DECEMBER 15, 1980

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Control Your Spirit —How?

THE WATCHTOWER®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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IN THIS ISSUE

3 When Tempers Flare
4 Your Spirit—How Can You Control It?
7 None Exempt from Showing Repentance
8 He Was Persecuted As a Child
10 Rewards of Training Children in a Godly Way
11 A Wise Proverb
12 Who Will Praise the King?
17 Are You a Loyal Proclaimer of God's Kingship?
23 Insight on the News

OUR COVER: Can you control your spirit? The pressures of our times make this increasingly difficult for many. Some practical suggestions are offered in the following pages

24 Our Five Decades of Integrity-keeping
29 Do You Remember?
30 Questions from Readers
31 Subject Index for "The Watchtower" 1980
32 How They Achieved Happy Family Life

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WHEN TEMPERS FLARE

IN NEW YORK city, "A Kew Gardens man, furious at neighbors for playing loud music, shot four people and then killed himself." On the other side of the world, in Osaka, Japan, "a driver was shot to death with a pistol when he blew his horn at a car that stopped suddenly in front of him."

Likely, you have never lost control of yourself to this extent. And obviously you want to avoid such a tragedy. But can you say that you always control your spirit? Should you make an effort to do so? Actually, is there anything that can be done about it?

MORE THAN CONTROLLING OUR TEMPER

The Bible clearly encourages control of our spirit. It says: "He that is slow to anger is better than a mighty man, and he that is controlling his spirit than the one capturing a city." (Prov. 16:32) The Bible also condemns loss of control, saying: "As a city broken through, without a wall, is the man that has no restraint for his spirit." (Prov. 25:28) But what is involved in a person's controlling his spirit?

The controlling of our spirit evidently conveys a deeper meaning than simply holding our temper. The Bible often uses the word "spirit" to denote our dominant traits, our motives and disposition. This is true in the Biblical terms "mildness of spirit," "quiet and mild spirit," "faithful in spirit" and "haughty spirit."—1 Cor. 4:21; 1 Pet. 3:4; Prov. 11:13; 16:18.

For example, if a person has hatred in his heart but because of the lack of opportunity restrains himself from committing murder, has he *really* controlled his spirit? Is hatred all right so long as we do not give vent to it? Jesus answers, No! While condemning murder, his words also imply condemnation of the hateful spirit that can lead to it.—See Matthew 5:21, 22.

At times we may be able to hold our tongue and our temper and walk away from an unpleasant situation without a word. Yet if several days or even weeks later we still brood over the incident and get upset over it, does this not indicate that we have not really controlled our spirit? If a person says, "I can forgive but *never* forget," is he truly controlling his spirit? And what about someone who, although not getting angry, becomes morose and sulky, refusing to talk with those whom he considers have hurt him?

We cannot disregard feelings of frustration or envy that come up in our heart, or simply dismiss them as "normal." These feelings are our true "spirit" or dominant

personality. It is these inner emotions that we need to control if we are to please God.

To show the damaging effects of uncontrolled inner emotions, Jesus Christ said: "Out of the *heart* come wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, fornications, thieveries, false testimonies, blasphemies." He then continues: "These are the things defiling a man." (Matt. 15:19, 20) Yes, to control our spirit means to control our "heart," that is, our very attitudes and motives.

So, then, it is not sufficient simply to restrain ourselves when under provocation. To please God, we really must control our spirit. But how?

Your Spirit—How Can You Control It?

ALL of us have a genetic makeup inherited from our imperfect parents, and this to some extent determines the kind of spirit we have. Also, our environment and background influence our personality to a large degree. Should we, then, just shrug off the matter by saying, "I can't help the way I am"? This definitely is not the way the Bible directs us. Instead, we are encouraged to 'make our mind over' and "put on the new personality." This means grappling with the "old personality" and getting rid of its wrong inclinations.—Eph. 4:20-24; Rom. 12:2.

We will fail at times, since no man can perfectly control his spirit. However, by meditating on God's Word and praying for his spirit to guide us, there is much that we can do to counteract any unwholesome "spirit" that we may have, thus controlling it. (Luke 11:13; Gal. 5:22, 23, 25) What can help us to do this?

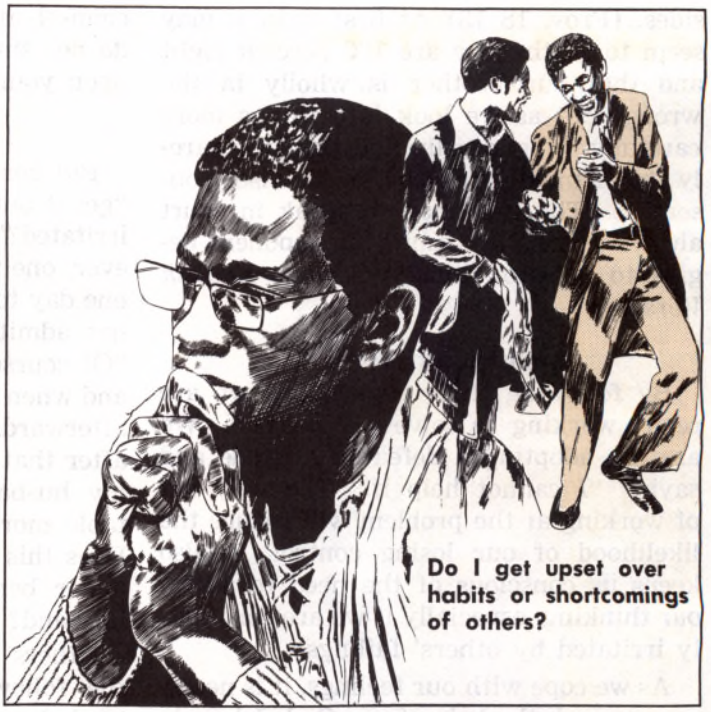
HELPS IN CONTROLLING IT

Whatever the cause of our agitated spirit, there are various things we can think about that will help us to remain calm under stress. Let us take a look at three suggestions that some have found helpful.

Examine Yourself. It really does help if we try to analyze our feelings. We can bring reason to bear on the problem, asking ourselves *why* we are disturbed. Often when we do this we find that our "reasons" are quite petty. Or we may discover within ourselves a motive that we did not realize existed.

The advantage of self-examination is that we then focus on our own share of

the problem, which we can do something about, rather than becoming frustrated by focusing solely on the other person's fault, regarding which we can do little. Some questions we can ask ourselves are: Do I get upset over the habits or shortcomings of others? If so, is this because their habits are unscriptural? Or is it because my own background and training differ from theirs? (In this latter case, it may be that the problem lies more with us than with the other person.) Do I quickly get irritated when something derogatory is said about me, my race or my family? Or is it when I am counseled that I get hurt? If so, could it be that I think a little too highly of myself and am overly sensitive? Does a particular person irritate me? Do I (if an overseer or a parent) become frustrated when counsel is not followed?



Do I get upset over habits or shortcomings of others?

Through such self-examination, we may learn to recognize our own particular weak spot. Then we are in a better position to 'pummel our body' and fight hard to control it.—1 Cor. 9:27.

Take an Objective Look at the Other Person. When someone upsets us, we tend to see only his weaknesses. So it helps if we can see him as God sees him. Is he or she dedicated to God and loved by him? Overall, is the person showing a good "spirit," perhaps falling short on just one or two points? If so, will it not help if we concentrate on his "righteous," "chaste" and "lovable" qualities, thinking on such things?—Phil. 4:8.

Really, would it be fair or proper to judge an individual on the basis of one or two "irritating" traits, as if we deliberately refuse to see any good at all in him? Why should we want to judge others, since our judgments too often will be influenced by our personal feelings of the moment? James put matters very frankly, asking: "Who are you to be judging your neighbor?"—Jas. 4:12.

Try to See the Other Person's Point of View. This is not easy to do, especially when his viewpoint may seem diametrically opposed to ours. Yet the very effort we make in trying to see things his way will often serve to offset our own feelings and have a calming effect. At least we will be able to understand to some extent how he could feel or act the way he does. In fact, when we do this we are applying the wise counsel given by the apostle Paul to the Philippians, to consider "that the others are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others."—Phil. 2:3, 4.

This helps us to avoid the trap of prejudging without really considering both

sides. (Prov. 18:13) At first sight it may seem to us that we are 100 percent right and that our brother is wholly in the wrong. But as we look into things more carefully, we generally find that it is rarely that simple. Proverbs 18:17 wisely observes: "The first man to speak in court always seems right until his opponent begins to question him."—*Today's English Version.*

KEEP WORKING ON IT

By following these suggestions we are really working to solve our problem. We are not adopting a defeatist attitude and saying "I cannot help it." The very act of working at the problem will reduce the likelihood of our losing control. It also keeps us conscious of the need to adjust *our* thinking, especially if we are constantly irritated by others' failings.

As we cope with our feelings, it is necessary to seek the help of our God, Jehovah, at all times. One young lady in New Jersey (U.S.A.) had a serious problem in this regard. She was constantly losing her temper and was easily offended. While fighting strenuously against these tendencies herself, she also tells us: "I prayed hard to Jehovah to please erase my doubts. I asked that he would search deep down into my heart, even to the inmost part of my body, and please remove any bad thoughts." Evidently Jehovah answered her sincere prayer, for she adds: "Now for months I have not said any bad words; my temper is much milder."

But what if, after applying these suggestions and having some success, we find ourselves seriously agitated on occasion? First, we should never allow this to cause us to become overly downhearted to the point where we want to give up. Rather, we need to ask for Jehovah's forgiveness and for his help to keep up the fight. Second, during the time we are actually disturbed, it is beneficial to remember the counsel at Psalm 4:4: "Be agitated, but do not sin. Have your say in your heart, upon your bed, and keep silent."

IS IT THE BEST WAY?

But some may ask, 'Is it not better to "get it out of your system" when you feel irritated?' That is how many feel. However, one wife who tried this at breakfast one day to get her husband to hang up his hat admitted after she lost her temper: "Of course, I hardly ever get really mad, and when I do I am sick two or three days afterward. To tell the truth I felt terrible after that breakfast, and believe it or not my husband still leaves his hat on the table more often than he puts it away." Does this sound as though the venting of anger benefited either this lady or her husband?

Others who lost their temper reported the following effects: "Upset stomach." "I shake all over, and things sort of blur." "I really do see red." Are these beneficial effects?

But this is not all. Besides the physical injury, there is also the damage caused to personal relations with others. Many things said and done in the heat of anger cause deep hurt and are irreparable. Finally, there is the feeling of guilt due to knowing that the losing of control is displeasing to Jehovah.

A person cannot deny the truth of the Biblical statements: "He that is quick to anger will commit foolishness." "He that is slow to anger is abundant in discernment."—Prov. 14:17, 29.

Also, how true to life is the proverb: "An enraged man stirs up contention, but one that is slow to anger quiets down quarreling"! (Prov. 15:18) There is no doubt that a man who fails to control his spirit 'adds fuel to the fire,' thus complicating the problem, whereas one who manifests a mild spirit can calm things down. "An answer, when mild, turns away

rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up."—Prov. 15:1.

Yes, the controlling of our spirit can be truly beneficial. Not only do we thus avoid bad effects, but we learn to get along with others. We also learn to trust our spiritual brothers, to have confidence in them. Is this not much better than constantly harping on their weaknesses? We find joy in looking for their good qualities and imitating these. As a result, likely we will find that others are drawn closer to us and we to them. This certainly results in a more loving atmosphere.

