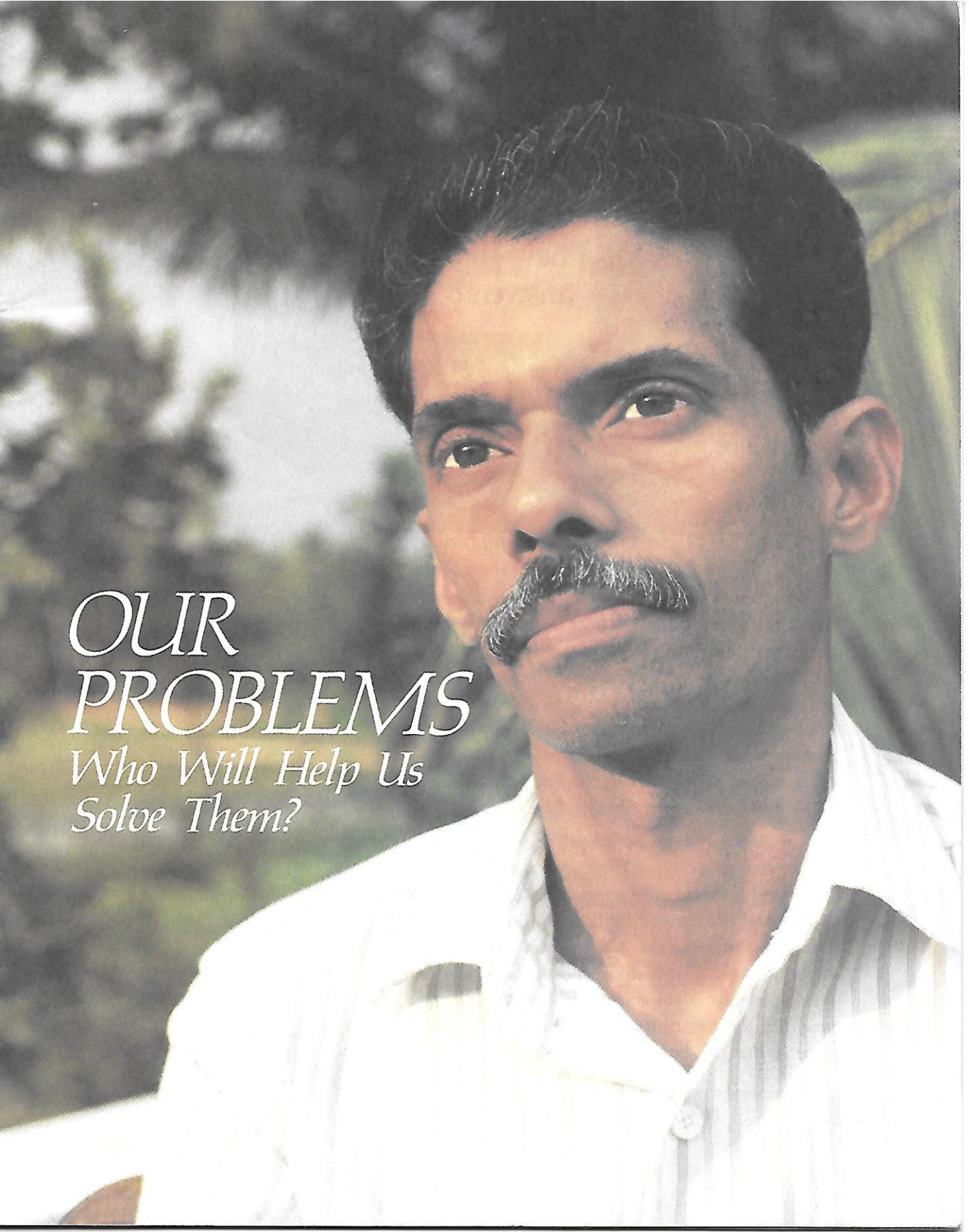
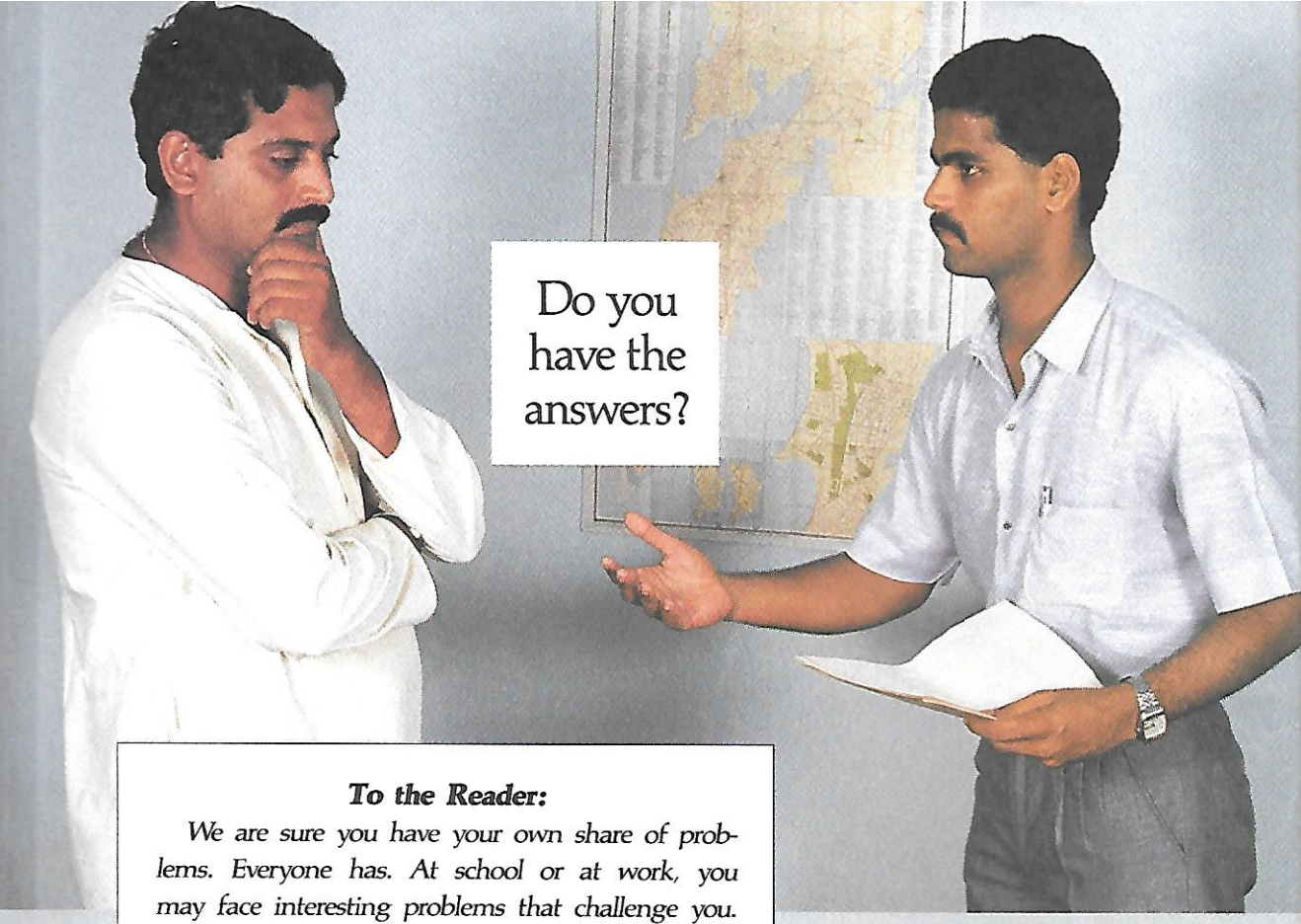

OUR
PROBLEMS
Who Will Help Us
Solve Them?



Do you have the answers?

To the Reader:

We are sure you have your own share of problems. Everyone has. At school or at work, you may face interesting problems that challenge you. Other problems are more painful, though. If you are poor, just getting enough to eat can be a continuing challenge. Sickness in the family makes matters worse. Unhappy marriages, prejudice, unfair practices, political unrest, and economic uncertainty make life more difficult.

