

The

WATCHTOWER

A
**CRIME-FREE
WORLD**

-HOW MUCH DO YOU REALLY WANT IT?

Also in this issue:

**Pursuing
A SATISFYING WAY OF LIFE**

JANUARY 15, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The **WATCHTOWER**

January 15, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 2

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

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

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

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

IN THIS ISSUE

A Crime-Free World	
—How Much Do You Really Want It?	35
Are You Too Bad to Be Forgiven by God?	38
Jehovah's Witnesses Move Ahead in Canada	41
How Are Christians Spiritually Fed?	45
Insight on the News	48
Safeguarded by Faith and Hope	49
Pursuing a Satisfying Way of Life	54
Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses	
Enlarged	60
A Youth Asks,	
Why Attend Christian Meetings?	61
Questions from Readers	63

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A CRIME-FREE WORLD

-How Much Do You Really Want It?

HAVE you ever had the experience of coming home and finding some of your valuable possessions missing? If so—and more and more people are having that experience today—how did you feel?

For most persons, there is a feeling of indignation. Anger wells up at the greed and lovelessness the act of stealing represents, as well as contempt for the sneaky way the thief does his work.

But many also feel a sense of helplessness. It seems that there is so little defense left against crime in modern times. Lack of confidence in law enforcement is the reason why fully half the crimes go unreported in many places. From around the earth, reports betray the losing battle that police agencies wage.

Subway motormen in Paris, France, for example, say that they sometimes see dozens of empty wallets in tunnels between stations, all tossed there by thieves.

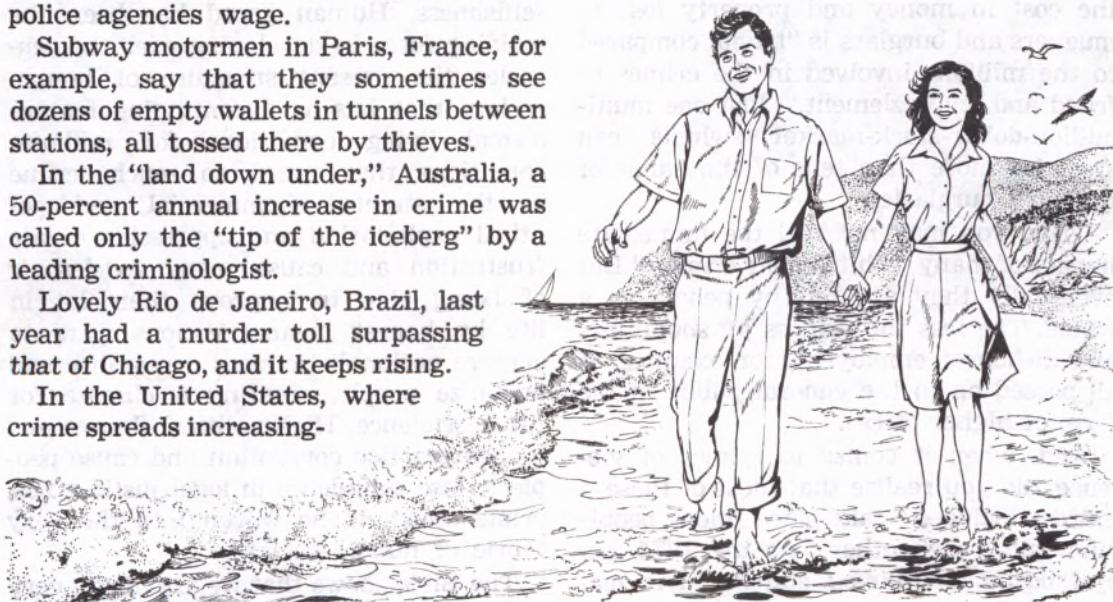
In the "land down under," Australia, a 50-percent annual increase in crime was called only the "tip of the iceberg" by a leading criminologist.

Lovely Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, last year had a murder toll surpassing that of Chicago, and it keeps rising.

In the United States, where crime spreads increasing-

ly into suburban and rural areas, the cost is enormous—\$13,000,000,000 a year just for police, court and prison expenses. The cost in property and lives is far greater. A recent study shows that, if the present rate continues, eventually "homicide will be the cause of death of roughly one of every 27" persons in the city of Atlanta. The U.S. attorney general spoke of the present campaign against crime as a "failure of substantial dimension—harsh, bitter, and dismaying."

Does not the world scene bring to mind words spoken by Jesus in answer to his disciples' question about the "conclusion of the system of things"? He said that part



of the "sign" preceding the end would be "the increasing of lawlessness." (Matt. 24:3, 12) Surely today as never before people everywhere are talking about crime, deplored it.

What would it take to bring about a world fully free from crime?

WHERE CRIME REALLY COMES FROM

When you think of crime and criminals, of what do you think? Many think of muggers, burglars, rapists, gangsters and similar types.

But what of the auto or television repairman who regularly charges for work he did not do, the doctor who "pads" his clients' medical bills, or the butcher who falsely weighs what he sells? Or what of the housewife who, when shopping, slips things into her coat pocket without paying for them, or the employee who carries off his company's products or tools? Really, how much different are these, in motive or method, from the "sneak thief"? Yet many of these same persons will complain about the 'increase in crime,' meaning, of course, 'crime in the streets.'

Actually, as a study on crime reveals, the cost in money and property lost to muggers and burglars is "trivial compared to the millions involved in the crimes of fraud and embezzlement." Just one multi-million-dollar-stock-market swindle can steal far more than tens of thousands of ordinary burglaries.

True, you may not feel the immediate impact of many "white-collar crimes." But eventually they are felt by people as a whole. The loss to business by shoplifters and dishonest employees, for example, is all passed on to the general public in the form of higher prices.

And, when it comes to crimes of violence, did you realize that most of these—murder included—take place among people who know each other? As the 1974 *Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "The ma-

jority of homicides are committed within the family or between close friends. About half occur as the result of trivial altercation," often where heavy drinking is involved. The same reference work points out that in England, as one example, "two-thirds of female victims of violent crime [including forcible rape] were attacked by relatives."

And does not all of this bring to mind other words found in the Bible, those of the inspired apostle who said: "But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . disloyal, having no natural affection, . . . without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness"?—2 Tim. 3:1-3.

THE ONLY WAY TO A CRIME-FREE WORLD

Sober thinking should help us to see that there are two basic things that must be changed if a crime-free world is ever to be enjoyed. What are these?

One is the present worldwide system of things. Why? Because the motivation for crime has been built into that system from far back into the past. That motivation is selfishness. Human greed has been the molding force in developing over the centuries the present structure of human society that has as a continuing feature dismal living conditions for millions, conditions that breed so much 'crime in the streets.' Commercial and political exploitation and oppression create frustration and cause many to despair of being able to improve their lot in life by honest means. Vicious wars to achieve nationalistic aims demoralize and brutalize people, creating a climate for future violence. High political figures and judges practice corruption and cause people to lose confidence in legal justice. Yes, crime seems to be woven into the very fabric of human society.

The Bible shows that we are at the very

threshold of the time when God is going to pave the way for a crime-free world by sweeping away this entire system of human rule and replacing it with a righteous new order directed and administered by his own Son, the one who proved his unselfish love for mankind by giving his own life on their behalf. (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 20:28) Of him, it was foretold: "There will be enjoyment by him in the fear of Jehovah. And he will not judge by any mere appearance to his eyes, nor reprove simply according to the thing heard by his ears. And with righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with uprightness he must give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth." (Isa. 11:3, 4) Under his rule people will enjoy genuine security. But a crime-free world calls for something else, a second change. What is that?

A change in people themselves. That is why the Bible says to those desirous of gaining life in that coming crime-free new order: "Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it."—Col. 3:9, 10.

Today people viewed by the community as "respectable citizens," including many churchgoers, engage in petty cheating and fraud on a regular basis. They excuse themselves with such rationalizations as, 'Well, everyone does it,' and, 'Since the competition does it, I have to do it to stay in business.' The shortness of life and the lack of a genuine hope for the future

foment materialism in many, even a fierce effort to "get rich quick."

So much crime today is committed by youth. Why? The president of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Great Britain says of juvenile criminals there: "If they had faith in the future, much of this would disappear." Criminologists Franco Ferracuti and Graeme R. Newman state: "American research has suggested that unsound [family] discipline may be related to about 70 percent of criminal men."

All of which proves the truthfulness of Jesus' prophecy, for he said that "because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matt. 24:12) Yes, with crime of one kind or another so pervasive, the love

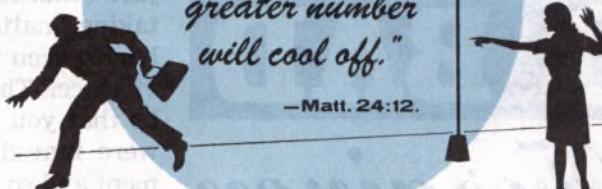
of righteousness, honesty and decency suffers decay on the part of more and more persons.

Really, does not all lawlessness stem from a lack of love? Jesus Christ said that the large code of laws given to the ancient nation of Israel hung on just two commandments: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind. . . . You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt. 22:37-40) And, after discussing the respect that genuine Christians should have toward the authorities and their laws, the inspired apostle Paul went on to say: "Love does not work evil to one's neighbor; therefore love is the law's fulfillment." (Rom. 13:1-10) But human systems can never develop the climate of love that will end crime on earth. Only

THE BIBLE FORETOLD:

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increasing of lawlessness
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greater number
will cool off."*

—Matt. 24:12.



man's Creator can and will do that through the coming new order and the education in righteousness that it will bring.

A crime-free world is approaching. But for any of us to enjoy it we must now learn the will, purposes and standards of Jehovah God. He has lovingly provided his inspired Word the Bible to enable us to know how to show true love for him and for our neighbor. In the Bible he gives us the hope and confidence that will enable us to overcome frustration and despair and to fight off the temptation to "get ahead" by dishonest means.

Do you really want to see a crime-free world? Then you need to take the steps necessary for surviving the approaching elimination of the present system of things. Only in the New Order that follows, in which love of God and love of neighbor will prevail earth wide, can people enjoy life free from all crime. To attain that, make use of your opportunity now to gain the enlightening and life-giving knowledge that God's Word contains. Because they love God and love their neighbor, Jehovah's witnesses offer their help free of charge.

Are You

TOO BAD

to be

Forgiven By God?

MILLIONS of persons throughout the world, persons with all kinds of backgrounds, are hearing the good news about God's kingdom. They are learning about the blessings that it will bring: Elimination of death, sorrow and pain; and every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree, with none to make him afraid. All such promises are held out to those who humbly seek Jehovah and his righteousness.—Isa. 2:4; Zeph. 2:3; Rev. 21:4.