Actually, when a group of people come together for any purpose, they manifest a certain "spirit" or dominant attitude. (Philem. 25) Whether this is upbuilding and encouraging or is negative and discouraging depends largely on the individuals making up the group. Jehovah's Witnesses, in tens of thousands of congregations worldwide, generally manifest a wholesome spirit that attracts others.

If you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses, why not make it your goal to contribute to the wholesome spirit of the congregation with which you associate? You can do this by controlling your own spirit and by being warm, friendly and upbuilding in your dealings with others. In this way you will help to spread a happy family spirit among your spiritual brothers and sisters. As you give generously in this way, you will reap the added dividend of receiving help yourself in controlling your spirit. This is because a good spirit is contagious, and generosity begets generosity. As the wise man said: "The generous soul will itself be made fat."—Prov. 11:25.

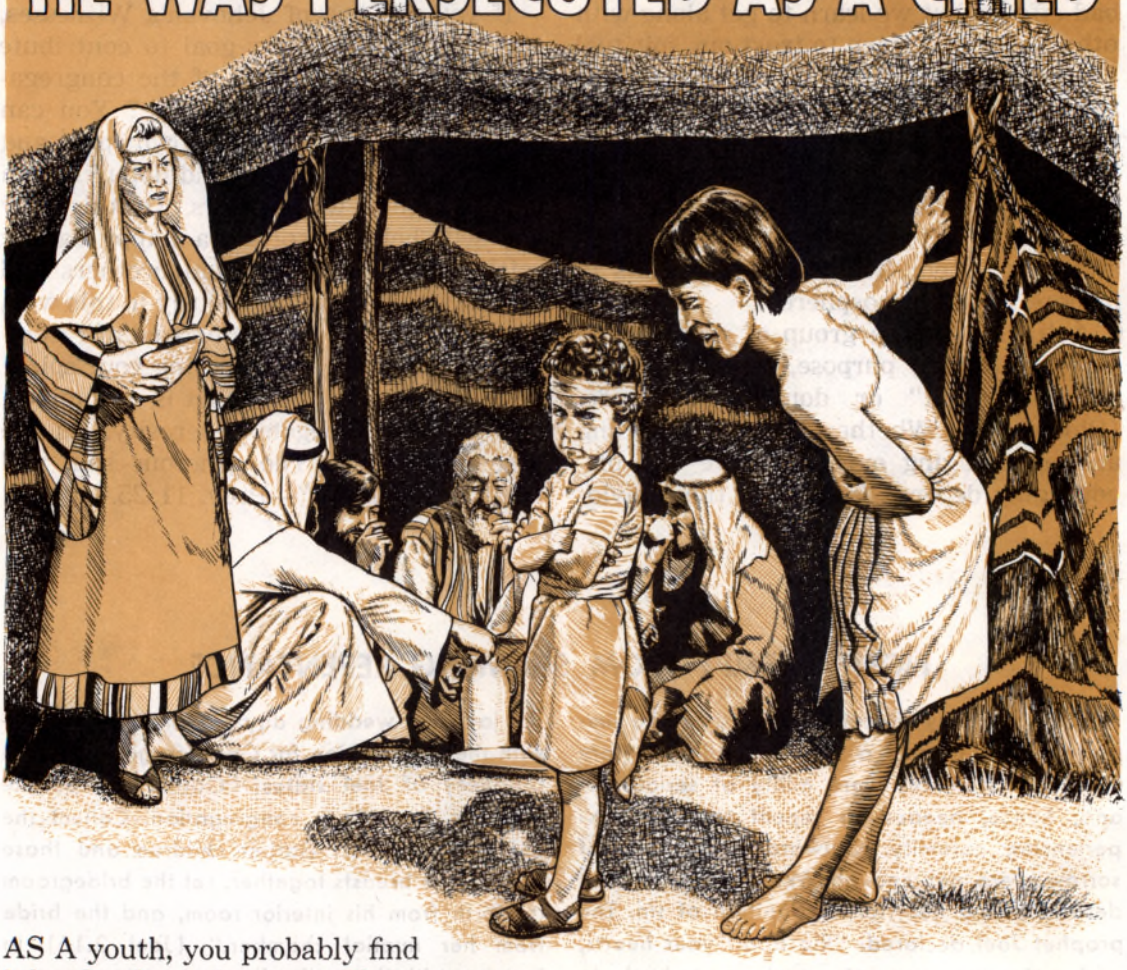
NONE EXEMPT FROM SHOWING REPENTANCE

JOEL'S prophecy forcefully indicates the importance of having a clean standing before God. The Israelites were guilty of serious sin and, hence, needed to repent to avoid experiencing calamity. Outward expressions of sorrow were not enough. What Jehovah God desired was a heartfelt recognition of sin. The prophet Joel declared: "Rip apart your hearts, and not your garments; and come back to Jehovah your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness, and he will certainly feel regret on account of the calamity."—Joel 2:13.

Since all were sinners, age exempted no one from being among those assembled at the temple in humbling themselves before Jehovah God. Even the infants needed to be there, and the joy of a wedding day was not to interfere with the supplication for God's forgiveness. The prophecy of Joel states: "Gather the people together. Sanctify a congregation. Collect the old men together. Gather children and those sucking the breasts together. Let the bridegroom go forth from his interior room, and the bride from her nuptial chamber." (Joel 2:16) In keeping with the spirit of these words, a person should let nothing become more important in his life than having a clean standing before the Creator.

Since sucklings are born sinners, parents have the serious responsibility of maintaining a proper standing before God so that their little ones will be viewed as holy or clean.—Compare 1 Corinthians 7:14.

HE WAS PERSECUTED AS A CHILD



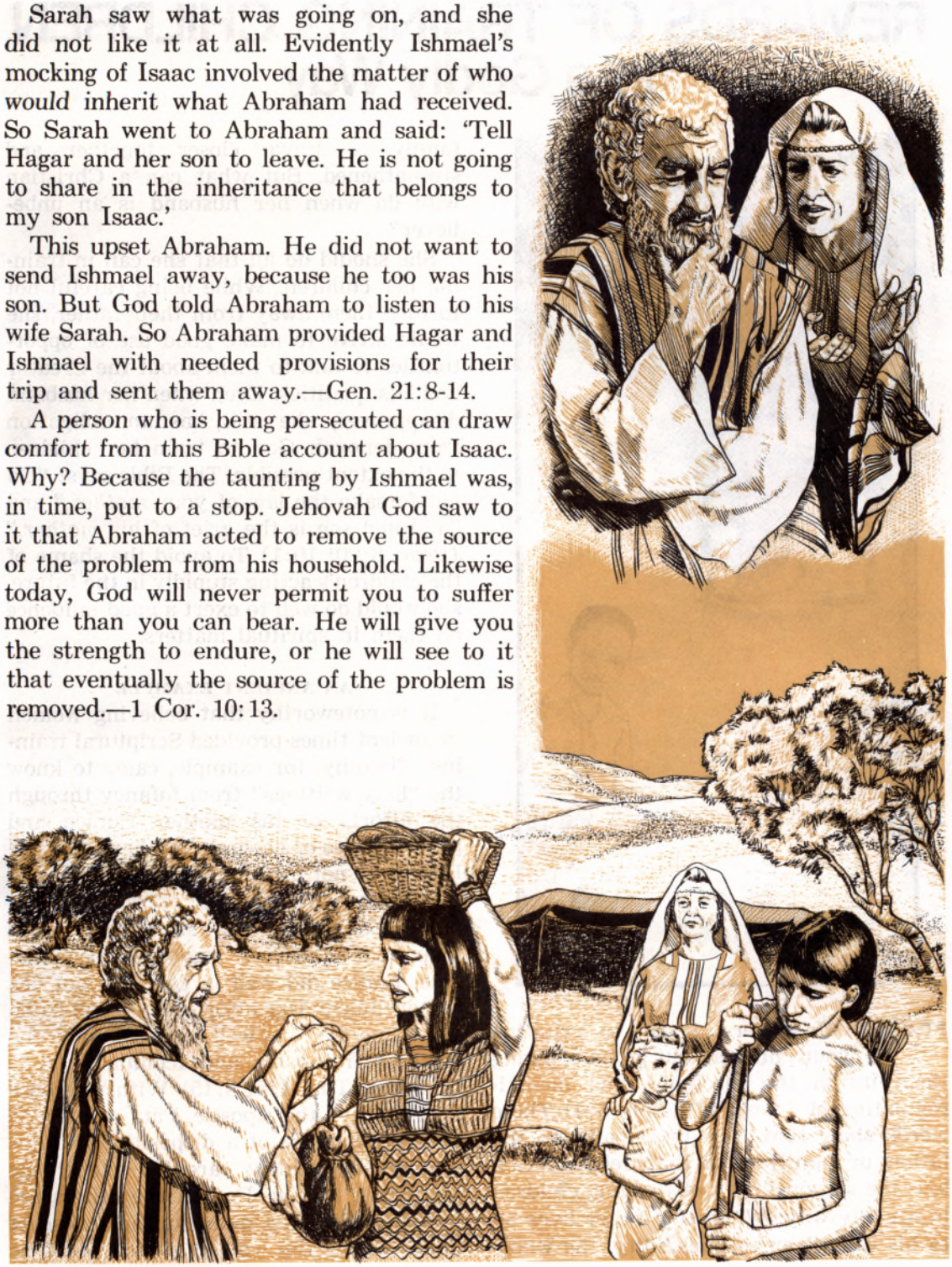
AS A youth, you probably find it hard today to be a true Christian. You may be ridiculed for not smoking or taking drugs. Or you may be persecuted for not sharing in ceremonies or celebrations that conflict with Bible principles. This brings to mind the persecution of Isaac, the young son of Abraham and his beloved wife Sarah.

For Isaac the trouble came to a head during a feast that Abraham spread on the day that Isaac was weaned. At the time, Isaac was about five years old. Mothers nursed their children much longer in those days. During the feast, Ishmael, Abraham's teenaged son by his Egyptian slave girl Hagar, began mocking and poking fun at his young half brother. This was not just a children's quarrel. It was the malicious taunting of a much smaller child. The Bible says that Ishmael actually "began persecuting" Isaac.—Gal. 4:29.

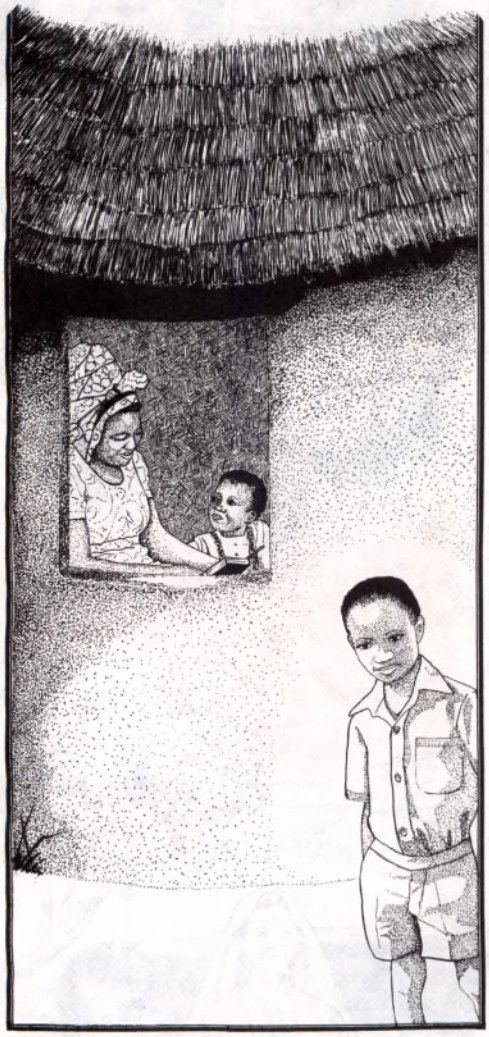
Sarah saw what was going on, and she did not like it at all. Evidently Ishmael's mocking of Isaac involved the matter of who *would* inherit what Abraham had received. So Sarah went to Abraham and said: 'Tell Hagar and her son to leave. He is not going to share in the inheritance that belongs to my son Isaac.'