Can such problems be solved? That is the subject of this publication. The question is discussed in conversations between two families. The conversations and the families are fictional. But the problems discussed are real, and the solutions arrived at really work. If you study and apply what this publication says, the information will truly change your life for the better. There are questions on page 30 that can be used to review the material.

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Publishers
WATCHTOWER
BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
OF NEW YORK, INC.
INTERNATIONAL
BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, 1984 Edition

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Our Problems—Who Will Help Us Solve Them? English (*op*-E)

Made in the United States of America

OUR PROBLEMS
Who Will Help Us Solve Them?

The storm clouds were gathering as Ramu picked his way over the rough path to his neighbor's house. He was feeling nervous. Examination time was near, and he could not understand some of his lessons in mathematics. His mother had insisted on his going to their neighbor to ask for his help, but Ramu had not yet spoken to Masterji,* who was teaching mathematics at a city school. Ma had said they were a friendly family and would be glad to help. Had not Masterji's wife carried Ma's grains from the ration shop after seeing her condition?

Ramu thought about his mother and how hard she worked from morning to night. And soon there would be another member in the family to feed, clothe, and take care of. No wonder his father kept urging him to study hard so that he could get a good job and help support the family.

He had arrived at Masterji's house. As he hesitated at the door, a kindly voice said, "Hello, come inside," and Ramu entered.

Some time later Ramu's father, Anand, was returning from work and saw his son leaving Masterji's house. Ramu seemed happy, and there was a spring in his step. As Anand got to Masterji's house, the heavens seemed to open, and the rain poured down in torrents. The schoolteacher, who had been watching Ramu run to his home, called Anand into the house and quickly closed the door against the pelting rain.

* Respectful term for a schoolteacher.

The Problems Facing All of Us

Weary after his long day's work in his cycle repair shop, Anand gladly accepted the hot cup of tea that Masterji's wife, Mariam, prepared for him. He glanced around the neat room as Mariam returned to her sewing machine and Paul and Rachel, Masterji's children, settled down with their homework. Suddenly, Anand was filled with a great bitterness and burst out, "I can see you do not have the problems I have to face every day. You are all so calm and contented. How I envy you!" Masterji smiled and said, "Well, we have our share of problems too, Anand. But what in particular is troubling you?"

Warmed by Masterji's kindly interest, Anand began to pour out his heart. Money, that was the main thing. There was never enough to go around. The landlord kept increasing the rent; school fees and the cost of books and uniforms were always shooting up. Each time his wife, Nirmala, came from the market, she complained about the rising cost of even the basic necessities. Now she was pregnant again, and the doctor said she must have tonics because she was weak and anemic. Where was the money to come from? It would still be some years before his son Ramu finished school, and after all the expense to send him to a good school, what guarantee was there that he would get a good job? Why, even college graduates with several degrees were unemployed. What hope was there for a cycle repairer's son to find the sort of job that would improve their lot in life? How could he hope to find husbands for his daughters without having the money to give a dowry for them? Even though this was illegal, people still demanded it, in one form or other.

Anand considered himself to be an honest man. His parents had taught him not to lie or cheat. But where did that get him? He did not like corruption, but he realized that he might never get ahead by honest means. Other cycle repairers traded in stolen cycles and sold secondhand spare parts as new, and their busi-

nesses were thriving. Why should he not do the same? A little more money would ease so many of his burdens.

Masterji listened patiently and sympathetically until Anand had exhausted his tale of woe.

"Anand," he asked, "do you really think money will solve your problems? Do you think all rich people are happy, secure, without any problems? Do they never get sick? What about their children becoming drug addicts, immoral, or rebellious? Do we not hear of corruption, taking of bribes, unemployment, and increasing violence in the so-called developed nations where money is more plentiful? No, Anand, I cannot agree that money alone will solve your problems or mine."

"Your problems," said Anand, "what are they?"

"They are the same as yours, Anand. I think most of us have the same problems, you know."

"But you are not troubled as I am. I can see that your family is placid and happy. What is your secret, Masterji?"

"Well, Anand, we as a family are convinced that someone is going to solve all our problems soon."

"Why, are you expecting to inherit a fortune?"

"No, not that," said Masterji, laughing. "No, Anand, we believe that very soon God is going to intervene in world affairs and bring about such a change that decent, peace-loving people will no longer have to worry about high prices, sickness, crime, housing problems, lack of employment, violence, or insecurity."

"I can see you do not have the problems I have to face every day. You are all so calm and contented. How I envy you!"

Anand looked amazed. "You sound just like my mother: 'Leave everything to God; your fate is in his hands.' I did not expect such thinking from an educated person like you, Masterji. I know that you are a Christian, but other Christians I know do not feel as you do. They

are active in politics and demonstrations, trying to improve conditions by their own efforts; they do not just 'leave it to God' to change matters."

"Perhaps I should explain, Anand, that there is a very big difference between what my family and I believe and what is taught and practiced by the churches. You know that there are many different groups here in the city that claim to be Christian, that is, they say they follow Christ and the teachings of the Bible. Yet, when you examine their beliefs, you find that many of their teachings differ from the teachings of Christ. For example, Christ taught his followers to be nonviolent and to love their enemies. Do the so-called Christian nations follow this teaching? Have they not taken the lead in two world wars and in producing nuclear weapons? And the record shows that the churches have supported them. So when they send their missionaries to non-Christian nations, they are not always bringing the teachings of Christ.

"There are, however, people all over the world who, like us, believe that God will soon bring the solution to our problems. We base our hope on predictions written down long ago in the Bible. These convince us that a world change is very near, and we do all we can to share this good news with our neighbors. Since the God of the Bible who promises this change is called Jehovah, we are known as Jehovah's Witnesses."

"Well, Masterji, this is something new to me. You must tell me more about it another time."

The Desire to Be Happy on Earth

"They do believe in God," Nirmala told her father-in-law.

"What are you talking about, Nirmala?"

"You felt that because Masterji and his family never went to the temple or the mosque or to a church and had no images or

religious pictures in their home, they must not believe in God. But they do. Mariam explained to me while teaching me how to make clothes for the coming baby. She said they believe in one God who created everything and whose name is Jehovah. Because he is invisible and no one has ever seen him, they do not make images or pictures of him. She told me that their holy book, the Bible, says that "God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) So they pray to God without using any visible thing to look at. They call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses.

What man desires most is a good home, good health, a happy family, and loving friends

"And she said a very interesting thing about worshiping God with truth. She said that truth means things as they really are, not mythology or imagination. Therefore, they do not believe in man-made philosophy, which does not agree with actual facts. (Mark 7:7, 8) As an example, she said that whereas most religions teach that our ultimate goal is to leave this earth and be united with God or to have a reward in some spirit afterlife, this did not agree with the facts, as this was not man's natural inclination. She stressed that what man desires most is a good home, good health, a happy family, and loving friends. When people are happy, they do not want to die and go to heaven or attain Nirvana or moksha, losing their personality and becoming nonexistent as individuals. 'Who must have given man this desire to live happily on earth?' she asked me. It must have been the One who created him. So the Bible, it seems, teaches that Jehovah God made man to live happily forever right here on this earth. Since this is man's natural desire, she claimed that this teaching of the Bible describes things as they really are and hence can be called truth."

"Well, Nirmala, if that were true, then God failed in his purpose. People are not happy on earth. Earthly life means problems and suffering, and we can only get relief if we escape from this

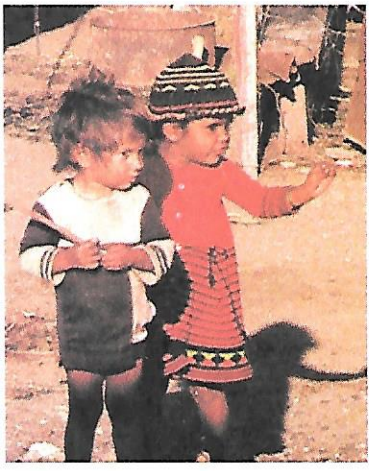
earth. Anyway, Anand says that Masterji and his family are visiting us tonight. Let us see what he says about this."

