

The WATCHTOWER

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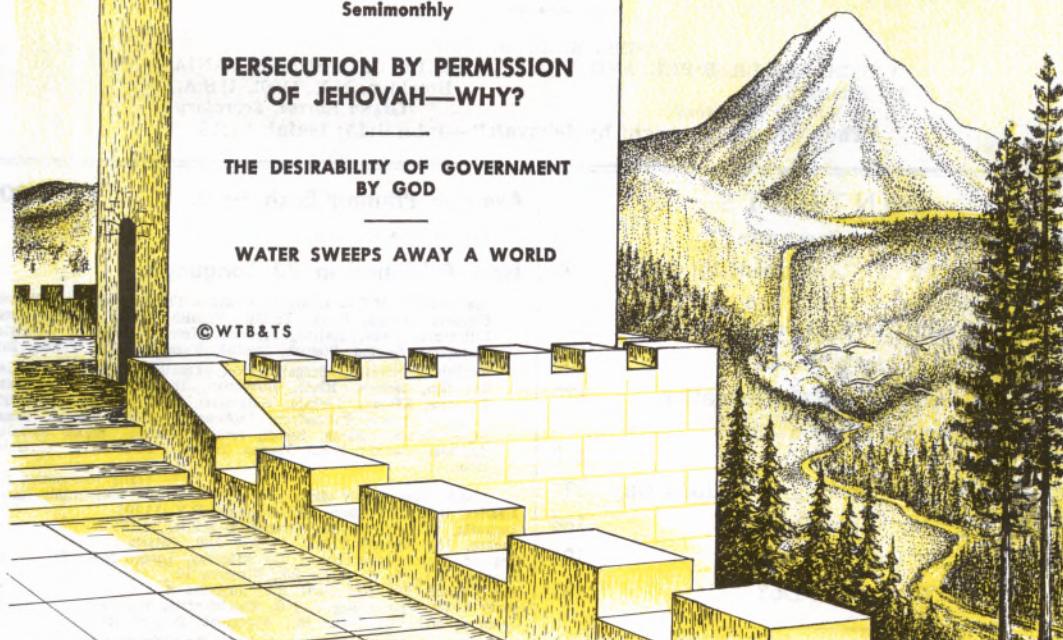
**PERSECUTION BY PERMISSION
OF JEHOVAH—WHY?**

**THE DESIRABILITY OF GOVERNMENT
BY GOD**

WATER SWEEPS AWAY A WORLD

©WTB&TS

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**



"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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WHEN a four-year-old boy stepped into his mother's kitchen not long ago, a small pail slipped from his hand. Sand spilled onto the newly scrubbed floor. Angered, the mother screamed and struck her son, sending him sprawling on the floor. After more screaming, the mother stormed from the kitchen, leaving the child still on the floor.

Have you ever seen anything like that happen? Has it happened in your home?

Screaming is frequent in many families today. Not only do parents scream at their children, but often marriage mates shout abuse at each other. Why?

Some persons may feel it is normal. Their parents screamed at each other. Their acquaintances do it. Also, they may have heard that it is harmful to bottle up emotions. So they feel justified in screaming when they are angry.

Women often scream when they feel under pressure. It may be that the children are sick and irritable. Perhaps the mother herself does not feel well. Preparation of supper may have been interrupted. Just about everything may seem to have gone wrong, and she feels at her wit's end. Under such circumstances, it is little won-

WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE SCREAMING

der that she feels like screaming. Men, too, are under pressure more and more. Often there are financial worries. A father may face the loss of his job. His nerves may be worn to a frazzle. Then even the slightest irritation, such as noisy children, may make him feel like exploding verbally.

Is such a verbal outburst beneficial? On the contrary, it can be damaging in many ways to oneself, as well as to those screamed at. Consider what happens to a person physically when he gives way to angry screaming.

Blood pressure rises. Circulation is adversely affected. Digestion is interfered with. Undue strain is put on the body's defense system. Thus, such serious conditions as strokes or heart attacks may result. Angry verbal outbursts can actually shorten one's life-span!

And what about the effect on others—for example, a marriage mate who is screamed at? Will this cause that one to want to be with the mate? Will that one be eager to see the mate in the evening and hold the mate in his arms?

Regarding the effect on a child frequently screamed at, one New York doctor

observed: "The child is certainly harmed emotionally. He frequently feels alienated from his parents. He often becomes withdrawn. And he may engage in abnormal, even delinquent behavior."

Is screaming worth such possible physical and emotional effects? Does it improve the situation at hand? Will the child screamed at be more inclined to view you with respect and love? Or will he feel uncomfortable in your presence and avoid you?

Does this mean that there is never a time to raise one's voice? Parents at times need to be firm with their children, and a somewhat enlarged voice may emphasize one's point. But this does not call for an uncontrolled verbal outburst or explosion.

God's Word the Bible takes a practical view of matters and gives this fine encouragement: "Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness. But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you." —Eph. 4:31, 32.

You may agree that that is fine counsel. "But what," you may ask, "can be done when I am at my wit's end, and screaming and abusive words seem to leap from my lips?"

Drug companies advertise that that is the time to reach for one of their sedatives. But resorting to drugs provides no lasting remedy. Rather, it can create even worse problems.

Another bit of common advice when you feel like screaming is 'to count to ten.' The idea is that this will provide time for you to simmer down and hold back angry words. This may help.

But there is something much more beneficial that a lover of God can do. He can stop and, at that moment when he feels like screaming, pray to Jehovah God. Pointing to the effectiveness of looking to God for help, one of Christ's apostles said that God can "do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive."—Eph. 3:20.

Surely, the One who urged that "screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you," can help you to calm down when you feel like screaming. But you must go to him in prayer to ask his help.

Other practical measures when you feel like screaming may be to get away from the trouble or problem if possible. Go for a walk. Listen to soothing music. Or get away to where you can sit down and read the Bible and meditate on its encouragement from God. To have God's continued approval we must apply what he says, including his admonition to put an end to the habit of screaming.

But is screaming ever justified? Yes, it is. For example, when your life is threatened or when trying to ward off an attacker. Under God's law to ancient Israel an engaged virgin who was threatened with rape was even under obligation to scream. But these are exceptional circumstances and do not represent a loss of one's self-control.—Deut. 22:23-27.

As for other circumstances, if you feel like screaming, stop and consider its effects. Do you want to hurt yourself physically, alienate other persons, and adversely affect your standing with God? If you do not, work hard to be kind, forgiving and tenderly compassionate. With the help of God, you will be able to refrain when you feel like screaming.

The DESIRABILITY of GOVERNMENT by GOD

IF YOU could personally select the government under which you would like to live for the rest of your life, what kind would you choose? Democratic? Socialistic? Communistic?

The fact is that different people would choose to live under each of these forms of government. And in each case they would make their choice because they believed that it would be for their own good and for the good of their families.

Undoubtedly you desire to live under the best form of government. But which one is it? With so many kinds of government, how can you know?

MAKING A COMPARISON

There are many factors to be considered. But, to help you to analyze your own thinking on the matter, consider these points:

Pollution is a major problem to governments everywhere, and various means are being used to cope with the situation. But what is really needed? Is the difficulty that there are not enough laws? Are more severe penalties required for violators? Would this solve the problem?

Or do we really need a government headed by someone with such thorough understanding of all that is involved in life on earth that he can guide his subjects in a course that will root out the very causes of pollution? If you believe that the latter solution is the right one, then you would favor government, not by men, but by God.—Jer. 10:10-13, 23.

Much is said about the need for peace.

But what kind of peace do you want? Would you say that the best arrangement is to live under a government that is armed to the limit with nuclear weapons, and with the latest radar equipment to detect the approach of enemy rockets? Would peace under these circumstances be most desirable?

Or would you rather live in a world where weapons of war had been converted into tools of peace, and where there were no enemy nations to fear, because there was just one government for all the earth? This latter kind of government is what is described in the Holy Bible as being God's purpose for man. Furthermore, the Bible indicates that we are living in the generation that will see that change take place—not by governments of men, but by intervention of God.—Mic. 4:2-4; Ps. 46:9.

Racial tensions are also a cause of great concern. But what is the solution? Do you favor repressive police tactics as the means to cope with the situation? Does this get to the root of the problem and solve it?

Or would you rather live under a government that could eliminate racial prejudice by inspiring love in the hearts of its people so that they would show genuine concern for everyone, regardless of race? Do you know any government of men that has really gotten to the root of the situation in that way?—John 13:34, 35; Acts 10:34, 35.

Corruption in government is so commonplace that it is almost taken for granted, but no one likes the idea of having

his hard-earned tax money used in that way. Yet is there a government anywhere that is not tainted with corruption?

Well, the Bible says that God's kingdom is to rule from the heavens, and God has no need of your money or other possessions. In fact, God tells us in his Word: "To me belongs every wild animal of the forest, the beasts upon a thousand mountains. . . . For to me the productive land and its fullness belong." So, unlike many human rulers, God has no desire to take anything away from you.—Ps. 50:10-12.

Rather, the Bible shows that God cares about you so much that he actually gives to you "life and breath and all things." (Acts 17:25) Don't you agree that government administered by him would be the kind that you want?

And then there is the matter of one's health. Not all governments view this matter in the same way. Some leave all the problems up to you. Others offer free medical treatment until the day you die. But would it appeal much more to you if you could live under a government that would oversee the complete elimination of sickness and death? Of course, that would require far more knowledge and power than are at the disposal of men. It would call for the wisdom and the power of God.

—Rev. 21:3, 4.

So, then, when you consider the things that are really important to you and how they can be attained, what kind of government is it that you want—one administered by men, or the government of God that is promised in the Holy Bible?

ONLY A DREAM?

"But let's be realistic," someone may object. "Of course a person would prefer the idealistic government of which you speak. But such a thing is only a dream. It could never be attained."

Is the idea of living under a government

by God really just an unrealistic dream? What is being realistic? And what is just dreaming? Are this earth and man upon it only a dream? Of course not! This is real.