This upset Abraham. He did not want to send Ishmael away, because he too was his son. But God told Abraham to listen to his wife Sarah. So Abraham provided Hagar and Ishmael with needed provisions for their trip and sent them away.—Gen. 21:8-14.

A person who is being persecuted can draw comfort from this Bible account about Isaac. Why? Because the taunting by Ishmael was, in time, put to a stop. Jehovah God saw to it that Abraham acted to remove the source of the problem from his household. Likewise today, God will never permit you to suffer more than you can bear. He will give you the strength to endure, or he will see to it that eventually the source of the problem is removed.—1 Cor. 10:13.



REWARDS OF TRAINING CHILDREN in a Godly Way



"YOU, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Eph. 6:4) These words show that it is principally on the father or family head that Jehovah God lays the responsibility of training children in a godly way. When the father lives up to his God-given responsibility, the whole family is drawn closer together and strengthened. But what can a Christian wife do when her husband is an unbeliever?

She should do all that she can in training her children. While being careful not to turn them away from their father, she would strive to make good use of opportunities to talk to them about the Creator and His qualities. Even when her husband disapproves, she still has an obligation from Jehovah God to train her children to the extent possible. The Bible says: "Do not forsake the law of your *mother*," and "a stupid son is the grief of his *mother*." (Prov. 6:20; 10:1) To avoid the shame of the children's acting stupidly in the future, she would do well to exert a good influence on them in spiritual matters.

AN ANCIENT EXAMPLE

It is noteworthy that believing women in ancient times provided Scriptural training. Timothy, for example, came to know the "holy writings" from infancy through the efforts of his mother Eunice and probably also of his grandmother Lois. The Bible does not mention whether Timothy's unbelieving Greek father approved or opposed Eunice's giving such training to their son. Whatever may have been the case, Eunice did well in carrying out her responsibility. Her efforts bore good fruitage. Timothy "was well reported on by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium." (Acts 16:1, 2; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15) With reference to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote: "I have no one else of a disposition like his who will genuinely care for the things pertaining to you. For all the others are seeking their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know the proof he

gave of himself, that like a child with a father he slaved with me in furtherance of the good news." (Phil. 2:20-22) Eunice must have felt great happiness in seeing her son being so used by God in serving congregations of his people. What a fine reward for her hard work!

MODERN-DAY SUCCESS IN TEACHING CHILDREN

Christian women in modern times have been similarly blessed. An African woman whose husband opposed her efforts to teach God's Word to their children relates: "I continued to study the Bible with my children. I studied with them in the bush. When I had to do this at home, one of my sons would sit at the door as a watchman. I did this for many years. Daily I would pray to Jehovah for my children." What was the result?

She continues: "Jehovah indeed answered my prayers. My daughter has married, and her husband is serving as an elder in the congregation with which they are associated." This woman's sons also are striving to live in harmony with the Scriptures. She concludes: "My family study was certainly blessed. I would like to express my gratitude to Jehovah for the way in which he answered my prayers."

Another Christian wife has this to say: "After school hours and before my unbelieving husband returned home from work, I found time to study with my two girls. At other times I would talk to them about good Christian conduct and things I heard at meetings. Now I am happy with the results of my efforts. One of the girls is married to a ministerial servant. The other is doing well. Jehovah truly answered my prayers."

Clearly, for Jehovah to bless our efforts, prayer is very important. Christians need to exert themselves vigorously and not become discouraged by the time and effort it takes to train children under unfavorable circumstances. With the help of God's spirit, a person can succeed.—Luke 13:24; Phil. 4:13.

A WISE PROVERB

"It is a foolish person that makes known his vexation in the same day, but the shrewd one is covering over a dishonor."—Prov. 12:16.

How do you react when someone unjustly criticizes or speaks against you? As Proverbs 12:16 notes, a very common reaction among imperfect humans is to flare up. Many persons immediately, "in the same day," give in to their vexation and heatedly reply. But what about "the shrewd one"? In using the expression "the shrewd one," Proverbs does not mean here some crafty person, such as one who schemes revenge. Rather, the favorable aspect of shrewdness is highlighted. In Proverbs it is linked with knowledge and wisdom, with a prudent person who thinks a matter through instead of reacting just from emotion. (Prov. 13:16; 14:8; 22:3) In the face of some unjust criticism or petty insult that seems to bring dishonor, the shrewd person restrains his tongue. He remains in control, instead of letting the other person or the situation control him. And he certainly benefits from such prudence in that he thus avoids the fights that frequently come to the person who rashly responds when his feelings are hurt.

WHO WILL PRAISE THE KING?

"I will exalt you, O my God the King, and I will bless your name to time indefinite, even forever. All day long I will bless you, and I will praise your name to time indefinite, even forever." —*Ps. 145:1, 2.*

KING David wrote words of praise to his heavenly King, Jehovah God. To some it may appear rather unusual for an earthly king to speak out so forcefully in favor of another as his own superior King. But David had good reason for doing so. His utterances were out of appreciation for that King, Jehovah. David possessed a mildness before this King such as belongs to wisdom. (Jas. 3:13) David was a loyal worshiper of Jehovah and had a wonder-

1. What did King David say in behalf of Jehovah as his King, and why?

fully close relationship with this "Lord of kings."—Dan. 2:47.

[2] From David's many expressions in Scripture we can see what made him appreciate his King, Jehovah God, so much. Psalm 19 shows David's appreciation for Jehovah as Creator, Lawgiver and Redeemer. Psalm 24 declares that Jehovah is the Owner of the earth and the glorious King, the mighty One. In Psalm 103:19 David expresses appreciation for Jehovah's kingship, saying: "Jehovah himself has firmly established his throne in the very heavens; and over everything his own kingship has held domination." Then David calls on angels and men to bless or praise Jehovah. David's song of thanks recorded in 1 Chronicles 16:8-36 emphasizes David's appreciation of Jehovah.

[3] Near the end of David's reign he expressed his lifelong feelings before all his people, saying: "Blessed may you be, O Jehovah the God of Israel our father, from time indefinite even to time indefinite. Yours, O Jehovah, are the greatness and the mightiness and the beauty and the excellency and the dignity; for everything in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Jehovah, the One also lifting yourself up as head over all. The riches and the glory are on account of you, and you are dominating everything; and in your hand there are power and mightiness, and in your hand is ability to make great and to give strength to all. And now, O our God, we are thanking you and praising your beauteous name."—1 Chron. 29:10-13.

THE KINGSHIP ISSUE

[4] Jehovah's kingship became an issue in Israel shortly before the birth of David. It was toward the end of Samuel's judgeship, as is seen in 1 Samuel 8:4-20. But what was it that motivated the covenant people of Jehovah to ask for a king to rule over them and thus to reject Jehovah? They told Samuel that they wanted to be like all the other nations. Jehovah through Samuel warned them of the price they would have to pay for seeking to be like the nations in having a human king over them. Really, they were so much better off with Jehovah as their King.—See also Deuteronomy 4:7.

[5] The issue had come up before in the nation of Israel when Jehovah gave the people under Gideon's command victory over the Midianites. "Later the men of Israel said to Gideon: 'Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson as well, for you have saved us out of the hand of Midian.' But Gideon said to them: 'I myself shall not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Jehovah is the one who will rule over you.'" (Judg. 8:22, 23) Loyally Gideon turned aside the request of the people of Israel and confirmed the kingship of Jehovah over them. However, not long after the death of Gideon, one of his sons named Abimelech violently murdered most of his brothers and set himself up as a king, but his rule was short-lived and his end was disastrous. (Judg. chap. 9) This history was well known in Israel. It shows how the kingship of Jehovah has been put at issue down through the centuries. Also, during all this time the opportunity has existed for each person to show his loyalty to Jehovah as King.

[6] God's Word shows that the people of the worldly nations had kings over them from very early times. Not long after the Flood man-ruled kingdoms were organized

2, 3. (a) What are some examples of David's expressions of appreciation of Jehovah in the Psalms? (b) What are some points made by David in 1 Chronicles concerning Jehovah and his kingship?

4. What happened in Samuel's day so that Israel came to have a human king, and how did the nations around Israel become a snare to them?

5. How did kingship become an issue in Gideon's day?

6. What does earlier history show concerning kingship, and what had Jehovah foretold as to how matters would turn out?

in opposition to Jehovah, as shown at Genesis 10:8-12. This was under the influence of Satan the Devil who originally raised a challenge against the rightfulness of Jehovah's rulership by rebelling against Jehovah and seeking to draw other creatures away from the worship of Jehovah. Jehovah has allowed time for the wicked one to try to prove his challenge. He has also disclosed how the matter will turn out.—Gen. 3:15.

JEHOVAH'S GREATNESS CALLS FORTH PRAISE

7 It was Samuel, who, under Jehovah's direction, anointed David. "And the spirit of Jehovah began to be operative upon David from that day forward." (1 Sam. 16:12, 13) David is a fine example of how the spirit of Jehovah operates on his loyal ones. It was God's spirit that impelled David to write so many of the psalms in which he praises Jehovah. (2 Sam. 23:2) One of his finest expressions of praise is Psalm 145. This psalm blesses, praises, lauds and magnifies Jehovah's goodness, greatness, mightiness, righteousness, eternalness, unsearchableness and his mercy. Indicative of the regard Jewish scholars have for this psalm is the fact that it appears three times in their daily liturgy. In Hebrew, the book of Psalms is termed *Tehil·lim'*, meaning "Praises." Psalm 145 is the only psalm that has as its superscription "A praise," the term in its singular form.

8 The very opening verses of this psalm overflow with joy and appreciation:

"I will exalt you, O my God the King, and I will bless your name to time indefinite, even forever. All day long I will bless you, and I will praise your name to time indefinite, even forever." (Ps. 145:1, 2)

7. (a) What part did Jehovah's spirit play in David's life? (b) In what ways is Psalm 145 outstanding?
8. What is implicit in the resolve to praise Jehovah's name forever?

Bible commentators generally interpret David's resolve to praise God's name "to time indefinite, even forever" to mean as long as David lived. But is there not another meaning implicit in David's resolve? To praise God's name forever one would have to live forever. Did not David have the future hope of everlasting life? Certainly today, the "great crowd" of the "other sheep" as a class do have that very hope, of being able to bless and praise Jehovah's name forever because of never dying off the earth.—Zeph. 2:3; John 11:26; Rev. 7:14-17; 21:4.

9 David's paean of praise continues:

"Jehovah is great and very much to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable." (Ps. 145:3)

The evidence of Jehovah's greatness has been there for all mankind to see from creation onward. (Rom. 1:20) Yet comparatively few people have been praisers of Jehovah in trueness despite his greatness and his creative works from which they all benefit. In fact, so great are Jehovah and the works he has done that even to this day mankind has been able only to start to fathom the intricacies of a few of the things that he has created. The patriarch Job had appreciation like that of David, for he spoke of God as "the One doing great things unsearchable, wonderful things without number." (Job 5:9; 9:10; 26:14) And the apostle Paul, after discussing God's grand purposes, felt impelled to exclaim: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!"—Rom. 11:33, 34.

