

FEBRUARY 1, 1978

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



MAINTAINING THE FAMILY CIRCLE

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 "Home Sweet Home"—In Critical Times**
What are some of the forces tearing at family unity today?
- 4 Maintaining the Family Circle**
Helpful suggestions for each family member
- 8 Insight on the News**
- 9 In Our Portuguese Hamlet—God's Word Exerts Power**
A first-person account of the impact of God's Word upon a village of about 100 inhabitants
- 13 Success Only by Reliance on Jehovah**
- 16 Basis for a Purposeful Life**
Have you ever asked yourself, "Where am I really going?" In truth, we all feel helpless at times. But there are powerful provisions already made in your behalf. Learn how to benefit from them
- 22 Your Maker Deeply Cares About You**
What problems can we take to God in prayer?
- 27 The Sermon on the Mount**
—The First Three "Happinesses"
- 29 International Conventions Need Many Willing Workers**
- 31 Questions from Readers**

A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

Copyright © 1977 by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

Ten cents a copy

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	\$2.00
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	A\$2.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5	\$2.00
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£1.70
Hawaii, 1228 Pensacola St., Honolulu 96814	\$2.00
New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	NZ\$3.00
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	#1.40
Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	P10.00
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, 1406	R1.80

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

Printed in U.S.A.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 79 LANGUAGES

SEMIMONTHLY EDITIONS

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chishona, Cibemba, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hiligaynon, Ibo, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malagasy, Norwegian, Portuguese, Sesotho, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

MONTHLY EDITIONS

Armenian, Bengali, Biicol, Croatian, Czech, Efik, Ewe, Fijian, Ga, Greenandie, Gun, Hebrew, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian, Icelandic, Kanarese, Kikongo, Kiluba, Lingala, Luvale, Malayalam, Marathi, Melanesian-Pidgin, Pampango, Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Silozi, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Solomon Islands-Pidgin, Tahitian, Tamil, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu

The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, R.D. 1, Box 300, Wallkill, New York 12589, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

Average Printing Each Issue:
9,800,000

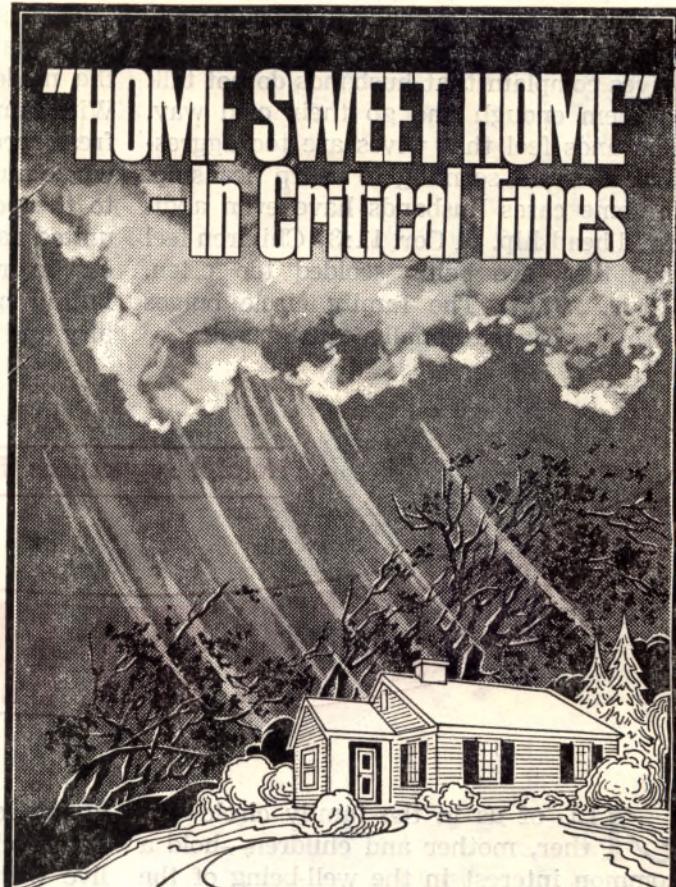
Published by
Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania

117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
Frederick W. Franz, Pres. Grant Suiter, Secy.

HOME is the haven where a family contentedly lives, relaxes and works together. A happy family with a joyous spirit makes "home" delightful. Unforgettable family experiences, humorous incidents and joint activities over the years build up fond memories of "home." True is the expression of years gone by—the lyric of slower days—entitled "Home, Sweet Home." Rhythmically the lyric sounds forth: "Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam, be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

Yes, "home" is what we make it. Have you fond memories of your youthhood home? Did you contribute in former days toward its pleasurableness and happy spirit? Is your home a happy one today? What are you doing today toward making it a place of peace and unitedness? Or, on the other hand, is your contribution one that brings divisiveness, even uproar and disintegration?

The Bible shows that every family on earth owes its name to the grand Creator of families, Jehovah God. To him, knees properly bend in reverence and prayer. (Eph. 3:14, 15) It is the course of wisdom to follow the Bible way toward keeping our families united in these 'critical days.' The Bible spells out the way to make "home" a happy place where all members cooperate together with a healthy, wholesome spirit. This contributes toward family joy. Happy, united families ascribe glory and strength to Jehovah their God.—Ps. 96:7.



A family is in fact a circle of friends bound together by ties of kinship. The parents are the God-appointed directors of this circle, which also includes minor ones, the children. The family circle today is under attack, heavy assault. It is a target just as in archery, where arrows fly to zero in for a bull's-eye hit at the center. It is assaulted by the glitter of materialism and the desire to purchase new things beyond the family budget. Father would like to buy a shiny new car. Mother wants the latest gadgets for the house. The children want to control the television and spend long hours watching new TV programs, arguing that these shows are harmless. They say that their friends have seen the programs and their parents have approved them. Children demand dangerous freedoms and become careless as to their associates.—1 Cor. 15:33.

Then, domestic peace is further disrupted by misunderstandings between parents. Wives complain that husbands do not talk to them enough and go their own way. Husbands feel that wives are too aggressive, at times seeming to usurp headship. In some cases husbands have even abdicated headship. (1 Cor. 11:3) Children feel that they are being scolded too often. (Prov. 22:15) The family circle bulges with strains that finally cause breaks.

This is the type of constant bombardment that can go on day and night against the modern family in this shaky world. With families reaching the breaking point, fresh problems arise that threaten the whole human social structure. Has it come to the point where it is impossible for a united family to operate? Is it too difficult to create and maintain the wholesome family spirit, the attitude of family loyalty and togetherness? Not at all!

Helpful suggestions for:

MAINTAINING THE FAMILY CIRCLE

ALL of us in the family circle—father, mother and children—hold a common interest in the well-being of the family. It should not be left up to the father to be the sole responsible one. The family circle has a common interest in food, clothing, shelter, health and growth. We all share in family blessings and family reverses. Above all, the entire family needs to maintain a healthy spiritual relationship with Jehovah God. While the father takes the lead, the others should share and cooperate in all these matters. True, the father is the major breadwinner, but the others may have to share in the load at times.

In these days of rising prices, inflation, it is practical for the family to have a budget. The family members need to develop a right viewpoint. Children should not be demanding things and insisting on their own ways. All need to cooperate by

giving loving assistance. With this right spirit all members will exercise care to live within the family total income. Let all be content with basic family sustenance. (1 Tim. 6:8) Avoid going into unnecessary debt. The Bible says: "Do not you people be owing anybody a single thing, except to love one another." (Rom. 13:8) You young folks, when you sit down at the table, are you "clean-platers"? Do you take only the food that you can eat so that there will be no leftovers for the garbage? Yes, we should avoid wastefulness. Let us be careful to spend our money for necessities first, not for luxuries.

Now, you young folks, what are you contributing materially to the happy family spirit? How many of you shared in doing garden work last spring and summer and helped in growing food for your family? It is a worthwhile project to learn how to produce food, because harder days may



The family should enjoy inexpensive recreation together

lie ahead and all may need to share in getting basic food on which to live. You say that you live in the city with no garden in which to work? Well, then, you young teen-age boys, how many repairs have you made around the house for your parents during the past six months? There are always repairs needed for the house, and they should not all be left up to father to make. Perhaps your father can train you and assist you to be making basic home repairs and maintaining the car.

You teen-age girls, have you taken an interest in preparing meals for your household? How many pastries and cakes have

you learned to bake? These are pleasant duties that mothers can share with their daughters. Children should not be allowed to become idlers, "wallflowers," just wasting their time away. Rather, our children should be welcomed as participating members of the happy family circle. Let us develop the spirit of helpfulness on the part of every member of the household.

In this way our family circle will indeed become a group of happy friends-loving associates. Children need to become close friends with their parents, freely communicating with them concerning all problems. You as parents should not have

a domineering, bossy relationship in the household. Rather, the father should be like Jesus, the "Eternal Father," who made his disciples his friends. Jesus took his disciples into his confidence. (Isa. 9:6; John 15:14) So likewise, you fathers, gain the confidence of your children. It is a good plan for family members to take their recreation together on a family basis, arranging vacations to the liking of all in the family. Make it a change of pace, wholesome, relaxing, educational and inexpensive. The key to developing the right family spirit is spending time doing things together. Genuine companionship builds family unity.

HOUSEHOLD NEATNESS

A happy household always reflects itself in the home. The home should be kept clean and comfortable. All members of the household can contribute toward maintaining the happy home in such a clean, Christian way, so that it is in order, ready to receive guests and callers. Then no family member will be ashamed to receive his friends when they call. A tidy, presentable home reflects the spiritual cleanliness of true Christians.