Who, then, put man on this wonderful earth? Someone did. Man did not come to exist without intelligent thought or design; he is not the result of some chance combination of molecules. The marvelous complexities of life make it obvious that a Master Designer must be responsible.

—Ps. 100:3; 104:24.

So think about it: Is it really unbelievable that man's Creator should establish a government to direct earth's affairs? Is that really any harder to believe than that God created man and other living creatures to populate the earth?

Jesus Christ did not think so. He taught people to look forward to the blessings of God's government, even teaching them to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. *Let your kingdom come.* Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:9, 10) That kingdom of God is a real government. And such a government by God is only fitting for this earth, which is so wonderfully designed for man's home.

Consider the grand precision that governs the movements of the sun, moon and stars, making life on earth both possible and pleasant! Why, the earth receives just one two-billionth of the heat and light that the sun emits. Yet it is precisely the right amount—if there were much more, all living things on earth would roast, and if much less, everything would freeze! Consider, too, the breathtaking beauty of a brilliant sunset, or of a green valley decorated with colorful flowers and majestic trees. Would you not say that the disorder and strife so apparent in present earthly governments are completely out of harmony with the orderliness, beauty and peace in creation around us?

Think, too, about the wonderful capacity of humans to receive and express love. The Bible explains that "God is love," and that he endowed man with this wonderful quality. (1 John 4:8) Would you not say that these marvelous gifts indicate that God really does love us and is interested in providing for our needs?

Well, then, what is one of man's greatest needs today? Is it not for a government that could successfully solve the gigantic problems that threaten even the very existence of mankind? Is not such a government what you want?

SOON EARTH'S ONLY GOVERNMENT

Surely no one can deny that God's government is the best one for earth. "But why has not God done something about bringing it about?" you may ask.

The fact is that he has. God has been selecting and preparing persons to rule in his heavenly government. Jesus Christ proved his worthiness as king by his faithfulness on earth to God. And since then God has been selecting from among mankind faithful servants to be rulers in heaven with his Son, Jesus.—Luke 22:28, 29; Rev. 20:6.

While some persons may complain that God is slow about destroying evildoers and bringing his government, is their complaint valid? The Bible explains: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all

to attain to repentance." Do you really wish that God had destroyed all those not doing his will before now? Where would you have been?—2 Pet. 3:9.

Yet God has set a time to destroy evildoers and replace all earthly governments with his government. According to fulfilled Bible prophecy we are now privileged to be living in the generation facing that time. Yes, this Bible prophecy soon will be fulfilled: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom . . . will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." Then God's government will be earth's only government.—Dan. 2:44.

How desirable that will be! But the question is: Are we desirable from God's standpoint? Will he want us to be subjects of his government?

God rules by love; that quality characterizes his government, and so to be his subjects we need to exhibit love. We must learn to love righteousness, to love doing what is right. God desires persons who want to please Him and to do good to their fellowman.

Are you cultivating this disposition? Are you making a real effort to know God better by studying his Word? Jehovah's witnesses will be happy to help you do this. You are cordially invited to their local Kingdom Hall to study God's Word with them. Do not put off learning God's will and doing it. Your prospects for life depend on the course you take now.

He Knew Where They Would Be Welcomed

One summer in Michigan a group of persons who work in the farm harvest wanted to attend church on Sunday. They hired a bus to take them. When the group reached the church, they experienced harsh treatment from people of their own denomination. The bus driver, who was the husband of one of Jehovah's witnesses, though not a Witness himself, observed this. He told the group that he knew a place where they would be welcomed and where they could learn about the Bible. Shortly, the bus group arrived at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's witnesses. There they were warmly welcomed and experienced spiritual refreshment.

WATER SWEEPS AWAY A WORLD

DO YOU like to play games? I do. They can be a lot of fun, can't they? When we play games, we sometimes have such a good time that we may not even want to stop to do other things.

But did you know that there is danger in becoming too busy having fun? Yes, there is. We could become so busy having fun that we might fail to pay attention to God. Did you know that?

The Great Teacher knew that this could happen. He knew what happened to a whole world of people once before, because he saw it from heaven. Jesus said: 'Those people were eating. They were drinking. Men were getting married, and women were being given in marriage.' It is not wrong to eat and to drink or to get married. But they were so busy doing those things that they did not take time to listen to God. That was bad.

What happened to those people? Jesus said: "They took no note until the flood came and swept them all away." Jesus was talking about the people who died in the days of Noah when the waters of a flood covered the whole earth.—Matt. 24:37-39.

Jesus said that what happened to those people is a lesson for us today. So it is important that we know all about the flood of Noah's day.

First of all, why did Jehovah God bring the Flood? It was because the people were doing very bad things. Perhaps those people did not all think they were so bad, because they just did what other people

An article specially designed for parents to read with their children

were doing. But God knew that it was very bad.

Yet there was one man who found favor with God. Who was that? He was Noah. Noah loved Jehovah God. He was never too busy to listen to God. Isn't that the way we should be too?

One day Jehovah told Noah that He was going to destroy all people who kept on doing bad things. God was going to make it rain so much that the water would cover the whole earth, even the mountains.

Would Noah die too when all that water fell? No; Jehovah was going to save him. Jehovah told Noah to build a big ark.

An ark is like a boat, but it looks more like a big, long box or chest. It floats on the water.

Noah and his family would be safe in this ark.

But what would happen to the animals? Some of every kind would be saved. The ark would be big enough for them too. God told Noah to build the ark over 430 feet long, over 70 feet wide and over 40 feet high! Is that bigger than our house? It would be bigger than many large houses all put together.

Now, Noah had never built an ark before. But Noah listened to God, and God told him how to do it. Noah and his family worked very hard. They cut down large trees. With the wood from these trees they began putting the ark together. This took many, many years, because the ark was so large.

After the ark was put together, God told Noah to cover it inside and out with tar. This was done to keep the water from leaking into the ark.

Did Jehovah give other people a chance to get into the ark and be saved? Yes, he did. Jehovah told Noah to preach. So during all the years that the ark was

being built, Noah warned the people about the coming flood.

Did any of them listen? Only Noah's family did. All the rest were just too busy doing other things. They did not think they were so bad, and they did not take time to listen.

Finally, all the animals that Jehovah wanted to save were brought into the ark. Now it was time for the people to get into the ark too. Noah and his family went inside. Then Jehovah shut the door. Once that door was shut no one could open it. It was too late for anyone else to get in.

What were the people outside the ark doing? Women were still busy cooking, washing and cleaning house. Men were still working in the fields and building homes. Families were still getting ready for weddings. They did not believe that the flood would come.

Then all of a sudden water began to fall! People stopped what they were doing. They had never seen it rain before. Noah had been right! What he had been saying all those years was coming true!

Soon the rain was falling very hard. It was a downpour! Big puddles formed quickly. The streets filled with water, and the water began coming into the houses.

People tried to reach safety on top of the hills. But it rained and rained, and the water rose up the sides of the hills. It

kept on raining for forty days and forty nights. Soon the whole earth was covered with water. Every person outside the ark died. As Jesus said, 'They did not listen, and so the flood came and swept them all away.'

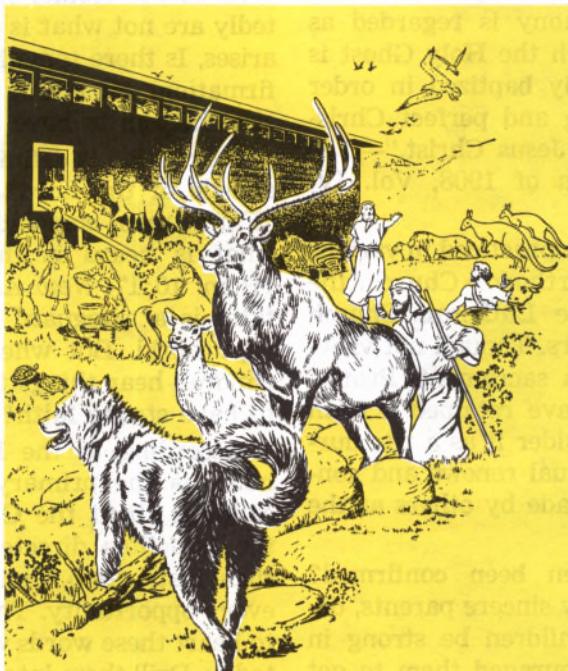
But there floating on the water was the ark. Noah, his family and the animals were safe inside. Jehovah saved the people who listened to him.—Gen. 6:5-7:24.

Now, why should we know about what happened in Noah's day? Do you remember what Jesus said? He said that what happened then is a lesson for us. Jehovah will again destroy all bad people, but this time he will not use a flood. The time for him to do this is getting very near.

When God does this, who will be the people that God will keep alive? Will it be persons who were so busy with other things that they never wanted to learn about God? Will it be persons

who were always too busy to study the Bible? Will it be those who never wanted to go to meetings where people learned God's will? What do you think?

We want to be among those people whom God will keep alive, don't we? Wouldn't it be wonderful if our family could be like Noah's so that God would save all of us? Let's always help one another to be faithful to God so that all of us will find favor with God.



Something Better than Confirmation

AT THE time of their confirmation, children in Roman Catholic families kneel along the altar rail of their church. The bishop passes along the line of these young folks and puts a mixture of olive oil and balsam on their foreheads in the form of a cross while repeating a formula prescribed by tradition. This ceremony is regarded as "a sacrament in which the Holy Ghost is given to those already baptized in order to make them strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ."—*The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1908, Vol. IV, p. 215.

Confirmation is also practiced in various ways by the Greek Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church and a number of others. Though not viewing confirmation as a sacrament, Protestant churches that have retained a form of this ceremony consider it as a rite during which the individual renews and confirms the promises made by others at the time of his baptism.

