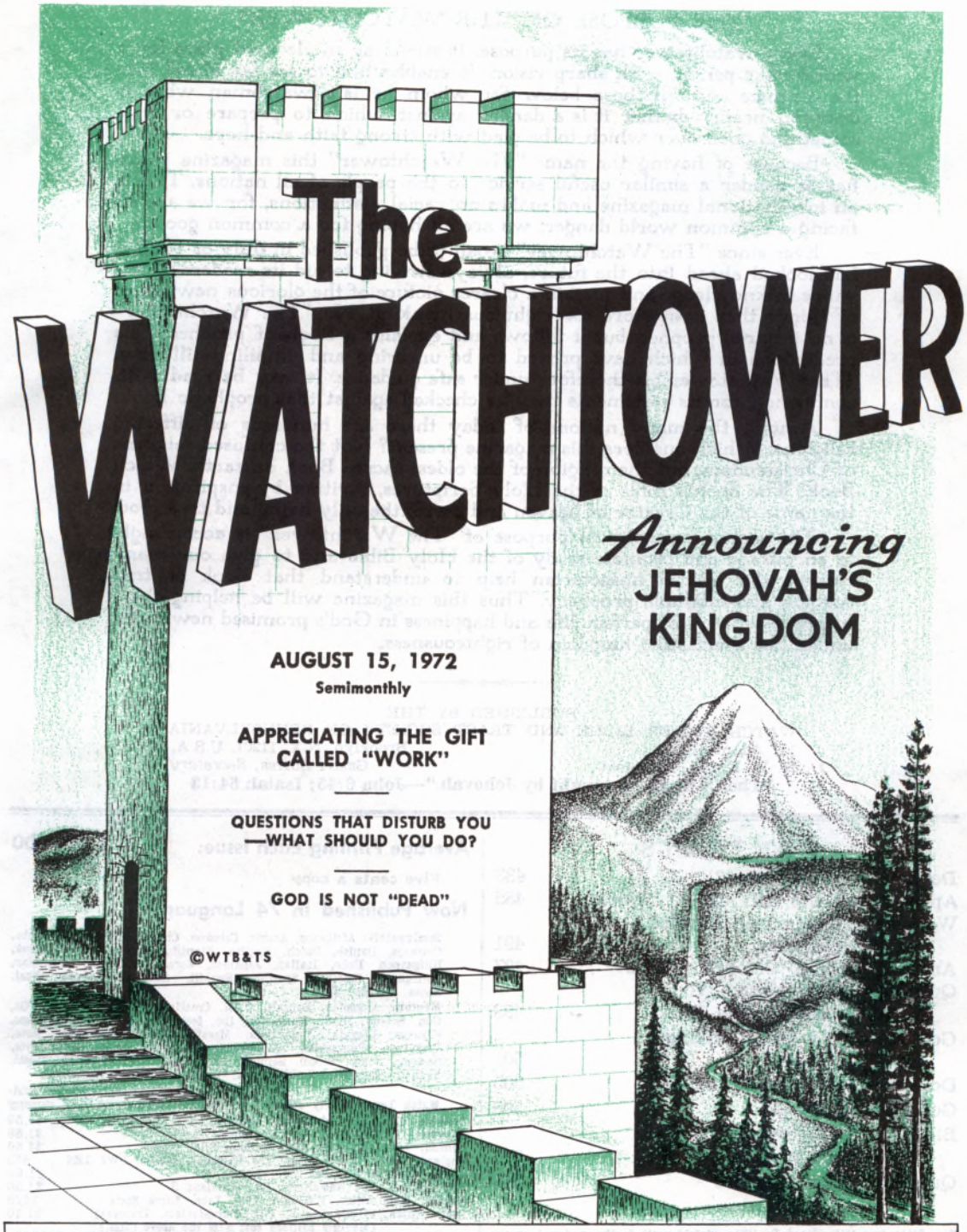

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

Do You Get Frustrated?	483
Appreciating the Gift Called "Work"	485
Working Hard for the Reward of Eternal Life	491
Annual Meeting, October 1, 1972	497
Questions That Disturb You —What Should You Do?	498
God Readjusts the Thinking of His People	501
Do You Tend to Be Stumbled?	505
God Is Not "Dead"	508
Bible Truth Reaches People in Various Ways	510
Questions from Readers	511

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The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
Vol. XCIII August 15, 1972 Number 16

Do you get FRUSTRATED?

THIS modern age may well be termed the age of frustration. More and more are people giving expression to their frustrations in violence or in other ways. For example, there is the "Dropout Wife," described as "A Striking Current Phenomenon," and featured in *Life* magazine, March 17, 1972.

The magazine told of one such woman, thirty-five years old, a college graduate, wife of a middle-level executive and the mother of three children. After fourteen years of married life she suddenly walked out on her family and started a life of her own, taking along her ten-year-old daughter and leaving two younger boys with their father. Why? Because she began "to see her life as increasingly frustrating and suffocating." Now she teaches for a living and has joined the women's 'lib' movement.

But it may well be asked of the one who is frustrated, To what extent is it your own fault? Does it inescapably follow that the conditions under which you labor have to be frustrating?

True, there are, even as the Bible shows, certain conditions over which we have no control and which bring frustration. Due to the transgression of our first parents, Adam and Eve, all of us have been "subjected to futility." In particular do all lovers of righteousness long to be "set free from enslavement to corruption."—Rom. 8:20-22.

The Word of God holds out a hope of relief from such frustration, namely, by means of the kingdom of God, for which all Christians pray: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place . . . upon earth." Until that kingdom brings an end to such frustration it can be endured with the help of God's Word, his spirit and his servants.—Matt. 6:10.

Another reason why some get frustrated is that they try to do too many things at one time. The course of wisdom and contentment would be for them to focus their attention on one thing at a time. A bee in a grove of orange blossoms does not get frustrated because of seeing so many flowers from which to get nectar. No, it concentrates on just one blossom at a time. And so with things that need to be done—take them one at a time.

Of course, here again we should use practical wisdom and realize that if there are too many things that need to be done,

some may not get attention, and so we should put first things first; start with the more important and avoid yielding to the temptation of starting with the easiest or more pleasant things. Then if something is not done, it will not matter so much.

In doing this, however, do not devote all your time to one or two things and totally neglect the rest. Extremely conscientious persons need to watch this. Do not handle one task so thoroughly that you do not have time for others. As Jesus, the Son of God, noted, put first things first but do not disregard the lesser things.

If you happen to be frustrated because of having too many things to do, it may well be that you can enlist the aid of others. If a big meal is to be prepared, mother can ask the rest of the family to help out, even letting the young folks have a part. It may take longer the first time to show a child how to help, but, then, in the long run and on subsequent occasions time will be saved. And that is not all. Training children to be helpful will aid them to mature intellectually and emotionally.

In the same way a husband may get frustrated at times because of having too much to do. But if he is willing to be patient he can aid his wife to become a real help; she can learn to use the family car in running errands, make repairs about the house, and so forth.

Similarly if one having oversight, such as a foreman or a manager, at times gets frustrated because of having too much to do, he can give some of the work to subordinates. So here also the course of wisdom is for one to be willing to delegate responsibility to an assistant and so avoid the sickening effects of frustration.

On the other hand, there is the frustration that comes when more is expected of one than one can possibly do or be reasonably expected to do. Research indicates that this form of frustration is common in industry and business. Then what?

As the poet puts it, 'Just do your best, then praise or blame that comes to you, counts just the same.' So long as your conscience does not condemn you, try to live with the unreasonable demands of others, be they at work or within your family, by not taking the demands too seriously, or by sugarcoating them, so to speak, with a little humor. It may well be that you can make adjustments elsewhere in your life so as to accommodate the frustrating situation about which you can do little if anything. Remember the Bible principle that in the final analysis each one stands or falls before his Maker. Hence, "whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah."—Rom. 14:4; Col. 3:23, 24.

Whatever you do, do not let yourself become frustrated to the point of exploding in a fit of violence. As one psychologist put it: "If expression can get you into trouble, the best method is to swallow your frustration." Yes, "do not show yourself heated up only to do evil," the Bible counsels.—Ps. 37:8.

And do not become a dropout, a quitter. The dropout wife mentioned in the foregoing admitted she has just as many "hassles" now as she had before, except that now they are *her* hassles. But what about the two little boys she deserted? What about when she gets older? Her husband may well remarry, but who would want to marry a woman with such a mental disposition? Will 'her sons rise up and pronounce her happy'? Will her husband give her the praise that King Lemuel said would be given the capable wife? By running away from her family problems she may well have jumped from the proverbial frying pan into the fire!—Prov. 31:10, 28.

Yes, there are better ways of dealing with frustrations than resorting to violence or becoming a dropout!

Appreciating THE GIFT CALLED "WORK"

"Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might."—Eccl. 9:10, An American Translation.

AT THIS time in history when men are working fewer hours and demanding more in return for their labors, it would be wise for all who seek happiness in what they do and also God's approval to examine their own attitude toward work. Much dissatisfaction in the world today can be traced to people who are discontented with their work. A growing number of workers, especially among the youth, tend to represent work as a curse, a punishment or fate from which to escape, if possible. Their complaint is that work exhausts the energies and leaves the worker too tired to enjoy life. They argue, 'Why work if it is going to destroy the pleasure of living?' 'Too many people are working without living,' they say. To demonstrate the undesirability of work, workers often point to the many protests and strikes among industrial, office and social workers, who are concerned, not only with wages, but with hours and conditions of work. Some feel that the ideal life would be a world free of toil. Few regard work as a blessing or as a gift from God. What is your attitude toward work? Do you regard it as a blessing from God or as just a necessary evil? How should one view one's work?

