

The WATCHTOWER

The Secret of

Happy Family Life



OCTOBER 15, 1976

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

October 15, 1976
Vol. 97, Number 20

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

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

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

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

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THE FAMILY BREAKDOWN

-Facing Up To It



"I NEVER would have thought of divorce five years ago," said a thirty-one-year-old secretary in India. She continued: "I would have suffered through an unhappy marriage until I died. But I heard of other women who were divorced, and then I met one, and that gave me the strength to try."

Remarks of this nature are also being heard with increasing frequency in other parts of the earth. Family breakups are definitely on the increase. In Sweden there are six divorces for every ten marriages, in the United States about five divorces for every ten marriages, in East Germany about three divorces for every ten marriages and in Finland less than three divorces for every ten marriages. Why are so many married people refusing to stay together?

The comments of the young woman from India well illustrate that there has been a change in attitude about preserving a marriage despite difficulties. No longer is divorce so frowned upon as to restrain marriage breakups. Prominent persons who are often before the public are among the many getting divorces. This has lent a certain label of respectability, making it easier for people to accept the idea of divorce for themselves. Furthermore, there has been a liberalizing

of divorce laws in various countries. All these factors have contributed toward making divorce appear like an easy way out of a serious marriage problem.

The women's liberation movement, too, has had its impact upon the family. It has caused some women to feel that a career is more important than being a housewife and a mother. Work in the home has come to be viewed as unrewarding drudgery. Even in certain lands where women used to have little say, there have been changes. There some wives demand greater voice in the marriage, but their husbands are unwilling to yield. Soon this leads to serious problems. For a wife, freedom through divorce may become more desirable than having to submit unquestioningly to the dictates of a husband.

The fact that many wives are part of the labor force has also contributed toward weakening families. At work, such wives may get considerable attention from other men. Sometimes this may lead to their finding another man who is more attractive to them than is their own husband. As a result, their marriage may end in divorce.

In lands where inflation continues to be a problem, husbands and wives often get into heated disputes about financial matters. Such arguments can develop to the

point where it seems that only separation or divorce could bring relief from the unpleasant situation.

THOSE WHO ENJOY A UNITED FAMILY

Yet many married people do remain together for life, and they are happy and contented. Why is this?

Often the reason for success in marriage is that both husband and wife follow sound principles. There is clear evidence that the closer such principles correspond to what is presented in the Bible, the stronger are the family ties. A married man in Las Vegas, Nevada, found this to be true in his case. He remarks: "Before my wife and I started studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, I am sure that our marriage would not have lasted another month. That's how bad things had become."

But why are the Bible's guidelines so helpful? They are based on more than human wisdom. The apostle Paul, who for years observed the wholesome effect that the Scriptures can have on people, wrote: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Yes, God is the source of the wisdom contained in the Scriptures. As man's Maker he knows what is in our best interests and will promote our greatest happiness. That is why we can trust the guidance that the Scriptures provide. This guidance has also passed the test of time.

What the Bible says about marriage and family life is very realistic. It does not raise false expectations; it frankly acknowledges that marriage is not without problems. We read that those who marry "will have tribulation in their

flesh." (1 Cor. 7:28) At the same time the Scriptures show how to handle family difficulties successfully, as we shall see.

Furthermore, the Bible deemphasizes material things, encouraging contentment and the pursuit of spiritual treasures. For example, at 1 Timothy 6:7, 8 we read: "We have brought nothing into the world, and neither can we carry anything out. So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." How many disputes over financial matters married couples could avoid by living accordingly!

The counsel of the Scriptures promotes the highest regard for the marriage arrangement. There is such admonition as the following: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Heb. 13:4) Besides counsel on maintaining an honorable marriage, the Bible also presents sound reasons for avoiding sexual immorality. In an unvarnished way the Scriptures warn of the dangers to one's health, family and, most importantly, to one's relationship with Jehovah God. The man pursuing an immoral woman, for example, is compared to a 'bull being led to the slaughter.' Then we read: "He has not known that it involves his very soul," that is, his life as a person.—Prov. 7:22, 23.

The Bible also sets forth the rights and responsibilities of husband, wife and children. When its admonition is applied, all members of the family enjoy a dignified standing. They feel needed and appreciated. Therefore, they enjoy being together.

So that you might see how fine the principles of the Bible are, we invite you to read the next article. We feel sure that you will be encouraged to note that wholesome family life is possible even at a time when family breakdown is a serious problem.

THE SECRET OF

Happy Family Life

"I bend my knees to the Father, to whom
every family in heaven and on earth owes its name."

—Eph. 3:14, 15.

WHAT sane person does not want his family life to be happy? If it is not happy at present, most persons would be willing to apply any means that they feel might help them to succeed in finding real family unity and happiness.

² In searching for the secret of happy family life, some have the view that this technological world poses problems no other age has faced. So they feel that a different moral standard is needed. They also believe that the world is more enlightened in every way than were past generations.—Prov. 30:13.

³ Is this true? Technology has accentuated some of the age-old problems, yes. But has human nature changed? Are people less desirous of being treated kindly and less susceptible to love? The way in which we have used our scientific and industrial advancement—has it solved our problems, or has it, instead, made us less human in our approach to social relations?

⁴ Assessing matters honestly, we must admit that today's generation is no more intelligent or no better than past ones. In fact, the intelligence we have, we inherited from them. So we cannot safely or sensibly throw over all the basic stan-

dards followed by practically every nation on earth for thousands of years—for example, monogamy, family headship and the importance of the family unit—especially since these have proved beneficial. In fact, it is deviation from these principles that has caused most family unhappiness.

WHERE PROPER STANDARDS ORIGINATE

⁵ More importantly, where did these standards of family life originate? Were they the product of man's logic, or were they drawn from trial-and-error experience? Neither. They came from the Creator of men and women, the Establisher of the family as the basic unit of human society. Even about the nations that do not acknowledge the true God, the Bible says: "Whenever people of the nations that do not have [the Mosaic] law do by nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law, are a law to themselves. They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them and,

5, 6. (a) How does Romans 2:14, 15 show the origin of the marital and other standards that most nations have followed? (b) How do the Scriptures, as at Deuteronomy 6:7 and 31:12, show that families should be together as much as possible? (c) How should the family head view the opinions of the other family members?

1-3. How do some persons feel about the standards for a happy family life, and what questions does this raise? 4. Why is it unwise to feel that we can discard all previous standards as to family life?

between their own thoughts, they are being accused or even excused."—Rom. 2:14, 15.

⁶ So the laws of many of the nations—their laws that tend toward holding families together—are a result of the moral standards and natural feelings put into the human makeup at creation. Accordingly, in all nations we see some families that enjoy a considerable measure of happiness. The members of these families have true natural affection. Usually there are good communication and common interests that weld the family together. They work together, play together, and respect one another. While the family head finalizes decisions on important matters, everyone is respectfully granted a hearing ear as to his ideas or opinions. There is a feeling of freedom of thought, speech and action, limited only by the best interests of the family and of the individual.

⁷ But for the greatest assurance of permanent happiness that will weather the economic ups and downs, the temptations of the so-called "modern morality" and the disappointments of this world, *a good relationship with God* is the primary thing. If that relationship is gained and maintained, all other features of family life will "fall into place," and even if matters do not always turn out precisely as one might desire, they can be coped with and handled in the most successful way possible.—Ps. 127:1.

⁸ What are some of the factors involved in maintaining a good relationship with God and, as a consequence, a good relationship among family members?

⁹ First, there must be love and affection, along with a *genuine display* of these qualities. Humankind, made originally 'in the likeness of God,' still possesses these good qualities in a measure, though sin

has dimmed them to a great extent. (Gen. 1:26, 27) Therefore, it is essential to strive constantly to put into application the Bible's principles governing the family. Let us consider a few of these principles.

¹⁰ At the beginning God said: "A man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh." (Gen. 2:24) Jesus Christ added: "Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart." (Matt. 19:6) This knowledge is a safeguard, restraining the married person from looking with longing eyes at others of the opposite sex and from actions that could lead to defilement of the marriage. He (or she) knows that marital unfaithfulness can ruin the family happiness and damage or break his relationship with God. In any case, the unavoidable effect is the branding of lasting scars on the heart and life of every family member.

PROPER VIEW OF FAMILY HEADSHIP PROMOTES HAPPINESS

¹¹ Having accepted this view of oneness of the married pair, we next see from the Bible that, while the marriage is a partnership arrangement, there must be order. God has provided this by making the husband the head of the family. The husband is the "senior partner," available to be consulted, and responsible for the final decisions on matters affecting the family's welfare. The Christian apostle Paul wrote: "A husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation. . . . In this way husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it."—Eph. 5:23-29.

¹² A good husband, appreciating the

7. How does Psalm 127:1 show what is the primary factor for happiness in family life?

8, 9. Using Romans 7:19, 20, show why it is necessary to work hard to apply Bible principles.

10. What marital safeguards do we find at Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:6 and Hebrews 13:4?

11. In what way is the husband the family head?

12. Why, according to Ephesians 5:29, does the good husband not use his authority tyrannically, and, therefore, how will he deal with the members of his family?

God-ordained responsibility that he has, will try to engender respect, not merely because he is head—and certainly not from any supposition that he is "boss"—but because his wife is *one* with him and he does not want to hurt her or bring disrepute upon himself (and his Creator) by tyrannical use of authority. Rather, he will encourage his wife and other members of the family to be free in their interchange of ideas, thoughts and feelings. He will keep the lines of communication open by being readily and kindly approachable upon *any* subject or problem. He will also respect their feelings, weigh their opinions impartially, and accord them certain authorities within their realm of activity in the family arrangement.

¹³ For example, the wife, in most cases, supervises the house. The Bible says of a "capable wife": "She has rewarded [her husband] with good, and not bad." "She has sought wool and linen, and she works at whatever is the delight of her hands." "Her owner is someone known in the gates, when he sits down with [his fellow] older men of the land." "Her sons have risen up and proceeded to pronounce her happy; her owner rises up, and he praises her."—Prov. 31:10, 12, 13, 23, 28.

