

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

APRIL 1, 1971

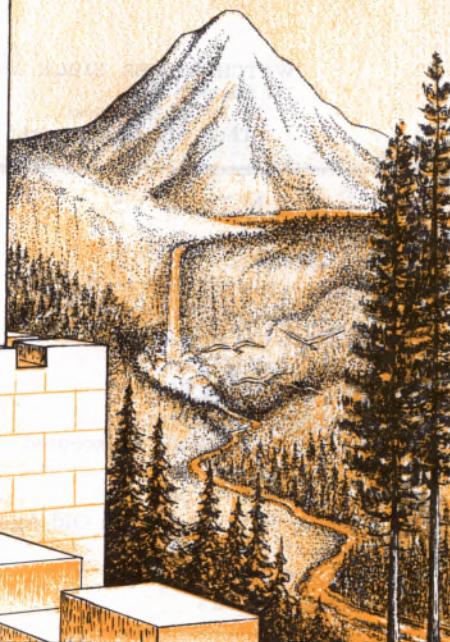
Semimonthly

UNITING
THE DIVIDED HOUSEHOLD

WORLD GOVERNMENT IN THE HANDS
OF THE "PRINCE OF PEACE"

THOSE WHO CHOSE THE
BEST PLACES

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"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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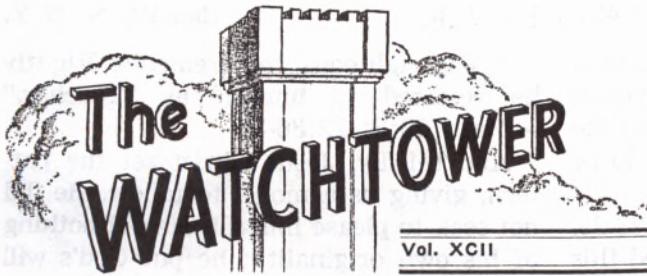
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Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

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April 1, 1971

Number 7

Will You Be Present

—FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 9?

PRESENT where? At the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Christian witnesses, after 6 p.m., Standard Time.

For what purpose? To celebrate the Lord's evening meal or "Lord's Supper." This was commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on the last evening before his death.

Last year more than 3,225,000 persons attended this celebration that was held in upward of 26,000 congregations throughout the world. Will you be among those in attendance this year?

Has your interest in religious subjects been limited to your perusing this magazine or other publications of Jehovah's witnesses? Why not widen out by attending the celebration of the Lord's evening meal at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses? You will doubtless be impressed with the sincerity of the presentation as well as the simplicity and the reasonableness of what is said on that occasion. But that is something that you can prove to yourself only if you attend.

Are you one of those who are studying the Bible with the help of a witness of

Jehovah? If so, we earnestly invite you to attend. It will enhance your understanding and appreciation of God's Word and purposes. More than that, you

will see just how Jesus Christ directed that the Lord's evening meal be celebrated, and this will aid you to grasp the meaning of it all.

Or have you recently begun to share in preaching the good news of God's kingdom? Then you will certainly want to be present with all others who have been preaching this good news in your locality for many years. It will strengthen your faith to continue as a proclaimer of the good news.

Do you happen to have one or more members of your family who are witnesses of Jehovah, while you yourself are not? Why not join them as they attend the Lord's evening meal at the local Kingdom Hall? It will make them happy to have your company and you are sure to reap a spiritual blessing.

Of course, all Christian witnesses of Jehovah, whether they have a heavenly hope or an earthly one, will be present; they would not think of missing out on such an occasion. And not only will they be there themselves, but before then each one will be busy inviting others to attend.

Among such ones will be those with whom they are conducting Bible studies, or upon whom they make return visits from time to time, as well as those they know to be subscribers for this magazine.

The Bible, at 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, tells just how Jesus Christ instituted this memorial of his death. It says: "The Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread and, after giving thanks to God, broke it and said: 'This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me.' In the same way, he took the cup after supper, and said: 'This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me.'"—*New English Bible*.

What benefits can you expect to derive from attending the Lord's evening meal? Since Jesus commanded its observance—"Do this as a memorial of me"—there is certain to be a blessing for obedience to his command. This occasion builds up one's appreciation of what Jehovah God did in giving his only-begotten Son so that all who believe on him may not perish but gain everlasting life.—John 3:16.

In particular does the Lord's evening meal remind us of what Jesus Christ did for us. And what did he do in our behalf? First of all, as the Word of God he left heavenly glory, came to earth as a human and gave his life as a ransom for the sins of the world. (Matt. 20:28; John 1:1, 29) Jesus not only said, "There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends," but exemplified this great love by doing that very thing. (John 15:13, NEB) So his death is of keen interest to all of us.

Secondly, as the Great Teacher he revealed God's will to us. He taught his followers the truth, which truth sets them free from bondage to sin, to the fear of man, to false religion. He helped them to get better acquainted with Jehovah God

and His righteous requirements. Rightly he referred to himself as "Teacher."—Matt. 23:8; 22:36-39.

And thirdly, Jesus Christ set the pattern, giving us a model to follow. He did not seek to please himself. He did nothing of his own originality; he put God's will ahead of his own. As we read: "To that you were called, because Christ suffered on your behalf, and thereby left you an example; it is for you to follow in his steps."—1 Pet. 2:21, NEB; John 14:10.

All who attend the celebration of the Lord's evening meal, with the right mental attitude, and who pay close attention to the truths there presented will surely benefit greatly. Their gratitude to Jehovah God and Jesus Christ will grow; they will gain a better understanding of God's will for them and they will be strengthened in their determination to do what is pleasing in God's sight. They will also discern better than ever before how Christians can truly be at unity.

The celebration of the Lord's evening meal will open with words of welcome and the singing of a sacred song by the congregation, followed by prayer. Then you will hear an upbuilding Biblical talk about the meaning, purpose and benefits to be derived from this celebration. This will be followed by blessings asked upon the bread and the wine, and the serving of first the unleavened bread and then the red wine. Comparatively few will partake, for last year, of the more than three million attending, only some 10,500 partook. After further appropriate remarks the meeting will close with sacred song and prayer.

There will be no collection taken nor will anyone be pressed to contribute or to join something. All who are conscious of their spiritual need will truly want to be on hand for this occasion, April 9, 1971. Will you be present? We warmly encourage you to do so.

WHY should you be interested in a world government? Persons in increasing numbers are today. For what reason?

Fear is the main factor with many. True, logic alone tells us that having scores of divided, and often uncooperative, political systems brings inefficiency, waste, disagreeable hindrances. So, some men "began dreaming of a world government as early as the 1300's," according to *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1970 edition, Vol. 20, page 363). But it was the shock of World War I that made men think seriously of world government. The League of Nations formed at the war's end was a step in that direction. But the League collapsed in World War II. The horrors of that war, and the prospect of an all-out modernized war, moved governments to form the United Nations in 1945.

Since then men have been faced with new dangers. National boundaries and frontiers provide no protection against growing pollution of air, water and land. An economic crisis in one part of the world can now disrupt the interwoven fabric of many national economies, bringing poverty and hunger.

Would you welcome a world government that could solve these problems, bring lasting peace and genuine security? Is there any reason to hope for such a government?

WHY MEN HAVE NOT PRODUCED A WORLD GOVERNMENT

Neither the League of Nations nor the United Nations have been world gov-

WORLD GOVERNMENT

**IN THE HANDS
OF THE
“PRINCE OF PEACE”**

ernments. Why not? Because even as fear edged men toward world government, fear makes them back off from giving up the power that would make such a government possible. Each nation distrusts the others. Men fear that, no matter who forms the world government, sooner or later those ruling will let selfish interests control them.

As the *Encyclopedia* article on "World Government," quoted earlier, says: "Some of the questions that must be solved include the problem of finding leaders for a world government, the problem of keeping it from becoming tyrannical, and the problem of avoiding civil wars, often bloodier than international ones."

Who, for example, would *you* trust to head a world government? What national leaders are doing such a superb job today in their own lands—proving themselves free from favoritism and selfishness, devoted to justice and righteousness, and possessed of wisdom and ability to solve problems—that they would qualify for such a responsibility?

THE SOURCE OF WORLD GOVERNMENT

World government is a certainty—but not by men or political governments. The Bible contains the promise of Jehovah God that it will come. He foresaw the need for world government long before men began to 'dream' about it. Now, thousands of years later, men are finally face to face with undeniable evidence that planet Earth and the human family on it desperately need some kind of effective, unified con-

trol and guidance. With world conditions what they are, is it reasonable to refuse to consider the Bible's promise?

Over 2,700 years ago the prophecy of Isaiah foretold the coming of the one who would head that world government. "For there has been a child born to us, . . . a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this." (Isa. 9:6, 7) That promised one is Christ Jesus, God's own Son. His power to rule comes, not from any grant by national, political governments, but from the Sovereign God himself.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE "PRINCE OF PEACE"

Can you confidently put trust in a world government headed by Christ Jesus, even to the point of making that, and not any political government by men, your real and only hope for life in peace and security? You certainly cannot unless you learn about him, read the record of his life, his words and deeds, the effect his teachings had on others, the kind of persons it produced among those becoming his disciples. Have you ever done this?

Would not honesty rate high on the list of principal qualities that you would look for in one heading a world government, for that matter, any government? Jesus' record for speaking the unvarnished truth caused hypocritical religious leaders of his day to seek his death and political rulers to carry out their wish. But it caused

those who loved truth to love him and become his disciples.—John 8:40, 44-47; 18:37.

Justice, impartiality and wisdom—how desirable in a ruler! Christ Jesus associated with both the rich and the poor and refused to show favoritism to any. His message was the same to all.—Luke 5:29-32; 7:36; 14:1; 19:1-6.

Read what the Bible says about him and you will see that, while courageous, he was also compassionate, tender and considerate. (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; Mark 6:31-34; Luke 7:11-15; 9:10, 11) He was never overbearing nor arrogant.—Matt. 11:28-30.

