

FEBRUARY 15, 1981

THE WATCHTOWER
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



How Real Is God To You?



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OUR COVER: From the orderly arrangement of the vast universe to the beauty and wisdom to be observed in living things—there is so much around us that testifies to the reality of God. This theme is developed in the following pages

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A WATCHTOWER provides a vantage point from which the watchman can observe and warn of approaching danger. This magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, serves a similar purpose. It keeps watch on world events in these critical times and calls attention to God's warning of his vengeance soon to be executed on those ruining the earth. It comforts all peoples with the hope that God's kingdom by Jesus Christ is about to bring in a global paradise of peace. It encourages all to exercise faith in the ransoming power of Jesus' shed blood, and points to the joyous prospect of everlasting life on earth under the sovereignty of the true God, Jehovah. "The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom" is nonpolitical, and adheres to the Bible as authority.

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Does God Really Exist?

NAPOLEON once asked the leading French astronomer of his day, Laplace, why he had not mentioned God in his recently published book *Celestial Mechanics*. His reply was, "Sire, I had no need for that hypothesis."* Obviously, Laplace was neither the first nor the last to take such a slighting view of God.

But in contrast with such unbelievers stand such "giants" of science as Sir Isaac Newton, who once stated that in writing his *Principia* he had his eye on stressing proofs of God's reality, His existence. Today it appears that more and more astronomers are veering from Laplace's position and toward that of Newton.

For example, Robert Jastrow, one of America's foremost astronomers, wrote on the subject "Have Astronomers Found God?" Among other things, he stated: "Theologians are delighted that the astronomical evidence leads to a biblical view of Genesis—but curiously, astronomers are upset."

Regarding these astronomers, Jastrow goes on to say: "Their reactions provide an interesting demonstration of the response of the scientific mind—supposedly a very objective mind—when evidence uncovered by science itself leads to a conflict with the articles of faith in our profession. It turns out that the scientist behaves the way the rest of us do when our beliefs are in conflict with the evidence. We become irritated, we pretend the conflict does not exist, or we paper it over with meaningless phrases."

* In passing, let it be noted that the theory on the origin of the solar system that Laplace advanced in his *Celestial Mechanics* has been replaced by other theories equally inconclusive.

Interestingly, Jastrow presents three lines of evidence that point to the fact that some 20 billion years ago there occurred a great explosion resulting in galaxies being driven apart at tremendous speeds, some actually at the rate of 100 million miles an hour! Too, it has been determined that the farther out these galaxies are the faster they keep receding. He also reports that at first Einstein—and not only Einstein—was very skeptical regarding this "big bang" theory of the origin of the universe, making such observations as: "To admit such possibilities seems senseless to me." "This circumstance of an expanding universe is irritating."

However, to Einstein's credit, later he did acknowledge that the theory made sense to him, even as it now does to ever so many other scientists. Such a view of the origin of the universe, as Jastrow noted, at least agrees with the Bible's statement that there was a beginning to the material universe: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
—Gen. 1:1.

OTHER EVIDENCES THAT GOD REALLY EXISTS

Not only does the fact that the universe had a beginning argue that God, the Creator, really exists, but so do the harmony and orderliness manifested on every hand. Thus one of England's leading astronomers, Sir Bernard Lovell, wrote of his "rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection."

Consider, for example, all the factors that work together to make life possible on our planet, the Earth. The sun is 93 million miles away from the earth. If the earth were just a few million miles closer to the sun, no life would be possible because of the intense heat. On the other hand, were the earth just a few million miles farther away from the sun than it now is, no life would be possible on the earth because of the cold.

Contemplate also the air that we breathe. We cannot get along without oxygen, and 21 percent of the atmosphere is oxygen. But were there half as much oxygen or twice as much oxygen as there is now, life as we know it could not thrive upon the earth. Then there is the harmony or balance between plant and animal life. Plants absorb carbon dioxide but give off oxygen, whereas all breathing creatures take in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide. How did all such harmony and balance

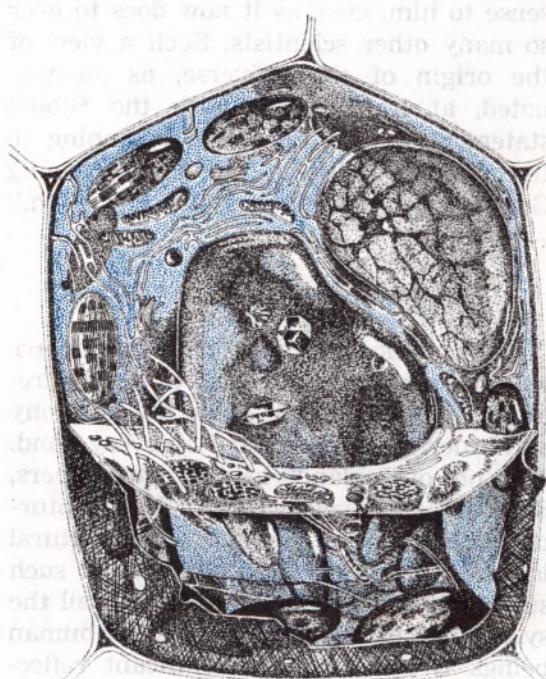


The unerring migration of birds

come about? Is it not evidence that God exists?

Equally forceful evidence that God really exists is seen in the literally millions of millions of cells that compose a human body. How tiny they are! Yet each of these millions of cells can be likened to a walled city where chemicals, proteins and hormones are produced. All this activity is directed by a nucleus, and the products produced are transmitted into and out of the cells by means of a network of channels. Some of the particles in these cells are so tiny that they cannot be seen even when magnified 200,000 times! No wonder that America's leading medical journal stated that at least 80 percent of scientists in the field of biology will readily admit that biology and life are regulated by some higher power.

Further evidence that God truly exists is seen in the instincts of animals. Why can birds fly unerringly many thousands of miles to their chosen destination, and that regardless of the weather? What wis-



The living cell—a marvel of design



Baby eels—they swim back to their parents' home waters

dom insects, such as bees and ants, display! Note also the wonder of the eels. Both European and American eels come to the Sargasso sea to spawn and there they die. When their eggs hatch, the baby eels go back to the place their mothers came from. It is said that never has a European eel been found in American waters, nor an American eel in European waters. What accounts for this?

The evidence is undeniable: There is a great First Cause. God really does exist. He has indeed performed countless miracles. Some men, in the name of science, would reject miracles. However, as the English poet Cowper once observed: "All we behold is miracle, but seen so [regularly], all is miracle in vain"—but not to those who acknowledge that God really does exist!

How Real Is God To You?

WHEN an American rabbi once asked Einstein, "Do you believe in God?" he replied: "I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals Himself in the orderly harmony of what exists."

But what kind of concept of God did that 17th-century Jewish-Dutch philosopher have? In brief, it was that "everything that exists is a part of God and that God is in everything that exists." Spinoza felt that "in God quite literally we live and move and have our being." But how real was such a God to Spinoza and Einstein?

At best, to Spinoza and Einstein He was but a pantheistic god. A pantheistic god? Yes, for the term "pantheism" comes from two roots meaning "all" and "god," and so is defined as "a doctrine that equates

God with the forces and laws of the universe."

There can be no question about it: The universe, the "book of nature," does reveal much about God. But for God to be truly real to us we need far more knowledge of him than just what can be seen in the universe. We really need his divine revelation. As we read, 'How can one put faith in God without first having heard of him?' (Rom. 10:14) Lovingly, wisely and justly, God has given us such a revelation, his Word, the Holy Bible. Therein not only do we learn that he is the great First Cause but we also learn of his qualities: that he is infinite in power and wisdom, wholly righteous and just, and that he is the personification of love. Moreover, in his Word we also learn of his purposes.

—Gen. 18:14; Deut. 32:4; Isa. 45:23, 24; Rom. 11:33-35; 1 John 4:8.

Does He Have a Body?

Actually, by teaching that God is *omnipresent* Christendom has confused matters and made it more difficult for God to be real to his worshipers. How could God be present everywhere at the same time? God is a spirit Person, which means that he does not have a material body, but a spiritual one. A spirit has a body? Yes, for we read, "If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual one." (1 Cor. 15:44; John 4:24) God being an individual, a Person with a spirit body, has a place where he resides, and so he could not be at any other place at the same time. Thus we read at 1 Kings 8:43 that the heavens are God's "established *place* of dwelling." Also, we are told at Hebrews 9:24 that "Christ entered . . . into heaven itself, now to appear before the person of God for us."

Moreover, the disciple Stephen and the apostle John had visions of heaven in which they saw both God and Jesus Christ. So Jehovah God must be just as much a person, an individual, as Jesus Christ is. (Acts 7:56; Rev. 5:1, 9) Those Christians who have a hope of eventually living in heaven are assured that they will see God and also be like him, showing that Jehovah God truly is a person and has a body as well as a certain location.—1 John 3:2.

It could well be that some have been confused due to the fact that God is all-seeing; also his power can be felt everywhere. (2 Chron. 16:9) We might illustrate these facts by likening God to an electric power plant. It has a certain location on a certain street in a city. But its electricity is distributed over all the city, providing light and power. And so with Jehovah God. He has a location in the

highest heavens, but his active force, his holy spirit, furnishes enlightenment, and its force can be felt everywhere, over all the universe.