10 *"Generation after generation will commend your works, and about your mighty acts they will tell." (Ps. 145:4)*

9. What can be said about fully comprehending Jehovah's works?
10. How has one "generation" told another "generation" about God's mighty works?

Yes, generations have come and gone, and from among them some have told of Jehovah's mightiness. But may it not also be said that the anointed remnant constitute one "generation" that has commended Jehovah's works to another "generation," the "great crowd" of "other sheep," so that these, in turn, can tell still others about Jehovah's mighty acts? Surely! By carefully considering God's Word we, whether of the spiritual "generation" or of the earthly, have come to know these great works and mighty acts of Jehovah. What a privilege it is to tell others about these things! (See David's example in speaking of Jehovah's mighty acts in Psalm 68.)

11 *"The glorious splendor of your dignity and the matters of your wonderful works I will make my concern." (Ps. 145:5)*

If we are to praise our Creator correctly, we must be thinking of and be concerned in our hearts with his glorious person and his wonderful works. (Matt. 12:34) How do you show concern for these? Do you take time personally to study about the things God has told in his Word? As you do so, do you meditate and let the meaning sink down deep inside to make a lasting impression? How can we speak well of or bless Jehovah God unless we have a deep conviction ourselves and really have love for Jehovah? Appreciating the splendor and dignity of Jehovah helps us to speak with enthusiasm, determination and positiveness about the great King.

12 *"And they will talk about the strength of your own fear-inspiring things; and as for your greatness, I will declare it." (Ps. 145:6)*

Ah, yes, there is much more for us to tell. Through the pages of the Scriptures many fear-inspiring things are revealed showing the power of Jehovah demonstrated on behalf of his faithful servants and against those who make themselves enemies of God. Many of those mighty acts in the past serve as prophetic pictures and are instruction that this generation of mankind must have. Yes, "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) Talking about those things publicly is a service and an act of love for others. It serves to warn them concerning Jehovah's purposes for the days ahead. Those who tell it benefit themselves also in the manner of the watchman described at Ezekiel 3:17-19. The approaching "great tribulation" will further demonstrate the greatness of Jehovah in carrying out his stated purpose. So let us declare it as long as Jehovah keeps the way open in this system of things. We may copy the manner of Jesus Christ in delivering God's warning of judgment.—Matt. 10:28-30; Luke 19:41-44.

13 *"With the mention of the abundance of your goodness they will bubble over, and because of your righteousness they will cry out joyfully." (Ps. 145:7)*

We must tell the world not only of Jehovah's mighty power, but also of his goodness and righteousness. Throughout history Jehovah God has shown goodness to his servants. Whenever they were serving him in faithfulness they received blessings in great abundance. Down to this very time the goodness of Jehovah toward those loving him has been outstanding, moving them to become like a large spring that continually bubbles with appreciative expressions. Such expressions of praise are bound to attract many others to experience

11. How do we show concern for Jehovah's dignity and his works?
12. Why is it good to think and talk about Jehovah's fear-inspiring things?

13, 14. (a) Why should mention be made of Jehovah's goodness? (b) What reason do we have to cry out joyfully?

the abundant goodness of Jehovah. Repetition of thoughts serves to retain them in the memory. This is a real blessing, helping us never to lose appreciation of the way Jehovah has dealt with his people. It truly is profitable to rehearse publicly the goodness of Jehovah toward us.

[14] Do we not have reason to cry out joyfully now? Through Adam we all came to be sinners and were condemned to die. (Rom. 5:12) But in connection with His righteousness and justice, Jehovah showed great love in providing the way out of mankind's difficulty. This was by means of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Through Jehovah's written Word we have come to know of His righteous ways and dealings with his earthly children. It is a pleasure to see these things and truly a cause for crying out joyfully concerning Jehovah. We have good reason to follow the example of King David, who cried out: "As for me, in your loving-kindness I have trusted; let my heart be joyful in your salvation. I will sing to Jehovah, for he has dealt rewardingly with me."—Ps. 13:5, 6.

[15] *"Jehovah is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and great in loving-kindness. Jehovah is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works." (Ps. 145:8, 9)*

From early in human history the marvelous qualities of Jehovah were demonstrated toward the human family as he carried forward his purpose to save some of mankind. Jehovah's way was demonstrated at the time of the Flood. (1 Pet. 3:20) David certainly was a recipient of Jehovah's mercies and had every reason to praise Jehovah. How well Jesus reminds us of Jehovah's love as seen by his words recorded at John 3:16, 17! Appreciation of it should cause us to speak out in praise of Jehovah, and also move us to love others. The apostle John reasoned on it in this way: "By this the love of God was made manifest in our case, because God sent forth his only-begotten Son into the world that we might gain life through him. The love is in this respect, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another." —1 John 4:9-11.

[16] As we see how this present generation of mankind is acting toward Jehovah and read of men's wickedness and violence down through the centuries, we can indeed say that Jehovah is slow to anger. How grateful we should be that we have been able to come to this time when Jehovah's patience is still being exercised! Appreciation of Peter's words at 2 Peter 3:9 and 15 should move us to think well of Jehovah's great mercy and loving-kindness: "Jehovah . . . is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance. Furthermore, consider the patience of our Lord as salvation."

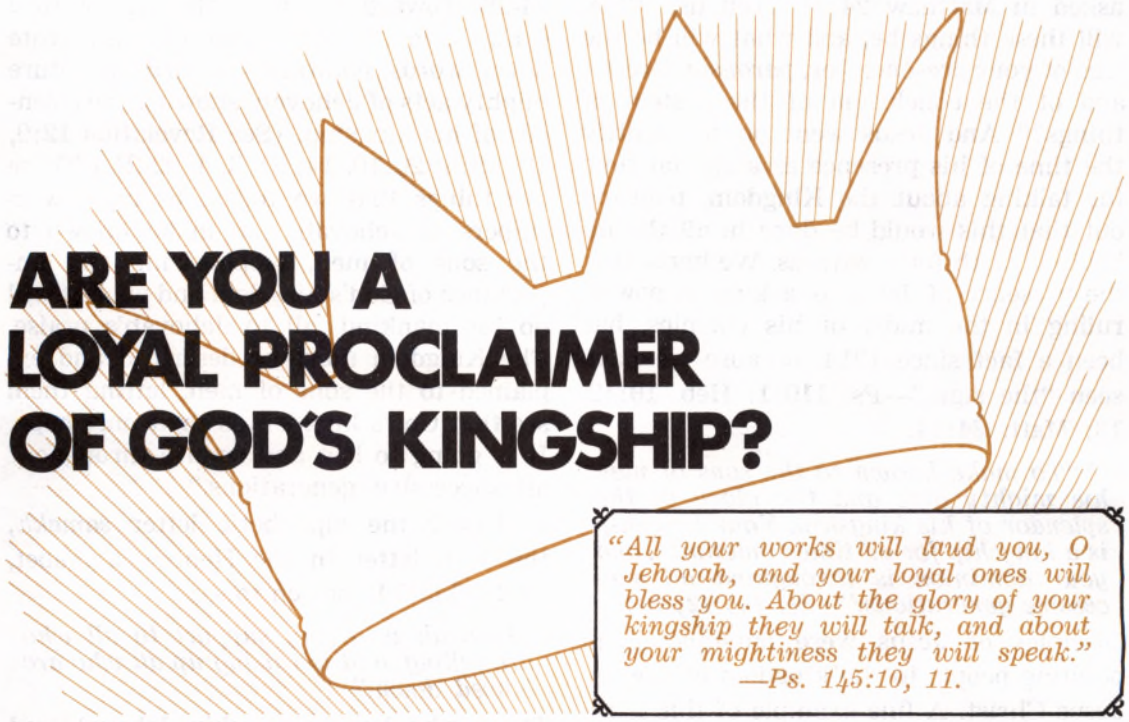
[17] We know the system of things under Satan is doomed to destruction, and so we want to urge all persons to view seriously God's patience and take the steps necessary toward salvation before it is too late. (Zeph. 2:3; Rev. 18:4) How happy we are that we have taken those lifesaving steps! And yet as fleshly descendants of Adam we are subject to the frailties of the flesh, and we make mistakes, even as David and others did. Because this is so, Jesus taught us to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one."—Matt. 6:12, 13.

[18] The provision Jehovah has made

15. What examples do we have of Jehovah's mercy, patience and love?

16-18. (a) What course are all urged to take while time permits? (b) What does Jehovah's mercy mean for us? (c) What appreciative sentiments of Paul do we do well to echo?

through Jesus Christ means so much to all of us. May we always appreciate Jehovah's loving-kindnesses and mercies and all he has done for us. The apostle Paul had such appreciation, for he said: "I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who imparted power to me, because he considered me faithful by assigning me to a ministry. . . . Faithful and deserving of full acceptance is the saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these I am foremost. Nevertheless, the reason why I was shown mercy was that by means of me as the foremost case Christ Jesus might demonstrate all his long-suffering for a sample of those who are going to rest their faith on him for everlasting life. Now to the King of eternity, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Tim. 1:12, 15-17) Our gratitude should move us to praise Jehovah all the more, as we continually speak of his kingship.



ARE YOU A LOYAL PROCLAIMER OF GOD'S KINGSHIP?

"All your works will laud you, O Jehovah, and your loyal ones will bless you. About the glory of your kingship they will talk, and about your mightiness they will speak."
—Ps. 145:10, 11.

SINCE the time of Abel Jehovah God has always had some loyal servants on earth to praise him. The outstanding loyal one of Jehovah, his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, took the lead in telling of Jehovah's mightiness and kingdom that will be for the benefit of all mankind. Jesus came as the Sent One, the foretold descendant of Jesse and David, the designated King, and he made God's kingdom the foremost doctrine of his teaching. (Isa. 11:1, 10; Matt. 21:1-17) He brought the good news of the Kingdom. Because he was present among the people, he was able to tell them of the nearness of the Kingdom as represented in him, the King-

1. To what extent did Jesus proclaim God's kingdom?

designate, and to teach his followers to seek first the Kingdom. (Luke 17:20, 21) When teaching his disciples how to pray, he emphasized the coming of the Kingdom and that it would mean the sanctifying of God's name, with God's will taking place on earth as it is in heaven.—Matt. 4:23; 6:9, 10, 33.

[2] Jesus invited others to join with him in talking about the good news of the Kingdom that was to come. (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-12) Jesus' followers understood that his presence as king would be in the future, as we can see by the question they asked in Matthew 24:3: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence [or, *parousia,* Greek] and of the conclusion of the system of things?" And Jesus went on to identify the time of his presence as a special time for talking about the Kingdom, pointing out that this would be done in all the inhabited earth for a witness. We know that the presence of Jesus as a king in power, ruling in the midst of his enemies, has been a fact since 1914, because we have seen "the sign."—Ps. 110:1; Heb. 10:12, 13; Matt. 24:14.

[3] *"To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts and the glory of the splendor of his kingship. Your kingship is a kingship for all times indefinite, and your dominion is throughout all successive generations." (Ps. 145:12, 13)*

Disciples of Jesus were outstanding in pointing people to the kingdom of God by Jesus Christ. A fine example of this is recorded at Acts 28:23, 30, 31, which tells of Paul's preaching the Kingdom while a prisoner in Rome. He previously had written to the Corinthians that Christians are "ambassadors substituting for Christ" and that they are helping people to "become reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20) As an ambassador Paul was expected to speak out in favor of the Kingdom and the King that he represented, and he did so. Have you reached out for such royal service? If so, then do you continue to speak out on behalf of the King and the Kingdom?