¹⁴ From this it is seen that the wife should be given latitude to manage the household. Proving herself a good worker, capable and apt in handling these things, she usually would be the one planning the decoration of the home, the buying of food and, perhaps, furniture and other things that promote family happiness. The husband would intervene only when her plans or spending would be unwise or would endanger the family's economy or welfare.

¹⁵ The appreciative husband never for-

13, 14. Commenting on the description of a "capable wife" in Proverbs 31, outline the authorities and duties that she may be granted.

15. What should the husband acknowledge about a good wife, and what are the results to him, as pointed out in Proverbs 31:23, 28 and 1 Corinthians 11:7?

gets to give his wife *encouragement* and to acknowledge freely her hard work and her accomplishments in the family's behalf. His associates respect him because her fine qualities reflect his good headship and loving attention to her. (1 Cor. 11:7) Both husband and children speak well of her on every occasion. Neither the good husband nor the good wife *ever* 'runs down' the mate by speaking disparagingly of him or her before others. They shrink from the thought of bringing such public disgrace and humiliation upon the family.

WIFE'S ROLE ESSENTIAL TO FAMILY HAPPINESS

¹⁶ The wife can have a great share in making the family happy. First, she realizes the truth of the Bible's advice: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord." "In fact, as the congregation is in subjection to the Christ, so let wives also be to their husbands in everything." "The wife should have deep respect for her husband." (Eph. 5:22, 24, 33) This subjection, rather than being slavery, actually brings *liberation* to the woman from the heavy responsibilities that the husband, being the head, must measure up to, in the sight of both God and men.

¹⁷ The good wife understands that, in a situation where she may think she is right, she should, nevertheless, submit to her husband's decision if he sees the matter differently. She should not hypocritically claim to submit, while using devious means to try to control the situation. Of course, where a violation of Christian conscience may be involved, the Christian will obey God first.—Acts 5:29.

16, 17. (a) Is Scriptural subjection of a wife slavery for her, or what? (b) How will the good wife act in a situation where her husband disagrees on a family matter?

¹⁸ The good wife also understands that, while her husband is charged by the Scriptures 'not to be bitterly angry' with his wife, she must be careful that she does not give him occasion to feel that way toward her. (Col. 3:19) The right-minded husband does not want to fight with her over issues, or to use force in exercising headship. The effect of an unsubmitting, anger-prone or quarrelsome wife is described at Proverbs 27:16: "Anyone sheltering her has sheltered the wind, and oil is what his right hand encounters." The husband is frustrated, he cannot restrain her, and her unsubmittingness becomes public knowledge, to the family's disgrace.

¹⁹ Of course, with human imperfection, it is unavoidable that irritating situations will occur. But people actually *want to be happy* and are rarely *trying* to be troublesome. So, both mates, rather than using retaliatory measures, will, by exercising self-control, speak words that promote love and happiness.

CHILDREN, A SOURCE OF HAPPINESS

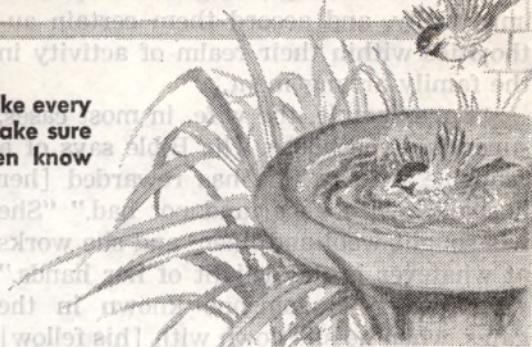
²⁰ Children do much to bring unity and happiness into the home if they are loved, acknowledged and properly trained. When should such training begin?

18, 19. (a) Comment on the effect of a contentious wife, as described in Proverbs 27:16. (b) When one of the marriage partners becomes irritated at what might be viewed as stubbornness or troublesomeness on the other's part, what should be kept in mind?

20-22. (a) When should real training of a child begin, and why? (b) Why is even a small baby able keenly to sense lack of love or an injustice, and, therefore, what care must be taken from the time of the baby's birth?



Parents should take every opportunity to make sure that their children know the truth about God's handiwork



²¹ First, the parents should not underestimate the newborn baby's intelligence. He (or she) is not a "second-rate" person. Remember, the baby is born with the godly qualities of *love* and *justice*. He is a very *intelligent* creature. He merely lacks information and experience in order to become full-grown mentally. Unlike animals, which act primarily on instinct, the human baby must *learn* nearly everything. So he hungrily *takes in all he sees and hears*. Therefore, training starts at birth, for *everything* said or done in the baby's presence should be *upbuilding*. Love should be lavished upon him. At the same time, anything wrong should be corrected in a kind, considerate manner.—2 Tim. 3:15; 1:5.

²² Keep in mind that the child is *you* in a smaller edition. A child does not want

people to talk "baby talk" to him any more than you do. Life is serious business and a young child wants to learn to do as grown-ups do. Being without guile, he quickly and keenly senses injustice, hypocrisy or lack of love. That is why the qualities of justice, love, mercy and other fruits of the spirit must not be violated in dealing with the child. They must also be cultivated in the child *from the beginning*.—Prov. 22:6.

²³ Later on the child may come to you wide-eyed, to ask a question, or enthusiastically to show you something he has discovered. If you brush him off with, "Don't bother me now," he is crushed. You, the one he depended so much on, have failed him. He may not say anything, but there is a lasting scar, and a barrier begins to build up.

²⁴ But what if you are genuinely too busy at the time? Kindly explain, just as you would to a grown-up, why you cannot take the time now, but that you will go into the matter later. Then *be sure to do so* as soon as possible. The child can be trained, when lovingly treated, to appreciate that there are appropriate times for certain things.

²⁵ Children, from infancy up, want *reasons*. Some time ago a popular television show presented an interview of a group of high-school youths and parents. The author of a book on parent-child relationships was present. When a live situation was demonstrated in which the parent reasoned with the youth as to why he had to say No to the teen-ager's request, the author said to the parent: "I'm against you. I would merely say, 'No, you can't have it.'" At that, the entire group of youths rose up almost as one person, in

23, 24. (a) Why is a brusque dismissal of a child's questions, or lack of interest in what he is doing, a crushing blow? (b) If the parent cannot immediately show interest, what should he (or she) do?

25, 26. Is it profitable to reason with a child even though he demonstrates a wrong desire or attitude?

disagreement. They said: "We want *reasons*, not mere commands." Reasoning with young people helps in keeping open channels of communication.

²⁶ In case a parent finds it difficult to reason with his children, he can follow no better outline than the book of Proverbs, particularly the first seven chapters, which relate counsel from a God-fearing father to his son.

SUMMARY

²⁷ Consequently, since God is the Designer of the family arrangement, and since man was made in the image of God, the good husband recognizes the godlike qualities, desires and feelings of the members of his family. He exercises headship in imitation of God and Christ. He demonstrates that he recognizes the Divine Headship over himself and directs his family to respect, above all, that Headship. (1 Cor. 11:3) Wives who recognize this principle follow the pattern of Sarah, Rebekah and other faithful women who served God. A wife could receive no finer compliment than to be called a true 'daughter of Sarah.'—1 Pet. 3:5, 6.

²⁸ Love and kindness will predominate in the happy family, but discipline will not be neglected, for all need training, especially being the imperfect sinners that we are. (Heb. 12:9-11) The "discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah" is the foundation of child training. (Eph. 6:4) This includes reasoning, as contrasted with arbitrariness. Also, it involves example—the parent inculcates love for God by showing the family that he loves God wholeheartedly.

²⁹ If each one in the family treats the others as God treats him, there is certain to be a happy family life.

27. (a) Along what lines should a husband pattern his headship? (b) Why would being called a 'daughter of Sarah' be a fine compliment to a woman, as Peter says at 1 Peter 3:6?

28, 29. Why is discipline needed and beneficial? (Heb. 12:9-11)

A WORLDWIDE FAMILY GATHERS

"FOR 'Sacred Service' District Assemblies

"*A* WORLD-WIDE family?" you may ask. "Is there really such a thing?"

Well, there are people from all races, nationalities and social backgrounds who have learned to get along well together. And especially when they gather in large assemblies is their close relationship apparent. The Allentown, Pennsylvania, *Evening Chronicle* of July 8, 1976, observed:

"A feeling of unity, family ties and sincere friendship permeated the air at the Allentown Fairgrounds today as 7,080 Jehovah's Witnesses were welcomed by smiling 'brothers and sisters' who began the festivities of their four-day District Assembly."

In all the United States alone a total



Mother and son preparing sandwiches for delegates at the Oakland, California, Assembly

of 94 "Sacred Service" District Assemblies were held this past summer, with a combined peak attendance of 974,039. At the same time, many other members of this worldwide Christian body were meeting in Canada, Europe and Asia, bringing the attendance to over 1,800,000! And hundreds of thousands more persons in this "family" will yet gather to hear this same assembly program in other lands throughout the earth.

A REAL FAMILY?

Yet, is it really right to call this worldwide body of Christians "a family"? Yes, for Jesus Christ himself said: "Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." And the Bible speaks of "God's household, which is the congregation of the living God."—Matt. 12:50; 1 Tim. 3:15.

How would you like to be part of such a household, one in which all family members really try to do the will of the heavenly Father? Well, Jehovah's Witnesses are dedicated to do God's will, and what a difference it makes!

The Augusta, Maine, *Kennebec Journal* noted that the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses "were evident. There were no smoke-filled rooms, no rowdiness, no littering of grounds. There wasn't even one policeman on duty to handle the huge crowd."

At the Detroit, Michigan, assembly health inspector Peter W. Komor said: "You have been able to do what no other

group has accomplished." And he observed the reason why. "Your people care, they are concerned with others. . . . This is the finest group I have ever worked with."