While the Bible repeatedly warns that God's worshipers are not to presume to make any likeness of him and not to bow down and worship such a likeness, it does use anthropomorphisms; that is, it ascribes to God human characteristics. Thus the Bible speaks of God's face, his eyes and ears, his nostrils and mouth, his arms and feet. (Deut. 4:15-20; Ps. 27:8; 1 Pet. 3:12; Ps. 18:15; Isa. 1:20; Deut. 33:27; Isa. 41:2) Of course, such descriptive language does not mean that his spirit body has the same kind of members that human bodies have. But by means of these expressions we are helped, inasmuch as Jehovah God thus becomes more real to us.

Yes, God's Word shows that God is a distinct personality, that he has feelings, that he can be pleased or displeased, that he can laugh, that he can be angry, that he is merciful and tender in affection. He is personally interested in each member of humankind. In fact, he loved the world of mankind so much that he sent his only-begotten Son to earth to die as a sacrifice so that whoever exercises faith in him can gain everlasting life.—Ps. 2:4, 12; John 3:16; Heb. 10:38; Jas. 5:11; 1 Pet. 5:7.

Why Fear Him?

If God is truly real to us, his very qualities will cause us to fear to displease him. The Bible says that "the fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom" and that it "means the hating of bad." (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 8:13) Does this mean having merely a reverential fear of Jehovah? Does it mean more than simply having a wholesome respect for God? We can have a

reverential fear of those in divinely appointed positions of responsibility and we can have a wholesome respect for all honest persons. But to have the fear of Jehovah means far more than that. The apostle Paul writes: "Let us continue to have undeserved kindness, through which we may acceptably render God sacred service with godly fear and awe. For our God is a consuming fire." That fact should surely make us careful not to incur God's displeasure, for to do so would mean that we would be in danger of being consumed by him!—Heb. 12:28, 29.

We might illustrate the fear of God in this way: A young son has reason to fear to displease his father. Why? Because his father is very real to him. He can see his father, hear his voice and he knows that his father is stronger than he, the son, is. More than that, the father lovingly provides for all the son's material needs—food, clothing and shelter, as well as for his recreational, mental and spiritual needs. So the son has practical reasons as well as a moral obligation to obey his father, to be concerned about not displeasing him. The wise son will see to it that he does not incur his father's displeasure, and to the extent that he fully appreciates all that his father is doing for him, to that extent he will really want to please his father.

Well, this is just the way it should be with all who address God as "our Father in the heavens." (Matt. 6:9) All good things come from him. (Jas. 1:17) That our having God be truly real to us will instill in us a wholesome fear to displease him can be seen from an incident in the life of Joseph, the son of the patriarch Jacob. While Joseph was serving in the household of Potiphar, an Egyptian court official, the wife of Potiphar tried to seduce handsome young Joseph. What enabled him to resist this great temptation? God's

being real to him, even as his words to her show: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" There is no question about it; God was very real to Joseph. Having God be truly real to us will also help us to resist temptations successfully.—Gen. 39:9.

Returning to our illustration: Suppose the father's business took him far away from his family for periods of time. Of course, he would still be providing for his family and no doubt would be sending letters to them, including his son. The son would eagerly read those letters, which would assure him of his father's continued interest in him. However, because of his father's being far away there might be a tendency for the son to get careless about not incurring his father's displeasure. But those letters would keep reminding him of his obligation to his father, would they not?

With Christians today it might be said, in a sense, that our Father is also far away, in the heavens of heavens. But true to his promise he provides all the things we need, and he has sent letters to us in the form of the 66 books of the Bible. If we truly love our Father in the heavens and appreciate all that he has done, is doing and will yet do for us, we will value those inspired letters very highly. We will peruse them earnestly and frequently. More than that, should not these inspired letters also serve to help us to be on guard that we do not misbehave, that we do not do things that might make God angry with us? Surely!

It might be observed that there are many more ways in which we can show how real God is to us, such as by frequently talking to him in prayer and by telling others about his wonderful qualities. In such ways we can cause God to become truly real to others while at the same time he will become ever more real to us.

Can you see what is invisible?

HAVE you ever been in real trouble? Did it seem that there was no way out, no possible relief? That is how a young man felt in the days of God's prophet Elisha.

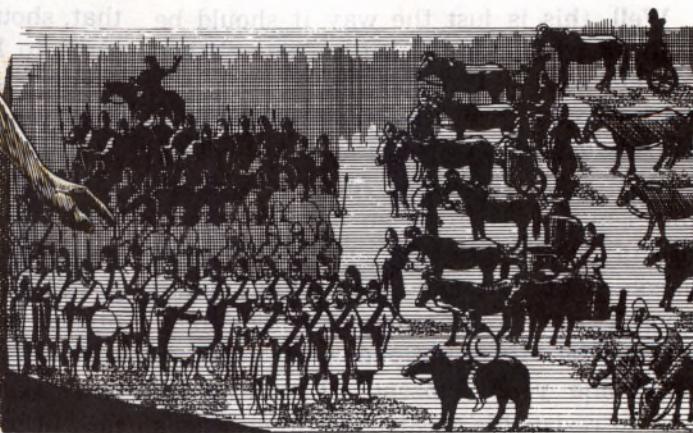
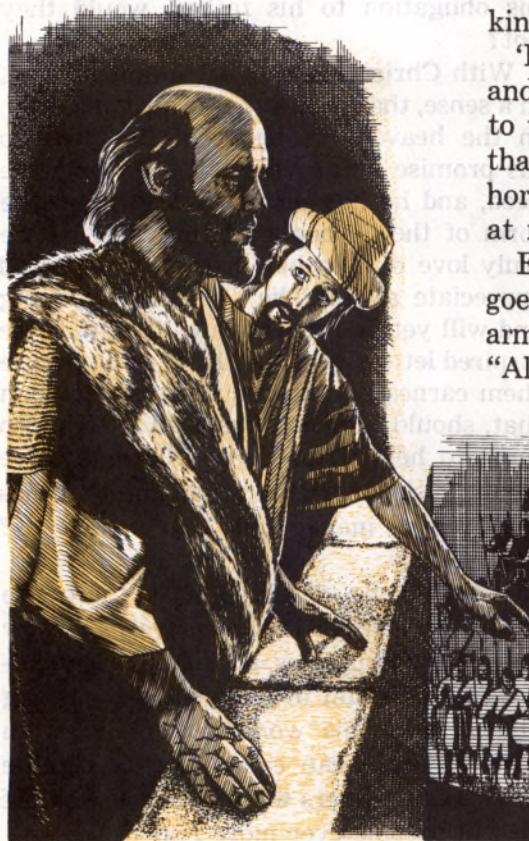
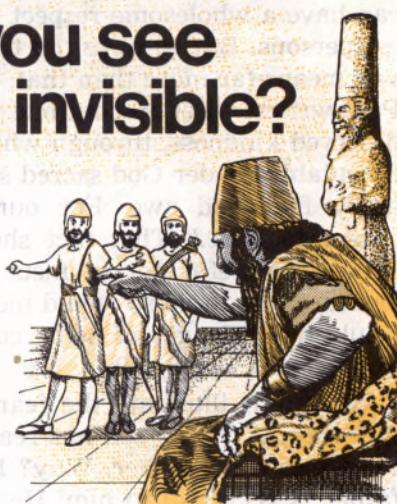
Looking back to that time, we find that the Syrians are fighting against the Israelites. However, the king of Israel always seems to know in advance where the Syrians are going to strike. So the Syrian king calls his officers, as you can see, and asks: 'Who from among us is betraying our troop movements to the king of Israel?'

'No one,' an officer answers. 'It is Elisha, the Israelite prophet. He knows what you say even in

the privacy of your own room, and he tells the king of Israel.'

'Find him,' the king orders, 'that we may go and capture him.' Later, the report is made to the king: "There he is in [the city of] Dothan." So he sends a large army there with horses and chariots. The soldiers reach the town at night and surround it.

Early the next morning Elisha's attendant goes outside, and look! all around is the Syrian army! The frightened young man says to Elisha: "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"





"Do not be afraid," Elisha calmly replies. Then he says something that sounds very strange to his attendant. "There are more who are with us than those who are with them." But how can that be?

Elisha prays: "O Jehovah, open his eyes, please, that he may see." And right away his eyes are opened to see what is ordinarily invisible. There on the hillsides are horses and chariots of fire all around. Yes, Jehovah miraculously opens his eyes to see His heavenly armed forces!

—2 Ki. 6:8-23.

Does this mean that God's angels are ready to help his servants today? Yes, it does! They are really there, even though we cannot see them. And they can come to our help, even as they protected Elisha and his attendant from any harm. Do you see, with your eyes of understanding, God's invisible heavenly forces?

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● "Suddenly, unexpectedly, one morning in 1914 the whole thing came to an end," declared Britain's former prime minister Harold Macmillan in a speech at Yale University. He said that the great war that began in 1914 marked the end of "100 years of peace and progress" and signaled "the end of an era." Before that the world seemed to be in an age of "automatic progress," where "everything would get better and better," said the 86-year-old statesman. "This was the world I was born in."

Macmillan then noted that the League of Nations was "an attempt to reproduce in the new age something of the stability created by the great nations" before 1914. But the League failed, he said, because there no longer existed "any sense of unity which had prevailed in the previous 100 years of peace."

Hence, another respected authority adds his voice to those of numerous statesmen and historians who, in looking back, recognized the significance of the year 1914. Yet, decades before that year arrived, dedicated students of Bible prophecy were able to identify 1914 as a climactic turning point. (The "Bible Examiner," October 1876, pp. 27, 28) These Bible prophecies also reveal that the "generation" that saw the events beginning in 1914 would also see the "conclusion of the system of things."—Matt. 24:3, 7-22, 32-35.