Shortly now the rule of the promised world government in the hands of this Prince of Peace will be manifest in all the earth. As human anxiety now shows, it will be none too soon! Already 'all authority in heaven and earth' has been given to the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:18) His rule will be firmly established and sustained 'by means of justice and righteousness,' not for a few years but "to time indefinite," even forever! The question is, Will we be the subjects, yes, 'children' of that "Eternal Father"?

Though a "Mighty God," Christ Jesus will *force* no one to live under his world government. But neither will he *allow* persons to live on earth who do not really love righteousness, truth and justice, in brief, who do not love his Father, Jehovah God, nor love their fellowman. What is your choice? What are you willing to do to prove your desire to be his subject?

Today more than one and a half million of Jehovah's witnesses publicly advocate world government in the hands of the Prince of Peace. Associate with them in their Kingdom Halls and learn how you, too, can have the hope of life under his world government.

THOSE WHO CHOSE THE BEST PLACES

SOME persons always want the best things for themselves, and they will take these things before anyone else can get them. Have you noticed this? I have.

For example, at a meal I have seen a big dish being passed. It was filled with delicious pieces of cake. As the dish came around, each person carefully looked over the pieces to make sure that he took the biggest one. Do you think it is right to do that?

There is something else that I have seen happen. A father and mother have taken their children with them to visit a friend. When they came into the friend's house, the children hurried to get the most comfortable chairs. Is this right? Should they take the best seats?

When the Great Teacher was on earth something like that happened. He was invited to a big meal at the house of an important Pharisee. There were many guests invited. As the guests came in for the meal, Jesus noticed that they would choose the best places near the head of the table. They wanted places of honor. Would you like to hear what Jesus said to them?

He told them a story. It contained good advice for those

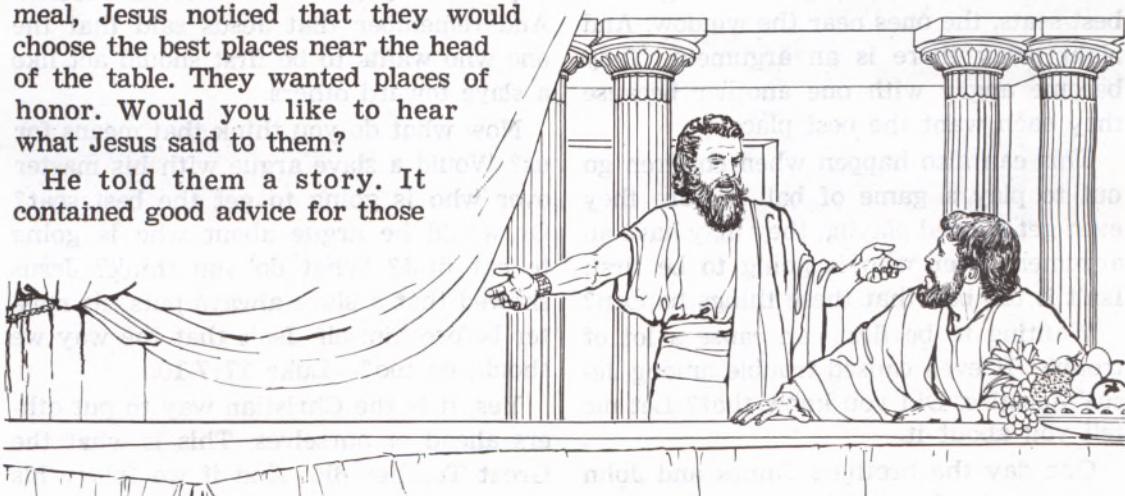
An article specially designed for parents to read with their children

guests, and it has some good advice for us today.

Jesus said: 'Someone may invite you to a big wedding feast. When you go, do not pick the most honored place to sit. For someone more important than you may also have been invited. Then the one putting on the feast may come over to you and say, "Let this man have your place." You will then feel shame as all the others present watch you go to the lowest place.'

Jesus wanted to show those guests, who had been choosing the best places, the right thing to do. So he went on to say to them:

'When you are invited to a wedding feast go and sit down at the lowest place. Then the one who has invited you may come and say, "Friend, we have a better place than this for you!" You will then have honor in front of all the others as you move up to the better place.'—Luke 14:1-11.



Did you get the point of Jesus' story? Let's take an example, and see if you did. Let's say that we were going to have dinner at someone's house. Would you pick the most comfortable chair when you were ready to sit down? Or would you leave the best place for someone else? What do you think Jesus would want you to do?

Take another example. Imagine that you are getting on a crowded bus. Should you hurry to get a seat, and let an old person stand? Would Jesus want you to do that?

Someone may say that it does not make any difference to Jesus what we do. But do you believe that? When Jesus was at that big meal at the home of the Pharisee, he watched what seats people were choosing. And don't you think that he is just as interested in what we do today? Now that Jesus is in heaven he certainly is in a better position to watch us.

Does it bring peace and good feelings between persons when each one tries to get the best place? Or, rather, do they get into an argument and become angry with one another? What do you think?

Sometimes this happens when children go for a car ride together. As soon as the car door is opened, they rush to get the best seats, the ones near the window. And right away there is an argument. They become angry with one another because they each want the best place.

This can also happen when children go out to play a game of ball. Before they even get started playing they may have an argument over who is going to be first. Isn't it too bad that these things happen?

Wanting to be first can cause a lot of trouble. It even caused trouble among Jesus' apostles. Did you know that? Let me tell you about it.

One day the brothers James and John came up to Jesus. These apostles were

close friends of Jesus. So they said to him: 'We want you to do us a favor.'

'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked.

They said to him: 'Let us sit down next to you in your kingdom, one of us at your right hand and the other at your left hand.' These brothers wanted first places in the Kingdom. They wanted honored seats.

But how do you think the other ten apostles felt when they found out what James and John had asked? They were angry! And so Jesus had to give them all some good advice.

Jesus told them that the rulers of the nations want to appear big and important. They want a high position, and to have everyone obey them. But Jesus explained to his followers that they should not be that way. Rather, Jesus said: "Whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all." Think of that!—Mark 10: 35-45.

Do you know what a slave does? He serves other persons, rather than let others serve him. He takes the lowest place, not the first place. He acts as the least important one, not the most important. And remember that Jesus said that the one who wants to be first should act like a slave toward others.

Now what do you think that means for us? Would a slave argue with his master over who is going to get the best seat? Or would he argue about who is going to eat first? What do you think? Jesus showed that a slave always puts his master before himself. Isn't that the way we should do too?—Luke 17:7-10.

Yes, it is the Christian way to put others ahead of ourselves. This is what the Great Teacher did. And if we follow his example we will be pleasing to God.



Uniting



THE DIVIDED HOUSEHOLD

"Wife, how do you know but that you will save your husband?
Or, husband, how do you know but that you will save your wife?"
—1 Cor. 7:16.

DIVIDED households—how could such a thing come about? By one or more members of a household learning God's truth, the truth concerning God's purposes, as revealed in the Holy Bible. Yes, this is what Jesus Christ foretold at Luke 12:51-53: "Do you imagine I came to give peace on the earth? No, indeed, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on there will be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." Not all persons in a family, Jesus shows, will readily recognize or appreciate the truth that comes from God.

² Since God's truth is not popular with this world, many persons oppose it and especially resent it when members of their own household take a stand for God and his kingdom. Divided households, as Jesus' prophecy indicates, were certain to occur. But does this mean that the situation in a divided household is hopeless? that nothing can be done to help the situation? No! Improvement is possible. Jesus is no marriage wrecker, so one's learning God's

truth does not mean breaking up the marriage. The wise and optimistic way to handle a divided household is set out by the apostle Paul at 1 Corinthians 7:12-16:

³ "If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and yet she is agreeable to dwelling with him, let him not leave her; and a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and yet he is agreeable to dwelling with her, let her not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in relation to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in relation to the brother; otherwise, your children would really be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbelieving one proceeds to depart, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace. For, wife, how do you know but that you will save your husband? Or, husband, how do you know but that you will save your wife?"

⁴ Can the believing wife, then, "save" her unbelieving husband by staying with him? Yes, this might be possible. If she does in time "save" her husband, it is, of course, salvation in a relative sense, since salvation is from Jehovah. (Rev. 7:10) But a wife can in a relative measure save her husband, just as a person can use a company's facilities for lifesaving to save

1. What did Jesus Christ foretell with regard to households, and why?

2, 3. Since Jesus is no marriage wrecker, what is the wise way to handle a divided household?

4. In what sense can a believing wife "save" her unbelieving husband?

a drowning man. The company may have a boat with rescue equipment. And when the rescuers see a person floundering in the sea, they throw out equipment to save him. The one hauling the person in from the raging sea is the one most active in the salvation, yet the company, too, must be considered, since it provided the facilities for lifesaving. Jehovah makes the arrangements for salvation, but he uses individuals to have a part in this lifesaving work.

⁵ So the believing wife can "save" her unbelieving husband. She can help him to salvation. How encouraging that is! To do this, the apostle Paul says, let the wife stay with her unbelieving husband. A Christian wife preaches the Kingdom good news to outsiders, so why not try to help members of her own household, especially that one with whom she is one flesh? Thus Christian women with unbelieving husbands should never lose hope that their divided household can be united!

⁶ Consider, for example, the mother of three children in Spain. She was cruelly opposed when she learned the Bible truth. Her husband even applied in a Catholic court for separation, charging that his wife was poisoning the children's minds. The court awarded custody of two children to the father. All seemed lost. But she appealed to God. Later, by chance, the husband happened to meet an old friend. How surprised he was to learn that his friend was now one of Jehovah's witnesses! After a two-hour discussion, a Bible study was started with the husband. He changed, and now his family is "more united than ever before." So Christian wives need never lose hope.

⁷ Also it is well to remember that it is not always a case of the unbeliever out-

rightly hating God's truth. Why, it may be that he simply was not introduced to Bible truth at the same time, and so he resents his mate's being ahead of him. Also perhaps no effort was made to hold a Bible study with the entire family. As a result the unbelieving member may not understand what Jehovah's witnesses really teach and what they are really like. Or could it be that the husband does not want to be taught religion by his wife? There is need for Christian ministers to analyze a situation in which the husband remains an unbeliever. What is the root of the problem?

