an external kind, there is what rushes in on me from day to day, the anxiety for all the congregations." (2 Cor. 11:21-28) The way of Christian integrity was not an easy course for Paul, neither is it today. In fact, Paul warned Christians: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." (1 Cor. 10:12) Remember, Judas and Demas and others who once stood rather firmly but fell.—2 Tim. 4:10.

<sup>14</sup> After Paul's time, persecution continued against the Christians, even though they were peace-loving people. Dr. John L. von Mosheim, writer of ecclesiastical history, refers to the first-century Christians as "a set of men of the most harmless inoffensive character, who never harboured in their minds a wish or thought inimical to the welfare of the state." Yet these very Christians suffered indescribably at the hands of the pagan peoples and the Roman state because they insisted on maintaining integrity to God.

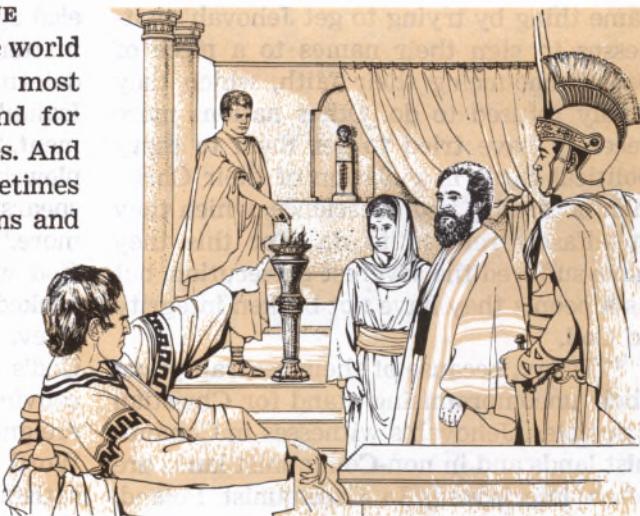
11. (a) What proves that the issue of integrity was in force in Jesus' day? (b) Jesus' steadfastness proved what and provided what?

12-14. (a) Were the followers of Christ excluded from trials? (b) What did Paul have to say about his maintaining integrity? (c) What did Dr. Mosheim have to say about Christians following Paul's time?

## INTEGRITY TO GOD STILL AN ISSUE

<sup>15</sup> Of all the religious groups in the world Jehovah's witnesses are the ones most widely criticized for their faith and for their integrity to Christian principles. And because of their stand they sometimes have found themselves in courtrooms and in prisons, as was the case with the early Christians. A professor of history stated: "Perhaps the most notable thing about the Witnesses is their insistence upon their primary allegiance to God, before any other power in the world." (*These Also Believe*) The result is, as stated by the Akron, Ohio, *Beacon Journal*: "Jehovah's Witnesses have a religion they take far more seriously than the great majority of people. Their principles remind us of the early Christians who were so unpopular and who were persecuted so brutally by the Romans."

<sup>16</sup> The early Christians were often persecuted because they refused to perform a simple patriotic rite: sacrificing to the emperor. Those Christians regarded such a rite as idolatry. Jesus also refused to do a single act of worship that was contrary to God's Word. (Matt. 4:9) Similarly Jehovah's witnesses give their worship and allegiance only to God. Like the early Christians, they live quiet, moral, indeed, model lives. Also like the early Christians, they refuse to idolize the state. As ministers of God and ambassadors for God's kingdom, Jehovah's witnesses do not salute the flag of any nation; yet they show respect for the flag of the country in which they live by obeying all laws that do not conflict with God's laws. Saluting the flag is considered by the Witnesses to be a re-



Early Christians were persecuted because of refusal to perform a patriotic rite: burning incense to the emperor. True Christians today also avoid all acts of idolatry

ligious act in which they cannot conscientiously participate. They view the act to be a violation of the Second Commandment and of Christian Scriptures warning against idolatry. (Ex. 20:4, 5; 1 John 5:21) While their stand against idolatry is little understood, still they consider it important enough to view it to be one of life or death. Their stand is like that of Peter and the other apostles who said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus declared his people were "no part of the world," just as he was no part of the world. (John 17:16) Like those first Christians, Jehovah's witnesses are no part of the world; hence, when it comes to this world's politics and wars, their stand is one of strict neutrality. This has resulted in persecution, such as in Nazi Germany, where thousands of Witnesses were thrown into Hitler's concentration camps. As Saul of Tarsus tried to force the early Christians to make a recantation of their faith, Hitler endeavored to do the

15. Of all the religious groups, who today suffer similarly for integrity to Christian principles? Give proof.  
16, 17. (a) Why are Jehovah's witnesses persecuted today? (b) What is their stand toward the political world, and what indignities did they have to suffer because of this?

same thing by trying to get Jehovah's witnesses to sign their names to a piece of paper renouncing their faith, which they boldly refused to do. Other nations more recently have tried to get them to carry political cards in violation of their Christian neutrality and conscience, which they steadfastly refused to do. For this they have suffered the severest persecution, but as a people they have not broken integrity to God.

<sup>18</sup> Today, because of their neutrality and their uncompromising stand for Christian principles, Jehovah's witnesses in Communist lands and in non-Communist lands are often imprisoned. In Communist Poland, for instance, at the trial of one of the Witnesses, the prosecuting attorney made this statement: "Jehovah's witnesses undermine the present social order. They do not go to the polls, refuse to salute the flag and do not serve in the army. Jehovah's witnesses upset the present order just as much as the first Christians did. The Roman emperor could not suffer it and so Jehovah's witnesses today cannot be tolerated either." In substance his complaint was that these people are intolerable because they keep the law of God.

<sup>19</sup> In lands supposedly guaranteeing the right to worship God freely, Jehovah's witnesses have been deprived of those very rights. They are banned in Red China. They are banned in Russia and in all Communist-dominated countries. Some of the emerging nations of Africa have shamefully persecuted Jehovah's witnesses because of their Christian neutrality. But even in these lands the worship of God flourishes despite persecution.

#### SUFFERING SOON TO END

<sup>20</sup> Notwithstanding the persecution lev-

eled against them, Jehovah's witnesses, no matter where they live in the world, are determined to be men of peace. In them Isaiah's prophecy already has had fulfillment. They have beaten their "swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. . . . neither will they learn war anymore." (Isa. 2:4) They trust that Jehovah God will soon bring a speedy end to all wickedness in his war of Armageddon. (Rev. 16:13-16) They are confident that God's love will stand vindicated. They are convinced that the issue of universal sovereignty and the truthfulness of God's Word will be settled for all time to the satisfaction of all who live in the universe. That is why Jehovah's witnesses are fully persuaded that the permission of evil and of persecution has served a worthy purpose resulting in the vindication of God's Word and name.

<sup>21</sup> The time allotted by God for wickedness to run its course has been sufficient for the wicked to demonstrate their evil intentions, to "fill up the measure of their sins." (1 Thess. 2:16) It has underscored God's Word as true that the existing systems in the world are cruel and heartless and are not worthy of existence. Their very corruptness and ineptness demand that God justly judge and destroy them. And with that judgment all those who love righteousness will rejoice!—1 Pet. 4:15-19.

<sup>22</sup> Persecution also has afforded all men the opportunity to show themselves for what they truly are, whether they are believers in God and his Word the Bible. For by the way men and nations have ruled and have treated the people of God, they have indelibly stamped themselves as for or against God. (Matt. 25:40, 45) Persecution has established beyond doubt that God is love and that he is patient with mankind and does not wish that any be

18, 19. (a) What is their stand in Communist lands? (b) How have they fared in some of the emerging nations of Africa? What has been the result?

20. What are the determination and conviction of Jehovah's witnesses?

21. What has the permission of wickedness established?

22. What purpose has persecution served, and what question remains to be answered?

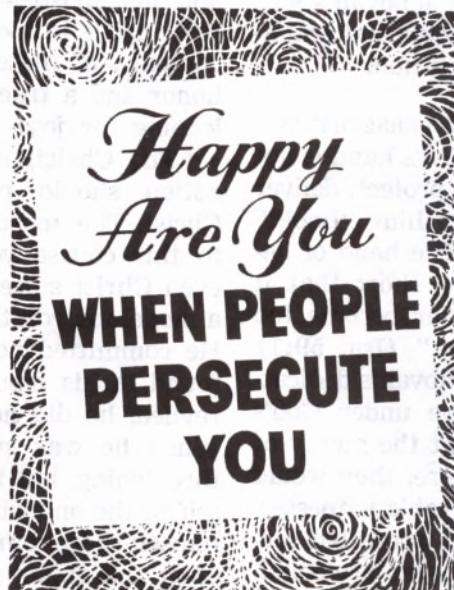
destroyed but that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) Persecution also proves that Christians are lovers of mankind by their suffering of evil to bring this message of salvation to them. The only remaining question is this: On whose

side of the issue will you be when God finally brings the struggle to a dramatic close in the battle of Armageddon now drawing near? Will you be found an integrity-keeper? Concern yourself with that question now, because your eternal destiny depends on it.