Have your children been confirmed? Should they be? Many sincere parents, desiring to see their children be strong in their faith, have encouraged them to get confirmed. Later, however, a considerable number have been disappointed, realizing that confirmation and the religious instruction preceding it did not make their children strong Christians. Parents often have seen their confirmed children lose interest and, in time, even stop attending religious services.

In such cases, confirmation has evidently failed in its intended purpose and, in

the opinion of some, has even been harmful. For example, Vergote, an ecclesiastical dignitary at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, observed: "The baptism of infants and particularly their confirmation has had a disastrous and telling effect on

their conscience. . . . Even before these children have had time to think about their faith, we ask them to make a solemn declaration of faith."

Since the results of this custom admittedly are not what is desired, the question arises, Is there something better than confirmation, something that will really assist children to have strong faith?

Instruction is definitely needed. Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, wrote: "Faith, then, comes through hearing, and what is heard is the word of Christ." (Rom. 10:17, *New American Bible*) Such faith is a safeguard in this morally corrupt world. But where and when should children hear things that will enable them to have strong faith?

According to the Holy Scriptures, the home is the primary place for teaching children about the Creator. God's law to the Israelites directed that parents give such instruction, and that they do so at every opportunity. They were told: "Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest."—Deut. 6:6, 7, NAB.

Note that parental instruction was required even though the Israelites had a sanctuary for worship. The sanctuary in Israel was, not merely a place for sacrifice, but also a center for education in the Law of God. Particularly was this the case every sabbath year during the festival of booths. At that time the entire Law was

read to all Israel—the men, women and children. (Deut. 31:10-13) This reading was of great value in acquainting children with what God required of those who would gain his approval and blessing. But it did not relieve parents of their responsibility to teach their offspring. The instruction available at the sanctuary had to be supplemented by daily teaching at home.

Similarly, though assembling regularly with their children to hear God's Word discussed at meetings of the congregation, Christian parents are under obligation to supplement this teaching. The apostle Paul counseled: "You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Eph. 6:4) Do you provide such instruction for your children? They need it in order to cope successfully with the everyday problems of life.

A God-fearing woman living in the first century C.E., Eunice the mother of Timothy, very much appreciated this. As a result of her training, Timothy knew the Scriptures "from infancy." (2 Tim. 3:15) Her efforts were richly blessed in seeing her son become a young man of outstanding faith. Two of the inspired letters in the Bible are addressed to him. He willingly expended himself in behalf of others. In one of his letters to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote: "I recollect the faith which is in you without any hypocrisy, and which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, but which I am confident is also in you."—2 Tim. 1:5.

What Christian parents would not be pleased to see their children reflect a faith like that? But it does not come automatically. Regular teaching of the Holy Scriptures at home is a must. Whereas confirmation and the religious instruction

preceding it have time and again failed to produce strong Christians, regular Biblical education by parents has repeatedly contributed immeasurably toward the realization of this aim. This is to be expected, for parental training in the way of righteousness is in harmony with the express command of God.

On the other hand, even those who advocate confirmation acknowledge that the ceremony is largely a matter of tradition and cannot really be supported by the Scriptures. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1908 (Vol. IV, p. 217) states: "The Sacrament of Confirmation is a striking instance of the development of doctrine and ritual in the Church. . . . we must not expect to find there [in Holy Scripture] an exact description of the ceremony as at present performed, or a complete solution of the various theological questions which have since arisen."

Of course, for parents to help their children to have a faith based on God's Word, they themselves must be well acquainted with its contents. Do you feel equipped to care for that God-given responsibility? If you are a parent who would like to improve the Biblical education being made available to your children, Jehovah's witnesses will be happy to assist you by studying the Scriptures with you in the privacy of your home, and that without any cost to you. The entire family can share in this study. Thousands of parents have been aided through such studies to build up their knowledge sufficiently to do a good job of teaching the truths of the Bible to their own children. If you are interested in doing so, ask Jehovah's witnesses about their home Bible study arrangement the next time they call on you, or write to the publishers of this magazine, requesting that someone be sent to demonstrate how such family Bible discussions are conducted.

PERSECUTION

by Permission of Jehovah

"Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment to be cut off."—2 Pet. 2:9.

FROM the day that Abel, the second son of Adam and Eve, was killed by his jealous brother, Cain, Jehovah's faithful witnesses have been hated and bitterly persecuted. An inspired writer of the first century C.E., in his letter to the Hebrews, described the treatment they received, and Jesus of Nazareth, who was himself killed by misguided opponents, forewarned his true followers that they too would receive similar persecution. (Heb. 11:4, 36-38; John 15:18-20) All such ill-treatment is unwarranted and the Lord God Jehovah could have prevented it. Why did he not do so?—See Habakkuk 1:13.

² Those dealing treacherously might begin to develop a false sense of security. The Bible psalmist wrote: "Why is it that the wicked one has disrespected God? He has said in his heart: 'You will not require an accounting.' " (Ps. 10:13; 76:7) But God's delay in exacting an accounting is not due to weakness or lack of concern for the oppressed. Peter, an apostle of Jesus, assured us: "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment to be cut off." (2 Pet. 2:9) Persecution of the righteous by the wicked then serves a purpose of God; sometimes, it is true, it is allowed by him as a chastisement when his people have displeased him (Isa. 12:1), but, for the

1, 2. What might persecutors of true Christians falsely conclude, and why does Jehovah not intervene?

most part, persecution has served to identify God's enemies (Deut. 25:17-19) as well as those favorably disposed toward him. (Matt. 25:34-36) It has served as a test of integrity on his own people and, through their deliverance, as a vindication of Jehovah's name.—1 Pet. 4:1, 2; Prov. 27:11.

³ God's dealings with his people and their adversaries in times past are often symbolic or pictorial of his dealings with us today, and one of the Bible's most dramatic accounts is found in the book of Esther. (1 Cor. 10:11; Gal. 4:24-26; Luke 17:26-30) You will read the entire book with great profit. Then, with the details fresh in mind, consider the significance of this prophetic drama in our day.

⁴ The story begins in the court of King Ahasuerus, who was ruling over the vast empire of Persia and Media from India to Ethiopia. "Now it came about . . . in the third year of his reigning he held a banquet for all his princes and his servants." (Esther 1:1-9) What does this suggest in modern times? At the end of the "times of the Gentiles" for world domination in 1914, the time had arrived for the Heir of King David, Jesus Christ, to assume his heavenly authority as King, to rule over all his subjects with royal power and authority, subjecting his enemies and exalting those whom he approves. (Luke 21:20-24; Ps. 110:1, 2; 1 Cor. 15:25; Matt. 24:45-47, *Authorized Version*) And in a remarkable preview given to the apostle John as recorded in Revelation 12:10, 12, a time for great gladness came shortly

3. What are prophetic dramas, and what evidences are there of them in the Bible?

4. How is the time feature of the Esther drama identified in modern times, and what is represented by King Ahasuerus?

-WHY?

thereafter to those who understood Bible prophecy. "And I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ [Messiah], because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down, who accuses them day and night before our God! On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them!' " So there was, at least, great rejoicing in the heavenly courts. Thus, King Ahasuerus, seated on his royal throne in splendor and wielding unlimited authority as to his vast empire, would well picture royal power in the hands of Jesus Christ in this "time of the end."—Dan. 12:1-4.

⁵ Furthermore, those Bible students on earth who were anticipating these events would properly be expected to join in this joyful celebration. (Ps. 97:1; 96:8) How was this paralleled among the subjects of King Ahasuerus? "On the seventh day, when the king's heart was in a merry mood with wine, he said to . . . bring Vashti the queen in the royal headdress before the king, to show the peoples and the princes her loveliness; for she was beautiful in appearance. But Queen Vashti kept refusing to come at the king's word that was conveyed by means of the court officials. At this the king grew highly indignant and his very rage flared up within him." (Esther 1:10-12) And rightly so! This would be highly damaging to the king's prestige and could cause contempt for authority to spread throughout the empire. The king sought legal counsel from his wise men, who advised him: "If to the king it does seem good, let a royal word go out from his person, and let it be written among the laws of Persia and Media, that it may not pass away, that Vashti may not come in before King Ahasuerus;

and her royal dignity let the king give to a companion of hers, a woman better than she is." This pleased the king and he ordered it to be done.—Esther 1:13-22.

⁶ Vashti, whose name means "beautiful," was the queen, espoused to the king; but, in spite of this preferred position that was hers, she was deposed because she did not respond to the king's direction to join him in his joyful feast. In the events surrounding the enthronement of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in the heavens in 1914, did all those who looked for God's kingdom join with the King in his celebration? The prophecies of the Bible, coupled with the physical facts in fulfillment, provide the answer.

A TEST OF LOYALTY

⁷ In 1918, Jesus the Messianic Messenger accompanied Jehovah to the spiritual temple, suddenly and unexpectedly, to begin judgment on God's people. (1 Pet. 4:17; Mal. 3:1) Jesus the Messiah foreknew that some of those seeking him would not be doing so with a pure motive. One purpose in judgment was to expose this heart attitude of those who seek God's Messianic kingdom and to deal accordingly with those displaying it. (Matt. 24:48-51) As it is with a master of slaves, the Messiah was within his prerogative in acting according to his own will and that of his God Jehovah, in dealing with those who are Scripturally spoken of as a "slave" class. Jehovah's purpose for this "time of the end" had been determined long in advance. (Isa. 46:8-11) That the full details of this purpose were not known to the "slave" class on earth at that time was not the important thing. Their dedication vow to Jehovah made them responsible to do whatever it was that Jehovah and his Messianic King asked them to do accord-

5, 6. (a) What was Queen Vashti called upon to do? with what result? (b) How is the modern-day parallel recognized?

7. What happened in 1918, and what did Jehovah's purpose for the "time of the end" require as regards the "slave" class?

ing to his Word, the Holy Scriptures. Now, with Jehovah's enemies disposed of in heaven, the time had come for the Messianic King and Judge to begin the fulfillment of Jehovah's purpose as regards the earth. He knew what was ahead for this class of servants on earth and he knew that only complete unity within their ranks and a single-mindedness as to the carrying out of God's purpose would enable them to fulfill the Scriptural responsibility that was to be theirs. For this reason it would seem that he imposed upon his anointed footstep followers on earth a very severe test so as to eliminate those who would not respond to his direction.
—Mal. 3:2, 3; 1 Pet. 2:4-8; Isa. 8:13-15.

