

The Watchtower

July 1, 1990

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



“Ruining the
EARTH”
How Much Longer?

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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WHAT IS MAN DOING TO THE EARTH?

THREE HUNDRED years ago, man lived much closer to nature. For the most part, he was not threatened by man-made changes to the global environment in the way he is today. The industrial revolution had not begun. There were no power stations, factories, automobiles, or other sources of widespread pollution. The thought of man's ruining the whole earth may have been hard for him to imagine.

Yet, even back then, a warning about global ruination was in wide circulation. That warning was found in the last book of the Bible, and it foretold a time when God would intervene in man's affairs to "bring to ruin those ruining the earth."—Revelation 11:17, 18.

How comforting for all who are concerned about modern man's mismanagement of the earth to know that the Creator of our magnificent planet will save it from ruin! 'But,' you may wonder, 'have we really reached such a critical situation that God's intervention is needed?' Well, consider some of the facts and judge for yourself.

Forests

Forests beautify the earth and provide food and shelter for several million different species. As trees grow and manufacture food, they perform other vital ser-

vices, such as absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing precious oxygen. Thereby, *National Geographic* says, "they offer one antidote to the global warming that threatens life on earth as we know it."

But man is ruining his forest heritage. North American and European forests are dying from pollution. And the demands of industrial nations are decimating tropical forests. An African newspaper explained that in 1989, "66 million cubic metres [of tropical wood were] expected to be exported—48 percent to Japan, 40 percent to Europe."

Also, in some lands, farmers burn forests to create farmland. Soon the fragile forest soil becomes exhausted, and the farmers have to burn more forest. It is estimated that in this century alone, nearly half the world's forests have vanished.

Oceans

Earth's oceans also play a vital role in cleaning the atmosphere, and man's activities are ruining them. Vast quantities of carbon dioxide are absorbed by the oceans. In turn, phytoplankton absorbs carbon dioxide and releases oxygen. Dr. George Small explains the importance of this life cycle: "70 percent of the oxygen added to the atmosphere each year comes from plankton in the sea." Yet, some scientists warn that phytoplankton could be seriously

depleted because of ozone reduction in the atmosphere, which is believed to be caused by man.

Also, man dumps garbage, oil, and even

**"We must
save the
oceans if we
want to save
mankind."**

—Jacques Cousteau

toxic wastes into the ocean. While some countries agree to limit the wastes they allow to be dumped at sea, others refuse. One Western nation even reserves the right to dump nuclear wastes at sea. Famed ocean explor-

er Jacques Cousteau warns: "We must save the oceans if we want to save mankind."

Drinking Water

Man is ruining even his drinking water! In poor lands, millions of people die each year because of contaminated water. In richer nations, water sources are contaminated by, among other things, fertilizers and pesticides that wash into rivers and seep into groundwater. In 1986 the world production of pesticides was 2.3 million tons, and the rate of increase is reported to be 12 percent per year.

Another source of pollution is chemical dumps. "The metal drums containing the chemicals," explains *Scientific American*, "are nothing less than time bombs that will go off when they rust through." This type of pollution, the journal adds, is happening "worldwide in thousands of chemical waste dumps."

The result? All over the earth, once pure rivers are being turned into industrial sewers. It is estimated that 20 million Europeans drink water from the Rhine, yet this river is so polluted that sludge dredged from its bed is too dangerous to use for landfill!

Farming Practices

Alarmingly, man is even ruining his farmland. In the United States alone, 20 percent of the land set aside for irrigation has been damaged, according to *Scientific American*. Why? Because overirrigation adds too much salt to the soil. Many countries have ruined much valuable land in this way. "As much land is now being taken out of production due to salinization as is being brought into production through new irrigation projects," states *The Earth Report*. Another widespread problem is overgrazing, which may be contributing to the spread of deserts.

Too Many Motor Vehicles

So much for our planet's land and water. But what about its air? This too is being ruined, and the culprits are many. To mention just one, consider the automobile. Following are warnings from three influential scientific journals: "Motor vehicles generate more air pollution than any other single human activity." (*New Scientist*) "There are currently 500 million registered automobiles on the planet . . . Filling their tanks consumes about one third of the world's production of oil. . . . The number of automobiles is increasing more quickly than the population." (*Scientific American*) "Petrol [gasoline] in all phases of production, use and disposal is a major source of environmental degradation and disease."—*The Ecologist*.