**N**O MAN'S lips ever demanded of his followers such service as do the lips of Jesus Christ. Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Britain early in World War II warned his people to expect "blood, toil, tears, and sweat." But Christ issued a darker warning. His followers could expect to be persecuted, delivered up before synagogue courts, haled before kings and governors and some would be put to death. "You will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name," said Jesus. "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me. For whoever wants to save his soul will lose it; but whoever loses his soul for my sake will find it."—Luke 21:12-17; Matt. 16:24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> These words well characterize the lives of Christians from the first century on. Today we witness their fulfillment in the lives of Jehovah's witnesses around the world. They have been banned in many

1, 2. What warning did Christ give to his followers and how have his words been fulfilled in the lives of Jehovah's witnesses?



"Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them."—Matt. 5:10.

world.—John 17:16; Jas. 1:27.

<sup>3</sup> Still such persecution has not embittered them against God or their persecutors. They have not risen up in revolt against their persecutors and repaid them evil for evil, nor will they. Neither has persecution caused Jehovah's witnesses to stop serving God, nor will it. Onlookers have been amazed at the attitude of Jehovah's witnesses toward persecution and

3. (a) What attitude of Jehovah's witnesses toward persecution has amazed onlookers? (b) What questions about persecution are worth while asking, and why?

nations. They have suffered vicious persecution. Thousands of their homes have been burned and hundreds of their Kingdom Halls have been demolished. Their women have been brutally beaten, and their menfolk have died from beatings or have been killed outright. Their children have been unjustly taken away from them. This because they insist on worshiping God in the manner that Jesus and his apostles did, that is, by keeping themselves neutral as to the political affairs of this

their persecutors. Some have wondered why they are not more aggressive, more vengeful, giving rise to serious questions, such as: What should the Christian attitude be toward persecution? How do you view it? Are you puzzled by it? Does it frighten or sadden you? Are such sufferings meaningless? What should be the proper attitude of a Christian toward his persecutors? Answers to these and other questions will explain why Jehovah's witnesses have remained peaceful and triumphant in the face of persecution.

#### PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD PERSECUTION

<sup>4</sup> Christians know that God's hand is not short. They believe he can protect, deliver and sustain those who love him. "Look!" said the prophet Isaiah, "The hand of Jehovah has not become too short that it cannot save, nor has his ear become too heavy that it cannot hear." (Isa. 59:1) One thing is certain. As Jehovah's dedicated servants, Christians are under God's care and are not entirely at the mercy of the Devil. Why, if they were, they would not be here today as Jehovah's witnesses. They are on earth as God's protected servants, even as Job himself was protected. (Job 2:4-7) God may, however, permit the Christian to be tested, to suffer, or even to die. But, regardless of what Jehovah allows, if we are faithful, we are assured of his love, for which we are very thankful.—Rom. 8:38, 39.

<sup>5</sup> In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus declared: "Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them. Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since

your reward is great in the heavens; for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you." (Matt. 5:10-12) Therefore, persecution is a cause for rejoicing, for leaping for joy, according to Jesus, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to such kind; since their reward is great in the heavens. Christian sufferings also put them in the distinguished and noble company of the prophets and of Jesus Christ and his apostles—men who suffered for their faith in God. To be classed in the company of these men is indeed no small honor and a true cause for rejoicing, for leaping for joy!

<sup>6</sup> The Christian attitude toward persecution should be that exemplified by Christ. The apostle Peter wrote: "In fact, to this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely. He committed no sin, nor was deception found in his mouth. When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he did not go threatening, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously. He himself bore our sins in his own body upon the stake, in order that we might be done with sins and live to righteousness. And 'by his stripes you were healed.'" (1 Pet. 2:21-24) This nonviolent example was productive and full of meaning.

<sup>7</sup> Through suffering God made the Chief Agent of mankind's salvation perfect. "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered; and after he had been made perfect he became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him." (Heb. 5:8, 9; 2:10) His faithfulness until death sealed the doom of Satan and his wicked system of things and opened the way for a heavenly Kingdom

4. With persecution in mind, what do Christians know about God? What can Christians be assured of despite persecution?

5. What attitude toward persecution should the Christian have, according to Jesus? And why?

6. What example toward suffering did Jesus leave?

7. (a) Were the sufferings of Christ meaningless?

(b) Why is Christ not pitied today because he suffered?

(c) What lesson does Paul say we should draw from this?

government. It provided a ransom by means of which mankind can gain everlasting life on a paradise earth. (Luke 23: 43) True, Christ suffered, but who today for a moment would pity him for the faith in God that he demonstrated, that brought these benefits and led to his triumph and immortality in the heavens? Speaking of Christ, Paul wrote: "For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." "Indeed," says the apostle, "consider closely the one who has endured such contrary talk by sinners against their own interests, that you may not get tired and give out in your souls."—Heb. 12:2, 3; 1 Tim. 6: 13-16.

<sup>8</sup> The apostle Peter also urged Christians to rejoice when persecuted for righteousness' sake. Peter writes: "Beloved ones, do not be puzzled at the burning among you, which is happening to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were befalling you. On the contrary, go on rejoicing forasmuch as you are sharers in the sufferings of the Christ, that you may rejoice and be overjoyed also during the revelation of his glory. If you are being reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy, because the spirit of glory, even the spirit of God, is resting upon you. However, let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a busybody in other people's matters. But if he suffers as a Christian, let him not feel shame, but let him keep on glorifying God in this name." (1 Pet. 4:12-16) Is this your attitude?

<sup>9</sup> In suffering, often there comes a rare sense of Jehovah's favor by means of his spirit, a realization that he has asked you to play a very important part in the vin-

dication of his name, Word and purpose. This realization brings a deep joy. There also may come a rare sense of faith, which can make of the Christian a better servant, a more active witness, a more serene person. It all depends on how the Christian meets persecution and what he does with it. Pain is beneficent when it brings about correction of what is wrong. This is a good thing. But unproductive suffering caused from wrongdoing is sad indeed! Its end can only be further misery.

<sup>10</sup> What, then, is the purpose of enduring persecution? Peter answers: "In this fact you are greatly rejoicing, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been grieved by various trials, in order that the tested quality of your faith, of much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being proved by fire, may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you never saw him, you love him. Though you are not looking upon him at present, yet you exercise faith in him and are greatly rejoicing with an unspeakable and glorified joy, as you receive the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls." (1 Pet. 1:6-9) Peter says persecution is to test the quality of the Christian's faith so that he may be found faithful and receive the end result of faith, namely, the salvation of his soul. So persecution does serve a worthy purpose.

#### THE APOSTLES REJOICED WHEN PERSECUTED

<sup>11</sup> Little wonder that the apostles rejoiced when they were flogged, imprisoned and otherwise persecuted for representing Christ. They could identify themselves with the sufferings of Christ and see the outworking of their own salvation. For the suffering Christian is more likely to be not

8. What attitude did Peter say Christians should have toward suffering, and why?

9. What rewards are often felt when one is persecuted for righteousness' sake?

10. What is the purpose of enduring persecution?

11. Why did the apostles rejoice when they suffered persecution?

the complaining Christian but the singing Christian. Shortly after Jesus' death, the apostles were arrested by the authorities and flogged and ordered not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. After this experience, the apostles left the Sanhedrin court "rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name. And every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ." (Acts 5:41, 42) Paul, too, said that he rejoiced in suffering because his trials taught him reliance on God. The persecuted Christian is usually the more zealous, the more determined, the more enthusiastic and the more sincere Christian.

<sup>12</sup> At one time Paul and his companion Silas were beaten with many stripes and their feet were placed in stocks. But in the middle of the night they were heard praying and praising God with songs, yes, the other prisoners were hearing them sing. Imprisonment brought them joy. Their joy had a reference to the future, for then God will reward all those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. And that assurance no prison wall, no dungeon, not even the threat of death can take away from the Christian. "Look! We pronounce happy those who have endured."—Jas. 5:11.