* Certain conditions were allowed to develop within the religious organization that searched out to the full depths the heart devotion of every individual who claimed to be espoused to the Messianic King, Jesus, as a member of the "bride" class. (Ps. 45:10-14; John 3:29) In three ways particularly their submissiveness was tested: first, as to their reliance on the doctrine of God's Word as revealed through his channel of communication; secondly, as regards their willingness to share in the preaching of this good news of the Messianic kingdom, which must be done before Jehovah's purpose in this "time of the end" would be concluded; and, thirdly, as regards their complete loyalty to his earthly organization, which was yet to be built up in full theocratic structure, something that must be accomplished during this "time of the end." This was essential, not only to enable his people to stand and to face severe persecution that Jesus knew they must yet receive, but also in order that his people would be ready to take over the responsible work that would be theirs after the present sys-

tem of things was destroyed in the approaching world trouble. During World War I in 1914 to 1918 none of God's people realized the full extent of this religious responsibility that was ahead. Yet, those who loved God sincerely accepted the trials that came upon them from within the disturbed organization and the fiery test that was being put upon them in order to purge them and cleanse them as foretold by the prophet Malachi. There were some, however, who failed and who rebelled and therefore, like Vashti, these were not submissive when the call came forth for them to show their godly beauty and their submissiveness to the Messianic King.*—Luke 14:17-21.

** Further details were given by Jesus in his illustration of the field in which a certain man had sown wheat and in which an enemy had come along and oversowed weeds. When the master was reported to the master he said: "Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the harvest season I will tell the reapers, First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them up, then go to gathering the wheat into my storehouse." (Matt. 13:30) The gathering spoken of here was to take place after the temple judgment and was to be applied to those who were faithful members of the "bride" of Christ, his anointed followers who were to rule with him in heaven. (Luke 22:28, 29; Rev. 3:21) But it was not God's purpose to gather out only this group. (Luke 12:32) Unknown to the anointed ones at that time Jehovah had a further purpose, and that was to gather together later on a great crowd that he purposed to use as a nucleus of a righteous human society that would live on earth under the Mes-

8. How were those claiming to be of the "bride" class tested? With what results?

* See the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, pp. 64-73.

9. What gathering work was to take place during the "time of the end," and how was it foretold?

sianic kingdom. (John 10:16; 2 Pet. 3:13) This would require a great amount of work on the part of the anointed ones, and they must be united because the work of preaching the Messianic kingdom would be done in the midst of great opposition. (Matt. 10:16-18) This was also pictured in the drama of Esther as it developed.

REPLACING THE UNSUBMISSIVE

¹⁰ First, however, King Ahasuerus found it necessary to replace the queen who had been deposed. It was recommended to him by his counselors that they gather together all the young virgins, the most beautiful ones of the entire realm, that he

might select from their number the one who would please him most as a successor to Vashti. Before any of the young women could be brought in to the king, they must be properly prepared to meet him. This involved a year's beauty treatment including massages with various kinds of oils under the strict supervision of Hegai, a trusted eunuch in the service of the king. Esther, whose name means "myrtle," was included among these young women and she immediately found favor with Hegai so that "he made haste to give her her massages and her appropriate food, and to give her seven selected young women from the king's house." Esther had not told about her people or about her relatives, for her cousin Mordecai himself had laid the command upon her that she should not tell. Mordecai knew that Esther was going to be subjected to many environmental changes and pressures that might

10. What steps did King Ahasuerus take to replace Vashti, and how were Mordecai and Esther involved?

cause her to turn away from the law of her own people in which she had been instructed by her caretaker, Mordecai. He was determined that this not be the final outcome for her. So he continued to maintain a close supervision of her spiritual welfare. "And day after day Mordecai was walking before the courtyard of the house of the women to know of Esther's welfare and what was being done with her."—Esther 2:1-11.

¹¹ Mordecai, therefore, whose name means "like pure myrrh, bruised myrrh," pictures those of the anointed remnant who faithfully survived the temple judgment during World War I and who were inter-

ested in seeing that those who were to replace the Vashti class were properly prepared to find acceptance with the King. In modern times, those of the Mordecai class have been found faithfully discharging their God-given responsibilities. (Matt. 24:45-47) But it is to be noted that Mordecai himself did not personally have the immediate charge of Esther in this matter; it was accomplished through Hegai, who was in the service of the king. Hegai, therefore, pictures the arrangement under the supervision of the Mordecai class to prepare those of the Esther class for proper presentation to the King.—Eph. 5:26, 27.

¹² Finally the day came for Esther to appear before the king. Unlike Vashti, who had leaned on her own understanding in her response to the king's commands,

11. Who or what is pictured by (a) Mordecai? (b) Hegai?

12, 13. Of whom was Esther a type, how have they been manifested, and what attitude like that of Esther do they display?

THE NEXT ISSUE

- Uniting the Divided Household.
- World Government in the Hands of the "Prince of Peace."
- Those Who Chose the Best Places.

Esther chose to take nothing with her when she went in before the king except what Hegai himself recommended. Today, too, those of the Esther class show themselves to be modest in appraisal of themselves and willing to follow the arrangement that is laid out for them in their service of the King. "And the king came to love Esther more than all the other women, so that she gained more favor and loving-kindness before him than all the other virgins. And he proceeded to put the royal headdress upon her head and make her queen instead of Vashti."

—Esther 2:12-18.

¹³ It must have been a joyful day indeed for the king to have before him on his throne a woman not only of great beauty but also of modesty and appreciation for her

relationship to him. Today, too, there is great rejoicing to see those who since World War I ended became new believers, newly dedicated ones who symbolized their dedication to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ by water immersion from the year 1919 onward, especially down to 1931. Those coming in were anointed by God's spirit as younger members of the "bride" class because the door was not yet closed to the high calling to reign with the heavenly Messiah. They were replacements that were being made for those who had been set aside because of their unsubmit-

sive attitude. But these, like Esther, did not presume upon their new position. They continued to follow the arrangement of God just as Esther did that of Mordecai. "And the saying of Mordecai Esther was performing, just as when she happened to be under care by him."—Esther 2:19, 20.

AN ACT OF LOYALTY GOES unrewarded

¹⁴ Something occurs now in the dramatic account that seems, at the time, of little significance to the story, yet it was to

play a remarkable part in the outworking of events. Mordecai uncovered a plot against the king and reported it to Esther, who revealed it to the king. Investigation

proved the guilt of the would-be assassins and they were hanged. (Esther 2:21-23) Mordecai's thwarting this attempted assassination of the king went unrewarded at the time, though it was

entered permanently in the record in his favor. The same holds true in the modern-day parallel.—Heb. 6:10.

¹⁵ In their service to the King, those of the Mordecai class are organization minded. As the organization began to take on more of the theocratic structure after the temple judgment had begun, they were quick to observe some who had appeared to be in harmony with the progress of Jehovah's purpose up to that time, men

14. How did Mordecai demonstrate his loyalty to the King, and what resulted?

15. How do the Mordecai class show their loyalty to the King, and how is this brought to the notice of the King?



King Ahasuerus made Esther queen
in place of unsubmitting Vashti

prominent in the organization, but who became disgruntled and who took a course of action that endangered the welfare of the Kingdom interests, thus constituting rebellion against the King. (Jude 16-19) The Mordecai class brought these matters to the attention of the Esther class, who needed to learn organization and be strengthened in loyalty to the King. This was especially true since they were newcomers. (Rom. 16:17, 18) Through the Esther class it came to the King's notice when these newly selected ones of the "bride" of Christ chose loyalty to the Messianic King and to the organization. However, no particular reward was given to the Mordecai class at that time.

AN ANCIENT ENEMY APPEARS

¹⁶ It would almost seem, in fact, that Mordecai's act was unappreciated, because the account continues: "After these things King Ahasuerus magnified Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite and proceeded to exalt him and to put his throne above all the other princes that were with him. And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate were bowing low and prostrating themselves to Haman, for so the king had commanded respecting him. But as for Mordecai, he would neither bow low nor prostrate himself."—Esther 3:1-4.

¹⁷ Haman's name, if of Persian origin, means "magnificent; celebrated," but if it corresponds with the Hebrew parallel, it means "noise, tumult, he who prepares," doubtless in a bad way. Being the son of Hammedatha (possibly, "he who troubles the law") the Agagite, he was a descendant of Amalek, who was the grandson of Esau. Esau had sold his birthright to his twin brother Jacob, from whom Mordecai

was descended. Yet Esau hated Jacob and opposed him bitterly because Jacob took what was rightfully his. (Gen. 25:29-34; 27:41) Furthermore, and in keeping with this animosity of Esau toward Jacob, his descendants through Amalek showed their hatred for God's own people the Israelites, when Jehovah himself was delivering his people from Egypt. The Amalekites attacked the rear of the departing Israelites and therefore Joshua fought against them with the help of Moses' upright hands and defeated them. Because of this vile attack upon the Israelites, God said that they had laid their hand against the throne of God and Jehovah would have war against the children of Amalek forever, and that meant down into the day of Mordecai and Esther. (Ex. 17:8-16) Haman would well represent in modern times the clergy of Christendom who have sold their birthright as to God's kingdom in return for exaltation among the kingdoms of this world and who fight bitterly against God and his chosen people, as did the Amalekites of old.—Matt. 23:5-7, 13-15; John 11:48-50, 53.

¹⁸ Now Haman was exalted above Mordecai, and King Ahasuerus had commanded all to bow low and prostrate themselves to him. How then can we say that Ahasuerus represents royal power in the hands of Jesus Christ? The Scriptures speak about God as permitting certain things to occur, bad things, damaging apparently to his own organization and hurtful for the time being to his own people. An instance of this is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:11: "So that is why God lets an operation of error go to them [God shall send them strong delusion (AV)], that they may get to believing the lie." God is not the au-

16, 17. (a) How did Haman come into prominence, and what is his ancestral background? (b) Whom does Haman picture, and how so?