Yes, our planet is being abused, ruined. Its seas, drinking water, farmlands, and even its atmosphere are being polluted to an enormous extent. Surely, this alone would suggest that the time is near for God to intervene and "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) However, there are other, even worse, ways in which the earth is being ruined. Let us see just what they are.



SAVING THE EARTH FROM RUIN

ONCE before in human history, God saved the earth from ruin at the hands of men. He did so by means of a global flood in the days of Noah. We have no record that men were ruining the physical environment back then. But the earth was ruined in another way to such an extent that God felt the need to act with the utmost severity.

The Bible reports: "The earth came to be ruined in the sight of the true God and the earth became filled with violence. So God saw the earth and, look! it was ruined, because all flesh had ruined its way on the earth." (Genesis 6:4, 11, 12) Yes, in Noah's day God viewed the earth as ruined because of the violence and wickedness of mankind.

Similarly, when ancient Israel began taking possession of the Promised Land, God warned: "You must not pollute the land in which you are; because it is blood that pollutes the land . . . And you must not defile the land." (Numbers 35:33, 34) Hence, Canaan was ruined because of the bloodguilt of its inhabitants. A horrible example of this was their practice of sacrificing young children to their gods.

The Canaanites were also grossly immoral, and this too affected God's view of the land. He warned Israel: "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these [immoral practices], because by all these things the nations whom I am sending out from before

you have made themselves unclean. Consequently *the land is unclean*, and . . . the land will vomit its inhabitants out." (Leviticus 18:24, 25) Immorality and bloodshed ruined Canaan to such an extent that God destroyed the Canaanite nations.

The Ruining of the Earth

What about today? Are we not also living in an age of uncontrolled violence, bloodshed, and immorality? Regardless of what man does to try to rectify the damage he has done to the physical earth, he can never restore to life the estimated one hundred million who have died in his wars during this century; nor can he bring back the millions murdered by criminals or the countless sad victims who die of hunger. Certainly, he cannot restore the estimated 40 to 60 million unborn babies whose lives are ended by abortion each year. Can we doubt that the earth is being ruined in God's sight by such things—not to mention by the immorality that is so rampant today?

Reason tells us that God must soon act to save the earth from man's ruinous activities, and Bible prophecy confirms this. But what will he do? The Bible says that he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18; compare Matthew 24:3-14.) Just as a landlord ejects a destructive tenant, so God will "eject" those who ruin his beautiful creation, the earth.

The Bible states: "As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it." (Proverbs 2:22) This coming divine action the Bible calls Armageddon. (Revelation 16:16) Jesus

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—Revelation 11:18

also called it "great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." (Matthew 24:21) It will be even greater than the Flood.

Is this an extreme or unjust solution?

No, God, as the Creator of the earth, has the right to decide who will inhabit it. He also has the right to hold man responsible for his actions. Moreover, if God permits man to continue his course unchecked, the earth will be ruined for everyone, and life will become impossible. On the other hand, by 'bringing to ruin those ruining the earth,' God preserves our earthly heritage for appreciative ones. The Bible promises: "For the upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it."—Proverbs 2:21.

With God's help, millions have found the strength to show themselves blameless because they want to be left over to enjoy God's creation. They also follow God's high moral standards and avoid violence and bloodguilt even indirectly. Hence, they are not ruiners of the earth in this important sense.

An Earth Saved From Ruin

Such ones now have the joyful prospect of seeing the earth transformed from its

present ruined state into a healthy paradise. Why, even their bodies will be cleansed, purified of the ruinous effects of sin. The Bible's last book describes God's provision for making all of this possible as a symbolic "river of water of life." On each side of this river, "there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations."—Revelation 22:1, 2.