#### MODERN REJOICING UNDER PERSECUTION

<sup>13</sup> That is why Jehovah's witnesses today can rejoice when persecuted. In *Personality*, the South African magazine mainly about people, Nell Coward, illustrated the all-consuming faith of Jehovah's witnesses and their happiness by quoting extracts from the writings of people who came into contact with them during the black and terrible years of World War II

12. What experience did Paul and Silas endure, and what was their attitude under suffering?

13-15. (a) How have Jehovah's witnesses of modern times suffered, and what is said of their attitude? (b) Why do they rejoice under suffering?

when Nazi concentration camps were packed with Witnesses. None of these authors were Jehovah's witnesses at the time. Captain S. P. Best, in *Venlo Incident*, writes: "The fortitude of the Jehovah's Witnesses was most remarkable and caused the grudging admiration even of their gaolers. Most had been imprisoned since 1933 and they had been beaten, tortured and starved. Yet all I met with were honest, kind and very brave men—fanatics if you will—but carrying with them something of that sacred flame which inspired the early Christians."

<sup>14</sup> An inmate of Dachau concentration camp speaks of "the admirable Jehovah's Witnesses [who] showed such courage, daring, virtue . . . that they deserve a special salute. They were rocks in a sea of mud." And the words of none other than Commandant Hess, Nazi boss of Auschwitz, are worthy of mention: "As people, Jehovah's Witnesses were quiet, industrious men and women. All who saw the condemned die were deeply moved and even the execution squad itself was affected." Coward says: "The intense happiness of Jehovah's Witnesses stems from a complete freedom from fear. They do not fear death as do so many Christians of other denominations in spite of the Church's teachings on life after death. . . . The Jehovah's Witnesses have no fear because they *know* without doubt the answers to all those questions."

<sup>15</sup> The same admiration comes from others who have witnessed the persecution of Jehovah's witnesses in Europe, Africa and Asia in even more recent years. Reports from Siberian prison camps tell of Jehovah's witnesses going to work each morning singing Kingdom songs. Why do they rejoice? Peter answers: "If you are being reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy, because the spirit of glory, even the spirit of God, is resting upon

you." (1 Pet. 4:14) This token from God is what makes them happy under persecution.

#### WHAT THE REJOICING IS ALL ABOUT

<sup>16</sup> Christians do not want to be persecuted. They would much rather live in peace. But this wicked world brings persecution against them for remaining steadfast to Christian principles. Their firm stand, however, has resulted in happiness. They thrill in the fact that they can stand for Jehovah and not bring any shame on him and his organization. Their rejoicing is in maintained integrity. For example, the fact that persecutors have burned down many of their houses and Kingdom Halls is no cause for rejoicing. But to find the spirit of God within themselves to remain faithful to God despite their losses is a cause for great rejoicing.

<sup>17</sup> When a wife or a husband is cruelly beaten by persecutors for righteousness' sake, as was the case in Hitler's Germany and his conquered lands, such brutality did not bring happiness to Christians. Christians do not rejoice in the brutal sufferings of others. Joy, however, does come to them when they learn that such wicked deeds have not embittered those persecuted, that wives and husbands under trial have remained faithful to God, that they have not doubted God's love or mercy, but have actually been drawn closer to Jehovah as a result of their suffering. This is what makes Christians want to leap for joy, because they see in such an uncompromising stand for righteousness the spirit of God at work in such individuals.

<sup>18</sup> God knows that Christians do not rejoice when their daughters are raped and cry out for help and there is no one to help them, as was the case in Malawi just a few years ago, but conditions have

changed now. Yet it is a cause for rejoicing that under such trials the child still believes in Jehovah, that she still trusts him. There is no pleasure in pain itself. But to know that God has called some to represent him under such difficult circumstances and that they are able to stand firm and faithful to him, come what may—this is what brings true rejoicing to the Christian. And, in effect, God, too, must find pleasure in them.—Prov. 27:11.

#### PROPER CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD PERSECUTORS

<sup>19</sup> What, then, should be the Christian's attitude toward persecutors? It should be one of understanding. The Christian must understand that persecutors are moved by Satan the Devil and his wicked organization to do their evil deeds. Many times persecutors are totally deceived. Jesus said: "Men will expel you from the synagogue. In fact, the hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God. But they will do these things because they have not come to know either the Father or me." (John 16:2, 3; 1 Cor. 2:8) Therefore, the Christian attitude should be one of forgiveness and a desire to help the persecutor to understand the Christian's position before man and God.

<sup>20</sup> Jesus commanded: "Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you; that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens." (Matt. 5:44, 45) Jesus also lived this way. When he was nailed to the tree, he prayed in behalf of his persecutors: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) Jesus' disciples did the same. When Stephen was being stoned to death, he prayed: "Jehovah, do not charge this sin against

16-18. (a) Why have Jehovah's witnesses thrilled under persecution? Illustrate. (b) Since they do not find pleasure in pain, what is the cause of their joy?

19, 20. (a) What should be the Christian attitude toward persecutors? (b) How does the Christian prevent himself from being conquered by evil?

them." (Acts 7:60) The apostle Paul counsels: "Keep on blessing those who persecute; be blessing and do not be cursing. Return evil for evil to no one. Provide fine things in the sight of all men. If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.' . . . Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil with the good." (Rom. 12:14, 17-21) This attitude and behavior lead to God's approval. It is the Christian way.

<sup>21</sup> There is no reason to retaliate in a vengeful way if people destroy the Christian's property or do him injury. The property belongs to God and he is God's fellow worker. The courts of law may protect the Christian and replace the lost property. But if they do not, then the Christian must suffer the loss. The Christian must not seek to injure or to kill anyone. Vengeance belongs to God; he will repay. That is the Christian attitude.

#### BEARING UP UNDER PERSECUTION

<sup>22</sup> To endure persecution the Christian must place full confidence in Jehovah. God will strengthen him and make him happy in the outcome. (2 Tim. 4:17) He should never neglect to pray to Jehovah in his own behalf and in the behalf of his Christian brothers who also may be enduring trials. When praying he should not blame Jehovah for the persecution, simply because God does not persecute any innocent one. Satan and his wicked organization are the ones who persecute. However, God has allowed persecution to establish before all creation Christian loyalty to his

21. (a) What will be the Christian's attitude if his property is destroyed or if he himself is injured? (b) If worse comes to worst, how will the Christian view matters?

22, 23. (a) What will a Christian do to bear up under persecution? (b) What is he admonished to do when threatened by unruly mobs?

universal sovereignty. By enduring persecution the Christian in this way upholds Jehovah's name and Word.

<sup>23</sup> The Christian will not seek persecution, or martyrdom, or want to provoke the ungodly to violence. They are admonished to be "cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves." (Matt. 10:16) On one occasion Jesus avoided a mob. It may be necessary on occasion for the Christian minister when threatened to move to a kindlier location.—John 10:31-39.

<sup>24</sup> The Christian should always remember that he does not endure persecution in his own strength and that God will not let him be tempted beyond what he can bear, that Jehovah will make the way out in order for him to be able to endure it. (2 Cor. 4:9, 10; 1 Cor. 10:13) For some, faithfulness until death may be the way out, but Jehovah will give them the needed strength even to endure so severe a trial. By making Jehovah his stronghold, the Christian will find strength in his hour of need. The resurrection hope, the promise of eternal life are faith strengthening. They were for Jesus and they will be for all who trust in Jehovah: "For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2) Keep Jehovah's promises ever before you that you might do the same.—Nah. 1:7; Prov. 18:10.

<sup>25</sup> The trials of persecution last but a little season and cannot be compared to the reward that Jehovah promises. Paul said: "I reckon that the sufferings of the present season do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us." For the tribulation "works out for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing weight and is ever-

24. What will the Christian ever endeavor to keep before him, and why?

25. What can the integrity-keeper happily look forward to?

lasting." (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17) Endure all trials, therefore, you whose privilege it is to suffer for righteousness' sake, for great indeed is your reward! "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, be-

cause on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him." (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10) May that be your happy reward.

**T**HE Bible says of God: "Perfect is his activity."—Deut. 32:4.

As God's handiwork, the planet Earth must have been perfect. Why, then, did God tell Adam and Eve to 'subdue the earth'?—Gen. 1:28.

Likewise the product of God's activity, the first human pair were also perfect. How, then, could they sin?