Perhaps, though you too have heard this good news, you feel that these promises are not for you because of your past life. Had you known about God and the blessings of his kingdom earlier, your life might have been different, but that was

not the case. Possibly you are one who, because of seeing unjust conditions, felt justified in taking matters into your own hands, even using dishonesty or violence. Then, again, it could be that you, as so many others, were reared in a bad environment and so got involved in various kinds of improper conduct and may even have been following such a course for a

number of years. As the Bible says: "Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Cor. 15:33.

Looking back, you may feel that you have built a bad record for yourself. You may wish that you could change, but perhaps you feel that it is of no use, that God could not forgive a person like you. However, the Bible shows that, while Jehovah does not approve of wrongdoing and wrongdoers, he is not a vindictive God, calling persons to full account for all the wrongs that they have ever done.

No, God is not at all like that. As the psalmist long ago expressed it: "If errors

were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" Rather, he assures us that, if we really leave our bad and harmful ways and turn to him, "he will forgive in a large way."—Ps. 130:3; Isa. 55:7.

You can be assured of this because the Bible gives us striking examples of God's forgiving even gross sinners who truly repented. Among these was King Manasseh of Judah. He was one of the wickedest kings that ever ruled in Jerusalem. Because of his gross wickedness God allowed him to be taken captive to Assyria. But when Manasseh repented, humbled himself and earnestly prayed to God, Jehovah heard his prayers and restored him to God's favor and to his kingdom.—2 Ki. 21:2-16; 2 Chron. 33:2-13.

And the example and teaching of Jesus and his apostles give you like encouragement. Jesus held out hope of forgiveness even to prostitutes and tax collectors (considered among the vilest sinners in his day) who appreciated their need of him and repented of their former course of conduct. As he told his critics: "Persons in health do not need a physician, but the ailing do. . . . I came to call, not righteous people, but sinners." And on another occasion he said: "I tell you that thus there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance."—Matt. 9:11-13; Luke 15:7.

In particular should Jesus' beautiful parable of the prodigal son be reassuring to you. The younger of two sons asked his father for that part of the family inheritance due him and then went abroad and "squandered his property by living a debauched life." Later, on coming to his senses, he repented and humbly returned home to his father, who, far from rejecting him, welcomed him with open arms.—Luke 15:11-32.

Also serving as a basis for comfort and hope are the apostle Paul's words found

at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. For there, after warning the Corinthians about the gross sins that would keep them from inheriting the kingdom of Jehovah God, he goes on to say: "And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean."

ARE ALL SINS FORGIVABLE?

Does that mean that no matter what kind of sins one commits one can be forgiven? No, not that. Jesus made that plain in his remarks addressed to his hypocritical opposers, saying: "I say to you, Every sort of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. For example, whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, no, not in this system of things nor in that to come."—Matt. 12:31, 32.

What caused Jesus to make these remarks? The context shows that those religious hypocrites saw Jesus, the Son of God, perform all manner of miracles, including the casting out of demons, by means of the power of God's holy spirit, and yet they willfully and maliciously attributed this power to Satan the Devil.

Others whose sins are not forgivable are those who once came to a knowledge of the truth about Jehovah God, exercised faith in Christ's shed blood and then repudiated it or turned to a practice of wickedness. But suppose you feel that you may have committed such a sin—is it necessarily true that you did? Not if you have a sincere desire to repent and to do what is right, for that indicates that you may not have gone too far, even as the example of King Manasseh shows.—Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26, 27.

That forgiveness can be granted in spite of one's past record is based on two assuring and comforting factors. One is Jehovah's mercy. He delights in being

generous, in being forgiving, as his Word assures us: "Who is a God like you, one pardoning error and passing over transgression . . . He will again show us mercy; he will subject our errors. And you will throw into the depths of the sea all their sins."—Mic. 7:18, 19.

The other factor is extenuating circumstances. King David, although seriously sinning against Jehovah in the matter of Bath-sheba, Uriah's wife, was forgiven, although not without severe chastisement. Why? Because he was born in sin. Also, he readily admitted his wrongdoing and sincerely repented, as we read at Psalm 51. (2 Sam. 12:1-23) Likewise with the apostle Paul. At one time he persecuted Christians to the death, for which reason he refers to himself as the "foremost" of sinners. But, as he himself says, "Nevertheless, I was shown mercy, because I was ignorant and acted with a lack of faith." Yes, he was honest and sincere in his opposition to Christianity, although terribly mistaken. He was also shown mercy, as he goes on to say, "that by means of me as the foremost case Christ Jesus might demonstrate all his long-suffering for a sample of those who are going to rest their faith on him for everlasting life."—1 Tim. 1:13-16; Acts 26:9-18.

MODERN EXAMPLES

Today, as in Bible times, persons who have been very great sinners can repent and gain forgiveness. The facts show this. Thus there was a man sentenced to a maximum-security prison in New York State because of the nature of his crimes. As a result of the informal preaching of one of the prison instructors, a witness of Jehovah, he became conscience-stricken. His former life greatly troubled him. He wondered if God could ever forgive him for the many mistakes and serious crimes that he had committed. But he was assured that if he sincerely repented he could be for-

given. This he did. He completely changed from his course of wrongdoing, dedicated his life to Jehovah God and was baptized. Now he is a most joyful Christian with a clean conscience.

Consider, too, the case of a man who was an extremely dangerous member of the Sicilian Mafia. Upon being apprehended he was given a life sentence. While in prison he came in touch with one of Jehovah's witnesses who told him about the one true God, about pure worship and the wonderful blessings that God has in store for humankind. While a Mafia member he had been a "good" Catholic but saw no discrepancy between the two roles he was playing. Yet now, upon being convinced as to the truth of the message the Witness was bringing to him from the Bible, he sincerely repented, converted and dedicated himself to do Jehovah God's will. So outstanding was the change in his life that he was interviewed over one of Italy's TV stations.

Yes, there is hope that you can gain forgiveness, a clean conscience and God's approval even though you have made serious mistakes in the past. But more is required than simply saying that you are sorry about your past conduct. You must take in knowledge of Jehovah God, and learn what his righteous requirements are. The Christian witnesses of Jehovah in your neighborhood stand ready to help you by conducting a personal Bible study in your home and by means of their Kingdom Hall meetings.

As you study with them you will be able to prove to yourself what God's righteous and holy will is for you. (Rom. 12:2) You will be aided to develop hatred for what is wrong, and a genuine love for God's righteous will. (Ps. 97:10) Not only will you learn to refrain from what is bad, but you will be aided to learn how to do the things that are right in the eyes of God. And, with faith in the sin-aton-

value of the sacrifice of Christ, you will be able to do these with a clean conscience, for "the blood of Jesus his [God's] Son cleanses us from all sin."—1 John 1:7.

It is true that as you begin to make over your life in harmony with God's righteous requirements, quite likely you may slip along the way from time to time. But this is no reason to be discouraged, for the psalmist David comfortingly wrote: "As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset,

so far off from us [God] has put our transgressions. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Ps. 103:12, 14) Let that assurance strengthen you to persevere in the right way.

Truly God's Word is filled with comforting assurances to those who sincerely desire to do what is right, regardless of what their past course of action may have been!

Jehovah's Witnesses MOVE AHEAD IN CANADA

"**A**S RELIGION DECLINES, JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MOVE AHEAD." This headline in Montreal's *Le Petit Journal* aptly describes what is taking place on the religious scene in Canada.

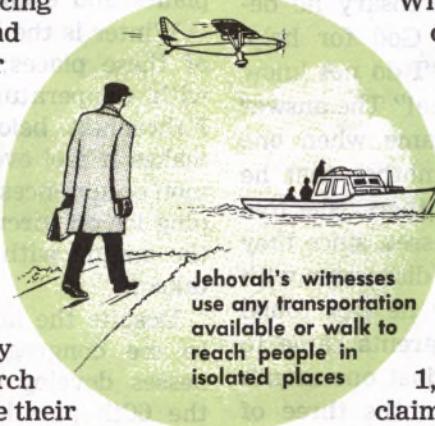
The article accompanying the headline explained: "As traditional religions slowly decline, their churches and temples getting emptier all the time, Jehovah's Witnesses are experiencing increased membership and are even getting former church buildings and other new facilities in which to gather their new members."

With an English Protestant and a French Catholic background, Canada was once a very religious country. Many still sincerely attend church services and try to practice their religion. But times have changed.

Today even outspoken advocates of such things as "abortion on demand" may continue as church members in good standing. The steady decline of religion's influence in Canada is evident from such headlines as "Shortage of Priests Called 'Panic'" and "Sunday Schools Declining."

Jehovah's witnesses, on the other hand, have steadily moved ahead. The

Witnesses began their work of Bible teaching here in the 1880's. At the time they wondered how it would be possible to reach all the people in this massive country, the second-largest in land area in the world. They went to work with diligence and conviction, and by 1914 there were 1,150 Witnesses busy proclaiming Bible truth to their neighbors.



The next thirty years saw a remarkable 690-percent increase in the number of Kingdom proclaimers, with 9,085 reporting activity in 1944. During the three decades since then Jehovah's witnesses have steadily moved ahead in Canada. By 1974 they reached a peak of 58,542. That means that in just sixty years Canadian Witnesses have grown by 4990 percent.

Of course, with more workers out in the field, additional thousands of interested persons could be reached more quickly. Last year Jehovah's witnesses in Canada spent 10,582,927 hours at their work of declaring Bible truth to others. They also made 3,689,440 return visits on persons who showed interest, and each week conducted an average of 26,571 home Bible studies with fellow Canadians. As a result, there is now one Witness for every 370 persons in Canada. Clearly Jehovah's witnesses were not just distributing Bible literature. They were truly making disciples.

Among those who have recently become Jehovah's witnesses are persons who sincerely prayed to God for aid, but who had been unable to get answers in the traditional churches.

A young man in Timmins, Ontario, for example, became dissatisfied with his religion. Instead of using the rosary he decided to pray directly to God for help. In his prayer he pleaded: "I do not know your name, but enlighten me!" The answer to his earnest petitions came when one day he mentioned to his mother that he had a desire to preach to others. She told him to see Jehovah's witnesses, since they do that. After a ten-minute discussion with a Witness, this man knew he had found the truth. His wife and parents came to the same conclusion after just one month of Bible study. In two months three of these individuals were sharing their new-

found faith with others, along with the local congregation of Witnesses.