⁸ Remember, unbelievers differ as to degree. Some bitterly persecute the believer. Some constantly nag the believer, trying to break down integrity. Some subtly discourage the believer. Others show indifference toward true worship. Other unbelieving mates are favorable to God's truth but do little to make spiritual progress. Gradual progress can be made in helping the unbeliever in any of these categories. Showing the proper Christian qualities results in breaking down opposition or in stirring up interest. If the unbeliever is favorable, the believer, with the aid of the Christian congregation, should work toward the goal of uniting the family by means of a home Bible study. If the unbeliever is opposed, the believer needs to endure even under abuse and persecution.

KEEPING INTEGRITY—THE FIRST GOAL

⁹ This brings us to the first goal in a divided household. What is that? The believer needs to keep integrity to God and to obey the one through whom God speaks today—his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. To yield integrity is to yield life itself. (Heb.

5, 6. What, then, is the proper attitude for a believer with an unbelieving mate?

7. What factors may account for a husband's remaining an unbeliever, and so what should Christian ministers do?

8. How do unbelievers differ as to degree, and how can progress be made in helping any unbeliever?

9. (a) What is the Christian's foremost goal in a divided household? Why? (b) If the unbeliever presses the matter to a showdown, then what?

1:1, 2; 2:3; Matt. 10:32-35) When discussing divided households, Jesus said: "Indeed, a man's enemies will be persons of his own household," and then Jesus explained: "He that has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me; and he that has greater affection for son or daughter than for me is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10:36, 37) If it must come to a showdown, then what? The believer must "obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) True, it may be a long war of nerves, but keep the goal of integrity foremost. The believer should refuse to become provoked or loud, when the going gets difficult. Realize that it is better to take abuse than to give it. (Eph. 4:26, 29, 31) And all who are members of the Christian congregation can help these persons who are fighting the battle of integrity on the home front. Encourage them to endure, to keep integrity to Almighty God.

¹⁰ Always remember this: The integrity of the believer is a must to enable the unbeliever to see the importance of loving God's truth. Consider what might happen if a wife fails to keep integrity by agreeing not to go to meetings of the Christian congregation. May not the husband feel that these meetings could not be so important after all or she would never give them up? May he not feel that her interest in the Bible is merely a passing fancy and nothing of any consequence? If so, how can the believer expect the unbeliever to take an interest in God's Word?

¹¹ On the other hand, if the wife keeps on going to meetings of the Christian congregation, explaining to her unbelieving husband why they are so important to her, he might in time be impressed. May not the unbeliever eventually accept an invitation to attend one of these meetings and thus see for himself their beneficial na-

10, 11. Why is keeping integrity to God vital in helping the unbeliever?

ture? So the believing mate must always remember that keeping integrity works for the benefit not only of the believer, but also of the unbeliever.

HELPING THE UNBELIEVING MATE

—THE SECOND GOAL

¹² The believer's keeping integrity is a must if the second goal is ever to be realized—and that is to help the unbelieving mate to learn God's truth. To do this the believing mate tries to stay with the unbelieving mate. By living together, the unbeliever is in constant touch with true worship, and this is most beneficial for the unbelieving mate and for the children. Timothy's mother, a Jewess, evidently remained with her unbelieving Greek husband, all the while imparting Scriptural instruction to her son Timothy. (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15) This home religious education of Timothy prevailed over any pagan influence of his Greek father. So when the apostle Paul came to town the first time, Timothy joined his Jewish mother and his grandmother in becoming a Christian. (1 Tim. 1:1, 2; 2 Tim. 1:1, 2) Continuing to live with an unbelieving mate may subject the believing one to some form of domestic persecution. But, rather than separate, the believer can accept this as suffering for Christ's sake and can strive to show the unbelieving mate good Christian endurance. "If, when you are doing good and you suffer, you endure it, this is a thing agreeable with God."—1 Pet. 2:20.

¹³ If your marriage mate is opposed to God's truth, tactfully try to help the unbeliever. Gradually endeavor to reduce the opposition. If the unbeliever is not opposed, but simply is indifferent, try to stir

12. (a) If the second goal in a divided household is to be realized, what should the believer try to do? (b) If staying with an unbelieving mate results in domestic persecution, how should this be viewed?

13. Why should the believer never give up hope that the unbelieving mate will respond to the Bible's message?

up interest gradually. Never give up in your determination to help the unbelieving mate to learn God's truth. As trouble and violence increase throughout the earth, some unbelievers may be jarred into examining the Bible's explanation of present-day events. Also circumstances change. One husband who was unfavorable to the message of Jehovah's witnesses had an auto accident and narrowly escaped death. The next day he asked his wife to call a Witness, and a home Bible study was started with him. There is always hope that a divided household can be united. But to unite such a household, it is absolutely vital that the believing mate live up to the twofold goal: Keep integrity and try to help the unbeliever to learn God's truth. Always work toward the goal of a united household, praying God's blessing upon your loving efforts.

THE CHRISTIAN HUSBAND IN A DIVIDED HOME

¹⁴ Not always, of course, does a divided household have an unbelieving husband; the unbeliever may be the wife. If so, what is the Christian husband's responsibility? A dedicated, baptized worshiper of Jehovah God should give his unbelieving wife no occasion for wanting to depart from him. Because of the bettering effect of her husband's belief upon him, she should see all the more reason for being agreeable to dwelling with him the same as before he became a Christian witness of Jehovah. One's being a Christian husband in a divided home is a more favorable situation than a wife's having an unbelieving husband. This is because here the believer is the head of his household. Though head of the house, the Christian husband still needs to use tact and kindness when

14. Why is one's being a Christian husband in a divided house a more favorable situation, and what is the husband's responsibility?

speaking about God's truth to his unbelieving mate. Properly the believing husband will kindly invite his wife to accompany him to meetings of the Christian congregation; but, if she refuses to respond to the invitation, he will not become angry with her, nor will he allow any wifely opposition to cause him to neglect associating with God's people.—Heb. 10:24, 25.

¹⁵ Why, then, does a wife sometimes appear opposed to God's truth? Although there are many reasons, there are three that the believer does well to consider:

¹⁶ (1) Is it possible that he seems to be forcing Bible truth on her? If so, remember that it is vital to present the truth tactfully at the right time to unbelieving loved ones. A fine thing along this line would be for mature Christian women to call upon the unbelieving wife to try to kindle her interest and endeavor to start a home Bible study with her.

¹⁷ (2) Is the believer insisting on his personal desires that are not related to God's requirements and that seem to slight her interests? How good it would be for him to put aside a few desires to spend some time doing what she wants!

¹⁸ (3) It may be that the unbelieving wife is mainly opposed to her husband's being away from home so much, rather than the Bible truth itself. So he must realize that she needs companionship and recreation provided by him. True, he cannot compromise Christian duties just to please her, but he may have to adjust his schedule to be with her more. His applying these principles may cause her to look into the faith that produced such loving consideration from him.

¹⁹ To help win his unbelieving wife to God's truth, the believing husband does

15-18. What are three possibilities to consider when the wife remains an unbeliever?

19. Like the apostle Paul, what principle should the believing husband follow when trying to save another?

well to pay heed to the principle followed by the apostle Paul toward those he was trying to save. Said the apostle: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews . . . To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to people of all sorts, that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor. 9:20, 22) The apostle Paul sympathetically considered the problems of the Jews. He respected their convictions, though he knew them to be wrong. He did not mock, despise or act intolerantly toward the Jews he was endeavoring to save. Likewise Christian husbands do well not to mock, be intolerant or ridicule their unbelieving wives. If they do, they will drive their wives farther away. Instead, show empathy and love. Ask yourself: "How would I like to be dealt with if I were in the same situation?" Love endures all things.

—1 Cor. 13:4-8.

²⁰ What if there are children in such a divided household? The apostle Paul indicates what the Christian father's duty is: "You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Eph. 6:4) Note that the Christian father has the obligation from Jehovah as the head of the house to insist on rearing his children as true Christians. So as not to fail as the spiritual provider of his family, it thus becomes mandatory for him to lead the children in attendance at meetings of the Christian congregation, in the public sharing of the good news of God's kingdom and in having a home Bible study with them. This is the wise course and may have the same gratifying results that came to a Witness in Panama who started a home Bible study with his children. Imagine his joy when his op-

posed wife began to listen and take part in the study and eventually came to accept God's truth!

²¹ Taking the lead with the children also requires balance. It would not be wise for him and the children to leave his wife home alone all day, as she would quite naturally resent it. How fine it would be for him considerately to arrange his schedule perhaps to engage in the field ministry on Saturdays and attend the meetings on Sundays, thereby providing part of these days for the whole family to be together. This loving course will likely unite his children with him in the Bible's truth and may bring the blessing of the wife's accepting it.

²² Suppose, now, that the situation is that the wife really is opposed to true Christianity. What if she openly expresses herself as being against it and even speaks against her husband because of his love and zeal for God? Then the husband must endure under abuse and keep integrity. David's wife Michal spoke very belittlingly of his worship of Jehovah, even to the point of despising her husband in her heart. David did not let her displeasure dampen his zeal and enthusiasm and love for God, did he? Not at all! Nor did faithful Job weaken in integrity when his wife and others of his companions spoke against him. What fine examples for believing husbands with unbelieving mates!

—2 Sam. 6:14-23; Job 2:9, 10; 16:19-21; 42:10, 11.

²³ How should the husband react to his wife's unkind words? Romans 12:21 very clearly answers: "Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil with the good." So it is evi-

21. Why is balance with regard to Christian privileges and responsibilities important?

22, 23. When a wife abusively opposes her husband's love and zeal for God, what should be his course of conduct?

dent that his answers must be mild, not in anger, which only makes matters worse. Women respond to kindness and love, not to a hard pressing of matters. Love and long-suffering wear down opposition and may cause the opposer to respect one's faithful stand. This is the good advice given at Colossians 3:19: "You husbands, keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them." The point is this: Be a better husband—more considerate, kind and understanding. The apostle Peter encourages the Christian husband to have the proper view of his wife, saying: "You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with them according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one."—1 Pet. 3:7.