● Have you ever had an infection that stubbornly resisted the antibiotics your doctor prescribed to treat it?

Do "Supergerms" Evolve? This unpleasant experience sometimes occurs because certain common germs apparently become immune to drugs that ordinarily

would kill them. Evolutionists sometimes claim that mutations are responsible for such "supergerms." They assert that similar "beneficial" mutations resulted in the evolution of man.

However, do ordinary germs commonly mutate into supergerms? Not according to biologist Richard P. Novak, writing in the December 1980 issue of "Scientific American." "For several years chromosomal mutations

were mistakenly assumed to be responsible for clinical antibiotic resistance," he observes. Why? Because in laboratory cultures of bacteria, mutants do sometimes appear that resist antibiotics. But at what cost to the general health of the bacteria? "The resistant mutants are evolutionary cripples," admits Novak, "and under natural conditions they rapidly die out."

Actually most antibiotic-resistant supergerms that doctors encounter are **not** mutations, according to Dr. Novak. Such germs obtain their resistance from tiny organisms called "plasmids," which apparently give the bacteria immunity to drugs. Scientists do not really know where the plasmids come from, but it is significant that there may not be nearly as many "beneficial mutations" as some evolutionists think there are.

● In a recent radio editorial, news director Jim Branch of station WRFM spoke on the subject "Has Religion Gone Too Far?" Branch noted religion's deep involvement in the past

"Has Religion Gone Too Far?"

U.S. presidential election, saying: "They really want to go back to the good old days when the church and state were not separate, and religion ran the show both on local and higher levels."

Branch says the churches seem to justify their political involvement "on the basis of God is everywhere, but someday they may face a judge who says, 'Oh, no, he's not . . . not from a legal point of view.' And then the judge will define God and religion and its limits. And so religion will find the tables turned. After so many years telling the secular world what to do, the secular world will tell religion what to do."

In a graphic depiction of a catastrophic change in the churches' status, the Christian apostle John quotes false religion, or "Babylon the Great," as saying: "I sit a queen, and I am no widow, and I shall never see mourning." The prophecy continues: "That is why in one day her plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and she will be completely burned with fire." —Rev. 18:7, 8.

Joys of Auxiliary Pioneer Service

THE apostle Paul stated the principle that "if the readiness is there first, it is especially acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what a person does not have."—2 Cor. 8:12.

This principle may be applied to the amount of time Christian ministers are able to devote to their preaching and teaching activity. Some, whose circumstances permit, serve as special pioneers, devoting 140 hours a month to the ministry. Others are able to devote 90 hours and so serve as regular pioneers. And for those not able to devote 90 hours each month to such sacred service, but who are still able to do more than the average Kingdom publishers, provision was made for the auxiliary pioneer service, which requires that a person devote 60 hours a month to the ministry. This has been a refinement of the vacation or temporary pioneer service, and it is being greatly appreciated, as can be seen in that more are now sharing in it and receiving blessings.

One such Witness in Barbados wrote: "In 1976 an announcement was made at the 'Sacred Service' District Assembly that a new feature of the preaching work was available—the auxiliary pioneer service with the monthly goal of 60 hours. I was overjoyed because I felt I could attain this goal of Kingdom service. The many blessings I have experienced during these thrilling years have certainly outnumbered the many problems I have encountered." She then goes on to tell how she obtained an enjoyable home Bible study with a mother and daughter. Already these have begun attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall.

A 15-year-old Witness schoolgirl tells of using her two-week spring vacation to share in the auxiliary pioneer service, and says: "I can really see the difference; an improvement in conversation. My results were outstanding, and I was able to hold many more conversations with people at the doors."

Another Witness writes: "I would like to express to you my appreciation for the auxiliary pioneer arrangement. As a housewife and mother, I have been able to enjoy auxiliary pioneering and it has been spiritually upbuilding to me and my family."

Then there is the 81-year-old auxiliary pioneer in Virginia. In eight months of this activity he was able to place over 4,200 maga-

zines. Because of his age, managers of chain stores allow him to sit on a chair inside their stores offering the magazines.

A brother from California tells of arranging his secular work so as to spend a month as an auxiliary pioneer, and states: "I could almost write a book on the many experiences I had: 60 hours, 130 magazines, 6 bound books, 6 return visits, and one new home Bible study. All praise to my heavenly Father for granting me, a 65-year-old man, to work 40 hours a week and do 60 hours a month of service!"

An eight-year-old daughter of a sister serving as a pioneer decided she wanted to meet the auxiliary pioneer requirements for one month. She devoted 61 hours, placed 3 books, 7 booklets and 140 magazines, obtained two subscriptions and started one home Bible study. In another congregation young Kingdom publishers not yet baptized were encouraged to meet the hour goal for auxiliary pioneers. Eleven responded and, of these, five made the 60-hour quota, one missed by four hours, and the rest exceeded their entire previous year's activity. Three new ones joined them in sacred service and kept up that service. All together the group of 14 placed 121 books and 264 magazines and averaged 41 hours each in talking about God's kingdom to others.

Another auxiliary pioneer wrote: "I now work from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. This means I have the whole day off, except for sleeping. So I decided to auxiliary pioneer a few times. Meeting the auxiliary pioneer hours after eight hours of secular work is not easy, but it's not too hard either, if one is willing to make sacrifices. Auxiliary pioneering has caused me to develop more love in my heart for the dying human race. I'm learning to be more conversational and versatile when talking to people. I guess the one blessing I'm most enthused about is that in the seven months that I have served as an auxiliary pioneer Jehovah has blessed me with 12 home Bible studies."

No question about it, many are the joys of those who arrange their affairs to serve as auxiliary pioneers. If you are not in the full-time service—although not a few of those serving at Bethel homes also auxiliary pioneer from time to time—could you be enjoying this privilege? Remember, "he that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."—2 Cor. 9:6.

Serving God During Difficult Times

IN THE winter of 1946, heavy snows were falling in the eastern European country where I live. On this particular day the snow interrupted train transportation, so I waited in vain at the station for a ride into the city. Someone pointed toward a small village where there was supposed to be bus service. But when I went there, I found that no buses were running.

On a number of occasions during the past several months I had left the city to be by myself in the woods. In the quiet setting, I would kneel and pray to God. After surviving the terrible years of World War II, only such prayer gave me peace and satisfaction. I was a Catholic who strongly believed in God, but praying in church before lifeless images brought me little comfort. In fact, observing the conduct of the priests made me determine not to go to church anymore.

On this day—temporarily stranded, hungry and tired—I noticed the sign “Bakery” on one of the houses of the village. Although the lady of the house informed me that the bakery was not in operation, she kindly gave me a little bread from her own supplies. I asked: “Please, could you allow me to sit down and rest up?”

While sitting, I noticed a book on the table. Learning that it was a Bible, I became very much interested. For a long time I talked with the woman and her husband, discovering that they were Jehovah's Witnesses. What I heard was like fresh water for a thirsty traveler. The couple said they would visit me the following Sunday.

The next Sunday I was ready. I even prepared a meal so we would have more

time to converse freely. But the couple did not come. My husband wanted me to forget about this “new religion.” I was in deep despair, even thinking about taking my life. But then my older daughter brought a letter from the Witnesses. They had *not* forgotten! Soon we were being assisted to study the Bible in our home. My children took part, including my daughter, 15, my son, 10, and my younger daughter, nine. They all prepared their lessons well, writing down the answers to the questions in notebooks.

I began sharing with others the things we were learning, and this gave me spiritual strength and joy. In August 1947 my older daughter and I were baptized, thus symbolizing our dedication to Jehovah God.

OPPOSITION FROM MY HUSBAND

My husband often got drunk, and made real trouble for me. He forbade us to go to Christian meetings. So sometimes my daughter and I would go to bed early, and then, when he did not observe us, we would get dressed and leave the house. Once, with ax in hand, he yelled that he would put an end to me. He swung the ax, but, because he was so drunk, it missed, falling behind me. I was able to escape.

My husband increased his attacks, one day trying to kill me with a cleaver. My younger daughter and I escaped to the house of some Witnesses who lived nearby, with my husband pursuing right behind. Because the Witnesses did not let him in, he broke the windows, and the police had to intervene.

In the early spring of 1948 my husband

gave the ultimatum: "It's either the home or Jehovah!" I preferred to leave home, our furnished four rooms, instead of giving up what we had learned. I took only my personal things and my three children. Everything we took could be carried by one person.

A HAPPY TWO YEARS

After these experiences I was physically and mentally exhausted, but at least I was free from family persecution. Witnesses who lived outside the city took us into their home.

In May 1948 my older daughter began pioneering, as the full-time preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses is called. She went to the southern part of the country, and later encouraged us to join her. When we arrived, there was no congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses there. I was able to obtain work, as well as two furnished rooms. Our room with a piano was set aside as a Kingdom Hall.

We began preaching and locating interested persons. Witnesses from a nearby city came and gave public Bible talks and helped us to increase in spiritual maturity. During the school vacation in 1949 my younger daughter did vacation pioneer work, and the following year she and her brother were baptized. However, what happened in 1950 cut short the joyful, although hard, life that I had with my dear children.

FAITH STRENGTHENED BY TRIALS

The work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned, and practically all of those known to the police, including myself and my older daughter, were arrested. My 13-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter were thus denied my care. One family took in my son, and another my daughter.