MOVING INTO THE FAR NORTH

Beyond the larger cities and towns that hug the United States border from coast to coast are towns and settlements comprising many thousands of persons. In Quebec, in recent years, concerted effort has been made to reach places hundreds of miles north of large centers like Ottawa and Montreal.

In the spring of 1974, for example, Jehovah's witnesses sent special full-time preachers into Dolbeau and Matane, each of which has a population of more than 10,000. Were these efforts successful? Happily there are now congregations in both of these cities.

Jehovah's witnesses have indeed moved ahead in Quebec. From June 1973 to June 1974 their number grew by 22 percent. Congregations there have multiplied from 99 in 1970 to 130 now. Rich blessings have resulted from reaching out to help others.

Much farther north, across the continent between the parallels of 55 to 70 degrees north latitude, are more thousands: Indians, Eskimos, trappers, fishermen, miners and some government workers. Here, too, Christian witnesses of Jehovah call by boat, commercial aircraft, "bush" planes and even on foot.

Winter is the best time to get into some of these places; but that means dealing with temperatures of 40 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit below zero. The wind chill makes it feel even colder than that. Common occurrences in such weather are chopping ice off aircraft surfaces and warming the engine with a propane heater before takeoff.

Despite the hardships, it is encouraging to see congregations of Jehovah's witnesses develop in remote places. Above the 60th parallel, for instance, are Hay River and Yellowknife. And in the north-

western extremity of the country there is a group of interested persons and baptized Witnesses meeting regularly at Inuvik, about 120 miles north of the Arctic Circle!

This past year Jehovah's witnesses pushed past the 70th parallel, to Sachs Harbour on Banks Island in the Beaufort Sea arm of the Arctic Ocean. A Witness who has been quite active among the Indian and Eskimo population in the northwest made the trip to this small community of about 300 persons. He found that he and his work were already known by some Eskimos there. As he stepped off the airplane, one said: "You finally got here to visit us, Allan!" He reports: "Almost every home received me with warm kindness and I was able to leave Bible literature in every home. . . . I spent much time talking; most nights it was two in the morning when we would go to bed."

THE CHALLENGE OF THOSE HARD TO REACH

Of course, even in large metropolitan centers there are thousands who are seldom at home. Their situation makes them hard to reach with the good news. But full-time preachers are putting forth determined efforts to contact such persons in giant apartment complexes and in downtown business offices. Some of them will enjoy programs that now appear weekly on three cable television stations in Toronto. To date, scores of shows have been produced. Subjects have ranged from current topics, such as the occult, abortion, homosexuality and drug abuse, to discussions of building a happy family life, Bible authenticity and current events in the light of Bible prophecy. Many favorable comments have been heard from viewers.

Another challenge in large cities was how to reach thousands who are isolated by language. Jehovah's witnesses were determined to tackle this problem and there are now twenty-eight Italian congrega-

gations across Canada, and other groups developing in a number of places. Greek-speaking communities are cared for by eight Greek congregations, and there are two Spanish and two Portuguese congregations to serve the spiritual needs of persons speaking those languages.

ALL TYPES RESPOND TO BIBLE TRUTH

What kind of people are becoming disciples? Persons from all walks of life. Some are professional people (for example, a doctor, a professional hockey star, radio station technicians, nurses, a journalist). Many are young (a student of philosophy, drug addicts, hippies, runaways). Certain ones had been very religious (Buddhists, Mormons, adherents of Hare Krishna, Pentecostals). There were also a political activist and a Communist. But the largest percentage of all were just ordinary people who long for peace, justice and life.

La Patrie, a Montreal weekly newspaper, told of four of those mentioned above. In a front-page story, with pictures, it told how young hippies who had been on drugs were helped by Jehovah's witnesses. The writer, Andrée Le Bel, observed: "In comparing the pictures of these youths before they became Jehovah's Witnesses with those showing their present appearance, it is easy to see that the change was a complete one."

Another youth from Canada had gone to India and had become an ordained Buddhist monk. He enjoyed the adulation of the public, such as that of village folk near Agra, India, who prostrated themselves before him and gave him gifts of money. He found, however, that his meditations and drug use opened up his mind to demonic influences. Back in Canada, when Bible truth penetrated his heart early in 1974 this young man left the Buddhist religion and was baptized as one of Jehovah's witnesses in August.

"MAKE DISCIPLES . . . BAPTIZING THEM"

Jesus commanded: "Go therefore and make disciples . . . baptizing them." (Matt. 28:19) Jehovah's witnesses in Canada have heeded that command. In 1974, 6,612 were baptized by immersion in water in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah God. That amounts to an average of eighteen a day, or more than one person immersed during every waking hour of 1974! In 1973 there were 6,305 who accepted Christian baptism. At present 11 percent of all active Witnesses in Canada are recently baptized.

These Christian disciples do not quit studying the Word of God after they are baptized. Each week they attend Christian meetings for further Bible instruction. Meeting attendance in Canada reflects a robust spiritual appetite, noticeable even to persons who are not Jehovah's witnesses. In Ontario, to give one example, at their Sunday meetings the attendance is 18 percent more than the total of active Witnesses. At the annual celebration of the Lord's Supper in 1974, the more than 58,000 Witnesses in Canada were joined by many other interested persons, bringing the total attendance to 110,874.

Growing attendances mean more congregations and larger meeting places. Whereas 1970 saw 25 new Kingdom Halls being built and 27 being renovated, 1974 has required 25 more new halls and 47 have been undergoing renovations. The number of congregations has gone up from 788 in 1970 to 924 now.

The same thrilling progress is seen in the attendances and other results of the recent "Divine Purpose" District Assemblies. Eighteen of these Bible educational conventions were held under the direction of the Canadian branch. Peak attendance swelled to more than 112,000, far in excess of the number of Witnesses. Daniel Rioux, writer for the newspaper *Le Journal de Montréal*, who was assigned to cover the

Montreal assembly, remarked: "In an age when people are less and less interested in religious practices, it is astonishing to note the excellent health enjoyed by the movement of Jehovah's Witnesses."

The August 19, 1974, issue of the same paper pinpointed an important reason for such spiritual health: "Jehovah's Witnesses Have Principles—Real Ones!" *La Patrie*, noting the same point, commented: "They have a number of principles that not only promote good understanding between husband and wife but also improve communication between parents and children."

NOT JUST NUMERICAL GROWTH

Surely comments such as these, along with the increases of Jehovah's witnesses in Canada, indicate not just a rise in numbers but also a spiritual growth. The love of neighbor that Jehovah's witnesses display is evident in the millions of hours spent in neighborhood evangelizing and in kind deeds from day to day. Here is a zeal born of genuine love for God. Here are a people living their faith. The genuine changes for the better in the personalities of those who have become Jehovah's witnesses show the value of applying Bible truth in one's life.

Thus, while traditional religion continues to lose influence throughout the world, it is encouraging to see that the Bible itself has power to refashion the lives of persons who study it, believe it and apply its God-inspired principles in their lives. (2 Tim. 3:16; Jas. 1:22) Jehovah's witnesses in Canada, as well as in the 206 other lands in which they preach, have personally experienced the truthfulness of the inspired statement: "The word of God is alive and exerts power." (Heb. 4:12) That is why the Witnesses continue to move ahead, not only in Canada, but around the world.

How Are CHRISTIANS

HOW does God feed his people, spiritually? Is it done individually, that is, do Christians get their spiritual sustenance as isolated persons, independently, not necessarily associating with other Christians having the true faith? Can they merely study the Bible on their own and serve God on their own?

We can get an answer to these questions by considering what Jesus Christ said to his apostles just three days before his death. In speaking about things to come, he had detailed the events that would constitute the "sign" of his presence when he would return in heavenly power and glory. He warned them to be on the watch for his inspection and judgment of his disciples, whom he called "slaves." (Matt. 24:1-44) He could use this term toward them because he would soon purchase them by his own blood.—1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23.

THE "SLAVE" AND THE "DOMESTICS"

In connection with his warning, Jesus also said: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?"—Matt. 24:45.

"Domestics" are house servants or slaves. As members of God's household, such would be fed as a group, working with one another, knowing, associating with and helping one another. We will note, as we consider Jesus' illustrative statement, that the term "slave" (singular number) here considers all the house servants together as a body, and that the expression "domestics" (plural) views them as individuals.

Spiritually Fed?

This view of a group of people, yes, even of a whole nation, as a slave or servant, was not new to Jesus' disciples. Jehovah God himself had spoken several times to the nation of Israel as his servant. He said: "You, O Israel, are my servant, you, O Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend; you, whom I have taken hold of from the extremities of the earth, and you, whom I have called even from the remote parts of it. And so I said to you, 'You are my servant; I have chosen you, and I have not rejected you.'" (Isa. 41:8, 9) Making clear that this composite "servant" is made up of many individuals, the Creator said to the nation of Israel: "'You are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'even my servant whom I have chosen.' . . . And now listen, O Jacob my servant, and you, O Israel, whom I have chosen. This is what Jehovah has said, . . . 'Have I not from that time on caused you individually to hear and told it out? And you are my witnesses.'"—Isa. 43:10; 44:1-8; also 42:19; 44:21; 48:20; 49:3; Jer. 30:10.

After God's rejection of natural Israel as his servant because of their disobedience, who would then become his servant, his earthly instrument, his witnesses in the earth? Let us see what the apostle Paul says about this. It was about the years 50-52 C.E. that Paul wrote concerning the matter to the Christian congregations in Galatia. The new covenant, replacing the Law covenant, had been in

operation since Pentecost of the year 33 C.E. The Christian congregation had therefore been functioning for about eighteen years. To the Galatian Christians, Paul said: "Neither is circumcision anything nor is uncircumcision, but a new creation is something. And all those who will walk orderly by this rule of conduct, upon them be peace and mercy, even upon the Israel of God."—Gal. 6:15, 16.

The Christian congregation was made up of the people who walked orderly by that rule regarding a "new creation." As a united congregation it thus was God's "servant," just as Israel of old had been. Therefore, the passage at Isaiah 43:10 could be directed in a spiritual way to the congregation as the "Israel of God": "'You are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'even my servant.'"

WHEN THE "SLAVE" CLASS BEGAN

When did this faithful "slave" come into existence? At Pentecost, 33 C.E. The first 120 persons upon whom holy spirit was poured out immediately set to work feeding the others invited to God's spiritual feast, namely, the Jews, 3,000 of whom accepted the spiritual "food" offered and got baptized. After this the 3,000 continued to take in spiritual food until they were well strengthened. Many then went back to their homes in other lands, establishing congregations and continuing to associate together and to keep in harmony with the true teaching of the apostles.