How would you answer these questions? What does "perfection" really mean? Do you know what the Bible's teaching on it is? Would it appeal to you to live in perfection on this earth? Or do you think perfection would take all the challenge out of living, make it mechanically regular, stale?

#### GETTING AT THE TRUE MEANING

Actually, most persons have a very *imperfect* understanding of what the word "perfect" means. For example, one may see some shirts advertised for "\$2.99 each," with the notice alongside, "\$5.99 if perfect." Is that a proper use of the word "perfect"?

Some would say No. They might say, "There is no such thing as a 'perfect' shirt." Why? Well, they may think that a "perfect" shirt should have amazing qualities, perhaps never wear out, last forever. But if the shirt was made from cloth that never wore out, how could that cloth be cut to begin with? If it *could* be cut, then it could also wear out. And if it could *not* be cut, then it would have to be harder

# PERFECTION

*—What does  
it really  
mean?*

than any other existing substance, harder than even diamonds. How would a shirt like that feel on your shoulders?

Yes, the advertisement's use of the word "perfect" would be correct. The dictionary tells us that the English word "perfect" comes from the Latin prefix *per*, meaning "throughout," "thoroughly," or "completely," plus the verb *facere*, meaning "to do or make."

So, something that is "perfect" is something that is 'completely made or finished, not lacking in essential parts, not defective.' It is also something that 'meets all requirements and measures up to the standards of excellence set.'

The question, then, is: Who decides what is essential, and who sets the requirements and standards of excellence? In the

case of a shirt, it is the manufacturer, the maker, who has certain requirements and standards. When these are met, the shirt is "perfect." Of course, if the shirt is a sport shirt and the buyer wants a dress shirt, then, from his viewpoint, the shirt is not "perfect" for his use, the purpose that he has in mind.

Really, then, the person objecting to the use of the word "perfect" regarding a shirt or similar thing is simply going by his personal "ideal." An "ideal" is one's own idea or concept of excellence or perfection, what one *thinks* a thing should be. But ideals differ from person to person, do they not? What would you say is the "perfect" height for a man, the "perfect" shape for a woman's face, or even the "perfect" flavor for an apple pie? Your answer would, of course, represent only your own preference, *your* ideal.

What does this have to do with the Bible or with living on earth in perfection? Very much. For though these points seem simple, keeping them in mind can help us to understand many things in God's Word, including the questions asked at the beginning of this discussion. This is so because the Hebrew and Greek words that the Bible writers used to express perfection have a meaning very similar to the basic meaning of the English word "perfect." They convey the thought of something that is "complete," "finished," "fully developed," "having attained the appointed purpose or goal." Let us see, then, how all this helps us to understand the Scriptures and their promise of life in perfection.

#### THE FINAL ARBITER OF PERFECTION

All creation owes its existence to God. That means that He is the final Judge as to whether a thing is perfect or not. If it meets his *standards* to his satisfaction, serves his *purpose* in the way he wishes, then it is perfect. That is why we can

properly say that the perfection of any part of God's creation is *relative*, not absolute. That is, it all *relates* to God's purpose for it, and only when we know his purpose can we know whether a thing is perfect in his sight or not.

For example, God prepared the planet Earth for man's habitation, filling it with vegetation, birds, animals and fish, and finally brought man forth upon it. Surveying his work, God pronounced the completed results "very good." (Gen. 1:31) It measured up to his perfect standards. But note that God still instructed the human pair to 'subdue the earth,' evidently meaning that they should cultivate it and make the whole planet, and not just Eden, a garden of God. (Gen. 1:28; 2:8) We might compare this with a builder who contracts to build a fine house for a family but then to turn it over to them to do the painting, decorating and furnishing. When he turns the house over to the family, the builder's work is complete, finished, of excellent quality. Is it "imperfect" because other things remain to be done? No, for this was the arrangement decided upon beforehand.

Then, too, God gave command to the Israelites to construct a tabernacle or tent of worship in the wilderness, giving them the specifications for making it. The work was of superb quality and done "just as Jehovah had commanded." (Ex. 36:1, 2; 39:32, 42, 43) Could we say it was perfect? Definitely, for, when completed, God approved of it and made his presence evident there. (Ex. 40:16, 33-38) Yet in due time God caused that portable tent to be replaced by a fixed temple at Jerusalem and later caused even the temple to be destroyed. Why? Because these structures were only to serve as types or a small-scale prophetic representation of a "greater and more perfect tent," Jehovah's heavenly arrangement in which the resurrected Christ Jesus acts as High Priest. (Heb. 9:11-14,

23, 24) The earthly tent was perfect because it satisfied all God's requirements. And it served its appointed end. On the other hand, the perfection of that which it represented, God's heavenly arrangement, was of a far higher type, and would accomplish God's ultimate purpose to remove sin completely. So, in this sense, what the earthly tent represented was "*greater and more perfect.*"

We cannot, then, go just by our own ideas in these matters, otherwise we are trying to make a god of ourselves, even putting our own thinking over that of our Creator. Since he is the Maker, the Producer, he knows what he wants and he has the full right to decide what the standards of excellence and perfection shall be in his activity and creation.

#### PERFECTION AMONG HUMANS

Turning now to the first human pair, we see that Adam and Eve were created perfect—physically and mentally. God even gave them a perfect moral start, for he implanted in man a conscience. That is why the apostle could properly say that God's law is 'written in men's hearts.' (Rom. 2:15) Could that perfect human pair sin? Or, to be perfect, should they be incapable of sinning, made so that they could only obey, only go in the right way, never deviate from the course outlined for them? If you made a machine, say an automobile, you would make it so that it always went in the direction you turned the steering wheel, would you not? So, then, should not the first human pair have been like that in order to be perfect?

No. Why not? Because they were not made to be machines, to perform like machines. God, the Maker, purposed that they should exercise free moral agency, that is, be able to make personal moral decisions, choose between right and wrong, between obedience and disobedience. Remember,

the Maker sets the standards and requirements, his will governs. Therefore, if the human pair had not had this ability to choose, they would actually have been incomplete, imperfect, according to God's standards.—Compare Genesis 2:15-17; 3:2, 3; Deuteronomy 30:19, 20; Joshua 24:15.

But suppose someone argues, "Yes, but if they were perfect then they should only have chosen what was right." This is the same as saying that they had no choice, for if you can only "choose" one thing, you really are not choosing at all. So to argue this way is simply to substitute a personal idea in place of God's own standards. Those standards required that the human pair be capable of choosing either good or bad. Why? Because only then could *love* enter the picture. If they obeyed because they could do nothing but obey, then their service would be automatic. But God granted them the ability to choose, so that they could serve because of love in their hearts. Or they could become disobedient because their hearts had become selfish. How could that happen?

This would depend on what they fed their hearts, from which their motivation issued forth. Just as their bodies, though perfect, required the right kind of food to function well, so also they had to feed their hearts with right thoughts and reasonings. Perfect Adam could not eat dirt, gravel or wood and still enjoy perfect physical health; if he tried to breathe water instead of air he would drown. His perfection was relative, limited to the human sphere of life. In the same way, if he chose to let his mind and heart feed on wrong thoughts, this would lead to entertaining wrong desire and finally would produce sin and death. This is exactly what happened, and by his disobedience Adam, *of his own choice*, entered into im-

perfection.—Jas. 1:14, 15; compare Genesis 1:29; Matthew 4:4.

**MANKIND'S RETURN TO PERFECTION  
ON EARTH**

In answer to the prayer, "Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth," Jehovah God is going to remove everything from the earth that does not measure up to his standards, fit his righteous purpose. His promise is that, as a result, 'neither tears, death, mourning nor outcry nor pain will be anymore.' (Matt. 6: 10; Rev. 21:3-5) During the thousand-year rule of his Son's heavenly kingdom over earth's inhabitants, obedient persons will be brought to bodily and mental perfection, the equals of the first human pair prior to their sinning.—1 Cor. 15:25, 26; Rev. 20:4-6.

Will this 'take all the challenge out of living,' make life 'mechanically regular and stale'? Just the opposite. The reason why some have this idea is that they imagine that a perfect human would be able to do just about anything he or she wanted to with practically no effort. Suppose you were to decide you wanted to play the violin. Why, you could just pick it up and, though never having had one in your hands before, now play a piece like Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* (Gypsy Airs) without a single slip! So some seem to think. But this is just an imaginary ideal. The Bible gives no such concept.