[4] As Paul explained Kingdom teachings he would show the relationship of Jesus Christ to Jehovah God in the Kingdom arrangement and that Jehovah is the great Sovereign of the universe. "The head of the Christ is God." (1 Cor. 11:3) Paul also told of what takes place at the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ. (1 Cor. 15: 24-28) Toward the end of the first century C.E., the loyal apostle John likewise wrote down words pointing forward to future mighty acts of Jehovah, showing the splendor of his kingship. (See Revelation 12:9, 10; 19:6; 20:10, 14; 21:3, 4, 22-24.) These are things that we today, as loyal worshipers of Jehovah, can make known to the sons of men, emphasizing the importance of God's kingdom and what it will do for mankind, all to Jehovah's praise. The Kingdom must be described and explained to the sons of men, letting them see that God's kingdom is their only hope. It is going to last and endure throughout all successive generations.*

[5] Under the alphabetic letter *samekh,* the 15th letter in the Hebrew alphabet, Psalm 145:14 goes on to say:

"Jehovah is giving support to all who are falling, and is raising up all who are bowed down."

Those who loyally worship Jehovah and

2. How did he move others to become involved in the issue of Jehovah's kingship?
3. How did Paul share in proclaiming God's kingship?

* Since Psalm 145 is an alphabetic psalm, each successive verse beginning with the successive letter in the Hebrew alphabet, the *New World Translation,* 1971 edition, has this footnote: "A verse beginning with the Hebrew letter *nun* is missing after the *mem* verse. In some Hebrew manuscripts the *nun* verse reads: 'Jehovah is faithful in all his words, and lovingly kind in all his works.' This is confirmed by *LXX*VgSy."

4. What things did Paul and John say and write that we can now make known as loyal worshipers of Jehovah God?
5. (a) What do Jehovah's servants often have to face? (b) In spite of opposition during World War I what have Jehovah's people been able to do since then?

proclaim his kingship often meet up with opposition and difficulties because of their loyalty to Jehovah. (Gen. 3:15) But evidence from the past shows how Jehovah, true to his promises, gave support and help to those who were his worshipers and raised them up when they were under oppression. (Gen. chap. 15; see also many examples in the book of Judges.) In this 20th century down to the end of 1980 we have seen how Jehovah delivered the anointed remnant and the "other sheep" from Babylonish oppression. There was great pressure upon the anointed remnant during World War I. But Jehovah raised them up by his spirit and word of truth. Shortly thereafter, at their 1922 convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, they loyally determined to *advertise* the King and Kingdom. Jehovah has been guiding them since then, so that his name and kingdom have become known worldwide.

6 *"To you the eyes of all look hopefully, and you are giving them their food in its season." (Ps. 145:15)*

In particular do the loyal worshipers of Jehovah need their spiritual food these days. They are "conscious of their spiritual need." (Matt. 5:3) Hopefully they have looked to Jehovah's arrangement for providing rich spiritual sustenance. (Matt. 24:45-47) The hopes of God's servants in this regard are indeed being abundantly satisfied and they are confident that Jehovah will continue to provide the spiritual food they need so regularly, "in its season."

7 In line with that, Psalm 145:16 goes on to say:

"You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing."

Jehovah God is the one person in all the universe who is without limit as a Provider. He is the heavenly Father and Life-Giver. His generosity and loving-kindness are seen in all his creative works and in the good provisions he has made for man and all other creatures on earth. Having endowed us with the need to worship, Jehovah generously has revealed himself and his purposes to mankind, and those who dedicate themselves to Jehovah God, and who share in his worship and service, have experienced Jehovah's openhanded generosity more and more. All such experiences are very reassuring and we may have confidence that Jehovah will continue to give his spirit to his servants and never stop satisfying them with reminders, guidance and spiritual help, even in these difficult last days.—Ps. 119:129.

8 Because we are loyal to Jehovah he is loyal to us. Hence,

"Jehovah is righteous in all his ways and loyal in all his works." (Ps. 145:17)

Having become dedicated servants of Jehovah and loyal supporters of his kingship, we can always have confidence in God. He deals justly and graciously with his servants. His wonderful qualities do not change. So once we take up the worship and service of Jehovah we are assured he will never let us down. He truly is "loyal in all his works." And so here we have another good reason to be telling others about Jehovah and his marvelous qualities and inviting them to join us in a dedicated life of praising Jehovah loyally.—Compare Psalm 107.

9 Accordingly, we can proclaim the following words to his praise:

"Jehovah is near to all those calling upon him, to all those who call upon him in trueness." (Ps. 145:18)

Calling upon Jehovah is important. It must be done in true faith. (Rom. 10:10-15) The psalmist stresses how near Jehovah comes to those who call upon him in

6. What provision of food does Jehovah make for his people?
7. How is Jehovah the Provider, especially in connection with the matter of worship?
8. How does Jehovah manifest loyalty?
9. What part does faith play in calling on Jehovah, and how is this calling on Jehovah to be done?

the right way, which includes exercising faith. (Heb. 11:6) And this calling on Jehovah is not something secret, but it is really a public declaration before men that we have faith in Jehovah and rely upon him. Paul stresses the need of declaring the "good news" of good things and preaching for the benefit of others. The shout of praise to Jehovah by those calling upon him grows as increasing numbers of faithful preachers of the "good news" tell still others about Jehovah. By acquainting them with Jehovah and his glory and greatness, as well as his kingship, the praisers build up faith on the part of these people so they too can join in calling upon the name of Jehovah and draw near to him. The way of salvation is open for all who wish to reach for it, there being no distinction on account of race, color or nationality, and there is no disappointment for those who put faith in Jehovah and call on him in trueness. How wonderful of Jehovah to allow us to have a relationship with, and a nearness to him! Especially is this so in these difficult last days when it becomes clearer than ever that it is necessary to rely completely upon Jehovah, the God of salvation.

[10] *"The desire of those fearing him he will perform, and their cry for help he will hear, and he will save them." (Ps. 145:19)*

Those truly fearing Jehovah dedicate themselves to him and their desire is to do his will. There is every reason for us to trust in Jehovah as the source of our help and salvation, as we are trying to carry out his will. "And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that, no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us. Further, if we know he hears us respecting whatever we are asking, we know we are to have the things asked since we have asked them of him." (1 John 5: 14, 15) We are aware that, in this day, it is Jehovah's will for us to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom and carry forward his pure worship. Our desire should be to let people know the great issue involving Jehovah's sovereignty in the universe, even though there is considerable opposition to our doing so. The opportunity is thus open for people of all kinds to accept Jehovah's message and put faith in him, learning of his patience with the human family and his desire to see mankind come to repentance and gain salvation.

[11] So it is our keen desire to see this Kingdom work carried out. We do not do the work alone. We are servants of Jehovah and are working together with him. In these difficult "last days" we must call on him for help, and when we come down to the climax of the issue and "Gog of the land of Magog" makes his attack, as foretold in Ezekiel 38 and 39, we will have to rely upon Jehovah and call upon him in order to be protected and saved. King David was saved in outstanding ways when the enemies were pursuing him. Christ Jesus had to give his life in connection with Jehovah's purpose, but he experienced a resurrection by Jehovah. So Jehovah is able to overcome any pressures or opposition the enemies of the truth might bring, even to the point of answering cries for help on the part of his servants who may go into death and who will need to be saved through the resurrection.

[12] So, it remains true, that

"Jehovah is guarding all those loving him, but all the wicked ones he will annihilate." (Ps. 145:20)

Since we have come to the climax of wickedness and the "great tribulation" is just ahead, it is a blessing to have such re-

10. Why will Jehovah perform the desire of those fearing him?

11. How does Jehovah answer cries for help from his servants?

12. Why do we not need to be fearful when the wicked are annihilated?

Loyal ones talk about the glory of Jehovah's kingship

assuring words that Jehovah is guarding all those loving him. (Matt. 24:21) The time has come for the annihilation of the wicked ones, and they must be warned. But Jehovah's servants as a group are destined to pass through the "great tribulation" brought upon the wicked, and in that way see the salvation of Jehovah toward them. Jehovah truly loves those who are loyal to him and will not forget them in the time of his great anger against the wicked. Numerous are the examples in the Scriptures of Jehovah's mighty acts in preserving and delivering his people at the very times that he brought punishments against the wicked ones. Truly, we are eagerly awaiting the time when the annihilation of the wicked will occur and those who oppose Jehovah's kingship will be removed from the scene.

[13] All through this period of the "last days" Jehovah's servants have been calling upon him for help and have shown their love for him. Jehovah has preserved and guarded his servants through many difficulties, especially during the period of World War II when many bans came on the work in different parts of the world and there were thousands in concentration camps and prisons. Mob violence occurred in many parts of the earth as well. But the proclamation of the Kingdom good news went forward, and Jehovah was kind to his servants, adding increase, giving comfort by multiplying their numbers throughout the world. It is Jehovah's purpose that the Kingdom rule by Christ Jesus extend over all the earth. There will be subjects of that kingdom living on the earth as the "great crowd" of "other sheep" pass through the tribulation, thereafter to be joined by the many coming forth from the graves in the resurrection. Thus the annihilation of the wicked ones will not mean disaster for Jehovah's servants. Rather, Jehovah will respond to the love shown to him by his servants and will guard them and show his love, mercy and kindness to them. And in his love, he has in store for his "other sheep" a wonderful earthly paradise where they may enjoy everlasting life. (Luke 23:43) The settling of the great issue over Jehovah's universal kingship means only blessings for lovers of Jehovah and will provide an opportunity to appreciate Jehovah more and more as the years go by. How marvelous it will be to live in the time of the fulfillment of the last verse of Psalm 150 when "every breathing thing" will praise Jehovah and all the wicked will be gone!—Vs. 6.

[14] Look back if you will and see the many blessings Jehovah has given us. See how he has satisfied us with rich spiritual food. Appreciate even more the wonderful privilege he has given us to be servants of his now and all the wonderful prospects for the future. Since there is a prospect of being Armageddon survivors, rejoice in looking ahead to the time of the resurrection and the wonderful work of then informing and educating those who come out of the graves. Many of them will have to learn of the Great King Jehovah for the first time. They will have to know to whom they are indebted for being alive once more. Who is going to tell them? Would not each of us rejoice to be able to do so? Yes, we do look forward to praising Jehovah forever.

[15] But what of the immediate present? What are you doing about the great issue of Jehovah's kingship? Are you among the loyal ones who trust Jehovah and talk about the glory of his kingship from day to day? May each one of us be a loyal supporter of Jehovah's kingship by means of his enthroned Son, Jesus Christ, the Greater David, and may we be as wholehearted in our personal determination to praise Jehovah publicly as was King David, who said:

"The praise of Jehovah my mouth will speak; and let all flesh bless his holy name to time indefinite, even forever." —*Ps. 145:21.*

13. (a) How has Jehovah guarded his modern-day servants? (b) What does Jehovah have in store for those loving him?