²⁴ So win her to God's truth as you won her to yourself when courting her. Do not be dictatorial and harsh as so many worldly husbands are. In many ways you can show her Christian consideration. Get her thoughts before making final decisions. Show concern for her. Give as much time as possible to the one with whom you chose to share your life. Often reassure her of your continuing love.

²⁵ Remember, it is easy to lose your temper and speak in anger. But such talk betrays a lack of self-control, a lack of one of the fruits of God's spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) It takes a real man, a real Christian man, to practice the fine conduct and tactful speaking of the truth that the Bible outlines. So why lose self-control and be unhappy when you can bring forth the Christian fruitage of God's spirit that brings true peace and happiness to you?

²⁶ Even though a wife may seem to oppose Bible truth, it has been found time

and time again that when she is approached tactfully, often a Bible study can be started. In Malawi a circuit supervisor of Jehovah's witnesses started home Bible studies with five opposing wives by calling on their husbands and tactfully asking the wives to join in. Shortly thereafter, the wives said that they really appreciated the Bible study that was started in their homes and that it was sufficient for them to see that this was the truth. They even expressed their desire to share in the Kingdom ministry.

²⁷ Thus friendly visits by mature Christians have often been of great help in uniting divided households. In the Philippine Islands, for example, the wife of one Witness was so opposed that she would dampen his clothing on days that she knew he might go out in the field ministry, and she burned his Bible and Bible literature. However, a mature Witness made friendly calls on the family and was gradually able to overcome the prejudice of the wife. Finally a Bible study was started with the entire family. The study progressed well for several months, and the wife reached the point of dedicating her life to God. Imagine the joy of the husband as he himself baptized his wife in a nearby river! When they came out of the water they embraced each other with tears in their eyes, thanking Jehovah that their long-divided family was at last united in true worship through the help of a loving Christian brother.

²⁸ Never become discouraged, then, or give up in your fine efforts to unite your household in true worship. Apply the good counsel of God's Word to your family and be assured that Jehovah's blessing will be upon your household.—Gal. 6:9.

24, 25. How can a believing husband show his unbelieving wife Christian consideration?

26. What can often be done to help opposing wives, as illustrated by the success of a circuit servant in Malawi?

27, 28. (a) What has been of great help in uniting divided households, as illustrated by an experience in the Philippine Islands? (b) So what is the Christian course in a divided household?

WHEN the lives of people are endangered, such as in fires, floods, and so forth, rescue work is urgent. At times, however, on account of thoughtlessness or carelessness lives are lost. In this there is a lesson for Jehovah's witnesses. How so? Because they realize that this system of things and all who are a part of it will be destroyed in the not-so-distant future. But before that happens they must continue to aid people to come out of this doomed system and to enter the "narrow gate" that leads to everlasting life in God's new system of things.

—Matt. 7:13, 14.

² Certainly Jehovah's witnesses do not want to neglect anyone or make it more difficult for others to learn God's truth because of thoughtless words or actions on their part. This would also be true in a divided household. There are times when husbands are not actually opposed, but have been neglected. For example, one wife in talking to her husband about the meetings of the Christian congregation was told, "But you've never invited me." So a tactful invitation to the congregation's meeting is not to be neglected at the opportune time.

³ Wives and children in families where the husband and father is not a believer would surely want to do everything they can to aid him to take his stand for Jehovah and His kingdom. However, in pre-

The Christian Wife and Children in a

DIVIDED HOUSEHOLD

"You wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives."—1 Pet. 3:1.

place ourselves in the position of the other person. By doing so, we can see how unwise it would be to bring up Bible truth continually. Personally we would not enjoy repeatedly hearing a subject discussed that did not interest us. Even if we had some interest in it, too many words could easily turn us against the whole thing. Hence, in presenting the truth from the Bible to an unbelieving husband, how inappropriate it would be for a wife to try to force the truth on him, to call him stubborn or to make uncomplimentary remarks about his not seeing the truth. Doing so would not be in harmony with the apostle Paul's counsel at Colossians 4:6: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one."

⁴ Here the apostle Paul is telling Christians that it is not only what you say that matters, but equally as vital is how you say it! The apostle is talking about how

4. In view of Colossians 4:6, what will Christian wives avoid when trying to help their unbelieving husbands to see God's truth?

5, 6. (a) What does it mean to speak God's message "always with graciousness," and why is this so important? (b) So how will a Christian wife not react when her husband shows no interest in Bible truth?

1-3. Why is spiritual rescue work now urgent? How can neglect be a factor in a divided household?

senting the Bible truth to the unbelieving family head there are certain things that believing wives and children can do and certain things they should avoid.

"ALWAYS WITH GRACIOUSNESS"

⁴ In helping others in this manner, it is important to try to

you speak Bible truth to others. We need to remember that there is an art of presenting information. The Christian message can lose its force if the way we say it is not "always with graciousness." This does not require flattery, but it means speaking God's truth in a way that is profitable to one and upbuilding. And "always" means not only when the Christian minister is preaching from house to house but also at home! So, when opportunities arise to present a knowledge of God's truth to an unbelieving husband, the believing wife would want to make the best of them, doing so "always with graciousness." She does this by being tactful and kind.

⁶ When a wife presents Bible truth kindly to her husband and there is no response, then what? Should she act terribly disappointed? Should she then become angry? No! Instead of showing open disappointment or becoming angry with her husband, the Christian wife does well to close the matter when it is appropriate. She does not press matters too far, nor does she become overanxious.

⁷ Showing respect toward her husbandly head, the Christian wife would not use God's truth to threaten him. (Eph. 5:33) Even if he rejects the truth, does not want to hear about it, or even treats his wife abusively, reviling her, she would not be justified in using the truth to threaten him. When her gracious words are rejected or she is treated abusively, the Christian wife does well to remember Jesus' example. Concerning this, the apostle Peter wrote: "In fact, to this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely. He committed no sin, nor was deception found in his mouth. When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling

in return. When he was suffering, *he did not go threatening*, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously." (1 Pet. 2:21-23) That is the wise course for Christian wives.

THE "QUIET AND MILD SPIRIT"

⁸ There is another way in which a wife can witness to her husband, regardless of how opposed he might be to Bible truth. That is by her fine conduct. The apostle Peter stresses the value of this fine conduct. He writes: "In like manner, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect. And do not let your adornment be that of the external braiding of the hair and of the putting on of gold ornaments or the wearing of outer garments, but let it be the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God."—1 Pet. 3:1-4.

⁹ The apostle Peter emphasizes the value of fine conduct and the "quiet and mild spirit." From the context we learn that the apostle is discussing the Lord Jesus Christ and how mildness distinguished him. When he was undergoing injustices, he refused to make vehement protest. He went like a lamb to the slaughter, knowing it was God's will for him. There was no loud, strong protest, no departing from mildness. And so Peter, talking to married women, stresses that mildness has great value in the eyes of God. He contrasts mildness with the outward adornment by which some women largely try to capture the attention and affection of their

8. In what powerful way can a Christian wife witness to her unbelieving husband, as stated by the apostle Peter?

9. What quality should distinguish one's Christian conduct, as illustrated by Jesus and as recommended by Peter? Why?

7. When an unbeliever treats his believing wife abusively, is she ever justified in using the truth to threaten him? Explain.

husbands, that is, by the garments of outward apparel. But unlike cloth garments that get old and wear out, the apostle Peter calls mildness something that is "in-corruptible." It is incorruptible apparel.
¹⁰ Though not pretentious, mildness works; it brings good results. "An answer, when mild, turns away rage." And "a mild tongue itself can break a bone."

(Prov. 15:1; 25:15)

Mildness thus betokens not weakness but strength. One must develop spiritual inward strength in order to show mildness and quietness. Thus if a Christian woman is married to an unbelieving husband, she is not to rise up in indignation and anger and engage in an altercation or argument with her husband. A strong-willed wife may actually hinder her mate in learning God's truth. But mildness, when coupled with quietness, is effective, for it is God's way.

¹¹ Many are the examples of how the "quiet and mild spirit" has helped unbelieving husbands. In one case a wife began to study the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. After a few weeks she began to change her personality. Previously she had a violent temper and used profane language. Her husband had threatened to leave home because of the cursing and the way she was treating the children. After this wife had studied the Bible for some weeks with Jehovah's witnesses, her husband came to the Witness conducting the study and asked what was causing his wife to change so much. She was now beginning to control her spirit, to use better language and to treat her children much bet-

ter. Upon learning that it was Bible truth, the husband also began to study the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses, and soon made progress to the extent that now he wanted to share the good news with his friends and neighbors. Here was a home in which the husband was ready to leave, but the change in his wife's conduct due to studying the Bible united what was rapidly becoming a divided home.

¹² Illustrating that an unbelieving husband can be won to God's truth by the fine conduct

of his wife is an experience in Hungary. An unbelieving husband treated his Christian wife cruelly, often beating her until she was unconscious. But she kept integrity to God, and always dealt with her husband patiently and with love, and this over a period of years. On one occasion she told her husband kindly but firmly: "Here I am and you can kill me, but even so I shall trust in Jehovah!" This man had a friendship with a local priest, who had full confidence in the husband because he was fighting against Jehovah's witnesses, not even sparing his own wife. One day the priest told this man that he should not even take a Bible into his hand. Shocked, the husband asked, "Well, is it a sin to read the Bible?" The priest replied that it was not but if he did, he might one day nourish beliefs the same as his wife. The man then admitted how loving and patient his wife was despite his hard dealings with her. He told the priest that if Bible reading produces such results, it seemed worth while to read God's Word. He began attending meetings of the Christian congregation with his wife and took up preaching the very truth he had formerly opposed.

10. (a) Why does mildness betoken, not weakness, but strength? (b) Why must the strong-willed wife be especially careful to show mildness?
 11, 12. Illustrate that mildness and fine Christian conduct can win unbelievers to God's truth.