—Acts 2:1-4, 37-42.

Less than three and a half years later the feeding efforts of the "faithful and discreet slave" were extended to the Gentiles when Peter explained the good news to Cornelius and his household. As new disciples came in, they as "domestics" joined in feeding others. An arrangement was made whereby the apostles, notably Paul and the associate "domestics" traveling with him, fed many persons in other

lands. They carried out Jesus' words: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matt. 28:19, 20.

To give lasting aid in the spiritual feeding work, the apostles and other first-century disciples of Jesus Christ were inspired by God to write twenty-seven books making up the Christian Greek Scriptures. These, together with the already-existing Hebrew Scriptures, provided the spiritual food in writing for them then, and for Christians down to this day.

Jesus had said: "Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:20) Jesus Christ is the Head of the congregation, his slave, and his words show that he would strengthen them to feed his "domestics" right down through the centuries. Apparently one generation of the "slave" class fed the succeeding generation thereof, as well as continuing to feed themselves.

Someone may ask, 'How can the "slave," who is composed of the "domestics," feed the "domestics"?' That would amount to the "slave" feeding itself.' This might be illustrated by a family that moves to a farm. One of their first needs is provision for food. Does the father provide all the food and put it into the mouths of the rest? No. Each family member performs a different task. One may do the plowing. Others may work to dig a well. Some engage in planting. Some take care of the cattle and the dairy. Of course, all may help in certain features of the work. Likely all would engage in the harvest. Then, the women would do canning for future feeding. They would cook and serve the food to the family. Now, no one individual could have provided so well. But with family effort, all are well fed. As a *family* they are one body,

just as the "faithful and discreet slave." But as individuals they are workers in producing and serving food, as "domestics" in a household. A similar illustration given by the apostle Paul at 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 is that of a physical human body and its members.

THE "SLAVE" CLASS IN MODERN TIMES

About this "slave," Jesus said: "Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so." (Matt. 24:46) Here Jesus spoke about his returning to inspect his "slave" class as to whether they were "doing so," that is, feeding his domestics their food at the proper time. Who would that "slave" be today?

On the basis of the rule stated by Jesus: "By its fruit the tree is known," we can determine who that "slave" is. (Matt. 12: 33) Nineteen centuries ago, when the "faithful and discreet slave" class was first formed, it declared the good news of God's Messianic kingdom and the coming destruction of the Jewish system of things. Only this faithful class produced true Kingdom fruitage. Though persecuted, it survived the turbulent period of time that came in initial fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy at Matthew 24:4-22, Mark 13:5-20 and Luke 21:8-24.

In the year 1914 C.E. the time of the complete fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy on the "sign of [his] presence and of the conclusion of the system of things" began. The "faithful and discreet slave" should therefore be very active in this urgent time of the end preaching the Messianic kingdom of God and the conclusion of this present world system. And, like the "slave" class of the first century, they should be surviving in spite of widespread persecution. Who is doing this today? Who is producing the right Christian fruitage? The facts point to the small body of anointed members of Christ's true congregation on earth at this time. They have vigorously

provided spiritual food from God's Word, keeping up their own spirituality.

Moreover, the modern-day "slave" has brought into association with himself about 2,000,000 other persons. He has indeed proved to be Jehovah's "servant," his witnesses. The associates of this "slave" have hope of living forever in a paradisaic earth. They are bountifully fed by the "faithful and discreet slave." The spiritual food they receive is food "at the proper time," because never were conditions so critical and the need to flee from this system of things and to trust in God's provision for survival so urgent.

We see, then, that Jesus Christ himself called attention to this method of feeding his people—not as isolated, independent individuals, but as a close-knit body of Christians having real love and care for one another. This is true today among the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses in all lands. It must be so now, for certainly, during Christ's thousand-year reign over earth, the people will be at unity, cooperating in the beautifying of the earth. In no other way can there be happiness and the producing of the fruitage of the spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) Only with these qualities operating in people can there be peace and full enjoyment of living upon this earth.

IN COMING ISSUES

- Growing Poverty—A Threat to All.
- Hope Based on the Unfolding Purpose of God.
- Anointing to a Heavenly Hope—How Is It Manifest?

Insight on the News

- Considerable furor may result from a recently published book entitled "Aftermath."

Disturbing Echoes of the Past It recounts post-World War II efforts to find and prosecute fugitive Nazi criminals (many of whom fled to South America). Why the possible furor? Book reviewer Howard M.

Kaplan (Sunday Denver "Post") says it will be mainly due to the "damning evidence of an escape route for many upper-echelon Nazis through Rome and the Vatican," with the Church furnishing new identity papers, false passports and, at times, even "clerical protection" for the Nazi fugitives. One source cited, the diary of Luftwaffe ace Colonel Hans Rudel, says, "The Church helped many of us to go overseas."

Hard to believe? Not so much so when we remember a lecture given during World War II in Washington, D.C., by priest Edmund A. Walsh. Reporting on it, the New York "Times" of February 17, 1940, stated: "The German war aims were outlined tonight as a re-establishment of the Holy Roman Empire by Dr. Edmund A. Walsh . . . of [Catholic] Georgetown University." Dr. Walsh said he had personally heard Nazi dictator Hitler present this very aim.

Far from engaging in political intrigue, Jesus Christ said that his true followers would maintain separateness from this world. (John 15:17-19; 17:14) Religious organizations failing to live by such Bible standards have only themselves to blame when past actions boomerang on them and bring reproach.

- "While church membership is dropping, the demand for books that appeal to religious needs is soaring," says "The Christian Century" magazine.

Religious Books Flourish

A few years back, a religious best seller had an annual sale of ten thousand copies. "Now even the number ten title on the cloth[bound] list sells better than 75,000 copies."

Yet, the article says, it is no "secret that church attendance among all age groups has been dropping for a decade and that membership plummets each month." What accounts,

then, for the interest shown in religious books? One editor says that "while institutions as such are all in disarray, that doesn't change people's need for definition, direction and guidance." "In fact," she says, "it intensifies it."

Yes, though having little trust in Christendom's religions, millions do feel a need for divine direction. Jehovah's witnesses seek to help people to fill this need. Just one of their clothbound publications, "The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life," has a distribution of—not 75,000—but over 70,000,000 copies in 91 languages. And the Witnesses go beyond mere distribution of literature, as they conduct over 1,350,000 free Bible studies weekly in the homes of people in all parts of the earth.

- Over two years ago this magazine warned against perverted sex practices such as oral and anal copulation, pointing out that, like homosexuality, these were "contrary to nature."

Unnatural Sexual Relations

The Christian apostle Paul says that those practicing unnatural sexual acts 'receive in themselves the full recompense due for their error.'—Rom. 1: 21-27.

Supporting this, the July 15, 1974, "Watchtower" quoted a warning from Dr. Elmar G. Lutz that "herpes-virus," which ranks next to gonorrhea as a leading venereal disease, could be transmitted through oral-genital sex acts.

Now, from the London "Medical News" comes yet further evidence of the rightness of the apostle Paul's inspired statement. At the Praed Street Clinic of St. Mary's Hospital, authorities are quoted as saying that, while male gonorrhea acquired from the rectum (as in homosexual acts) has been relatively "commonplace," evidence now records increased rectal contamination with gonorrhea among women. Of 105 females referred to the Clinic, doctors found that almost half had "indulged in either oral or rectal coitus." The report adds that "such figures co-relate closely with those previously obtained from overseas sources."

Those holding to Scriptural standards are certainly protected from much unnecessary suffering.—Prov. 4:13, 20-22.

SAFEGUARDED By Faith and Hope

"[Christ] was made manifest
... so that your faith and
hope might be in God."
—1 Pet. 1:20, 21.

IS THIS life all there is? That question affects everyone alive today. It is a question that perplexes many people, and the answer that a person accepts deeply influences his life. Every year tens of thousands of persons find that the right answer brings them true joy and gives purposeful direction to their life. On the other hand, because of accepting wrong answers, millions upon millions of persons are being exploited and are leading lives that result in very little satisfaction.

² Consider the evolutionist. To him, this life is all there is. But what does that leave him? Evolution cannot explain why world conditions are worsening nor can it give him solutions for the problems of life that he must face. And he has no hope for the future. Evolution holds before him as an individual only the eventual prospect of being dead forever.

³ What about the members of religious organizations that do not teach God's Word or, at best, only make a pretense of doing so? Are they any better off? Do they have real faith and a well-founded hope? As you know, many professedly religious people today are as materialistic as those who claim no religion. They live only for the present, struggling to make a living, to get comfortably situated materially. To attain their goal, they may sacrifice principle, disregard the welfare

1. How does the question as to whether this life is all there is affect people?

2. Why is the evolutionist's view of life not satisfying?

3, 4. What shows that many professedly religious people have no real faith and hope?

of fellowmen and, as a result, suffer the pangs of a disturbed conscience. Many members of these

organizations do not really believe what their religion teaches. But they go along with tradition, not wanting to be different from their neighbors. They may even pay out hard-earned money for ceremonies that are part of the religion, but that they do not believe to have any real value.

⁴ But what if a person is not like that? What if he really does believe in his religion and molds his hopes in harmony with it? Nevertheless, of what benefit is it if he has not been taught the truth? Unknowingly, he is building his whole life around falsehoods, and this is bound to lead to disappointment.

⁵ Only the truth, as contained in the Word of God, can lastingly benefit mankind. That Word provides the basis for genuine faith. (Compare Romans 10:5-15.) It does not encourage gullibility, a readiness to believe even when evidence is lacking. Instead, it sets out ample evidence as a basis for one's faith. As a result, genuine Christians know that Jehovah is the true God, that the Bible is his Word, and that hope based on his promises will never come to disappointment. (Josh. 21:45) They are convinced that, just as he has promised, God will soon destroy the present wicked system and transform this earth into a lovely paradise. (Rev. 11:18; 21:3, 4) They firmly believe that under

5. What is the situation of those whose faith and hope are solidly based on the Bible?

his kingdom he will, by means of his Son, restore the dead to life and aid obedient ones to attain to perfection. (John 5:26-29) They are persuaded that even now God cares for his servants. (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) It is this conviction, based on God's Word, that safeguards devoted servants of Jehovah against the frustrations of a life from which faith and hope are missing.