The One Who Promises to Solve All Problems

After some talk about the weather and the children's coming examinations, Dadaji* brought up the argument he had put to Nirmala earlier in the day. Masterji thought for a few moments, then asked Anand's mother, "Dadi,# what do you do when someone in the family has malaria?"

Surprised, she replied, "I give them medicine, of course. We have had it often enough, so I know what to ask the chemist for."

Turning to Anand's father, Masterji said, "You see, Dadaji, that is the logical thing to do when you are suffering; you take medicine to get better. You do not say, 'Let me die and leave the earth.' But suppose we had the right 'medicine' to remove all suffering and solve all our problems here on earth. Would we not prefer to stay here rather than die and leave our loved ones?



For a long time, humans have been suffering on earth

"Obviously, man does not have the ability to solve all his problems. So for a long time, humans have been suffering on earth. But does not your own belief teach that during *kalyug*, God must take avatar to bring *satyug* on earth?△ Does that not show that the ancient philosophers who developed that teaching also believed that God wanted man to be happy here on earth?

"Think of this colony, Dadaji. When it was first built, it was a very fine colony, was it not? But look at it today. So many tenants have moved in who do not care about others. They have broken the streetlights, thrown garbage wherever they like, smashed windows, and stolen taps, so that water is wasted and makes the roads muddy. What needs to be done now? If the bad tenants were removed and the colony facilities repaired, could we

* Grandfather.

Grandmother.

△ *Kalyug* is the "black age," or period of wickedness. "Avatar" means "incarnation." *Satyug* is the age of truth, peace, and happiness.

not enjoy living here? This is what God has promised to do to the whole earth.

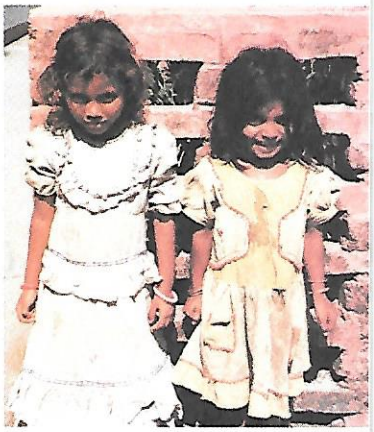
"According to the Bible, God created man perfect, healthy, and happy. But by not obeying God's laws, men have acted ruinously and become defective. (Deuteronomy 32:4, 5) Not only that but today they are even ruining the earth, which is God's creation. So the Bible says that God will first remove the wicked 'tenants' from the earth and then help good people to restore happy conditions."—Revelation 11:18.

"But Masterji, things would just get bad again after some time. That is why after God cleanses the earth and brings *satyug*, bad conditions recur and lead to *kalyug* again. So only escape from the earth can bring permanent peace. For example, I have solved some of my family's problems from time to time, but they just come back again, or some other problems come in their place."

"Yes, that happens to all of us. But it would not happen with God. Not only does he have the power to solve problems but he has the power and the desire to see that they never arise again; he has the ability to maintain peace and security permanently earth wide."—Nahum 1:9.

At this point, Anand, who had been listening quietly to the discussion, interrupted: "I do not agree with you at all, Masterji. We have had to put up with our problems for such a long time, and has God interfered? No! I think only we humans can bring a change. We must change the whole system, rebel against the rich and the corrupt and remove them from power. If the downtrodden all over the world would rise up against oppression, we could bring a change. Then perhaps I could get Ramu and Priya into a better school without needing to give a large donation or bring pressure through influence."

"I can appreciate how you feel, Anand. Actually, the Bible speaks of this state of affairs, saying that for centuries 'man has dominated man to his injury.'"—Ecclesiastes 8:9.



Will it take a revolution to give them an opportunity for a happy future?

"But is that not what God intended?" asked Anand. "Even in places of worship, the rich get preference over the poor and dominate over them."

"No, this was not what God intended, Anand. The Bible account says that God made man to dominate over the lower forms of life—animals, fish, and birds only—not over fellow humans." —Genesis 1:28.

"Good. Then if such domination is contrary to God's wishes, would not revolutionaries be carrying out God's will if they were to destroy corrupt, domineering people?"

"But what would happen after the revolutionaries removed such ones? They would take control and become oppressive themselves, so that we would be back where we started. No, only God can remove all wicked domination and bring lasting peace by establishing divine rulership. This is what the Bible says Jehovah God will do very soon. This is what my family and many thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses firmly believe, and it gives us a wonderful hope for the future."

When Will the Problems Be Solved?

"That sounds all right," said Anand, "but I cannot see any sign of change or improvement on earth. How can I believe that God is going to bring a change in my lifetime?"

"Suppose I told you, Anand, that when you were out of the house, I had planted a mango seed in your garden. You go outside and look, but you cannot see anything, not even a disturbance in the soil. I am a stranger to you. You may feel: 'Why should this stranger take the trouble to come into my garden and plant a mango seed?' Would you be inclined to believe that I had actually done what I had claimed to do?"

"No, I do not suppose I would. At least I would be very doubtful that you had done it."

"Yes, I can believe that. Now, suppose after some time you see a plant begin to grow. You realize that someone is quietly watering the plant when you are not at home. Time passes, years pass. You begin to recognize that it truly is a mango tree. Then, one year you see that the tree is filled with blossoms. Now what would you feel?"

"Well, I would know that what you had said was true. I would know you were kind and really cared for me. And I would keep watching the tree, excitedly waiting for the fruit."

"Exactly. Your reaction is just what one would expect. Now, this is an illustration to show you why Jehovah's Witnesses are expecting a tremendous world change very soon. Let me explain.

"The Bible took about 1,600 years to be written. More than 40 different men wrote it in the form of 66 small books, which were later collected together into one large book. None of the writers claimed to be expressing his own thoughts. They stated that God was telling them what to write and that the information was from him. One writer, a king who ruled in the Middle East, said, 'The spirit of Jehovah it was that spoke by me, and his word was upon my tongue.'—2 Samuel 23:2.

"The very first book describes creation; it says that Jehovah God made man perfect and gave laws to guide him. But he also gave him free will so that he could choose whether to follow God's laws or not. Following these laws would bring happiness; breaking them would bring punishment. Man chose to break God's laws and thus brought suffering and death upon himself and his offspring. But now God planted a 'seed.' Yes, a 'seed' of hope that one day he would solve all our problems and restore peace and happiness to the human race.

"This 'seed' was in the form of a promise that God would bring a change. Now, to most of mankind down through history, God has been a 'stranger.' You and I and all the people living today were not present when Jehovah made that original promise or planted that 'seed.' Nor were we present when he kept

'watering' the seed by repeating his promise and enlarging upon it, giving more details over the centuries. But an account of this is found in the Bible, spread throughout the various books. When the Bible was completed, it had fully explained how God would remedy mankind's problems.

"So this is the point of my illustration, Anand. Even though we did not observe the planting of the 'seed'—God's original promise—or the watering of it by means of all the additional information God gave, we can today see the fully grown tree with blossoms on it. So we can be sure the fruit will come."

"What do you mean? As I told you before, I cannot see anything that shows a change is coming."

"Yes, you can. But you do not recognize it because no one has told you what to look for. The Bible gives a detailed description of what conditions will be like on earth at the time God will intervene. It says clearly that a number of outstanding things will be seen by one generation of people and that the very generation that sees this 'sign' will also see the end of wickedness and the start of a peaceful new world. (Matthew 24:3) Now, Anand, wouldn't you like to know what the Bible says so that you can judge for yourself and see if you too can see these things happening?"

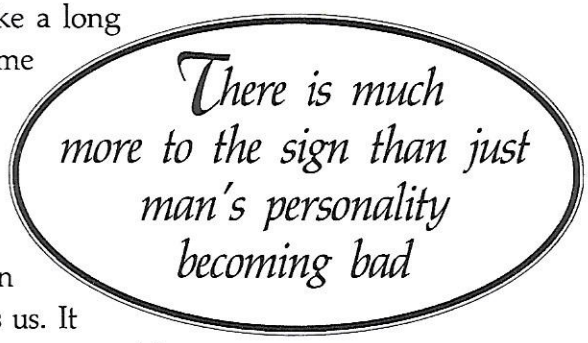
"I certainly would."