My older daughter was freed from prison after three months. I was in jail four



months more. On being released, I was ordered to leave the area. We took only our clothes and bedding, and the four of us went to another city where we were taken in by Witnesses. The experiences while in prison, and in moving to another territory, strengthened my faith and appreciation of Jehovah's care and guidance.

After a few months my older daughter began pioneering again. Because of the ban, however, she could not preach from house to house. So she visited already interested ones, giving them Bible literature and studying the Bible with them.

In 1952 my son finished school. Then we moved to a town over 100 kilometers (60 mi.) away, where he and I got work at a sawmill. Since I worked only part time, it was a joy to be able to begin pioneering.

Shortly after this a number of Witnesses, including my son and me, were arrested for preaching the Bible's message. However, because we held a secular job, we were freed after only two days. Several of the other Witnesses stood trial, and they received sentences of up to 15 years in prison. But we kept on preaching and in a short while 35 people were baptized in our area.

My older daughter was arrested again in 1953. During the investigation she was beaten and later sentenced to four years in prison. About this time my younger daughter finished school, and she and her brother began pioneering. The following year, when she was only 16, she was arrested and imprisoned for one month. Then she was put in a home for underage girls who were in trouble with the law.

Since I was being hunted by the police for my preaching activity, I could not be present at my daughter's court trial. As she was without parental care, she was sentenced for an unlimited time to a correctional institution. Because of her fine reputation, she was trusted to run errands into town, and we were able to see each other several times. What happy occasions these were!

Then I was sent to another town to pioneer. It was a trying time for me. My two daughters were in prison. And I did not see my son very often, since he was pioneering in a different part of the country. However, we did see each other at pioneer meetings, which sometimes lasted several days. These spiritual feasts took place in the more isolated homes of Witnesses. What joyful occasions they were!

Toward the end of 1955 I was asked to help out in reproducing, as well as transporting, Bible literature. The work was hard, but we knew how important it was. We gained strength by seeing the joy of the brothers who were so happy to receive the "bread" (this is what we called *The Watchtower*) and the "pastry" (which we called the booklets). Also, whenever I had free time I preached in parks, starting up conversations with people and establishing return visits.

WE ALL PIONEER

Early in 1956 my younger daughter was set free, and she continued where she left off in the pioneer service. About three

months later my older daughter was released from prison, and she, too, immediately resumed pioneering. After she was freed, the four of us met at a pioneer meeting, which we shall always remember.

For the next five years we met each other from time to time. At the beginning, each of us pioneered in a different area. So wherever we met was "home." The ceiling above was always sky blue, and the floor was sometimes green, or white, depending on the season of the year.

We started to work with electrical mimeograph machines in reproducing the Bible literature. On one occasion the house with the printing equipment and paper burned down. The authorities found out that there was a printery in this burned-out home, but no one was arrested. Then we had a share in a special work. I helped set the type for the beautiful book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*.

Our summer vacation in 1961 was spent as a family with hospitable brothers in a fishing village. We were able to rest up by the sea and gain strength to work for the coming year. We did not realize what awaited us.

OUR WHOLE FAMILY IMPRISONED

In August my older daughter was arrested, as well as my son. Then, three months later, my younger daughter and I were arrested. We were held in the investigative process for over a year.

While being held, I applied to see the prison dentist. When waiting in line, the woman prisoner next to me asked why the ward head had yelled at me the previous day. On telling her that it was for conversing with fellow Witnesses while taking a walk, the young lady next to this woman grabbed me. She embraced me with joy, stating that she too was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She was serving a three-year sentence for producing Bible literature. At the time I did not know that she

would eventually become my daughter-in-law—"my third daughter."

While imprisoned I had regular contact with my children through letters. Every letter was censored twice. We started to put more Biblical material into the letters so that the censors would get a witness about God's purposes. Once an older woman, who was a department head, called me from my cell. She led me to another wing of the prison in order to converse, asking about how I had brought up my children. She told me how patiently they were enduring in prison. She also said that all the people on duty were very much interested in our letters.

It was not until early 1963, about a year and a half after our arrest, that they started the court trial. It lasted three days. My older daughter was sentenced to three years in prison, while my son got two years. My younger daughter and I were set free. Our time already spent in prison was considered our punishment.

AFTER RELEASE FROM PRISON

Upon our release, hospitable brothers took my daughter and me in and helped us to regain our health. Soon afterward my son was released, and the three of us lived with brothers. I took up work at a foundry, my son found work with the railroad and my daughter did office work. At home, after work, we all helped to set the type for the second edition of the book "Let God Be True."

My older daughter was released from prison in September 1963. We returned to the territory where we had worked 15 years earlier. There we located an old house and, with the help of the brothers who lived nearby, we were able to repair it. The children all started pioneering again.

My husband had searched for us, but since we were in the full-time preaching activity, he never located us. I knew where

he lived, and so after 10 years of separation I encouraged my children to visit him. At this time he was still an alcoholic.

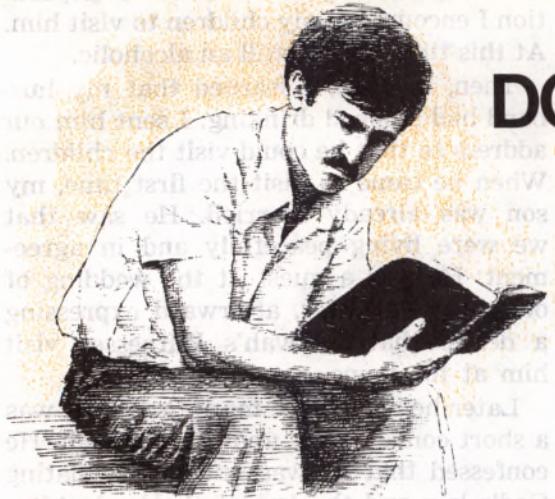
Then, in 1963, I learned that my husband had stopped drinking. I sent him our address so that he could visit the children. When he came to visit the first time, my son was already married. He saw that we were living peacefully and in agreement. He was a guest at the wedding of our older daughter, afterward expressing a desire that Jehovah's Witnesses visit him at his home.

Later he came once more to talk. It was a short conversation and very difficult. He confessed that he was guilty of violating God's law and the law of the land. After 22 years of separation he came back to live with us. Shortly afterward, on April 4, 1971, he was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Today, my son and daughters have their own families and I am a happy grandmother, having four grandsons and two granddaughters. We have found much joy and have experienced Jehovah's guidance, protection and help. I am deeply convinced that none of those who zealously endure in Jehovah's service will experience disappointment. With my whole heart I have trusted Jehovah and his assuring words, "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you." (Heb. 13:5)—Contributed.

In Coming Issues

- Do You Appreciate the "Faithful and Discreet Slave"?
- Who Are God's Ministers?
- Happiness—What Is the Key?



DO WE NEED HELP TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

LAST April the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Brazil received the following letter:

"I am writing you to respectfully inform you that I am a humble newspaperman, film maker, photographer, . . . and I have done everything that I wanted to. But it so happens that I am lacking the main thing: Faith in God. Already for two years I have been reading the publications of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and I like the doctrine of 'Jehovah's Witnesses,' and would like to become one of them, and do something good for humanity. I am tired of writing scripts for movies, feature stories and articles that even stimulate prostitution, murder, use of drugs, assaults, and everything bad that the newspapers print on their first page, and which is being avidly read by grown-ups and children. I must change. There is still time for me to use the imagination God has given me to the benefit of my brothers.

"For this reason, I would like to ask you earnestly to inform me about what I should do to start in the doctrine of 'Jehovah's Witnesses.'

"Respectfully, and waiting your kind answer."

Would it have been sufficient to tell this man simply to read the Bible together with others who would like to do the same thing? It appears he had been doing some Bible reading. But it was obvious to him that he needed help beyond that.

He was like the Ethiopian man mentioned by the Gospel writer Luke at Acts, chapter 8. This Ethiopian, while riding in his chariot, was reading aloud from the prophecy of Isaiah. At the prompting of God's holy spirit, the evangelizer Philip approached the chariot. On hearing the man reading from what is today part of Isaiah chapter 53, Philip asked: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" The Ethiopian replied: "How could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?"—Acts 8:30, 31.

Yes, by himself the Ethiopian could never have identified the one mentioned by Isaiah when he wrote: "As a sheep he was brought to the slaughter, and as a lamb that is voiceless before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth." So Philip explained that this prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The man accepted the proof and asked to be baptized at the first opportunity.—Acts 8:32-38.

NEED FOR INTERPRETATION

This same need for guidance is shown in the record about two of Jesus' disciples. These men were on the way to Emmaus,

on the third day after Jesus' death. They were familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, but still they could not understand why Jesus had to suffer and die. When the resurrected Jesus met up with them, they did not recognize him since Jesus had evidently taken a different form. What did Jesus do to help these sad-faced disciples?

"Commencing at Moses and all the Prophets," the Bible record says, "he interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures." With what result? After Jesus had identified himself and vanished from their sight, they said: "Were not our hearts burning as he was speaking to us on the road, as he was fully opening up the Scriptures to us?"—Luke 24:27, 32.

A little later on the same day these two disciples met with the 11 apostles in a room in Jerusalem and told them of their experience. While they were still speaking about these things, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. Did Jesus provide them with further enlightenment? Yes, for he explained: "These are my words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all the things written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms about me must be fulfilled." And Luke adds: "Then he opened up their minds fully to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures."—Luke 24:44, 45.