¹³ When an unbelieving husband observes the fine conduct of his believing wife, he may come to appreciate that she has something that he does not have. And he may want to be like her. However, even if the unbeliever does not accept God's truth, the wife certainly is not the loser for having applied the inspired counsel given by the apostle Peter. Mildness, we need to remember, is also of "great value in the eyes of God." Hence the believing wife can rest assured of Jehovah's tender care.

¹⁴ As the apostle Peter indicates, the "quiet and mild spirit" displayed by the Christian wife will cause her to be submissive to her husband. This is Jehovah's will for Christian wives, just as much as it is his will for them to have a part in preaching the Kingdom good news. (Titus 2:4, 5) And a wife with an unbelieving mate has the added incentive to be submissive in compliance with the divine will so that in this way she might help a loved one to learn God's truth.—Eph. 5:21, 22.

¹⁵ A wife's submissiveness, of course, is not absolute but relative. If her husband tries to cause her to violate God's law, she follows the example of the apostles, who said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

¹⁶ At all times, though, the believing wife should strive to be a model Christian wife, carrying out all wifely duties to the best of her ability. Never should she give her husband reason to complain that she is neglecting to care for the home and children properly. At no time will she view

herself as the one who should make the family decisions because of her knowing Bible truth. So, she will respect her husband, and her good example will help him to appreciate the value of Bible truth. Her chaste conduct with deep respect may open his eyes to see what a fine wife he has and lead him to accept God's truth. What a blessing that would prove to be for him and for her!—Eph. 5:33.

GOOD PLANNING

¹⁷ Besides speaking with graciousness and showing the "quiet and mild spirit," what else may a Christian wife do to help her husband see God's truth? Good planning is important so that she will be well balanced in her activities, not neglecting her children nor her husband nor her Christian privileges.

¹⁸ Good planning will help the Christian wife to refrain from doing anything that might contribute to her husband's building up resentment for God's truth. To illustrate, the unbelieving husband may wish to be with his wife for the weekend. However, because his wife shares in the field ministry and goes to the meetings of the Christian congregation, he may begin to feel that his wife's religion is taking her away from him. While he may not object to her being gone for a few hours to a meeting, he may very much dislike his wife's being away for prolonged periods. In this case good planning on the part of the wife is necessary. She might arrange to share in the ministry on the weekdays when her husband is away. Perhaps this will require curtailing her Christian ministerial activity to some extent, but still not forsaking the Christian obligation to share the good news and to assemble regularly with fellow believers.

13. (a) So because of his wife's fine conduct, what may an unbelieving husband eventually realize? (b) Why is the Christian wife never the loser for applying Peter's inspired counsel?

14, 15. (a) What incentives does a believing wife have for being submissive to her unbelieving husband? (b) Is her submissiveness absolute?

16. In striving to be a model Christian wife, what will the believer do? And what may be the result?

17, 18. Explain why good planning is also important in helping the unbelieving husband.

INDIRECT HELP

¹⁹ There are also other ways in which Christian wives can help their unbelieving husbands, but in a somewhat indirect manner. For example, a Christian wife might ask her husband for suggestions in preparing a talk for the Theocratic Ministry School. This was recommended to a believing wife in Bolivia. Her husband had threatened her with violence if she ever were to participate in the door-to-door preaching work. However, she enlisted her husband's aid in preparing talks for the Theocratic Ministry School. In time, this man's attitude improved. He eventually became the Bible study servant in the Christian congregation!

²⁰ Another thing a wife can do to interest her husband indirectly in God's Word is to leave some Bible literature in an appropriate place in the home. It may be an article on some subject in which her husband has a particular interest. At some time when the wife is busy or away, her husband may be in search of good reading matter and may richly benefit from the material that the wife has made available. Of course, should a husband resent having Bible literature out in the open, then it would be best to keep such publications in a private place.

²¹ Certain publications of the Watch Tower Society have been particularly effective in helping unbelievers, even those who seem opposed, to appreciate the reasonableness of Bible truth. Some opposed mates, although accepting little or nothing else, have accepted and enjoyed reading the Watch Tower Society's book *Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?* Speaking of this publication, one circuit supervisor of Jehovah's witnesses observed: "Quite a number of men in this

circuit, mostly husbands of believing women in the congregations, have come to appreciate the clear, logical arguments presented in this publication. This has helped some to be more tolerant of their wives' Christian activities." The book *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* is another fine publication for helping unbelieving husbands.

FRIENDLY CALLS ON THE UNBELIEVER

²² Often it is possible for mature Christians to make friendly calls on the unbelieving husband. He may have a wrong impression of Jehovah's people and this can eventually be corrected. The purpose of such calls is to get to know him, to befriend him. It will be helpful to find out what his interests are, because people enjoy talking about what they really like. So it would be good for the believing wife to enlist the aid of a mature Christian brother, perhaps one who has some interest along the line of the unbeliever's likes, such as fishing, farming, a knowledge of sports, and so forth. A few friendly visits will often break down prejudice and enable the minister to correct any false impressions.

²³ Some mature Christians have found it helpful to invite the unbelieving husband and his Christian wife to come to dinner, with a view to getting acquainted and to breaking down prejudice that may exist. Some have found that when an unbelieving husband has a business, by patronizing that business they have been able to get better acquainted with him.

²⁴ Should the unbeliever become sick or be confined to a hospital, friendly visits by dedicated Christians may encourage him in many ways. Consider this example of an unbelieving husband in Luxembourg.

19. How might a Christian wife help her husband spiritually in an indirect manner?

20, 21. (a) What else can a Christian wife do to help her unbelieving husband? (b) What publications of the Society have especially helped unbelieving husbands?

22-24. (a) How can the wrong impressions of an unbelieving husband often be corrected? (b) What opportunities are there for mature Christians to get acquainted with an unbelieving husband?



If the unbeliever in a divided household becomes sick or is confined to a hospital, friendly calls by Christians are encouraging

He became very ill and had to go to the hospital. During this time he was afraid of dying, and he began to read Bible literature. Not one of his fellow employees visited him in the hospital, but Jehovah's witnesses did. This made such an impression upon him that he started to attend the congregation meetings after his recovery. In this way he learned God's truth, and he became a dedicated, baptized Christian.

STARTING A HOME BIBLE STUDY

²⁵ In making friendly calls on the unbelieving husband, Christians want to work toward the objective of starting a Bible study with him. Frequently, husbands do not like to have wives teach them religion, but prefer to be taught by other men. If the believing wife is not too far advanced in Bible knowledge, it may be possible for a Witness to invite the unbelieving husband to study along with his wife. However, when the wife is advanced in Bible truth, the husband's pride is a factor that may have to be taken into consideration. Should a Witness succeed in starting a study with the man, it may be advisable for the wife to leave the room

25. (a) What should be the objective in making friendly calls on the unbelieving husband? (b) If the wife is advanced in Bible truth, what course may be advisable?

during the study. The husband may then relax more and speak more freely.

²⁶ Servants in the Christian congregation will especially want to be of help to believing wives with unbelieving husbands, to help to unite the divided household. One overseer who put forth special efforts in this regard was great-

ly blessed. Over a period of about two years he had Bible studies with eight husbands, three of whom are making good progress. "I find," he reports, "that these unbelieving husbands will respond when called on by men, especially by the overseer."

²⁷ If an unbelieving husband is reluctant to join the Bible study, it may still be possible to help him to sit in on it, not with the idea that he would have an active part in the study, but merely to be there to check the things being taught his wife to see whether they are true. This opportunity for him to hear the kind of information that his wife is receiving may favorably influence him in a very short time. A wife who tactfully asks her husband to sit in on the Bible study to make certain that what she is being taught is all truth from the Bible may find her husband responding to the authority and logic of God's Word.

FINE CONDUCT OF THE CHILDREN

²⁸ Frequently, there is another avenue by which the unbelieving husband can be

26, 27. (a) Who can be of great help to believing wives with unbelieving husbands, and what did one overseer say in this regard? (b) If an unbelieving husband is reluctant to participate in a Bible study, how may he be helped to sit in on it?

28. In order for children to help their unbelieving fathers to learn God's truth, how must they be trained?

assisted, and that is through his children. The mother can in many cases tactfully arrange to have the children go with her to the meetings of the Christian congregation and share in the field ministry. Should the husband object, the wife may accede to her husband's wishes. Nevertheless, at home the mother can teach the children Bible principles as to how they should conduct themselves. Children so trained can do much to encourage an unbelieving parent to look into the Bible.

²⁹ When believing children show obedience and respect to their unbelieving parent, they are doing the will of God. Showing respect toward the unbeliever is very important. If the unbeliever saw his children studying the Bible with their mother and yet noted that they were becoming hostile toward him, would this cause him to view the Bible favorably? The answer is obvious. How important it is therefore for children to heed the Bible's counsel: "Be obedient to your parents in everything," that is, everything not contrary to God's will. (Col. 3:20) Believing children should respond eagerly and willingly to requests to do something, whether it be to wash or dry dishes, set the table, mow the lawn or do something else.

³⁰ When the unbeliever observes the fine spirit of his children, which is so unlike

that of great numbers of disrespectful youths of the world, it may move him to investigate their faith. When he sees that they do not steal, tell lies or get into trouble, he may see the contrast between his children and worldly ones, causing him to think or say, "My children don't do that." This may be just the thing to aid the unbeliever in opening his eyes to see that Bible truth is worth investigating. What a blessing this would be for God-fearing children!

³¹ Really, much can be done to work toward uniting a divided household. Keep the two goals (maintaining integrity and being alert to help the unbeliever) foremost in mind. Speak about God's truth "always with graciousness," remembering that mildness breaks down opposition. Fine conduct works in a powerful way, enabling the Christian wife in many cases to win her husband to God's truth "without a word." Good planning will aid the believer to be well-balanced in all activities. Use the various means of indirect aid. Arrange for friendly calls on the unbeliever, with the goal of starting a Bible study to unite the family. Do not give up hope. Be encouraged by God's Word and what it records at 1 Corinthians 7:16 and 1 Peter 3:1. Do your best under the circumstances, and be assured of the blessing of "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort."—2 Cor. 1:3.