Jesus Christ was born a perfect human. Yet he had to learn to eat solid food, walk and talk as all human babies do. If, as seems likely, he worked at carpentering with his foster father Joseph, he certainly had to *learn* skill in handling carpenter's tools. It did not come automatically because he was perfect. Nor did other knowledge, nor even knowledge of his Father's

Word and purpose. As Luke 2:52 says of him from the age of twelve years onward: "And Jesus went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men."—Luke 2:42-52.

Perfection, then, will not eliminate the challenge of living. Each task will have its particular problems to be solved. Effort, thinking, planning will still be required. But perfection *will* remove the frustration, the disappointment, the futility that living in an imperfect, sin-ridden world now brings us, where even our best efforts so often are thwarted by obstacles or by the very shortness of our life-span, or fail due to the weakness of our sinful nature.

The prospect of everlasting life in itself will challenge those living in God's new order to learn more and more, to learn about the wonderful earth on which they live and the enormous variety of created things that God has made. It will challenge everyone's productivity, initiative, resourcefulness and enterprise, ingenuity and originality. What each person produces in the way of homes, gardens, dress, hand-craft and works of art will reflect his own personal preferences and purpose, though all in harmony with the will of God. This will assure unending variety earth wide, never sameness and monotony.

Realize, then, that we should learn now all we can from the Source of truly worthwhile knowledge. Recognize that, "as for the true God, perfect is his way; the saying of Jehovah is a refined one." Trust in his Word, put it to work in your life now and, relying on his promises for the future, make him your refuge and source of strength. Then you can say with the psalmist: "The true God is the One girding me closely with vital energy, and he will grant my way to be perfect."—Ps. 18: 30-32.

# Why Have the MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

## Ceased?

**N**INETEEN hundred years ago, the invisible God powerfully backed up the good news of salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ. By what means?

The writer of the book of Hebrews, addressing Christians who had been under the Mosaic Law covenant, showed how, saying: "God joined in bearing witness with signs as well as portents and various powerful works and with distributions of holy spirit according to his will." (Heb. 2:1-4) Yes, by this means, God also plainly showed that he was now dealing with the newly established Christian congregation under the new covenant and had removed his favor from the Jewish arrangement under the Law covenant.

These "distributions of holy spirit" included many miraculous abilities. The apostle Paul spoke of these miraculous gifts, and said that they would pass away in time. (1 Cor. 13:8) Today we do not observe God's spirit operating through individuals in such startling, miraculous ways, performing healings, speaking in various tongues that the speaker has never before studied, uttering inspired prophecy, and so forth. Why not? If they were necessary to the congregation then, why not now?

The reason is that, though the Christian congregation today is just as fully blessed with the operation of God's spirit to accomplish its ministry, the spirit supplies many of the congregation's needs in a different, more widespread and permanent way. How is this? For the answer, it is necessary to review the purpose of

the gifts as bestowed back there and what they accomplished.

### THE SPIRIT'S MIGHTY ACTIVITY IN THE FIRST CENTURY

When we read the account reporting the activities of the apostles and their associates, as recorded primarily in the Bible book of Acts, we cannot help but be impressed by the might, intensiveness and energy of the holy spirit's operation. From Pentecost of 33 C.E. onward, "believers in the Lord kept on being added, multitudes both of men and of women." (Acts 5:14) During Paul's first missionary journey, which occupied only about a year and a half, he and Barnabas traveled through Cyprus and Asia Minor. (Acts chaps. 13, 14) In this short time they established congregation after congregation and appointed local men to take oversight. Some congregations were evidently formed in a very short period of time. On a later tour, Paul spent only about a year and a half in the large city of Corinth, finding many disciples there.—Acts 18:11.

Why did the spirit operate so mightily, gathering hundreds, yes, thousands, to the Christian congregation in so short a space of its early history?

It was because there were relatively only a few years in which to establish, build up and strengthen the congregation. Jesus, in his illustration of the wheat and

the weeds, had shown that this vigorous activity would be of limited duration. It would end when "men were sleeping," that is, after the apostles 'fell asleep' or passed off the scene in death. When this occurred, the foretold "man of lawlessness" would not much longer be restrained and the great apostasy, the rebellion against true apostolic teaching and practice, would blossom forth in full strength. (Matt. 13: 24-30, 36-43; 2 Thess. 2:3-8) So the apostles worked tirelessly to build up the congregation in order that it would be "a pillar and support of the truth" against the storm waves of the apostasy that would all but swallow it up.—1 Tim 3:15; 4:1; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

Why, however, were *miraculous* operations of the spirit necessary? Well, you will recall that, in the first century, even the Jew was rare who possessed a complete set of the scrolls of the Hebrew Scriptures. Among pagans the Bible was virtually unknown. As to the Gospel accounts and the letters of the Greek Scriptures, only very few copies were circulating. None of the Bible books were handily divided into chapters and verses, as today. Bible concordances, Bible dictionaries and commentaries were nonexistent. Therefore, it becomes apparent that help from God was needed, beyond what was normal. It was logical that the spirit of God should operate in a way that filled the need of the many Christian disciples for Bible knowledge and direction. This it did through the miraculous gifts, as we shall see.

#### THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS

These gifts are listed at 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Here the apostle writes that the spirit did not operate in the same manner upon every member of the congregation, but, rather, that it manifested its operation and influence in a variety of ways.

Thereby it fully equipped the congregation as a body to maintain right doctrine and clean practices, to preach and teach the good news and to stand firm against the apostasy. Let us consider the various gifts and their purposes.

The first listed is "speech of wisdom." Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge and understanding successfully to attain certain goals. This gift of wisdom was not a wisdom born of experience, but a miraculous wisdom, the possessor thereof being able to assist the congregation in decisions of a difficult nature.—Acts 13:1-5.

Second was "speech of knowledge." This was not the knowledge of God and Christ that all Christians were required to have to be disciples. (John 17:3; Rom. 10:14) It was a miraculous knowledge that made up for the lack of copies of the Scriptures. It also alerted them in a miraculous way to situations affecting the well-being of the congregation.—Acts 5:1-11.

Next was "faith." Again, this would not be the faith that all Christians had to possess, for faith in God and in his Son and in the ransom sacrifice was the primary requisite to become a Christian. (Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38, 39) Rather, this was a miraculous spirit-inspired faith, an unbreakable conviction that enabled its possessor to overcome mountainlike obstacles and to impart to the congregation energy and zeal to go ahead unshakably in preaching the good news. What a valuable member of the congregation the one possessing this gift would be!

Then there were "healings" and other "powerful works." (Acts 3:1-8; 5:12-16; 13:6-12) These served as signs to unbelievers, powerfully proving that God's spirit was on the congregation and facilitating its work.

The gift of "prophesying" included, besides speaking the magnificent things of God, the inspired ability to speak accu-

rately of things to come. This inspired foretelling of events seems to have been generally limited, however, to things that affected the congregation at that time, enabling it to meet the foreseen situation, as in the case of the famine in the time of Emperor Claudius, foretold by the Christian prophet Agabus.—Acts 11:27-30.

“Discernment of inspired utterances” was a gift that worked for the safety of the congregation. At that time there actually were prophets with inspired messages from God, some of whom traveled, as did Barnabas, Silas, Paul and others. By the gift of discerning inspired utterances, the congregation would be protected from any impostors, false prophets. If such came to the congregation, they could be identified by the member who possessed this gift. Thus the congregation would know whether to give attention to the “inspired utterances” or not.—1 John 4:1.

“Tongues” and “interpretation of tongues” were important in getting the good news quickly spread through Asia, Europe and Africa and the islands of the sea. The gift of tongues also served as a sign to those outside the Christian congregation. (1 Cor. 14:22) Paul, because of his commission as the apostle to the nations, traveled more widely than the rest, meeting persons of a great variety of languages and dialects. Doubtlessly it was for that reason that he was so richly endowed with this gift, as he said: “I speak in more tongues than all of you do.”—1 Cor. 14:18.

#### SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE MODERN CONGREGATION

Now, at the present time, the true Christian congregation has been recovered from the apostasy that enshrouded the Middle Ages in spiritual darkness. Just as Israel was returned to its land in 537 B.C.E. by King Cyrus of Persia, so Jehovah has used his reigning King Jesus Christ to bring

the modern-day Christian congregation into a spiritually prosperous condition. (Isa. 1:25-27) The true doctrines have been restored concerning God’s name, the position of his Son Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God, the ransom, resurrection, and others. The false doctrines of Trinity, hell-fire, immortality of the human soul and others have been exposed as unscriptural. The preaching of the good news of the Kingdom is being done world wide. Are the miraculous gifts of the spirit necessary for the congregation to carry on its work and to maintain its cleanliness, uprightness and unity?