"The Sign"

"Do you remember the other evening that we were discussing the increasing violence in the locality, and we agreed that the women and children should not go out alone after dark? So many people have been assaulted and robbed in this area, which was formerly such a peaceful part of the city. Well, that is part of the sign. The Bible says there would be an 'increasing of lawlessness' and that people would become 'lovers of money, . . . without self-control, fierce.' We also spoke of the recent raids on manu-

facturers of spurious drugs—do you remember? What a cruel thing that is, to put people's lives in jeopardy for the sake of making money! Normally, humans feel sorry for people who are sick, but the Bible says that during the last days of this wicked world, times would be very critical as people become 'lovers of themselves, . . . having no natural affection, . . . without love of goodness.'"—Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1-3.

Ramu suddenly spoke up, "This is just what Dadi tells us is a sign of *kalyug;* she says people become very selfish and greedy during *kalyug.* But she says it will still take a long time for *satyug* to come, that it will not come in her lifetime."



"Well, Ramu, many feel as Dadi does. They realize that conditions are very bad, and they expect a change, but there are many different ideas about when it will come. This is where the Bible helps us. It makes it very clear that the change will come in our lifetime. You see, there is much more to the sign than just man's personality becoming bad.

"In the Bible book of Matthew chapter 24, verse 7, it says, 'For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another.' This is part of the sign that Jesus Christ gave to show that the last days of wickedness had come and destruction from God was near. Now, compare this with a description of the same period given in the last book of the Bible, called Revelation. In chapter 6, verses 4 to 8, we find that these conditions would be all over the world. Describing war, it speaks of taking 'peace away from the earth.' You have no doubt learned in your history lessons, Ramu, that 1914 was the year in which the first world war began. Historians tell us that this was a turning point in history because since then we have seen one war after another, and peace has been taken away completely from the whole earth.

"The same chapter gives more details of the food shortages that Jesus spoke about. It speaks of getting just a small quantity of wheat for a full day's wage. Is that not what Nirmala complains about, Anand, when she goes to the market? Prices of even basic commodities constantly increasing? Look at the terrible shortage of food caused by drought in many parts of Africa and Asia. Lakhs* of people go to bed hungry at night. Children die because of diseases caused by malnutrition. Yes, food shortages are a worldwide menace in our day.

"Another part of the same sign is pestilence, or disease. Despite all the progress man has made in the field of medicine, he still cannot rid us of the mosquitoes that plague us with malaria and other diseases. Man is still not able to provide everyone with clean drinking water so that we do not get typhoid, cholera, jaundice, dysentery, or worm infestations. And in the so-called developed countries where these diseases are rare, there are increased cases of cancer, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases, and many other pestilences.

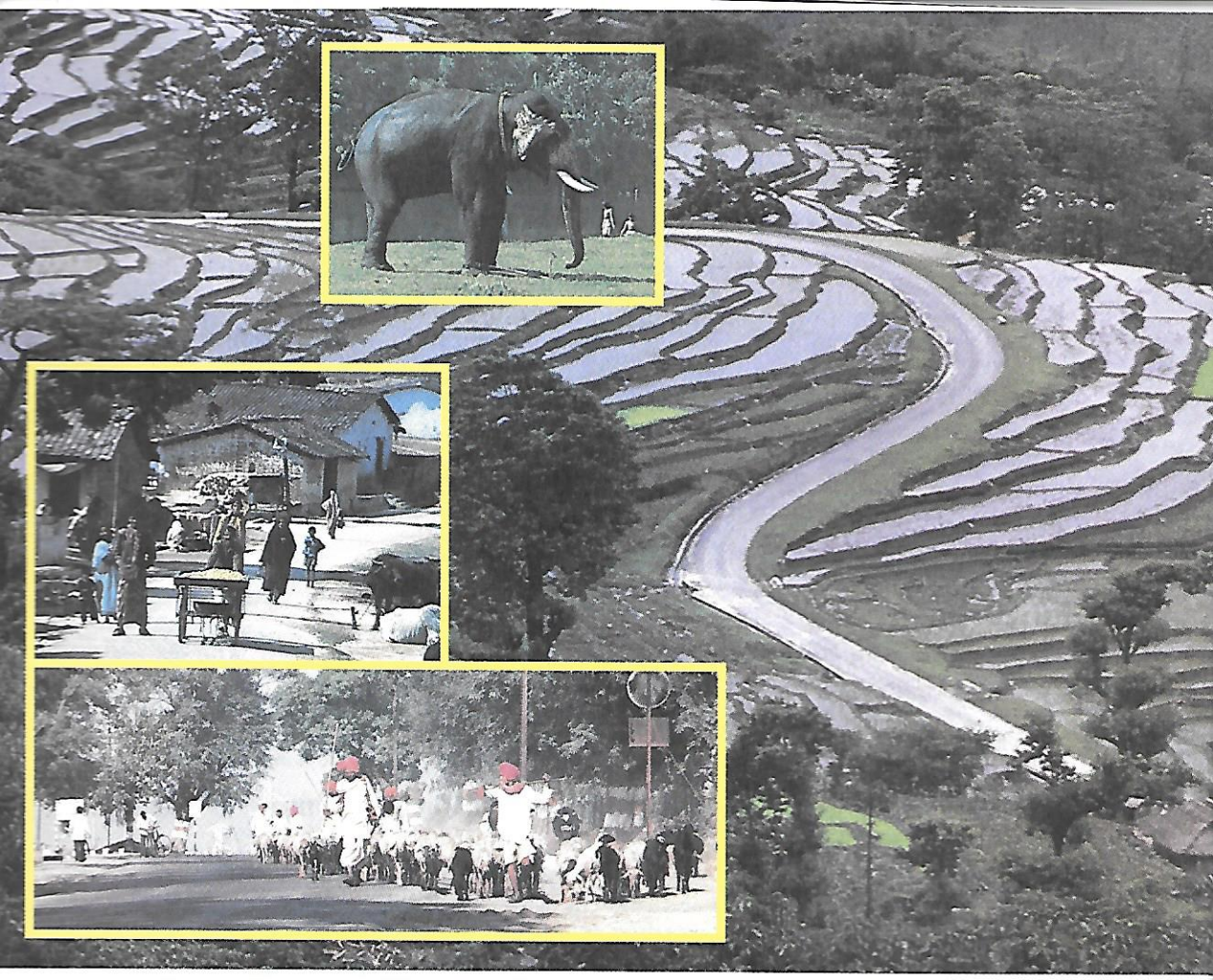
"Here, now, is where the Bible pinpoints the period of time in which the end will actually come. Priya, why not read out for us from the book of Matthew chapter 24, verses 32 to 34."

* A lakh equals 100,000.

"Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur."

When you see the tree blossom, you know that summer is near. Similarly, when the whole sign is being fulfilled, the end is near

"Thank you, Priya. Do you see what this means? The tree puts forth blossoms, and you know that summer is near. You see the sign—all the different things that make up the sign taking place—and you know that God's time to take over world affairs is near. How near? Jesus says 'this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.' Which generation? Why, the generation that sees the complete sign. Otherwise, what would be the point of the sign? This is a warning to people living at that time that they must take action to preserve their lives. When the bell rings on the railway platform, does it mean that the train is coming tomorrow? Do we settle down and doze off to sleep? No. We pick up our bags and stand ready because we know the train will be coming onto the platform shortly. So Jesus was saying that the generation of people who saw the warning sign would be the same generation that would see the complete end of this wicked world. In other words, some people who were