1. How do some people view work, and why? So, what questions are asked?

[2] The Holy Scriptures commend work. They declare that a man should eat, drink and "see good for all his hard work." It is the divine will that man "rejoice in his works." (Eccl. 5:18; 3:13, 22) Nowhere in the Bible are slothfulness, indolence and laziness encouraged as a way of life. To the contrary, man is urged to 'exert himself vigorously.' Industriousness is what is praised. A man should 'do with his might what his hands find to do.' (Luke 13:24; Eccl. 9:10; Heb. 6:10, 11) Lazy souls are told to "go to the ant, . . . see its ways and become wise." (Prov. 6:6) Easygoingness is associated with the stupid. It is their 'easygoingness that will destroy them.' (Prov. 1:32) Rather than its being an ideal way of life, "a slack hand" soon finds itself engulfed in poverty. Those who love their sleeping, slumbering and folding of their hands are not bound for happiness but for ruin. (Prov. 10:4; 18:9; 24:33, 34) Therefore, people who practice true religion, the religion of the Bible, can have no partnership with indolent, lazy persons. The people of God are called, not to an inactive, lazy life, but to an active, vibrant life in imitation of none other than their God Jehovah. It is this active, productive

2. (a) In the Scriptures, how is work viewed? (b) What does the Bible say about lazy persons? (c) Why should we have no partnership with lazy persons?

life that is the gift from God that results in true happiness.—John 5:17.

GOD AND HIS SON ARE WORKERS

[3] Open your eyes and look around you. You need but a single glance to become aware that you are surrounded by works that are countless in number, matchless in beauty and precious to behold. These works are included in the expression 'the wonderful works of God.' (Ps. 145:4, 5; 148:3-10) There are the heavens above "declaring the glory of God"; and "of the work of his hands the expanse is telling." The earth, with its wide variety of animal, fish and plant creations, compels praise. An appreciative psalmist declared: "How many your works are, O Jehovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions." (Ps. 19:1-4; 104:24) The whole universe is literally alive with the works of God. Their number is overwhelming, causing praise to bubble forth. Their beauty is awe-inspiring. Their magnitude and wisdom incite praise and gratitude. Their effect is humbling. Said the psalmist: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him?" (Ps. 8:3, 4; 92:5; 150:2) All these creations receive God's constant attention and care.

[4] All of God's works are incomparable, faithful and true. All of them are wrought in wisdom. In the Bible book of Proverbs, wisdom personified is represented as being beside Jehovah God in creative work as his "master worker." (Prov. 8:12, 22-31) Under inspiration the apostle John revealed that Master Worker to be "the Word," God's first creation, his only-begotten Son who later on earth became Jesus Christ. Said John: "This one was in the beginning with God. All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence." (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:17) This wise Son of God proved himself a master worker on earth. No one man before or since his time has accomplished as much, or had such an impact on man's history. Methuselah, who lived 969 years, left not a single work behind worthy to be remembered. His long life might be viewed as a total waste. On the other hand, after reviewing the Gospel accounts of Jesus' earthly works, John writes: "There are, in fact, many other things also which Jesus did, which, if ever they were written in full detail, I suppose, the world itself could not contain the scrolls written." (John 21:25) Whose life was the happier—Jesus' or Methuselah's? Yet Jesus lived only a short span of thirty-three and a half years. He obviously was an industrious worker!

[5] When men tried to stop him from doing works of kindness on the Sabbath day, Jesus answered with an allusion to Jehovah's ceaseless activity on all days of the week, saying: "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working." (John 5:17) Why should not good works be done on the Sabbath? Does God's sun cease to shine because it is the Sabbath? Do rivers stand still? Does the grass stop growing? Do not fruits ripen and birds sing? Is not God busy caring for the needs of his creation? Why, then, should his Anointed One refuse to do works of love simply because it is the Sabbath? Jesus in his work habits followed the example of his heavenly Father. "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me," he said, "and to finish his work." (John 4:34) Whose

3. What can be said about God as a worker and the effects of his works on mankind?
4. Who was God's first creation, and what proof of his being a worker is there?
5. Whose work habits did Jesus follow? Give proof.

example do you follow in your work habits? What is your attitude toward work?

MAN A WORKER

[6] Earthling man was made by God to be a worker. Not only does the Bible say this, but the very makeup of man, his muscular frame, the design of his hands and feet, show that some form of work is absolutely essential to his well-being. All growth depends upon activity. There is no physical or intellectual development without effort, and effort means work. Work gives meaning and purpose to life. A man's accomplishments are the measure of the man himself. Work that enlists a man's energies and gives him contentment and self-expression is a safeguard against dissipation and sensuality. Men who work hard are usually the happiest. However, those who do not work for the love of work but for money or for some other selfish end are not likely to find much happiness in life. Hard work makes a man hungry, so he eats and enjoys his food all the more. It makes him thirsty, so he drinks. It makes him tired, causing his sleep to be sweet. "Every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work," says the Bible. "It is the gift of God." "With a man there is nothing better than that he should eat and indeed drink and cause his soul to see good because of his hard work. This too I have seen, even I, that this is from the hand of the true God." (Eccl. 3:13; 2:24) Do you see your work as a blessing from the true God? This is essential if you are to derive lasting happiness and satisfaction from your work.

6. What proof is there that man was made to work, and why can work be referred to as "the gift of God"?

THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Meeting the Challenge of Moral Principles.**
- **You Are Never Alone.**
- **Help from On High.**

[7] The first man Adam was surrounded with perfection, but even under these paradisaic conditions he was to be a worker. He was not to lean back and pass the time in indolent repose. Adam was commanded by God to cultivate the garden of Eden and to care for it. (Gen. 2:15) This meant work. It demanded initiative, imagination and resourcefulness. As caretaker of Eden, Adam could visualize himself as a co-worker with God, fulfilling the Creator's will and purpose in the earth. His work was to make the whole earth a paradise garden and people it with a perfect race of mankind. (Gen. 1:28) This was no small assignment; it demanded courage and industry to fulfill. But it was this work that made his life meaningful. Knowledge of being a co-worker with God is what brings satisfaction and joy. Wherever this awareness is missing, even today, work loses its sense of purpose and meaning. It soon becomes drab, a drag, a bore, without any lasting goal or purpose.

[8] However, Adam chose to pursue a course contrary to the will of God. He worked at satisfying his own cravings and desires, which course proved disastrous to himself and the whole human race after him. (Rom. 5:12) The vast majority of mankind since Adam's time have followed his unworthy example. They engage in pursuits that are almost solely selfish. God is not in all their thoughts. (Ps. 10:4; 14:1) For the most part their work does not relate to God's will concerning mankind nor can they visualize themselves as co-workers with God. Their work has no con-

7. (a) Would life in perfection mean no work for man? (b) What fact makes work meaningful?

8. What was the pursuit of Adam, and that of mankind since, and with what results?

structive meaning. Thus they are left empty and disgruntled with what they are doing. (Eccl. 2:22, 23) Had mankind proved willing to work out God's purpose of turning this earth into a paradise garden, think of what a beautiful place the earth would be after these thousands of years! And, too, how many tears, how much bloodshed, what misery and suffering would have been spared mankind in every part of the earth!

CALLED TO DO SPECIAL WORK

[9] From Adam's creation until Noah was 600 years old, a period of 1,656 years, mankind's pursuit was almost totally materialistic and selfish, with calamitous results. The record of the Bible reads: "The earth came to be ruined in the sight of the true God and the earth became filled with violence. So God saw the earth and, look! it was ruined, because all flesh had ruined its way on the earth." (Gen. 6:11, 12) This declaration is somewhat reminiscent of the state of things in the earth today. Jesus Christ, in his prophecy concerning the end of this system of things, declared that this would be the case, saying: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be." (Matt. 24:37-39) During such critical times on earth, God calls on men to do special work for him. Noah was one who received such an assignment.

After going into the ark that he built at God's command, Noah cared for the animals and did other work. How are you responding to God's work?

[10] This man of God, Noah, was commanded to build an ark for the preservation of himself and his household and all animal life. This called for extra strength and determination, for it meant the assembling together of much timber and other materials. Likewise the marshaling of a host of animals that later entered the ark required planning and orderly handling. This work involved knowledge of raw materials, animal habits, food, architecture, carpentry, waterproofing. Noah's assignment also involved preaching and practicing righteousness. And this worker Noah was more than 500 years old when he began building the ark.—Gen. 6:9-22; 7:6; 2 Pet. 2:5.

[11] After caring for all the preliminaries, Noah went into the ark in 2370 B.C.E., with an organized society of which he was the head. During the lunar year and ten days that he was in the ark he worked. He doubtless conducted worshipful discussions, led in prayers of thanksgiving, fed the animals, removed the waste and kept count of the time. This was meaningful work. It meant his salvation. Said the disciple James: "You see that a man is to be declared righteous by works, and not by faith alone." (Jas. 2:24) Noah's works testified to his faith. To what do your works testify? Noah's example assures us that God is the One who determines what works are proper and what works are im-

9, 10. Why was Noah given a special assignment of work, and of what did it consist?

11. Why can we say that Noah's work meant his salvation and not just a demonstration of his faith?

proper. God gives warning now that he "will bring every sort of work into the judgment in relation to every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad." (Eccl. 12:13, 14) Noah proved equal to the challenge of his time. Can the same be said of you? How are you responding to work, God's work?

A NATION WORKING WITH GOD

12 In the purpose of God to produce a nation, men such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and others, received distinctive assignments of work from Jehovah. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews records their works of faith. Finally, at Mount Sinai in the year 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah organized the nation of Israel for his exclusive purpose, saying: "Now if you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me. And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." To these words the people answered unanimously: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." (Ex. 19:5, 6, 8) The purpose of that Law covenant, said the apostle Paul, was to lead the Jews to Christ, "that we might be declared righteous due to faith."—Gal. 3:23-25.

13 Within the exclusive nation of Israel, various tribes had specific work duties. For example, priestly duties were confined to the male members of Aaron's family, with the rest of the Levite tribe acting as their assistants. (Num. 3:3, 6-10) Setting up, dismantling and carrying the tabernacle was the work of the nonpriestly Levites. Their work was highly organized under King David, who appointed supervisors, officers, judges, gatekeepers and treasurers. Later, after the building of Solomon's temple, a vast number assisted the priests in the courtyards and the dining rooms in connection with the offerings, sacrifices, purification work, weighing, measuring, and various guard duties. Much of this was hard and unglamorous work. On one occasion the number of priests totaled 1,760, all "mighty men of ability for the work of the service of the house of the true God." (1 Chron. 9:10-13) These were priests of distinguished capabilities. We cannot, however, imagine that all these priests were highly qualified or gifted at birth, that it was exceptionally easy for them to be proficient in whatever was assigned to them. No, but by diligence in learning their jobs and by unfaltering attention to their assigned duties, one and all in due time won the reputation of being very able men for the work of Jehovah. This highlights the fact that men can work at things they either enjoy or dislike. If a man applies himself, no work is so crude or menial but that he can exalt it; no work so boring or lifeless but that he may breathe a little life into it; no work so dull but that man can enliven it with his imagination, if he but applies himself.