How is it that Jehovah's Witnesses world wide truly function as a united Christian family? What motivates them to love and serve others?

THE EDUCATION RESPONSIBLE

Well, think: What makes for respectful, law-abiding families? It is fine instruction and training, is it not? And at their weekly Christian meetings, as well as at larger assemblies, Jehovah's Witnesses receive the very best instruction and training—from God's Word, the Bible. Consider, for example, this year's "Sacred Service" District Assembly program.

As noted in the Vancouver Sun's article, "WITNESSES' CONVENTION IS A REAL FAMILY AFFAIR," the first day's program was concerned with the idea of individual families serving God together unitedly. Each member of the family was given helpful Scriptural counsel and encouragement in such talks as: "What Sort of Man Are You?" "The Woman Who Procures Praise for Herself" and "What Does Youth Want out of Life?"

Special attention was focused on teenagers. Helpful instruction was given them to cope with questions regarding sex, dating, drugs, alcoholic beverages and other matters. A free copy of the new 192-page book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It* was given to all who, during this part of the program, sat in a special section up front.

A feature of the second day was the talk "Holy Spirit in Action," after which



Teen-agers eagerly received their free copy of the new book, "Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It"

a new 192-page book, *Holy Spirit—The Force Behind the Coming New Order*, was released. During the third day, which stressed a Christian's responsibility to tell others about God's kingdom, a new 192-page book to aid in this disciple-making work was made available. It is entitled "Good News to Make You Happy."

To add to the assembly's enjoyment, a Bible drama was presented each day that nicely impressed a point of instruction.

The effect of such Scriptural education that Jehovah's Witnesses regularly receive was apparent to assembly visitors. Judy Hierseman, who entitled her newspaper article "FAMILY-ORIENTED PROGRAM," wrote:

"Families are the rule rather than the exception. And the presence of all those children, ranging in age from babes in arms to teenagers, does nothing to disturb the tranquillity and quiet dedication of the remainder of the Witnesses.

"Rather it adds a feeling of togetherness, serious, yet lighthearted, that has pervaded the scene of swarming humanity at the

Brown County Veterans' Memorial arena." —Green Bay *Press-Gazette*, July 10, 1976.

Family unity was manifested in many ways at the assemblies, as the Oakland (Calif.) *Tribune* observed: "Family togetherness is evident in many convention activities, from parents and children folding plastic eating utensils into napkins to others peeling vegetables into enormous crocks to feed the assemblage."

REALLY UNITED FAMILIES

The assembly's principal talk, "Will Serving God Solve Your Problems?" showed that family-related problems not only *can be solved*, but actually *have been solved* when individuals apply in their lives the righteous principles in God's Word. True experiences were related on the program at some assemblies to illustrate this. For example, at Allentown a person, whose wife became one of Jehovah's Witnesses,



Families were baptized together, as was this father, mother and daughter at the Richfield, Ohio, assembly

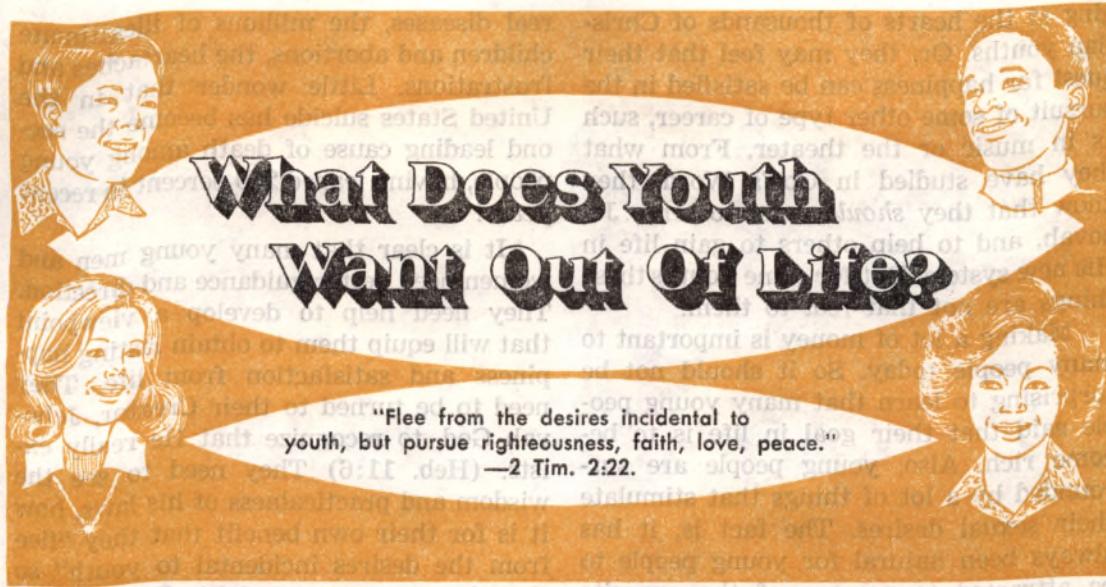
told of how he committed crimes that landed him in prison.

"My wife, whom I had treated so cruelly," he said, "came to visit me in prison. I could see the deep concern in her eyes, and I knew she really wanted to help me. She wrote me every day, and all of her letters spoke of Jehovah. Finally, I began to listen, and even began seriously to examine the Scriptures to make sure of the things she said. In less than six months I was convinced that it was the truth."

"I started working with the prison officials to establish meetings there at the prison that would be open to all the prisoners. In time the institution awarded us one hour every week to meet together for either a Bible talk or a *Watchtower* study. Eventually, a couple of my charges were surprisingly dropped, and I was released in time for the district assembly that was held in Allentown last year. There I symbolized my dedication to serve Jehovah God by water baptism. How thankful I am for the determination of my wife, and for the privilege of becoming a member of this beautiful and unique family of Jehovah's Christian witnesses!"

In just the United States 10,181 persons were baptized at the 94 district assemblies, thus publicly expressing their desire to be members of this united worldwide Christian family. Sometimes husbands and wives were baptized together, and, on occasion, their children as well.

You, too, can be a member of this worldwide Christian family. First, it is necessary to learn what the will of the heavenly Father is, and then to obey it. And as you thereafter regularly assemble with others who have dedicated their lives to do God's will, you will come to experience the happiness that comes with serving as a member of the worldwide Christian family of Jehovah's Witnesses.



YOUNG people, what DO you want out of life? Many youths were recently asked this question. And from examining their answers, we feel that we know how you would probably answer this question.

² In a few words, youths say that they want *happiness and enjoyment*. One eighteen-year-old put it this way: "I want to be happy. And I want comfort—nice clothes, a nice house, good music and good food, and the feeling that I'm doing some little thing that matters." While also expressing a desire for such things, many youths, due to their Christian training, said that they wanted to serve their God Jehovah, and to gain eternal life in his new system of things. (1 John 2:17; 2 Pet. 3:13) Really, you could have no finer purpose than this, for the rewards that God will bestow upon his faithful servants are far superior to anything you could ever get out of life on your own.—Ps. 37:4; 145:16.

³ Therefore, it is not wrong for young

1-3. (a) What, basically, do youths say that they want out of life? (b) What is the finest purpose one can have, and how does the Bible show this? (c) Why is it not wrong to want to be happy?

people to want happiness, and to want to enjoy themselves. The Bible speaks of Jehovah as "the happy God," and so he also wants his people to be happy. (1 Tim. 1:11) It should not be surprising, then, that God's Word speaks favorably of young people deriving pleasure from activities in which they engage. For example, in describing God's blessed people, the Bible says: "The public squares of the city themselves will be filled with boys and girls playing." Also, it says that there is "a time for dancing."—Zech. 8:5; Eccl. 3:4; *New English Bible*.

REALIZING THE HAPPINESS THAT YOUTHS WANT

⁴ Many young people today enjoy sports very much, and believe that pursuing a career in sports will bring them real happiness. A fourteen-year-old Christian youth acknowledged: "I think a lot about sports, particularly basketball. I want to serve Jehovah, but I also dream of being a basketball player someday on a famous team." No doubt similar desires are tug-

4. (a) What type of careers do many young people desire? (b) Why do Christian youths generally recognize a problem in pursuing such careers?

ging at the hearts of thousands of Christian youths. Or, they may feel that their quest for happiness can be satisfied in the pursuit of some other type of career, such as in music or the theater. From what they have studied in God's Word, they know that they *should* want to serve Jehovah, and to help others to gain life in His new system. But for some youths these things are not that *real* to them.

⁵ Making a lot of money is important to many people today. So it should not be surprising to learn that many young people said that their goal in life is to become rich. Also, young people are surrounded by a lot of things that stimulate their sexual desires. The fact is, it has always been natural for young people to be attracted to persons of the opposite sex. Thus the reply of one Christian girl in New York city is understandable: "The main thing I would like from life," she said, "is to be married." Many Christian youths said that they want to marry sooner or later and have a good family life.

⁶ By contrast, many youths of the world have quite different views. For example, a nineteen-year-old boy said: "I want lots of women." And a seventeen-year-old girl responded: "I want to live comfortably and not worry about anything. And anything includes disease due to living a care-free life. Maybe this sounds distasteful to some, but it's about time they grew up. Marriage ties you down. I want to live a little."

⁷ Yes, many young people believe that lots of money and lots of sex with a variety of partners is what will give them the best in life. But, obviously, something is wrong with their thinking. For look at the overwhelming problems that have resulted from immorality—the epidemic of ven-

5, 6. (a) What other things do youths say they want out of life? (b) What is responsible for young people's having such desires?

7, 8. (a) Why is it obviously wrong to engage in immoral sex relations? (b) In what ways do many youths need help?

real diseases, the millions of illegitimate children and abortions, the heartaches and frustrations. Little wonder that in the United States suicide has become the second leading cause of death among young people, having leaped 250 percent in recent years!