18. How could the Haman class receive prominence in this "time of the end" when Jesus Christ is ruling in heaven with all power and authority?

thor of error nor the source of delusions but he permits them to go to the class that he wants to be affected by them. So in the fulfillment of the prophetic drama, Jehovah wants his people to come under a certain test in order for them to prove that they uphold his universal sovereignty and to demonstrate their true theocratic Christian integrity to him. The Lord Jesus Christ, ruling at Jehovah's right hand with all power in heaven and earth, lets this situation develop. He lets the clergy of all Christendom get a high station in this world, in the midst of which the Mordecai class and Esther class are living. This affects the condition of the Lord's people on earth. It does not destroy their own relationship with the Messianic King, but it does prove to be a peril, threatening even their lives.—John 16:2, 3.

ANNIHILATION THREATENED

¹⁹ Mordecai, however, refused to bow to Haman. Jehovah's witnesses today take the same position as regards the clergy of Christendom. (Ps. 139:21, 22) In view of recent developments on the world scene this might not be difficult to understand. We must remember, however, that the events relating to this aspect of the fulfillment of the prophetic drama began to take place some years ago when rebellion was not the order of the day and when church attendance was high and religious leaders were highly respected. They held high positions in civic matters. They entered into concordats with world leaders, not only to establish themselves more securely but also to advance the interests of these secular leaders. When Jehovah's witnesses, the

19. What attitude did Mordecai take toward Haman, and why might its fulfillment not be too difficult for some in recent times to appreciate?

Mordecai class, spoke out boldly against them to expose their friendship with the world which made them enemies of God, it is understandable how tension and hostility grew between these servants of God and the clergy of Christendom.* (Jas. 4:4) The house-to-house preaching by the Mordecai class continued, however, and the animosity of the clergy increased until finally it became evident that they had determined to break up the work of the Mordecai class altogether.

²⁰ Haman, too, goaded to the extreme by his pride and Mordecai's refusal to bow to him, determined that he would annihilate not just Mordecai but all the Jews. To this end Haman cast lots to determine the time most auspicious from the standpoint of his gods for his plot to be fulfilled. The lot or "Pur" fell on the thirteenth day of the twelfth lunar month, Adar. He then presented the matter to the king, charging the Jews with being against the king's law, and asked that a writing be published throughout the empire authorizing their destruction. King Ahasuerus agreed, giving Haman his own signet ring to seal the writing, making it a law of the Medes and Persians which could not be revoked. (Esther 3:5-15) This would indicate that in modern times the Lord Jesus Christ would allow the enemies of his people to go to the full limit in their effort to carry out their purpose to destroy them. What the end result would be, however, would be his to determine, as it was even in the case of Mordecai and Esther. These dramatic events are the substance of the article that follows.

* See the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, pp. 123-125, 129.

20. (a) What was Haman's reaction, and what did he set out to do? (b) What is the parallel today?



A CHANGE FROM MOURNING

TO A GOOD DAY

TRUE Christians know they will be hated by this world, because the world also hated Jesus, even cruelly putting him to death. (John 15:18-25) The apostle Peter wrote to the Christian congregation: "Beloved ones, do not be puzzled at the burning [persecution] among you . . . On the contrary, go on rejoicing forasmuch as you are sharers in the sufferings of the Christ [Messiah], that you may rejoice and be overjoyed also during the revelation of his glory."—1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

⁴This privilege of sharing in the vindication of God's name through endurance and through reliance on Jehovah's power of deliverance was demonstrated by both Mordecai and Esther when Haman schemed the annihilation of all the Jews. A writing, naming Adar the thirteenth as the fateful day, was published throughout the 127 jurisdictional districts of the empire of the Persians and the Medes, including Shushan the royal castle. Mordecai, learning of it, put on sackcloth and ashes, doubtless in supplication to Jehovah, as others of God's servants have done. (Dan. 9:3; Ps. 12:1) When Esther inquired the reason for his deep grief he told her all the things that had happened and laid the command upon her to come in to the king and make request directly before him for her own people.

⁵Deeply moved by this command of Mordecai, Esther reminded him that ac-

cording to the law of the Medes and the Persians anyone coming in before the king unbidden was to be put to death. Only in the case that the king would hold out to him the golden scepter would he stay alive. Besides, Esther informed Mordecai, she had not been called to come in to the king for thirty days. To do so now as Mordecai requested, without being bidden by the king, could mean her death. Mordecai, however, was adamant and replied to Esther: "Do not imagine within your own soul that the king's household will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you are altogether silent at this time, relief and deliverance themselves will stand up for the Jews from another place; but as for you and your father's house, you people will perish. And who is there knowing whether it is for a time like this that you have attained to royal dignity?" Esther's obedience to Mordecai and her love for her people won out. She replied: "Go, gather all the Jews that are to be found in Shushan and fast in my behalf and neither eat nor drink for three days, night and day. I too with my young women, I shall fast likewise, and upon that I shall come in to the king, which is not according to the law; and in case I must perish, I must perish."—Esther 4:1-17.

DISCERNMENT IN FACING DANGER

⁶Esther did not presume on her relations with the king. Neither did Mordecai rely upon his own deed of loyalty, which had gone unrewarded up to this point.

⁷What attitude did both Esther and Mordecai display, and what example is set by those whom they pictured?

1. Why are true Christians not puzzled when persecution comes?

2, 3. (a) What did persecution allow for in the case of Mordecai and Esther, but why would Mordecai go into mourning? (b) On what course of action did Mordecai determine, and what was Esther's response?

(Esther 2:21-23) Both relied entirely on Jehovah and sought his guidance in the course of action they would follow to serve as instruments for the preservation of God's people alive. Esther, taking her life in her hands, dressed up royally and took her stand before the king. "As soon as the king saw Esther the queen standing in the courtyard, she gained favor in his eyes, so that the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand." (Esther 5:1, 2) Today, too, the Esther class are in the same danger as the Mordecai class. But they do not back down, they show real love for all of God's people and work along with the Mordecai class in complete unity seeking the preservation of the ones whom God is calling out of this world to represent him in this "time of the end." (Matt. 12:30; Ps. 133:1) What an example this is to those who are in association with the anointed ones of Jehovah, confident of the outcome in their reliance upon the Greater Ahasuerus, Jesus Christ.

⁵ Esther approached the king but asked simply that the king attend a banquet that she had prepared for him and for Haman. The king readily accepted. (Esther 5:3-5) Apparently by including Haman in this arrangement, Esther was showing favor to Haman, unlike Mordecai. This agrees with the fact that in the antitype the Esther class, acting under the instructions of the Mordecai class, do not try to destroy by violence the professed Christian clergy of Christendom. They do not try to undo the closeness of their Church-State union. (Eph. 6:12) According to Bible prophecy it must be shown up to its fullest degree. The Haman class will expose themselves for what they really are: enemies of God by being friends of the world. It must become very apparent that those pictured by Haman are the "man of lawlessness"

5. What request did Esther make, but how was her course toward Haman not contradictory to Mordecai's?

toward God, absolutely doomed to destruction.—2 Thess. 2:3, 4, 8.

⁶ Still Esther did not reveal what was in her heart. No doubt acting under Jehovah's direction, as subsequent events strongly suggest, she asked the king to return for a second banquet, to be attended by Haman also. Haman went out, "joyful and merry of heart." But seeing Mordecai at the king's gate not bowing or quaking on account of him, he was immediately filled with rage. However, he controlled himself and came into his house where he boasted of his greatness to his wife and friends. They rejoiced with him but agreed when Haman complained that "all this—none of it suits me as long as I am seeing Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate." Then Zeresh and all his friends advised him: "Let them make a stake fifty cubits high. Then in the morning say to the king that they should hang Mordecai on it. Then go in with the king to the banquet joyful." This pleased Haman immensely. He determined that early the next morning he would go in before the king and press this request upon him.—Esther 5:6-14.

JEHOVAH MANEUVERS MATTERS

⁷ Now events took an unexpected turn. That night while Haman was plotting mischief against Mordecai, King Ahasuerus went to bed but could not sleep. Drawing the conclusion that he had omitted something, was guilty of some delinquency, some failure, he had the book of records brought to him and asked his servants to read. They ran down the list to see if anything had failed to be done. "At length there was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two court officials of the king,

6. How did Haman respond to this seeming favor of Esther, but what did he now purpose toward Mordecai?

7. What unexpected occurrence that night changed the situation for Mordecai?

doorkeepers, who had sought to lay hand on King Ahasuerus. Then the king said: "What honor and great thing has been done to Mordecai for this?" To this the king's attendants, his ministers, said: "Nothing has been done with him." The king determined at once to honor Mordecai.—Esther 6:1-3.

⁸ Early the next morning Haman came to present himself before the king and King Ahasuerus had him brought in. But before he could carry out his resolve toward Mordecai, the king put in his question first, thereby averting what could have been an altogether different outcome of events. Had Haman been allowed to ask first that Mordecai be hanged, the king, seeking to honor Mordecai, might well have turned on Haman then and there without the intervention of Queen Esther or Mordecai. Thus, their role in this drama would have been anticipated and they would not have served to finish Jehovah's warfare against the Amalekites.—Esther 6:4, 5.