14. Of what blessings from Jehovah can we speak?

15. What privileges with regard to God's kingship are ours?

In Coming Issues

- **"Engaging in the Holy Work of the Good News"**
- **Why Will a Loving God Exact Vengeance?**
- **How to Stop Smoking**

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

Cause for Church Disunity

● Two theologians of Canada's largest Protestant body, the United Church, warn that their denomination may be on the verge of falling apart. Why? Serious disagreements. These became evident recently at sessions of the General Conference of the religion at Halifax. Newspapers reported differences over abortion, political activism and other issues. One report called for ordination of some homosexuals and acceptance of certain situations where premarital sex and infidelity in marriage occur. Some clergymen spoke out against such practices as being unscriptural. But why the disunity? The clue is given in what one newspaper reported: "Delegates said they found themselves in a dilemma trying to reconcile the absolute demands of the Gospel with the reality of the human condition."

The real problem here is whether religious leaders accept the Bible, "not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God." (1 Thess. 2:13) That done, the decisions are not hard ones. Writing under divine inspiration, the apostle Paul pioneered the view of the early Christians when he warned: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, . . . will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you **were**." They changed when they became Christians. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) But some men would change Christianity rather than call for a change by wrongdoers. No wonder they suffer disunity and the threat of breakup!

Fear and Health

● Speaking at an international convention of physicians in Davos, Switzerland, Professor Hans Schäfer of the University of Heidelberg said that fear is a serious risk factor in maintaining health. The German newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" commented: "Fear exerts a one-sided strain on the psyche that causes sickness: fear of the future, fear of losing face, fear of being degraded, fear of one's superiors and sometimes even fear of one's marriage mate." Fear works through the hormones of the adrenal gland to harm the health. "If fear is one of the more important risk factors, then confidence is the best factor in maintaining good health," said Professor Schäfer. "Health education must be carried on in harmony with moral demands," which is impossible "without reviving old religious values."

Such "old religious values" can be found in the Bible; they stem from man's Creator and replace fear with peace of mind. "Do not be anxious over anything," is the divine counsel, "but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:6, 7.

Biblio-therapy

● "A good book is good medicine" was a recent headline for the syndicated medical column "The Doctor Game." The Canadian doctor who wrote the article said: "The use of books and other reading material to treat illness" is what is called "bibliotherapy." Is it effective? The column tells of several people who have definitely been aided more by good reading than by many pills. To one of his own patients, the doctor recommended:

"You've been complaining of pain, fatigue and tension for the last 10 years. But you're still breathing. Different doctors have X-rayed you from head to toe without finding anything wrong. You've had every laboratory test in the books. You have enough drugs in the house to open a pharmacy. Why don't you toss them all out, get a library card and read some good books?"

That would be especially beneficial if the world's best seller, the Bible, was at the top of the list of books to be read. It would also give a sound hope for the future. Commenting on the state of affairs in medicine today, the doctor concluded: "Regrettably, 20th century medicine has given too many people a false impression of what constitutes good health. It has produced a nation of hypochondriacs."

OUR FIVE DECADES OF INTEGRITY-KEEPING

As told by Ramón Serrano

"RAMÓN, did you know that the Bible says we do not have an immortal soul, and that hellfire does not exist?"

That startling statement by an illiterate domestic helper, Francisca Arbeca, stopped me in my tracks. It was a turning point in the life of my younger brother, Francisco (Paco), and in mine. I was 15 at the time, in 1932.

Our mother, a pious woman, used to send us to a nearby Baptist school here in Barcelona, Spain. There, Señor Rosendo, the teacher and pastor, instilled in us the classic Protestant teachings of the immortality of the soul and hellfire torment. Our domestic helper, Francisca, on the other hand, was associating with the local group of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Soon my mother started to take us to the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, held in a private home. At one of these, I was deeply impressed by the explanation that Christ "through his death . . . [will] bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil." (Heb. 2:14) If the Devil is going to be brought to nothing, I reasoned, then how can hellfire torment be eternal? When I later raised this question with Señor Rosendo, he became angry because he had no answer.

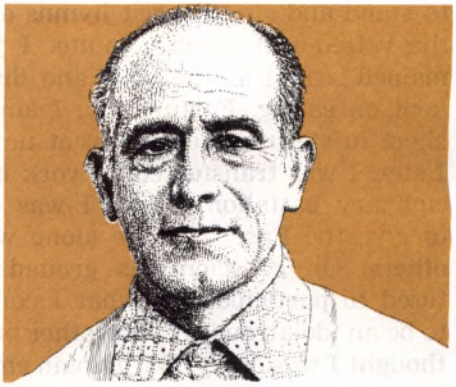
EARLY PREACHING

Convinced that we had Bible truths that others could benefit from knowing, Paco and I, with the help of another Witness, started preaching the "good news of the kingdom" from house to house. (Matt. 24:14) I was only 17 and Paco just 13. While the older brother covered the adjoining city of Badalona, we concentrated our efforts in Barcelona, and in Tarrasa, a city some 31 kilometers (19 mi.) distant. That represented a territory of some 750,000 inhabitants between the two of us! However, we did not feel abashed. We knew it was the Lord's work and we got on with it.

About that same time we started to use the phonograph with records of Brother Rutherford's Bible talks translated into Spanish. Sometimes the motor would run down before the recording ended. I can still remember Paco feverishly winding up the machine, half way through the groaning record, to keep it going. How things have changed in this electronic age!

TESTS OF INTEGRITY DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Beginning in 1930, the political situation in Spain became very unsettled. The king fled into exile in 1931 and the country was declared a republic. But the population was divided over the issue and political hatred smoldered beneath the sur-



Francisco (left), and Ramón Serrano

face. In July 1936, the terrible civil war broke out and, being in Catalonia, we found ourselves in the republican, anticlerical side of the country. In spite of the hostilities, though, we kept up our house-to-house preaching activity.

One day, while witnessing in Horta, on the outskirts of Barcelona, we were picked up by a Communist militiaman and taken to the local headquarters for interrogation. At that time I was 18 years of age and my brother 14. We were harangued by a local official, who confiscated our literature and warned us not to waste our time preaching. I was told I should be at the front fighting with the comrades. This was our first real taste of the effects of the civil war. Being young, we were shaken by this experience, but we knew that we had to go on preaching the "good news."

At that time—in the year 1936—we did not have as clear a view of Christian neutrality as we do today. (John 15:19) This subject was not clarified in the Spanish *Watchtower* until March 1940. All I knew was that as a Christian I could not kill.—Ex. 20:13.

In 1937, at 19 years of age, I was called for military service with the republican army. At first, to avoid participation in this fratricidal conflict, I went into hiding. After some eight months I was traced and tried by the Espionage and High Treason Court. Such was the wartime atmosphere that my parents were convinced I was going to be executed. As it was, I was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment. After some months in prison, however, I was released and sent to the front in the province of Lerida. Things were building up there for a big battle.

My first assignment was in an office, which meant that I did not have to use a weapon. That situation soon changed when our company was ordered to the battle-front, near a little town called Serós, on the river Segre. Now, like the rest of the troops, I found myself under fire. On one occasion while sheltering from the bullets in a shallow depression in the ground, there was, at each side of me, a sergeant shouting at me to grab a rifle and start shooting. I ignored the order. A few minutes later they were both dead where they lay.

Finally, our company retreated and, after some three weeks on the move, I was captured by Italian troops of the Littorio Brigade, who were fighting with Franco's national army. As a prisoner I had some respite from the pressure to participate in the war. It was now the beginning of 1939 and I was assigned to a concentration camp in Deusto, Vizcaya, in the north of Spain. But my problems did not end there. At mealtimes we all had

to stand and sing Fascist hymns and give the raised-arm Fascist salute. I just remained seated at the back and discreetly kept on eating. Fortunately, I am rather short in stature and so I went unnoticed. Later, I was transferred to work in a disciplinary battalion. There I was ordered to give the Fascist salute along with the others. On conscientious grounds, I refused to participate in what I considered to be an idolatrous act. The other prisoners thought I was crazy. With Spain embroiled in a civil war, my attitude was tantamount to suicide.

I was called out in front of everybody and ordered to give the Fascist salute. I refused. An officer struck me and tried to raise my arm forcibly, but he failed. A heavy sack of sand was then tied to my back and I was made to run in circles while my legs were whipped with a belt. Finally, I fainted and collapsed and was taken away to solitary confinement. To strengthen my spirits, I began to scrawl Bible texts on the cell wall. Two officers came in and tried to persuade me to salute. My adamant refusal to do such a "simple" thing mystified them, especially since I was due to be released shortly. Eventually, I was taken before a group of officers and army doctors, who decided to send me off to the hospital to have my sanity checked. A few weeks later I was set free and, with the end of the war, was sent home, in April 1939. Those harrowing experiences were now past, and to the best of my ability I had kept my integrity.

POSTWAR DIFFICULTIES

Spain's civil war ended on April 1, 1939, but the open wounds it had caused continued to fester with hatred for years thereafter. Fear of reprisals, vengeance and anonymous denouncement reigned everywhere. An atmosphere of dread prevailed, accentuated by the ravages of war and the shortage of food.

In this setting I returned to Barcelona to find that the meetings of Jehovah's people had 'folded up' and their preaching work had ceased. Without delay, Paco and I collaborated with others in getting the meetings reestablished at Paquita Arbeca's home. (Heb. 10:24, 25) We held these on Sundays, basing our studies on the Bible, old copies of *The Watchtower* and books such as *Government, Deliverance* and *Riches*. Our preaching activity was confined to informal contacts.

Due to the outbreak of warfare in 1936, our link had been broken with the Watch Tower Society in Brooklyn, New York. Although the war had ended, we could not communicate with the Society. Why not? Because there was censorship of mail and people were obligated to write patriotic slogans on the envelopes. So it seemed best for us to avoid writing letters.

In 1946 the Spanish press included a news dispatch about the Glad Nations Theocratic Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses held in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. That rekindled our hopes. By then the slogans on mail were no longer required. Anxiously, we wrote to the Society to ask for more information. What joy when, some weeks later, we received a letter and a package of magazines! At long last, fresh Bible truth was trickling into our parched field.

MARRIAGE IN A CATHOLIC DICTATORSHIP

The year 1946 was a happy one for Paco and me for another reason. I was nearly 29 years of age and Paco was 25 and we were both courting Catalan girls, Carmen and María, who were also studying the Bible and attending the meetings. My brother and I were very conscious of the need to marry "only in the Lord," and so we had exercised patience. (1 Cor. 7:39) All four of us wanted to get married on the same day. There was just one problem. The only marriage ceremony really available in those days was the Catholic one.

The question was, how could we avoid the Catholic rite? We eventually found a priest who, for a consideration, was willing to allow a simple ceremony in his church, without religious trappings. Just to cover himself, on the day of the wedding he stayed away and left the matter in the hands of the sacristan. Thus, in October 1946, I married María Royo and Paco married Carmen Parera.

GILEAD MISSIONARY SHOWS US HOW TO PREACH

In December 1947, John Cooke, who had received missionary training at Gilead School, arrived in Barcelona. Truthfully, before his arrival, our meetings were more like acrimonious debates. But he showed us how a Christian gathering should be conducted, and those who did not appreciate it soon left.—1 Cor. 14:33.

Then came the real challenge. Brother Cooke told us we had to start preaching from house to house if Spain was ever to get covered with the "good news." "You must be out of your mind, Brother Cooke!" we told him. "You cannot preach that way here in Franco's Spain. Maybe in London or New York, but not here!" When he saw that we were unwilling to give way, what did he do? He went out on his own and showed us that it could be done. That shamed us into action. If he, a foreigner, with his heavy accent, was willing to witness to our people, so were we. He taught us how to preach discreetly, not visiting all the apartments in a building but, rather, zigzagging around the territory so that we would not be caught by the police.