⁸ It is clear that many young men and women need better guidance and direction. They need help to develop a viewpoint that will equip them to obtain lasting happiness and satisfaction from life. They need to be turned to their Creator, Jehovah God, to recognize that He really exists. (Heb. 11:6) They need to see the wisdom and practicalness of his laws, how it is for their own benefit that they "flee from the desires incidental to youth" so that they can prove useful to God. (2 Tim. 2:20-22) They need to learn that his purpose is to destroy this corrupt system and to replace it with a new one of his making. They need to be helped to live for that new system, to live in a way *now* so that they can prove worthy to live forever. This is what will truly bring them happiness.—Prov. 3:13-18.

A BALANCED VIEW OF SPORTS

⁹ God's Word can help young people to get a balanced view of sports. For example, it gives this wise counsel: "Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim. For bodily training is beneficial for a little; but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Tim. 4:7, 8) So the Bible shows that "bodily training," such as we get in sports, has its place. It can help us to develop physical coordination, flexibility, muscle tone and strength. But note the caution, "bodily training is beneficial for a little." What

9-12. (a) How does 1 Timothy 4:7, 8 help us to get a balanced view of sports? (b) What are benefits derived from sports, but what are the dangers of becoming overly involved in them? (c) Why is it only proper that devotion and service to God be a foremost part of our lives? (Ps. 36:9; Heb. 6:10; Jas. 1:12)

can happen if such Bible advice is ignored and you become totally absorbed in sports?

¹⁰ For one thing, it can spoil the fun, making sports "serious business" rather than a welcome recreation. Pointing to the effects of overstressing competitive games, sports psychologist Bruce Ogilvie said: "I once interviewed the rookies in 10 major league baseball camps and 87 percent of them said they wished they'd never played Little League baseball because it took the joy out of what had been a fun game." Also, some sports, such as football, can be dangerous, especially when your body is in the process of developing physically. What has made some sports so dangerous is the extreme competitiveness—the win-at-all-costs attitude—that is often encouraged.

¹¹ Still another thing to consider is the associations to which playing organized sports may expose you. Locker-room talk, for example, generally has the reputation of being sexually immoral. How practical would it be to get involved in something that could easily damage your moral principles and your relationship with your Creator? When a young member of the Oakland Raiders professional football team, in the U.S.A., began to appreciate the teachings of God's Word, he decided to give up his lucrative football career. Representatives of the Raiders visited him to try to change his mind. "I told them," he said, "what my associations in those circles had resulted in—use of drugs, loose living, an arrogant, proud disposition. That whole life-style connected with professional football, I explained, would interfere with the Christian life I now wanted to lead."

¹² So sports are much like other things that are good when they are kept in balance—when they do not dominate your life so as to overshadow more important things, or to expose you to damaging situations. How exhilarating it can be to play

a fast-moving sport and experience the thrill as one's body responds and performs feats of skill! But sports in themselves are not the source of lasting happiness. They do not hold "promise of the life now and that which is to come," as godly devotion does. Yes, making the most important thing in your life the service of your heavenly Father, Jehovah God, is what will bring you true happiness and satisfaction—forever.

A BALANCED VIEW OF MONEY AND SEX

¹³ In most places today it takes money to eat, to buy clothes, to have a home. So efforts must necessarily be made to earn money. Yet to have as your purpose in life the accumulating of riches simply is not wise. It does not bring happiness. God's Word is accurate when it says: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

¹⁴ Sickness, worry, sleepless nights and a disrupted family life are among the problems experienced by many of those whose purpose in life is the making of a lot of money. Even when a person is able to accumulate wealth, it is usually observed that this does not bring him happiness. (Eccl. 5:10) So show yourself wise. Take a balanced, godly view of money. Heed the Bible admonition: "Flee from these things. But pursue righteousness, godly devotion, faith, love, endurance, mildness of temper. Fight the fine fight of the faith, get a firm hold on the ever-

13, 14. (a) Why, according to 1 Timothy 6:9, 10, Luke 12:16-21 and Ecclesiastes 5:10, is it unwise to have as one's purpose the accumulating of material riches? (b) According to 1 Timothy 6:11, 12, what should we pursue, and why?

lasting life."—1 Tim. 6:11, 12, 17-19; 2 Tim. 2:22.

¹⁵ Certainly, to gain everlasting life requires having a balanced, godly view, not only of money, but also of sex. The Bible openly discusses sex in a truthful, frank way. The fact is, the Bible is largely a book about people, and sex is an integral part of the life of people. So God's Word tells about the joy of honorable marriage. (Gen. 26:8; Prov. 5:15-20; 1 Cor. 7:1-5) But it also tells about the perversions and the misuse of sex. For example, just consider what is in the Bible book of Genesis. It describes the homosexual passions of the men of Sodom, the drunken relations of Lot with his daughters, the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah, Judah's relations with his daughter-in-law whom he mistook for a prostitute, and the sexy attempts of Potiphar's wife to seduce Joseph.—Gen. 19:4, 5, 30-38; 34:1, 2; 38:12-26; 39:7-16.

¹⁶ Some persons have criticized the Bible for telling about life as it really is, for exposing the badness in people's lives. Yet the Bible never does this in a way to stimulate passions, or to encourage wrong-doing. Rather, it usually shows the bad consequence of a wrong course. Also, these accounts are recorded so that vital lessons can be learned from them. For example, consider what happened in King David's household.

¹⁷ David's oldest son Amnon developed a passionate desire for his lovely half sister Tamar. Feigning sickness, he maneuvered things so that Tamar was the one who waited on him, bringing him food when no one else was around. He then "grabbed hold of her and said to her: 'Come, lie down with me, my sister.'"

15, 16. (a) How does the Bible take a frank view of sex? (b) Why is it beneficial that the Bible discusses sexual matters in a straightforward manner?

17, 18. (a) What do we learn from the experience of Amnon and Tamar, as reported at 2 Samuel 13:1-33? (b) What similar results have modern-day youths experienced from immoral sex relations?

She virtuously protested, but he refused to listen and forced her to lie down with him. Did he really get what he desired out of this? The record describes the result: "Amnon began hating her with a very great hatred, . . . greater than the love with which he had loved her, so that Amnon said to her: 'Get up, go away!'" —2 Sam. 13:1-33.

¹⁸ Clearly, the fulfilling of Amnon's passionate, incestuous desire brought no real pleasure to him or to his half sister. And this so often is the case when persons engage in immoral sex relations. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported this confession of a youth who had premarital sex relations with many misled girls. "I have learned that this did not bring me happiness." Also, a tearful young co-ed said of such an experience: "It sure wasn't worth it—it was no fun at the time, I've been worried ever since."

¹⁹ Really, how wise we are to heed the Bible's command: "Flee from fornication"! Indeed, "flee from the desires incidental to youth," which can lead to trouble in your life. (1 Cor. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:22) Sexual morality makes sense because those who hold to it have a far better likelihood of a successful marriage. On the other hand, so-called sexual "freedom" changes what should be pleasurable and clean into something cheap and detestable. So to stay free from immorality, stay free from the things that lead to it: conversation that always dwells on the opposite sex, also reading material or looking at pictures that excite sexual passion. Keep your mind, your eyes and your tongue occupied with clean, positive things, working toward worthwhile goals that bring enduring benefits.—Eph. 5:3-5; Phil. 4:8.

19. (a) Why does sexual morality make sense? (b) What can help you to keep free from sexual immorality, as shown by scriptures such as Ephesians 5:3-5 and Philippians 4:8?

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF LIFE

²⁰ So, what DO you want out of life? You may feel, as did most Witness youths who were asked that question, that you want to please Jehovah God and prepare yourself to live in his new system. That is a fine purpose, the very best! It is something truly worth while to want. But the question remains: "Is what you are doing in keeping with what you say?"

²¹ A person may say that what he wants out of life is to be an expert physician. But what if that person made no effort to apply himself in school, or even to take courses that would give him knowledge of the human body and its functions? You would probably question the sincerity of the person's desire to be a physician. Similarly, you are answering the question, "What do you want out of life?", by the way you are living. It reminds one of the expression, 'What you are thunders so loud that I can't hear what you are saying.' A person may say that he wants to please Jehovah God and to gain everlasting life, but if that person makes little or no effort to listen to God by studying or obeying His Word, obviously something is lacking.

²² What can you do if you find that you are one of those who says that he wants to serve Jehovah God but who is not doing as much as he should be to serve God? Here is one step you can take: Read the new book published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*. Make a real effort to begin applying its sound Scriptural counsel. Also, where possible, ask your father or mother if they will study this book with you. This will put you on the right track for winning Jehovah's favor. It will help you to "flee from the desires inci-

20, 21. How do you reveal what you really want out of life?

22. (a) What can you do to help to strengthen your desire to serve Jehovah? (b) How can you prove to be "a vessel for an honorable purpose," as described at 2 Timothy 2:20-22?

dental to youth," and to become a useful "vessel," or instrument, to God.—2 Tim. 2:20-22.

²³ Each of us needs to realize that the key to getting the best out of life is found in our reliance on our heavenly Father, Jehovah God. No matter how fine, or how poor, a start your parents may have given you, and no matter how good a mind and body you may have, you will always want to appreciate the need for guidance from Jehovah. He inspired these words to be written for young persons like yourself: "To my sayings incline your ear. May they not get away from your eyes. Keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those finding them and health to all their flesh. More than all else that is to be guarded, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life."—Prov. 4:20-23.

²⁴ Yes, the more you look to Jehovah God and his Word for direction, the smoother the road of life will become for you. True, it will not be easy so long as we are in this world with its god, Satan the Devil, who is trying to turn us away from Jehovah. (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 6:12; 1 Pet. 5:8, 9) But stand firm! Be confident! If you stick to your determination to serve Jehovah God, he and all his heavenly hosts will back you up. They will help you to get the best out of your youth now, and to gain everlasting life in God's righteous new system so near at hand.—Ps. 34:7.