⁹ According to Jehovah's purpose, the king spoke first: "What is to be done to the man in whose honor the king himself has taken a delight?" (Esther 6:6) Haman, with his boasts of the night before still fresh in his mind, could view no one but himself as being in the highest estimation of the king and concluded that he must be the one whom the king delighted to honor. Therefore he advised the king according to his own ambitions: 'Bring out the king's own horse with a crown upon its head and the man who is to be honored is to be seated on the horse and the chief officer in the king's realm is to take the horse and make this favored man ride in the public square of the city and proclaim aloud before him: "This is how it is done to the man in whose honor

the king himself has taken a delight." Confidently, Haman awaited the king's reply, only to hear him say: "Quickly, take the apparel and the horse, just as you have said, and do that way to Mordecai the Jew who is sitting in the king's gate." Haman was completely crushed. But he could do nothing but comply. Failure to do so would have meant certain death. Thus, when Mordecai most needed to be remembered, Jehovah acted in his behalf for his protection and the saving of his life. Haman, by contrast, was obliged to admit that, not he, but this hated, despised Jew Mordecai was the one whom the king delighted to honor.—Esther 6:6-11.

A COMPLETE REVERSAL

¹⁰ Haman was a proud man. Proverbs 16:18 says: "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." According to this principle, there was only one outcome for Haman. There had to be a comedown. Today, an exact parallel is taking place. In times past the clergy have been exalted to the very highest position in this system of things. Though claiming to rule by the grace of God and by his King, Jesus Christ, the clergy have no real standing with God, which fact is becoming increasingly evident to all open-minded observers. (Matt. 7:15-23) The Mordecai class, on the other hand, is coming more and more into favor with the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly since 1926 when they declared themselves favorable toward God in *The Watch Tower*, issue of January 1 of that year, in the leading article, "Who Will Honor Jehovah?" Many events since that time have borne out these facts. From 1922 to 1928 a series of proclamations went out by Jehovah's witnesses, many of these aimed directly at exposing the clergy. In 1930, two books called "Light," explaining Revelation, were pub-

8. What developed that assured Mordecai a continued part in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose?
9. How was Haman humiliated before Mordecai?

10. What led up to Haman's comedown, and what parallel is taking place today?

lished and these, too, exposed the clergy of Christendom, at the same time exalting God's kingdom by the Lord Jesus Christ. All these proclamations and exposés stung the clergy of Christendom with humiliation. Yet, even at the height of their power they were unable to prevent these and many other publications from being distributed world wide in millions of copies.* This record still stands, and in the light of current events it is proved even more true. Those who care to look into the record can see for themselves that the faithlessness of the clergy toward the Bible and their lack of interest in building up the moral standards of the people is not new but is just as it has been exposed by Jehovah's witnesses from this early period when God showed his favor upon his true servants, the Mordecai class, at the expense of the clergy and to the clergy's shame. What further humiliation awaits them before their ignominious end, the future alone will reveal.

¹¹ Haman slunk home to his family and friends, but there he found no comfort. On the contrary, "his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him: 'If it is from the seed of the Jews that Mordecai is before whom you have started to fall, you will not prevail against him, but you will without fail fall before him.'" Hardly were these words of doom out of their mouths when the king's court officials arrived and proceeded to take Haman to the second banquet that Esther had made for the king.—Esther 6:12-14.

IDENTIFICATION AND EXPOSURE

¹² Now, at the conclusion of the second banquet, the time had arrived for Esther

* For an outstanding instance, see the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, pp. 117, 118.

11. What future did Haman's wife and friends see for him now?

12. How did Esther accomplish Haman's exposure, and what was the outcome for him?

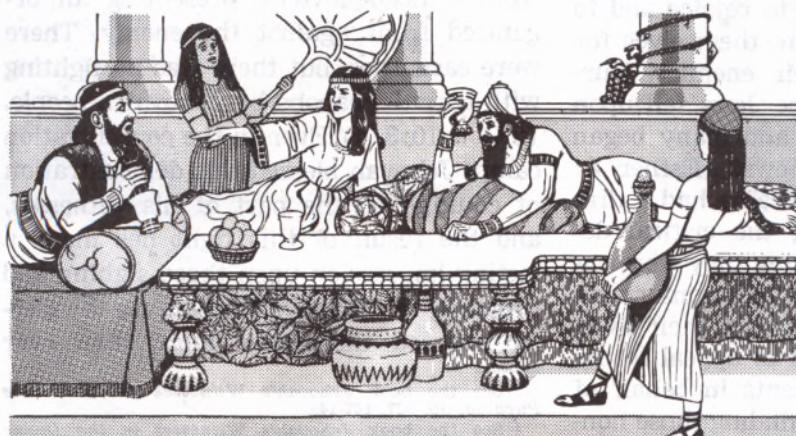
to state her request to the king. "If I have found favor in your eyes, O king, and if to the king it does seem good, let there be given me my own soul at my petition and my people at my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be annihilated, killed and destroyed. Now if we had been sold for mere men slaves and for mere maidservants, I should have kept silent. But the distress is not appropriate when with damage to the king." The king was highly aroused. "Who is this, and just where is the one who has emboldened himself to do that way?" Then Esther said: "The man, the adversary and enemy, is this bad Haman." The king, unable to contain his rage, withdrew to the garden of the palace to regain his composure. Haman, terrified at this turn of events, pleaded with Esther for his life because he knew that the king's face was set against him. So intense were his pleas that he fell upon her couch beside her just as the king returned from the garden. Seeing this the king said: "'Is there also to be a raping of the queen, with me in the house?' The word itself went out of the king's mouth, and Haman's face they covered. Harbona, one of the court officials before the king, now said: 'Also, there is the stake that Haman made for Mordecai, who had spoken good concerning the king, standing in Haman's house—fifty cubits high.' At that the king said: 'You men, hang him on it.' And they proceeded to hang Haman on the stake that he had prepared for Mordecai; and the king's rage itself subsided."—Esther 7:1-10.

¹³ Esther's exposing of Haman as the archenemy necessitated her revealing her own identity. When did those of the Esther class in modern times identify themselves according to the historical record?

13. (a) How was the identification of the Esther class brought about; how has this added to the exposure of the Haman class? (b) What is pictured by Haman's being hanged on the stake prepared for Mordecai?

The best evidence is the identification that took place Sunday, July 26, 1931, at an assembly of Jehovah's people in Columbus, Ohio. On that occasion they adopted a resolution by which they identified themselves, embracing the name "Jehovah's witnesses." (Isa. 43:10, 12) A booklet containing this resolution was published and given a wide circulation. This identification also worked for the exposé of the clergy class. The hatred already manifested toward the true servants of God was now revealed in even stronger action and the Haman class now became identified even more positively as anti-God, determined to destroy God's servants. (Matt. 23:29-36) Jehovah's people ran into opposition as never before in their history.* The fulfillment of Haman's being hanged on the stake prepared for Mordecai does not need to wait until the destruction of Babylon the Great, for by these acts, from this time forward, the Haman class died in the sight of God and in the eyes of honest-hearted persons the world over. Additionally, Haman's ten sons survived him to carry forward the picture to a further fulfillment.

* For some of the details, see the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, pp. 125, 126, 128-147.



**Esther exposed Haman as the archenemy,
thus also revealing her own identity**

¹⁴ It was in this same year, 1931, that the first volume of a series of three books was issued, namely, *Vindication*, and at that same assembly a speech was given explaining in detail the ninth chapter of Ezekiel. In this talk the man clothed with linen and carrying the recorder's inkhorn was identified in antitypical fulfillment as well as those sighing and groaning that were to be marked in the forehead and the twenty-five men in front of the temple who were worshiping the sun instead of Jehovah God. The Mordecai class and the Esther class together now realized they had a further work to do for which they were being retained on earth for a while longer. This was to find those who were sighing and groaning because of the conditions brought about by those perverting the true worship of God, those pictured by the twenty-five men worshiping the sun, namely, the clergy class. This lifesaving was to take place before destruction was to be brought upon all who did not receive the mark on their foreheads. So the identification of Jehovah's people by the significant name Jehovah's witnesses came at a time of great need for God's people and simultaneous with the opening up of a new and important phase of the purpose of God in this "time of the end."

ORGANIZED FOR DEFENSE AND OFFENSE

¹⁵ Now Mordecai was promoted and was given the king's signet ring, which had been

14. What further work was now seen to be ahead for the Mordecai class?

15. (a) What reversal for the Mordecai class did Jesus foretell? (b) What threat still loomed ahead for the Jews, and what steps did Mordecai take to avert it?

removed from the finger of Haman before he was hanged. The fulfillment is in harmony with the prophecy of Jesus when he said: "This is why I say to you [that is, to the clergy of his day], The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits." (Matt. 21:43) This has indeed been a dramatic reversal that has taken place in our day. But something else needed to be done. Though Mordecai's personal life had been saved and he had been exalted, Haman's ten sons were still alive and there still stood the decree for the extermination of all the Jews throughout the empire on Adar 13. Mordecai realized that there was a way out for the Jews, one that Haman's decree had not allowed for. This was authority for Jehovah's people to gather together and fight back in self-defense. Now the Jews could take the initiative against those who would destroy them and destroy the malicious enemy instead. To this provision the king agreed and the decree was sealed with his ring and copies were sent to all 127 jurisdictional districts.—Esther 8:1-14.

¹⁶ This caused a great change to take place. Now, instead of great mourning among the Jews, and fasting and weeping and wailing, they began to rejoice and to gather together and unite themselves for their stand against their enemies. Furthermore, the fear of the Jews fell upon the peoples of the land and many began to declare themselves Jews. (Esther 8:15-17) This part of the drama had a dramatic fulfillment during the critical decade in the 1930's. Realizing they were entitled to take all peaceful, law-conforming measures for the protection of their lives, God's servants proceeded to appeal to the courts and the governments in behalf of their God-given work of finding those hon-

estly disposed toward Jehovah and his people. Further steps of unification were taken and the theocratic structure of the organization came to its full realization by 1938. God's people were now fully united and ready when the time for the antitypical fulfillment of Adar 13 should arrive.*

¹⁷ This time came during the period of the second world war. All the evidence points to the conclusion that the enemies of God's people determined to use that war situation with its patriotism, its nationalism, its bias, its false accusations of Communism on the one hand and Nazism on the other in order to get Jehovah's witnesses and destroy them. A global attack shaped up that appeared as though it might completely blot out the worldwide preaching of the Mordecai and Esther classes and their companions who had now begun to join with them.† It could have been a bleak day indeed, one of mourning, but these faithful servants of God did not take this concerted action lying down. During this time represented by Adar 13 Jehovah's witnesses fought as they have never fought before. They made a spiritual fight to preserve their spiritual lives all around the world, fighting from a centralized headquarters, presenting an organized front against the enemy. There were casualties, but there was no fighting with carnal weapons by Jehovah's people. (2 Cor. 10:3, 4) Even in the concentration camps Jehovah blessed this demonstration of courage on the part of his witnesses, and the result of this fight has made a lasting impression upon those sighing and groaning in Christendom because the clergy exposed themselves more than ever

* See the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, pp. 127, 147-149.