A united Christian family also sees to it that the grounds around the home are kept neat and well trimmed. Some families, to keep their yard maintenance to a minimum, see to it that it is designed with just basic shrubbery and floral displays. They avoid complicated, decorative landscaping that might consume considerable time for upkeep. With modestly designed premises, family groups can work together for an hour or two a week to maintain their household exterior as a credit to the neighborhood. Thus neighbors will not be able to charge that the many away-from-home activities of the busy Christian family have brought neglect to the home. At the same time, friendliness with the neighbors may be maintained on the part of all

in the household. Remember, untidy yards and homes poorly kept on the inside can become "causes for stumbling" to neighbors who might otherwise heed our Christian message. Let the spirit of a happy, well-ordered home radiate to the neighbors round about.—1 Cor. 10:32.

BIBLE AIDS FAMILY SPIRIT

Family Bible reading became common in Europe and America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Discussion of the Bible's message brought spiritual guidance to the family and enabled basic principles of righteousness to be impressed on receptive hearts. In many homes, the Bible became a powerful factor in building a wholesome family spirit.

In this twentieth century, Jehovah's Witnesses have stressed the importance of Bible study in the homes. Daily discussion of Bible texts and weekly enlarged study of the Sacred Scriptures have provided the basis for a united Christian family. Not only has there been a reading and hearing of the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12) and of the fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), but families have been moved actually to become "doers of the word." (Jas. 1:22) Under the leadership of the father, basic Bible truths have been discussed in a way to stir the hearts of all in the family. This, in turn, has helped families to be fruitful in joyfully performing good works toward others in the family and to those on the outside. By manifesting unselfishness, families have come to share in the contentment Jesus referred to when he said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

Featuring the Bible in the home demonstrates a recognition of the fact that Jehovah God is the great Father and Provider for the household. (Jas. 1:17; Ps. 145:16) Not only a healthful family relationship, but each one's personal relationship, with God is in this way encour-

aged and maintained. Godly devotion with contentment comes to be great gain in the family. (1 Tim. 6:6) All in the family come to feel that they are wanted and needed, and are encouraged to serve Jehovah together wholeheartedly. The household comes to feel truly safe and secure.

In former times, households of wholesome Christian spirit featured daily family prayer. Not only was prayer offered at mealtimes, but also at the close of the day when the family kneeled together in reverence. The father would speak to God on behalf of the entire family, expressing gratefulness for the day's joys and requesting forgiveness for mistakes. Similarly, in current times, households of Jehovah's Witnesses are "vigilant with a view to prayers." (1 Pet. 4:7) The family that keeps close to God in prayer is helped in molding a wholesome family spirit.

HUMILITY AND THE HOME

Humble parents with Christian good sense are quick to listen to their happy children's expressions. Both father and mother are alert to commend and to express confidence in their children's good qualities. Parents should be slow to criticize, particularly in public, endeavoring always with firmness and kindness to build up a good spirit and relationship, and to keep the lines of communication open with their children. The parents should never give the appearance of feeling that they are never wrong, as this in itself could create a barrier. The father does not abandon his Scriptural role of headship, but still he can be humble. (Jas. 3:2) There may be times when he needs to correct himself before the entire family and make adjustments in some of his decisions.

Parents should not be expecting too much of their little ones or be harping about their children's weaknesses. Through objective and helpful conversation at the table, improvements in conduct can be en-

couraged in a kind, humble way. When handling family problems and matters, the parents do well to strive to be positive and cheerful. It is to be recalled that second in the list of fruits of the spirit is "joy." (Gal. 5:22) Also, children should not be expecting too much of their parents. They too need to be humble and considerate, waiting for leadership to be taken by their elders.—Eph. 6:1-3.

Where the children's opportunities for association with other Christian children are limited, parents should themselves try to become good companions for their little ones. Where children do have many friends, parents do well to get to know these friends of their children, befriending them also. Parents can help children to have upbuilding friendships by inviting children with a good attitude to come to their home, with or without their parents.

"Home, Sweet Home"! These words aptly describe happy homes of God's people down to this day. As Jehovah continues to bless his people with the necessities of life, and, above all, with rich spiritual provisions, the many "homes" of his people on earth are equipped to reflect the happiness of His great universal household. (Ps. 104:1, 14, 15; Matt. 4:4) They become havens of true peace and security despite the divisions of these "critical times." (2 Tim. 3:1-5, 13) Truly, for appreciative children and parents, there should be "no place like home." As children get older, joyful memories and love for aging parents will urge them to return home whenever opportunity affords, be that even for a few hours, the better to reflect on and express thankfulness for the peace, security and wholesomeness of their earlier years. Yes, "Home, Sweet Home"—however humble that home of our childhood days may have been—should always hold for us fond memories of fine training and a family spirit built solidly on the basis of God's Word, the Bible.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

- "I want a world free of inequality and violence; I would like to build a society in which I could walk down the street without being stared at because of my color." This expression by a high school girl of Asiatic background was cited by "The Toronto Star" as typical of an idealism reflected in letters written by Catholic youths to Emmett Carter, the bishop of London, Ontario, Canada.

Carter had toured the Catholic schools of his diocese and had invited the students to write to him. He received almost 2,000 letters on various matters. According to the newspaper, the correspondence revealed that the youths "are consumed with idealistic passion for a world free of injustice, discrimination and hate."

In the face of today's realities, such a world may seem to be merely an idealistic dream. But is it? Not among Jehovah's Christian witnesses who comply with God's will that they "exercise justice." (Mic. 6:8) They do not practice discrimination, for they know that "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) And from a study of the Scriptures, they are confident that Jehovah God soon will make it a global reality—"a world free of injustice, discrimination and hate."—2 Pet. 3:13.

- "Botanicas," shops selling religious and other items, are common in the Puerto Rican neighborhoods of New York city. Articles sold in these stores include Roman Catholic medals and spiritist amulets. Says the journal "Natural History": "As the [spirit] medium is apt to prescribe Catholic prayers and attendance at Mass along with 'santería' [certain spiritistic] rituals, so 'botanica' products call on African gods and Catholic saints and Jesus Christ" on their labels. The magazine also states: "The same cross fertilization is obvious in the 'botanica's' stock of religious jewelry: Catholic medals and scapulars, spiritist amulets

Fitting "Cross Fer- tilization"?

shaped like small rosary beads, or miniature black hands."

This Catholic-spiritist mixture is apparent at infant baptisms, when families often have priests bless the child's spiritist amulet and its Catholic medal, thinking both (worn on a single chain) are required to shield the baby from evil. "Some priests bless both objects without comment," remarks "Natural History."

Evidently many see nothing incongruous in such religious "cross fertilization." And "Natural History" comments: "Besides serving as community therapy, spiritism also represents a colorful alternative to the relatively inexpressive Roman Catholic ceremonies."

God's Word, however, lists the "practice of spiritism" among "the works of the flesh" that bar a person from inheriting God's kingdom. (Gal. 5:19-21) The Scriptures also require that those desiring God's approval "flee from idolatry," and that they "worship the Father with spirit and truth."—John 4:23, 24; 1 Cor. 10:14.

- Writing in the magazine "Sports Illustrated," William Oscar Johnson states: "All the tricks the knee is capable of remained unknown for so long because men didn't put it through the stresses and strains it undergoes routinely in present-day athletics."

"Bodily Training" —How Beneficial?

Knee injuries are quite common among athletes, and Dr. Robert Kerlan remarks: "The fact is, the human anatomy is simply not constructed for the games men play today."

Many factors, including fame and a sizable income, move men to participate in various sports, some of which are quite dangerous. But are such things as money and public acclaim really worth one's endangering life and limb? Or should something else take first place in a person's life? Upon reflection, many have shown that they agree with the Christian apostle Paul, who wrote: "Bodily training is beneficial for a little; but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come."—1 Tim. 4:8.

In Our Portuguese Hamlet —God's Word Exerts Power

As related by Eva Maria Carvalho

MY BROTHER'S name is Adam. My name is Eva. A little background will help you to understand why my father gave us these names.

Father was born in 1879 in a very conservative Catholic community, some 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of Lisbon. He was a farmer and raised a family of nine children. He was a God-fearing man.

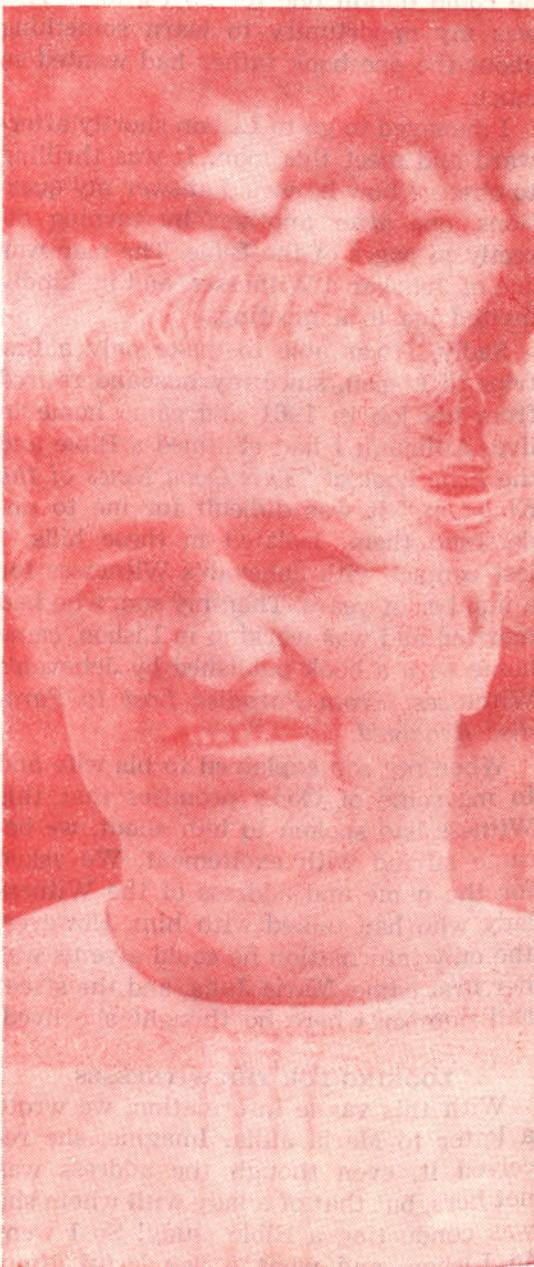
After eating, father would often pray to God at the table, thanking him for the day. Because of father's refusal to cheat and take advantage of others, he came to be called 'the poor man.' And yet, in spite of this, there was not a man in the community who was more respected.