23, 24. (a) What is the key to getting the best out of life, as indicated at Proverbs 4:20-23? (b) Despite enemies who are against us, why can we be confident that we can get the best out of life now and forever?

IN COMING ISSUES

■ **Holy Spirit in Action.**

■ **'Glorious Good News from the Happy God.'**

Insight on the News

● Retiring Chief Juvenile Court Judge Thomas Gill says that, in the last twenty years of work in Connecticut courts, he has observed the emergence of a **Disruptive Children** more dangerous group of children. He says that their antisocial behavior is such that they now constitute an "extremely disruptive group" that is having "a chilling impact on people." Because of their viciousness, these youths have gone beyond what was once regarded as juvenile delinquency. Gill noted that in a previous period of thirteen years his court had only one charge of homicide against a child in some 55,000 cases that it handled. But in a recent period of only one year it had three such cases. And the same increase in youth crime is noted nearly everywhere.

Bible prophecy foretold that in our times children would indeed be "disobedient to parents," and that people in general would increasingly lack self-control, becoming fierce, without a love of goodness.—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

● In last summer's Italian national elections, the ruling Christian Democratic party, backed by the Catholic Church, won a narrow victory over the **Ominous Trends in Italy** Communist party. But the Communists continued to make gains.

This was also reflected in the municipal elections held at the same time. For example, in the Rome city government the Communist party won 35.5 percent of the vote, compared to 33.1 percent for the Christian Democrats. Hence, for the first time Rome came under the control of a Communist-led coalition. The New York "Sunday News" said that this "was a setback to the Vatican and the Pope, who reigns as the Catholic bishop of Rome." With the Rome vote, the Communist party now dominates the governments of every major city in Italy, the "News" observes.

Also of great concern to the Church is the decline of religious practice in Italy. The Catholic periodical "Commonweal" reports: 53 percent of the Italian people were regular Church communicants in 1956; 40 percent were in 1960; 35 percent, in 1965. The most

recent figure is only 30 percent. There is no indication that the decline will be reversed. The Jesuit magazine "Civiltà Cattolica" says that 72 percent of the people it questioned felt that the Church had no real interest in, or understanding of, the working class.

These trends in Italy and other lands toward more radical-type governments and the drift away from "orthodox" religion are ominous for the churches of Christendom. Yet this was foretold in Bible prophecy at Revelation chapters 17 and 18. There God's Word reveals that religions which have 'played the harlot' with this world are to be suddenly destroyed in the near future, causing great shock to supporters of those religions.

● It has been a common belief that the leaders of Nazi Germany must have been demented, madmen. Hence, many have thought that by keeping insane people out of office, Nazi-type atrocities would not be repeated. But after decades of study, personality tests given Nazi leaders at the Nuremberg trials seem to reveal otherwise.

According to psychologist M. Harrower of the University of Florida, "the Nazis who went on trial at Nuremberg were as diverse a group of people as one might find in our own government today, or for that matter, in the leadership of the PTA [Parent-Teacher Association]." Of eight high Nazi leaders studied, six "showed no serious mental disturbance, and two of them were exceptionally well-adjusted. Their crimes cannot be blamed on mental disorder."

On what, then? Unchecked power by humans tends to corrupt. Hence, blind obedience to any leader who asks people to break God's laws can lead to all kinds of corrupt acts. That is why true Christians are told: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) In addition, those who break God's laws leave themselves open to control by "wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places"—demons. (Eph. 6:12) Thus, human leaders and those who blindly follow them can become tools of Satan the Devil, whom the Bible calls "the god of this system of things." —2 Cor. 4:4.

What Does the Proverb Mean?

HOW pleasant it is to deal with someone whom you know to be honest! Such persons are rare in this world, especially in the realm of business. Jehovah expressed himself to his people Israel as being against dishonest weights and measures, the having of two kinds of weights, one for buying and one for selling. (Mic. 6:10, 11; Prov. 20:10) An example of lying and dishonesty, which Jehovah hates, is found in Proverbs 20:14: "*'It is bad, bad!' says the buyer, and he is going his way. Then it is that he boasts about himself.*"

It is common practice in business for the buyer to "run down," find fault with and cheapen an article that he wishes to buy, so as to cause the seller to reduce his price. Of course, the seller also often exaggerates the value of the thing that he is selling and keeps hidden any faults that it may have. Then, after the buyer obtains the product at what he estimates to be well below its actual value, he brags to others about the bargain that he got. He is even willing to tell how he lied to get it. Often the seller acts similarly. But how much better it would be to give an honest evaluation of what one is selling, revealing any faults the item may have. And how good it is if the buyer is likewise honest, not finding supposed or probable faults for the purpose of getting the item cheaper.

Dishonesty of this nature can become a habit and a practice with a man in business, and he justifies himself by saying that if he could not do this he could not stay in business. Yet there are many businessmen among Jehovah's Witnesses who are proof of the principle that one can

be honest, even in a generally corrupt business world, and survive. Some, who, before coming to a knowledge of the truth, sold tobacco in their own restaurants and grocery stores, quit doing so when they found how much they were damaging their fellowman by engaging in the tobacco traffic; for tobacco has finally been acknowledged to be a very dangerous drug. Some observers gloomily predicted that they would lose a lot of business. In some cases, their business did wane at first, but then their sales began to go up again until, in many cases, sales were better than when they had formerly sold tobacco. The owner of a chain of food stores had such an experience.

God, of course, sees and favors the honest person, and there are likewise many people in the world who appreciate honesty and feel more like dealing with a conscientious person. When he became one of Jehovah's Witnesses, a grocer in Portugal took to heart the proverb that states: "*Two sorts of weights are something detestable to Jehovah, and a cheating pair of scales is not good.*" (Prov. 20:23) To the surprise of some, his business increased substantially. Why? Because, as one observer commented: "Everyone in the neighborhood says that he will not cheat and rob as other merchants do because now he is one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and they are honest people."

However, regardless of whether one loses or gains financially by reason of honesty, the person following the Proverbs' good counsel on honesty will have peace of mind, a good conscience and happiness, along with Jehovah God's smile of approval.

What Has Brought Happiness

To Me

I WAS born in Lameiras, a little village in the Oporto district of Portugal, famous for its port wines. We lived in a large stone house, with upstairs bedrooms and country house furniture. Downstairs was a large kitchen that also served as a dining room. Here was a wood-fire oven, where our delicious corn bread was baked.

Our drinking water came from the spring at the back of the house.

It was fresh and clear, and by its side grew delicious strawberries. And a crystal-clear stream flowed near our house.

I can still remember some of these things, and I still take delight in looking at clear flowing waters. Since childhood days my heart has beat faster when reading in the Bible about the "river of water of life." (Rev. 22:1, 2) How happy I was, too, when I learned that someday all mankind would live in peace under their own vines and fig trees!—See Micah 4:3, 4.

When I was only three months old, my father left for Brazil in search of better economic conditions. Mother and I joined him four years later, in 1917.

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES

Father had been an altar boy in the



As told by Maria Alves de Azevedo

Catholic church back in Lameiras. And mother always took me with her to church. Later, a Presbyterian aunt got father to read the Bible, and soon my parents became Presbyterians.

I was about nine years old then, and I enjoyed reading the Bible stories about merciful Joseph and patient Job. Their course of integrity would move me to tears. I wanted to be like them.

In time we moved to Olaria, in the northern part of Rio de Janeiro. Here, instead of a clear stream, there was a big ditch in the middle of the road overgrown with grass and weeds. This was turned into an open sewer that gave off not so pleasant odors. And the mosquitoes? Well, let us forget them now.

The family's goal of material prosperity meant hard work. First, I helped mother with the house chores and then both of us would give father a hand in his shoe-making business. Mother also raised chickens, and I helped to sell the eggs. One day I overcharged for two dozen eggs. My intention was to buy a lottery ticket in the hope of winning a doll or toy kitchenware. The stern discipline I received deeply impressed on me the value of honesty.

At age nine I was baptized as a Presbyterian, and in 1927, at age fourteen, I was confirmed. One day that year I met a sailor named Raimundo F. Cabral, who said he was a "Bible Student." He was en-

gaged to a girl whom I was trying to convert from spiritism to the Presbyterian Church. I was teaching Sunday school and desired to help people to learn about God.

Yet, this sailor showed me from the Bible, not only that spiritism is wrong, but that the soul is mortal and that hell is the common grave of mankind. We discussed other subjects as well, and I learned many things of which I had been unaware. However, he and my girl friend got married and moved away. For twelve years I had no further contact with the Bible Students.

During that time many things happened. I, too, married but my marriage did not turn out to be a bed of roses. There were lots of thorns and few roses. With the highest of hopes I awaited the arrival of my first child. Would it change my marital relationship for the better? Sad to say, the baby was born dead. By this time my husband had already taken to a Bohemian way of life. Not even the birth of three more children changed that sad situation.

I always tried to hide my problems from others, especially from my parents, so I had no one to comfort and encourage me. My religion offered no hope. In fact, I thought I was one of those who read the Bible, but did not deserve to understand it. On the other hand, I also believed that there must be those who would 'bring the many to righteousness.' (Dan. 12:3) I kept wondering who they were. How I longed to know the truth that sets one free!

—John 8:32.

WHAT I HAD BEEN SEARCHING FOR

Then, in January 1939, the same Bible Student visited me again, only this time he presented himself as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I readily subscribed to *The Watchtower* in Portuguese, and as a gift I received the book *Riches* and three booklets. I was amazed at their powerful message and showed them right away to my neighbors. When I had finished reading

the book *Riches* I could truly say: "I have found God's people!"

On April 4, 1939, I attended my first meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses; it was the memorial of Christ's death. I believed that everybody would welcome the marvelous Bible truths that were bringing so much happiness to me. But as I began to talk about God's grand purposes to my parents, neighbors, relatives and friends, some said that I had gone crazy. My husband forbade me to mention the Bible to him. My mother started wearing black as a sign of mourning, as though I had already died!