† See the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, pp. 150-153.

16. (a) What changed attitude among the Jews now came about? (b) How has this been fulfilled in modern times?

17. When did the antitypical day of Adar 13 arrive, and what occurred?

as being anti-God and anti-kingdom of Christ.* (2 Thess. 1:4, 5) This continuing spiritual death of the clergy in the eyes of honest-hearted people is well represented by the death of Haman's ten sons killed on Adar 13. Along with them, 500 of God's enemies were slain in Shushan and 75,000 throughout the rest of the realm. On Adar 14 the fighting was continued in Shushan the castle and 300 more enemies of the Jews were put to death, whereas in the outlying districts the Jews were celebrating their victory.—Esther 9:1-19.

FROM GRIEF TO REJOICING

¹⁸ This day that it had been schemed was to be a day of mourning had become a good day, a day of victory, vindication and rejoicing! So also in modern times! When World War II began in 1939, there were 71,509 of Jehovah's people united in their defense of true worship. By the time this war was over among the nations of the world, far from being annihilated, the faithful band of active witnesses had almost doubled, and 1945 saw 141,606 carrying on the spiritual warfare against God's enemies. But our spiritual war of self-defense is not over. It continues down to this day as pictured by the annual celebration of "Purim" that was imposed on all the people by Mordecai, namely, "to be regularly holding the fourteenth day of the month Adar and the fifteenth day of it in each and every year, according to the days on which the Jews had rested from their enemies and the month that was changed for them from grief to rejoicing and from mourning to a good day." (Esther 9:20-32) This year (1971) the

* See the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, pp. 154-185.

18. What was the outcome of the enemy's efforts to annihilate God's people, and what pictures the continuation of this spiritual warfare?

Orthodox Jews celebrated their "feast of Esther" on March 10, and their feast of Purim on March 11, 12.

¹⁹ With full proof of Jehovah's deliverance already a part of the historical record both in ancient and in modern times, we will look forward with confidence and keen anticipation to the "great tribulation" just ahead when all those of the Haman class and their supporters will literally reap what they have sown, just as King Ahasuerus pronounced upon Haman: "Let his bad scheme that he has schemed against the Jews come back upon his own head." (Esther 9:25; Matt. 24:21, 22) When that time comes, the Greater Ahasuerus will literally make an end of all his enemies and will exalt the Mordecai and Esther classes to the position reserved for them in the Messianic kingdom.—2 Thess. 1:6-10.

²⁰ In the meantime, the final preparation of the rest of the King's subjects must be accomplished according to Jehovah's purpose for this "time of the end." This is as indicated by Esther 10:1: "And King Ahasuerus proceeded to lay forced labor upon the land and the isles of the sea." What a blessed privilege it is today for those of Messiah's "other sheep" to comply wholeheartedly and loyally with the modern-day service commission! This they do by cooperating, to their own everlasting benefit, with those taking the lead in this "energetic work" as promoted by those anointed Christians foreshadowed by Mordecai. "For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus and was great among the Jews and approved by the multitude of his brothers, working for the good of his people and speaking peace to all their offspring."—Esther 10:2, 3.

19, 20. What final outcome is certain, and how should we view in its fulfillment the "forced labor" that was imposed by King Ahasuerus?

Grateful for

OUR OLDER BROTHERS

As told by Don and Earlene Steele

IT IS June 29, 1970, our thirtieth wedding anniversary. Earlene and I are seated in our comfortable room in the Watch Tower Society's branch headquarters here in Seoul, Korea. We are reminiscing about our years together—twenty-seven of them in the full-time ministry of God's kingdom, the last twenty-one years in missionary assignments.

"Your memories of the organization of Jehovah's people and of faithful older men and women in it must go back a long way, Don."

"Yes, Earlene, for mother accepted the Kingdom message when I was only two years old, and she did her very best to bring us boys up in a way that would fit us for the ministry. The major part of each year she herself used to devote to the ministry full time."

"That's wonderful! She is still busy on a missionary assignment in Puerto Rico, too. But is there anything else you recall about those early days?"

"Yes, there is. Mother saw to it that my two brothers and I were trained to pay close attention at 'class,' as our Bible study meetings used to be designated. She made sure that we were surrounded by visitors and associates who were devoted to Jehovah's service. And each one of us went along in the door-to-door ministry when we realized it was expected of us. I recall working with mother when I was not yet ten, she on one side of the street and myself on the other, offering seven booklets on various Bible subjects. When I placed

my first set of booklets, I don't know who was the happier."

"That was in Kansas, wasn't it?"

"Right. I can recall vividly many of our activities in the 1930's out in Wichita, Kansas. We would organize several car-loads of publishers and go as a group in the door-to-door ministry in the various towns and cities. In 1934 and 1936 we used to go from door to door seeking to get as many names as possible on the petitions seeking relief from the boycott on broadcasts by the Watch Tower Society's president, J. F. Rutherford. We also used printed testimony cards in explaining and presenting our Bible message from door to door, and later phonographs were put to use."

"And you have often told me about those early conventions. They must have been thrilling to attend."

"They surely were, Earlene. At first Mom used to give us all the news, such as the adoption of the name 'Jehovah's witnesses' in 1931, and the information about the 'great multitude' in 1935. But my first convention was at Columbus, Ohio, in 1937. I stayed with friends at the trailer camp on the Fair Grounds, and how I loved to listen to the experiences of my older Christian brothers each night after the sessions had closed!"

"So, when once you started, you have never really been idle as far as the Lord's work is concerned, have you?"

"Well, in 1939 I had become involved with secular work and worldly associates

to the point that I was inactive. But I recall the loving assistance I received from our 'company servant,' as a congregation overseer used to be termed. He was a barber, and he used every opportunity when I was in the chair to remind me tactfully of my responsibility to Jehovah. And do you remember, after I met you, how he used to invite us both for dinner and engage in fine Scriptural discussions for our benefit?"

"Oh, yes, and that was not long before we got married in 1940. Then we hesitated about going in the full-time pioneer ministry because we had the idea we needed to have some kind of financial reserve."

ENTERING THE FULL-TIME MINISTRY

"How glad I am that we got rid of that idea and wrote the Society to say that we had saved up enough money to keep us going for at least two months! With my appointment as pioneer minister came a letter admonishing us 'not to be anxious' about the necessities of life. (Matt. 6:25-33) So I got started in February 1943, and you were appointed one month later. Any way, we've managed, with Jehovah's help, to keep going, not for just two months, but for twenty-seven years."

"I remember how happy we were, Don. Of course, we did not realize at the time that there would be tests and trials of our devotion."

"That's right. Soon after that my brothers and I got caught up in the 'neutral-
ity' issue. At first I was given deferment by reason of being married prior to Pearl Harbor. Later my classification was changed to 'conscientious objector' rather than to that of 'minister' as I had requested. So soon I joined my brothers and some sixty other Witnesses in Leavenworth Penitentiary. But even there we kept up our Bible studies and meetings, and I shall never forget the visits of the

Society's special representative, A. H. Macmillan. His counsel and encouragement did much to sustain us all spiritually."

"I really missed you all that time, I must say."

"Yes, that was one of several occasions when we had to endure separation for the sake of the good news. But then we appreciated each other all the more when we were reunited. That time it was twenty-five months. And one thing that really made it easier for me, Earlene, was your faithfully continuing in the full-time preaching work."

"It was quite difficult in some ways, especially since I could not visit you often. But I agreed with Dave and Pauline Hasty and their young son, Bud, to go into unassigned territory where there was great need for giving the Kingdom witness. At an assembly in Denver, Colorado, we met Sister Glass and she encouraged our group to come to Glenwood Springs and Aspen in the mountains. I shall never forget her kindness, not only then, but down through the years. Later, the McLain family came out from Wichita and we moved our trailers near Palisade, Colorado. With only one car for the whole group, we preached God's Word throughout that rugged area. It seemed to take every cent we could get to keep the car going."

"That's where I joined you on my release, and I remember that one of the first questions you asked was, 'How much money do you have?' It seems that the car was badly in need of some repair."

"But you must admit that those were among the happiest years of our lives, pioneering in that beautiful mountain country and associating with those wonderful friends we still have there."

"Soon after, do you recall going to the Cleveland assembly of 1946? I believe that

was your first large one, wasn't it, Earlene?"

"Yes, and I was assigned in the volunteer service department with Mabel Haslett. We did not know at the time what a fine influence she and her husband were to have on our lives, no, not even when we found that they were called to the same class of the Society's Gilead School as we were."

GILEAD SCHOOL AND MISSIONARY WORK

"That was the eleventh class, the second international class as it was called, since only about one third of its students were Americans. What a privilege it was to associate so closely with spiritually mature brothers from Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Europe!"

"And do you remember how, after the first quarter, the Society's president, N. H. Knorr, asked for volunteers to go to Japan with Don and Mabel Haslett and a group of Hawaiians of Japanese descent? As I recall, about 75 percent were willing to go, and we were among the sixteen who were selected. That meant we had to start studying Japanese right away."

"For about a year after graduation we were assigned to visit and assist congregations in a California circuit, and then came President Knorr's letter changing our assignment from Japan to Korea, and asking if we would accept. Of course, we did, and it was in August 1949 that we took off from Los Angeles airport bound for Korea. Our plane arrived in Tokyo, and Don Haslett arranged with the occupation authorities for us to stop over for a few days, days during which he could offer us some fine counsel as to how to adjust to an Oriental assignment."