Father had heard people say that the true word of God was written in a book, the Holy Bible. I remember him remarking: "It must be a very expensive book; I don't think I'll ever be able to own one." He was told that Adam and Eva were the names of the first man and woman created by God. So when we were born, this was a fine reason, in his mind, to give my brother and me these names.

Father died without ever seeing a Bible. I remember him as a good man. The little he knew about God was important to him. This fact, along with the name he gave me, had a tremendous impact on my life.

OBTAINING A BIBLE

Years passed. I married and raised a family here in these same hills where I



grew up. We live in Serra de Alrote, a tiny hamlet of some 35 homes. But for a time my husband was working in Lisbon.

Upon arriving home one weekend, he told me that a fellow worker had talked to him about the Bible. He had said that he could obtain one for 25 escudos. This was my opportunity to learn something about the one book father had wanted so much.

I managed to go to Lisbon shortly afterward and meet this man. It was thrilling to observe how he would answer my questions, one after another, by turning directly to pages of the Bible. The man was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and he kindly invited me to a meeting.

Sadly, I was able to make only a few trips to Lisbon, since my husband retired from his job in 1961 and came home to live. Although I had obtained a Bible and the little booklet "*This Good News of the Kingdom*," it was difficult for me to understand them. Isolated in these hills, I lost contact with Jehovah's Witnesses for a number of years. Then my son, who had married and was working in Lisbon, came home with a book published by Jehovah's Witnesses, *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*.

When my son explained to his wife and to me some of God's promises that this Witness had spoken to him about, we became stirred with excitement. We asked for the name and address of the Witness lady who had talked with him. However, the only information he could give us was her first name, María Julia, and the street and number where he thought she lived.

LOOKING FOR THE WITNESSES

With this vague information, we wrote a letter to María Julia. Imagine, she received it, even though the address was not hers, but that of a lady with whom she was conducting a Bible study! So I went to Lisbon, and what a wonderful after-

noon I spent with María Julia! Hearing the Bible's truths explained was so heart-warming.

Lisbon, though, seemed far from our home in Serra de Alrote, especially as public transportation was then quite difficult to find. I was told that the nearest congregation to our home was at Malveira, some 14 miles (23 kilometers) distant. In May 1969, I went to Malveira to meet a Witness and was told that someone would come to see us. However, there was a long delay. Little did I then realize how busy the few Witnesses were in this area caring for the scores of interested people, all anxious, like me, to have a home Bible study.

SEEDS OF BIBLE TRUTH KEPT ALIVE

In the meantime, María Julia, in Lisbon, was regularly maintaining a Bible study with Argentina, my daughter-in-law, by correspondence. Whenever an opportunity arose I would speak about the Kingdom hope with our many relatives. Yes, that *Paradise* book eventually found its way into all the homes of our relatives who live in these hills. My brother, Adam, along with his family, was also now interested. And María Julia started additional studies, by correspondence, with more and more of our relatives.

We will never forget the excitement when my daughter-in-law, Argentina, came back from Lisbon in October 1969, with the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. She was told that whoever accepted this book was entitled to a six-month free study course in the Bible. Then the person could decide for himself if he wanted to act on the knowledge. That night, several of us talked about how urgent a matter this was. In fact, we stayed up the entire night, huddled around a kerosene lamp reading the *Truth* book almost from cover to cover.

REGULAR MEETINGS START

It was on January 25, 1970, that a Witness from Malveira came to Serra de Alrote. To be sure, it was not an easy place to find. The only access is a small dirt road twisting up through the hills. No homes can be seen from the main road, and at that time no sign identified any kind of settlement. But up here, tucked away in these hills is our tiny hamlet.

When he arrived, Brother Basilio was amazed to find a small group truly hungering and thirsting for Bible knowledge. Some of us were then up to chapter 16 in our study of the *Truth* book. Arrangements were made for a regular study every 15 days, since it was a round trip of 27 miles (44 kilometers) to his home, and he was busy with several other Bible studies.

After a few studies, we said: "Two weeks is a long time! Since gasoline is so expensive we will help to cover the costs. Then perhaps we can have our study every week!"

Well, Basilio gladly consented. As a result, the seven adults present at his first study all dedicated their lives to serve Jehovah, and symbolized this by being baptized on May 16, 1971. In a short time, our home Bible study became a congregation book study. My daughter-in-law, Argentina, was now conducting seven of her own Bible studies weekly, many with relatives all here in the hills.

PERSEVERANCE BRINGS RESULTS

Not all relatives, however, readily accepted what they were learning. My own son, José Pedro, who is married to Argentina, is a typical example. He first wanted to see the world, then settle down. So he joined the merchant marines. One trip he made to the United States turned out to be a real blessing. He visited the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York.

In Coming Issues

- **Human Kindness Essential for Happiness**
- **"An Excellent Woman" Displays Loyal Love**
- **Our Incoming World Government —God's Kingdom**

There he saw hundreds of young men and women coming from the factory on their way to the Bethel home for a meal. He said to himself: "This is really something! All these young people, my age, busy and happy in Jehovah's work."

A Witness who spoke Portuguese showed him around the buildings, and the spirit he observed among Jehovah's people at Bethel deeply moved him. Soon afterward he changed his job, was baptized and is now a ministerial servant in our congregation.

Evaristo, the brother of my daughter-in-law Argentina, strongly resented our talking to his wife about the Bible. When Argentina started a Bible study with his wife, he warned her: "Be careful what you are doing! I don't want any problems with my wife. I would be very thankful if you stopped putting strange ideas into her head."

Evaristo's wife spoke to him about God's warning of an impending world destruction, similar to the flood of Noah's day. (Matt. 24:37-39) This caused Evaristo to think seriously, for as a young boy he had read in the Bible about Noah and the destruction of wicked mankind by the flood. Since he was in the navy and would travel, he decided to take a *Truth* book with him on one trip. He also obtained a Catholic Bible so he could prove to himself whether

such doctrines as hellfire, Trinity and the immortality of the soul were taught in it. He checked every Bible text mentioned in the *Truth* book and after one month was convinced that Jehovah's Witnesses were teaching the truth. The results were thrilling.

Evaristo started to attend meetings on furlough. Shortly before being discharged from the navy, he began to share in the preaching activity. In September 1972 he was baptized with the second group from our hills, and is now serving as a zealous ministerial servant in the congregation.

My niece's husband, Antonio, was very opposed to the Kingdom message. While he was serving in the armed forces in Angola, his wife started to write letters telling him the wonderful things that she was learning from the Bible. When Antonio found out that she was studying with the Witnesses, he requested leave, expressly for the purpose of going home to "save" his wife. What a surprise awaited him!

All his accusations were calmly answered from the Bible and within one month, he, too, was convinced that Jehovah's Witnesses were teaching the truth. He returned to Angola a different man. His companions thought that he was crazy, for he would stay up at night to read. All their efforts to get him to share in their immoral life were unsuccessful. Antonio was later baptized on July 15, 1973, with the third group from this area. He, too, is now one of our ministerial servants.

PERSECUTION

All this time the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses was illegal in Portugal. When we started holding meetings in this hamlet, some neighbors reacted strongly and reported our activity to the G.N.R. (National Republican Guard). A policeman came to visit us, telling us that he knew meetings were being held regularly in my son's home. He ordered us not to meet there

again. When the time for the next meeting arrived, we gathered as usual, but in my home. The police were informed and quickly arrived to find us all together having a Bible study.

The policeman said: "Didn't I order you before to stop these meetings?"