All of this was very trying. Yet I dedicated my life to Jehovah, and on April 11, 1941, submitted to water baptism, in symbol of my dedication. The words of Psalm 26:1 became my firm decision: "In Jehovah I have trusted, that I may not wobble" in my integrity.

While I was facing opposition, not all hearts were closed. My dear sister Ruth accepted the Bible truths I spoke to her. Under the cover of giving her sewing lessons, we studied together. In order to get out of the house to preach to others, I became a dressmaker and a teacher of sewing and embroidery. Thus not a day passed that I was not able to share with others the good things in God's Word, and this activity especially is what has brought happiness to me.

In time my parents became more friendly again. So in 1944 I invited them to attend the "United Announcers" assembly in São Paulo. To my happiness, they accepted. The train journey from Rio de Janeiro took more than twelve hours, but the warmth and joy among the Witnesses soon made us forget the hard wooden benches. We shared lunch boxes and sang Kingdom songs until we were hoarse.

The Christian love and unity, as well as the assembly program, stimulated my parents, and when we returned to Rio de Janeiro they asked for a home Bible study.

From this study soon sprang up a center of preaching activity. Later, some inner walls of my parents' house were torn down to form a Kingdom Hall to accommodate the new Olaria Congregation, the second one formed in Rio de Janeiro. Today this house is still a Kingdom Hall, and the congregation is as progressive as ever. But now there are altogether ninety-five congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rio de Janeiro!

TEACHING MY CHILDREN

The Bible truths made me feel the dual responsibility of a Christian wife—to love and respect my husband, and to inculcate godly principles in my children. Before bedtime I would sit with the children on my bed and tell them Bible stories. Noemi often rested her little head on my lap. Paulo jumped up and down at the most exciting moments, as when I pretended to be David stretching his sling to hit the giant Goliath, or Samson pushing down the pillars of Dagon's temple. All along, I tried to stress the integrity of these and other faithful servants of God.

It was not easy to train my children in the work of telling others the good news. Yet Paulo seemed to respond very well to the Christian training and was baptized when he was fourteen. However, when he was seventeen, sports had an attraction for him. He was a soccer player of some distinction on his school team and the possibilities of a sports career seemed bright. It was time for a vital decision, and he seemed to have made it one Sunday morning when he did not go in the witnessing work. He said: "Mother, I do not want to belong to that religion anymore. I am not even sure if it is the truth."

When I recovered from the shock of this unexpected confession, I was able to talk to him and help to straighten him out in his thinking. Today, he says he is deep-

ly grateful for this, saying that it was a turning point in his life. From then on he never looked back. He paid more attention than usual at the meetings, and came to love Bible truths from his heart.

With my children's cooperation I was able, in September 1948, to become a pioneer, devoting at least one hundred and twenty hours a month to the preaching work. My daughters Elza and Noemi took turns in preparing meals and Paulo lent a hand with everything, even in the kitchen.

FACING A TRAGEDY

One morning Noemi and I talked about the resurrection. How would people be resurrected? I explained to her that they would probably look similar to the way they were before they died. Little did I realize that my own faith in the resurrection would soon be tested.

On October 5, 1951, around noon, I went to make one more return visit on a person interested in the Bible and sent Noemi home with her friend Nely. After I had returned home, Nely came running to the window and shouted, "It's Noemi! A car hit her!"

More running than walking I hurried to the hospital. On the way I passed a puddle of blood at the scene of the accident. Noemi had been crushed against a wall. At the hospital, Brother Augusto Machado was a great comfort to me. "Noemi is not suffering anymore," he said, "she is already sleeping."

The funeral talk was delivered at our home. A loudspeaker had been installed so that hundreds of people were able to hear it. It was a marvelous witness about Jehovah's power to resurrect people in his own due time. Moreover, it was a great help in softening my husband's heart. The love and kindness of my Christian brothers were of immense encouragement.



I have been privileged to bring the Kingdom message to many persons

MAINTAINING TRUST IN GOD

For years my husband opposed my Christian activity. I was locked out of my own home, threatened with a legal separation and even with a gun! My loving Christian brothers and sisters, including fleshly relatives, were a real comfort to me. But above all, I came to realize that our main source of spiritual strength is Jehovah God himself, in whom we must put "unfaltering trust."—Ps. 26:1, *Byington*.

In time, Paulo was appointed as a circuit overseer, as traveling ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. At first he did not want to leave me alone with his opposing father. But I told him: "Son, if you trust in Jehovah, neither you nor I will be lacking anything. Jehovah will give me the strength to persevere." Today Paulo is still serving as a circuit overseer with his cheerful wife Tereza. I miss him very much, but I know he is serving Jehovah, as I always wanted him to do.

The most trying time of my life came when my husband and I took over a bakery. This meant working almost around the clock to pay for the next day's flour. As a result, I had to miss many meetings and

reduce my witnessing activity considerably. Some friends even thought that I had gone materialistic. Finally, we managed to sell the bakery. My husband, however, began to show the symptoms of the sickness that was to lead to his death in November 1969. Afterward I was alone. What would I do?

On March 1, 1970, when I was fifty-seven, I started out on a new feature of my life. I became a special pioneer, and began devoting at least 150 hours each month in the work of proclaiming the good news.

My first assignment was Volta Redonda, where, together with my partner Felicia Migual, we saw the formation of another congregation. Then we were assigned to Pará de Minas, a very Catholic city where we suffered all kinds of ill treatment. Once I was cowardly attacked from the back, punched and knocked down. Yet this incident only strengthened me in my firm determination to keep on searching for God's "sheep."

And I did find them in that city. Among them was José Antonio, a young man so thirsty for God's truth that he was ready for baptism after only six months of Bible study. Now he is one of the elders in the Pará de Minas Congregation. My present assignment is Pitangui, a small town close to Pará de Minas.

Looking back over my years of Christian service, I am able to remember at least seventy people whom I have had the joy of helping to become Christian witnesses of Jehovah. But the end is not yet! My heart's desire is, by Jehovah's dynamic power, to keep right on serving him, and eventually to realize the happy hope of seeing his very face for all eternity. (Rev. 22:4, 5)—Contributed.

THE WORSHIP OF THE "WILD BEAST"

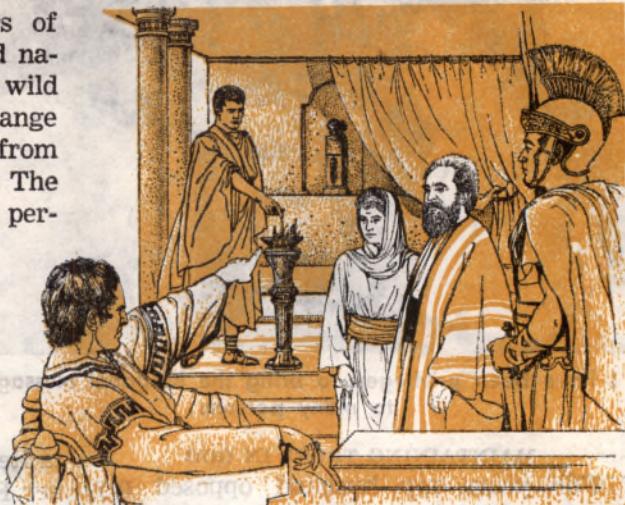
CAN you imagine large numbers of men and women of all races and nationalities worshiping a seven-headed wild beast? That may seem like a strange question. Yet it is one drawn, not from the realm of fiction, but from reality. The most tragic aspect is that there are persons who resort to brutalities in an effort to force others to worship the "wild beast."

That "wild beast" was seen in vision by the Christian apostle John back in the first century C.E. Describing it, John wrote: "I saw a wild beast ascending out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, and upon its horns ten diadems, but upon its heads blasphemous names. Now the wild beast that I saw was like a leopard, but its feet were as those of a bear, and its mouth was as a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave to the beast its power and its throne and great authority." (Rev. 13:1, 2) Regarding the extent of that authority, we read: "Authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. And all those who dwell on the earth will worship it."—Rev. 13:7, 8.

There is no question about the identity of the "dragon." Earlier, the apostle John referred to "the great dragon" as "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Rev. 12:9) But just what is the "wild beast" that derives its authority from the Devil?

THE "WILD BEAST" IDENTIFIED

Over the years Bible scholars have concerned themselves with this question. One of these, Charles John Ellicott, back in the nineteenth century edited eight vol-



—Why True Christians Refuse

umes of commentary covering the whole Bible. In a condensed version of *Ellicott's Bible Commentary*, we find the following explanation of the "wild beast ascending out of the sea":

"The sea represents the great, restless mass of human kind. The individuals, like larger and smaller waves, make up this great ocean-like mass of men, swayed by impulse or passion. . . . The wild beast is always the figure of the kingdoms of this world—i.e., the kingdoms which are founded on passion or selfishness. They are seven in number, as the beast has seven heads. We read afterward of seven mountains. These world-powers are spoken of as mountains for their strength and stability; as heads of the wild beast because, though separate, they are inspired by the dragon spirit, the spirit of utter enmity to the rule of the Righteous King. In [Revelation] 17:10 we read that five are fallen, one was in possession of power, and the seventh had not yet arisen. The key is thus placed in our hands. The sixth head is imperial Rome."

This commentary is based on clues that the Bible itself provides. The Scriptures speak of the sea, or waters, as representing "peoples and crowds and nations and tongues." (Rev. 17:15) We also read: "The wicked are like the sea that is being tossed, when it is unable to calm down, the waters of which keep tossing up seaweed and mire." (Isa. 57:20) As to the beast that came out of that "sea," the Bible book of Daniel provides helpful information to make positive identification. There we find a description of four beasts—a lion, a bear, a leopard and a creature that is terrifying in appearance. These four beasts are identified as kings or kingdoms. The lion represents Babylon; the bear, Medo-Persia, and the leopard, Greece. (Dan. 7:2-7, 17, 18) By the time the apostle John wrote the book of Revelation, the world powers of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece had fallen, as also had the great powers of Egypt and Assyria before them. Accordingly, the "wild beast" must represent the great political system that has ruled over mankind through its successive seven heads, starting with the world power of Egypt.