This inspired vision is a guarantee that God will save the earth and mankind on it from ruin. Other prophecies give an advance glimpse of that restored earth. Consider, for example, Isaiah's poetic foreview: "The wilderness and the waterless region will exult, and the desert plain will be joyful and blossom as the saffron. Without fail it will blossom, and it will really be joyful with joyousness and with glad crying out." (Isaiah 35:1, 2) At that time there will be no polluted seas, ruined topsoil, or toxic atmosphere.

More important, the earth will not be ruined by violence, bloodshed, or immorality. Only those who respect God, his standards, and his creation will be there. (Revelation 21:7, 8) Listen now to the glorious results of all these things: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away. . . . 'Look! I am making all things new.'"—Revelation 21:4, 5.

What a happy outcome! How glad we are that God will shortly "bring to ruin those ruining the earth"! And how much these inspired promises move us to want to serve the God who will save the earth from ruination and make it a paradisaic home for righteous mankind!

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

□ THE "great persecution" against the early Christian congregation served to scatter many disciples of Christ. (Acts 8:1) However, this persecution backfired because those who were scattered "went through the land declaring the good news of the word." (Acts 8:4) Philip continued to preach, and "with one accord the crowds were paying attention." (Acts 8:6) As persecution backfired in the first century, so it did in a village in northern Thailand.

A special pioneer of Jehovah's Witnesses began preaching in this village, but at first the villagers would not listen. When he talked to the local preacher, however, the people gathered around to listen. Some came to realize that the Witness knew the Bible better than their minister, so they began to study the Bible with the pioneer even though others harassed them. Some of their ducks were killed, the pioneer's life was threatened, and the house of one in-

terested man was burned down. The man said: "They can burn my house, but they cannot burn my heart." Those studying with the Witness rode a long distance by bicycle to attend meetings at the Kingdom Hall. Four of them got baptized, and six others still attend meetings along with them.

Reward for Honesty

□ The brothers in Zambia have built a good reputation for honesty, and this has resulted in blessings to them, as well as helped others to identify the truth. An elder, who is a regular pioneer, was traveling on a bus and overheard a Witness on the bus talking to others about the resurrection. A passenger asked her: "Why do you Witnesses claim that your religion is the only true one?" The brother joined the conversation and said to the passenger that Jehovah will reward his Witnesses because they teach the truth from the Bible.

After midnight on this long journey, the bus arrived at a roadblock. It was raining hard. A soldier entered the bus and asked if there were any of Jehovah's Witnesses on board. There were three. Then he said: "Okay, Witnesses remain seated, the rest go out with your bags." All the others went out in the rain, and after the inspection, they came back with their luggage and their clothing soaked.

Back on the bus, the soldier said: "The reason I let the Witnesses remain is that they are honest people. We have had much experience and found that they are the only ones who are honest; when we ask what is in their bags, they tell us the truth." As the bus drove on, the brother asked: "Which is the true religion?" One person answered: "The one that is not soaked in the rain."

Yes, honesty helps identify the true religion, and it certainly has its rewards!



The Memorial Supper

AFTER Jesus washes his apostles' feet, he quotes the scripture at Psalm 41:9, saying: "He that used to feed on my bread has lifted up his heel against me." Then, becoming troubled in spirit, he explains: "One of you will betray me."

The apostles begin to grieve and say to Jesus one by one: "It is not I, is it?" Even Judas Iscariot joins in asking. John, who is lying next to Jesus at the table, leans back on Jesus' breast and asks: "Lord, who is it?"

"It is one of the twelve, who is dipping with me into the common bowl," Jesus answers. "True, the Son of man is going away, just as it is written concerning him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been finer for that man if he had not been born." After that, Satan again enters Judas, taking advantage of the

opening in his heart, which has become wicked. Later that night, Jesus fittingly calls Judas "the son of destruction."

Jesus now tells Judas: "What you are doing get done more quickly." None of the other apostles understand what Jesus means. Some imagine that since Judas is holding the money box, Jesus is telling him: "Buy what things we need for the festival," or that he should go and give something to the poor.

After Judas leaves, Jesus introduces an entirely new celebration, or commemoration, with his faithful apostles. He takes a loaf, says a prayer

of thanks, breaks it, and gives it to them, saying:

"Take, eat."
He explains:
"This means
my body



which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me."