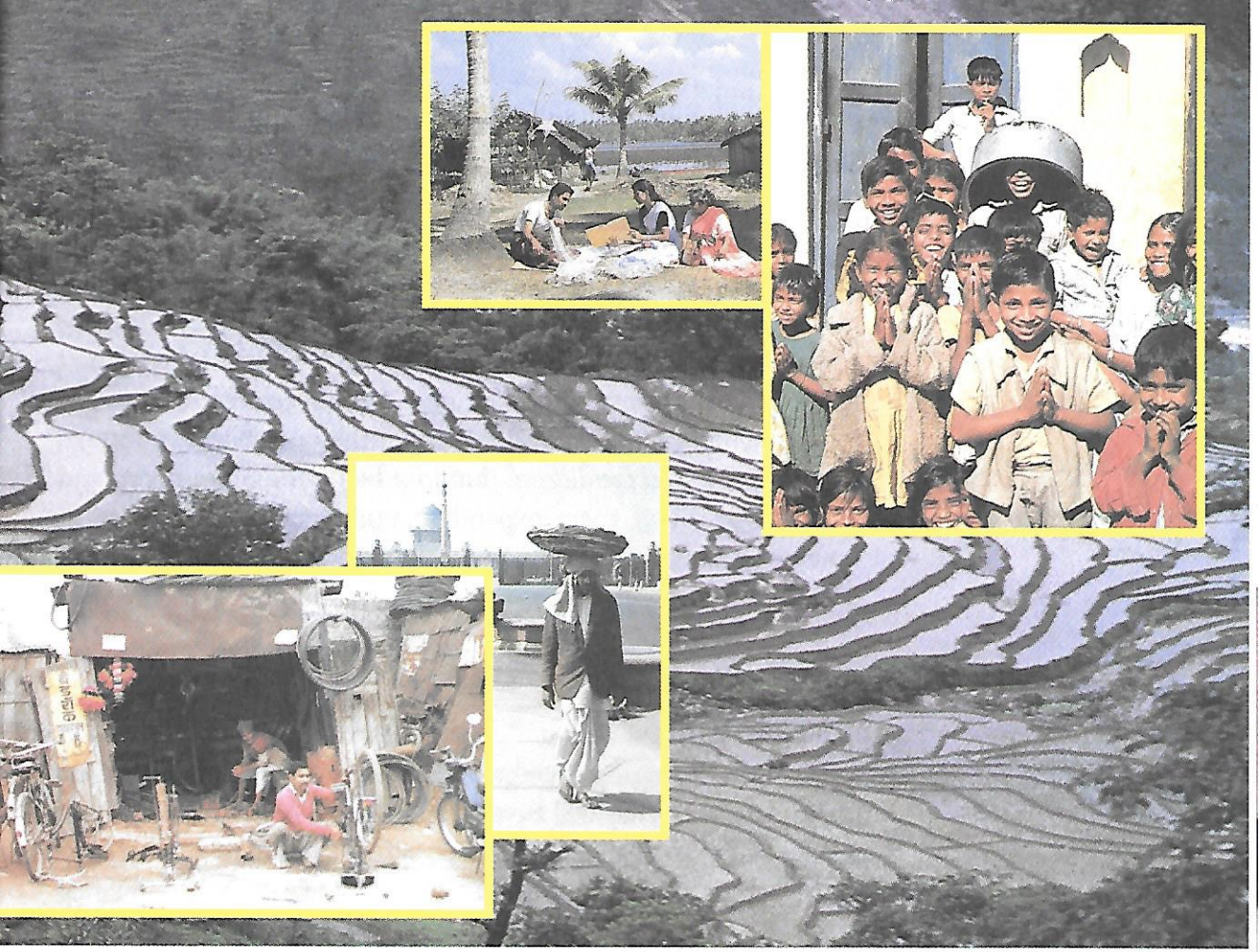
The Bible warns humble, sincere people to take God's warnings seriously

living and aware of what was happening when the first part of the sign appeared in 1914 would still be alive when the end came."

"Dadaji, were you alive in 1914?"

"No, Ramu, I am not quite as old as that. But I was born not too long after that, and I remember my mother telling me when I was small that we were poor because my father and many of his family had died of a terrible disease that came after the first world war. It was called the Spanish flu, and millions of people all over the world died because of it."

"You see, Dadaji, that is another part of the sign. That epidemic was so outstanding that you know about it and re-



member the effects of it even though it happened nearly 70 years ago.

"However, even though God in his kindness gives us such a clear warning of what he is going to do, the Bible states that the majority of mankind will ignore the warning. It tells us that most people will go about their daily affairs being concerned only about what they will eat and drink, who their children will marry, and other such normal things, and they will take no notice until the destruction suddenly comes upon them. Many, the Bible prophesies, will even mock and ridicule when told about the coming end of this wicked world. So it warns humble, sincere people not to be like the majority but to take this warning seriously. —Matthew 24:38, 39; Luke 21:34-36; 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

"This is what some 38 lakhs of people in 212 lands have done. They believe this warning and are doing all they can to prove that they are worthy of surviving this great destruction and remaining on earth as fit 'tenants' of this beautiful home that God has given to man. You will find that wherever they live, Jehovah's Witnesses make no distinction as to race, caste, or color; they are one big worldwide family. In obedience to God's laws, they take no part in war, violence, revolutions, or political movements in an effort to bring changes in the world. Instead, they practice love toward all, the greatest expression of that love being the time, effort, and money that all of them expend to visit people from house to house and encourage them to take notice of God's warnings so that they too can enjoy life in God's peaceful new world."

A New World—How Different?

"Masterji," said Ramu, "you keep speaking of a new world and of God bringing changes. What sort of changes will God make? I mean, what will be different in this new world?"

"Let us ask Rachel to tell us something about that, Ramu. What are some of the things you have read in the Bible, Rachel, about conditions on earth when God intervenes in man's affairs? Tell us some of the things that appeal to you."

"This is one of the Bible verses I love to read," Rachel said, "because I love playing with animals. May I read it out? It is from the book of Isaiah chapter 11, verses 6 to 8. It says: 'The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them. And the cow and the bear themselves will feed; together their young ones will lie down. And even the lion will eat straw just like the bull. And the sucking child will certainly play upon the hole of the cobra; and upon the light aperture of a poisonous snake will a weaned child actually put his own hand.' I think it will be wonderful when we can go into the

jungle without fear of being attacked by lions or bitten by snakes; we will be able to play with all the animals.

"When I get the flu or malaria or even a bad cold, I think of the text that says, 'And no resident will say: "I am sick."' (Isaiah 33:24) At school there is a girl who is lame because she had polio when she was very small. She suffers so much and is not able to play games with us. I took my Bible to school one day and read this out to her from Isaiah 35:5 and 6: 'At that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness.' She was so happy to hear that.

"My uncle, who is a farmer living in our village, was happy too when I read the next verse to him: 'And the heat-parched ground will have become as a reedy pool, and the thirsty ground as springs of water.' (Isaiah 35:7) He has so much hardship when the monsoon rains fail and his crops are poor. But the Bible says there will be plenty of food for everyone in God's new world—no crop failures then! It says that Jehovah God will 'make for all the peoples . . . a banquet of well-oiled dishes' and that 'there will come to be plenty of grain on the earth.' (Isaiah 25:6; Psalm 72:16) Ezekiel 34:27 tells us: 'And the tree of the field must give its fruitage, and the land itself will give its yield, and they will actually prove to be on their soil in security.' Is that not wonderful?"

"It would certainly be wonderful if I could really play with a lion," said Asha, Anand's youngest daughter. "I have seen them in the zoo, and they look so frightening."

"I am sure you would enjoy that, Asha," said Masterji. "Now, do you see, Anand, how the Bible shows that Jehovah God recognizes our specific problems and promises to remove them? Sickness, lack of food due to poor rainfall and failing crops, these are things that affect all of us. Poor housing conditions are also a major problem. High rents and overcrowding, these are things

that will not exist in God's new world. In Isaiah 65:21 and 22, it says this about housing: 'They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating.' So God promises homes and gardens for everyone on earth.

"However, these wonderful conditions could not be enjoyed if we had insecurity because there were wicked people waging wars and causing violence. These are the ones God will destroy. Psalm 37:10 states: 'And just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be.' Because wicked people will be destroyed, we can have confidence in the promise, 'He is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth.'—Psalm 46:9.

"Jehovah God promises to accomplish this by means of a government that the Bible calls God's Kingdom. This government will be different in many ways from any human government. For one thing, it will be a heavenly government, so it will be impossible for it to be corrupted. Second, it will guarantee justice for all, not just for the rich and powerful. Let me show you a beautiful description in the Bible of this government in action: 'With righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with uprightness he must give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth. . . . And righteousness must prove to be the belt of his hips, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.'—Isaiah 11:4, 5.