^{29, 30. (a)} Why is respect for the unbelieving parent important? (b) When an unbeliever observes the fine conduct of his children, what may result?

³¹ Summarize some of the things that can be done to help unite a divided household.

Why Early Christians Were Persecuted

● Roman history is stained with the blood of the early followers of Jesus Christ. Why? Philip Schaff answers this in his book *History of the Christian Church*:

"The conscientious refusal of the Christians to pay divine honors to the emperor and his statue, and to take part in any idolatrous ceremonies at public festivities, their aversion to the imperial military service, their disregard for politics and depreciation of all civil

and temporal affairs as compared with the spiritual and eternal interests of man, their close brotherly union and frequent meetings, drew upon them the suspicion of hostility to the Caesars and the Roman people."

Yes, the early Christians were "objects of hatred" because, in these matters for which they were persecuted, they were 'obeying God as ruler rather than men.'—Mark 13:13; Acts 5:29.

Preach God's Kingdom with the Right Viewpoint

What examples do we have to encourage us to preach God's kingdom with the right viewpoint?

Our chief Exemplar, of course, is Jesus Christ, God's Son. He appreciated that preaching God's kingdom was the greatest privilege that could be extended to anyone. That is why he said: "I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth." And he continued faithful regardless of what others did or failed to do.—Luke 4:43; 8:1; Mark 1:38.

Jesus' right viewpoint included having a close personal relationship with his heavenly Father. He found delight in preaching God's kingdom because it provided him with opportunities to prove his unbreakable love for God, thereby furnishing his Father a reply to Satan's taunt that humans will not serve him out of love for him.—Job, chapters 1 and 2; Ps. 40:8; Prov. 27:11.

Jesus' apostles likewise had the right viewpoint of Kingdom preaching. 'They left all things and kept following Jesus' to share in that work. 'Without letup every day, in the temple and from house to house they continued teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ.'—Mark 10:28; Acts 5:42.

In the apostle Paul we have another fine example of preaching God's kingdom with the right viewpoint. He had much of which to boast after the flesh, but he gave it all up to preach God's kingdom. What a record he made, as he tells it at 2 Corinthians 11:22, 33 and at Philippians 3:4-8. Even when in prison he kindly received "all those who came in to him, preaching the kingdom of God to them and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with the greatest freeness of speech, without hindrance."—Acts 28:30, 31.*

In modern times, among the many examples that might be cited is that of the young American couple that had settled down in a fine home and were planning to raise a family. Then one day the husband came home and said to his wife: 'Just what difference is there between us and the people of Christendom? We are contenting ourselves with mere token service when there is nothing to keep us from being in the full-time ministry. Let's

quit our secular jobs, sell our home and enter the full-time pioneer ministry.' His wife gulped, for she had been looking forward to the joys of motherhood, to bearing and rearing a number of children. But she went to Jehovah in prayer and asked his help. And he did help her. So they entered the pioneer ministry and in a few years were invited to attend the Gilead missionary school. For some years now they have been very joyful serving as missionaries in a South American country.

How will having the right viewpoint help us to preach God's kingdom?

The right viewpoint will help us to preach God's kingdom because it means appreciating that God's kingdom must come first in our lives. It will keep us from becoming lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God and it will help us to buy out the opportune time for preaching God's kingdom. It will help us to turn off the television set in time to get a good night's rest, especially on Saturday night.—Matt. 6:33; Eph. 5:15, 16.

This right viewpoint will also help us because it includes appreciating that we are dedicated to a person, Jehovah God, and not just to a work. So regardless of how many doors are slammed in our faces we will be able to continue faithful, knowing that our work is successful so long as we are pleasing to God and contributing to the vindication of his name.

We will also be diligent to improve our skill in presenting the Kingdom message, to improve our tact in dealing with objectors, if we have the right viewpoint of preaching God's kingdom. It will even motivate us to improve our voices if they are unpleasant to listen to. (Helpful along this line being an article recently published in *Awake!* December 22, 1970.) We may never have given it any thought, but really, whether we have a pleasing voice or not may make the difference between whether the householder behind the door opens it to us or not. Especially is a good tone of voice an asset to the public preacher of God's kingdom.

In all such ways and many more, having the right viewpoint can help us in preaching God's kingdom.

* For details see *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1970.

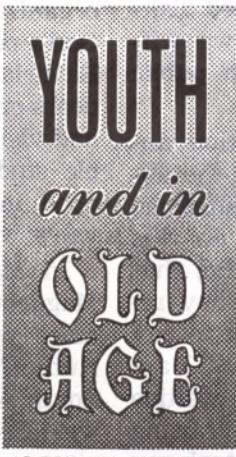
Serving Jehovah in

EVEN as a youngster I learned to have a deep respect for the name of the Great Creator, Jehovah. At home I had opportunity to read about that name in the Bible. And when I attended Lutheran religious services with my family I often felt deeply touched by songs that made use of that name. I wanted to praise that name, just as the inspired writer of Psalms invited fellow worshipers to do. (Ps. 66: 1, 2) But I did not know how.

In the quiet of our home in Bavaria, Germany, it might seem that we would be far from the stresses and strains of world developments, but in 1914 they began to affect us. War already raged throughout much of Europe. Some were against it, though many favored it; among them particularly the clergy. I can recall the Lutheran priest telling us from the pulpit that "if the government declares war . . . it is because God's will manifests itself in favor of it."

Like many other youths I had to go to the nearest city to join the army. On the way I had a conversation with my father. He did not agree with the priest's view, and I can well recall his saying: "I don't think it's right for Lutherans to kill Lutherans, and Catholics to kill Catholics."

In the trenches there was no time for spiritual thoughts. We seemed to be continually on the move, transferring from one place to another until we got to the port of Reval (now Tallin) on the Baltic Sea. The days passed, and then came 1918 and the Armistice. We sailed back to



Germany and home. My cousin, who was a Bible Student, as Jehovah's witnesses were then known, gave me one of C. T. Russell's booklets *What Say the Scriptures About Hell?* He promised to return the following week so we might talk about it some more. So great did my interest become that I wrote the Watch Tower Society's office in Barmen-Elberfeld requesting one of every available book by Russell. I also subscribed for the *Watch Tower* magazine. Within a week I received four books, one of them being *The Divine Plan of the Ages*.

So engrossed was I in this book that I was still reading at four the following morning. My father, when he heard about it, scolded me, saying: "Stop reading so much . . . you are wasting too much electricity." As I continued my reading I began to see that a life of devotion to Jehovah God was required. I learned, too, that the decision to dedicate one's life to God could not properly be made merely on the basis of emotion. It would mean a complete change in one's way of life.

I WANTED TO PREACH

Having learned that others were spreading the good news of God's kingdom by means of literature of the Watch Tower Society, I wanted to share in that work. But I did not feel sufficiently qualified. I really tried to get in touch with the Bible Students. Finally I located a congregation in Nuremberg and began to study with them. Many of their number visited me and by conversation stirred up my desire to share the good news with others.

I began passing on to members of my own family the things I was learning. Two of my sisters later joined me in association with the Bible Students. Very soon I was sharing in the distribution of literature from door to door, and even started visiting other nearby towns where we witnessed to the people and put on public Bible lectures.

Our campaign of Bible education angered the clergy and they incited the authorities against us. The police visited me and asked: "Who pays you to do this work?" I answered that nobody did, that I was doing it for God's sake. They replied: "Do you think God is going to pay you for what you are doing?" "Yes," I answered without hesitation, "I am positive about that, and that is why I am praising God openly." My father, I recall, took my side in that discussion.

ENLARGING MY SERVICE

When I was privileged to attend a showing of the "Photo-Drama of Creation," a slide-and-movie presentation of the Bible's true-life story with appropriate commentary, it helped me to decide to dedicate myself to God and be his minister. That dedication I symbolized by water baptism on August 19, 1919. Though I was still helping my father on the farm, I started to think about a life of full-time service in the preaching ministry.

Finally I wrote the Society. Father thought I was being unrealistic and told me I would starve. My answer was that Jehovah had used ravens to feed the prophet Elijah (1 Ki. 17:6), that Jesus fed five thousand people with a few loaves of bread and some fish, and Luke 22:35 relates that when Jesus asked his disciples whether they had experienced any want in his service, their answer was No. I trusted in Jehovah, and now, after some

fifty-one years, I can testify that my confidence was not misplaced.

When the Society asked where I wished to serve, I suggested Ingolstadt, because I was interested in learning all about the organizational setup of a congregation of God's people. Soon I was sent to northern Bavaria, and by 1922 a group of us pioneers or full-time preachers of God's Word had visited eight cities and established Bible study centers, many of which developed into active congregations of Jehovah's witnesses later.

In May 1925, during a convention in Magdeburg, where the Society's branch office was then located, President J. F. Rutherford asked me to go to Argentina, South America. Imagine what a thrill that was! Crossing the Atlantic to serve in territory where very little Kingdom work had yet been done! I was overjoyed.

I embarked on July 12 and arrived in Buenos Aires on July 26. Juan Muñiz, the Society's representative in Argentina, and two other Witnesses were awaiting my arrival. They had just received four tons of Bible tracts, and it was our job to distribute them. We would get up early in the morning and by breakfast time we would have distributed thousands of tracts. These were put under doors and in other places where people would find them.

From our home, which was also a meeting place for Bible study, we organized the work of spreading the Kingdom message by house-to-house visits. Publications we used included the booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, the Photo-Drama of Creation in book form, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, and *The Harp of God*. I enjoyed visiting schools, especially German schools, where we used to obtain the addresses of the students—about 300 in two months' time. The objective was to take to their parents the good news of the Kingdom in their own language. Thrilling, too,

it was to see the first two of those German-speaking people step out to symbolize their dedication to Jehovah!

During some years I was sent to various parts of Argentina for the purpose of organizing meetings for Bible discussion. Then, in 1928, I was assigned to Montevideo, Uruguay, where I was kept happily busy in the Kingdom work for ten years. In 1939 I was recalled to Argentina, and this time I was appointed as a pioneer minister and congregation overseer at Bahía Blanca. Following a year of service there, I was invited to serve in the Society's branch office in Buenos Aires. My first job there was in the shipping department.