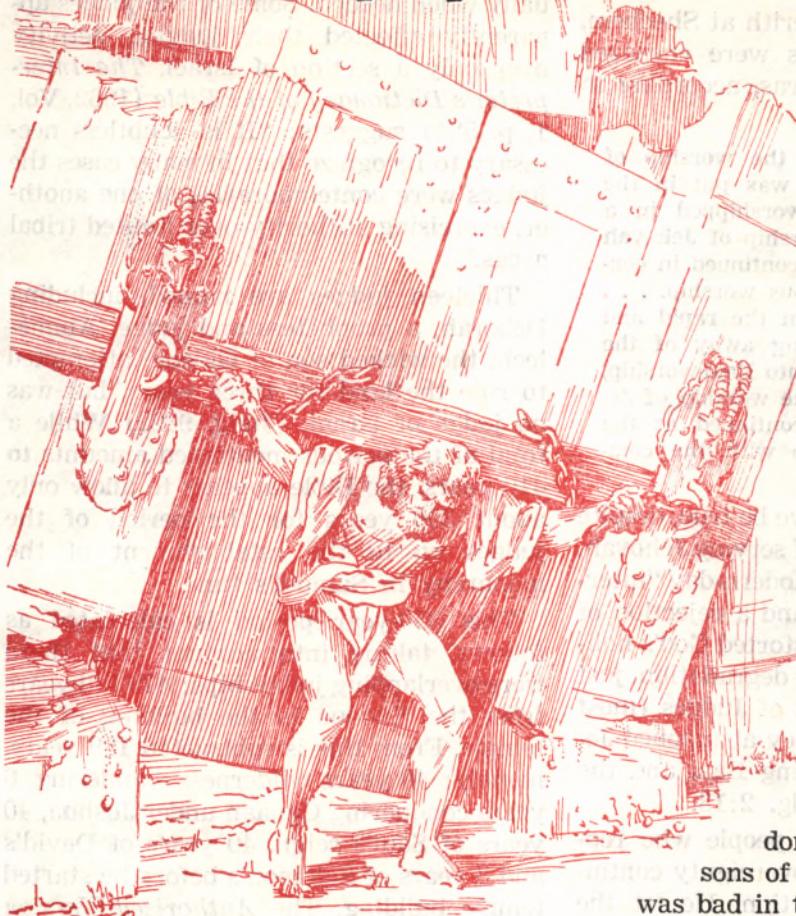
I answered: "Yes, you said in the home of José Pedro. Now we are not in my son's home. This is my home, a different home." The policeman was truly bewildered and left without saying a word.

Our neighbors were relentless in their determination to stop our Christian meetings. We saw the wisdom of avoiding needless confrontations. So we held the meetings each week on different days, at different hours and in different homes. Once after a meeting, Basilio found the two rear tires of his car flat. A closer look showed that they had been punctured in several places.

The neighbors wanted us arrested at all costs, and finally went to the principal police station for this area in Loures. Soon after, on a meeting night, a G.N.R. jeep arrived at our hamlet accompanied by 15 armed soldiers in another vehicle. For some reason we had held our meeting that night an hour earlier than usual. Oh, how the police were disappointed that their plans were thwarted! We saw many a neighbor's head peeking out from behind nearby buildings apparently anticipating a victory. Much to their chagrin the police left empty-handed.

Times have changed here in the hamlet. The persecution of our neighbors has died out. Among our family and relatives, the Word of God has truly proved to be alive. All told, we are now 28 Witnesses of the Most High God, Jehovah; a total of 41 attend the meetings and there are five ministerial servants. All of this in a little hamlet of some 100 inhabitants! Surely, God's Word has exerted power here!—Heb. 4:12.

Success only by reliance on Jehovah



PERFECT holiness, firmness for what is right, coupled with mercy and long-suffering—these are the outstanding qualities of God demonstrated in the Bible book of Judges. And the fact that no success can come without wholehearted recognition of and reliance on him is the chief lesson taught. The account bridges the somewhat unsettled period of Israelite history between the death of Joshua and the events leading to the establishment of the kingdom under Saul.

The history of the period of the judges

is one of Israel's alternately falling into idolatry and oppression by their enemies and their returning to Jehovah, with resulting deliverance. Under the strong and faithful leader Joshua and the men of Joshua's generation, who had been eyewitnesses of God's majestic power exercised in behalf of those who worshiped him, they had success. But now "another generation began to rise after them that did not know Jehovah or the work that he had done for Israel. And the sons of Israel fell to doing what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah and serving the Baals."—Judg. 2:10, 11.

HOW ISRAEL WAS ENSNARED BY IDOLATRY

Even though they had not personally seen all of God's works, why would a nation with Israel's background, and knowing God's law and his hatred for idolatry, fall into such a snare? As Bible scholars Keil and Delitzsch* explain:

"With regard to the nature of Baal and Astharte worship, . . . it is evident from the more precise allusions contained in the

* Commentary by Keil and Delitzsch on the book of Judges, pp. 269, 270 (Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.).

history of Gideon, that it did not consist of direct opposition to the worship of Jehovah, . . . but that it was simply an admixture of the worship of Jehovah with the heathen or Canaanitish nature-worship."

The worship of Baal-berith at Shechem, into which the Israelites were ensnared after Gideon was dead, was, according to this commentary,

"simply a corruption of the worship of Jehovah, in which Baal was put in the place of Jehovah and worshipped in a similar way . . . The worship of Jehovah could even be outwardly continued in connection with this idolatrous worship. . . . This will serve to explain the rapid and constantly repeated falling away of the Israelites from Jehovah into Baal-worship, at the very time when the worship of Jehovah was steadfastly continued at the tabernacle in accordance with the commands of the law."

Nonetheless, if the above be true, despite its outward appearance of serving Jehovah, this practice, similar to modern-day "inter-faith," was a forsaking and a rejection of Jehovah. It altogether distorted God's holiness and was a disgusting degradation, just as the writer of the book of Judges (most likely Samuel) says: "They abandoned Jehovah and took up serving Baal and the Ashtoreth images."—Judg. 2:13.

God could not let the people who represented his name and sovereignty continue to receive his protection. He let the enemy nations remain in the land and used them as instruments to punish unfaithful Israel. For his name's sake and for discipline—to preserve Israel so that his law and his truth might remain—God let them come under oppression. When they came to their senses, got rid of their idol gods and appealed to him in sincerity, he delivered them. (Neh. 9:26-28) This he did by raising up judges.

JUDGES CALLED DIRECTLY BY GOD

Jehovah called the judges directly and bestowed miraculous power on them so

that they could deliver Israel. They often continued for some years to judge during times of peace. They did not follow a line of succession but were raised up individually when needed. Some of the judges apparently effected their judging activity over only a section of Israel. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (1962, Vol. 1, p. 584) suggests: "It is doubtless necessary to recognize that in many cases the judges were contemporaries of one another, exercising authority over limited tribal areas."

Thirteen judges are named, including Deborah, a prophetess and judge. Abimelech, the wicked son of Gideon, attempted to rule the land for three years, but was no judge of Israel. (Judg. 9:22) While a total of the periods mentioned amounts to 410 years, the Bible appears to allow only about 350 years for the period of the judges up to the establishment of the monarchy in Samuel's time.

This 350-year period is calculated as follows, taking into account that there were overlapping judgeships: 479 full years from the Exodus to the building of the temple. From this is subtracted 129 years, namely: 40 years wilderness wandering, 6 years conquering Canaan under Joshua, 40 years of Saul's reign, 40 years of David's and 3 years of Solomon's before he started temple building. The *Authorized Version* reading of Acts 13:20 is not according to the earliest Greek manuscripts.—Deut. 2:7; Josh. 14:7, 10; Acts 13:20; 2 Sam. 5:4; 1 Ki. 6:1.

MIRACLES PERFORMED IN JEHOVAH'S STRENGTH

It is thrilling to read the accounts of the exploits of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah and the other judges. Barak, with 10,000 men, completely destroyed a huge enemy force that possessed 900 war chariots armed with iron scythes projecting from their sides or from their axles.

(Judg. 4:3, 16) Gideon, with 300 men, routed an army of 135,000 Midianites. (Judg. 7:19-22; 8:10) Jephthah struck down 20 cities of the oppressing Ammonites. (Judg. 11:32, 33) Samson carried the tremendous gates of the Philistine city of Gaza several miles to the top of a mountain and deposited them there. He slaughtered a thousand of these hard-set enemies of Israel in one battle, singlehandedly. Finally, he killed more at his death than during his lifetime, when he pulled down the great temple of the Philistine god Dagon while the Philistines were offering their idolatrous sacrifices and exulting over their capture of the strong man of God. Three thousand died.—Judg. 15:14, 15; 16:1-3, 28-30.

Samson's work was highly important, for he 'took the lead' and began to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines at a time when even the leading tribe of Judah trembled and cowered in fear before them. (Judg. 13:5; 15:9-13) Under the prophet Samuel this crushing of the Philistines was carried further, and King David finally subjugated them altogether.

Some persons may wonder why a woman, Deborah, became a judge of the nation. Her place of judgment was under a palm tree, where the people approached her so that she could judge their problems and cases according to the Mosaic law. She was also a prophetess. She never led the army of Israel into battle, but she encouraged and strengthened Barak, a man of Naphtali, to take leadership in the fight against King Jabin of Hazor, who had oppressed Israel for 20 years. And she was willing to accompany Barak in the attack. (Judg. 4:4-9) The fact that a woman was used in this manner seems to reflect the low spiritual state to which Israel had fallen at that time. It appears that there was no man in the northern part of Israel that had the strong faith and the

prominence to take the lead. But God's spirit that came upon Barak, together with the assurance given him by Deborah, who was an inspired prophetess, impelled him to gather together an army of 10,000 men and to achieve an astounding victory.

—Judg. 4:10.

VICTORY ONLY THROUGH PURE WORSHIP

The last five chapters of Judges are not chronologically placed. These chapters are, in effect, appendices to the book of Judges. Chapters 17 and 18 record the beginning of idolatrous worship shortly after the death of Joshua and the sin and unrighteousness connected with it from its very start. The last three chapters depict how deep-rooted the corruption produced by the influence of the Canaanites had become at that early period. And this helps us to see why God commanded the extermination of the Canaanite peoples.

However, this latter account, which describes the war waged against Benjamin by the other tribes because of Benjamin's extreme moral degradation, also illustrates how Israel as a whole had kept itself from such corruption. The tribes showed great zeal for what was right. But they had evidently relied on themselves and their action was not primarily motivated by interest in clearing reproach from Jehovah's name. Here, as throughout the accounts of the judges, the absolute need to rely wholly on Jehovah is emphasized in this way: Even with their zeal for clean worship, the 11 tribes seemed to rely on their own power in the first two attempts to punish Benjamin. They were defeated in these battles, sustaining a loss of 40,000 men. High Priest Phinehas was with the sacred Ark that had been brought from Shiloh to Bethel, where the army was encamped. But after the two defeats they fasted and offered burnt offerings and communion offerings, thereby recognizing the need for Jehovah to fight the battle

for them. Only then did Jehovah deliver the Benjaminites into their hands.—Judg. 20:20-29.