The situation with Apollos, who "was well versed in the Scriptures," also illustrates the need for guidance from a proper source. Apollos was an eloquent and convincing preacher about Jesus' being *the Messiah*. But still it was necessary for a couple, who had associated closely with the apostle Paul, to provide him Scriptural guidance. When this Christian couple heard Apollos preach, they could see that he needed clarification on certain teachings. For one thing, he knew only about the baptism of John the Baptizer.—Acts 18:24-26.

A HUMAN CHANNEL

From such experiences it can be seen that Jehovah God caused the Bible to be written in such a way that one needs to come in touch with His human channel before one can fully and accurately understand it. True, we need the help of God's holy spirit, but its help also comes to us primarily by association with the channel Jehovah God sees fit to use.—1 Cor. 2:6-10.

Showing that God would have an organized congregation through which instruction would come, the Bible says: "He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers, with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ, until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ; in order that we should no longer be babes."—Eph. 4:11-14.

In the first century, such congregational arrangement was looked to for direction. This is noted, for example, when the question came up as to whether Gentile converts should be circumcised. On that occasion, did the apostle Paul say something like this: 'Look here, Jesus Christ appeared to me personally, he has caused me to see supernatural visions, he has given me the gift of prophecy and inspiration and has enabled me to perform mighty works; so let me tell you just what is what on this question of circumcision?' Not at all!

The apostle Paul and his companions went up to Jerusalem to consult the Christian congregation's governing body, made up of the apostles and older men. And the one who made known the verdict on circumcision was not the apostle Paul but James, Jesus' half brother, who, at the time, was evidently the presiding overseer

of the Jerusalem congregation. After that, Paul, Silas and others delivered these decisions to the brothers.—Acts 15:1-35.

What about Paul's missionary travels? Did he act independently of Jehovah's assignment of him as an apostle to a certain group? No, but he obediently accepted his assignment, and this was later recognized by "pillars" of the governing body at Jerusalem, as Galatians 2:9 says: "When they came to know the undeserved kindness that was given me, James and Cephas and John, the ones who seemed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of sharing together, that we should go to the nations, but they to those who are circumcised."—Acts 9:15; 13:1-4; 22:17-21.

Later, when Paul came to Jerusalem for the last time, the Jews there had received misleading reports about him. So the "older men" in Jerusalem advised Paul what to do in an effort to put to rest these reports. And Paul readily accepted their direction.—Acts 21:17-36.

To help us to understand God's Word in these "last days," Jehovah God has lovingly provided a visible organization under Christ—the "faithful and discreet slave." The way Jehovah God has prospered the activities carried on under its direction can leave no doubt in the minds of dedicated Christians as to Jehovah God's approval being upon it.—Matt. 24:45-47.

A NOBLE-MINDED VIEW

How shall we view the spiritual food provided by this "faithful and discreet slave"? Should it be viewed critically—"Oh, well, it might be true but then again it might not be and so we have to scrutinize it very critically"? Some apparently have felt that way about it. To support their way of thinking they have quoted Acts 17:11, which says of newly interested persons at Beroea: "Now the latter were more noble-minded than those in Thessa-

lonica, for they received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so."

But does this mean that those Beroeans were looking for flaws in the message they were hearing, or that their attitude was one of doubting? Does this set a precedent for regarding critically the publications brought forth by the "faithful and discreet slave," with a view to finding fault? Not at all!

First of all, let us note the setting of the statement about the noble-minded Beroeans. Paul, accompanied by Silas, was on his second missionary tour. Due to persecution that arose, the brothers at Thessalonica sent them on to Beroea. In Beroea they met sincere Jews who had strong faith in God's Word. These were not Christians yet. They were simply interested persons who had to satisfy themselves that what Paul was telling them had the support of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Up to this time, these devout Jews in Beroea may never have heard of Jesus Christ. What Paul was telling them was *entirely new*. So those noble-minded Jews in Beroea searched the Scriptures daily to make certain that the references that Paul gave were really part of God's Word. And with what mental attitude did they pursue their studies? With a skeptical attitude, trying to prove Paul wrong? No, they were altogether unlike Paul's critics on Mars Hill, for we read that they heard Paul's testimony with "the greatest eagerness of mind."—Acts 17:11, 32.

These Beroeans listened with a readiness, yes, an eagerness, to believe. Thus not only were they open-minded, but they were *wanting* to have this "good news" proved true. In fact, for a person to acquire faith he must have "the will to believe." If he is determined not to believe, then no amount of evidence will convince him; for if a person looks for them he

can always find excuses, plausible reasons for not accepting the accountability that belief will bring upon him. As the apostle Paul well said: "Faith is not a possession of all people." (2 Thess. 3:2) But the Bereans had the will to believe. They considered what they heard with a receptive frame of mind. As a result, "many of them became believers, and so did not a few of the reputable Greek women and of the men."—Acts 17:12.

Jesus' disciples wrote many letters to Christian congregations, to persons who were already in "the way of the truth." (2 Pet. 2:2) But nowhere do we read that those brothers first, in a skeptical frame of mind, checked the Scriptures to make certain that those letters had Scriptural backing, that the writers really knew what they were talking about.

OUR VIEW OF THE "SLAVE"

We can benefit from this consideration. If we have once established what instrument God is using as his "slave" to dispense spiritual food to his people, surely Jehovah is not pleased if we receive that food as though it might contain something harmful. We should have confidence in the channel God is using. At the Brooklyn headquarters from which the Bible publications of Jehovah's Witnesses emanate there are more mature Christian elders,

both of the "remnant" and of the "other sheep," than anywhere else upon earth.

True, the brothers preparing these publications are not infallible. Their writings are not inspired as are those of Paul and the other Bible writers. (2 Tim. 3:16) And so, at times, it has been necessary, as understanding became clearer, to correct views. (Prov. 4:18) However, this has resulted in a continual refining of the body of Bible-based truth to which Jehovah's Witnesses subscribe. Over the years, as adjustments have been made to that body of truth, it has become ever more wonderful and applicable to our lives in these "last days." Bible commentators of Christendom are not inspired either. Despite their claims to great knowledge, they have failed to highlight even basic Bible truths—such as the coming Paradise earth, the importance of God's name, and the condition of the dead.

Rather, the record that the "faithful and discreet slave" organization has made for the past more than 100 years forces us to the conclusion that Peter expressed when Jesus asked if his apostles also wanted to leave him, namely, "Whom shall we go away to?" (John 6:66-69) No question about it. We all need help to understand the Bible, and we cannot find the Scriptural guidance we need outside the "faithful and discreet slave" organization.

THE SCYTHIAN

WHEN stressing that fleshly distinctions do not affect a Christian's standing as a member of Christ's body, the apostle Paul wrote: "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all things and in all." (Col. 3:11) The inclusion of the Scythians is noteworthy, as these fierce, nomadic people were regarded as the worst of barbarians. However, through the power exerted by God's holy spirit, even they could put on a Christlike personality, discarding their former ways. (Col. 3:9, 10) How powerful is the spirit of God!

Make A Good Name With God

"A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."—Eccl. 7:1, Authorized Version.

EVERYONE makes something additional to what he does, even the one who does nothing. A man makes fine furniture, and, additionally, makes a name as a skilled craftsman. A woman makes delicious meals, and thus makes a name as a good cook. A third person does nothing, and makes a name for laziness. Everyone makes a name for himself. And sometimes we give names to others. Saul and his associates by their slander gave David a bad name. David by his psalms gave God a good name. Jehovah enabled David to make a good name for himself. Some who claim to represent God give him a bad name through their religious lies and immoral deeds. True worshipers by their words and their deeds give God a good name, and in so doing they make a good name for themselves with Jehovah God.—Ps. 64:1-6; 1 Chron. 17:8; Ezek. 36:20-23.

² There is a verse in the Bible book of Ecclesiastes that may seem to be a very strange statement to some readers: "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth." How can this be? How can death be better than life? If you had a choice, would you not prefer to be beginning your life rather than to be coming to its end? Let us read this verse again, along with the verses that follow it:

1. What does everyone make for himself, and sometimes give to others?
2. What seemingly strange statement is made in Ecclesiastes, and what counsel follows it?

"A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity."—Eccl. 7:1-6, "Authorized Version."

Does this clarify the strange statement that the day of your death is better than the day of your birth? It does if you know the occasion and the background of those words. They concern a custom in ancient Israel. When a household lost a loved one in death, their dwelling became a house of mourning. It was the custom for friends and neighbors to come and offer condolences. The most consoling thought would be that the day of the death of this loved one would be better than the day of his birth—if he had made a good name with God. It is true that in the original Hebrew, verse one of this passage merely says "a name" rather than "a good name."* How-

* See the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures.

3. (a) What ancient custom in Israel is here discussed, and what is the most consoling thought for such a time? (b) How do we know that the name here mentioned is a good one?

ever, it is to be understood that the name is a good one. A similar case is Proverbs 22:1: "A name is to be chosen rather than abundant riches." Some translations supply the adjective "good" to show the kind of name meant.* Necessarily the name is a good one, in both the proverb and in Ecclesiastes 7:1; otherwise, neither of the statements would make sense.

⁴ As we live, we make names for ourselves—good names or bad names. If we act wisely in God's eyes, we make a good name for ourselves with God. But it takes time. On the day of our birth we have not lived long enough to make any kind of name at all. Furthermore, we are born under Adamic sin and condemned to death. (Rom. 5:12) Hence, if years later, on the day of our death, we have made a good name with God, we have something that we did not possess on the day of our birth. We have a name that God will remember when he resurrects the dead to life under Christ's kingdom. "The remembrance of the righteous one is due for a blessing, but the very name of the wicked ones will rot."—Prov. 10:7.