GIRDING FOR EXPANDED SERVICE

That we were living in a time when great things were due to happen, we were all quite certain. In 1945 we eagerly anticipated the visit of N. H. Knorr, the Society's president, to Argentina. He promised to send some missionary graduates from the Society's School of Gilead to help with the vastly expanding opportunities of the Kingdom-preaching work. Also, he told us that some local Witnesses would in due time be brought in to the Gilead School for training.

During that visit President Knorr arranged for us to start the weekly course in Bible and speech training in all of the congregations in Argentina, an arrangement that has proved to be marvelously helpful in equipping Kingdom publishers in all parts of the country for their ministry. Personally I had the joy of establishing this training provision, known as the Theocratic Ministry School, in several congregations. At the same time the country was divided into districts or regions, with a district servant supervising each, and each district was subdivided into circuits, each comprising a group of congregations visited regularly by a circuit servant.

In 1949 President Knorr again visited Argentina, this time accompanied by his secretary, Milton Henschel. We planned an assembly in a centrally located facility in Buenos Aires, but the authorities, influenced by the clergy, denied us authorization. So we then arranged for the assembly in our own hall on the Society's property. Again the police interfered, closing down the assembly place and detaining some four hundred witnesses, including President Knorr, for several hours. This was just one of the many occasions when I was taken to the police station to explain our work. If the clergy had had their way, we might have been the victims of hotter persecution. It was always a joy, however, to suffer in behalf of Jehovah's truth.

BLESSING APPRECIATED

Throughout my course as one of Jehovah's witnesses I have rejoiced to see the growth of the Kingdom work and of the organization that God has brought into existence among men for the very purpose of spreading the Kingdom good news. I can recall when we were just twenty Kingdom publishers here, whereas now there are more than 18,700 Witnesses serving Jehovah unitedly here in Argentina. And I attended three international conventions in New York—one in 1953, one in 1958, and most recently the one in 1963. How thankful I am to Jehovah for those extra blessings!

To me it is also still a great privilege to be able to live in this beautiful and comfortable Bethel Home in Buenos Aires with many fellow Witnesses with whom I can still happily serve. True, I am now in my eighties and have undergone three operations within a short period, so my strength is not what it once was. But through Jehovah's undeserved kindness I have the

joy of continuing to serve to the fullest of my capacity. I am still able to get to the breakfast table each weekday morning to share with the Bethel Family in our daily discussion of a precious text from the Bible.

It is my earnest desire to carry on in Jehovah's service, with his help, until he is disposed to grant me the heavenly inheritance for which I have hoped. I have been young in his service and now I am

old. If, on the basis of long experience, I am considered as one who can offer mature Christian counsel, I would urge all in Jehovah's organization, young and old, to keep on faithfully in the way they chose when they dedicated their lives to the loving and merciful God. Just as I have been blessed in all of my years of Kingdom activity, so you too can enjoy the peace and satisfaction that derives from his favor.

work? Is it a work that a person can neglect and still gain God's favor?

The Christian apostle Paul indicated the seriousness of the ministry when he encouraged his fellow worker Timothy: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things,

for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." The ministry is really that important! Sharing in it conscientiously can mean the difference between enjoying eternally the blessings of God's kingdom, and being cut off from life forever.—1 Tim. 4:16.

Servants of Jehovah God today are in a position similar to that of God's prophet Ezekiel some 2,500 years ago. Ezekiel served as a watchman to warn the people of Jehovah's coming judgments. Thus God told him: "O son of man, a watchman is what I have made you to the house of Israel, and at my mouth you must hear the word and give them warning from me. When I say to someone wicked, 'O wicked one, you will positively die!' but you actually do not speak out to warn the wicked

BLESSINGS FROM

TAKING THE MINISTRY SERIOUSLY

IF YOU are a true Christian minister, yours is a highly favored position. You have a firm basis for your faith in Jehovah God. You have also a bright hope for the future, God's kingdom.—Heb. 11:6; Rev. 21:3, 4.

But how deep is your concern for those with whom it is your privilege to share these good things? Are you really interested in their eternal welfare? If you are, you will heed these instructions of Jesus Christ to his followers: "Go therefore and make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." And you will take seriously the Bible's command: "Preach the word, be at it urgently in favorable season, in troublesome season."—Matt. 28:19, 20; 2 Tim. 4:2.

SERIOUSNESS OF THE MINISTRY

Really, how vital is it that God's servants share in this preaching and teaching

one from his way, he himself as a wicked one will die in his own error, but his blood I shall ask back at your own hand."—Ezek. 33:7, 8.

Today Christians also have a warning work to do. They are commissioned by God to warn of the approaching "great tribulation" that will annihilate this entire system of things and those who remain a part of it. Thus lives are involved. Not only the lives of those who are warned are at stake, but also the lives of God's own servants who are commissioned to give the warning.

So because of the seriousness of the matter, Christian ministers need to be thorough in their ministry. Are you? Do you really take your ministry seriously?

CALLING BACK ON NOT-AT-HOMES

Following the example of Jesus and his apostles, Christian ministers of Jehovah's witnesses call on people at their homes. But what if no one is there? Would it really be taking the ministry seriously to forget persons living in those homes?

To find persons at home often involves calling at another time of the day. Why? Because as a matter of habit some people are not at home at certain times, such as is the case with those who may go to church every Sunday morning. So they will have to be reached on Sunday afternoons or at some other time of the week. If you are not in position to call at another time, you might arrange for a fellow minister to do so.

Illustrating the importance of trying to contact persons at *every* home is the case where no one was found at one house for three years. When finally someone was contacted it turned out to be a woman who had been waiting all that time for a Witness to call and resume the Bible study

she had before moving to this particular place.

In another instance a Christian minister thought of neglecting a certain not-at-home because on previous calls the householder was strongly opposed to the Bible's message. Nevertheless, the effort was made to call, and to the surprise of the minister a new family had moved into the house. The minister reports:

"She invited me in. I gave her the Bible sermon and she subscribed for the *Awake!* magazine. I was able to start a Bible study with her on this initial call. Within three weeks she was attending the meetings at the Kingdom Hall. After seeing the Society's picture, 'Proclaiming "Everlasting Good News,"' she discerned that the Witnesses did indeed have the right understanding of God's Word. She began shar-



ing in preaching the good news of the Kingdom and within six months of my first call on this 'not-at-home' she symbolized her dedication to do Jehovah's will by being baptized."

Truly, many blessings have been enjoyed by Kingdom publishers who are thorough in their ministry. Can you see possibilities for contacting persons who previously were not at home?

MAKING RETURN VISITS

There is also the need to feel concern about calling back on all who manifest interest. The following true-life experience underscores the need to be persistent in trying to locate such persons.

A Christian minister placed two magazines with a young man who had just been discharged from the marines. He seemed to be searching for something better. Because of this the minister who placed the magazines with him made it a point to call back. But not finding him at home, after a few tries he scratched the name off his list.

Then one day at a semiannual circuit assembly of Jehovah's witnesses this minister met the man with another minister who had found him and had brought him to the assembly. Because of similarity of age and of other interests it was decided that the first minister study the Bible with him.

The ex-marine made rapid progress and soon was sharing in the Christian ministry. Then one day, after the two had engaged in the house-to-house ministry, the minister was looking through his old records and found the name of this man scratched off his list as not interested because he had not found him at home after a few tries. And here he was, sitting alongside him, himself one of Jehovah's witnesses!

Truly, this impressed upon the young minister the importance of not giving up in making return visits. Think of the blessing he almost missed of helping this person onto the road to everlasting life! Are you missing similar blessings by failing to be persistent in efforts to find persons who have shown interest?

Making a similar point—that persistence often is needed even when interested persons are found—is another true-life experience.

A minister placed two magazines with a family. Concerned, he made it a point to call back on them. On this call he was able to obtain a subscription for the *Awake!* magazine. By persisting in making return visits he was able, at the end of two months, to start a Bible study in their home. As the study began the parents asked the children to go to the next room so as not to disturb the study. However, the Christian minister, concerned for the spiritual welfare of the children also, suggested that they remain and join in the study; a suggestion greatly appreciated by the parents.

The minister further showed his concern by inviting the family to attend the meetings of the Witnesses at their Kingdom Hall. They readily accepted the invitation, and their attending these meetings resulted in their making still more progress. So it was that within six months of the time the study of the Bible was started with this family, both parents took their stand for Jehovah God and his kingdom and dedicated their lives to serve Jehovah and were baptized.

If you are a Christian minister, do you call back whenever interest is shown? Do you persist in efforts to start a Bible study? You may enjoy similar blessings if you do.

On the other hand, failure to make a return visit when one has said one would

may cause real disappointment. Thus a minister placed two Bible study aids with a woman and promised to call back. But for some reason he failed to take his own word seriously. He may have felt that so often he had called back on others without finding any interest. However, be that as it may, it so happened that this woman was different. She *was* interested—so much so that she at once read the books.

Disappointed that the minister did not call back as he had promised, this woman wrote the publishers of the books, the Watch Tower Society, telling of her interest and requesting that someone call on her. The Society sent the letter to the congregation in whose assigned territory the householder lived. When the minister heard about the letter, and recognized that the woman was one of his calls, how did he feel? Well, he certainly saw the need to take his ministry more seriously!

INCIDENTAL WITNESSING

And what about incidental witnessing—talking to people about God's purposes wherever and whenever you happen to meet them in your daily course of life? Those who are alert to do this often have many outstanding joys and blessings. Thus a Puerto Rican missionary began witnessing to a college student while sharing a taxi ride with him. That incidental witness started the young man on the way to life. Today he is a servant in a congregation.

One day at her secular place of employment a Christian minister heard a woman say that socialism was the only answer to world problems. This gave the Witness an opportunity to tell the woman about the Kingdom hope she had. Soon these discussions at work led to a regular Bible study in the home. In a few months the woman began to witness to others and today she

herself is a zealous Christian minister and so is her husband.