An event during the earthly life of Jesus Christ proves that Satan has indeed been the one behind the beastly ruling powers. The Bible reports: "The Devil took [Jesus] along to an unusually high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him: 'All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me.'" (Matt. 4:8, 9) By reason of his controlling "the kingdoms of the world," the adversary could offer them to Jesus Christ. The Son of God did not deny that the Devil was in position to give him these kingdoms. In fact, Jesus later told his disciples: "There is a judging of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."—John 12:31.

The book of Revelation reveals that

pressures would be applied to earth's inhabitants to become worshipers of the Devil-controlled "wild beast." We are informed that all persons would be put under compulsion—"the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, that they should give these a mark in their right hand or upon their forehead, and that nobody might be able to buy or sell except a person having the mark, the name of the wild beast or the number of its name."—Rev. 13:16, 17.

The "mark" of the beast would identify the one having it as belonging to that "wild beast," giving it full support. *Elliott's Bible Commentary* notes that the mark 'surely means the acquiescence to the principles of this tyrannical world-power.'

Now the question is, Could a true Christian give his full assent to the "wild beast"? Not if he wants to remain loyal to Jehovah God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 13:8 states that the 'name of not one of the worshipers of the wild beast stands written in the scroll of life of the Lamb.'

EARLY CHRISTIANS STOOD FIRM

The conduct of early Christians toward the sixth head of the "wild beast," Rome, shows that they firmly believed this. Of course, those Christians were not disrespectful to the ruling authorities. They recognized that the Roman Empire existed due to God's permission. Furthermore, those in governing authority had a measure of God-given conscience and, therefore, provided beneficial services for all, including Christians. Among such services were the maintenance of a legal system, the building and upkeep of roads, protection from criminals and illegal mobs, and the like. With a good conscience, therefore, Christians paid taxes and tribute. Never did they rise up in revolt against the secular authority.—Compare Romans 13:1-7.

b Even those who renounced Christianity,

when faced with the threat of death, acknowledged that they had been taught to live exemplary lives. In a letter to Emperor Trajan, Pliny wrote:

"Others, named by an informer, at first acknowledged themselves Christians, and then denied it, declaring that though they had been Christians, they had renounced their profession, some three years ago, others still longer, and some even twenty years ago. All these worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and at the same time execrated Christ. And this was the account which they gave me of the nature of the religion they once had professed, whether it deserves the name of crime or error; namely, that they were accustomed on a stated day to assemble . . . binding themselves as with a solemn oath not to commit any kind of wickedness; to be guilty neither of theft, robbery, nor adultery; never to break a promise, or to keep back a deposit when called upon."

Truly, the Roman Empire had nothing to fear from such law-abiding people. Nevertheless, the mere profession of being a Christian was then punishable by death. Answering Pliny's letter about handling cases involving Christians, Emperor Trajan wrote:

"These people are not to be hunted up by informers; but if accused and convicted, let them be executed; yet with this restriction, that if any renounce the profession of Christianity, and give proof of it by offering supplication to our gods, however suspicious their past conduct may have been, they shall be pardoned on their repentance."

Yes, just one small gesture could make the difference between life and execution. In many cases Christians could have saved their life by putting a pinch of incense on an altar standing before the image of the ruling emperor. Yet true Christians would not compromise. They did not submit to the wishes of the sixth head of the "wild beast."

To many people today the stand of true Christians would not make sense. We read

in the book *The Beginnings of the Christian Religion*:

"The act of emperor worship consisted in sprinkling a few grains of incense or a few drops of wine on an altar which stood before an image of the emperor. Perhaps at our long remove from the situation we see in the act nothing different from . . . lifting the hand in salute to the flag or to some distinguished ruler of state, an expression of courtesy, respect, and patriotism. Possibly a good many people in the first century felt just that way about it but not so the Christians. They viewed the whole matter as one of religious worship, acknowledging the emperor as a deity and therefore being disloyal to God and Christ, and they refused to do it."

But why did not the sixth head of the "wild beast" respect the conscience of Christians? It had nothing to fear from them. They were obeying the command of their Lord: "Pay back . . . Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matt. 22:21) The sixth head of the "wild beast," however, was not satisfied with receiving what rightly belonged to it. That sixth head wanted also what belonged to God. The aforementioned book continues:

"Because they refused [Christians] were regarded as politically disloyal. The reason why Christians were persecuted was precisely that they were considered enemies of the state because they would not join in emperor worship. It was such worship that helped bind into a real unity the widely divergent elements that made up the Roman empire."

Note that, in the final analysis, the point at issue was political loyalty to the state—a loyalty that put the state ahead of God and made the state the supreme authority. The sixth head of the "wild beast" did not object to the religious professions of its subjects so long as they venerated Caesar. But it would not tolerate anyone's giving *exclusive* devotion to the Creator of heaven and earth. Hence, that sixth head seized for itself the position

of a god and demanded to be acknowledged as such. True Christians simply could not go along with such presumptuousness. They viewed themselves as being accountable to an authority higher than that of the state, namely, to God and Christ.

WORSHIP OF THE "WILD BEAST" TODAY

In modern times, the Christian body, known world wide as Jehovah's Witnesses, has experienced from the "wild beast" the same things as first-century Christians. Take the African country of Malawi, for example. There all citizens have been required to become members of the country's only existing political party, the "Malawi Congress Party." A membership card costing about twenty-five cents (U.S.) identifies the bearer as 'acquiescing to the principles of the ruling political party,' especially to the Life President, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda. How are the people of Malawi to view the purchase of a "Party Card"? An official circular issued on August 27, 1975, says: "This is the one way in which we people of this country can show appreciation to our Life Leader, the Ngwazi [Dr. Banda] for developing this country of Malawi." Accordingly, refusal to buy a "Party Card" is viewed as a lack of appreciation—an act of disloyalty to Life President Dr. Banda. The fact that the person refusing to buy a "Party Card" is a law-abiding citizen who truly loves his fellowmen is not taken into consideration. In the eyes of the Malawi government, the individual is a criminal, not deserving of any legal protection.

As a result, men and women who, for conscience' sake, refused to buy "Party Cards" have suffered terrible persecution. Many have had their homes burned and their belongings seized. They have been severely beaten, often to the point of unconsciousness. Shocking indignities have been perpetrated against them, including sexual abuses. Some have been killed.

Thousands have been herded into concentration camps. Infants have been taken from their mothers and later some of these have died because of not being given proper attention.

Many persons would probably say that it would surely be better just to buy the "Party Card" and thus avoid trouble. Jehovah's Christian witnesses, of course, do not expect all people to understand their position nor are they interested in forcing their conscientious objections on others. In that respect, all they desire is to be allowed to live morally clean lives, to be able to demonstrate, by word and action, depth of concern for their fellowmen, and to have the freedom to give God exclusive devotion.

As Jehovah's Witnesses they value their relationship to God and Christ above everything else. Were they to identify themselves as giving unquestioning support to any political arrangement, they would be acting contrary to the Bible's teaching that all human governmental systems exist by God's toleration only until such time as he chooses to replace them by his kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ. (Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14) Jehovah's Witnesses have promised to give unqualified allegiance exclusively to God and Christ. Any act on their part that would indicate otherwise, therefore, would be an act of disloyalty. Such an act would be taking away from God and Christ their rightful due and so would be worship of the "wild beast."

Moreover, the provisions for life come, not from the political state, but from God. The Christian apostle Paul told the men of Lystra: "In the past generations [God] permitted all the nations to go on in their ways, although, indeed, he did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer."—Acts 14:16, 17.

Hence, whenever the enjoyment of God's provisions is made dependent solely upon expressions of prescribed allegiance to the governmental authority (as, for example, compulsory membership in the ruling political party), the state, by falsely representing itself as the source of *all* good things, makes itself a god. Those who support the state's policy in this regard, either voluntarily or under compulsion, become worshipers of the "wild beast." They give their assent to the wild beast's disregard for the true God and to all the brutalities

that it commits against those who give Him exclusive devotion.

The answer as to why true Christians cannot and will not worship the "wild beast" is, therefore, simple. The wild beast is not entitled to such worship. No matter how insignificant the act required may seem, a Christian's engaging in such worship would mean his being disloyal to God and Christ. True Christians will, instead, show unbreakable devotion to the Giver of life and to his Son's kingdom.

THE APOSTLE PETER

'strengthens his brothers'

TO DAY in more than forty lands the Christian activity of the witnesses of Jehovah is circumscribed in various ways. More and more they are being "grieved by various trials," tests of their faith.—1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

In certain lands, such as those behind the Iron Curtain, and also in Africa and in the Orient, this persecution is bitterly cruel and vicious, almost beyond description. For all Christians, but especially for those experiencing such trials, the first inspired letter of the apostle Peter is of great comfort. In writing it he was indeed doing what Jesus told him to do, "strengthen your brothers."—Luke 22:32.

That Peter himself wrote this letter there can be no doubt. The writer identifies himself as Peter, as an "elder" and as a witness of the sufferings of the Christ. From earliest times the letter has been recognized as authentic.

When did Peter write this letter? From

the internal evidence and the facts of history, a reasonable deduction is that he wrote it between the years 62 and 64 C.E. Apparently it was written when Christians suffered much, but before the persecutions by Nero in 66 C.E.

From where did Peter write it? At 1 Peter 5:13 we read: "She who is in Babylon, a chosen one like you, sends you her greetings, and so does Mark my son." There is every reason to believe that Peter here refers to the literal city of Babylon, even as he refers to literal provinces of the Roman Empire in his introduction: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the temporary residents scattered about in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." (1 Pet. 1:1) According to the Jewish historian Josephus of our first century C.E., Babylon on the Euphrates had quite a Jewish colony at that time and so it would be quite natural for Peter to travel east to visit and preach to the Jews there, even

as it was for the apostle Paul to travel west to preach to the Gentiles.—Gal. 2:7.