14 In their work the priests of Jehovah viewed themselves as co-workers with God, which made them look upon their assignments as a privilege and not as just a common task to be done. Despite the menialness of their assignments, they could maintain a fine spirit like that urged by the apostle Paul, who said: "Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory." And again he says: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men." (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23) But even when men view themselves as co-

12. How did Israel become a nation of co-workers with God?

13. (a) What can be said about the duties of the priests and how they became distinguished in their assignments? (b) What fact does this help us to see about work we do?

14. How did the priests view themselves, and what attitude expressed by the apostle Paul may help us in our work?

workers with God, they still must apply themselves. It is this vigorous, diligent application of oneself as God's fellow worker that eventually results in achievement and true happiness. Is this your attitude toward work?

15 The ancient Hebrews, like their priests, never doubted the importance of work. It was regarded as most honorable, a sacred duty, a gift from God. The Talmud teaches: "He who does not teach his son a craft is, as it were, bringing him up to robbery." "Labor is greatly to be prized, for it elevates the laborer, and maintains him." The Bible praises diligence and skillful labor, saying: "Have you beheld a man skillful in his work? Before kings is where he will station himself; he will not station himself before commonplace men." (Prov. 22:29) Diligence was synonymous with riches. (Prov. 10:4; 12:27) The Christian apostle Paul also declared: "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat."—2 Thess. 3:10.

16 Even among Hebrew women, industry was praised. A woman who willingly worked with her hands was highly recommended as "a capable wife." "She works at whatever is the delight of her hands."—Prov. 31:10, 13, 31.

17 With such a high regard for labor, it is not difficult to see why the Hebrews as a nation prospered. Also, it is not hard to see why conquering nations prized them as captives. Nebuchadnezzar, like the king of Tyre, no doubt found among the thousands that he had taken captive skilled Jewish craftsmen of all kinds: smiths and metalworkers, carpenters and masons, shipbuilders, masters in the art of spinning and weaving both wool and linen, shoemakers, tailors and painters. —2 Chron. 2:13, 14.

15. How did the Hebrews regard work, and what was thought of diligence and skillfulness?
16. How was work on the part of Hebrew women viewed, and what do the Proverbs have to say about this?
17. Why were the Jews prized as captives?

THE VALUE OF WORK AND REST

18 Life has beautiful rhythms. There is a time for work and a time for rest. God's sabbath laws to Israel provided that one seventh of man's working hours should be free from toil. This was to rest the body and improve the mind, which tends to strengthen, invigorate and sustain the man. On the Sabbath day man was to rest and worship. The body required rest, while the mind and heart acquired the strength derived from worship, from feeding on the thoughts of God. (Matt. 4:4) Since man must worship God in order to live, it is only reasonable that that worship should be free of all distractions. While work is important, there must also be a time for quiet reflection in order to evaluate one's effort and gain from such an evaluation a sense of living and accomplishment. This is not suggesting that workers dream away the daylight hours. No, but that some time be given after the day's close to quiet contemplation. The night serves that purpose well.

19 The purpose of the night should not be abused or perverted, however. For many it is time consumed in listening to "rock" music, a time for liquor drinking in nightclubs and vigorous dancing in discotheques, all of which leaves a man or a woman more spent and jaded than all the work of the day. But God gave the night for the kind of rest that genuinely restores the body and mind. Honest rest like honest work brings well-being and joy.

20 Nothing determines a man's worth as much as the work he does from day to day. God gave man hands and muscles for action. It is his actions, then, that deter-

18, 19. What can we say about rest, and why should the purpose of night not be perverted?
20. Why should mankind ask about the work they do now, and why is there no cause for despair?

mine his worth. In fact, God will judge mankind according to their deeds. (Rev. 20:12) That is why it is well that we ask ourselves: What have we done with our lives? What works have we performed or can we point to that would prove our worth? If you have little or nothing to show for the time you have been on earth, do not despair. The good news is that it is not too late to change. There is still time in which you can do useful work to God's glory and from which you can gain everlasting satisfaction. In these critical hard times God has a work in which you can engage and become his co-worker. Of that work and how you might take part in it to your eternal happiness, we leave for the following article to tell.

WORKING HARD FOR THE REWARD OF Eternal Life

"Always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord."—1 Cor. 15:58.

IF AN opportunity were extended to you today to start a completely new way of life, would you accept it? Or are you satisfied with the work you are doing and the life you are leading? Young people often ask older persons, 'If you had a chance to live your life over again, would you do the same work that you are now doing, or would you choose something different? Would you want your sons and daughters to do the same work you are doing?' These probing questions are youth's way of determining whether your work has been rewarding and would be a course worth while for them to pursue.

[2] Few people, however, will admit to having wasted away their lives at worthless jobs, despite how unrewarding their lives have been. One such person, Andrew Carnegie, a man envied for his wealth, said: "I would give all my millions, if I could have youth and health. If I could make Faust's bargain, I would. I would gladly sell anything to have my life over again." But, alas! eternal life is not for sale. Youth and health are beyond the reach of wealth. Perhaps those persons among mankind busily engaged in amassing wealth as if it were some form of panacea are the ones most to be pitied. For their life is an empty illusion indeed. Wrote the inspired psalmist: "Man's busy life indeed is but a phantom, making an empty ado, amassing wealth and knowing not who is to have his hoard." (Ps. 39:6, *Moffatt*) Probing into this very subject of determining life's chief concern or pursuit, the greatest thinker among men of all time, namely, Jesus Christ, pinpointed the answer in two searching questions, saying: "For what benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul [or, life]? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul [or, life]?" (Matt. 16:26) Man's most urgent and lasting need, according to Jesus Christ, is not fame or fortune, pleasure or pos-

1, 2. (a) What questions do youths often propound, and why? (b) What do some persons admit about their past lives? (c) What did the psalmist and Jesus Christ have to say about life and mankind's most urgent need?

sessions, but life itself. It is for the reward of eternal life that every last person on earth should now be working. Are you?

[3] Literally hundreds of thousands of people everywhere today are giving Jesus' words about life deep thought. They are working hard now for the reward of eternal life by responding to a new way of life in imitation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:21) In just the past three years, 1969, 1970 and 1971, from 207 lands, a grand total of 434,906 persons have experienced great changes in their lives by making themselves eligible to receive the reward of eternal life. They have dedicated their lives to Jehovah God and have symbolized that dedication by being immersed in water. Materialistic pursuits have been placed in the background by them. They have taken to heart the appeal of Jesus: "Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you." (John 6:27) While they do provide for themselves the necessities of life, these things are no longer their main goals. They know that if they trust fully in Jehovah he will provide them with life's necessities. So they seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and as God promises, all these needed things are added to them. —Matt. 6:25-33.

[4] This life in imitation of Jesus Christ calls for faith. It is hard work and it demands diligence and skill. It calls for self-sacrifice, a willingness to share of what is one's own. It demands patience, this work of making disciples of Christ of peoples of all nations. However, the diligent worker finds joy in this work of God, as the psalmist declared: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted." (Ps. 40:8) To his listeners, Jesus said: "If you know these things, happy you are if you do them." (John 13:17) The man who does not shrink back from the hard work of being a Christian will come in line for the splendid and ultimate reward—eternal life. —Matt. 16:24, 25.

3, 4. (a) What are persons by the thousands doing today, making what their goal? (b) Being a disciple of Christ calls for what, with what reward in view?

WELCOME TO JEHOVAH'S HARDWORKING ORGANIZATION

[5] For Christian workers, the outstanding, happy event for 1971 was the wonderful series of "Divine Name" District Assemblies. These were held throughout the earth. One of the most thrilling sights at these assemblies was to see hundreds, yes, even thousands of persons arise and publicly testify to their determination to take up the hard work of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. At one of these assemblies, in New York, the baptismal speaker greeted the candidates by saying: "How thrilling and happifying to see here this morning such a multitude of persons whose love for Jehovah God impels them to follow in the steps of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ! For many months you have been studying the Bible systematically. You have come to accept it as God's guidebook for his human creatures. You have learned its basic teachings. You have come to know just what is involved in being a genuine servant of the Most High God. Your study has borne good fruit, for it has produced a powerful desire in your hearts, a desire to do what all of God's intelligent creatures ought rightly to do—dedicate your lives to God, thereby becoming his willing servants forever. . . . We are truly happy for you and welcome you to the congregation of God's happy, hardworking servants, his witnesses."

[6] Their attention was then drawn to Je-

5. At the 1971 New York assembly, how were prospective disciples of Christ greeted by the baptismal speaker, and into what kind of congregation did he welcome them?

6, 7. (a) How have things in life changed for many who were baptized, and in what kind of work were they invited to share? (b) What facts prove that these new workers have come to a busy organization?

hovah's earthly organization consisting of very busy people. "In times past many of you," the speaker continued, "quite likely, have felt that life was aimless, a mere round of accidents to be finally concluded with the great accident, death. Others of you may have been . . . keenly aware that life is full of injustices and frustrations. But now all that has changed for you. You have a reason for living. You have discovered that Jehovah God and Christ Jesus are having a great work done in all the earth in these days—and more, that they are opening the opportunity for multitudes to labor with them in a life-giving, life-transforming work. Laborers together with God! That does not sound like taking things easy, does it?"

[7] During 1971, for example, those in the organization of Jehovah's witnesses spent 291,952,375 hours talking to others about God's Word, the Bible. They made 133,785,116 return visits, because they were concerned with the lives of people. More than that, they organized home Bible studies with many of the interested ones, conducting, on the average, 1,257,904 studies. Thus multitudes of persons were made disciples, and all in obedience to the commission Jesus gave his followers: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them."—Matt. 28:19, 20.

[8] Why are God's dedicated people working so hard? It is because their heart is in God's work. Their dedication is genuine. They meant it when they chose to put God's will first in their lives. And besides that, they are mindful of the rich reward that God holds out to them—the reward of everlasting life! What a powerful incentive this!