SAFEGUARDED AGAINST MATERIALISM

⁶ Yet, even though true Christians have such faith and hope, they cannot allow themselves to lose sight of the fact that, if they are careless, the world's materialistic view can infect them. Their faith can weaken and their hope can grow dim. This is what happened to a man named Asaph who lived many centuries ago. He found that his attitude about the prosperity of the wicked had deprived him of joy. Regarding his feelings, Asaph wrote:

"As for me, my feet had almost turned aside, my steps had nearly been made to slip. For I became envious of the boasters, when I would see the very peace of wicked people. For they have no deathly pangs; and their paunch is fat. They are not even in the trouble of mortal man, and they are not plagued the same as other men. Therefore haughtiness has served as a necklace to them; violence envelops them as a garment. Their eye has bulged from fatness; they have exceeded the imaginations of the heart. They scoff and speak about what is bad; about defrauding they speak in an elevated style. They have put their mouth in the very heavens, and their tongue itself walks about in the earth. And they have said: 'How has God come to know? And does there exist knowledge in the Most High?' Look! These are the wicked, who are at ease indefinitely. They have increased their means of maintenance. Surely it is in vain that I have cleansed my heart and that I wash my hands in innocence itself."—Ps. 73:2-9, 11-13.

6. Why, as illustrated in the case of Asaph, should devoted servants of Jehovah not take their faith and hope for granted?



Asaph's envy of the prosperity of the wicked ones robbed him of joy —until he realized that only a good relationship with God leads to permanent blessings

⁷ Asaph's reasoning was dangerous. He had lost sight of the fact that genuine happiness and contentment do not come through material prosperity alone. He was actually thinking like those who were not serving Jehovah God. As he himself said, "These are the wicked."—Ps. 73:12.

⁸ The wrongness of Asaph's thinking is further emphasized in Psalm 144. In this psalm David has the *wicked* express the following thoughts: "Our sons are like little plants grown up in their youth, our daughters like corners carved in palace style, our garners full, furnishing products of one sort after another, our flocks multiplying by thousands, ten thousand to one, in our streets, our cattle loaded down,

7, 8. (a) What was wrong with Asaph's thinking? (b) What is the real source of happiness?

without any rupture and with no abortion, and with no outcry in our public squares. Happy is the people for whom it is just like that!" So it would seem. But is material prosperity alone the source of happiness? No, in itself it can leave life empty and meaningless. Genuine happiness lies elsewhere. In the latter part of verse 15 David indicates a change to another speaker; there David rightly points to what makes for true happiness, saying, "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!" (Ps. 144: 12-15) Is that the way you view life? Certainly, a fine relationship with the Creator brings true happiness.

⁹ Although Asaph had nearly been caused to stumble due to his failure to appreciate this all-important relationship, he succeeded in recovering himself. He, like the psalmist David, came to see that a fine relationship with Jehovah God meant more than anything else. How did this change in Asaph's outlook come about? Realizing that his thinking was wrong, Asaph went to the sanctuary. There, among the congregation of Jehovah's people, he began to discern that the seeming prosperity of the wicked is only short-lived, whereas a good relationship with God leads to permanent blessings, including material ones. (Ps. 73:15-22; 72:16) Out of the abundance of an appreciative heart, Asaph then expressed himself to God in the words found at Psalm 73:23-28:

"I am constantly with you; you have taken hold of my right hand. With your counsel you will lead me, and afterward you will take me even to glory. Whom do I have in the heavens? And besides you I do have no other delight on the earth. My organism and my heart have failed. God is the rock of my heart and my share to time indefinite. For, look! the very ones keeping away from you will perish. You will certainly silence every one immorally leaving you. But as for

9. (a) What prevented Asaph from being completely stumbled by wrong thinking? (b) How did he come to feel about his relationship with Jehovah?

me, the drawing near to God is good for me. In the Sovereign Lord Jehovah I have placed my refuge, to declare all your works."

¹⁰ If you are a dedicated Christian, is this the way you feel about your relationship with Jehovah God? All of us should. But could it be that some have allowed the materialistic thinking of the world to mold their viewpoint? While professing to serve God, are they really putting the acquiring of material things first in life? Such a course would surely be damaging to their relationship with the One on whom their life depends. Jesus Christ truthfully said: "Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) Under inspiration the apostle John wrote: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:17) True, the world's economic situation is shaky; it can be difficult to provide for one's family. But if we have faith and hope that are centered in Jehovah, we will be safeguarded against any temptation to relegate our service to God to a secondary place in life. Regardless of what conditions develop, we will be able to face the future with full confidence, knowing that God cares for his faithful servants. His promise is: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you."—Heb. 13:5; Matt. 6:25-34.

PROTECTED FROM DIRECT DEMON INFLUENCE

¹¹ People of the world, lacking such faith, often seek guidance from sources that only worsen their situation. That is what King Saul of ancient Israel did. Because of having sinned against Jehovah, Saul was cut off from all divine communication. As he put it, "God himself has departed from me and has answered

10. What should be a Christian's view of material possessions, and how will this right view prevent him from losing God's favor?

11. What did King Saul resort to in an attempt to get to know the future?

me no more, either by means of the prophets or by dreams." About to face the Philistines in battle, Saul desperately wanted some direction about what he should do. (1 Sam. 28:15) So, instead of humbly begging Jehovah God for forgiveness, he turned to spiritism for help. Contrary to the Law that he as an Israelite was under obligation to obey, he consulted a spirit medium.—Lev. 19:31; 20:6; 1 Sam. 28:8.

¹² But did Saul's action give him the comfort and direction that he desired? Not in the least. He received a gloomy message. As to the effect that this had on him, the Bible record tells us: "Saul quickly fell down his full length to the earth and became very much afraid." (1 Sam. 28:20) He certainly did not improve his situation by what he did. Though he had told the spirit medium that he wanted to speak with Samuel the prophet, Saul knew that Samuel was dead, unable to speak. The fact that God's law condemned talking with the dead as something detestable should have made Saul realize that seeming communication with the dead through spirit mediums was a fraudulent deception perpetrated by wicked spirit forces.—Deut. 18:10-12.

¹³ A person may know what the Bible says about such matters. Nevertheless, the great amount of publicity given to occult practices may cause him to become curious. He may hear about someone who reportedly can predict the future accurately. Or he may come to know about the various means of divination used—Ouija boards, ESP, astrology, crystal-ball gazing and the like. His fascination may become so great that he may want to find out firsthand whether such things really work. He might be willing to 'try anything once.'

12. Did Saul's consulting a spirit medium bring him the comfort and direction that he wanted, and why was that the case?

13. Why may one's knowing what the Bible says not prevent one from falling into the trap that King Saul did?

¹⁴ Is that wise? Definitely not. His curiosity can lead to his coming under demon harassment. Supernatural disturbances may rob him of sleep and fill even daylight hours with dread. He may begin to hear strange voices, suggesting that he kill himself or someone else. This is no mere supposition. Case histories prove that this has actually happened.

¹⁵ If we truly have faith in God's Word, we will not allow any undue curiosity about occult practices to build up in our minds, and this will be a safeguard. Jehovah God does not view this matter lightly. To protect the Israelites from being deceived and harmed by wicked spirits, he made the practice of divination an offense worthy of death. God's Word said: "You must not preserve a sorceress alive." (Ex. 22:18) "As for a man or woman in whom there proves to be a mediumistic spirit or spirit of prediction, they should be put to death without fail."—Lev. 20:27.

¹⁶ Has Jehovah's view of spirit mediums, sorcerers and diviners changed? Not at all! A decree from God still stands against all who persist in the practice of spiritism. Revelation 21:8 lists them among those meriting the judgment of "second death." That means eternal death from which recovery is impossible. So, if any persons who have dabbled in this sort of thing want to do the will of God, now is the time to clean it out of their lives.

¹⁷ As to any items closely associated with spiritistic practices, make sure that none of such things are in your home. Imitate the example of those who accepted true worship in Ephesus, of whom Acts 19:19 reports: "Quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody." Expensive as these items were, the

14. What can happen to those who dabble in the occult?

15, 16. How does Jehovah view occult practices?

17. What should those seeking God's approval do with items associated with the occult?

Ephesians who embraced Christianity did not hold back from destroying them.

¹⁸ The current upsurge of interest in occult practices in the midst of Christendom certainly points up the failure of her religious leaders. Even so-called educated people consult fortune-tellers, dabble in astrology, carry "lucky" charms or, in some parts of the earth, seek cures from medicine men who invoke false gods. It would come as a great surprise to most of these persons to learn that the Bible condemns what they are doing. They have not been told what God's Word says. Their clergymen have failed to teach them these things and have therefore left them open to demonic assault.

SAFEGUARDED AGAINST

SUCCUMBING TO THE FEAR OF DEATH

¹⁹ Besides demon possession and harassment, another powerful device that Satan has used to control humankind is the fear of death. Consider what Hebrews 2:14, 15 says about this. Here Jesus Christ is referred to as the one who is in a position to "bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil." We are also told that Jesus can "emancipate all those who for fear of death were subject to slavery all through their lives."

²⁰ There can be no question that humans generally fear having their life cut off prematurely by violent means. This is the kind of death referred to in this scripture, and Satan the Devil has exploited fear of such death to the full. He uses this fear to maneuver humans into doing his bidding. Events of this century well illustrate this. For example, in Nazi Germany many people were afraid of the consequences of not doing what their superiors demanded.

18. What does the situation in Christendom regarding occultism reveal about the failure of her religious leaders?

19. According to Hebrews 2:14, 15, what powerful means has Satan used to control people?

20. Illustrate how Satan has used fear of violent death to hold people in slavery.

These people feared the possibility of being executed. So they went against the dictates of their conscience and committed dastardly crimes against humanity.

²¹ Our God-given faith and hope, however, can safeguard us from becoming so fearful that we back down from what we know is right, and thereby ruin our conscience and lose divine favor. We need not fear unduly, because we know that Jehovah loves us, that our lives are precious to him. Note the comforting words of Jesus Christ: "My friends, Do not fear those who kill the body and after this are not able to do anything more. But I will indicate to you whom to fear: Fear him who after killing has authority to throw into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear this One. Five sparrows sell for two coins of small value, do they not? Yet not one of them goes forgotten before God. But even the hairs of your heads are all numbered. Have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows."—Luke 12:4-7.

²² True, men can kill the body. But they cannot destroy the soul everlasting. (Matt. 10:28) And what is the "soul" in this case? It is the person's God-given title to be a living being. Men cannot blot the person out of God's provision and so make it impossible for him to live again. So any who refuse to yield to the fear of death and who maintain integrity, even when their lives are taken, continue living according to God's viewpoint. Jehovah will safeguard their title to life. He will not forget a single detail about them. He remembers their personality, their mental growth and experience in life. And he will restore such in the resurrection.—2 Cor. 1:8, 9.