When each has eaten of the bread, Jesus takes a cup of wine, evidently the fourth cup used in the Passover service. He also says a prayer of thanks over it, passes it to them, asks them to drink from it, and states: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf."

So this is, in fact, a memorial of Jesus' death. Each year on Nisan 14 it is to be repeated, as Jesus says, in remembrance of him. It will call to the memory of the celebrants what Jesus and his heavenly Father have done to provide escape for humankind from the con-

demnation of death. For the Jews who become Christ's followers, the celebration will replace the Passover.

The new covenant, which is made operative by Jesus' shed blood, replaces the old Law covenant. It is mediated by Jesus Christ between two parties—on the one hand, Jehovah God, and on the other, 144,000 spirit-begotten Christians. Besides providing for the forgiveness of sins, the covenant allows for the formation of a heavenly nation of king-priests. **Matthew 26:21-29; Mark 14:18-25; Luke 22:19-23; John 13:18-30; 17:12; 1 Corinthians 5:7.**

- ♦ What Bible prophecy does Jesus quote regarding a companion, and what application does he make of it?
- ♦ Why do the apostles become deeply grieved, and what does each of them ask?
- ♦ What does Jesus tell Judas to do, but how do the other apostles interpret these instructions?
- ♦ What celebration does Jesus introduce after Judas leaves, and what purpose does it serve?
- ♦ Who are the parties to the new covenant, and what does the covenant accomplish?



Jehovah's blessing has made me rich

As told by Elsie Meynberg

THE blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it.” (Proverbs 10:22) I have personally experienced the truthfulness of this Bible proverb. Allow me to tell you how.

When I was only six, I listened in on my mother's discussions with a Bible teacher who visited us, and I noted how enthralled my mother was by what she was learning. One cold winter night, I went downstairs for a glass of water and found Mother reading next to the open oven door. Instead of scolding me as I expected, she put her arm around me and explained that God's name is Jehovah. The warmth in her voice told me that what she had learned was very important to her.

After a few more discussions with the Bible teacher, Mother set out on foot to share with the neighbors the good news she had learned. However, she was not



always well-received. We lived in the country near Beatty, Saskatchewan, Canada, and our neighbors were mostly relatives of ours, staunch Lutherans or Evangelists. Nevertheless, Mother continued to visit them.

I would watch through frosty windows as Mother struggled to bring the horses from the barn, knowing that she was not accustomed to hitching them up. At other times she would go off to the meetings or the field ministry despite Father's complaints. He was not in agreement with Mother's new faith, but she was determined. She would always return with an inner happiness that was evident to all. "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich," she would say. I used to wonder what she meant by that. Although I was only six, I too wanted to serve Jehovah.

One day I was on the roof with my father, where he was repairing the shingles. Mother and my sister Eileen were

leaving with a group in a Model T Ford to take part in an "information march." They were going to parade through the town with placards advertising a Bible talk.

"You will never be so foolish, will you?" Father asked me. But even though I was a girl who just delighted in climbing, I would much rather have been in that information march than up on the roof. However, they said I was too short to carry a placard.

Meeting the Challenge of the Ban

Finally, my first opportunity to share in Kingdom preaching came in November 1940. What excitement! Since the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Canada at the time, we went out in the middle of the night and left the booklet *End of Nazism* at the door of every house.

When I was nine years old, I determined to dedicate my life to Jehovah and be baptized. Because of the persecution, we were not told the location of the meeting, but we were led to a place in the forest where a large group of Witnesses were enjoying a "picnic." There my older sister Eleanor and I were among the many who were baptized in the cold waters of a nearby lake.

School in those days began with the class saluting the flag and singing the national anthem. Despite the accusing stares of our classmates, we would respectfully refuse to participate because of the Bible's teaching on idolatry. (Daniel, chapter 3) My cousin Elaine Young, who was also a Witness, had to walk four miles to school, but each day she would be dismissed for not saluting the flag. Afterward she would walk all the way home again. She did this for half the school year so that she would not be marked absent and fail the course.