If the bad tenants were removed and the colony facilities repaired, could we not enjoy living here? This is what God has promised to do to the whole earth

"Finally, God's Kingdom will replace all other governments, so that it will be a real world government. This is shown in a striking prophecy in the book of Daniel: 'In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be

brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.' (Daniel 2:44) Yes, things will be much better when God's Kingdom is in full control. No wonder Jesus taught his followers to look forward to its coming. He even told them to pray to God: 'Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.' —Matthew 6:10.

"So you can see that the almighty God, whose name is Jehovah, is fully aware of our difficulties and is sympathetic toward us. He assures us that very soon he will take action to solve our problems."

Benefits Now From Wise Counsel

"That all sounds very good, Masterji, but just sitting and waiting for God to bring a change is not going to feed and clothe my children today. We must work. We must put forth effort ourselves to improve our lot in life."

"We certainly must work, Anand. The Bible tells us to work hard even in the face of difficulties in order to provide for those who are dependent on us. (1 Timothy 5:8) In fact, it clearly says: 'If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat.' (2 Thessalonians 3:10) It also gives us laws, principles, and counsel that are beneficial to our health and happiness if we follow them. For instance, the Bible shows that God disapproves of overeating and overindulgence in alcoholic drinks. We know both these things can seriously harm our health and waste hard-earned money.

"Similarly, Bible principles teach us to avoid tobacco and betel nut, which seriously impair our health, as doctors agree, and which waste money that could be better spent on paying off debts or buying food for the family. (2 Corinthians 7:1) Following the Bible's high moral standards and wise counsel on hygiene also keeps us emotionally happy and helps us to avoid many diseases.

That is why in the Bible, Jehovah God speaks of himself as 'the One teaching you to benefit yourself,' and he goes on to say, 'O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.'—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

"However, we must admit that even though to a great extent we can improve the quality of our lives today by following wise advice, we still cannot solve the big problems of injustice, corruption, racial and caste prejudice, partiality, serious sickness, and death. For these to be removed permanently, God himself must intervene."

"I believe we can bring great changes by our own good works," Dadi broke in. "Our good karmas* affect other people also, and by daily meditation we can get inner peace and be undisturbed by whatever problems we have to face."

"Many persons feel as you do, Dadi, but one thing is certain. No matter how good our deeds are, we cannot remove wickedness from the earth. Our good works may influence others to do good, but some people will not change. In fact, some will take advantage of your goodness to do more harm.

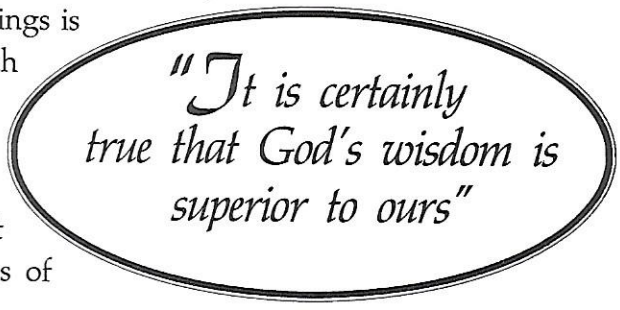
"You will agree that most Hindus believe that only by God's taking avatar can *satyug* come. They feel that God's intervention is very necessary when the majority of humans are doing bad karmas. And just think, Dadi, if you have inner peace due to meditation, will that of itself guarantee that Anand earns enough money to feed, clothe, and educate the family? It would not, would it?

"What you say about meditation is very interesting. First, though, we have to learn to meditate correctly. For example, we must first have information to meditate upon. That is why we send our children to school; they need someone with more information to teach them. Then the children can meditate upon what they learn. We do not tell them just to sit at home and meditate

* Deeds, or actions.

and let knowledge come from within them. We recognize the need for a teacher, or guru, one who knows more than we do. So who knows more about man and his problems than the One who created him? Surely, then, we can expect our Creator also to act as our Teacher and to show us the solution to our problems. We educate our children because we love them. Would not a loving, almighty, heavenly Father do the same?"

"I must say you sound convincing, Masterji," interrupted Dadaji, "but the way you explain things is too simple. Our religion consists of much deeper philosophy. Our saints and sages spent years meditating on the meaning of life. I myself have read the holy books all my life, but I still cannot grasp the meaning of all the mysteries of the universe and life and its purpose."



"It is certainly true that God's wisdom is far superior to ours, Dadaji. The Bible speaks of a man called Job who, after long years of deep thought about God and his creation, admitted, 'Look! These are the fringes of his ways, and what a whisper of a matter has been heard of him!' (Job 26:14) But even though we with our inferior minds cannot understand all there is to know about God, could he not teach us at least what we need to know if he so desires?

"For example, if a professor of mathematics, a very learned man with a reputation for being a brilliant mathematician, offered to teach Ramu without taking any fees, would you refuse the offer, saying, 'He is much too advanced in knowledge; Ramu could never understand all he knows?' Of course not! You would know that however brilliant a scholar he is, if he is a good teacher, he can teach even kindergarten children so that they can grasp and understand. So could not an all-wise God teach us, his children, what we need to know in simple language that we can understand? The Bible says he does so. It says: 'All your sons will

be persons taught by Jehovah.' (Isaiah 54:13) That is why you find the teaching of the Bible to be simple and understandable to us humans. It is full of illustrations, has records of ordinary people, and contains accounts of everyday life written in simple language that any of us can understand. This is an excellent way for a person of superior intelligence to show us the solution to our problems.

"But we must go now. We have really enjoyed this time spent together and appreciate your hospitality."

A Book of Instruction

A few days later, Nirmala and Mariam were checking the instruction book of Mariam's sewing machine, which was not working properly. When the difficulty was cleared up, Mariam asked Nirmala, "Do you not think that the God who made us would give us a book of instructions that we can refer to when we have problems?"

"What do you mean, Mariam?" asked Nirmala, surprised.

"When we bought this sewing machine, the maker gave us a book of instructions. Similarly, would it not be reasonable that God, who is the Maker of man, would give instructions that would benefit humans if they followed these instructions?"

"I suppose you believe the Bible is that book of instructions?"

"Yes, I do, Nirmala. There are many books that are called holy books. Some of these are accepted as mythology, some as the philosophy of individuals living at a particular time in history and developed by their own thinking. Others give a moral code and social laws to fit a particular area at a specific time. All these books teach different things, and people choose to follow what appeals to them, just as a woman chooses what color sari she will wear.

"The Bible, however, is different. As we discussed earlier, none of the writers claimed that the thinking was their own.

As one writer explained it, the message in the Bible 'was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God.' (2 Peter 1:21) Although the Bible's counsel was practical at the time it was written, it is also practical today in the 20th century because God's guidance is eternally beneficial and his standards do not change. It has always been a force for good in the lives of those who follow it, helping them to make tremendous changes in their lives. That is why a lawyer living almost 2,000 years ago said: 'For the word of God is alive and exerts power.'—Hebrews 4:12.

"Perhaps, though, the most outstanding value of the Bible for us living today, Nirmala, is that it clearly pinpoints our

The Bible's counsel is practical today because God's Word is eternal

generation as the one that will see the change God has promised. It gives us 'the sign' that we were discussing the other evening. Bible writers looked forward to this time, but many of them did not understand the meaning of the prophecies that they recorded, although they were keenly interested in how God would solve man's problems. For example, one writer, Daniel, requested an explanation of things he had been told to write down. But look at the answer he got: 'Go, Daniel, because the words are made secret and sealed up until the time of the end . . . The ones having insight will understand.' Also, he was told about the time of the end, 'Many will rove about, and the true knowledge will become abundant.'—Daniel 12:4, 8-10.

"This is really happening today. For centuries the Bible was available only in the original languages, then one or two other languages. Today, we have all or part of the Bible available in over 1,900 languages, and more than 200 crore* of copies have been distributed worldwide. Add to this the fact that some 38 lakhs of Jehovah's Witnesses are going from house to house helping people to understand the Bible, and you can see how that prophecy is being fulfilled. The things 'made secret' are being understood now as 'the true knowledge' increases in 'the time of the end.' This is vital if people are to be made aware of God's instructions for survival of the end of this wicked world. By studying the Bible, people can see that things God foretold in the past really took place, so they can believe his promise of a new world that will bring the solution to our problems."