Many people all over Barcelona responded to our message, and soon our group became a congregation. As time went by, we were able to form several congregations in the city. With such good expansion, Paco and I decided that we could now 'spread our wings' and move out into the nearby cities of Hospitalet and Prat de Llobregat and other coastal towns, to give the witnessing work more impetus there. As we look back now, it is really gratifying to see that there are 52 large congregations in the city of Barcelona, 9 in Hospitalet and several more in towns strung along the coast, where we have been able to serve as elders. Of course, we do not take the credit for this increase but are happy to have had a part in it. —1 Cor. 3:5-9.

FAMILY BLESSINGS

June 10, 1951, was a "historic" date for our family. That day, in a small reservoir in Brother Brunet's garden, five of us were baptized—Carmen, María, Paco and myself, as well as our mother. Circumstances had made us wait many years for that joyful occasion.

During the difficult years of the 1950's, María and I had three outstanding blessings—the birth of our three children, David, Francisco (Paquito) and Isabel. This brought upon us the enormous responsibility of training them in the 'way they should go,' knowing that, in all probability, when older, they would not turn away from it.—Prov. 22:6.

POLICE HARASSMENT

In 1955, and coinciding with a visit by Brother F. W. Franz, arrangements were made to hold a secret assembly in the woods on the Tibidabo Mountain, overlooking Barcelona. Our assemblies were usually held picnic-style, in case the police should come upon us. In this case, the "picnic" became enlarged with an attendance of over 500. Another inconvenient factor was that the police had raided a brother's home the week before and had confiscated a copy of the *Informant* supplement that had announced the arrangements for this assembly. María and I were present at the "picnic" with our two small sons, David and Paquito.

The program got under way and everything seemed normal until we suddenly saw four men running up the hill, one holding a pistol. They ordered us not to move. Yes, you are right, it was the police in plain clothes. Really thinking they had pulled off a coup, they herded all of us—men, women and children—into waiting trucks and took us to police headquarters for identification and interrogation. Imagine the disgust of some of them when they realized they had rounded up inoffensive families that had met together to study the Bible, rather than a clandestine political group. Although nothing came of it all, this experience served to strengthen our integrity and helped us to appreciate Jehovah's protection.—Ps. 34:7.

TRAGEDY STRIKES

By 1963 our children, David, Paquito and Isabel, were 13, 11 and 9 years old respectively and progressing well in the truth. It was a joy to us to see them participating in the field service and enjoying with us the Bible study meetings we attended in private homes.

Then one day in March of that year Paquito came home from school complaining of severe pains in the head. Within three hours he had died of meningitis.

We were so deeply affected by this terrible loss that I do not know how we managed to make arrangements for the funeral, for even in this we had to contend with the Catholic Church. Obviously, we wanted a civil funeral, and for that we had to obtain clearance from the local parish priest. With a document proving we were Jehovah's Witnesses that hurdle was overcome.

More than a thousand brothers, friends and business associates turned up at the house. Imagine the stir that this caused in the neighborhood. The traffic was blocked and people on the street were asking who was the important person that had died. That very important person was our dear son, Paquito. Only the knowledge of the resurrection hope sustained us through that most difficult period. (John 5:28, 29; 11:23-25) As loving parents, María and I yearn for that day when we shall see our boy again and be able to continue his education, but in the new system of things that God has promised for this earth.—2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 25:8, 9.

Two weeks after the funeral, I was called to police headquarters and interrogated for two hours. Their agents had been spying on the funeral crowd and it was evident that the massive attendance of Witnesses provoked their reaction. Their questions were an attempt to get information about brothers directing the work in Spain at that time. I was aware of their tactics and determined not to say anything that could implicate anyone else. Straightforwardly, I told them that I was not a Judas. Although they threatened me with a heavy fine, they had no proved accusation against me, and their bluff failed.

LONG-AWAITED FREEDOM

In 1967 the Spanish government approved the Religious Liberty Law, which guaranteed greater freedom to the non-Catholic religions. We asked ourselves whether the Witnesses would benefit from this law and be given legal recognition. That our stand on preaching from house to house and on Christian neutrality was an obstacle for the political and ecclesiastical authorities seemed evident when our inscription in the official register of non-Catholic religions was delayed until July 1970.

Paco and I had waited for more than 30 long years for that day. We could now practice our religion under law, without fear. Imagine how delighted we were to attend the inauguration of the first Kingdom Hall in Barcelona, in February 1971.

Our hearts swelled with joy that day as we joined our voices in singing Kingdom songs, something that Jehovah's Witnesses had not been able to do in Spain for many years.

INTEGRITY AND ITS MANY BLESSINGS

In looking back over nearly five decades in Jehovah's service, I have to admit that his loving-kindness and blessing have accompanied us as we have tried to walk in the path of integrity. (Ps. 26:1-3) He has blessed María and me with loyal children who have continued in the pathways of truth. To this day, we are a happy, united family with a strong bond of affection. Our son, David, was sent to prison in 1972 because of his stand as a Christian neutral. It was his first separation from the family and it was a heartrending experience for all of us. But we understood the reason and it strengthened us to see him keep his Christian integrity during three years of imprisonment. When he was released in 1976, he had the further privilege of serving in Bethel, the Watch Tower Society's facilities here in Barcelona. He later married a dedicated Christian woman who also served there with him for a while. Recently, we had the happy blessing of becoming the grandparents of their first child, Jonathan.

In 1976 our daughter, Isabel, started witnessing as a pioneer (a full-time Kingdom proclaimer). Now she is accompanying her husband in the circuit work, visiting congregations here in Catalonia.

Jehovah has sustained us through many difficult trials over the years. And truthfully, we are very ordinary people, with the frailties common to all mankind. Nevertheless, our experiences as a family have taught us patiently to lean on Jehovah and wait for the outworking of his will. We are determined to continue carrying out David's resolution expressed at Psalm 26: 11, 12: "As for me, in my integrity I shall walk. O redeem me and show me favor. My own foot will certainly stand on a level place; among the congregated throngs I shall bless Jehovah."

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Have you given careful attention to points developed in recent issues of "The Watchtower"? If so, you no doubt remember the following:

● Why does the fact that the "great crowd" are shown serving God in the "na·os'," or "sanctuary," not mean that theirs is a heavenly destiny?

The Greek word "na·os'" may refer not only to the inner "sanctuary" of the temple, but also in a broader sense to the entire temple area or arrangement. (Isa. 66:6, Greek "Septuagint"; Matt. 27:5, 39, 40; Mark 15:29, 30; John 2:19-21) It is here in the earthly courtyard of God's spiritual temple that the unnumbered "great crowd" are observed to be performing their "sacred service." The "great crowd" as a group survive the "great tribulation," and the promise fulfilled toward them even now with regard to their spiritual relation with Jehovah is: "God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—Rev. 7:9-17.—8/15, pp. 14-20.

● Does "sacred service" include everyday activities of life, such as caring for our families, maintaining good morals and the like?

No. "Sacred service" applies to that which directly involves our worship of God. It includes formal and informal witnessing, sharing in worship at Kingdom Halls, caring for our meeting places, all activity related to providing Bibles and Bible literature, as well as sacrifices that we may make in encouraging and aiding our brothers, spiritually and materially, to keep active in Jehovah's work.—8/15, pp. 30, 31.

● Why are true Christians wise to avoid every form of gambling?

Gambling for material gain, even for small amounts of money, can lead to cultivating greed, covetousness and other undesirable fleshly qualities. It induces laziness and other bad fruitage, that may work against one's gaining Kingdom blessings. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-23) Christians should support themselves by hard work, viewing their material possessions as something devoted to God, and not to be squandered before "the god of Good Luck." (Isa. 65:11, 12) —9/1, p. 29.

● How may single parents cope in today's world?

They may do so by trusting in God and his promises, maintaining a close personal relationship with Jehovah, and keeping busy in worthwhile work. Others in the Christian congregation

can help make their hearts glad by loving and practical assistance.—9/15, pp. 20-26.

● What clear proofs do we have that we have been living in the "last days" since 1914?

Jesus' "sign" given at Matthew 24 and 25 has had convincing fulfillment. The global preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses has accomplished God's purpose in warning the nations and gathering a "great crowd" for survival into God's "new order." As this organized proclaiming of the Kingdom reaches its climax, "then," says Jesus, "the end will come."—10/1, p. 29.

● What prophetic meaning is there to the dropping of the waters of the Euphrates River just prior to the overthrow of Babylon?

Today, "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion, "sits on many waters," meaning the "peoples" who support her. But in modern times there has been a great falling away, in the numbers both of the flock and of the religious clergy and workers, particularly in Christendom. This diminishing support of "Babylon the Great" indicates that Jehovah is about to send forth the Greater Cyrus, Christ Jesus, to execute judgment on the "great harlot." (Rev. 17:1, 4, 15-17)—10/15, pp. 17-23.

QUESTIONS from READERS

● In fulfillment of the first prophecy, at Genesis 3:15, when is the head of the "serpent" bruised by the "seed" of God's woman?

The Jerusalem Bible translation of Genesis 3:15 reads: "I will make you enemies of each other: you and the woman, your offspring and her offspring. It will crush your head and you will strike its heel." Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible* reads: "He shall crush thy head, but thou shalt crush his heel." The crushing of the heel of the "seed" of God's woman resulted in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. In retaliation, the glorified Jesus Christ will crush the symbolical serpent, Satan the Devil.

After the "birth" of God's kingdom at the close of the Gentile Times in 1914, Revelation chapter 12 tells of Michael and his angels battling with the symbolic dragon and his demon angels and banishing them from heaven, adding: "So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him."—Rev. 12:5, 7-9.

Just following the description in Revelation 19:11-21 of the war at Armageddon, in which Jesus leads the heavenly forces to victory over all earthly opposers, John envisions the abyssing of Satan: "And I saw an angel [undoubtedly the archangel Michael] coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended."—Rev. 20:1-3.

Jesus Christ, as the "seed" of God's woman, could surely crush "the original serpent" to the full extent, to his complete extinction, at that time, rather than just abyssing him. But Jehovah, in his wisdom, has determined that perfected mankind should be subjected to temptations from the same challenger of his universal sovereignty, following the 1,000-year reign of Christ. This will remove any possible doubt about the integrity of those who refuse to be misled by the Devil.

There is a final attempt of the earthly opposers, led by Satan, to take over the earth. John describes the result as though it has already taken place, saying: "Fire came down out of heaven and devoured them." And concerning the bruising of the head of "the original serpent," the account says: "And the Devil who was misleading them was hurled into the lake of fire and sulphur." (Rev. 20:9, 10) This means his complete destruction. Thus, in connection with the bruising in the head of God's chief opposer there is not only a thorough ridding of the universe of opposers but also the complete sanctification of His most holy name. This fulfills completely the promise at Romans 16:20 to Christ's joint heirs that "the God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly."—Heb. 2:14, 15.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

January 18: Who Will Praise the King? Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 1, 42.

January 25: Are You a Loyal Proclaimer of God's Kingship? Page 17. Songs to Be Used: 65, 103.