And then there was the very earnest Roman Catholic man in the broadcasting profession. He had spent four years studying advanced mathematics at a university, but at heart he was searching for Bible truth. One day he went to the office of one of the executives where he worked to ask some questions about certain statements this executive was supposed to have made. The executive happened to be one of Jehovah's witnesses who had been doing some incidental witnessing, but who had been misquoted. He was glad to give this Roman Catholic searcher for truth the correct information. It was suggested that it would be best to discuss these things at home instead of on company time.

A few days later the man called again, asking the Witness when they could get together to discuss these things. Thus a call was arranged and several Bible study aids were placed with the man.

A week later he asked about attending one of the meetings, but since his work-day began at four in the morning he was able to stay for just the first meeting, the Theocratic Ministry School. He found it so interesting, the students so confident and knowledgeable and the school servant so instructive that he could hardly believe his ears. When asked how he enjoyed it, he said: "I've never seen such friendly, confident people . . . even the children."

He asked about the next meeting and was told it was Sunday morning. As the man's wife was away for a few weeks, the Witness invited him for lunch after the meeting. The result was that they carried on a discussion from 2 to 11:30 p.m., during which time he also obtained more Bible study aids as well as the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. He attended the Tuesday night and Thursday night con-

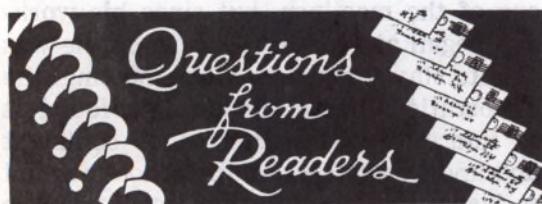
gregational meetings during the following week, even taking part in them.

The next Sunday it was much the same—meetings and luncheon, followed by a study in the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* from 2 to 11:30. That Wednesday they completed the study in the *Truth* book, upon which he asked, "What prevents me from getting baptized?" It was suggested that he get in touch with the congregation overseer, which he did. He soon completed reading the books "*Your Word Is a Lamp to My Foot*" and *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God*. Within three weeks from when he began the study in the *Truth* book—not six months—he was baptized!

The person continues as a zealous Christian witness of Jehovah, averages from forty to sixty hours a month, mostly in door-to-door preaching. Because of the

hours of his secular work he is able to take the lead in midweek witnessing. When his wife went away for a few weeks he had not begun studying. When she returned he was already a dedicated Christian minister of God, and waiting to be baptized. It was almost too much for her, but it was not many studies before she was telling her relatives about the wonderful things she had been learning from the Bible. Yes, what marvelous blessings can come from incidental witnessing!

So, if you are a Christian minister, take your ministry seriously. Try to reach all those who are not at home when you first call while going from house to house with the good news. Make return visits whenever persons show interest in God's purposes. And do not overlook the many opportunities for incidental witnessing. Remember, he that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.—2 Cor. 9:6.



- What is the meaning of Proverbs 20:19, and how does this apply to a Christian's keeping certain matters confidential?—E. M., U.S.A.

The verse in question reads: "He that is going about as a slanderer is uncovering confidential talk; and with one that is enticed with his lips you must have no fellowship." The first part is quite plain. A slanderer is a person who intentionally spreads harmful talk designed to put someone in a bad light. Often to accomplish this he deliberately makes public and distorts things that were supposed to be kept confidential.

The second portion of the text is somewhat parallel, but it deals with "one that is enticed

with his lips." A person can be enticed with his lips just as with his eyes or hands in that any of these organs can allow him to be tempted and drawn into evil ways. (Matt. 5:27-29) One enticed with his lips is led astray into trouble because his mouth is open in speaking whatever he hears. He has no protection, for he does not control his speech. King David observed: "I will guard my ways to keep from sinning with my tongue. I will set a muzzle as a guard to my own mouth." (Ps. 39:1) The person that "is enticed with his lips" is just the opposite; he seldom keeps anything confidential. Proverbs 20:19 counsels, "You must have no fellowship" with him, for he can cause you just as much trouble as a slanderer.

There are actually two aspects of this topic of confidential matters. The latter half of Proverbs 20:19 focuses on one of them. The advice basically is to be careful as to the one to whom you entrust confidential matters. Sometimes a person has certain private information or plans that he does not want made public at present. Perhaps he tells these to an acquaintance, ex-

pecting that one to keep the matters confidential, and he may even request as much. Later he learns that the second person spread to others the private information that was of no real concern to them. The wise man will learn from such an experience with an acquaintance and determine accordingly how much he will say in the future.

However, without in any way excusing the habitual betrayer of confidences, it must be admitted that all humans are imperfect. The disciple James wrote: "The tongue, not one of mankind can get it tamed." (Jas. 3:8) Even persons with the best of intentions occasionally make mistakes and unintentionally mention or hint about things that they know ought to be kept private. Thus, a degree of responsibility rests on the person himself who has a matter that he does not want made public. The more persons to whom one tells a confidential matter, the greater is the possibility that it will become general knowledge. And when one tells such a matter to a person who has proved himself to be "one that is enticed with his lips" the possibility becomes a probability.

The other important aspect of this topic is that of personally being trustworthy. Proverbs 25:9, 10 recommends this, saying: "Plead your own cause with your fellow man, and do not reveal the confidential talk of another; that the one listening may not put you to shame and the bad report by you can have no recall." So there is a stigma affixed to the one who needlessly and without authorization reveals information that he was expected to keep confidential. And once a private matter has been publicized, there is no recalling it despite all the complications to which it may lead.

Let us consider some situations and relationships in life that bring to one's attention private information.

A husband and wife, being "one flesh," are aware of many family matters, plans or weaknesses that are understood to be confidential. (Matt. 19:5) If either mate got into the habit of thoughtlessly telling other people such things, many problems could result. For example, perhaps a husband kiddingly comments to others about an unusual personality trait his wife has. When this gets back to the wife, she easily might be offended. Though this is just an illustration, it shows how a wedge can come between the mate who expected the matter to

be kept confidential and the one who publicized it. On the other hand, how the bond of love between mates is strengthened when each sees that the other is worthy of full trust in regard to personal or family matters. (Eph. 5:25, 28) Children also can be taught to use discretion about repeating things they hear discussed within the family circle.

In one's relationship as a close friend or business associate a person sometimes knows of things of a confidential nature. It would be impossible to set any rules on just what should be kept confidential in these relationships. But a person can keep in mind that one strong binding force between close friends is mutual trust. (Prov. 18:24) If in your mind there is any question as to whether something your friend told you can be mentioned to others, it is best not to, or at least not until you have his permission. The same general view holds true in business matters, keeping in mind that one could severely hurt one's employer economically by revealing confidential business plans. The Scriptures urge those in the relationship of employees to exhibit "good fidelity to the full." —Titus 2:9, 10.

Other situations that should be considered involve the Christian congregation. In each congregation of Jehovah's witnesses there are mature ministers appointed to care for various assignments. (1 Tim. 3:2, 12) As they discharge their duties they often are told about confidential things, and it is essential that they respect this confidence. For instance, James 5:13-16 shows that a member of the congregation who has some spiritual problem, perhaps even having committed a sin, should go to the spiritually older men for help. Isaiah 32:2 prophetically pictured these men as places of comfort and protection. What a fine thing it is to be able to explain one's problem and get balanced spiritual help, and at the same time have full confidence that the matter will not become general knowledge in the congregation or community.

Those mature ministers will not discuss even with their wives and close friends what they thus learn in confidence. They know that if they did so it would undermine respect for their positions; it would make individuals hesitant to come to them; yes, in time it might even make it impossible for them to fulfill their role as spiritual shepherds. Another reason why they maintain this confidence is so as to avoid

burdening others. For instance, if a man tells his wife some confidential matter related to his ministerial duties, she is put under pressure to maintain that confidence. Is that fair to her as the "weaker vessel"? (1 Pet. 3:7) Even if in a moment of weakness she out of curiosity asked her husband what took place or why he was speaking with a certain person, the loving and correct course is for him to say kindly that it is a confidential matter regarding the congregation. In that way she does not have to carry unnecessary mental burdens. And if someone asks her about the matter, she can honestly say that she does not know the details.

All in the congregation should cooperate with the appointed servants by not trying to obtain the details on such confidential matters. Humans are somewhat curious by nature, and we usually like to learn new things. This is not bad. The number of new points about the Bible and the Christian ministry that we can learn and share with others is limitless. (Phil. 4:8) Yet we need to keep our curiosity in check when it comes to things that are confidential. Remember Samson and Delilah. When he would not tell her a secret that related to his theocratic assignment, she said in effect, 'You don't love me.' And "because she pressured him with her words all the time and kept urging him, his soul got to be impatient to the point of dying. Finally he disclosed to her all his heart." (Judg.

16:15-17) As a consequence, Samson suffered personally and he also temporarily hurt the cause of true worship by depriving Israel of his leadership. (Judg. 16:20, 21) Surely no Christian relative or friend today wants to copy Delilah's example.

There may be an occasion when the presiding minister announces to the congregation that its representatives have had to expel an unrepentant sinner or had to offer strong discipline to someone because of his unchristian conduct. The members of the congregation are informed so that they can avoid that one altogether or be careful in his presence, as the case may require. (1 Cor. 5:11-13; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15) But they should not try to ferret out all the details. Those are confidential and ought to be kept as such.

How thankful we can be that Jehovah provided in his Word perfect counsel on this vital topic. He had recorded, for example, the proverb: "The one walking about as a slanderer is uncovering confidential talk, but the one faithful in spirit is covering over a matter." (Prov. 11:13) He obviously knew that it was a common failing of imperfect human nature to talk about confidential matters that should be kept private. But by calling attention to this danger He helps all who want to please Him to guide their steps in a way that will encourage peace, friendship and unity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

May 9: Uniting the Divided Household. Page 201. Songs to Be Used: 56, 94.

May 16: The Christian Wife and Children in a Divided Household. Page 207. Songs to Be Used: 60, 107.