A reading of the book of Judges is faith-strengthening. It is a powerful testimony to Jehovah God's holiness and insistence on pure worship and to his great mercy toward those who call on him in sincerity.

and truth. The book inspires confidence in its readers that they can come off victorious by 'rolling their works upon him.' Through his appointed Leader and Great Judge Jesus Christ, deliverance will come to those putting their trust in Jehovah, no matter how great the obstacles.—Prov. 16:3; Rom. 8:35-39.



Basis For A Purposeful Life

"See what sort of love the Father has given us, so that we should be called children of God."—1 John 3:1.

EVERY normal person would like to make something of his or her life. But many make the complaint that the

1-3. What factors interfere with the enjoyment of life? (Eccl. 1:15; 2:18-21; 4:1-3; 9:11, 12)

system in which we live offers little to encourage real purpose.

² These individuals point to the fact that a person may start out with a goal, spend years getting an education in his chosen

field and then find that he cannot get employment. A good many college graduates are having to accept common labor for a livelihood.

³ On the other hand, those who have achieved financial success know that a war or other calamity can quickly wipe out all that they have gained. And the death of a loved one can doom them to a life of loneliness.

⁴ Looking at things in this way, some say, 'God is dead.' That is, God has no concern for humankind's affairs. But, having designed and brought forth the universe, God does have intense interest in dealing with it. In fact, in the mind of God there is a future for man and a purpose toward every person who lives, or has lived. Furthermore, that purpose takes our feelings into consideration, so that our fulfilling life's purpose also means our fullest happiness and enjoyment. That is what we want, is it not?

OUR HELPLESS CONDITION

⁵ But it must be admitted that mankind is powerless to change matters. The inspired psalmist Moses described our helpless situation: "In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things; for it must quickly pass by, and away we fly."—Ps. 90:10.

⁶ Man's helplessness in getting free from enslavement to death is expressed in the forty-ninth psalm, verses six to nine: "Those who are trusting in their means of maintenance, and who keep boasting about the abundance of their riches, not one of them can by any means redeem even a brother, nor give to God a ransom for him;

4. (a) Why do some say, 'God is dead'? (b) How does Jehovah feel about mankind? (Job 14:14, 15; Lam. 3:34-36; Jonah 4:10, 11)

5. How did Moses describe mankind's situation?

6. Why are humans unable to free themselves from enslavement to death?

(and the redemption price of their soul is so precious that it has ceased to time indefinite) that he should still live forever and not see the pit." The writer of the psalm knew that the price was too precious, too high, beyond the reach of all mankind. As far as imperfect man's ability was concerned, relief was so far away that it was "to time indefinite," actually beyond hope.

⁷ This sad, helpless situation is upon us all because our forefather Adam sold his future offspring, without their consent, into slavery to sin and death. The price he received for the "sale" was the selfish doing of what he wanted to do, stepping out in independence, in rebellion against God. Hence, everyone is, just as the apostle Paul said that he was, "fleshly, sold under sin." —Rom. 7:14.

⁸ So, if man was ever to be delivered, God had to act to make provision. Sincere ones cry out: "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the sake of the glory of your name; and deliver us and cover over our sins on account of your name."—Ps. 79:9.

GOD CANNOT OVERLOOK SIN

⁹ Does Jehovah God hear this prayer? And, if he does, can he answer it? Is man's powerlessness a problem that God can solve? Here, indeed, is a real problem. It arose about six thousand years ago. The first man, Adam, had joined with God's enemy, Satan, in bringing wickedness into the earth. He made himself an enemy of God, and his children, who, inheriting sin and imperfection from him, performed unrighteous works. As the apostle Paul tells us, Adam brought the human race into the position of enemies of God.—Rom. 5:10.

7. How did Adam sell his offspring, and what did he receive from this "sale"?

8. On account of their enslavement, how might sincere persons make their appeal to God?

9. Into what situation did mankind come with reference to God?

^{at} ¹⁰ Nevertheless, Jehovah loved his creation, knowing that they could not help themselves. But in his love for mankind, could he condone the wickedness that Satan, along with Adam, had brought into the universe? Could God say to any sinning individual, 'Well, I like you and want to show you mercy, so I'll just overlook your sin'? In harmony with his justice and righteousness he could not ignore sin and let it go unaccounted for. If he should do this, he would be undermining the foundation of his government, for the Bible says: "Justice and judgment are the foundation of your throne."—Ps. 89:15, *New American Bible* (89:14).

¹¹ We have an example in some nations of earth today of the results of being "soft" with and, in effect, condoning lawlessness. In many cases they have been slack and not zealous in acting against wrongdoers. Criminals have been let run loose. The result has been that people lose faith in the governments, and everything finally breaks down. However, the Universal Ruler will not let that take place with the laws that he made.

THE SOLUTION THROUGH A "SEED"

¹² From the human viewpoint, there was no solution to the problem. But Jehovah works out seemingly impossible problems in a marvelous way, still maintaining the dignity of his universal sovereignty and, at the same time, extending mercy. After seeing the outcome, we are moved to say, 'It just couldn't have been done in any other way and have been so thorough, righteous and altogether good.' So, as the Bible shows, at the very time that God pronounced judgment upon Adam for his sin, God revealed that he would come to the rescue of the human race when he an-

nounced: "He [the seed] will bruise you [Satan] in the head." (Gen. 3:15) As time went on, God would let men see the outworking of his purpose.

¹³ Who, particularly, would be designated by God to be the "seed" eventually to crush Satan's head? Jehovah's only-begotten Son! He was chosen as the primary one to serve for the settlement of the issue regarding the worthiness and righteousness of Jehovah's rulership or sovereignty, which had been challenged. Why did Jehovah choose this great One who was so close to his heart? Well, when Satan made his challenge it called into question the loyalty of all creatures in the universe, right up to this Son of God. More than that, the question of loyalty would focus more on him than on any other one of God's creatures, because he was the chief Son of Jehovah, next to Him in the universe.

¹⁴ Furthermore, in the Proverbs, chapter eight, this Son, symbolized by wisdom, says, speaking of God's creative work: "The things I was fond of were with the sons of men." (Vs. 31) He deeply *loved* mankind. He gladly took this assignment to vindicate his Father, first out of loyalty to Him and, additionally, out of the love that he had for mankind.

¹⁵ Because of the universal issue involved, Jehovah the Universal Sovereign permitted sin to exist for a time in order to settle the question of his sovereignty and of the loyalty of his great family of intelligent creatures. He also had to take time to lay a foundation for the removal of sin and then to allow sinful humans opportunity to learn of and to take hold of his arrangements. So, altogether for a good purpose and for a relatively short period in universal time, God has let wrongdoing take place. Really, the way that God

10, 11. (a) Why could Jehovah not simply overlook the sin that had come into the universe? (b) What illustrates that a minimizing of lawlessness results in serious problems?

12. After Adam sinned, how did God reveal the means by which he would rescue the human race?

13. Who did the 'seed of the woman' prove to be, and why was he the one chosen by God?

14. How did the Son of God feel about mankind?

15. Why has God permitted wrongdoing to continue?



—those who sinned did not—sinners of dug
has decided on is the *only* way that he
can effectively and genuinely help man-
kind.

A LEGAL BASIS FOR DEALING WITH MANKIND

¹⁶ Now, in order to have dealings with

those who were born in sin, though it was through no fault of their own, God had to have some legal basis on which to deal with them. Otherwise, all men would have to die forever, since God's law required that sinners be removed from the universe. Only the sacrifice of another man, a perfect one, as that "precious" price that was beyond humankind's reach, could buy back

16. Why was a legal basis needed for God to deal with humankind?

what Adam had lost, canceling off the judgment that God's righteous court had against humankind. About this, Jesus said: "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many."—Matt. 20:28.

¹⁷ By establishing this legal basis, Jehovah would demonstrate the rightness of his universal rulership. At the same time he could extend mercy to humans. The apostle Paul expresses it in this way:

¹⁸ "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus. God set him forth as an offering for propitiation [that is, a covering for sins] through faith in his blood. This was in order to exhibit his own righteousness . . . in this present season, that he might be righteous even when declaring righteous the man that has faith in Jesus."—Rom. 3:23-26.

¹⁹ Thus, God deals with the human family through his Son, Jesus Christ, who acts as Jehovah's representative in the matter. The sacrifice of his life offset the judgment, purchasing the human race. Then, those obedient to God's arrangement can come to have a legal standing with Him. The apostle Paul said of this merciful action on the part of Jehovah and his Son: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all."—1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

²⁰ God, in his wisdom, designed the only means by which he could help humankind to get a righteous standing and a hope of everlasting life as members of his clean, righteous, perfect universal family. At the

exactly appropriate moment in his time schedule, God performed his act of greatest generosity. He sent his Son from the heavens to earth, to become a human. Here on earth this Son could first and primarily prove that perfect men who love God can be loyal to God and his rulership through any and every test or circumstance. His life could also be the ransom price for humankind, for there was among them no perfect man to provide this price. This, of course, would require that he die.—Titus 2:11-14.

JESUS CHRIST, OUR HELPER

²¹ By his faithful course Jesus qualified to become the Helper of all who desire to serve God. The apostle John wrote: "If anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one. And he is a propitiatory [covering] sacrifice for our sins."—1 John 2:1, 2.