THE MOURNERS BENEFITED

⁵ But when an ancient Israelite went to a house of mourning to comfort the bereaved ones, there was benefit for him also. Consider this as we reread some of the verses. "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart." (Eccl. 7:2, AV) Not only does he show a kindly sympathy for the survivors, rather than callously pursuing his own pleasures, but also he ponders the fact that in this

* Authorized Version, American Standard Version, The New English Bible, etc.; see also the New World Translation footnote.

4. What may we have at death that we did not have at birth, and why?

5. What may the mourner ponder as he sits in a house of mourning?

house a person has died, that it is not anything unusual, that death comes to every man, and that it will come to him also. When it does, will that day of his death be better than the day of his birth? Will he have acted wisely during his lifetime, so that by the day of his death he will have made a good name with God? The living must lay it to heart, while there is time to change, for a good name cannot be made in the few minutes of a deathbed repentance.

⁶ "Sorrow is better than laughter," the account continues, "for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." (Eccl. 7:3, AV) Rather than consume time in frivolous merriment, it is better to examine your life, face mistakes made in the past and be saddened by wrongs committed. It will improve your heart and move you to change your ways and start acting wisely, rather than laughing and giggling your way through life like an irresponsible fool. "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart

6. Why, in this instance, is sorrow better than laughter?



The day of death better than the day of birth—how can that be?

of fools is in the house of mirth."—Eccl. 7:4, AV.

⁷ Furthermore, "it is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools." (Eccl. 7:5, AV) Contact with death, as at a funeral, is a sobering experience and should cause a person to reflect on his own course in life. It may also put him in a frame of mind to listen to wise counselors. Criticism, even when kindly given, is difficult to endure, but it is better than listening to the song or the "praise of fools." (*The New English Bible*) To hear and to heed the wise rebukes found in the pages of the Bible will enable us to make a good name with God. To fritter away our time listening to foolish flattery is vanity: "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity." (Eccl. 7:6, AV) To use thorns as fuel under a cooking pot accomplishes nothing. The flame shoots up with noisy crackling, but soon dies down as the thorns turn to ashes. There is not enough substance to the thorns to make a fire last until the meat is cooked. The noisy display is as useless as the stupid one's laughter. Neither accomplishes anything of lasting value.

AN EVEN STRANGER STATEMENT

⁸ So now, with this deeper understanding, we go back to the statement that 'the day of death is better than the day of birth.' We see that it is no longer strange but is a powerful lesson on how we should live our lives in order to make a good name with God. Then the day of our death will be better than the day of our birth. That is, of course, if the day of our death ever comes. 'What is that?' some exclaim. 'If the day of our death ever comes? You

7. (a) In what frame of mind may this put the mourner? (b) Why is the laughter of fools likened to the sound of thorns under a pot?

8. With deeper understanding, what lesson is now discerned?

mean it may not? Why, that is an even stranger statement than the one about death being better than birth!"

⁹ Again, it is a matter of understanding the times in which we live. Do you have eyes that see, really see? Certainly you see that the times are critical and hard to deal with, that many people are self-centered and haughty, that marriages collapse and families disintegrate, that cheating and lying and crimes of violence are everywhere, and that even many of those claiming to be Christians are proving to be hypocrites. But do your eyes see what these things signify? Second Timothy 3: 1-5, 13 tells us what they mean:

"But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power; and from these turn away. But wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled."

¹⁰ Do you have ears that hear, really hear? Certainly you have heard about the wars, famines, earthquakes and pestilences that have plagued the world since 1914. You know of the moral collapse that afflicts the whole world. And you have heard of the worldwide preaching of the good news of Christ's kingdom by Jehovah's Witnesses, and of the waves of persecution that have rolled over them for declaring that this millennial kingdom is at hand. But do your ears hear the significance of these things? Do they register the truth that these things were foretold by Jesus as a sign of the end, when he was asked

9. What conditions do your eyes see, and what should they really see?

10. What do your ears hear, and what should they further realize?

by his disciples, "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"—Matt. 24:3.

¹¹ Is your heart sensitive to what all of this means, or is it thickened with calluses that cause you to say, "All these things have happened before"? Those who scoff are providing another part of the sign that we are in "the last days." Their presence was foretold at 2 Peter 3:3, 4: "In the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.'"

SOMETHING NEW

¹² However, surely your heart is sensitive to the fact that when you consider the earth-wide pollution of our planet you discern that 'all things are NOT continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.' Never before have men had the power to destroy the earth as a habitable planet. They have that power now and they are using it now to do that very thing! The men of science have given industrialists a technology that was to be a blessing to all mankind, but that blessing has turned into a curse, as it pollutes the environment, and deadly diseases stalk the earth. The air we breathe is poisoned, the soil that grows our food is toxic, many rivers and lakes that supply our drinking water are dying, and the oceans are becoming international cesspools!

¹³ Is your heart aware that the earth's ability to sustain life is in danger, that this has never happened before, and that scoffers cannot dismiss this as history repeating itself? They might like to, for this

11. What do scoffers say, and thereby provide what?

12. What now is new in world history?

13. About what feature of the sign are scoffers unable to say, "It has happened before"?

ruining of the earth was also foretold as a part of the sign of "the last days." The Bible book of Revelation revealed this almost 19 centuries ago, in chapter 11, verse 18: "The nations became wrathful, and your own wrath came, and the appointed time for the dead to be judged, and to give their reward . . . to those fearing your name, . . . and to bring to ruin those ruining the earth."

¹⁴ If your eyes really see, and your ears really hear, and your heart is not calloused, you will understand that we are living in "the last days" and that the end of this wicked system of things draws near. But the majority of mankind do not understand this, just as the majority in Jesus' day did not grasp his warning message. What he said to them then, quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, applies to mankind today:

"Looking, they look in vain, and hearing, they hear in vain, neither do they get the sense of it; and toward them the prophecy of Isaiah is having fulfillment, which says, 'By hearing, you will hear but by no means get the sense of it; and, looking, you will look but by no means see. For the heart of this people has grown unresponsive, and with their ears they have heard without response, and they have shut their eyes; that they might never see with their eyes and hear with their ears and get the sense of it with their hearts and turn back, and I heal them.'" —Matt. 13:13-15.

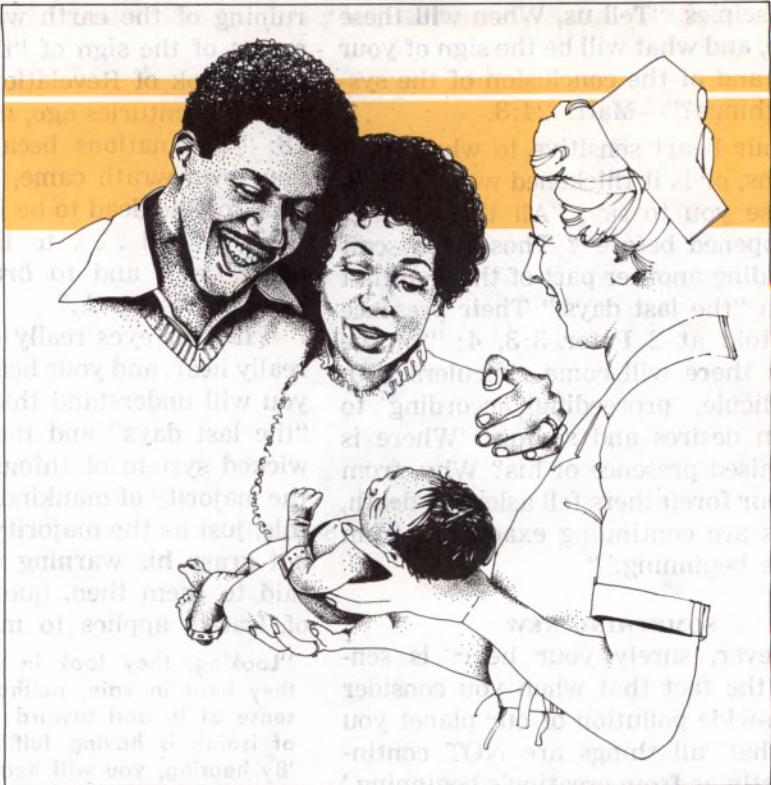
¹⁵ In the next verse Jesus adds these words for his followers: "However, happy are your eyes because they behold, and your ears because they hear." Those today who have eyes and ears and hearts that see and hear and understand that we are living in "the last days" can be truly happy. "As these things start to occur," they are told, "raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) Some of those living in "the last days" may never have to face the day of their death.

14. Why did the majority in Jesus' day, and now the majority of our day, fail to heed the warning?

15. Who can now rejoice, and with what hope in view?

“a blotted out of all time set to gather...” “and will now set it against him to afflict him even more.” “Now, I will rejoice in your salvation, and I will sing praises unto Jehovah, my God, because of thy judgments.” “I will sing unto Jehovah, because he has triumphed over his enemies, and he has exalted his people, because he has delivered us from our oppressors.” “I will sing unto Jehovah, because he has triumphed over his enemies, and he has exalted his people, because he has delivered us from our oppressors.”

How can the day of death be better than this?



Jesus compared this time to the days of Noah. Just as Noah and his family were preserved through the flood that destroyed that wicked world, so today those who act wisely and make a good name with God will not see death when Jehovah God destroys this evil system of things at his war of Armageddon. So it is not voicing the impossible to say that some may never see the day of their death. Rather, it is expressing a hope from God.