In an endeavor to put Peter in Rome some contend that by "Babylon" Peter meant Rome. But if Peter had really been in Rome, there would have been no reason for him to hide his being there by calling Rome "Babylon."^{*}

To whom did Peter write in these Roman provinces? It appears that he wrote this letter to both Jewish and Gentile Christians. (1 Pet. 2:9, 10; 4:3-5) From the expressions Peter uses and from his reference at 2 Peter 3:15, 16, it is apparent that he was familiar with Paul's letters. In his letter he frequently refers to the Hebrew Scriptures.

From what Peter writes it is also clear that those to whom he was writing were suffering much persecution and could expect more. In strengthening his brothers, Peter proceeds in this letter to point to the fine example Jesus left, the good results even now of enduring persecution and the ultimate reward for such endurance.

COUNSEL, COMFORT, ENCOURAGEMENT

Peter begins by pointing to the glorious hope that anointed Christians have in which they are rejoicing, even "though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been grieved by various trials, in order that the tested quality of your faith . . . may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." "Hence brace up your minds for activity."—1 Pet. 1:6, 7, 13.

To strengthen his brothers Peter also points out that to suffer unjustly for conscience' sake is "a thing agreeable with God." In fact, Christians were called to this course, Jesus himself setting the example for his disciples to follow closely in his steps. Yes, "if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are happy,"

and this calls to mind Jesus' words in his Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5:10) By sharing in Christ's sufferings now they will be able to rejoice at the revelation of Christ's glory. However, repeatedly Peter warns against suffering for wrongdoing.—1 Pet. 2:19-23; 3:13, 14, 16, 17; 4:2, 12, 15.

In addition to strengthening his brothers to be able to endure persecution Peter has much to say as to fine conduct: "Put away all badness and all deceitfulness and hypocrisy and envies and all sorts of backbiting." "Keep abstaining from fleshly desires, which are the very ones that carry on a conflict against the soul." "Be as free people, and yet holding your freedom, not as a blind for badness, but as slaves of God." Most helpful along this line are his further words: "He that would love life and see good days, let him restrain his tongue from what is bad and his lips from speaking deception, but let him turn away from what is bad and do what is good; let him seek peace and pursue it."—1 Pet. 2:1, 11, 16; 3:10, 11.

In this letter Peter also stresses the matter of subjection. Christians are to subject themselves "to every human creation"—to kings, to governors. Servants are to be in subjection to their owners. Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands, even though these may be unbelievers. Younger men are to be in subjection to the older men. Yes, "all of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind."—1 Pet. 2:13-18; 3:1-5; 5:5.

In addition to thus giving counsel to various groups among Christians, Peter also singles out elders. Concerning them he writes: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock." What insight into imperfect human nature this

* As to whether Peter ever was in Rome, see *The Watchtower*, 1972, pages 669 to 671.

counsel shows, and how far short do the clergy of Christendom come from following it!—1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

There are two other subjects that Peter repeatedly mentions. One of these is Christian brotherly love: "Love one another intensely from the heart." Yes, Christians are to be "showing fellow feeling, having brotherly affection, tenderly compassionate, humble in mind, not paying back injury for injury . . . but, to the contrary, bestowing a blessing." Yes, "*above all things, have intense love* for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." —1 Pet. 1:22; 3:8, 9; 4:7-9.

The other matter Peter repeatedly stresses is that of being a witness by one's conduct and by word of mouth. Christians have been called out of darkness to show forth God's excellencies. By fine conduct Christian wives may win over their unbelieving husbands. And at all times Christians are to be "ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of [them] a reason for the hope in [them], but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." —1 Pet. 2:9, 12; 3:1, 2; 3:15.

Truly, in his first letter Peter showed himself obedient to Jesus' command to him to strengthen his brothers!

the transfiguration scene (Peter was one of the three apostles that witnessed this), that Jesus had foretold his death, and that this is his second letter.—2 Pet. 1:16-21; 3:1; Matt. 17:1, 2; John 21:18, 19.*

Though the theme and thrust of his second letter differs from that of his first, Peter begins it by calling to mind the glorious hope set before those called to "become sharers in divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:3, 4) Continuing, Peter champions God's principles by telling Christians to 'supply to their faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godly devotion, brotherly affection, love.' What a great deal Peter here gives Christians to work on! If they do these things to their utmost ability they will never fall but will gain an entrance to God's kingdom. And although they knew these things, Peter was disposed to remind them always of these. Championing God's truth, Peter notes that he was not following "artfully contrived false stories" in preaching Jesus, for he had witnessed the transfiguration scene in which God himself spoke from heaven, saying about Jesus: "This is my Son, my beloved, whom I myself have

* For more on this subject see "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," p. 252.

PETER

champions God's truth and principles

THE apostle Peter in his second letter, even as in his first, wrote much to 'strengthen his brothers.' (Luke 22:32) However, rather than doing so by encouraging them to endure persecution he strengthens his brothers by boldly championing God's truth and principles.

Because of the great difference in style of writing, as well as in subject matter, Bible scholars in Christendom argue that he did not write this second letter. If that were so, this would mean it is a forgery, for 2 Peter 1:1 plainly states: "Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith." He also writes that he was an eyewitness to

approved." Peter also emphasized that Scriptural prophecy does not originate with man but "men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." No question about it, Christian faith is not built on fables or imaginary things, but on facts, on truth! This being so, 'we do well to take heed to inspired prophecies as to a light shining in a dark place.' —2 Pet. 1:16-21.

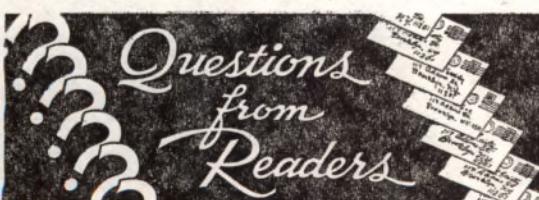
In chapter two Peter champions God's truth and righteous principles by speaking out strongly against apostates. These with counterfeit words seek to exploit their fellow Christians. Rightly they will suffer the same kind of fate that befell the wicked antediluvian world and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But people of godly devotion will be preserved just as Noah and his family were. Those false teachers follow the mercenary path of Balaam. By their fleshly desires and loose habits they offer others greater freedom while actually they themselves are slaves of corruption. Having once known the truth and turned away from it, they are in a worse condition than they would have been had they never known the path of righteousness. —2 Pet. 2:1-22.

In his concluding chapter, Peter further champions God's truth by exposing the falseness of the ridiculers' claim that ever

since ancient times things have continued in the same way. But not so! Such overlook the flood of Noah's day. And so in the last days, Jehovah's day will come suddenly, like a thief in the night, when He executes the wicked. True, the time may seem to delay, but, after all, with God a thousand years are as but one day. Actually Jehovah is patient because he desires that all attain to salvation by repenting.—2 Pet. 3:1-10.

Peter reminds Christians that God's patience means salvation. This truth the apostle Paul also noted in his letters, which some twist as they do the rest of the Scriptures—Peter here championing Paul's letters as being inspired. And since God's Word is so sure and the present wicked system is to be dissolved, what sort of dedicated lives should we lead? Should we not be known for our holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion? Yes, we should do our utmost to be found by God "spotless and unblemished and in peace." —2 Pet. 3:11-16.

Truly by thus championing God's truth and righteous principles Peter strengthens our faith in them and our resolve to live by them. Doing so, we can look with confidence to "the new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness will dwell." —2 Pet. 3:13.



- Do Jehovah's Witnesses believe in Jesus Christ?

We most certainly do. We wholeheartedly accept and preach everything that God's Word says about Jesus Christ. That includes the

apostle Peter's declaration: "There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved."—Acts 4:12.

Even outsiders who have examined our Bible-based teachings realize that we believe in Jesus. For instance, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967) says in its article "Jehovah's Witnesses":

"They consider Jesus as the greatest of Jehovah's Witnesses, 'a god' (so they translate John 1:1), inferior to no one but to Jehovah. Before existing as a human being, he was a spirit creature called the Logos, or Word, or

Michael the Archangel. He died as a man and was raised as an immortal spirit Son. His Passion and death were the price he paid to regain for mankind the right to live eternally on earth."—Vol. VII, page 864.

So the view that Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in Jesus is clearly untrue! This gross untruth has sometimes been spread by religious opposers because Jehovah's Witnesses do not teach the Trinity. These opposers adamantly hold to their belief in the Trinity doctrine, that Jesus was part of a triune deity, and that when on earth he supposedly was God in the flesh.

The fact is that Jehovah's Witnesses recognize and accept that the Bible uses the designation "god" with regard to Jesus. (John 1:1, 18) But Jesus himself quoted Psalm 82:6, agreeing that even powerful human judges might be termed "gods." (John 10:33-36) And the Bible even uses the word "god," signifying a powerful one or one who is worshiped, in reference to Satan. (2 Cor. 4:4) Obviously it would be incorrect to conclude simply from such uses of the term "god" that any creature given life

by Jehovah God the Almighty is equal to the Creator himself.—Rom. 1:25.

Jesus openly acknowledged that he was not equal to or the same person as his Father to whom he prayed. Christ said: "I am going my way to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am." To the Almighty in prayer Jesus addressed these significant words: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 14:28; 17:3.

Jehovah's Witnesses fully accept this plain statement of fact. And we are active in the vital Christian work of aiding others to know of and accept what the Bible says about 'the only true God Jehovah and about the one whom he sent forth, Jesus Christ.'

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 14: The Secret of Happy Family Life. Page 613. Songs to Be Used: 15, 37.
November 21: What Does Youth Want out of Life? Page 621. Songs to Be Used: 100, 112.

Entertainment Weekly Songs to Be Used: 100, 112
and 113 (radio, pop, rock, punk, metal, indie)