²² Now, the Devil has tried to find fault with God's servants from the time of Abel, the son of Adam. In fact, Satan is called "the accuser of our brothers . . . who accuses them day and night before our God!" (Rev. 12:10) So, in due time in the contest with respect to integrity, Jesus Christ has appeared before God as a helper. He has access to the throne of God in our behalf. When faithful servants of God have made a mistake, have committed a sin, and have sincerely repented and confessed, Jesus has presented the merit of his sacrifice so that they should not be put to death—for his propitiatory sacrifice can cover their mistakes and sins.

²³ The apostle Paul describes the fight that he had, and that all other Christians have, and how, in spite of their best efforts, they will make mistakes, though not

17, 18. What would God be demonstrating by establishing this legal basis?

19. How do humans get a proper standing with Jehovah God?

20. What was the Son of God to accomplish while on earth?

21. According to 1 John 2:1, 2, what did Jesus' faithful life course qualify him to become?

22. Why do God's faithful servants not lose their approved standing when they fall short in some way?

23. What attitude toward our sinful state must we maintain?

deliberately, insolently and willfully. He said: "The good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice. If, now, what I do not wish is what I do, the one working it out is no longer I, but the sin dwelling in me." (Rom. 7:19, 20) The value of Christ's atonement sacrifice as applied for their sins, over which they repent and make confession, is the basis for their being declared righteous.—1 John 1:9.

²⁴ Also, in Jesus' office of helper, he has proved before God that the Devil's charges against Christians are slander. He calls attention to the Christians' acts of faith and their calling on God in true repentance when they have sinned. For he knows that, as stated at Hebrews 6:10: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering." Jesus has also shown before the heavenly court that the servants of God on earth have realized their own incompetence and lack of righteousness and have called for mercy on the basis of Christ's sacrifice—God's appointed way.

²⁵ And Jehovah God has accepted Jesus' intercession for them. The Devil has been defeated in every attack he has made. Thus Jesus has loyally carried out his high priesthood, protecting them from all condemnation, as the Bible says: "Therefore those in union with Christ Jesus have no condemnation. For the law of that spirit which gives life in union with Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."—Rom. 8:1, 2.

²⁶ The prophet Isaiah helps us further to see how Christ imparts real life to all who exercise faith in him. Isaiah wrote prophetically of Christ's sufferings and

said, speaking to Jehovah: "If you will set his soul as a guilt offering, he will see his offspring." (Isa. 53:10) Christ does not get offspring through the natural method. When he was on earth he had the power to have a family of his own. But he did not. Instead, he gave up that potential in his sacrifice. As he said: "The Son of man came . . . to give his soul a ransom *in exchange for many.*"—Matt. 20:28.

²⁷ Jesus therefore became the "last Adam." The first Adam brought forth a family, an imperfect one, with bad traits. Jesus Christ brings forth a family that attains to righteousness. Individuals can be transferred from the family of Adam and be regenerated through the sacrificed life of Jesus Christ and, by putting on the new personality, they can come to be 'in his image.' They can be cleaned up to be sons of the "Eternal Father," the "last Adam." Jehovah has "set his soul as a guilt offering," and accepts this offering to atone for the guilt of all who exercise faith.—1 Cor. 15:45; Isa. 9:6.

²⁸ Truly, because of what Jehovah God and Jesus Christ have done for humankind, our life can have real purpose. All who avail themselves of the atoning benefits of Jesus' sacrifice during his rule as King-priest can become perfect human children of God's Son. This leads also to their being counted as children of the Most High for all eternity and living under righteous conditions. How so? Because Jesus is not bringing forth a family to keep as his own. After bringing them to human perfection, he turns purchased and rehabilitated mankind over to Jehovah God, "the Father, to whom every family in heaven and on earth owes its name," in order for God to prove their unbreakable loyalty and worthiness to be his children forever.—Eph. 3:14, 15; 1 Cor. 15:26, 28.

24. In his position as helper, how can Jesus prove that the charges of Satan are false?

25. Why do those in union with Christ have no condemnation?

26, 27. How can individuals be brought forth as children of Christ, with a clean standing before God?

28. For whom is Jesus Christ bringing forth a family of perfect humans?

Your Maker Deeply Cares About You

"God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35.

THE Most High God has already demonstrated his superlative love for mankind. Though he deeply loved his only-begotten Son, Jehovah God arranged matters for this one to die in our behalf so that we could be reconciled with Him and eventually enjoy everlasting life in perfection. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8) In view of this, could we imagine that God would regard humans as just a *mass* of "faceless" persons, or that he would select a certain group on which to bestow his favor and then simply ignore the rest?

² That could never happen! God recognizes every person as a distinct individual. His "will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Tim. 2:4) The apostle Peter, seeing God's acceptance of Gentiles into the Christian congregation, exclaimed: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man [the individual person] that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him!"—Acts 10:34, 35.

³ Jesus Christ was sent by God to give himself "a corresponding ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:6) He 'tasted death for *every man*,' buying the entire race. (Heb. 2:9) Would it, then, be logical for God's Son to have an unconcerned attitude, saying,

in effect: 'I gave my lifeblood for everyone, but of what importance is this one person? Whether he loses his life or not makes no difference to me'? Never! Under his kingdom each individual to whom his ransom applies will receive attention, with opportunity for life.

⁴ Therefore Jehovah is always willing and ready to grant his help and to show his love to anyone exercising faith in him. And the intensity and constancy of his love are far greater than what we are able to express toward others. Note God's love for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were imperfect men but who served him wholeheartedly. *Centuries later*, Jehovah's love was as strong as ever. Moses told the nation of Israel: "To your forefathers did Jehovah get attached so as to love them." (Deut. 10:15) He put up with the nation's stubbornness for centuries because of this love.—Mal. 3:6.

⁵ Jehovah's love is just as great and lasting for those who serve him today. He is, so to speak, watching for an opportunity to "get attached" to anyone who calls on him in sincerity and truth. "As regards Jehovah," says the Bible, "his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him." (2 Chron. 16:9)

1. How great has been God's love for mankind, and so what would it be hard for us to imagine?
2. How does Jehovah view each person?
3. Why can we be confident that under Christ's Kingdom rule each individual will receive attention?

4. What do we learn from the Bible about the constancy of God's love?

5. Does Jehovah want to express love toward just a select few?

"His ears are toward their supplication."
—1 Pet. 3:12.

⁶ As Jehovah views the earth and sees the many distresses that men undergo, he has deep feeling for humankind. His desire is to help each one of them. Though he does not 'turn a blind eye' to wrongdoing, he is looking for people's good points, rather than their faults. Said the psalmist: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" No, rather, in viewing us, Jehovah remembers that we all "are dust."—Ps. 130:3; 103:14.

⁷ When on earth, God's Son was *anxious* to use his power to help people. When a leper said to him: "If you just *want to*, you can make me clean," Jesus "was moved with pity, and he stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him: '*I want to*. Be made clean,'" and with that he cured him.—Mark 1:40, 41.

⁸ Jesus' healing of people who came to him for help was accompanied by deep feeling. In the same way Jehovah God and his Son are at this time showing concern and love for anyone who has paused in the affairs of everyday life to give consideration to the "good news" about God's purpose. Are you right now looking into God's Word in a genuinely searching way and getting some knowledge about Him? If so, this in itself is evidence that he is interested in you. How can this be said with assurance?

⁹ That statement is true because God sees some goodness of heart in anyone sincerely inquiring into his Word. As a result, he opens that one's mind to understanding. Jesus said: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him." (John 6:44) You cannot understand the purposes of God without the help of God's

spirit. If you are learning about God's purpose, you can be sure that he is helping you.

GOD'S APPRECIATION—AN EXAMPLE

¹⁰ In thus responding to your effort to get understanding, God is displaying another fine quality toward you. That quality is *appreciation*. You no doubt have and express appreciation for most things that others do for you, and you may say, Thank you, or make some other gesture. But the appreciation that humans feel is far less deep and heartfelt than is God's appreciation of those who show faith in him and who have respect for his Word. He *rejoices* in them. Jesus even spoke about *joy in heaven* over one sinner that repents or forsakes wrong things in order to please God. (Luke 15:10) Why, Jesus said that a person giving just a cup of cold water to one whom he recognized to be a servant of God would by no means lose his reward. (Matt. 10:42) And Jehovah's reward always far exceeds the value of worship or service that one renders to him. Jehovah observes and appreciates each one who respects his name and treats his people kindly. So his heart and his help go out to that person.

¹¹ When a woman came into the house where Jesus was eating a meal and poured perfumed oil on his head, Jesus was so appreciative that he said: "Truly I say to you, Wherever the good news is preached in all the world, what this woman did shall also be told as a remembrance of her." And his words have proved true, because the woman's good deed, though small, is recorded in the Scriptures and has been called to the attention of millions.—Mark 14:3-9.

¹² We, in turn, should show appreciation

6. What shows that God does not look for faults?

7, 8. (a) How did Jesus demonstrate that he really wanted to help people? (b) What should the tender feeling of God and Christ toward humankind move us to do?

9. What does Jehovah do for one who sincerely examines His Word?

10. What shows that Jehovah appreciates his servants?

11. How does Mark 14:3-9 reveal that Jesus, too, was appreciative?

12. What effect should the appreciative spirit of the Father and Son have on us?

for God's kindness in helping us to know about his purpose and in giving us the opportunity to get everlasting life. A person should be thankful that God has seen fit to allow him to be like the people to whom Paul preached in Antioch in Asia Minor. There certain Jews who claimed to serve God opposed the truth. But the record states: "When those of the nations [Gentiles] heard this [the opportunity to be accepted by God], they began to rejoice and to glorify the word of Jehovah, and all those who were rightly disposed for everlasting life became believers." (Acts 13:48) Those people appreciated God's kindness. This appreciation helped them to be the kind of people that God is pleased to accept.