SUBJECT INDEX FOR "THE WATCHTOWER" 1980

Indicating date of issue in which article appears

BIBLE

Archaeology Confirms the Bible, 10/1
Bible—A Book of Hope, 10/1
Bible Treasure in Leningrad, 9/15
Book of Ecclesiastes, 3/1
Book of Proverbs, 2/15
Psalms
(Discussions of various Psalms appear in several issues.)
Science Attests Bible's Accuracy, 10/1
Should You Believe the Bible? 10/1
Sure Help from God's Word, 2/15
Sustaining Power of God's Word, 8/1

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND QUALITIES

Avoiding the Tragedy of Rape, 10/15
By What System Is Your Family Governed? 11/15
Content with What You Have? 3/1
Control Your Spirit—How? 12/15
Could You Be Your Own Enemy? 2/15
Do Not Isolate Yourself, 11/15
Find Entertaining What God Hates? 8/1
Generosity Brings Blessings, 11/15
Have You Tried to Make Amends? 7/1
Impatience Could Cost You Your Life, 3/1
Imputing Wrong Motives, 4/1
Isolation Can Be Hazardous, 11/15
Is Your Giving Good? 8/1
"Let Your Light Shine," 6/1
Life's Anxieties, 7/15
Look Straight Ahead, 6/1
'Nations Sacrifice to Demons,' 4/1
Power of Christ's Generosity, 5/1
Removing the Stain of Sin, 11/1
Respect Jehovah's Arrangement, 11/1
Rewards of Training Children, 12/15
Saving Face, 9/15
Show Love in a Finer Way? 6/1
Sin—Does It Matter Anymore? 11/1
They Need Their Friends, 1/1
True "All Have Sinned"? 11/1
"Two Are Better than One," 3/15
Walking in the Steps of the Master, 1/15
What Gives Them Courage? 8/15
What Gives True Peace of Mind? 11/1
What It Takes to Keep Separate from the World, 6/15
When Not to Be Kind to Yourself, 5/15
Why "Be in Subjection"? 5/15
Why Do What Is Right? 5/1
Why Keep Separate from the World? 6/15
You Can Control Your Temper, 6/15
You "Give Away a Fault"? 3/15

GOD'S WORD IS ALIVE

(Bible-based stories appearing in many issues.)

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

(This section appears in each issue.)

JEHOVAH GOD

Divine Name in Later Times, 2/1
Does God Have a Name? 2/1
God's Name in Early History, 2/1
Power Behind the Universe, 2/1
What Does the Proverb Mean? 4/1
Your Attitude Toward God's Name? 2/1

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Bible Education in San Marino, 11/1
Challenge in Colombia, 6/1
Cuban Christians Endure, 10/15
"Divine Love" District Convention, 2/1, 5/15, 12/1
"Glad Tidings" Bring Joy to Central America, 8/1
"Good News" Comes to Virgin Islands, 5/1
Graduates with a Vital Commission, 6/1
It Revived Our Family Spiritually, 9/1
Jehovah—A Secure Height, 9/1
Missionaries Told: "Glorify Your Ministry!" 11/15
Name of Jehovah a Protection, 6/1
'No Weapon Formed Against You Will Succeed,' 7/15
Rejoicing in the Philippines, 7/1
Report from Dominican Republic, 9/1
Rwanda, 4/1
"Word of God Is Not Bound," 7/15

JESUS CHRIST

Follow the Great Exemplar, 9/1
He "Loved Them to the End," 3/1

LIFE STORIES

Faith in God Sustained Me, 4/15
Five Decades of Integrity-keeping, 12/15
Fulfilling My Purpose to Raise a Christian Family, 5/15
Happy to Serve the God Who Remembers, 9/15
I Survived the "Death March," 8/15
Jehovah Answered Our Prayers, 1/15
Maintaining Faith Along with My Husband, 4/15
Rewards of Serving One Master, 3/15
Search for Freedom Rewarded, 7/15
Soldier Who Became a Preacher, 10/15
"Stick to the Work," 6/15

MAIN STUDY ARTICLES

Advancing After Obtaining "a Faith," 5/1
After Destruction of Organized Religion, Which Way? 3/1
After These "Last Days" God's Messianic Kingdom! 10/1
Are We Nearing Armageddon? 10/15
Are You a Loyal Proclaimer of God's Kingship? 12/15
Are You a Loyal Subject of God's Government? 1/15
Baptism—An Expression of Faith, 5/1
Calamity Facing All Religionists of the World, 5/15
Can You Help Widows and Fatherless Children "in Their Tribulation"? 9/15
Choosing the Best Way of Life, 3/15
Confident in a World Beset by Doubts, 8/1
Creation's Hope—Awaiting Its Realization, 4/1
"Do Not Be Anxious over Anything," 11/1
Execution of the "Great Harlot" Nears, 10/15
Festival Illumination, 2/15
Festival to Be Celebrated by Billions, 2/15
"Fine Shepherd" and His "Other Sheep," 7/15
"Fine Shepherd" and the "Little Flock," 7/15
Flee to God's Kingdom! 12/1
"Get Out of Her, My People," 5/15
God's Government—Mankind's Only Hope, 1/15
"Great Crowd" Renders Sacred Service Where? 8/15
Harvesting Fruit Suitable for God's Kingdom, 6/15
How Shall We Escape? 12/1
Humanity's State of Health That Might Have Been, 11/15
"In the Last Days" Since When? 10/1
"Jehovah of Armies" to the Rescue! 11/15
Joyful Festivals, 2/15
Living Up to Our Choice, 3/15
'Love As Strong As Death,' 4/15
Love—The "Surpassing Way," 4/15
Modern-Day Bible Burning Fails of Its Purpose, 2/1
Overseers—Be Fine Examples to "the Flock," 9/1
"Peace of God That Excels All Thought," 11/1
Praying to Jehovah so as to Be Heard, 6/1
Rejoicing in "the God Who Gives Hope," 1/1
Remain "Solid in the Faith," 8/1
Right Route Needs to Be Selected Now, 3/1
Road to Recuperation Opened by God, 11/15
Sacred Service in This "Time of the End," 8/15
Serve the "King of the Nations" and Survive, 2/1
Showing Concern for the "Flock of God," 9/1
Single Parents Coping in Today's World, 9/15
Sowing with God's Kingdom in View, 6/15
Spurred On by Our "Living Hope," 1/1
'Use Every Form of Prayer and Supplication,' 6/1
Watchman Said: "She Has Fallen!" 7/1
"Watchman, What of the Night?" 7/1
Who Will Praise the King? 12/15
Why Our Good Hopes Are Certain of Realization, 4/1

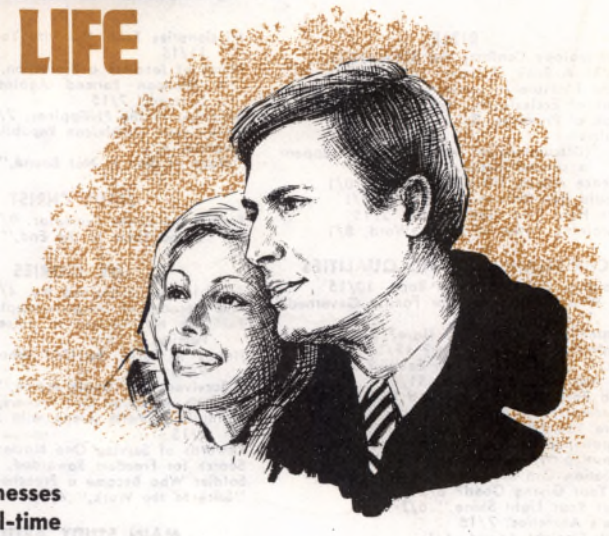
MISCELLANEOUS

'Altar to an Unknown God,' 2/15
Asa, 12/1
Can Human Government Meet Challenge? 1/15
Challenge to Government, 1/15
Cherubs in Israel's Worship, 11/1
Church Practice What Pope Preached? 1/1
Coming—A World Without Pain, 4/15
Do You Honor the Dead? 3/15
Experiment That Failed, 5/1
First Woman to Be Deceived, 6/1
John Wycliffe, 7/1
Keep Watching! 7/1
King Who Forgot Gratitude, 3/1
Lollards, Bible Preachers, 8/1
Miriam, 1/1
Pope at the U.N., 1/1
Promise of a Bright Future, 4/1
Promise of Paradise, 10/15
Pursuit of Security, 9/1
Rebekah—Blessed by Jehovah, 8/15
Security Now and Forever, 9/1
Warnings That Should Be Heeded, 12/1
Who Needs Pain? 4/15

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Ages given in Genesis chapter 5, 10/1
Anglo-American World Power the last, 11/15
Birthday celebrations, 7/15
Bruising of the serpent's head, 12/15
Christ 'hands over kingdom to God' (1 Cor. 15:24), 12/1
Dating when not free to remarry, 8/1
David's serious mistakes, 6/15
Deborah a judge? 11/1
Distinction between God's and Christ's kingdoms? 12/1
Divorced before becoming a Christian—free to remarry? 1/15
"Do not search for Bethel," 2/15
"Four horsemen of the Apocalypse"? 1/1
Gambling with small money stakes, 9/1
"Generation" of Matthew 24:34, 10/15
'Head of serpent bruised'—when? (Gen. 3:15), 12/15
"His own virginity" (1 Cor. 7:36-38), 4/15
Human organ transplants, 3/15
Jesus return in the flesh? (2 John 7), 1/15
"Meaning of the loaves" (Mark 6:52), 6/1
Missing meetings an unforgivable sin? 11/1
"Mouth of wicked" (Prov. 10:6), 8/1
"New covenant" near end of operation? 7/1
Overseer "a husband of one wife," 9/15
Revealing of the sons of God, when? (Rom. 8:19), 11/15
"Reward" of 1 Corinthians 9:17, 1/1
Sects among Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:18, 19)? 6/1
Secular work sacred service? 8/15
U.N. eighth World Power? 11/15
Who "made his soul spacious"? 6/15

HOW THEY ACHIEVED HAPPY FAMILY LIFE



SEVERAL years ago two of Jehovah's Witnesses —a married couple engaging in full-time preaching activity as special pioneers—came in contact with a friendly Czech family living in Switzerland. The wife was a teacher and her husband a top-ranking sportsman in rowing. Both had been raised as atheists, and when either God or the Bible was mentioned they smiled. After some discussions, the pioneers stopped visiting them.

Later, however, "The Watchtower" contained an article about a black man who had won a gold medal as a runner at the Olympic Games in Tokyo. The Witness (whose husband died in the meantime) writes:

"I remembered the Czech couple, because the husband had won a silver medal at the same Olympic Games. So this article was a signal for me to visit this family again. First, we talked about sports and I merely listened. During further visits, I spoke again and again about the Bible. But usually I was tactfully interrupted with the remark: 'Please excuse us, Mrs.——. You have forgotten that we are atheists.' Despite this, I continued visiting this nice family. Somehow I felt that something was not quite in order.

"Finally, I noticed that they had family problems. They were already speaking of divorce. So I showed them from the Bible how to overcome such problems. The couple was very astonished at the practical counsel contained in the Scriptures and they agreed to a Bible study. Their marriage was increasingly strengthened and they got immersed at a circuit assembly."

By water immersion, or baptism, this couple symbolized their dedication to God. Reflecting on the wholesome spiritual developments in their life, the man said:

"Previously, I just could not tolerate hearing the words 'holy,' 'angel' and similar terms. It hurt my ears. I did not want to hear anything about meetings either. But everything has changed. Now my free time belongs to God and my family. Also, as regards friends we have made changes. And now I know how important Christian meetings are. Furthermore, I have learned to assume the responsibility of a father, and we now have a happy family life. I want to thank Jehovah God again that we were permitted to learn to pray and that he offered us his hand before we searched for him."