¹⁶ In ancient Israel, a man might reason that he had the rest of his natural life to make a good name with God. A man hides from the fact that he may die tomorrow. He knows others will, but not he. Others younger than he is will die, but not he. He always sees a few years remaining for

him to live. To reason thus is a human mistake, a dangerous one. It would have been so even for a man in ancient Israel, but it is a much more dangerous mistake for us today. We are not living in normal times, when we might expect to live out a normal life-span of threescore and ten or even fourscore years. We are in “the last days.” The death of a system of things draws near. It is crucial for us to heed the words of Ephesians 5:15-17: “So keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked. On this account cease becoming unreasonable, but go on perceiving what the will of Jehovah is.”

¹⁷ Now is the time, while you have life, before the day of your death, to make a good name with God.

16, 17. What are people reluctant to face, and what is crucial for us now?

Make Your Good Name NOW!

"All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power, for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, the place to which you are going."—Eccl. 9:10.

WHAT if some say, 'But what if the end does not come in my lifetime? Down through the centuries people have thought that the end was going to come in their lifetime and it did not'? Notwithstanding the fact that their expectations failed to materialize, the lifetime of many of these was still their time for making a good name with God, for exercising faith in the Son of God, that they might be resurrected to everlasting life "at the last day." (John 6:40; 11:24) Long before these present "last days" the apostle Paul could say: "From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness." At whatever time a person lives, that is his time for making a good name, whether the world's end is near or far off.—2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 11:4-38.

² "Just as one has come forth from his mother's belly, naked will one go away again, just as one came; and nothing at all can one carry away for his hard work, which he can take along with his hand." (Eccl. 5:15) Materially speaking, there is nothing the dead man "can take along with his hand." However, he can take along the only thing of lasting value that this life is good for—a good name with God. While each one of us is living, that is our time to make a good name with God. Make

1. At what time must we make a good name with God?

2. (a) Is there anything, materially or otherwise, that can be taken along when we die? (b) What admonition is therefore appropriate?

use of that time! Redeem it! Buy it out! "All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power, for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, the place to which you are going." Especially now, at the end of this system of things, when many of those living may never see death, it is the time for us to do with our might what our hands find to do in Christian activity.—Eccl. 9:10.

³ If we are going to make a good name with God we must concern ourselves with two categories: what is wrong and what is right. We must stop doing what is wrong and start doing what is right. How do we go about it? The mind must become involved. "Quit being fashioned after this system of things," Paul said, "but be transformed by making your mind over." (Rom. 12:2) He repeats the formula at Ephesians 4:23: "You should be made new in the force actuating your mind." And that force is identified at Colossians 3:9, 10: "Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it." The force that actuates your mind, makes your mind over and leads you to God's favor is the accurate knowledge of his Word the Bible.

3. What accurate knowledge is vital, and what can it accomplish?

⁴ To grit your teeth and grimly set about stopping the forbidden things does not always work. What if you do succeed in stopping them for a time? You are still not safe. Jesus showed this by an illustration. An unclean spirit left a man, its "house," and later returned. Finding the house unoccupied, it moved in with seven other spirits, "and the final circumstances of that man become worse than the first." (Matt. 12:43-45) It was not enough for the house to be emptied of the wicked spirit; it needed to be filled with good so that the wicked spirits could not reenter. It is not enough to stop the doing of what is wrong and leave a vacuum—we must start the doing of what is right. Crowd out the wrongdoing by occupying yourself with the doing of good. "Oppose the Devil," James said, "and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you." (Jas. 4:7, 8) Idleness is an invitation to Satan; filling the mind with truths is a protection.—Phil. 4:8, 9.

THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE

⁵ Today in the worlds of religion and philosophy there is a maze of conflicting opinions of rights and wrongs. In their search, some try to read the Bible but find it difficult. They are not the first ones to experience this. Nineteen centuries ago an Ethiopian man was riding in his chariot, reading from the book of Isaiah. "Philip [the evangelizer] ran alongside and heard him reading aloud Isaiah the prophet, and he said: 'Do you actually know what you are reading?' He said: 'Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?'" Philip got into the chariot and rode along and guided him.—Acts 8:26-35; 21:8.

⁶ Where are the 'Philips' of today quali-

4. Why is it not enough to stop wrongdoing, and what else must be done?
5. Why is reading the Bible difficult for many, and how was the problem solved for a man 19 centuries ago?
6. Where might we expect to find modern-day 'Phillips,' and where not?

fied to guide others in determining from the Bible the course that gains a good name with God? Not in the established, respected, orthodox religions of Christendom, as one might expect. Philip was not a distinguished scribe or Pharisee, but was one of the spurned, maligned, persecuted Christians. The lessons of history teach us that the established, accepted religious systems often fall prey to human philosophies and are guilty of adulterating the words of God.

⁷ The nation of Israel had Jehovah's law, but they adulterated their worship by adding to it the lewd idolatries of Baal sex worship, practiced in the groves and high places. Second Chronicles 33:17 alludes to this mixture, saying: "The people were still sacrificing upon the high places; only it was to Jehovah their God." This mixing of the true and the false was what Elijah challenged Israel about: "How long will you be limping upon two different opinions? If Jehovah is the true God, go following him; but if Baal is, go following him." (1 Ki. 18:21) Many churches and church members today are permissive of pornography, illicit sex movies, premarital sex, adultery and homosexuality—even to the point of condoning and practicing these things prohibited by God.—Rom. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Rev. 21:8.

⁸ For such obscenities Judah went into captivity to Babylon. Upon her return, she again adulterated God's Word—not by idolatrous sex worship this time, but by adding human traditions and philosophies. Jesus condemned their religious establishment, the scribes and Pharisees, for this, declaring: "Why is it you also overstep the commandment of God because of your tradition? You hypocrites, Isaiah aptly

7. (a) In what way did ancient Israel adulterate God's Word? (b) To what degree do some modern churches and church members in Christendom copy Israel, in violation of what scriptures?

8. Upon returning from Babylonish captivity, in what new way did the nation of Judah adulterate and make void God's Word?

prophesied about you, when he said, 'This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines.' "—Matt. 15:3, 7-9.

⁹ Paul was denouncing the contamination of God's Word with human philosophies when he said: "We have renounced the underhanded things of which to be ashamed, not walking with cunning, neither adulterating the word of God." Cheating wine merchants in those days would add cheap liquors or even water to their wine to make it go farther and bring in more money. Similarly, some religionists added human traditions and philosophies to God's Word to make it more palatable to worldly people. But not Paul! "We are not peddlers of the word of God as many men are," he declared, "but as out of sincerity, yes, as sent from God, under God's view, in company with Christ, we are speaking."—2 Cor. 4:2; 2:17.

¹⁰ Paul warned that Christianity would become apostate, and in the fourth century C.E. it was flagrantly adulterated through Roman Emperor Constantine. (Acts 20: 29, 30) As a result there was a fusion of Christianity with demonistic doctrines that originated in Egypt and Babylon—Trinity, immortal soul, hellfire, purgatory, prayers for the dead, use of rosaries and others. These doctrines are not in the Bible, but they were incorporated into the creeds of so-called Christian churches. They remain there to this day. Moreover, today's modern churches of Christendom adulterate God's Word even farther: they have added the higher criticism that tries to undermine the Bible's authenticity, and the unscientific theory of evolution that denies that God is Creator of heaven and earth and life!

9. In what forceful way did Paul compare deceitful wine merchants and unfaithful religionists?

10. What warning did the apostle Paul give, and how has it proved to be no false alarm?

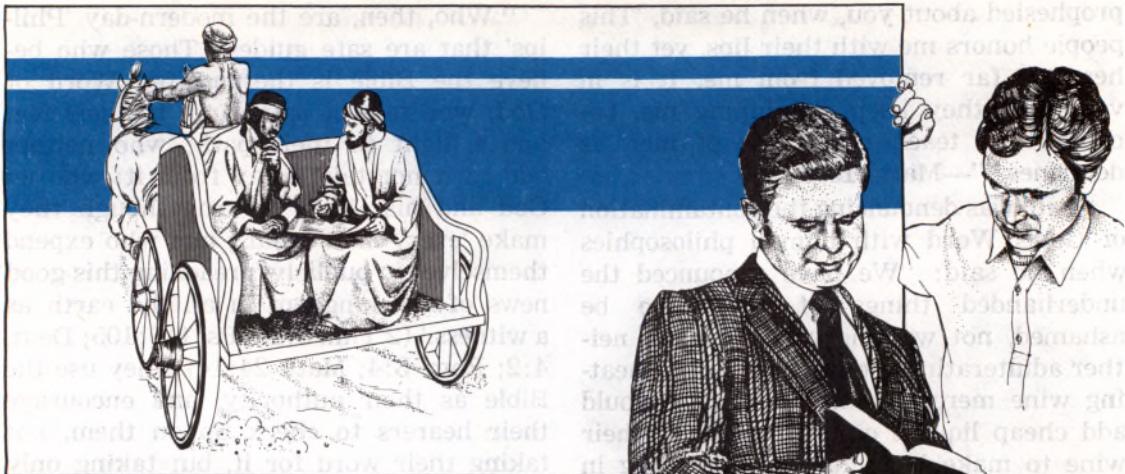
¹¹ Who, then, are the modern-day 'Philips' that are safe guides? Those who believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God; who take it as a lamp to their feet and a light to their path; who neither add to it nor take away from it; who let God and his Word be true though they make 'every man a liar'; and who expend themselves in publicly 'preaching this good news of the kingdom in all the earth as a witness.' (2 Tim. 3:16; Ps. 119:105; Deut. 4:2; Rom. 3:4; Matt. 24:14) They use the Bible as their authority, and encourage their hearers to check up on them, not taking their word for it, but taking only God's Word for it. (Acts 17:11) For you to make a name with God, you should aim to be such a faithful guide, "always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." Or, as Paul said: "Know how you ought to give an answer to each one."—1 Pet. 3:15; Col. 4:6.