No, such gifts are not needed in an altogether miraculous way, as they were in the first century, for God has endowed the congregation with the necessary things in a different, more complete and permanent way. However, just as in the congregation’s early history, not all members of the congregation possess all abilities, but each complements the others so that the congregation as a body, in all its abilities, accurately represents God and Christ. This is accomplished by the operation of God’s spirit, giving a variety of abilities.

As to knowledge, God has provided his entire Word, which today can be possessed in printed form by the most humble person. Its use can make the man of God fully competent, completely equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Furthermore, knowledge is available to all through Bible study helps such as commentaries, concordances and Bible dictionaries, as well as by the help of men in the congregation who have acquired knowledge through diligent study.

Wisdom can be similarly obtained. It is not necessary for wisdom to be gained miraculously. The experience of the early congregation as related in the book of Acts is available, along with the history of the modern congregation, recovered

from apostasy. Hardly a problem can arise that has not been faced and overcome. The congregation of anointed Christians at this time is designated by Jesus Christ as the "faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45-47) Mature men who have had years of experience in being directed by God's Word and his spirit employ the wisdom thus gained in helping the congregation to overcome problems and to carry forward the work in an orderly, successful manner.

In a similar way, strong faith works powerfully in the congregation through the majority of its members. It is a fruit of the spirit developed by carefully ascertaining God's will through study of the Bible and by following the leading of the spirit. (Gal. 5:22) Through the upheavals of two world wars, through the furnace of burning hatred and opposition to God's kingdom and its proclamation, through indifference, ridicule and persecution, men of faith have led and inspired the congregation to fulfill its commissions.

Gifts of healings and similar miraculous works are not necessary today. God's change from the ancient Jewish to the Christian congregation is verified by history, while love and activity on the part of the Christian congregation, as well as many fulfillments of prophecy, stand as modern identifying signs, proof that God's favor is upon it. The worldwide expansion of the Kingdom preaching is also a powerful sign.—1 Cor. 13:10-13; Matt. 24:14.

Inspired prophesying today would be superfluous. The prophecies written in the Bible being complete as a guide to the congregation today, nothing needs to be added. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Rev. 22:18, 19) Accordingly, since God's Word provides a perfect guide, there is no need to have the gift of discernment of prophecies in a miraculous sense, for there are no inspired prophets now authorized by God. Those things that "come out of the mouth of the

dragon and out of the mouth of the wild beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet," or from others who speak so-called "inspired expressions" are quickly evaluated and proved false by means of the spirit-inspired Word of God.—Rev. 16:13, 14; 1 John 4:1.

"But what about tongues and interpretation of tongues?" someone may ask. In reply the question might be propounded, "Is the good news of the Kingdom being preached to all the nations in all the major languages?" Yes, in 206 lands the witness is being given, and the Bible or parts of it are available in more than 1,400 languages. Thousands of trained missionaries have learned foreign languages and have brought the good news of the Kingdom to the people in those lands. The people hearing are in turn spreading it abroad, even in dialects not spoken by the missionaries, thus interpreting the word of truth to others.

In this manner God's spirit directs the preaching of the good news, with the result that 'a great crowd, which no man is able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples *and tongues*' has come forth in praise of Jehovah God and his King Jesus Christ, joining in the proclamation that the King has begun his rule.

—Rev. 7:9, 14.

The spirit therefore does indeed act powerfully today, as it did in the early Christian congregation. Actually the work it is accomplishing might well be termed miraculous, from a human standpoint. The ones doing the work must have God's spirit to do it, and they acknowledge that his spirit really accomplishes the results.

However, the things accomplished may seem to be the natural outworking of matters to one who does not recognize God's spirit as the force that energizes his people to activity. The operation of the spirit

in God's congregation today does not appear as a spectacular thing, for the gifts employed are spiritual gifts developed over a period of time by their possessors, while the miraculous gifts of the early congregation were bestowed instantly on Christians as selected by God.—1 Cor. 12:6, 11, 18; Acts 19:5, 6.

As Christians today, we can be happy that God, in his marvelous wisdom, worked in this manner so that the truth has been kept alive in the earth. We should now zealously seek to develop the fruits of the spirit so as not to be found 'accepting the undeserved kindness of God and missing its purpose.'—2 Cor. 6:1.

# HOW RELIGIOUS EXPENSES ARE MET



"**A**LL religions are pretty much the same." Have you heard people say that? True, *most* religions share many things in common. But not *all* religions do. To appreciate just how great the difference can be, consider the matter of how religious expenses are met.

Today, although Christendom's churches have a wide variety of ways to finance their activities, there is, nevertheless, a basic similarity. Among the most common methods is that of passing the collection plate or basket—sometimes more than once during the services. Some churches send out letters with self-addressed return envelopes, asking for donations. Others get financial support from paid advertising in their church bulletins and papers. Many organizations send out religious trinkets and ask the receiver to contribute for these unsolicited "gifts." Still other church-

es resort to dinners and card parties to raise money. An advertisement appearing in religious magazines states: "A Proven Money Maker for Churches and Clubs. Make \$82 with Happy Home Dish Cloths."

A very common method is the use of personal envelopes for Sunday contributions, as, for example, those of the Brown Memorial Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. Its members get a set of fifty-two envelopes at the beginning of the year, each set having an identifying number. When the collection basket is passed, members drop in their envelopes. These envelopes being numbered, the church officials are able to tell just how regularly and how much each member contributes in the course of a year.

Certain clergymen in the New York area are very businesslike about the matter. They send out monthly statements to

their parishioners reminding them of the amount they owe their church. And one Congregational preacher in Vermont was reported in the press as having installed a credit-card machine inside the front door for those who would prefer to contribute by this means. Ever so many churches either require or encourage their members to tithe, that is, to give to their church a tenth of their income.

There are also the professional fund raisers for special purposes, such as the renovating or the building of church structures. As the book *The Church as Employer, Money Raiser and Investor* says, "The work of helping churches raise money has become a specialized job." Among the foremost of the fund-raising agencies is Ketchum, Inc. It and others like it belong to the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel.

A very popular method used to collect money for a church is the use of bingo and like games of chance. Among the latest of these are what are called "Las Vegas Nights." Under the heading: "Bingo's Sun Is Setting in Glow of Vegas Nites," the New York *Daily News*, of March 2, 1971, told how these Las Vegas Nights are replacing bingo as a source of church revenue. The report said: "Last Saturday night more than 500 persons showed up at the Holliswood Jewish Center in Holliswood, Queens, to try their luck at cards, dice, luck bucks and a wheel spinning creakily on the wall. Our Lady of Lourdes in Queens Village, Queens, is presenting a Las Vegas Night replete with poker, black jack, big six, over and under and you name it. Admission is \$1 and the refreshments are gratis." One Catholic church reported an income of \$26,000 from just one Las Vegas Night staged recently.

From your own experience, have you not found various ones of these methods to be used by Protestant, Catholic and

Jewish religions to meet their expenses? Note, too, that they all have a basic similarity. Rather than encourage spontaneous giving, they employ pressure, subtle or otherwise, and even appeal to selfishness, as through gambling.

What about the Christian witnesses of Jehovah? Which of these methods do they use? Actually, they use none of them, not even the very common passing of a collection plate. How, then, do they gain the needed funds to pay for the expenses incurred in carrying on their religious activities on a local, national and international scale?

The emphasis in all giving among the Witnesses is that it must be voluntary and spontaneous, from the heart. In fact, ever since the earliest days of the modern witnesses of Jehovah it has been their policy that never should there be any passing of collection plates or similar solicitations for money. It was their conviction that this is Jehovah's work and that he would open the hearts of his people to make the necessary contributions so that necessary funds would always be available for the expansion of the preaching of the Gospel.

At all of their meeting places there is a contribution box. Those who want to contribute to the support of the worship by the Witnesses may go to that box and give to the extent that they are able. There are no envelopes, no identification. So that those contributing might know the total amount contributed and what was done with the contributions received, once each month a statement is read to the congregation, giving those details. Additionally, many feel moved to send donations to the national and international headquarters for use in furthering the missionary work in other parts of the world. This, too, is voluntary.