[9] All lovers of life should want to join the ranks of Jehovah's witnesses. And especially so today, because we are blessed to be living at a time of greatest need for more workers. Remember Jesus' words when he looked at the people with pity and said: "The crop is heavy, but labourers are scarce; you must therefore beg the owner to send labourers to harvest his crop." (Matt. 9:36-38, *New English Bible*) We are now in the closing part of another great ingathering work. Lovers of God should want to share in this work of God and reap the grand reward of their faithful labors, namely, eternal life.

[10] There is need, as you take up the work of God, to be aware of the hazards, the obstacles, that may threaten to move you aside from the course of loyal service to God. You need to have the right view of the work that has to be done and done quickly between now and the "great tribulation" that will end the present wicked system of things, and you must hold on to that proper view. (Matt. 24:21) But how can one keep that proper view and not be influenced by lazy or indifferent attitudes of worldly people or by persons lacking faith?

ALWAYS KEEP THE RIGHT VIEW OF OUR WORKING HARD

[11] Since true Christians are servants of Jehovah and have dedicated their lives to him because they love him, what does it matter what other people think of them or their work? It is God's approval for which they long. "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments." (1 John 5:3) Lukewarmness for the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work is not the mark of the genuine, dedicated servant of God.

8. Why are God's people working so hard?
9. Why should lovers of life want to join the ranks of Jehovah's witnesses?
10. Why should the attitude of urgency be cultivated, and with what attitude toward the work ahead?
11. (a) Whose approval does the Christian worker seek, and why? (b) What attitude toward work marks the true Christian? (c) What counsel does Paul give?

Rather, it is zeal and eagerness to share in the hard work of God's great witness-organization that marks the true Christian. (Rev. 3:16; Luke 13:24) We should want to do more and more, ever progressing in our chosen vocation as workers together with God. (2 Cor. 1:24) The apostle Paul, that indefatigable laborer, had the right counsel for us when he recommended: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men, for you know that it is from Jehovah you will receive the due reward." (Col. 3:23, 24) Notice that! Jehovah is the rewarder. It is to his standard of service that we must measure up. Does not that suggest that we could do more?

12 Instead of imitating worldlings in their endeavor to work as little as possible for as much return as possible, the Christian must place the ministry of God on a much higher level and on a far more stable basis, and then go on making constant progress. (Phil. 3:16) He will seek to please, not men, but God, who makes proof of our hearts. (1 Thess. 2:4) Like Christ and his apostles, he will not please or spare himself, but will go on working at that which God approves.—John 8:29; Acts 20:31.

13 Then, too, there is urgent need for God's ingathering work to be accomplished, for the time is now short before the end overtakes this wicked system of things and all who are still part of it. Think how many may still be aided to find peace with God and take their stand firmly on his side and against this old system and its god, Satan the Devil. As this opportune time swiftly runs out, what can you do to reach these people with God's saving Word of truth? It is a real challenge, one not to be missed. —Eph. 5:15-17.

12. What will genuine love for God motivate a Christian to do?
13. Why is the Christian ingathering work urgent, especially so now?

GUARD AGAINST NEGATIVE AND DEPRESSIVE FORCES

14 It is only to be expected that God's work and his workers would arouse the ire and hatred of Satan and his organization, and that these, in turn, would subject the Christian to pressures of every sort in an effort to cause the Christian to break integrity to God. But refuse to be diverted from your dedicated relationship to God, even should an unbelieving marriage mate, a member of your own family or some close friend turn out to be the very instrument the Devil uses for your discouragement. Even when those who are fellow workers in the congregation of God fail somehow to give you comfort and help when you most feel the need, that is no valid reason for your turning your back on the honorable, meaningful work that Jehovah has extended to you. Instead, rely heavily on Jehovah's Word and trust implicitly in his promises. Be assured that those who are sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit, if they do not tire out.—Gal. 6:8-10.

15 What should one do if the Devil plagues one's mind with thoughts of doubt, thoughts such as: 'Is it all useless? Am I really accomplishing anything? Am I expected to do all this work amid pressures, criticisms and scoffers?' Remember, only Jehovah can give the right answers, the dependable answers, for he is the one who has commissioned his servants to do this disciple-making work. When questions arise, it is His answers you need. Go to him at once and ask. (Prov. 3:5, 6; Matt. 7:7) Remember the prophet Job! How he continued to honor God with his lips through bitter trials of his faith. God blessed him for it too. Remember also those men of faith recorded in the eleventh

14. What might a Christian worker expect, and what counteracting counsel do we find in Galatians, chapter 6?
15. When questions of doubt arise, whose answers should we seek? Whose example can we copy?

chapter of Hebrews and profit from their experiences. "Look! We pronounce happy those who have endured," wrote the disciple James. "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him."—Jas. 5:11; 1:12.

MAKING UP FOR PAST NEGLECT OF GOD'S WILL

16 It is good occasionally to reflect on the past, to remember our previous situation, before becoming a servant of God, when we were without God and without hope in the world. Such reflections should awaken an earnest desire in us to make up for such negligence of the past when God was not in any of our thoughts. But how can we make up for ignoring God and his will in the past? By exerting ourselves in Jehovah's service and thus proving that we repent over our past. Peter urges us to arm ourselves with this right disposition, "to the end that [we] may live the remainder of [our] time in the flesh, no more for the desires of men, but for God's will. For the time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct." (1 Pet. 4:2-11) The prophet Jonah is a good example. When he came to his senses and realized how he had shirked his responsibility to God, he turned around, and we find him loudly proclaiming: "Jehovah the God of the heavens I am fearing, the One who made the sea and the dry land." Further he declared: "As for me, with the voice of thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed, I will pay. Salvation belongs to Jehovah." (Jonah 1:9; 2:9) He was eager to make up for his neglect of the past; and so should we.

17 Keep in mind also that while Jehovah graciously extends to us a share in the busy Kingdom work, he also expects us to maintain good conduct in everyday relationships of life. Being busy in the preaching activity, but at the same time letting down one's moral standard, would prove that it is not out of love for God that one serves. Serving with the wrong motive could render all our work of no avail. So while we busy ourselves in the work of the Lord, let us each one seek God's approval on all our ways. This is what the apostle Paul was concerned about, stalwart laborer though he was, when he declared: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave [under close control], that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow."—1 Cor. 9:27.

18 Keep from becoming disapproved, by putting on that new personality that the Bible speaks of. (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10) Allow the free flow of God's spirit to guide every aspect of your life so that the spirit's fruitage will make itself apparent. Then love, joy, peace and the other fruitage of the spirit will beneficially affect our relationships with one another. Such determined conscientiousness on our part is evidence of a right motive and a pure heart in our service of God.—Gal. 5:16-25.

RIGHT VIEW OF THE REWARD A HELPFUL STIMULANT

19 Not only a right view of the preaching work is needed, but a right view of the reward. Do not be mistaken, working for the reward can indeed be harmonized with working out of love for God. How is that? It is God who holds out the re-

16. (a) What reflections may prove profitable, and why? (b) What words of the apostle Peter can we take to heart? (c) How is Jonah's example beneficial?

17. (a) What should busy Christians keep in mind? (b) How did Paul show this same concern?
18. What can safeguard one against being disapproved by God?
19. Why must there also be a proper view of the reward?

ward and bids us to strive to gain it. At Titus 1:2 we read: "Upon the basis of a hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times long lasting." It was with that promised gift of life in mind that God gave his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ as a ransom, "in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:14-16, 36) God having provided such a precious gift, certainly he cannot but love those who would with all diligence reach out to receive it. And, besides, the inspired Scriptures assure us that "without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Heb. 11:6) And what is that reward? Always remember that the reward is eternal life under righteous conditions in God's new order. So, reach out now for the reward, and qualify to receive it, while opportunity is still available.

[20] How different life in God's new order will be from what we see today! Now a man may spend long hours in building a home and making a beautiful garden, only to die suddenly and leave it to someone else. But in the promised New Order a man will enjoy the outcome of his labors for years without end. Consider all the marvels of the heavens, sea and land! The most advanced scientists have but scratched the surface in their attempt to understand the wisdom and principles upon which our universe is founded. The reward of eternal life that integrity-keeping servants of God will then enjoy will afford them ample opportunity to investigate all these marvels of creation. Time will then allow for travel to become acquainted firsthand with fellow humans of all races and with animal creatures in all parts of the earth.

[21] Best of all, people everywhere on earth will be enjoying peace and freedom as God's earthly children. They will be free from the fears that blight this old system of things. They will be able to serve Jehovah in whatever they set their hands to do, for God will see to it that there is meaningful work for all. No, not jobs that produce burdens or endanger their own or others' lives, but work that has to do with rehabilitating man and transforming this earth into a beautiful garden paradise.

[22] Of course, it is good to guard against letting one's imagination run riot when thinking of conditions in the New Order that are not promised by Jehovah in his Word the Bible. No need, for example, to train now for some hoped-for activity in that glorious era, for there will be plenty of time then to gain such training and experience. Under God's Kingdom rule people will be living in a system wherein there will be no fight against time. Time will still be marking off the days and years, but the endlessness of life then will make the need for haste unnecessary.

[23] The reward God's people are working hard for is sure, for it is guaranteed by the Creator himself, of whom the apostle Paul confidently declared: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." (Heb. 6:10) Your hard work in proclaiming the good news of his kingdom, and thereby publicizing his holy name Jehovah, will not go unrewarded. Assured of that fact, be like Abraham who held unbreakably to his faith in God's word to him: "Do not fear, Abram. I am a shield for you. Your

20, 21. (a) What will life in God's new order be like? (b) What will people everywhere enjoy, transforming this earth into what?

22. Why is it not wise to let the imagination run riot when thinking about the future new system of things?

23. Why are Christian workers assured of the reward, and whose examples are they called upon to imitate?

reward will be very great." (Gen. 15:1) Also, be like the Moabitess Ruth who accepted in full faith the marvelous prospect held forth to her: "May Jehovah reward the way you act, and may there come to be a perfect wage for you from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge." (Ruth 2:12) May you too find the strength and courage to seek refuge under Jehovah's wide-spreading wings as his fellow worker.

[24] As you manifest the right attitude toward work you will not want to relax your effort but be alert always to have plenty to do in the work of the Lord, doing more and more, if possible. (1 Cor. 15:58) Our service to God is the highest form of work to which man can devote himself. It is the greatest Cause of all. It is that which has to do with the Name of our God and Creator, Jehovah, and certainly that is no lost cause. Rather, it is a triumphant cause, and one that gives promise to those diligently promoting it of a full and satisfying life now with the prospect of unending life in God's new order so near at hand. May you qualify to join us in this most urgent of all causes now.