²³ Faith in God's promise of a resurrection can strengthen us to do what is

21, 22. What liberates Jehovah's devoted servants from being unduly fearful about having their life taken by violent means?

23. How can faith and hope strengthen us when confronted with the threat of death?

right even if that might mean death for us. That faith enables us to appreciate that the eternal life to be enjoyed upon our being raised from the dead is far more precious than a few years of life now. It safeguards us against jeopardizing our opportunities to gain that everlasting life. That is what faith did for men of ancient times; of them the Bible book of Hebrews reports: "[They] were tortured because they would not accept release by some ransom [some compromise of what is right], in order that they might attain a better resurrection."—Heb. 11:35.

²⁴ It was unshakable faith in Jehovah's ability to resurrect and reward him that also enabled Jesus Christ to maintain perfect integrity. Think of what he endured. He was reviled, slapped, hit with fists, spit upon, scourged and, finally, nailed to a stake, to die like the worst kind of criminal. Yet never did Jesus Christ waver. He

24. What did faith enable Jesus Christ to endure?

Pursuing A SATISFYING WAY OF LIFE

VAST numbers of earth's inhabitants are not finding real satisfaction in life. Many are enslaved because of false religious teachings about death and the dead. Still others are giving way to feelings of hopelessness and despair. Millions upon millions of persons are in desperate need of liberation so that they might begin to pursue a way of life that is truly satisfying. Consider:

1. Why are millions of persons today not finding real satisfaction in life?

did not lose sight of the reward. What a faith-strengthening example he set for us! As Hebrews 12:2, 3 puts it: "For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Indeed, consider closely the one who has endured such contrary talk by sinners against their own interests, that you may not get tired and give out in your souls."

²⁵ Indeed, this life is not all there is. Living in harmony with that fact results in our avoiding the vain, empty life of materialistic people. Not even the possibility of death can dim our joy in living now and cause us to view the future with despair and uncertainty. Thanks be to God for making it possible for sincere truth seekers to have a solid hope and a firm faith!

25. What benefits come from living in harmony with the truth that this life is not all there is?

² Throughout most of Asia and parts of Africa millions of persons believe that during all their life they must pay homage to

dead ancestors. In front of the tablets of their deceased relatives, they burn incense, pray, place flowers and even offer food. Why do they perform these acts? They have been taught that such veneration will help the dead to enjoy a pleasant existence in the next life and will prevent them from becoming hostile spirits.

³ Especially in connection with mourn-

2-4. How have beliefs about the dead affected members of non-Christian religions?

ing and funerals do the survivors put forth costly efforts to help the deceased. There are parts of the Orient where paper houses and other paper objects costing hundreds of dollars, at times even thousands, are burned to help the spirits of the dead.

⁴ Belief in a purgatory is the underlying basis for this practice. After a person's death, the spirit is believed to wander in purgatory for two years, needing help to enter heaven. The offerings made in the form of paper items are designed to show that the dead man lived a good life and has everything needed to function in the next world. Many Orientals believe that by such means his spirit will be freed from purgatory sooner.

⁵ Is it any different in Christendom? Not really. For centuries rich and poor alike have been paying vast sums of money to religious organizations in the hope of reducing their own and their loved ones' time in purgatory. In regard to these practices, author Corliss Lamont in his book *The Illusion of Immortality* observes:

"Since the early Middle Ages the Catholic Church has obtained, through the granting of indulgences alone, huge sums from rich and poor alike. These indulgences, given in return for money payments, almsgiving or other kinds of offerings, provide that one's own soul or the soul of a deceased relative or friend be spared all or part of its destined punishment in purgatory. . . . In Russia the Orthodox Church accumulated enormous wealth through similar intercessions on behalf of the dead. Besides the steady income from workers and peasants anxious to mitigate divine retribution, many members of the nobility and upper class endowed monasteries and churches on condition that daily prayers be said for their departed souls."

—Pp. 17, 18.

⁶ Widespread, too, is the belief that the living need to be safeguarded from the dead. In many parts of Africa, when sick-

ness strikes a family, when a child dies, when a business fails or any other misfortune occurs, a person will quickly consult a juju priest. Usually the priest tells him that a dead family member has been offended. The oracle is consulted and sacrifices are prescribed. Of course, the juju priest charges much money for this. He also gets the meat of the animal offered in sacrifice.

⁷ The truth of God's Word brings liberation from such enslaving falsehoods. The Bible clearly shows that the soul dies and that nothing survives the body to continue conscious existence. (Ezek. 18:4, 20) There is no reason to fear the dead. Ecclesiastes 9:6 says of them: "Their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished, and they have no portion anymore to time indefinite in anything that has to be done under the sun."

⁸ For like reasons, the dead cannot be helped by the living. They have returned to the lifeless dust. (Gen. 3:19; Ps. 104:29) Being lifeless, unconscious, they simply could not be in any place of permanent or temporary torment. God's Word, at Romans 6:7, plainly says: "He who has died has been acquitted from his sin." That would not be true if he continued to be punished for his sins after death. Rather than being acquitted, he would still be paying for his sins.

⁹ Christendom's scholars know what the Bible teaches about the state of the dead. In their theological literature they admit that the Scriptures do not teach the immortality of the human soul and that this and other doctrines are a product of pagan Grecian philosophy. "Christian theology," writes Professor Douglas T. Holden, "has become so fused with Greek philosophy that it has reared individuals who are a mixture of nine parts Greek thought to

5. What have many in Christendom done in the hope of reducing their own or their loved ones' time in purgatory?

6. What view do many people have of what the dead can do to the living?

7, 8. What does the Bible reveal about the state of the dead?

9, 10. What acknowledgments do Christendom's theologians make about the human soul, hell and purgatory?

one part Christian thought." (*Death Shall Have No Dominion*, p. 14) And French theologian Oscar Cullmann referred to belief in the immortal soul as "one of the greatest misunderstandings of Christianity."—*Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?*, p. 15.

¹⁰ Regarding the idea of eternal torment in a fiery hell, the Catholic periodical *Commonweal* (January 15, 1971, p. 370) notes: "For many people, some philosophers included, hell answers a need of the human imagination—a sort of Santa Claus in reverse. . . . Who among the righteous doesn't like to see the unjust get punished with some equity? And if not in this life, why not in the next? Such a view, however, is not compatible with the New Testament, which invites man to life and to love." As to the doctrine of purgatory, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* frankly admits: "The Catholic doctrine on purgatory is based on tradition, not Sacred Scripture."—Vol. 11, p. 1034.

¹¹ Yet are these things actually being taught in the churches? Are the religious leaders telling their congregations that the soul dies, that the doctrine of eternal torment in a fiery hell is contrary to the spirit of Christianity and that belief in purgatory is not based on the Bible? Or, do Christendom's clergymen as a whole persist in propagating "teachings of demons"? (1 Tim. 4:1) Is the answer Yes to the latter question too severe a judgment? Well, are not Christendom's own scholars acknowledging such teachings to be false? And if the clergy persist in teaching doctrines that are known to be false, are they not imitating the one whom Jesus spoke of as the "father of the lie"? (John 8:44) Furthermore, does not the teaching of eternal torment reflect the morbid, vicious and cruel disposition of the demons?

11, 12. (a) Why can it be rightly said that Christendom's religious leaders have been propagating "teachings of demons"? (b) What exploitation has been carried on by religious leaders of Christendom?

¹² The Bible says: "God is love." (1 John 4:8) But the doctrines of hellfire and purgatory grossly misrepresent him. Those teaching such doctrines are therefore saying blasphemous things against God. This being the case, religious organizations have also been obtaining large sums of money under false pretenses. Instead of comforting orphans and widows in their time of extreme grief, many religious leaders have hardheartedly exploited them by accepting money for worthless ceremonies. This has been especially hard on the poor, who could have used such money for necessities of life.

¹³ While some clergymen may not be familiar with the Biblical evidence, they should be. They represent themselves as speaking God's message and therefore are under obligation to know what the Bible says. They certainly know full well that what they do and say can deeply affect the lives of those who look to them for instruction. That should cause them to be careful in making sure of their teaching. Any misrepresentation of God can turn people away from true worship, to their injury.

¹⁴ How do you feel about false religion's exploitation of people and its misrepresentation of our Creator? Do you want to see God's name cleared of the reproach brought upon it through the teaching of false doctrines? Do you desire to see every effort put forth to free honest-hearted ones from bondage to religious falsehoods? Are you willing to share in exposing religious error? That is certainly the desire of every devoted servant of Jehovah God.

FREEDOM FROM DESPAIR

¹⁵ Of course, many people today have

13. Why can Christendom's clergymen not excuse their teaching of false doctrines?

14. In view of false religion's misrepresentation of God and its exploitation of people, what questions might we ask ourselves?

15. Why are many who recognize the exploitation carried on by false religion still not finding satisfaction in life?

seen through the exploitation carried on by false religion. But that has not been enough to give them true freedom and to start them in a way of life that is truly satisfying. Why not? Because they lack genuine faith and hope. So they are not safeguarded against the hurtful impact that world developments can have on them mentally and emotionally.

¹⁶ Consider for a moment what has happened. Millions have perished as victims of war, crime, riots and famine. Life-sustaining air and water are being polluted at an alarming rate. Seemingly from every quarter man's life is being threatened. And there is nothing to give real assurance that mankind will be able to solve its problems in the near future. This has caused even many of those who have turned their backs on false religion to give way to hopeless despair. As far as they can see, this life is all there is. Aptly the Bible describes their attitude. They say: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die."—1 Cor. 15:32.

¹⁷ In an endeavor to escape the harsh realities of life, many turn to alcohol or drugs. Others try to find an outlet for their frustrations by indulging in sexual immorality. They engage in fornication, adultery, homosexuality through sodomy and lesbianism. Regarding the effect life's uncertainty is having on people, Ignace Lepp, in his book *Death and Its Mysteries* (translated from the French by Bernard Murchland), says: "It seems that more normal people today are affected by this fear of collective death, at least unconsciously. This is at least a partial explanation of the disarray of our times, which is expressed in gratuitous crime, vandalism, eroticism and the accelerated pace of life. Even modern music and dances

seem to express the despair of a humanity that no longer believes in its own future." (P. 49) What has been the effect of giving in to feelings of despair and then trying to escape them?

¹⁸ Those given to heavy drinking may temporarily forget their troubles. But they sacrifice their dignity and, while intoxicated, at times injure themselves or others. And the next day, they find that they have added an agonizing headache to the troubles that they already had. Serious illnesses are also a result of heavy drinking.