Which of these methods do you think most closely resembles those used by Jesus

and his apostles, who instituted Christianity? Have you ever read in the Bible of Jesus or any of his disciples asking for the tithe, or passing a collection basket or plate or operating games of chance? No, when Jesus sent forth his twelve apostles he specifically commanded them: "You received free, give free." (Matt. 10:8) But did not Jesus and his band of apostles have expenses that needed to be met? Indeed they did, and so we read that they had a "money box" for their funds. (John 12:6) Where did this money come from? Doubtless from voluntary contributions. Indicating the source of some of this, Luke's account says that traveling from city to city with Jesus and his apostles were a number of women "who were ministering to them from their belongings." (Luke 8:3) The apostle Paul later set a fine example as a true minister of Christ Jesus in that he worked with his own hands "so as not to put an expensive burden upon any one of you." Likewise among Jehovah's witnesses

today there is no paid clergy class burdening the congregations.—1 Thess. 2:9; Acts 20:34.

Newcomers at the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's witnesses are struck with this difference between the way their churches finance their worship and the way Jehovah's witnesses do. As one woman once put it: "In my church I felt like a dollar sign; we have been very large contributors. But here at the Kingdom Hall I was not made to feel that way at all." The principle governing such matters among Jehovah's witnesses is expressed by the apostle Paul at 2 Corinthians 8:12: "For if the readiness is there first, it is especially acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what a person does not have."

Does the place of worship that you attend adhere to these Bible standards regarding religious expenses? If it does not, do you believe that God is pleased with your associating with an organization that disregards the standards of his Word?

### *God's Truth Saved My Life!*

● When my dearly beloved wife passed away I was left very gloomy. I had been told at my church that my wife was in a fiery hell, for she had never been baptized. I was so miserable to be around that my son would not stay at home on the weekends. He left on Friday morning and returned late on Sunday night.

One Friday evening I decided to join my wife in death. I did not want to live another year in misery. In our neighborhood, many poisonous plants grow. I planned to pick some of these, make a brew from them and then drink it, after which I would go to bed.

As I was getting the wood to build a fire, two young women walked up the path to my home. They gave me a short sermon from the Bible. I told them that this was a mother-

less home but that they were welcome to come in. They did so and we three sat down. For an hour or more we discussed God's truth in the Bible. On leaving they promised to call back on me next Friday. So I did not gather the greens to make my poison brew that evening.

These two witnesses of Jehovah called back on me faithfully that Friday and others thereafter. Well, about a month later, I made my first visit to a Kingdom Hall here in Seattle, Washington. I have regularly gone there since. Later I was baptized and I am now one of Jehovah's happy witnesses. I truly feel that those two Witnesses were a provision from God, for the truth they brought saved my life.—Contributed.

## "If One of Jehovah's Witnesses Calls"

HERE are very few places where Jehovah's Witnesses cannot call to preach the good news of God's kingdom. Dartmoor prison, one of England's chief prisons, is one of them. And yet recently the Anglican chaplain there distributed to every cell containing members of the Church of England a leaflet called "What to Say If One of Jehovah's Witnesses Calls." He had good reason to do so.

A few months ago a prison officer at Dartmoor began witnessing to some men in his shop. One of them accepted the message readily and changed his religion so that he would qualify to have the local overseer of Jehovah's witnesses visit him. Soon, four more had become sufficiently interested to ask for interviews with the chaplain, who then gave a sermon to the prisoners condemning Jehovah's witnesses as unchristian and heretical. This led to a considerable increase in the interest in the prison and more requests for Bible studies.

Recently a new warden moved to Dartmoor prison and the first thing the chaplain told him was that he did not mind what religion he was, or whether he had any religion at all. He was perfectly open-minded except with those "confounded Jehovah's witnesses." When the new warden said that he was one of Jehovah's witnesses, the chaplain became very perturbed. One prisoner commented: "The chaplain never refers to the Bible except when he is running down Jehovah's witnesses."

Mr. — has expressed his desire to be baptized and is now going over the preparatory questions with the local overseer, and every month groups of Witnesses travel to see him in the prison to build up his faith. Regarding the things that have happened in his life in recent months he writes:

"Dear Brothers:

"Owing to forced circumstances I will not be able to join you, but the comfort of knowing we are united in spirit brings great joy. At the present time, due to my former course of life, I still owe the State some time.

"Actually, this is where it all began for me, right here in prison, just like this:

"I was searching for help and counsel as regards how to live my life. I couldn't seem to receive any satisfaction from the prison authorities, so one day I got to speaking to the prison chaplain and I told him that I had a desire to serve God. I asked him how I would

know if God knew I had this desire. He replied, 'When he is ready . . .' I showed him the Gideon Bible I had and told him I found it very difficult to understand, so he said, 'You want a New Testament,' which was kind of him.

"He also explained that he was starting a new Bible class with some friends from the Church of England Men's Association. He enlisted me in this class.

"The first week at the class nothing happened as regards discussing the help and guidance that was needed. The next week nothing happened. For a few more weeks nothing happened, but by this time they had given out small membership cards and asked us for a penny each. The only time the Bible was mentioned was when they condemned Jehovah's witnesses.

"Well, at that time, in the prison shop where I was working one of the staff was a Christian witness of Jehovah, so we had quite a few conversations together, and counsel was given me as regards changing my way of life. Thanks to the generosity of what are now my brothers, within a few days a Bible and *Truth* book were placed with me. Within a few weeks a study was started, and since then, I am happy to say, through the help of Jehovah's organisation and the love of my new brothers, I have this wonderful hope of serving Jehovah God forever, also of sharing this good news with others.

"One man has already changed his religion. He has now gone to another prison and as he was leaving he said, 'Thanks for helping me to find the truth. I look forward to seeing you at one of the meetings in the future.'

"Another has told the same prison chaplain that he will not be going anymore to his church and that he will be changing his religion to be one of Jehovah's witnesses. Of course, the chaplain got quite annoyed, and made mention the next Sunday of a book that condemns Jehovah's witnesses. The inmate noticed there was not one scripture in the whole book and asked the chaplain why. The chaplain got even more annoyed and has put in every cell where Anglicans are a leaflet called, 'What to Say If One of Jehovah's Witnesses Calls.' The inmate refused to be put off and is determined to learn more about Jehovah and his loving purpose."

So the good news about Jehovah's kingdom continues to be preached, even in the most unlikely places, including the literal prisons.

# What basis for the GREEK MYTHS?

**Z**EUS, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite—these and others are familiar to most of us as the names of Greek gods and goddesses. Many, too, know that the mythological accounts of the ancient Greeks ascribe all kinds of detestable practices to their deities. They are depicted as quarreling among themselves, fighting against one another and even conspiring against one another. That the myths might have even the slightest basis in fact may seem difficult to conceive. Yet, strange as it may seem to some persons, the Bible sheds light on the possible, or even probable, origin of these legends.

According to the true history found at Genesis 6:1-13, angelic sons of God came to the earth prior to the flood of Noah's day and took up living as husbands with attractive women. The offspring of these unions were "Nephilim" or "Fellers," that is, 'those causing others to fall.' This contributed measurably to the immorality and violence that prevailed on earth then.

Doubtless the Deluge survivors, Noah and his family, passed on the information about pre-Flood conditions to their descendants. It is therefore noteworthy that the myths attributed to the Greek poets Homer and Hesiod echo the account found in the Bible. Of course, these myths present matters in a highly distorted form when compared with the Bible record.

The Grecian deities described by Hesiod and Homer had human form and great beauty, though often being gigantic and superhuman. They ate, drank, slept, had sexual intercourse among themselves or



even with humans, lived as families, seduced and raped. Though supposedly holy and immortal, they were capable of any type of deceit and crime. They could move among mankind either visibly or invisibly.

Besides the principal gods, the Greek legends describe demigods or heroes who were of both divine and human descent. The demigods were of superhuman strength but were mortal (Hercules being the

only one of them said to have been granted the privilege of attaining immortality). So the demigods bear a marked similarity to the Nephilim mentioned in the Genesis account, whereas the gods appear to find their counterpart in the 'sons of God' who forsook their heavenly position.

## EVIDENCE OF BABYLONIAN INFLUENCE

But why is it that the Greek myths present such a distorted version of what appears to be alluded to in the Holy Scriptures? The facts of history, as contained in the Bible, provide the needed clues for answering this question.