24. Why is the Christian's work the highest of all causes, with what end in view?

Annual Meeting, October 1, 1972

● In accordance with the resolution adopted unanimously at the annual meeting last year, the forthcoming annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on Sunday, October 1, 1972, in the Civic Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The program planned for the date of the annual meeting October 1, 1972, will include, not only the annual meeting proceedings, but also the graduation exercises of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

It will be appreciated if the members of the Corporation will now see to it that the Secretary's Office has their present mailing addresses so that the regular letters of notice and the proxies can be sent to them to reach them shortly after September 1. The proxies are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 15. As each member knows, he should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not.

Early reports indicate that not only are many members of the Corporation planning to attend in person, but also other brothers from distant places are considering attending the annual meeting. For the information of the latter, we call attention to the fact that the capacity of the Civic Arena in Pittsburgh is approximately 14,000. We would not want to have persons come a long distance and not be able to get into the Arena. In view of these circumstances and since the auditorium will of necessity be filled on a first come first served basis, and we just cannot guarantee seats to everyone, you should know that within a 200-mile radius of Pittsburgh there are approximately 40,000 of Jehovah's witnesses. Within a radius of 150 miles, the number is approximately 34,000, and if all of those within just a 100-mile radius of Pittsburgh attended the annual meeting, the Arena would be overfilled with the approximately 16,000 publishers within this area. So we feel that all should be practical in the matter, and our suggestion is that the general attendance, that is, those aside from the members and their families, be limited to those who are located within a 150-mile radius of Pittsburgh. Of course, we do not know how many of these will attend, and our sole purpose is to avoid anyone coming a long distance and being disappointed at not getting a seat. So we want you to know the facts regarding the capacity of the facilities that will be used. We expect the doors to the Arena to be opened at about 7:30 a.m., and the program to begin at 8:30 or 9 o'clock.

QUESTIONS that DISTURB YOU

—what should you do?

CHRISTIANS appreciate the fact that Jehovah God and Jesus Christ are their Teachers. They know that, just as he did with ancient Israel, God leads his people progressively, according to the principle stated at Proverbs 4:18: "The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established."

In the process of traveling this path, basic truths are the foundation, among which truths are Jehovah's sovereignty, his Messianic kingdom, the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, earth to be made a paradise, and everlasting life for all faithful, obedient ones. Increased light of understanding constantly shines upon these great truths, clarifying different related facets. This includes sharper focus on the understanding and application of certain Scripture texts and adjustments in procedure and organizational structure of the Christian congregation. All of these add to the joy of God's people and help them to carry on their lives and to do their work of preaching and teaching the good news with greater freedom of movement and increased spirituality.

At times, in the minds of some, doubts may arise as to something that is said. Some statement in the Watch Tower publications may not be clearly understood or fully grasped. To some, it may seem to contradict what has been said previously.

If such doubts arise in your mind, what can you do? First, be sure that you did not misunderstand what was said, or read into it something that was not there. Then, do some meditation on the matter.

"CONTEXTUAL" AND "EXTENDED" APPLICATION

A Scripture text may be quoted or cited and applied in a way that appears to contradict an application made in an earlier instance. In some cases this may be due to greater light of understanding, correcting a former view. In other cases you may be helped by considering whether the application is "contextual," that is, whether the scripture is being discussed in the light of the context and setting. Or perhaps it is an "extended" application, that is, the *principle* of the text may be applied to some other circumstance.

An example of a text from which the principle is often forcefully applied is Hebrews 12:9, which reads: "We used to have fathers who were of our flesh to discipline us, and we used to give them respect. Shall we not much more subject ourselves to the Father of our spiritual life and live?"

The writer is here speaking of the "spiritual life" of the spirit-begotten brothers of Jesus Christ, who have heavenly hopes. (Heb. 12:22-24, 28) But the principle set out in this text may also be applied to the "other sheep," who are prospective children of God, with hope of everlasting life on earth. (John 10:16; Rom. 8:21) These, too, have a "spiritual life," inasmuch as they are living according to the direction of God's Word and spirit

alongside the spirit-begotten ones. They are not living 'fleshly lives,' lives devoted to pursuing "the works of the flesh." —Rom. 7:5; 8:5-8; Gal. 5:19-21; compare 1 Corinthians 2:14.

For further illustration of this principle, consider the text at 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word, be at it urgently in favorable season, in troublesome season." *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1971, pages 701-703, explained that Paul was here instructing Timothy, as an overseer in the congregation, with regard to his teaching *in the congregation* in Ephesus, which faced a "troublesome season," with some trying to subvert the faith of others by teaching false doctrine, engaging in foolish questionings, and so forth. Timothy was to stay by *God's Word,* not some philosophy or ideas of his own.—2 Tim. 2:14-26; 3:1-17; 4:1-5.

However, in *The Watchtower* of March 1, 1972, page 136, the text at 2 Timothy 4:2 is cited in support of preaching the good news to persons in the world in spite of persecution. Why this difference?

The first application is the contextual one, and expresses the force of what Paul was really saying to Timothy. The latter application is given on the principle that the preaching we do inside the congregation we also extend to the outside. If we stick to God's Word in the congregation, and do so even when unfavorable situations arise, we also stay by God's Word in preaching to those outside, and we see that the people outside get an opportunity to hear, whether we meet with difficulties or not.—1 Thess. 1:6.

However, we should not be indiscriminate and careless in applying Bible texts, remembering, rather, that the contextual application is the primary and basic one. If it is possible to use the text in a secondary or broader application in principle, it can add force to our presentation to point out to our hearers the basic contextual sense and to make clear that we are using the text in its secondary application, applying it only in principle.

PROPHECIES WITH MORE THAN ONE FULFILLMENT

Prophecy also may have more than one fulfillment. In all instances, prophecy spoken in olden times had meaning to the people who heard it; it served for their guidance as well as ours. Most often it had some fulfillment in that time, in many instances being fulfilled during the lifetime of that very generation. Frequently there was a second fulfillment during the time Christ was on earth or in the history of the early Christian congregation. Then, in a great number of cases, there is a larger fulfillment, spiritually or literally, in our time, or in the future.

Accordingly, in applying a passage that has prophetic import, it is good to recognize these facts. For example, at Psalm 37:10, David stated: "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." For whose benefit was this written? Does it have application only in this "time of the end," when wickedness will be destroyed forever? This would be some three thousand years after the psalm was written and was read by the people of Israel. Did these words mean nothing to those reading them except a promise for the distant future?

No. These words concerning the wicked had a meaning and message for the people *then.* In fact, they found a fulfillment in David's own time. It was David's observation and experience that the wicked, though they seemed to flourish for a while, did not last long. (Verses 35, 36) For this very reason he counseled, in verses one and two, not to be heated up because of

evildoers. So he was stating a principle of life. In David's time the "earth," that is, the portion of the earth assigned by God to Israel, was brought under peaceful domination by David, and during his son Solomon's rule the people had peace from wicked enemies.—Ps. 37:11; 1 Ki. 4:20, 25.

This prophetic truth or principle also finds a grander fulfillment in these "last days" of the wicked system of things, with a far more extensive cleansing of the earth in prospect, for God has expressed his purpose to clear out all wickedness from the entire earth forever through the exercise of Christ's kingly rule.—Rev. 11:18; 19:19-21.

Another prophecy, that of Isaiah 65:17, concerning God's creating "new heavens and a new earth," was not proclaimed by Isaiah for the Jews merely to hear as something to be fulfilled some 2,700 years in the future. Rather, it had a first fulfillment about 200 years after it was first recorded, when the exiled Israelites were restored to Jerusalem. A new ruling body provided by Jehovah with Zerubbabel as governor and Joshua as high priest constituted "new heavens" and the land of Judah was repopulated with an organized people, constituting a "new earth." In this restoration, no more did an enemy like Nebuchadnezzar come in to kill infants and young children, and men lived their normal life-span. They built houses and planted vineyards in security, without fear that the enemy would again come in and desolate their land as the Babylonians had done in 607 B.C.E. (Isa. 65:20-22) This was a meaningful fulfillment for those Israelites back there. They could act with faith on Isaiah's prophecy to their own good.

God loved his people back there and remembered them in their captive state in Babylon. He acted to restore them from captivity and to bless them in their own land. What occurred with them is said by the apostle Paul to be pictorial of greater things. (1 Cor. 10:11) Consequently we know that in God's great love for the Christian congregation, 'spiritual Israel,' he would deliver them from their enemies. In the first century he delivered a remnant of faithful Jews, bringing them into the Christian congregation that was established at Pentecost. (John 8:31-36; Acts 2:41, 47) Likewise, in these "last days," God has shown the same love in restoring spiritual Israel from captivity to Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. He has progressively restored to them the truths and practices of the early Christian congregation and has prospered them in releasing others from religious bondage. Thus there has been a threefold fulfillment of Bible prophecy concerning deliverance of Jehovah's people from Babylon.

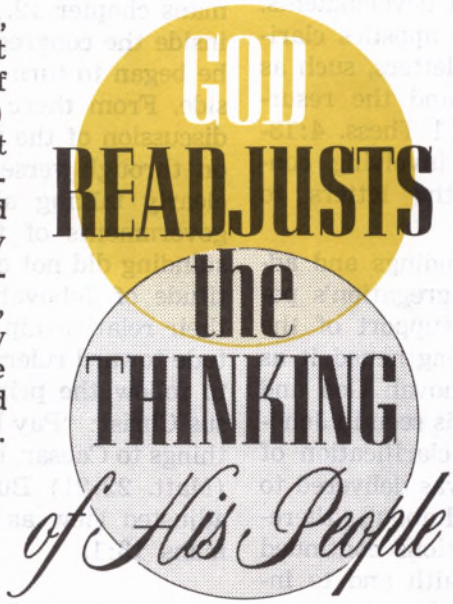
The apostle Peter corroborates this understanding that there is more than one fulfillment when he makes a future application of the prophecy of Isaiah 65:17, in connection with Christ's rule. Writing to the spiritual Israel of his day, Peter says: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." (2 Pet. 3:13) Also the book of Revelation, written to spiritual Israel about 96 C.E., envisions "a new heaven and a new earth" for mankind's benefit, security and blessing in God's new order under Christ's Kingdom rule.—Rev. 21:1-4.