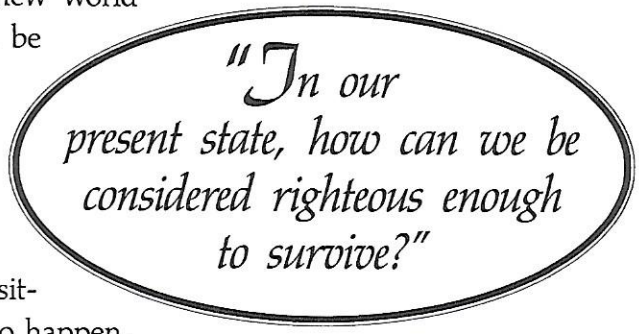
What We Must Do to Survive

Dadi had just finished her evening prayers when Mariam walked home with Nirmala. After admiring the pretty clothes for the expected baby, Dadi suddenly changed the subject.

* 200 crore equals 2,000,000,000.

"If Masterji is right," she said, "and God is soon going to destroy wicked people, we will be safe. We do not cheat or lie, we go to the temple and pray, and we lead a moral life. No harm can come to our family."

"It would certainly be necessary to lead a moral life to survive God's destruction of wicked people, Dadi," Mariam responded. "He would not want people in his new world who lie, cheat, and kill, or it would be no different from the present world, would it? But just think, Dadi. In a time of disaster, like a flood, the government gives us specific instructions for survival. These are based on their knowledge of the exact situation and what they know is going to happen. We would not sit at home and say, 'I am a good person, so I will not drown,' would we? Now, God is going to bring a much greater disaster than a flood. He is bringing a war, which the Bible calls Armageddon, that will affect every individual on earth. (Revelation 16:14-16) The Holy Scriptures tell us that being morally good is one basic necessity for survival. But God has also given other specific instructions, based on his knowledge of the situation. These also we must follow if we are to survive. Those who follow God's instructions would be considered 'righteous,' 'upright,' and 'blameless' ones who the Bible says will be left over in the earth when God destroys the wicked."—Proverbs 2:20-22.



At this point Dadaji responded: "But in our present state, how can we be considered righteous enough to survive?"

Mariam answered, "Jehovah God made a wonderful legal arrangement to help man. Let me explain it with an illustration. Suppose, Nirmala, you give Ramu ten rupees and send him to buy a kilo of sugar. On the way to the shop, he stops to play and loses the money. When he gets to the shop, will the shopkeeper give him the sugar?"

"No, of course not," said Nirmala.

"Ramu stands crying. He knows the whole family will suffer because he lost the money. A kind gentleman standing nearby takes pity on him and gives him ten rupees. This is given to the shopkeeper for the sugar, and your family is able to use it.

"The Bible tells us that our problems started when the first human pair that God created misused their free will and chose to disobey God's wise instructions. God had warned them of the punishment for doing so—loss of perfection, loss of their Paradise home, and loss of their right to continue to live on earth forever. God justly enforced his laws. This left their offspring crying, as it were, because of their great loss. But because God tempers his justice with love, he arranged to give humans the chance to regain what the first pair had lost. Like the kind gentleman in the illustration, God provided the exact price of what had been lost. He did this by sending his own spirit son from heaven to be born on earth as a human known as Jesus Christ. When Jesus willingly sacrificed his perfect human life, which was equal to the life that the first man, Adam, had forfeited, and presented the value to God, then that price could be used to buy back for humankind what had been lost, namely, perfect life forever on a paradise earth."

At this point in the discussion, Masterji, who had entered a short while earlier with Anand, joined in. "So you can see from what Mariam is saying that Jesus was not an avatar of God but a spirit son of God, born as a man to offer his perfect life for humans, paving the way for them to regain what was lost because of the disobedience of the first human pair. When we come to accept this arrangement God has made, then we are well on the road to surviving the end of this wicked world and enjoying everlasting life on a peaceful, problem-free earth. This hope is so wonderful that Jehovah's Witnesses all over the world are exerting themselves to help people of all nations to learn about it. True, it requires effort to prove to ourselves that this hope is reliable, but the rewards held out to us surely make the effort worthwhile."

A Bright Future

The sun was shining in a clear blue sky when Anand brought Nirmala and the new baby home from the hospital. It looked as if the rainy season was almost over. There was a lot of excitement in the family, and neighbors came in to see the new arrival. Anand slipped out quietly into the compound and sat watching a sparrow collecting pieces of straw to make a nest. 'She wants a secure future for her family just as I do,' he thought.

What if all the things Masterji had been saying were true? Then this new child in his home would have a wonderful future ahead of it. Anand remembered Masterji's closing words when they had conversed a few days earlier. He had said, "Suppose when Ramu has completed his education, you see an advertisement in the newspaper for a job. It is being offered to someone with Ramu's qualifications. The pay is excellent, the location is where he would like to live, good accommodation is available, and the work is something he would enjoy doing. What would you do? Ignore the advertisement, or do everything in your power to obtain that employment?" 'Well, the answer to that was obvious,' thought Anand.

So, what about the things the Bible says that God is offering to people living today? A paradise earth, a good home, plenty to eat, satisfying employment, perfect health, and total security. Suppose that was true. Anand thought for a long time.

As the sun began to set in a glorious blaze of color, he made up his mind. 'Yes,' he said to himself. 'I owe it to myself and my family to examine thoroughly the evidence as to whether this change will really come. And if I am satisfied, we must do everything in our power to prove worthy to survive the end of wickedness and enjoy a happy future when all our problems will have been solved.'

"I owe it to myself and my family to examine the evidence"

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Our Problems —Who Will Help Us Solve Them?

Why did Ramu visit Masterji?

What made Masterji invite Anand into his home?

The Problems Facing All of Us

Why was Anand filled with bitterness?

What were some of his problems?

What was Masterji's response to Anand's tale of woe?

Why was Masterji's family happy?

Was the religion practiced by Masterji's family the same as that of the churches? Why not?

The Desire to Be Happy on Earth

What did Mariam explain to Nirmala about God?

What is "truth"?

Man's natural inclination is to live where?

The One Who Promises to Solve All Problems

State the illustration that Masterji gives to prove that man's inclination is to live on earth.

Who does Masterji say will solve all man's problems, and for how long?

Why does Anand disagree with this?

How does Masterji show that violence cannot solve man's problems?

When Will the Problems Be Solved?

What was the point of Masterji's illustration of the mango tree?

Give some facts about the Holy Bible.

"The Sign"

What are some features of "the sign" at (a) 2 Timothy 3:1-3; (b) Matthew 24:7; (c) Revelation 6:4-8?

How does Matthew 24:32-34 pinpoint the period in which the end will actually come?

How do most react to the warning about what God will soon do to the wicked?

How are Jehovah's Witnesses different?

A New World—How Different?

What are some things about God's new world that appealed to Rachel?

Show from the Bible that God recognizes our specific problems and promises to remove them.

Benefits Now From Wise Counsel

What does the Bible say about work?

How are the Bible's laws and principles beneficial?

Why is Bible teaching simple and understandable?

A Book of Instruction

Why is Mariam sure the Bible is God's book of instruction?

How can it especially benefit us today?