It was after the Flood that a large segment of mankind chose to rebel against Jehovah God. On the plain of Shinar, they undertook the building of the city of Babel and a tower, likely a ziggurat to be used for false worship. This project was begun in defiance of the Creator's purpose for humans to spread about in the earth. But it had no success, for Jehovah confused the language of the builders. Unable to understand one another, they eventually stopped their construction work, and were scattered.—Gen. 11:2-9.

However, the knowledge about earlier

events, such as the conditions existing before the Flood, must have lingered in some form in the memory of the dispersed people. Reasonably they and their descendants accommodated such knowledge to their religious concepts. This could explain why these myths are in many respects so different from the Biblical account.

Since Babel was the point from which the rebellious people were scattered, we should expect to find Babylonian or Chaldean influence in the Greek myths. And this is exactly what numerous scholars have noted. Orientalist E. A. Speiser traces the theme of the Greek myths back to Mesopotamia, saying:

"The tale of divine beings who were guilty of unseemly acts, which they sometimes carried to the point of savage family battles, was taken over from Mesopotamia by the Hurrians, was transmitted from them to the Hittites, and cropped up eventually in Greek and Phoenician sources."—*The World History of the Jewish People*, Vol. I, p. 260.

Years earlier Professor George Rawlinson observed:

"The striking resemblance of the Chaldean system to that of Classical Mythology seems worthy of particular attention. This resemblance is too general, and too close in some respects, to allow of the supposition that mere accident has produced the coincidence. In the Pantheons of Greece and Rome, and in that of Chaldea, the same general grouping is to be recognized; the same genealogical succession is not unfrequently to be traced; and in some cases even the familiar names and titles of classical divinities admit of the most curious illustration and explanation from Chaldean sources. We can scarcely doubt but that, in some way or other, there was a communication of beliefs—a passage in very early times, from the shores of the Persian Gulf to the lands washed by the Mediterranean, of mythological notions and ideas."—*Seven Great Monarchies*, Vol. I, pp. 71, 72.

Yes, the evidence points to one source for the religious concepts that are a distortion of the truth as contained in the

Bible. Wrote Colonel J. Garnier in his book *The Worship of the Dead*:

"Not merely Egyptians, Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, but also the Hindus, the Buddhists of China and of Thibet, the Goths, Anglo-Saxons, Druids, Mexicans and Peruvians, the Aborigines of Australia, and even the savages of the South Sea Islands, must have all derived their religious ideas from a common source and a common centre. Everywhere we find the most startling coincidences in rites, ceremonies, customs, traditions, and in the names and relations of their respective gods and goddesses."—P. 3.

The fact that the theme of the legends from widely scattered areas can be traced back to one point of origin, Mesopotamia, demonstrates that they simply could not have been the product of independent imaginations. Had the sole basis for these legends been imagination, it would be difficult to explain why the deities are always presented in a poor light. Later Greek writers and philosophers did, in fact, try to purge the accounts of Homer and Hesiod of some of the baser elements. But there is no indication that the people generally ever thought that their gods were being slandered or blasphemed by the legends. Evidently they preferred to venerate deities that could be portrayed in a disparaging way, for the immorality of the gods doubtless gave them reasons for justifying their own wrongdoing.

In worshiping deities whose course of action was wholly unworthy of imitation, the ancient Greeks and other peoples were really serving those spirit creatures who had become demons. They were glorifying and venerating those disobedient sons of God whose disgusting practices in pre-Flood times may well have become the underlying basis for numerous myths. As the apostle Paul told Christians at Corinth: "The things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God."—1 Cor. 10:20.



## Questions from Readers

● Second Peter 3:10 says: "Jehovah's day will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a hissing noise, but the elements being intensely hot will be dissolved, and earth and the works in it will be discovered." What does this text mean? Are not the physical heavens and earth a permanent part of God's creation?—U.S.A.

In determining the significance of the apostle Peter's statement, we must remember that the terms "heavens" and "earth" often do not designate the physical heavens and earth, which are an abiding part of God's creation. (Ps. 104:5) A notable example of this are the words of Isaiah 13:13 regarding the day of Jehovah's triumph over Babylon: "I shall cause heaven itself to become agitated, and the earth will rock out of its place at the fury of Jehovah of armies and at the day of his burning anger."

Obviously the fall of ancient Babylon resulted in no agitation of the physical heavens—sun, moon, stars and planets—nor was the literal earth rocked out of its place. But, figuratively speaking, the heavens and the earth were affected. How so? Well, we might recall that the Babylonians worshiped the sun and moon as well as the stars and planets as gods or goddesses. So when these deities proved unable to help Babylon in her greatest time of need, her "heavens" became agitated. Also the "earth" of the Babylonian Empire rocked out of its place. Babylon lost control of this vast portion of the earth upon being defeated and becoming a mere province of the Persian Empire.

The case of Babylon illustrates that the heavenly bodies have been viewed as representing powers higher than men, powers that have exercised controlling influence over mankind. The worship that has been given to these heavenly bodies has actually gone to invisible spirit forces higher than men, namely, to Satan the Devil and his demons. This is evident from the apostle Paul's declaration: "The things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons." —1 Cor. 10:20.

Yes, God's Word clearly shows that Satan and his demons constitute a "heaven" over the human society alienated from Jehovah God. The

apostle Paul, for example, referred to "wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places," with their governments, authorities and world rulers. (Eph. 6:12) And 1 John 5:19 tells us: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one."

So it must be the heavens composed of Satan and his demons that "will pass away with a hissing noise." A fierce, devouring flame of great magnitude makes a loud hissing sound, as, for example, in the burning of a house or a forest. Of course, literal fire would be ineffective in bringing an end to Satan and his demons. But the wicked heavens will not escape the expression of God's rage, spoken of in Scripture as burning like a fire. (Ps. 89:46; Isa. 30:27) That the Satanic and demonic heavens will pass away is confirmed in the book of Revelation. After having seen a vision of the complete defeat of Satan's forces and the casting of Satan into the abyss, the apostle John noted that the "former heaven and the former earth had passed away."—Rev. 21:1.

The "former heaven" not being literal, the "former earth" likewise is not literal. According to Revelation 19:19-21, not the physical earth,

### ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER 1, 1971

The annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania on October 1, 1971, will be held at Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, Buckingham, Pennsylvania. At the annual meeting last year the members determined upon this location for 1971, and accordingly the meeting will be at 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon of Friday, October 1, 1971, at the assembly hall in Buckingham.

It will be appreciated if the members of the corporation will now see to it that the Secretary's office has their present mailing addresses so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can be sent to them to reach them shortly after September 1.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 15. As each member knows, he should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not.

but the kings of the earth and their armies are the ones in line for destruction. Thus the "former earth" designates the wicked human society under the control of Satan and his demons. This identification of the "earth" is in agreement with the fact that, in Biblical usage, the term "earth" can denote earth's inhabitants.—Ps. 96:1.

Accordingly, no "elements" (or constituent parts) of the symbolic heavens and earth will be able to withstand the intense heat of God's burning anger. They will be completely "dissolved." The words of Peter somewhat parallel the thought expressed at Malachi 4:1: "The day is coming that is burning like the furnace, and all the presumptuous ones and all those doing wickedness must become as stubble. And the day that is coming will certainly devour them," Jehovah of armies has said, 'so that it will not leave to them either root or bough.'

The earth, the ungodly human society, and its works will be "discovered" (the Greek word for "discovered" appears in the two oldest and most reliable Bible manuscripts available, the Vatican 1209 and the Sinaitic). This means that the wicked human society and its works will be seared bare of all disguise, *exposed* as being against Jehovah God and his kingdom by Christ and therefore worthy of destruction. By means of his Son, Christ Jesus, and multitudes of faith-

ful angels, Jehovah God will see to it that none of the wicked works will go undiscovered and unpunished. A comparable idea is conveyed at Isaiah 26:21: "Jehovah is coming forth from his place to call to account the error of the inhabitant of the land against him, and the land will certainly expose her bloodshed and will no longer cover over her killed ones."

If we desire to withstand the consuming heat that will blaze against the old heavens and earth, we must make it our determination to know and to follow the course approved by Jehovah God. As Peter encouraged fellow Christians: "Do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace. . . . be on your guard that you may not be led away with [the untaught and unsteady] by the error of the law-defying people and fall from your own steadfastness. No, but go on growing in the undeserved kindness and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Pet. 3:14-18.

#### "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

**September 19:** Why Has God Allowed the Righteous to Suffer? Page 485. Songs to Be Used: 57, 109.

**September 26:** Happy Are You When People Persecute You. Page 491. Songs to Be Used: 7, 59.