¹⁹ Drug addicts, too, pay a high price for their efforts to escape reality. They often experience lasting physical and mental harm. And to support their costly habit, many degrade themselves by engaging in theft or prostitution.

²⁰ What about promiscuous sex relations? Do they help to improve one's lot in life? To the contrary, the fruitage is often loathsome venereal disease, unwanted pregnancies, illegitimate children, abortions, broken homes, bitter jealousy, fighting and even murder.

²¹ Sad indeed is the lot of many. They need hope and genuine faith to be freed from their despair and the resultant problems. God's Word can help them, if they will but study and apply it. This has been the experience of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. They have found that the application of Bible principles improves relationships at home, at work and in daily contacts with others. (Rom. 12:17-21; 13:8-10; Eph. 5:22-6:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7) This has contributed much toward making their life happier and more satisfying even now.

²² Does this mean that the person who applies Bible principles in his daily life will be immune from the problems and pressures of the world? No, he still lives among people who have no love of right-

16. Just what has been happening in the world, and what attitude has this brought about among many people?

17. What are many persons doing today in an attempt to escape harsh realities of life?

18-20. What bad fruitage has resulted from excessive drinking, drug addiction and sexual immorality?

21, 22. What good results come from applying Bible principles?

teousness. But he can cope with the problems of life far more effectively than those who rely on mere human reasoning. He does not become bitter because of injustices that he may suffer. He knows the reason for them and has the firm conviction that God's kingdom by Christ will soon put an end to all the things that detract from full enjoyment of life. (2 Pet. 3:11-13) He is safeguarded against succumbing to despair and injuring himself in vain attempts to escape it.

²³ Appreciating this, dedicated Christians should certainly be stirred in their hearts to help their fellowmen to begin following a way of life that is satisfying. That means proving oneself to be the kind of person of whom Jesus Christ spoke at Matthew 13:23: "This is the one hearing the word [of the kingdom] and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, the other thirty."

²⁴ Are you that kind? Is your heart continuing to respond appreciatively to the 'word of the kingdom'? Does this move you to make opportunities to share with others the Kingdom message so that they might begin enjoying the best way of life now? If that is the case, you can rest assured of Jehovah's approval and blessing.

DILIGENT EFFORT NEEDED

²⁵ Pursuing a way of life that is satisfying requires our putting forth strenuous efforts. We humans are sinners and therefore need to exert ourselves to keep sinful tendencies in check. We cannot allow such tendencies to gain the mastery over us, thereby bringing us into slavery to the ruler of this world, Satan. (John 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4) Regarding himself, the faithful apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave,

23, 24. How should the benefits we have gained from practicing true worship affect what we do for our fellowmen?

25. Why is diligent effort required to pursue a way of life that is satisfying?

that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow." (1 Cor. 9:27) He used every means available to him to subdue sinful tendencies, gaining the victory over them.

²⁶ What motivated Paul and other faithful disciples of Jesus to do this? Many of Christendom's clergymen have claimed that fear of the torments of hellfire serves as an incentive for proper conduct. But the facts of history prove otherwise. The horrible inquisitions and bloodspilling crusades of Christendom are proof that some of the greatest cruelties have been perpetrated by believers in the unscriptural doctrine of hellfire.

²⁷ Fear of punishment is not the proper motivation for serving God. Jehovah God wants our worship to be motivated by love. That has always been his desire respecting his intelligent creatures. Note the appeal that Moses made to the Israelites: "I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the malediction; and you must choose life in order that you may keep alive, you and your offspring, by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him; for he is your life and the length of your days." —Deut. 30:19, 20.

²⁸ We certainly have good reason to love Jehovah deeply and to demonstrate our love by obedience to his commandments. It was Jehovah who took the initiative in showing love to us in the superlative degree. As sinful humans we could never on our own merit gain a favorable standing before him. The only wages that we sinners deserve is death. (Rom. 6:23) Yet in his boundless love Jehovah God gave his Son in our behalf, that we might have our sins atoned for and be able to gain a righ-

26. What shows that Christendom's clergymen are wrong in claiming that belief in hellfire serves as an incentive for proper conduct?

27. What is the proper motivation for serving Jehovah God?

28, 29. (a) Why do we have good reason to love Jehovah? (b) How does the apostle Peter emphasize this point in his first letter?

teous standing. That was no little thing on Jehovah's part. He deeply loved his Son and yet allowed him to undergo the greatest of humiliations, yes, even a shameful death on an executional stake. As for Jesus Christ, he was willing to undergo this in expression of his love for mankind.—John 10:17, 18.

²⁹ Really, what Jehovah God and Jesus Christ have done in our behalf should stir within our hearts a burning desire to conduct ourselves in harmony with the divine will. This is the point the apostle Peter made when encouraging fellow believers: "Conduct yourselves with fear [that is, with a wholesome awe or dread of not wanting to displease Jehovah God] during the time of your alien residence. For you know that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were delivered from your fruitless form of conduct received by tradition from your forefathers. But it was with precious blood, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, even Christ's. True, he was foreknown before the founding of the world, but he was made manifest at the end of the times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, the one who raised him up from the dead and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God."—1 Pet. 1:17-21.

³⁰ Do you really appreciate the precious sacrifice of Jesus Christ? Do you show this by the way you conduct yourself? Are you doing what is proper for one who has been shown love and for whom such a priceless sacrifice was made? All of us should be. For that reason, at 1 Peter 1:14, 15, spirit-begotten Christians are urged: "As obedient children, quit being fashioned according to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but, in accord with the Holy One who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct."

30, 31. Contrast the conduct of true Christians with the way they lived before learning the truth.

³¹ If we are dedicated Christians, we have definitely benefited from Jesus' atoning sacrifice. We should therefore hate the way we lived our lives before we had real faith and hope, when we lacked appreciation for what Jehovah God and Jesus Christ did in our behalf. In our ignorance, we lived only for self-interest. We gave in to our desires, unless perhaps restrained by fear of authority or fear of harm to our health, property or reputation. But how many of us really felt accountable to our Creator and Life-Giver?

³² Now, however, we have strong incentive for seeking to conform to the standard of holiness exemplified by our loving heavenly Father. Jehovah God is "holy," pure or clean in the absolute sense. He is good through and through, free from even the faintest trace of badness or taint of corruption. He is the Source of all righteous principles and laws.—Prov. 19:7-10; Ps. 119:137, 138, 160.

³³ Moved by love for him, we should want to be like him. Therefore we should want to cast off every inclination that is in opposition to his holiness. That is the admonition given at 1 Peter 2:1, where we read: "Put away all badness and all deceitfulness and hypocrisy and envies and all sorts of backbiting." What does this require of us?

³⁴ The dominant inclination of our hearts should not be given to any kind of badness. We should repel even the thought of deceiving others for selfish gain, no matter how large or how small. The tendency to envy should be kept in check so that we do not resort to fraud or other dishonest practices to gain what others have. Nor do we want to fall into the snare of backbiting, trying to downgrade fellow Christians by undue criticism or by questioning their abilities and motivations. What we say should be in good taste, serving to

32. What is meant by Jehovah's being "holy"?

33, 34. What does following the counsel of 1 Peter 2:1 require of us?

build others up and not to tear them down. We do not want to act the part of hypocrites, pretending to be what we are not and hiding wicked designs under the cover of a form of godly devotion.

GOVERNING BODY OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ENLARGED

The Brooklyn Bethel family were delighted to learn on November 28 that the following brothers had been made members of the Governing Body of Jehovah's witnesses. These will now serve along with those who are already serving in the Governing Body. The new members are as follows: W. Lloyd Barry, who at present is branch overseer in Japan; John C. Booth, who is working in the office at Watchtower Farm; Ewart C. Chitty of London, England, who is secretary-treasurer of the International Bible Students Association; Charles J. Fekel of Brooklyn, New York, who works in the composition department of the Brooklyn factory; Theodore Jaracz of the United States, who is serving as a circuit overseer; Karl F. Klein of the Brooklyn Bethel, who works in the office; Albert D. Schroeder, who has been serving as an instructor of the Kingdom Ministry School; and Daniel Sydlik, who works in the printing plant at Brooklyn Bethel. All these brothers will eventually be living in the Bethel home in Brooklyn and will attend the regular meetings of the Governing Body of Jehovah's witnesses held on Wednesday mornings at eight o'clock. They will also take their turns at the head of the Bethel table in weekly rotation alphabetically according to last name.

The Governing Body is now composed of eighteen members, all anointed, and the other ten are as follows: Frederick W. Franz, Raymond V. Franz, George D. Gangas, Leo K. Greenlees, John O. Groh, Milton G. Henschel, William K. Jackson, Nathan H. Knorr, Grant Suiter and Lyman A. Swingle.

It is indeed their joy to be serving Jehovah's witnesses world wide in their capacity as the Governing Body, and their deliberations on spiritual matters will continue to prove very beneficial to all of Jehovah's witnesses who are enjoying the spiritual paradise in which those who love Jehovah find themselves today.

³⁵ Yes, our everyday experiences—at home, at our place of secular work, at school, in our daily contacts with others—should give evidence that our life is more satisfying than it was before we began obeying God's Word of truth. That should especially be our desire in view of the wholesome effect fine conduct can have on sincere observers. Said the apostle Peter: "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection."—1 Pet. 2:12.

³⁶ If we are devoted Christians, we do indeed experience many blessings and joys. By resisting the pressure to give in to selfishness, we find satisfaction in being able to prove that our service to God is motivated by love. We experience Jehovah's direction, care and help as we confront life's problems. We enjoy spiritual health and contentment. We preserve the peace of mind and heart that only a clean conscience can give us. Our life has purposeful direction in that it revolves around an enduring relationship with Jehovah God.

³⁷ Truly, dedicated Christians have reason to continue exerting themselves to maintain the freedom that they have gained by conforming to God's truth. Is that what you are doing? Are your attitude, words and actions coming ever closer to God's standard of holiness? Are your faith and hope safeguarding you against anything that could destroy a good relationship with Jehovah God and result in losing out on "the life . . . which is to come"? (1 Tim. 4:8) If so, continue your

35. What should all aspects of a Christian's life reveal, and what wholesome effect can this have on others?

36, 37. What are some benefits that Jehovah's servants enjoy, and what should this cause them to do?

fine efforts. Heed the inspired admonition: "Take exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will give you the requests of your heart." (Ps. 37:4) May your real delight continue to be in maintaining the love and

approval of Jehovah God, convinced that this leads to satisfaction now and holds promise of life eternal in God's righteous new order, which is near at hand.—Rev. 21:3, 4.