What We Must Do to Survive

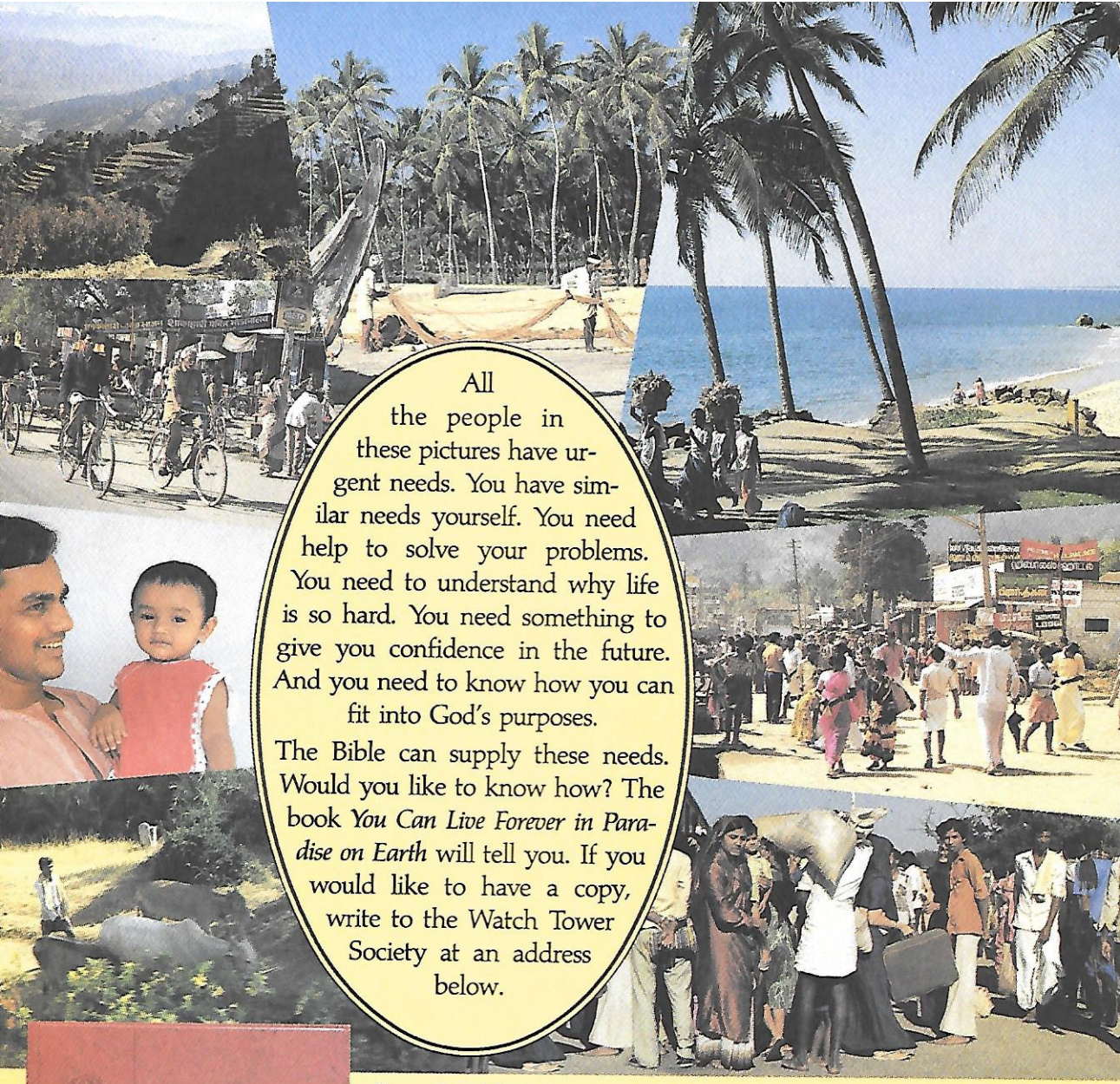
Is just being morally good sufficient for survival?

How does Mariam illustrate this?

Since none of us can do enough good works to redeem ourselves, what legal provision did God make for us to survive?

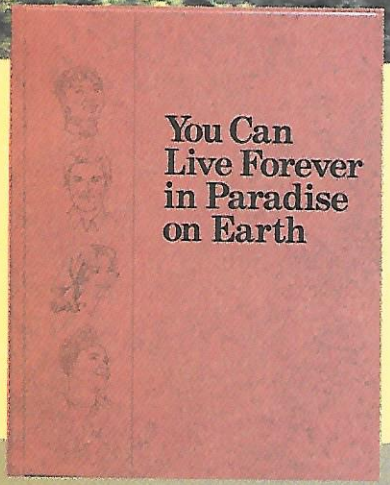
A Bright Future

What does Anand meditate upon after the new child is brought home?



All the people in these pictures have urgent needs. You have similar needs yourself. You need help to solve your problems. You need to understand why life is so hard. You need something to give you confidence in the future. And you need to know how you can fit into God's purposes.

The Bible can supply these needs. Would you like to know how? The book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* will tell you. If you would like to have a copy, write to the Watch Tower Society at an address below.



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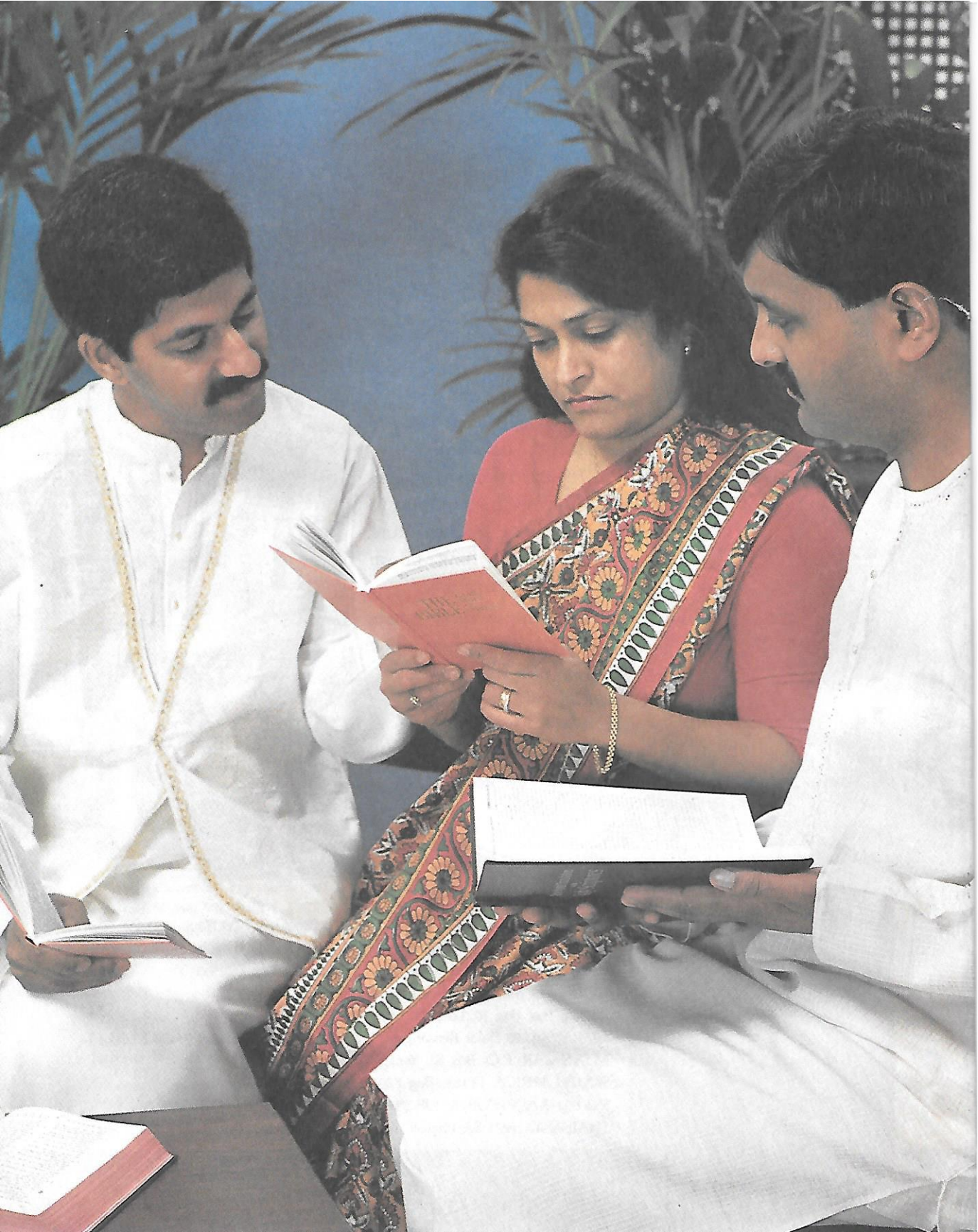
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