Consequently, if we have difficulty in understanding an explanation of a prophecy as it is set forth in the Watch Tower publications, the thing to do is to think more deeply. Consider the possibility of more than one fulfillment. Often it greatly strengthens our faith when we read of

God's fulfilling a prophecy toward his people back there. We have even stronger assurance that he can and will carry out the greater fulfillment upon his people today.

Again, if we wonder about the application of a Scripture text, consider the context of that scripture, and also ask, 'Is the usage here merely an application of its principle extended beyond the immediate contextual use of the scripture?'

But what about changes in viewpoint that may occasionally occur? This is a point to be discussed in the next article.



JEHOVAH is infallible, and he is the Great Teacher and Leader of his people. (Ps. 143:10) They are fallible, and at no point do they understand all things. God leads them progressively so that the truth constantly grows brighter, they reflect more fully God's glory, and they are transformed more and more into his image. (2 Cor. 3:18) They come to *know* him more intimately. Their needs are fully supplied, everything for their spiritual welfare being provided. (Phil. 4:19) Such progress involves changes, readjustment of their thinking.

Some persons, however, object to changes in viewpoint, changes in understanding of certain scriptures or procedures. For example, since the 1940's Jehovah's witnesses have refused to give or accept blood transfusions, whereas prior to that they did not take this position. Since 1962 they understand the "superior authorities" of Romans 13:1 to be the rulers of worldly governments, whereas up to that time, since 1929, they had held a different viewpoint. Other examples could be cited. Does this show that Jehovah's witnesses do not have the truth? Does this bring into question the basic principles of their teachings?

Not at all. Jehovah's witnesses do not claim infallibility. They are being *taught* by God. (Isa. 54:13) Never will they know all things, but they will continually be learning from the inexhaustible wisdom of God as they walk in his truth.

EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY CONGREGATION

When Jesus was on earth, he said to his disciples: "I have many things yet to say to you, but you are not able to bear them at present." (John 16:12) If he had told them all these things at once, they would have been overwhelmed. It would have been impossible for them to grasp these things and to put them into effect in their lives. So he taught them progressively.

Review the history of the early congregation as recorded in the Acts of Apostles. When Jesus was with them shortly before his ascension to heaven, they thought that he would at that time set up a kingdom on earth for the fleshly nation of Israel. (Acts 1:6) But from Pentecost (33 C.E.) on, they learned differently. (Acts 2:32-36; 3:19-21; 1 Pet. 3:18) Some time after

that God opened to their understanding another feature of his "sacred secret," namely, that he would bring Gentiles into the Christian congregation. (Acts 10:34-48; Rom., chap. 11; Col. 1:25-27) Yet later the dispute about circumcision of Gentile converts arose and was settled by the governing body. Here a readjustment of thinking took place as they examined the Scriptures in the light of recent developments. (Acts, chap. 15) Also, the apostles clarified many things in their letters, such as Christ's second presence and the resurrection (1 Cor., chap. 15; 1 Thess. 4:13-17), as well as matters involving congregation organization (the letters to Timothy and Titus).

Did these new understandings and adjustments weaken the congregation's position as the "pillar and support of the truth"? No, rather, it strengthened it as being led and used by Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. Proof of this is seen in Jehovah's blessing. When the clarification of the issue of circumcision was delivered to the congregations scattered about, "therefore, indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day." —1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 16:4, 5.

ADJUSTMENTS IN UNDERSTANDING TODAY

Like the governing body of the early Christian congregation, which was led progressively by Jehovah, handling matters as Jehovah allowed developments to take place, searching the Scriptures in order to direct the congregation according to Jehovah's leading, so the governing body of the congregation does today. For example, the issue over blood began to arise particularly after 1937, when the first blood bank was established in Chicago, Illinois. Christian witnesses of Jehovah who became ill were faced with the question, Should I accept this form of therapy? Is it in harmony with God's Word? A prayerful examination of the Scriptures was made, revealing God's will in the matter.

Likewise as to the scripture at Romans 13:1, a correct understanding was gained by careful and critical study of the context and related pertinent scriptures. It was seen that the apostle Paul, in Romans chapter 12, dealt first with matters inside the congregation, then, at verse 17, he began to turn his attention to the outside. From there on, Paul leads into the discussion of the superior authorities and, on through verse 7 in chapter 13, he is clearly talking about authorities in the governments of this world. This understanding did not cause a change in the attitude of Jehovah's witnesses as regards their relationship to God or in their attitude toward rulers. No, for they continued to follow the principle enunciated by Jesus Christ: "Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matt. 22:21) But it did result in a readjusted view as to the meaning of Romans 13:1.

ANCIENT 'DRAMATIC' EVENTS

Another thing that has given rise to questions is the use by Jehovah's witnesses of parallels or prophetic types, applying these to circumstances and to groups or classes of people today. Many people who read the Bible view its accounts all as simply history, but when they begin to study with Jehovah's witnesses a readjustment of viewpoint takes place as they see that there is more to the accounts than history. For example, the Israelites gathered on the Plains of Moab just before entering the Promised Land fell into fornication with the women of Moab in their worship of the Baal of Peor. This brought about the death, at Jehovah's hand, of 24,000 Israelites out of three million or more en-

camped there. (Num. 25:1-9) This has been likened to the position of God's people today on the threshold of God's new order, and serves as a warning to them now. In fact, due to the increased wickedness and immorality in the world now, the danger is accentuated, and it has proved true that a comparable percentage have been expelled or disfellowshiped from the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses in recent years. This disfellowshiping has kept the congregations clean from defilement and is in harmony with the apostles' counsel to remove wicked persons from the Christian congregation's midst.—1 Cor. 5: 9-13; 2 John 9-11.

The question that is sometimes asked is, Did Jehovah stage that 'dramatic' event, so that we would have a warning now? Well, would he cause such bad things to happen? Would he maneuver them himself? No. The Christian disciple James answers: "With evil things God cannot be tried nor does he himself try anyone." (Jas. 1:13) As far as God's actions and the application of his principles are concerned, he knows what he will do in certain circumstances. He acts always in harmony with his purpose and principles for the good of his faithful people. But he does not set up an arrangement inducing people to commit wrongdoing or set up the circumstances to lead them into bad. —Matt. 6:13.

In the case of the Israelites' deviation in connection with Baal-Peor, God, while not bringing this about, could use this historical fact as a warning for Christians, for they are under a test just as was ancient Israel, and their enemy Satan the Devil uses similar tactics to make them fall. God showed the danger to Christians in this "time of the end," and what he would do against those who would try to bring contamination into the Christian congregation. With reference to this very incident on the Plains of Moab, as well as other things taking place with ancient Israel, the apostle Paul said: "Now these things went on befalling them as *examples,* and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived." (1 Cor. 10:11) They served as examples, lessons, warnings to Christians at the time of the end of the Jewish systems of things, and they do the same for us now.

This is in harmony with the apostle's words: "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope."—Rom. 15:4.

Some dramas God did arrange fully, as when he commanded Abraham to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice, foreshadowing His own offering up of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ as a ransom sacrifice for the human race. There was no wrongdoing in his command to Abraham, and he did not let Abraham go the full way in sacrificing his son, but provided a ram instead.—Gen. 22:1-18; Gal. 3:16; John 3:16.

Many other dramatic events wherein God took action in harmony with his principles to make a prophetic drama for us today were not fully staged by him. For instance, nothing in the Bible indicates that God caused Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, and Mahlon and Chilion, her sons, to die. Nor did he cause the one with the primary right of repurchase, called "So-and-so" in the Bible, to refuse to buy Elimelech's inheritance. But through his Law he did point out the course for Ruth, Naomi and Boaz to take, and because of their love for God they acted in harmony with his Law. Hence he could have a record of this sequence of events written down to make a picture of things to come, as explained in the February 1, 1972, issue

of *The Watchtower*.—Ruth, chaps. 1, 4.

It helps us to understand more fully when we keep in mind that the people in ancient times were *real,* living their daily lives in association with their families and fellowmen, having hopes and desires as we do today, the same general problems with sin working in their members, and many of them faithfully waging a fine fight to serve God. God spoke to them through his prophets and his laws, and took action toward them to reward righteousness and to punish wickedness.

Likewise today, similar things are happening in connection with those serving God. Jehovah does not change from one period of time to another, so that his principles and judgments are different. (Mal. 3:6) We can therefore read what took place with ancient Israel and surrounding nations and know that they were just as real as our situation today and that God will act toward us according to the same principles, just as surely as he did back there. As we benefit from the record of God's dealings with his people in the past, we experience a readjustment of viewpoint. But, of course, at times there may be points that we find difficult to grasp.

FAITH AND PATIENCE ESSENTIAL

When questions arise, it is good to talk to the responsible ones in the congregation, who are spiritually "older men" and who have understanding. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4) Even then, if, at the time, we do not fully understand, are we willing to go on with God's congregation and accept Jehovah's leading, with the assurance that he will enlighten us in his due time?

If we have a friend, do we forsake him when he says or does something we do not fully understand? How much more should we exercise faith in God and in his congregation. "He that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him," say the Scriptures. (Heb. 11:6) We who have come to a knowledge of the truth know that the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and his atoning sacrifice for sins, must be preached as the only hope of mankind. Who is doing this preaching? Whom is God blessing with peace and spiritual prosperity in all the earth? What takes place with individuals who fight the work and organization of God's people today? They try to tear down, but whom are they building up? If we allow some stumbling block to cause us to fall permanently, to turn us away from God and his people, where will we go for life?

When certain persons objected to some sayings of Jesus that they could not understand, Jesus asked his close disciples: "Does this stumble you?" Then to his apostles he said: "You do not want to go also, do you?" and Simon Peter answered: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life; and we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God."—John 6:61, 67-69.

The Bible counsels to exercise patience. (Jas. 5:9-11) Do we not owe patience, first of all, toward our greatest Friends, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, until they reveal the reasons for their actions? How foolish we would be to pit our knowledge and judgment against them! Jehovah's prophet said: "Who has taken the proportions of the spirit of Jehovah, and who as his man of counsel can make him know anything?"—Isa. 40:13.