THE PERSONS WE OUGHT TO BE

¹² To make a good name with God it is not enough to study and learn answers. We must apply this knowledge to ourselves first. To benefit personally we must take it personally. Like the man in ancient Israel in the house of mourning, we must 'lay it to heart.' (Eccl. 7:2, AV) "Do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching 'Do not steal,' do you steal? You, the one saying 'Do not commit adultery,' do you commit adultery?" Even the apostle Paul declared: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow." (Rom. 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 9:27) It is more basic than what we are

11. What different qualities and convictions mark modern-day 'Philips' as safe guides?

12. What means more to you than just studying God's Word and preaching it to others?



At whatever time a person comes or lives, that is his time for making a good name

doing. It is, What are we? What is "the secret person of the heart"? "What sort of persons ought you to be?"—1 Pet. 3:4; 2 Pet. 3:11.

¹³ What we are is not determined by what we appear to be. The prophet Samuel was sent to Jesse to anoint one of his sons to be king of Israel. Samuel was impressed with the stalwart firstborn son, but Jehovah said to Samuel: "Do not look at his appearance and at the height of his stature, for I have rejected him. For not the way man sees is the way God sees, because mere man sees what appears to the eyes; but as for Jehovah, he sees what the heart is."—1 Sam. 16:7.

¹⁴ Appearances are deceptive. Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees appeared righteous outwardly, but were corrupt inwardly. (Matt. 23:3, 27, 28) The Jews in Paul's day thought the outward sign of circumcision would save them, but Paul said: "He is not a Jew who is one on the out-

13. How did Jehovah adjust Samuel's thinking about judging people?

14. What further evidences are given showing that appearances may be deceptive, and what is the vital thing?

side, nor is circumcision that which is on the outside upon the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that of the heart." (Rom. 2:28, 29) And Paul listed great things that he might accomplish, and then added, "But [if I] do not have love, I am not profited at all." Whatever we do to make a good name with God should be motivated by love from the heart. "I, Jehovah, am searching the heart."—1 Cor. 13:1-3; Jer. 17:10.

¹⁵ What sort of persons, then, ought we to be? The apostle Paul gives this rather formidable listing of things commanded and things forbidden:

"Let your love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is wicked, cling to what is good. In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead. Do not loiter at your business. Be aglow with the spirit. Slave for Jehovah. Rejoice in the hope. Endure under tribulation. Persevere in prayer. Share with the holy ones according to their needs. Follow

15. What sort of persons ought we to be?

the course of hospitality. Keep on blessing those who persecute; be blessing and do not be cursing. Rejoice with people who rejoice; weep with people who weep. Be minded the same way toward others as to yourselves; do not be minding lofty things, but be led along with the lowly things. Do not become discreet in your own eyes. Return evil for evil to no one. Provide fine things in the sight of all men. If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.' Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil with the good."—Rom. 12:9-19, 21.

¹⁶ That is the sort of persons we ought to be! It would be frightening if God's mercy were not available where we in our weakness fall short. Here is a big source of help: associate with persons who have the same goals. "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." Shun the adulterous world empire of false religion that adulterates God's Word. "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins." Her conscience is seared beyond feeling guilt, though her sins mount up to heaven. As it is with the literal harlot, so it is with her: "Here is the way of an adulterous woman: she has eaten and has wiped her mouth and she has said: 'I have committed no wrong.'" Hence, it is vital to gain strength by associating with those seeking to make a good name with God, "not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom."—Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33; Rev. 18:4; Prov. 30:20; Heb. 10:25.

NOW IS YOUR TIME!

¹⁷ As the end of Satan's wicked system draws near, let us concentrate on 'what

16. What should we avoid, and what should we seek? 17, 18. What should we concentrate on now, and why must this not be postponed?

sort of persons we ought to be,' on making our minds over, on stripping off the old personality and putting on the new, and on making a good name with God 'so that the day of our death will be better than the day of our birth.' (Eccl. 7:1) Or, in the case of those hoping to inherit an earthly paradise, that the day of death may never come at all!

¹⁸ But perhaps you think the end should have come by now. Do you think the Lord has delayed his coming? Do you begin to slack your hand from the vital work of proclaiming God's kingdom, or even drift into misconduct? Regardless of when the end comes, this is the time your hand should do what it finds to do in making a good name. Any one of us may be gone tomorrow. We are like the flower that fades, the mist that vanishes, the shadow that passes. (Job 14:1, 2; Jas. 4:14) Ecclesiastes 9:12 warns: "Man also does not know his time. Just like fishes that are being taken in an evil net, and like birds that are being taken in a trap, so the sons of men themselves are being ensnared at a calamitous time, when it falls upon them suddenly."

¹⁹ We must do more than the young man who came to Jesus asking how he could gain everlasting life. Apparently, he was living a morally clean life, but that was not enough. In addition, Jesus said to him: "Come be my follower." Jesus is the model. (Matt. 19:16-22; 1 Pet. 2:21) He not only practiced God's precepts of conduct in his personal life; he also proclaimed "the good news of the kingdom" to others. "Repent, you people," he declared, "for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." He "set out on a tour of all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom." (Matt. 4:17; 9:35) When crowds wanted him to

19, 20. (a) In addition to living a morally clean life now, what else is required? (b) Why is it urgent to act now?

stay with them longer and tried to detain him, he said: "To other cities I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth." When he saw the crowds that had been spiritually "skinned and thrown about," he was "moved with pity for them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd. And he started to teach them many things." (Luke 4:43; Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34) He sent out his apostles to preach, instructing them: "As you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.' "—Matt. 10:7, 8.

²⁰ We now live in the critical last days of this satanic system. "The time left is reduced." It is urgent for us to declare the "good news." (1 Cor. 7:29; 9:16) Now is the time foretold for 'this good news of the kingdom to be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness, before the end comes.' (Matt. 24:14) Whatever may be Jehovah's time to bring the end to this wicked system, never forget this: NOW while you are living; NOW before unpredictable death may take you; NOW is your time to share in preaching the "good news" and to make a good name with God!

"Kingdom Loyalty" District Conventions

HOW rare loyalty is today! Citizens display disloyalty by cheating on their taxes; mates cheat on each other; employees cheat on their employers in a multitude of ways; religionists cheat on God by their hypocrisy. How comforting, therefore, is the Scriptural assurance that Jehovah God, above all others, is the loyal One! —Jer. 3:12; Rev. 15:4; 16:5.

As imitators of God we likewise want to manifest loyalty, and especially do we want to be loyal to Jehovah God and to his kingdom. If we are loyal to Jehovah he will never forsake us.—Ps. 18:25; 37:28; Rom. 8:35-39.

Satan and his world are seeking to lure us into acts of disloyalty, and so we need all the help we can get to keep loyal. What

are the many instances of those who have drifted away, or, worse yet, been disfellowshiped, but examples of disloyalty?

To help us effectively to meet the challenge of being loyal to Jehovah and his kingdom, and in line with our yeartext, Psalm 145:10, 11, the theme "Kingdom Loyalty" has been chosen for our 1981 district conventions. We can be confident that our "Kingdom Loyalty" conventions will be every bit as encouraging, spiritually stimulating and enjoyable as were last year's "Divine Love" district conventions. There will be upbuilding talks, starting from Thursday morning and continuing through all four days, that none will want to miss.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 22: Make a Good Name with God.

Page 20. Songs to Be Used: 112, 62.

March 29: Make Your Good Name Now!

Page 25. Songs to Be Used: 38, 8.

Why Control Our Tongue?

Do you know someone who talks too much? Proverbs 10:19 presents a reason for guarding against that. It says: "In the abundance of words there does not fail to be transgression, but the one keeping his lips in check is acting discreetly."

Jesus' half brother James confirmed the need to guard against stumbling with the tongue, for failure to bridle it may make one's worship futile. (Jas. 1:26) None of us can perfectly control our tongue, but we can definitely improve.—Jas. 3:2-8.

This does not require that we remain mute, never joining in or contributing to conversation. But why not run this test? Take note of your impulses for a while. See if you observe that, in group conversation, you feel impelled to speak up quite a bit on every topic. With conversations on various subjects of life, do you consistently wind up having spoken more than most others in the group? If so, some meditation on Proverbs 10:19 may be a safeguard.

"WATCHTOWER, STUDIES FOR THE WEEK
March 23: Trials & Good News After
Years of Silence to the World—178
March 26: Works from Good News Point
Back to Sounds of the Gospel—181

With Continued Good Tidings

Do you know someone who takes too many "breaks" from Jesus? If so, it deserves a lesson for him. Encouragement through study of the Word, "in the spreading grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," can help. Paul pointed out earlier that we need to keep him in sight to avoid spiritual sluggishness. This is also true of those who have given up their daily walk with God. Paul's words to the Thessalonians are appropriate here: "Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to your faith, for the hour of darkness has not yet come. It is the last hour." That is, the time of final judgment is near. We must remain strong in our walk with God, for the world around us is filled with temptation from evil. Take note of how important it is to keep our walk with God. As the Apostle Paul said, "If we do not good works, we sin; if we do good works, we do not sin."