A HEARER OF PRAYER

¹³ Now, we know that God has communicated his purpose to us. Can we, in turn, communicate our inmost thoughts and heartfelt desires to God? Yes. That is by means of prayer. You need not fear that God will not listen to you. His only requirement is a sincere heart and the acknowledgment that one is a sinner, needing help. One who cries out to him will be shown what to do. Such a person will come to know that prayers addressed to God must be through Jesus Christ as God's appointed High Priest. The apostle wrote: "For we have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin. Let us, therefore, approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time."—Heb. 4:15, 16.

¹⁴ What are proper subjects for prayer? Anything that will affect one's relationship to God; anything that will affect one

spiritually. The apostle John said: "No matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us."—1 John 5:14.

¹⁵ Asking "according to his will" would mean that we would not pray for things that promote strictly selfish interests, such as riches, position above our fellowman, revenge, selfish pleasures and like things. But, for example, a single person, desiring marriage may petition God for help with regard to finding a suitable mate or in living a balanced and a useful single life if such a mate does not immediately become available. Married couples may pray regarding their having children, or for wisdom in rearing children. We have the examples of Hannah, who prayed to God for a child, and of Samson's parents, who asked for advice on bringing up their son. (1 Sam. 1:10-17; Judg. 13:8-14) Also, we can pray for harmony in our marriage, asking him to bless our efforts to make our marriage a success. Even a move to another location or another job may be a subject for prayer, because one's family may be economically and, along with this, spiritually affected.

¹⁶ Such matters, though intimately personal, definitely affect our lives and require adjustments in which we need God's wisdom. God is interested and is pleased to hear us present such prayers to him. Whatever it is, the desire to find and to do God's will is the primary factor. Of course, each person has his own circumstances, different from those of others, and this will affect the subjects of his prayers.

¹⁷ The answer from God can be confidently expected in the form of wise guidance suited to the person's own individual case. God promises: "I shall make you have insight and instruct you in the way you should go. I will give advice with my eye upon you."—Ps. 32:8.

13. Through whom must prayers be addressed to God, and why should we not fear that he might not listen? 14-16. What can we properly pray for, and why?

17. What confidence does Psalm 32:8 give us respecting God's answering our prayers?

Seeking Jehovah's direction through united prayer can help couples to maintain marital harmony



¹⁸ Of course, having prayed, the individual should then be consistent and act in harmony with his prayer. He should seek for counsel on the problem, first, from the Bible. As the psalmist said: "I have called with my whole heart. Answer me, O Jehovah. Your regulations I will observe." (Ps. 119:145) God, knowing our problems in advance, saw to it that counsel on all human problems was written in his inspired Word. The person may also consult others who can help him to see what

do so, he will not be showing God that he has faith or that he is really concerned about getting God's answer. That was the point in Jesus' parable about the widow who persisted in appealing to the judge for relief before he finally granted it.

—Luke 18:1-8; Jas. 1:5-8.

¹⁹ The person who prays and acts with faith in God can be assured that he will be guided so as to take the most beneficial course. He will really come to *know* God, who promises: "The intimacy with Jehovah belongs to those fearful of him." (Ps.

18. What may acting in harmony with our prayers include?

19. How can we come to know God better?

25:14) God's dealings with him will be a reality, and he will realize that he is 'walking with God,' being sustained, guided and loved by God. The fear of God mentioned in the psalm is not a morbid fear, but a wholesome respect for God. If you love God you will want to take your problems to him, and you will have no fear of being rebuffed or rejected. Of such inhibiting fear, the apostle John wrote: "Perfect love throws fear outside, because fear exercises a restraint."—1 John 4:18.

²⁰ You should never be fearful or hesitant to take to Jehovah the most intimate matters, whatever they are, including your sins. He will not view your problem as foolish or laugh at you as humans may do. "He gives generously to all and without reproaching." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—Jas. 1:5; 1 John 1:9.

A REWARDER

²¹ Furthermore, it is entirely proper, and not selfish, to look for God, not only to hear our prayers, but also to reward us for faithfulness to him. Jehovah wants us to look toward the reward of life as something that he enjoys giving, knowing that we appreciate it and will use it in the right way. Jehovah wants us to know that he is the kind of God who rewards those who love him. He is not like many worldly persons who have no appreciation or consideration for those who do things out of love or loyalty. And a god without appreciation for loyalty, who never rewarded his servants, would be unworthy of worship. But Jehovah God is loyal; he is warmhearted

20. Why should we not fear to come before Jehovah with any problem?
21. How does Jehovah want us to feel about his being a rewarder, and what effect should this have on us?

and draws close to his friends. To those who have faith in him, he promises: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you."—Heb. 13:5.

²² So, in becoming an intimate friend of God, communicating and walking with him, there is great reward now. And there is a greater reward to look forward to, of things far beyond what we are able to conceive. Our maintaining faithfulness to God gives, first of all, a better life *now*, with a *purpose*, and great freedom from the problems and worries that this world experiences. (Eph. 3:20) Then, there is the prospect of being a part of the "foundation" of the "new earth." What a joy it would be to be in on the "groundwork" of making the earth a paradise! How grand to be on hand to receive others back in the resurrection and to teach, help and train them! There is an exciting future before us—a fine purpose in the life ahead!

²³ But do not belittle the marvelous opportunity you have to serve God *now*. For this is the last time that people will have an opportunity to take their stand for God's side of the issue of universal rulership *amid a whole world of people who do not know God's provisions*. Furthermore, it is the last opportunity to proclaim the "good news" to these people under conditions of opposition. What a fine way to prove your loyalty to God! Doing this brings the greatest reward. Now is the opportunity to work as a member of "God's household, which is the congregation of the living God, a pillar and support of the truth" in sharing and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom to others.—1 Tim. 3:15.

22. (a) What rewards do we enjoy even now from serving God? (b) What blessings are still future?
23. Why is it important for people not to delay in taking their stand on God's side, and what does this involve?

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The First Three "Happinesses"

JESUS opened his Sermon on the Mount with a series of nine statements that describe persons who are truly happy. In the first of these "happinesses," Jesus said: "*Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.*"—Matt. 5:3, NW; *An American Translation*.

"Those conscious of their spiritual need" are, according to the literal Greek of Matthew, persons "poor [as] to the spirit." Luke's parallel account reports Jesus as saying: "Happy are you poor, because yours is the kingdom of God." (Luke 6:20) Jesus pointed out that an important reason for his coming as Messiah was "to declare good news to the poor." (Luke 4:18) This does not indicate any special merit in being poor or that the poor automatically have God's favor. But, primarily,

those who followed Jesus and had been given the hope of sharing in the blessings of God's kingdom were drawn from among the poor or common people. (1 Cor. 1:26-29; Jas. 2:5) Those downtrodden ones knew themselves to be poor "as to spirit" (spiritually) too. Rather than succumbing to bitterness due to external circumstances, they became "conscious of their spiritual need," more fully aware of their dependence on God.

In contrast, Jesus declared: "But woe to you rich persons, because you are having your consolation in full." (Luke 6:24) Material wealth often dulls consciousness of spiritual need. An example can be seen in Jesus' words of rebuke to certain Christians at Laodicea, Asia Minor: "You say: 'I am rich and have acquired riches and do not need anything at all,' but you do



Jesus' words caused people really to think about their relationship with God

not know [that is, are not conscious that spiritually] you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked.”—Rev. 3:17.

The reason for happiness on the part of those conscious of their spiritual need is that “the kingdom of the heavens *belongs to them*.” They accepted Jesus as Messiah, and this opened up opportunities for them to rule with him in God’s heavenly kingdom by Christ. (Luke 22:30; John 14:1-4) How it must have warmed the hearts of humble “commoners” to learn that they could be in line for the kingdom of God, whereas rich and highly educated persons who trusted in their wealth and viewed the common people as “accursed” were not! (John 7:49) Of course, wealthy persons could manifest the same spirit of humility and a spiritual appreciation that would gain happiness for them as well.—1 Tim. 6:17-19; Jas. 1:9, 10.

WHICH MOURNERS COMFORTED?

As the second “happiness,” Jesus stated: “*Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted.*” (Matt. 5:4) The parallel account by Luke reads: “Happy are you who weep now, because you will laugh.”—Luke 6:21.

“Those who mourn” are not all persons who express sadness. Rather, they are the same kind of persons as “those conscious of their spiritual need” mentioned in the previous statement of Jesus. Their mourning is a “godly sorrow” over their own sinful state and the distressing circumstances that have resulted from human sinfulness. (1 Cor. 5:2; 2 Cor. 7:10) They heed the counsel of Bible writer James: “Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you indecisive ones. Give way to misery and mourn and weep.”—Jas. 4:8, 9.

These godly mourners “will be comforted.” (Compare Luke 2:25.) Among the comforts forthcoming through Jesus Christ

are forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

The mourners to whom Jesus referred can be called “happy” both now and in the future. Because of exercising faith in Jesus, they enjoy the well-being that stems from a favorable relationship with Jehovah God. (John 3:36) And as for future happiness, those who now mourn because of the unrighteousness of humankind can look forward to ‘relief at the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus.’—2 Thess. 1:7, 8.

In contrast to the happiness pronounced upon those who mourn, Jesus declared: “*Woe, you who are laughing now, because you will mourn and weep.*” (Luke 6:25) This does not condemn laughing and having a good time. Jesus was evidently referring to pleasure seekers whose lives are dedicated to their own comforts. They neither mourn over their inherited sinful state nor feel sorry for the suffering of fellow humans. Such individuals seek their own “comforts” in a self-satisfying course of life and the fleeting pleasures that it can bring.