And as to the Christian congregation, made up as it is of imperfect humans, can we not be patient with it as it follows God's leading? Certainly we are happy and thankful when patience is shown toward us. We do well to imitate God's pa-

tience, for by means of Christ he will bring the congregation through spotless and unblemished.—2 Pet. 3:15; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7, 8.

Indeed, the only place of happiness and life is in following Jehovah's leading. Now, on the threshold of his righteous new order, let us show ourselves willing to let Jehovah readjust our thinking. Doing so, we will strengthen one another to stand against the Devil, "that we may not be overreached by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs."—2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11.

JESUS CHRIST said: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31, 32) Before a person becomes a true disciple of Jesus Christ, exercising faith in the ransom sacrifice and becoming Christ's follower, he is a slave of sin and death. He has to make a change.—John 8:34.

The apostle Paul admonished the Christians in Ephesus, Asia Minor, to "put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct and which is being corrupted according to his deceptive desires." (Eph. 4:22) Yes, the old personality had wrong desires that had to be removed.

Accordingly, when a person comes to God for His help, he must be willing to work hard to make over his mind. (Rom. 12:2) He comes to realize that " 'eye has not seen and ear has not heard, neither have there been conceived in the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him.' For it is to us God has revealed them through his spirit." We should adjust our thinking to these revelations new to us.—1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

If you have a tendency to stumble because you do not thoroughly grasp some explanation of Scripture or some organizational or procedural matter coming through the "faithful and discreet slave" class, remember your position before God. Think: Have I oriented myself properly? Have I progressively made my mind over? Am I going to stop doing so at this point? —Matt. 24:45-47.

Also, examine your heart. Ask yourself: Is there some desire, some leaning, some selfishness that hinders me from seeing or accepting the idea? Is it the truth on every matter that I am looking for, or do I want things to be *my* way in some particular respects?

HUMILITY AND REFLECTION

Humility is essential for the Christian in order for him to endure to the end. Testings that come from persecution are often not as difficult as the fight against the old personality with its pride and its pressures to conform a person to its desires. A person who thinks that he knows better than the Christian congregation should ask himself: 'Do I fully know the

history of God's people?' Perhaps the things you advocate or the way you want things done have already been tried years ago and found to be wrong. Think: 'Do I have greater wisdom than those who have faithfully served Jehovah God for decades, who have spent their lives in research, study and service of God, directing the work of his people throughout the earth? Has God suddenly given me greater wisdom than these?'

In this connection, consider what the apostle Paul wrote to the Christian overseer Timothy. After describing some who resisted the truth, Paul said: "You, however, continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe, knowing from what persons you learned them."—2 Tim. 3:14.

If you have doubts, you can follow this good advice. When you studied the Bible to come to a knowledge of the truth about Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ, you were *learning*. You *proved* the points as you went along. You were persuaded to believe the things you were learning, but not by smooth talk or pressure on the part of the one teaching you. Rather, the Scriptures themselves, with the help of God's spirit, persuaded you. You were firmly convinced of the truth. You *knew* you were *right* in accepting it. You may have gone ahead and expressed full faith by full dedication to God, being baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." (Matt. 28:19) You said, in effect, 'I come to do your will, O God.' (Heb. 10:7) You did it willingly, out of your heart. Why, now, should you doubt that which you once thoroughly proved and decided? Why should you stumble and perhaps turn from this path of progressive knowledge, because of one or two things that you do not fully understand?

Also, think "from what persons you learned" these things. Were they after your money? Were they out to deceive you, to take advantage of you? Or were they ignorant and unable to teach you the fundamental things of God? Did the congregation with which you associated practice wicked works, hypocritically posing as teachers of truth? Rather, did they not take more interest in your spiritual welfare than anyone had ever done before?

Timothy knew that his mother and grandmother, and later, the apostle Paul and other Christians, had taught him with his own best interests at heart. Also, their example was good. But Paul knew he had to say these things to Timothy to strengthen him for the tests, trials and, possibly, the doubts that might assail him.

Consequently, if you are inclined to stumble, you should think upon those words of Paul and, additionally, on his counsel to the Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem. He admonished them: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith." —Heb. 13:7.

Yes, stick to the faithful course. How do you want your conduct to turn out? Good, of course. To life, of course. Then you have the sure formula in the words of the apostle: "Imitate their faith." These brothers have remained in the faith; they have "waited for Jehovah." (Ps. 130:5, 6) They have endured through trials and through times when imperfect human inclinations would have indicated a different course. The 'realities not beheld' may at times have been difficult to see. But they maintained faith and they are happy in serving Jehovah.—Heb. 11:1.

BEWARE OF UNHAPPILY SEEKING A WAY OUT

With regard to this matter of happiness, there is another way that you can

test your own position. Ask, 'Am I joyful; do I get real joy in serving Jehovah?' If you have lost your joy, there is something wrong, but not in Jehovah or his people. It is you who are missing something. You have lost a measure of your spirituality. If you are becoming withdrawn, not having happy association—wholeheartedly—with your brothers, if you are isolating yourself, becoming introverted, look out! It is a serious warning signal. The inspired proverb says: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth." —Prov. 18:1.

If you find that you are stumbled or are offended about something being taught in God's organization, or some adjustments being made, keep this in mind: God has put enough in the Bible to provide a complete foundation for faith. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) He has also left many details of various events in the Bible out of the account, enough so that one whose heart is not right, who wants to discover an apparent fault, who wants to find an excuse for leaving the way of truth, can find it.

Likewise Jehovah has arranged fully for the spiritual welfare of all his people through the Christian congregation. If you hear questionable words or see questionable actions, even wrong or mistaken actions, on the part of someone in the congregation, do not be stumbled and lose out on Jehovah's favor because of this. Since God's congregation is, indeed, made up of imperfect humans, one not really loving Jehovah and his people certainly can find an excuse to leave. The apostle John wrote that some had turned away. He said: "They went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us. But they went out that it might be shown up that not all are of our sort." (1 John 2:19) Jehovah wanted only the loyal, loving, understanding sort, the kind who endure. Those who went out undoubtedly found some complaint that justified their actions in their own minds and hearts. But "Jehovah knows those who belong to him." The firm foundation of his congregation will not fail. He inspired the psalmist to write: "Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law, and for them there is no stumbling block."—2 Tim. 2:19; Ps. 119:165.

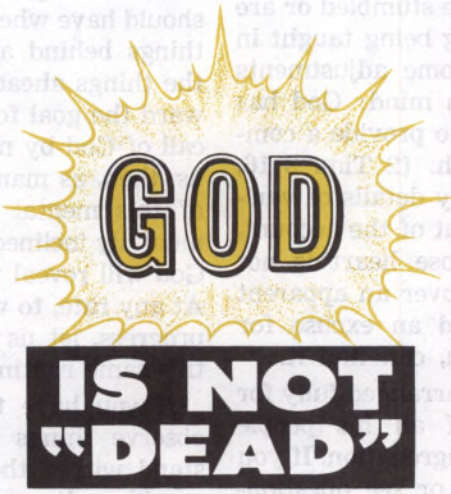
THE PROPER ATTITUDE

Troubles, doubts and causes for stumbling will arise. What shall a person do, then? The apostle expressed the spirit all should have when he said: "Forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pursuing down toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God by means of Christ Jesus. Let us, then, as many of us as are mature, be of this mental attitude; and if you are mentally inclined otherwise in any respect, God will reveal the above attitude to you. At any rate, to what extent we have made progress, let us go on walking orderly in this same routine."—Phil. 3:13-16.

If you have troubles, trials, or if you observe things you cannot quite understand within the framework of truth as you know it, pray to God. James says: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him *keep on asking in faith,* not doubting at all." (Jas. 1:5, 6) Approach God freely in times of heavy trial or judgment, for the apostle John says: "This is how love has been made perfect with us, that we may have freeness of speech in the day of judgment." (1 John 4:17) If we approach the "throne of undeserved kindness" in any time of need, we can confidently expect help. God will then reveal the right attitude to us. —Heb. 4:16.

Then, *act* in accord with your prayers. Consider: To what extent have I made progress in my service to Jehovah? Where have I made it? Was it not through study of God's Word, association with God's people, applying Bible principles in daily life, giving comments in meetings and carrying out other assignments? Was it not also by engaging in the preaching activity? Is it not in these ways that you developed your freeness of speech in the faith and your ability to present the good news to others? Then, Paul counsels, "let us go on walking orderly in this same routine."

If you do these things when in danger of stumbling, God will restore your happiness and joy in serving him, and you will be able to express the conviction of the apostle Paul, who wrote: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor governments nor things now here nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 8: 38, 39.



WHAT do you think when you hear some clergyman say "God is dead"? Some of Christendom's leading theologians who make this remark explain that they do not mean by this that God never existed. Rather, they mean to say that God is 'not involved in present history.' These theologians hold that he is not concerned with man's affairs and is content to let man go his own way without interference or help from Him.

Those believing in such a philosophy therefore feel that, no matter what they do, God will not call them to account for it. They think that God does not see what they do, or if he does see, he is not concerned enough to take any action.

It seems unbelievable that religious leaders in the nations that officially call themselves "Christian" should adopt this attitude. They have the Bible, and they have access to historical records. They can observe the natural creation. Surely they should be able to discern that a God who exercised such care in creation and who provided a book of truth and high principles, as is the Bible, is a God who is definitely interested in his creation. Furthermore, the Bible gives hundreds of instances of his dealings with men and many promises and prophecies that reflect the utmost care and concern for people who are living today.

So that those who believe in God may not fall into the foolish attitude of these religious leaders, Jehovah gives through his prophet Ezekiel an account of people in the past who thought as these clergymen do. He shows the bad results of such thinking—the degraded things to which it led.

EZEKIEL'S SECOND VISION OF JEHOVAH

Ezekiel was in Babylon. It was the year 612 B.C.E., more than a year since his first vision, in which he beheld Jehovah's heavenly chariot on its way toward Jeru-

salem. Ezekiel was in his house at Telabib, with the older men of Judah sitting before him, to see what message he had for them. While these men waited, Ezekiel had the following vision:

> "And I began to see, and, look! a likeness similar to the appearance of fire; from the appearance of his hips even downward there was fire, and from his hips even upward there was something like the appearance of a shining, like the glow of electrum. Then he thrust out the representation of a hand and took me by a tuft of hair of my head, and a spirit carried me between the earth and the heavens and brought me to Jerusalem in the visions of God, to the entrance of the inner gate that is facing northward, where the dwelling place is of the symbol of jealousy that is inciting to jealousy. And, look! the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the appearance that I had seen in the valley plain."—Ezek. 8:2-4.