"Yes, Don, I remember that. And I remember too that when we arrived in Seoul there were about twenty meeting each week for a study of *The Watchtower*. One

of the Witnesses would translate the study material from the English, and then make extra copies on thin sheets of paper. This painstaking handwork would produce only eight copies, and at the study four or five persons would crowd around one copy."

"That's right. Little literature was available then. In fact, we had brought with us twenty copies of the Korean edition of the booklet *Where Are the Dead?* And in the ministry we loaned these twenty booklets out, then went back and picked them up again. Eight of the local Witnesses joined us in the field ministry that month. What other recollections of those early days do you have, Earlene?"

"I remember when six new missionaries arrived in March 1950. By May we had reached a peak of sixty-one publishers, including eight missionaries. The original Witnesses we found here when we came had endured prison from five to seven years each under the Japanese occupation. Almost all of them held on faithfully until their deaths, and those surviving are still preaching the good news."

THE KOREAN WAR
"Then war came. I know that you recall the public meeting we had in a school auditorium on June 25, 1950. As the meeting was dismissed, police told us that Communist North Korea had attacked and that a curfew was in force; everyone was to hurry home.

"So we watched the war from the roof of our home the first night. On the third day, when the Communist forces had entered the city's outskirts, all American and European citizens were ordered to report to their respective embassies for immediate evacuation. As we obeyed the order, we had no idea that the hostilities were to develop into a major conflict. You'll never forget those days, will you, Earlene?"

"Never! One of our Christian sisters and

I were ill at the time, and we had about thirty minutes to pack one suitcase. I still remember how upset the American consul was when he found out that there were six American women still in the city because we had not recognized the warnings broadcast in code earlier over the radio. But it worked out well for us because we got to go on the last group of planes from Kimpo airport, while the other women and children who had been evacuated on a fertilizer boat the previous day were a long time in getting reunited with their menfolk.

"I'll never forget the strafing of our buses by Communist planes as we were going to the airport. And out there on the airstrip they strafed us again, so we were herded into a cramped basement. Finally we women were put on the first plane out. Then two Communist planes tried to shoot down our plane; however, they were shot down by the planes escorting us. We learned later that these two planes were reportedly the first to be downed in the Korean War. Instead of taking the evacuees to some other place in Korea, they took us to Itazuke in Kyushu, southern Japan. How glad we were to find out that you men had been taken to the same place!"

"Yes, Earlene, and it was only later that it became apparent there would be no early end to the Korean conflict, and Seoul twice fell into the hands of the Communists. The Society then assigned us eight missionaries from Korea to Nagoya, Japan. There were no local Witnesses then in Nagoya, but within a year's time there were more than sixty publishers of the good news!"

RETURN TO KOREA

"During the next year the Tokyo branch office of the Society tried repeatedly to arrange for at least one of us to return

to Korea. Finally the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers permitted one of us to return to Korea. The Society's president wrote me to go back and stay at least a month. It turned out that I could remain in Korea, but no other Witness missionaries could come in; so I stayed. I got back there in November 1951, but you were not allowed to come until October of 1952, Earlene."

"How well I remember! And how happy you were, when I did get back, to have me cook you a meal for a change. I suspect you had many more cold meals from those GI rations that were on the market then than you'd admit, Don."

"That year was difficult in view of our being separated again, Earlene, but what a wonderful year of progress for the Kingdom work. Our Christian brothers had been scattered to the south as refugees during the heavy fighting. In November 1951, only thirty-five reported serving in the field ministry, but more were preaching than that. In December and January I traveled around to visit them, and six congregations were organized. From then on, the work grew so fast there was almost no keeping up with it. By the end of the 1952 service year, there were 192 publishers reporting. By the end of the 1954 service year, 1,065 were reporting! So, while the Korean War was a disastrous thing for the Korean people, the fact that Jehovah's witnesses were scattered to different parts of the country served to get the Kingdom message to people in those areas that much sooner. It is certainly a credit to our dear Korean brothers that they 'exerted themselves vigorously' to make use of that circumstance."

"Don, I must say that those days had their difficulties for us, but it brings me joy when I think about the excellent qualities of our Korean brothers and Jehovah's

direction that resulted in all that increase. It is true that at times things seemed difficult. For example, when we first moved back to Seoul after two years in Pusan, into the portion of the present Bethel home known as the 'old building,' it had been all shot up from the war—no windows, the plaster down, no electricity, no water, and so forth. Then for ten years in that building we had no water come through the pipes. It all had to be carried up in buckets on an A-frame on someone's shoulders. Now, just look at the fine modern Bethel home we enjoy today. It's hard to realize what happened during those other days."

"Yes, all of Korea has changed much from those days, Earlene. Eight more missionaries arrived in 1955 after the war. And local Witnesses had made fine progress in spiritual growth. One of my first Bible students, baptized in 1950, is now an overseer in one of Seoul's fifty-two units. At that time he was not yet married; now his second son is assisting us here at Bethel. It makes us seem old, doesn't it?"

"Well, Don, we are considered the grandfather and grandmother of our Christian brothers here. They use those same endearing terms when speaking to us. Even though we have passed the age of fifty years, we still have years ahead of us to use for the work remaining before Armageddon. Jehovah has certainly blessed us."

"You remember, Earlene, when we graduated from Gilead in 1948, the Society's president told our class we were to be given one-way tickets to our assignments. But Jehovah has been good to us, for since our return to Korea from our home leave in 1969, we can say we have crossed the Pacific nine times, having been back on four different occasions. In 1953, for instance, to attend the international assembly in New York, we were sched-

uled to go by ship, but the brothers in our old circuit in California contributed the extra funds so we could go by air. Again in 1958 we were in New York at the assembly. Then in 1962 I was called back for the ten-month course in Gilead School. And at that time you were having physical difficulties and were allowed to spend those ten months in Colorado to recuperate. This last year we were able to attend the 1969 assembly in New York also. Our families have been good to us, as well as many friends whose help made those trips possible, and we are grateful to them as well as to the Society."

"Don, I shall always be grateful for that extra leave given in 1962. I have had some health problems during the years, including three cases of surgery, and I can't say that I have had less competent treatment here than I could have had elsewhere. Now I must say I feel better physically than I have in the past five or six years, and I am grateful to Jehovah for it."

"Through the years our Christian brothers have been very kind and hospitable to us, Earlene, and have shown their love in so many ways. They have been our constant delight. And now as we write this story, our Korean brothers are still growing in numbers. The service year of 1970 has seen more than 3,000 baptized. And for the service year, we had a publisher peak of 12,267. There is no letup in sight.

"We can look back with thankfulness to the many older brothers and sisters in the faith whose lives touched ours in our younger years and who exerted much influence on us by their own course of faithfulness. Many of them were of the Lord's anointed. If these blessings we have enjoyed so far are any indication, then what wonderful joys await us all in the new system of things, along with the fine associations we can then enjoy!"

Questions from Readers

- What are the "old commandment" and the "new commandment" mentioned at 1 John 2:7, 8?—U.S.A.

The verses in question read: "Beloved ones, I am writing you, not a new commandment, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. This old commandment is the word which you heard. Again, I am writing you a new commandment, a fact that is true in his case and in yours, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining."—1 John 2:7, 8.

Was the apostle John referring to the Mosaic law by the words "old commandment"? That could hardly be, for he was writing to Christians who were not under the Law. (Rom. 6:14) Rather, since the theme of John's letter is love, it appears that he had reference to Jesus' statement: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34) When John wrote his first letter (c. 98 C.E.) more than sixty years had passed since Jesus, at the beginning of Christianity, gave that commandment to love. So John could appropriately say that it was an "old commandment."

What then is the "new commandment" that John mentioned in verse eight? It seems to be the same as that which he had just called the "old commandment." We cannot imagine John giving Christ's followers a truly "new" commandment, different from that which Jesus had taught. But in what sense could John call it "new"?

He could call it new just as Jesus had done. It involved being willing to surrender one's soul in behalf of one's brother, something the Mosaic law did not require. (John 15:12) Furthermore, it was new in the sense that fresh application of it had to be made, and with new urgency, in view of changing conditions and situations. Near the end of the first century C.E., with the apostles dying off and the 'mystery of lawlessness' already at work among the congregations, the Christians to whom John wrote could see the changes and could appreciate the new applications of love needed. (2 Thess. 2:6-8) Yet John was able to write them that the "new commandment" was 'true in both Christ's case and in yours' because they were carrying it out in their lives, even as Jesus carried it out. In the context John showed that a Christian who does not love his brother is in darkness. It therefore appears that because of the increasing love among many of Christ's followers John could write that 'the darkness is passing away and the true light is shining.'

In view of the difficulty that 1 John 2:7, 8 presents, a number of modern Bible translators have freely translated the verses in line with the foregoing explanation. For example, *The New English Bible* reads: "Dear friends, I give you no new command. It is the old command which you always had before you; the old command is the message which you heard at the beginning. And yet again it is a new command that I am giving you—new in the sense that the darkness is passing and the real light already shines. Christ has made this true, and it is true in your own experience." See also *The Jerusalem Bible* and the translations by C. B. Williams and J. Phillips.

Consequently, both the expressions, the "old commandment" and the "new commandment," evidently refer to Jesus' command that his followers love one another just as he loved them.

What Would Your Child Do?

- At an assembly of Jehovah's witnesses a young lad of twelve went to the Lost and Found Department and asked if they had the dollar he had lost. He was given the one turned in that morning, but, after carefully examining it, he exclaimed, "No, I don't believe that's my dollar. I'll wait until after the assembly is over, and if it's not claimed by then I'll know it's mine."

What a shining example of youth today who have been trained by God's Word in the way of righteousness! Sunday evening the unclaimed dollar was waiting for the lad when he returned.

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