Jesus emphasized that their frivolous laughter is only for “now.” Such individuals will “mourn and weep” when God brings an end to the present system of things that has provided the occasions for their hilarity and merriment. (Matt. 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30) In harmony with Jesus’ words, James admonishes: “Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves in the eyes of Jehovah, and he will exalt you.”—Jas. 4:9, 10; 5:1-6.

HAPPINESS FOR THE “MILD-TEMPERED ONES”

Next, Jesus said: “*Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the*

earth." (Matt. 5:5) To what type of persons did he refer?

In the Scriptures the term for 'mildness of temper,' or "meekness," does not suggest cowardice, weakness or a veneer of condescending, hypocritical gentleness. On the contrary, meekness is an inward quality of mildness and peaceableness that people exercise first of all in their relation to God, in their response to his will and guidance. Rather than becoming embittered at widespread oppression and injustice on earth, truly meek individuals discern that these woes are due largely to human imperfection. Toward God they feel, not bitterness, but a keen sense of dependence. This frame of mind, in turn, reflects itself in conduct toward fellow humans that harmonizes with the counsel: "Return evil for evil to no one. . . . If possible, as far

as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men."—Rom. 12:17-19; Titus 3:1, 2.

The happiness of these mild-tempered ones is because "*they will inherit the earth.*" How does that come about? Jesus, who in a perfect sense was "mild-tempered and lowly in heart," is the principal Inheritor of the earth. (Ps. 2:8; Matt. 11:29; 28:18; Heb. 1:2; 2:5-9) The Hebrew Scriptures foretold that the "son of man" would have associate rulers in his heavenly kingdom. (Dan. 7:13, 14, 22, 27) As "joint heirs with Christ," the mild-tempered ones will share in Jesus' inheritance of the earth. (Rom. 8:17) Additionally, in the earthly realm of Jesus' kingdom, many other 'sheeplike' persons will enter into everlasting life. (Matt. 25:33, 34, 46) A happy prospect indeed!

International Conventions Need Many Willing Workers

JEHOVAH'S Christian witnesses are rightly noted for their zeal, their willingness to work together to get things done. Typical is what occurred when they built an assembly hall near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. An illustrated newspaper report stated that "approximately 200 men, wearing hard hats and work clothes, were pouring concrete and laying brick at a construction site and not one of them was getting paid." Among other things, it also quoted one of the Witnesses having oversight as saying: "Sometimes . . . we have more men out here than we need." A few days later the same paper told of a deacon who, by way of contrast, be-

moaned that hardly anyone showed up to help in a project that was being sponsored by a "vast number of Protestant churches."

Zeal has ever marked Jehovah's true servants. Surely the tabernacle in the wilderness and its furnishings required much hard work. Did Moses find it necessary to compel, or force, his people or to pay them to do the necessary work? Absolutely not! Those Israelites back there were appreciative volunteers, even as we read: "Moses proceeded to call . . . every wise-hearted man into whose heart Jehovah had put wisdom, everyone *whose heart impelled him to approach the work in*

order to do it." (Ex. 36:2) The account goes on to describe what all those willing-hearted ones were able to accomplish.

The apostle Paul spoke of himself as performing his ministry willingly. (1 Cor. 9:17) And he counseled that giving material aid to needy fellow believers should be done willingly, not under compulsion, "for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7) And the apostle Peter admonished older men, elders, to perform their duties, "not under compulsion, but willingly."—1 Pet. 5:2.

Annually our district assemblies offer fine opportunities for willing souls to serve their brothers zealously and unselfishly. And at the coming international conventions this will be the case still more.

As Jehovah's loyal dedicated servants, we are all interested in letting God's Word prove true, even as Jesus did, by carrying out all that had been foretold regarding him. (Rom. 3:4; Luke 24:26, 27, 44-46) Do we have the same loyal spirit regarding God's prophetic Word? Then we will offer ourselves willingly, freely, cheerfully at these conventions, for Jehovah God caused to be written in his Word: "Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force . . . You have your company of young men just like dewdrops." (Ps. 110:3) Have we not been living in the day of Jesus Christ's military power since 1914? Indeed we have. He is still carrying out Jehovah's foretold will regarding him. Should we not also be carrying out what Jehovah foretold about us?

The coming international conventions promise to be occasions of great spiritual feasting. The Governing Body is working hard, together with other brothers at head-

quarters, to provide a fine spiritual banquet for all of Jehovah's servants able to attend. The same can be said of the brothers at the branches in those lands where these assemblies will be held. But it is not enough just to prepare this spiritual food. There must also be fine provisions for distributing this nourishing spiritual bread to all attending these conventions, as well as the arrangements to care for their other needs. That means volunteering to help out at such conventions. There is truly work for all. Especially needed are those "wise ones" who have professional experience or ability to take the oversight in directing the various departments. All others can volunteer to help wherever 'the need is great,' as attendants, or in the cleaning and sanitation, cafeteria and refreshment departments, to mention but a few.

Yes, willing workers, many of them, will be needed if the brothers attending the 1978 International Conventions are to be made comfortable and able to hear and enjoy the programs provided by the "faithful and discreet slave." The brothers serving on the platforms have the privilege of dispensing the spiritual food. Supplying the material necessities and conveniences is also important. Only if both spiritual and material needs are properly provided will all those coming to these conventions be truly built up spiritually. They will then be able to return to their homes with the same mental attitude that the Israelites of old had upon returning to their homes from the dedication of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem—"joyful and feeling good at heart over the goodness that Jehovah had performed toward his people."—2 Chron. 7:10.

QUESTIONS from READERS

● If children in the household of elders or ministerial servants come under a "charge of debauchery," what determines whether the family head can continue to serve the congregation in an appointed capacity?

The Scriptures are very clear that married men serving in the congregation should be exemplary family heads. We read: "The overseer should therefore be . . . a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness; (if indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?)." (1 Tim. 3:2, 4, 5) "Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife, presiding in a fine manner over children and their own households."—1 Tim. 3:12.

The congregation rightly expects elders, ministerial servants and their families to be fine examples in Christian living. (Compare 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3.) If that should cease to be the case, this can have a damaging effect on the spiritual welfare of the congregation. For example, if the children of elders and ministerial servants are lax about applying Scriptural principles, this can embolden other children in the congregation to do likewise and to excuse their wrong conduct. (Compare 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:31, 32.) The situation becomes even more serious when children of elders and ministerial servants engage in gross wrongdoing.

So, when such children bring disgrace upon the family and the congregation, the body of elders should determine whether the father qualifies to continue serving as an elder or as a ministerial servant. His feeling personally that he qualifies to serve despite developments in his household should not determine the decision reached by the body of elders.

For a man to continue serving, there should

be clear evidence that he is capable of giving needed spiritual help to his household and that he has not been seriously negligent in this regard. An alert father usually can detect problems in his family before they get out of hand. As a man who knows how to preside over his household, he is able to take steps to control undesirable situations in his family. While his children may commit wrongs, he should be able to give them the needed guidance and discipline so that they do not become 'debauched' persons.—Titus 1:6.

Of course, there may be times when a child departs from the way of the truth or slips into wrongdoing despite a father's commendable efforts to help the family spiritually. His other children may well be fine examples in Christian living, testifying to their having received good parental training. On the other hand, if one minor child after another when residing at home gets into deep spiritual difficulty upon reaching a certain age, and brings reproach on the family and the congregation, there is serious question as to whether the father is 'presiding over his household in a fine way.' Care must then be exercised not to excuse the situation simply by pointing to Scriptural examples of those who did not turn out well, including Esau, the sons of Samuel and the like. (Gen. 25:27-34; 26:34, 35; 1 Sam. 8:2, 3, 5) It should be kept in mind that most of those referred to in the Bible as going astray were adults, fully capable of making their own decisions. They were not subject to the same kind of authority and guidance as are minor children in a household, and it is such ones we are here considering.

In view of the spiritual danger that can result to the congregation when the children of elders or ministerial servants engage in wrongdoing that is truly gross, men whose children are involved should cooperate fully with the body of elders in ascertaining the facts. They should not minimize such gross wrongdoing of their children or try to conceal it so as to retain their position. Also, they should avoid undue harshness toward the children. (Eph. 6:4) These fathers should be sincerely interested in helping their wayward children spiritually to

the extent circumstances allow. Of first concern should be the *spiritual condition of their family* and not whether they can continue serving in an appointed capacity.—Compare 1 Timothy 5:8.

Hence, if gross wrongdoing by children in the household does raise serious questions in the congregation about a man's presiding in a fine way over his family, he should not continue serving as an elder or as a ministerial servant. When the man serves as an elder and his fellow elders allow their judgment and decision to be swayed by friendship or sentimentality to the point of sidestepping Scriptural principles, then especially can his continuing to serve as an elder, though unqualified, be spiritually hurtful to the congregation. This is because it can undermine respect for the entire body of elders. It can provide an excuse

for other children in the congregation to engage in wrongdoing. So, it is good to keep in mind that the man's abilities as a speaker or an organizer or his likable personality are really not the point at issue. The determining factor is whether he is fulfilling his role as a father in a fine way. *Only if he is* may he continue to serve. Of course, when that is so, the body of elders should avoid being unduly critical and faultfinding in reviewing his family situation.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 12: Basis for a Purposeful Life. Page
16. Songs to Be Used: 23, 118.

March 19: Your Maker Deeply Cares About You. Page 22. Songs to Be Used: 41, 42.