It was hard for Ezekiel to describe the appearance that Jehovah assumed in the vision, for it was not that of a human figure, but it was awe-inspiring and glorious. Ezekiel was lifted up by the hair of the head and carried by the spirit of inspiration to see, in this visionary way, what was going on hundreds of miles to the west in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel was set down at the gate of the inner courtyard of the temple, at a north gate. (The temple itself faced eastward.) It was a gate leading to the altar of sacrifice. At this place he saw something shocking: a lifeless, motionless "symbol of jealousy." This was some kind of idolatrous image. It may have been an "asherah" or sacred pole representing the false goddess—a filthy sex goddess—who was the wife of the Canaanite god Baal.

THE "SYMBOL OF JEALOUSY"

Jehovah then began to speak from his chariot, which now had threateningly moved to Jerusalem to execute judgment on that city. Ezekiel tells us:

> "And he proceeded to say to me: 'Son of man, please, raise your eyes in the direction of the north.' So I raised my eyes in the direction of the north, and, look! to the north of the gate of the altar there was this symbol of jealousy in the entranceway. And he went on to say to me: 'Son of man, are you seeing what great detestable things they are doing, the things that the house of Israel are doing here for me to become far off from my sanctuary? And yet you will see again great detestable things.' "—Ezek. 8:5, 6.

The religious leaders of Jerusalem had broken the first two of the Ten Commandments, and were committing a 'detestable thing.' The temple was a place where God representatively dwelt with Israel as a nation devoted to his worship. With the temple defiled by the disgusting worship of this "symbol of jealousy" wherewith the Jews incited Jehovah to jealousy, was that temple a proper place for his occupying? No, indeed! Jehovah was not obliged to remain there. Rather, he was obliged to withdraw his spiritual presence; as he said, "to become far off from my sanctuary."

Has Christendom, within which are those who say, "God is dead," done similarly? Consider what took place in St. Clement's Episcopal Church in New York city, in December 1971. *Time* magazine reports, in its issue of January 3, 1972:

> "In the sanctuary upstairs, the show went on. At one end, three nude young people splashed happily in a kiddies' plastic wading pool. At the other end, Actor Kevin O'Connor (*Tom Paine*) performed the bathtub scene from Sam Shepard's play *Chicago*, a scene of despair and rebirth. At a sink, two housewives talked about which detergent was purest."

What mockery! What degradation of the clean, upright teachings of Christ! This is the outcome of flouting God's Word the Bible and of using images, symbols and teachings that draw church members away from exclusive devotion to the God they profess to serve.

JEHOVAH VERY MUCH ALIVE TO WHAT IS BEING DONE

As Ezekiel was taken on the visionary tour of inspection, Jehovah told him, "Yet you will see again great detestable things."

Likewise, in Christendom, such a glimpse is only a fraction of the detestable things carried on right in Christendom's churches. Back in Ezekiel's vision, these things were done by the appointed heads of the people. Like the clergy today who say, either by actions or in words, "God is dead," those leaders thought, "Jehovah is not seeing us. Jehovah has left the land." —Ezek. 8:12.

Perhaps those Jewish leaders felt that Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Judah had had so much trouble recently at the hands of Babylon that Jehovah had apparently "left the land." In effect they were saying the same thing that clergymen are saying now.

Because these men of Judah did not see God taking action in their affairs, did that mean that God did not know? No. He was fully aware of what they were doing. Just because he did not do what they thought should be done, namely, act to save Jerusalem, that did not mean he was not concerned. Rather, he was concerned with his judgment that they be destroyed for their detestable practices!

Even then, Jehovah exercised forbearance. But five years later he directed the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar to the attack on Jerusalem. (Ezek. 21:18-23) If you read the Bible book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, particularly chapters two and four, you will see that the calamity that came on Jerusalem is attributed to Jehovah's judgment because of her detestable practices. Certainly the Jews, both those surviving the siege and those in Babylon, did not then say, "Jehovah is not seeing us. Jehovah has left the land."

From this historical record we can realize that there is great peril hanging over Christendom. God is alive, and he is very much concerned over his own name and true worship. He is also interested in all people who "believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him."—Heb. 11:6.

Are you shocked at the disgusting things that clergymen, followed by many church members, have done? Then forsake any association with such persons and give God exclusive devotion. You may be sure that he sees and truly will reward those who look to him as the living God.

Bible Truth Reaches People in Various Ways

JEHOVAH God is intensely interested in the eternal welfare of humankind. The Holy Scriptures give us the assurance that it is God's will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Tim. 2:4) And today people are indeed being reached with the Bible's message, at times in very unusual ways.

● A Witness from Canada relates: "I was working at a coffee shop one evening. Among those on the night shift was a girl I'd never met before. As was his habit, one of the workers began telling an immoral joke. I turned and walked away in disgust. Unknown to me, the new girl asked some of the other girls, 'What's the matter with her?' They told her that I was one of Jehovah's witnesses. Although this girl lived in my neighborhood, I did not see her again until some time later when we met at a little grocery store."

What was the result? Because of having observed the Witness' adherence to right principle, the girl agreed to have a home Bible study and within a year became a baptized Witness.

● In Italy, one of Jehovah's witnesses who during various days of the week helps her husband in the operation of an electrical appliance store is alert to acquaint others with the Bible's message. One day a man

came in to buy a table lamp. After being shown various lamps, he asked if he might test the lamps with something to read. The Witness promptly handed him the Bible study aid *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie,"* opened to the chapter "God's Permission of Wickedness Soon to End." The man began reading while the Witness waited on another customer.

Many minutes passed. After reading the first few pages of the chapter, the man asked some questions about the interesting things that he had read and requested a copy of the book. On receiving it, he made his way toward the door. "But didn't you want to buy a lamp?" the Witness reminded him. The lamp no longer interested him, but he readily agreed to have a home Bible study.

● A married couple in Tahiti obtained several publications from Jehovah's witnesses when they called at their home. But this couple had no interest in reading the literature. Later they purchased a new home in a different area. There two Witnesses called on them, only to be sent away by the husband. Following this incident the wife asked her husband to clean out the books in the garage, throwing away those no longer needed. While sorting through the various books, he came across the publication *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie."* Recalling the recent visit of the Witnesses, he said to himself, "This is one of their books."

As he was about to discard it he opened it and glanced over a paragraph. It caught his attention. So he sat down and then and there read the book from cover to cover, finishing it late that night.

The next day he read in the newspaper that Jehovah's witnesses were holding an assembly. He attended this assembly with his wife. Impressed by what he heard, he obtained more literature. Three weeks later a Bible study was started with him and his wife. Soon he began sharing with others the good things he was learning from God's Word.

● Over a period of several years a man in West Germany obtained *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* from one of Jehovah's witnesses. One day the Witness asked him whether he was reading the magazines. The man assured him that he was and remarked that they were interesting. Actually, though, he had not read any of the magazines. Plagued by a bad conscience because of having lied, the man went to the stack of magazines and started to read them. He began to realize that he was reading the truth and talked to his wife about it. Since the Witness had not called on them for a while, they decided to locate the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's witnesses. After doing so, they went to the Kingdom Hall and requested a home Bible study. Not long thereafter they were baptized.

Thus it can be seen that, not only the spoken word, but also personal conduct and the printed page are playing a vital role in reaching people with Bible truth.

● *Is it Scriptural to act as a godparent or to designate godparents for one's children?* —U.S.A.

The practice of designating some person or persons other than the parents as godparents for an infant or child at the time of its solemn baptism and, later, at the individual's confirmation, is a ritual of the Catholic Church. The practice also applies to adults when baptized or confirmed.

In the baptism of infants the godparents or sponsors (usually relatives or friends who are baptized persons) ask "faith from the Church of God in the child's name." (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*) They also make a profession and declaration of faith and ask for baptism, in the child's name. In the case of default of the parents, that is, their failure to bring up the child in the Catholic faith, the godparents are obligated to instruct it concerning faith and morals.

In the rite of confirmation (like baptism, considered a sacrament) usually another person (or persons), different from the godparent(s) designated at the time of the child's baptism, acts as sponsor or godparent. He or she must be one well instructed in the Catholic faith.

What is the Scriptural position regarding this practice? First of all, infant baptism is unscriptural. In view of the fact that 'receiving the word with one's ears' and 'doing penance' precede water baptism, and that baptism re-

quires the individual to make a solemn decision, it is apparent that he must be of an age to do these things himself. (Acts 2:14, 38, 41, *Douay* Version) The apostle Paul writes: "For, with the heart, we believe unto justice: but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10, *Dy*) This an infant or very small child could not do. Thus infant baptism is ruled out by the Scriptures.

Moreover, no person can actually believe with the heart or make confession by mouth for another person. True, the apostle Paul pointed out that obedient minor children are "holy" because of the faithful parent. This is because God holds the parents, not some outside individuals, responsible for the children. (1 Cor. 7:14) God thereby makes a kind provision in behalf of his faithful servants. But when such children come to the age of responsibility they are no longer covered by this arrangement. Each has to stand or fall according to his own personal faith.—Rom. 14:4; Ezek. 18:20.

It is true that the apostle Paul said to the congregation at Corinth: "For if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, by the gospel, I have begotten you." (1 Cor. 4:15, *Dy*) However, Paul was not any "godfather" to this congregation. Rather, he had originally brought to them the gospel by which they became believers. In a spiritual sense he became a father to them through this life-giving message, though other persons had a later share in instructing them. Paul was forced to remind the Corinthian Christians of this fact because they were being seduced away from Christ by false apostles. It was not that he demanded to be called "Father," or that he was referring to a church-appointed position of godfather.—2 Cor. 11:3, 13.

Today in many places the practice of having godparents is only a formality. The godparent usually gives the child a gift, and thereafter often has little to do with the child, as to training him in the faith. Nevertheless, since the principle is based only on Catholic tradition and is contrary to the Scriptures, true Christians will avoid any connection with such practice.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

September 17: Appreciating the Gift Called "Work." Page 485. Songs to Be Used: 30, 29.

September 24: Working Hard for the Reward of Eternal Life. Page 491. Songs to Be Used: 38, 58.