A YOUTH ASKS,

Why Attend Christian Meetings?

"**I**HAVE a problem." Thus began a letter from a sixteen-year-old girl in Georgia.

Her mother was regularly attending the meetings at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, and the daughter was expected to attend also. But she did not want to be "forced" to do so. The girl wrote: "I feel that I'm old enough to make decisions as far as the religion I want to be involved with, if any." So, she asked, "Why must I attend these meetings?"

Whether you are in a similar situation or not, what about the query, 'Why attend the meetings at the Kingdom Hall?'

DESIRE TO BE INDEPENDENT

The teen-ager in Georgia commented: "I feel I am too old to hang on mom's skirt tail." But is it so?

A teen-ager may feel like an adult, and may even have certain legal rights and privileges, such as being able to obtain an automobile driver's license. But in many areas one does not obtain full legal rights as an adult until twenty-one years of age. Why is that the case? The experience of millions of youths over many generations has proved that, with a view to their own lasting welfare and that of society, it usually is still best for them to have some parental guidance. So if one is still a minor, would it not be modest and sensible to

bear in mind what the experience of millions of young persons has shown? And might it not be that you too could still profit from your parents' experience and counsel, especially if the law of the land says that they have the right to guide you and are responsible to do so?

Also, do you know what might develop in many places if parents leave a youth at home unattended? If a question of neglect comes up, there could be court action and the youth might be put in an institution.

Did you notice, though, what the girl in Georgia wrote about 'hanging on to her mom's skirt tail'? Does that not reflect the common yearning among teen-agers to be independent? To a degree such a feeling is understandable, for as they become adults they will basically be expected to stand on their own. That is part of becoming an adult, is it not? But ask yourself, 'Is anyone ever completely independent?' For instance, we are dependent on the air we breathe. Who created it? Jehovah did, just as he provided the sun and rain that we need to grow food. (Acts 14:16, 17) Would it be a sane course if our desire for independence led us to reject the air, sunshine and food that we get from God? If you knew a friend who got it into his mind that he never needed food, would

you not be doing him a kindness to urge him to eat enough to keep alive?

Extending this matter, the One who created the means for us to sustain life also offers counsel as to how we can find the greatest happiness—and do we not all want to be happy? For example, he assures us that lasting happiness does not come from drunkenness, fornication or homosexuality. (Prov. 23:29, 30; 1 Cor. 6:9) Perhaps from your own observations in life you already realize the wisdom of that counsel. But the Creator's wise advice does not stop there. His Word contains the best counsel on living that has ever been written, covering "the entire course of what is good." (Prov. 2:9) Why, some men and women who are unaware of this, study at universities for years or travel the globe seeking wisdom and knowledge that can bring true happiness. So if one's parents, based on careful study, assure a young person that such sought-after wisdom and knowledge are available at the Kingdom Hall, would it not be wise to investigate carefully?

WHY THEY WANT YOU TO ATTEND

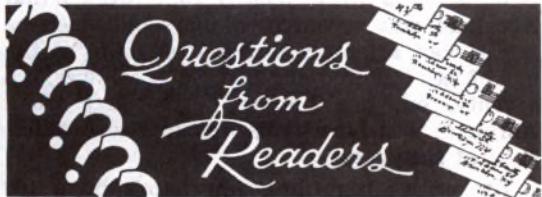
Now, if you are a young person who has a natural desire to be happy, do you not believe that your parents want that for you too? Think back. How many sleepless nights did your mother spend caring for you when you were sick? (1 Thess. 2:7) Did not your father work hard over the years to supply food and clothing for your family? Undoubtedly you feel gratitude for such love. If, then, your parents are urging you to accompany them to Christian meetings on a few occasions each week, might this not be another display of their loving concern? They have for many years observed life and its meaning and have evaluated the importance of God and his Word. Thus is there not real reason to cooperate with their efforts to bring to you the lasting benefits that they know

you can obtain from accepting and following Godly wisdom?

Also, youths should consider the consistency of the matter. The Bible informs us that God directs youths to be obedient to their parents, to observe the commandments of their father and mother. (Eph. 6:1; Prov. 6:20-22) So your parents could simply command you to go off to the Kingdom Hall meetings. Is that what they do? You may know of many families where the parents make their children attend Sunday-school classes at a church, while the parents laze around at home. But is that so in your case? Are you being told to do something your mother or father or both are not doing? No. Though they may sometimes be tired or busy, they discipline themselves to attend the Kingdom Hall meetings, knowing how immensely profitable they are. Thus they are not asking you to do what they are not doing. Rather, they urge you to benefit along with them.

At the Kingdom Hall you can enjoy fellowship with persons who will not try to cheat or "use" you. Rather, the members of the congregation are pleased when you attend. While there you can learn about what many professors acknowledge to be some of the world's greatest literature, the Bible. Are you interested in being able to express your feelings and thoughts clearly, to get your point across? Young men and women attending the Theocratic Ministry School at the Kingdom Hall get outstanding help along these lines. And if you do, in time, conclude that the Bible's promise of eternal life in paradise for those serving God is true, the benefits of attending the meetings may be yours eternally.

Hence, there are quite a number of sound reasons why you should attend meetings at the Kingdom Hall. Realizing this and acting accordingly, you can contribute to peace in the family and can find personal contentment.



- Why could Jehovah say, as recorded at Deuteronomy 32:39, "There are no gods together with me," when John 1:1 states that "the Word was with God, and the Word was a god"?

Viewed in their proper setting, these texts in no way contradict each other. They are discussing entirely different matters.

At Deuteronomy 32:39, the point being made is that the false gods of the nations have no share with Jehovah in his saving acts. They are unable to deliver their worshipers from disaster. This is evident from the preceding two verses, which read: "Where are their gods, the rock in whom they sought refuge, who used to eat the fat of their sacrifices, to drink the wine of their drink offerings? Let them get up and help you. Let them become a concealment place for you."

Other parts of this song likewise indicate that these false gods had no share in the expressing of Jehovah's saving power. With reference to the nation of Israel as represented in its forefather Jacob, verse 12 says: "Jehovah alone kept leading him, and there was no foreign god along with him." Apostasy, however, set in among the Israelites, as verses 16, 17 and 21 tell us: "They began inciting him to jealousy with strange gods; with detestable things they kept offending him. They went sacrificing to demons, not to God, gods whom they had not known, new ones who recently came in, with whom your forefathers were not acquainted. They, for their part, have incited me to jealousy with what is no god."

Against this background, we can appreciate that none of such false gods were 'together with Jehovah' in anything that he did. He alone is the true God, whereas the false gods are an unreality, nonexistent and powerless to help their worshipers in time of calamity.

As for the reference to the Word's 'being a god,' it does not disagree with the statement at

Deuteronomy 32:39. Why not? Because the "Word" does not stand in opposition to Jehovah nor is he a rival, as was the case with the false gods. Then, too, in the phrase rendered "the Word was a god," the term "god" is a predicate noun that describes "the Word." Says the noted scholar Westcott, coproducer of the famous Westcott and Hort Greek text of the Christian Scriptures: "It describes the nature of the Word and does not identify His Person." In view of the descriptive nature of the predicate noun for "god" in the original Greek, *An American Translation* renders John 1:1: "The Word was divine."^{*} The *New World Translation*, however, retains the predicate noun and indicates the significance of the omission of the definite article by using the indefinite article.

Being God's firstborn Son, "the Word" could rightly be described as a "god" or powerful one, even as are God's other angelic sons at Psalm 8:5. (Compare Hebrews 2:6-8.) But neither the firstborn Son nor the other faithful angelic sons of God stand in opposition to their Creator, or try to equal him or substitute for him, as do false gods. They all recognize that worship is properly directed to Jehovah God alone.—Phil. 2:5, 6; Rev. 19:10.

- Why does the Jewish count of time differ from the chronology published by Jehovah's witnesses?

Since the twelfth century C.E. traditional Jewish reckoning has placed the creation of Adam in the fall of 3761 B.C.E. Jehovah's Christian witnesses, however, have presented as the date for this event 4026 B.C.E. The basic reason for the difference is that Jehovah's witnesses do not rely on ancient traditional Jewish sources such as the *Seder Olam* (attributed to Yose b. Halafta of the second century C.E.). Instead, Jehovah's witnesses give the greatest weight to the chronological material found in the Bible itself. And they tie in this chronological material with the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.E., an established pivotal date accepted by secular authorities.[†]

* In *The Translator's New Testament* (1973) a note on John 1:1 states: "There is no article and it is difficult to believe that the omission is not significant. In effect it gives an adjectival quality to the second use of *Theos* (God) so that the phrase means 'The Word was divine.'"

† For a detailed discussion of chronology, see the book *Aid to Bible Understanding*, pp. 322-348.

Today scholars acknowledge that such traditional Jewish sources as the *Seder Olam* are unreliable. For example, it assigns but thirty-four years to the time from the rebuilding of the temple in the days of Zerubbabel until the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great. In actuality, the period involved was about 150 years longer, an error acknowledged in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971 edition, Vol. 14, p. 1092), which says: "The most significant confusion in Yose's calculation is the compression of the Persian period . . . to no more than 34 years."

Another error involves the time of Abraham's birth. According to the Jewish count of time, Terah was seventy years old at the birth of Abraham (Abram). This is based on their understanding of Genesis 11:26, which reads: "Terah lived on for seventy years, after which he became father to Abram, Nahor and Haran." Note that this text does not actually say that Terah was seventy when Abraham was born but that he became father to three sons after having died. The word *lived* means *died*. The text does not say that Terah died at age 70, but rather that he died at age 70 and then had three sons. The word *lived* is used here to indicate that Terah died before his sons were born.

ABR 17, 1971 18 10:2 1111—.ana

reaching the age of seventy. A comparison of Genesis 11:32 with Genesis 12:4 reveals that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran after his father died there at the age of two hundred and five. So Terah was, not seventy, but one hundred and thirty when Abraham was born. This amounts to a difference of sixty years.

The errors regarding Abraham's birth (60 years) and the Persian period (about 150 years) as well as lesser mistakes account for a difference of about 265 years between traditional Jewish reckoning based on the *Seder Olam* and the Biblical chronology published by Jehovah's witnesses.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

February 23: Safeguarded by Faith and Hope.

Page 49. Songs to Be Used: 78, 111.

March 2: Pursuing a Satisfying Way of Life.

Page 54. Songs to Be Used: 19, 29.

ABR 17, 1971 18 10:2 1111—.ana

ABR 17, 1971 18 10:2 1111—.ana