After leaving school, I worked in a bank. But a test came when I was denied my request to attend the international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York in 1950. I had some savings and decided to quit and start in the full-time ministry. So Elaine and I moved to the city of Regina. "She will be home begging by spring," taunted some. However, I was able to provide for myself by working as a part-time housemaid. The richness of Jehovah's blessings has kept me in his full-time ministry ever since.

Achieving Our Goal

In 1955 Elaine and I were thrilled to be invited to the 26th class of Gilead and later to receive assignments to Bolivia, South America. There were only about 160 Witnesses in the whole country at the time. Eventually, we headed for Tarija to join two other missionaries in our first assignment.

Tarija was a beautiful town. It was so interesting to see the women in their traditional dress carrying burdens on their heads. The people were pleasant and would never tell us they were not interested. They evidently felt that it was more polite to tell us to call again at a time when they knew they would not be at home. It took a while to get used to that.

One day we were talking to a man at his door when a jeep stopped and out leaped a furious, red-faced priest. "If you don't stop talking to those girls, you will be excommunicated!" he yelled at the man. Turning to us, he threatened: "You have no right to preach here. If you don't stop, I'll take further measures." By this time many neighbors had come out to watch. So we simply went on with our work, placing many books and Bibles with the curious onlookers.

Having spent two years in this pretty valley where peaches, peanuts, and grapes

thrive, we were not at first happy to receive a change of assignment to Potosí, a bitterly cold mining city situated at an elevation of over 13,000 feet. We were used to the frigid Canadian winters, but the difference was that in Potosí the homes normally had no heat. However, in Potosí there was the warm association of a Christian congregation, whereas no congregation had yet been formed in Tarija.

Opening Up New Territory

Next, Elaine and I were assigned to Villamontes to open up the preaching work there. The truck we took was loaded with contraband sugar, so to avoid problems with the police at the toll bars, the driver did not set out until nightfall. How we wished that we had brought a flashlight along, for suddenly something stirred beside us under the canvas! It was the truck driver's helper.

At five in the morning, we stopped. Sick from the exhaust fumes and laden with dust, we crawled out. A landslide had blocked our way. Finally, after four hours of hard work, the owner had his helper take the vehicle across the narrow ledge that had been cleared. The owner would not even look as the truck edged its way across with the outer of its dual wheels turning in midair above the seemingly bottomless abyss at the side of the road. Elaine and I crossed on foot. As we continued toward Villamontes in the truck, the hairpin turns on the mountain passes were so tight that the driver was repeatedly forced to back up and maneuver around them. Finally, after 35 exhausting hours, we arrived.

It was a new experience for Elaine and me to be completely on our own. Also new to us were the tropical insects. Large hardshell beetles would drop on us after crashing into the light above our heads. Tiny flies would give us painful bites, causing itchy lumps that oozed a clear

liquid. The first night in our new home, I went out to use the outdoor toilet. But when I turned on my flashlight, the whole floor seemed to come alive with cockroaches. Lizards scuttled away, and huge toads eyed me from the corners. I decided I could wait till morning.

Later, we were by the river and thought that we would rest on a log we saw there. However, we decided we would first make a return visit nearby. When we returned, the log was gone. Excited passersby told us that a massive snake had been there. I'm glad we didn't try to sit on *that* "log"!

What we enjoyed most about Villamontes was visiting people in the evening. We would find them sitting on wicker chairs out on the sidewalks, sipping an herbal drink called maté. We spent many a happy hour explaining the Kingdom promises in such surroundings. But more difficult times came after Elaine married and I was reassigned to Vallegrande with a new partner.

Like the Wild West

To reach Vallegrande, another exhausting trip of three days was required, and this time I was alone. The narrow dirt roads seemed to wind on forever into the wilderness. At last I arrived as the sun was setting. The bus disturbed the tran-

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■ **'Against Knowledge
—Falsely So Called'**

■ **Do We Really Need
the Originals?**

quillity of a town where horses were more common than motor vehicles. People stared from under the eaves, which projected over the sidewalks and were supported by posts. Some of the men who leaned against the posts wore gun belts with revolvers. Almost everyone seemed to be wearing black. I thought: 'Why this is just like the wild West!'

And it was, in effect. Disputes were settled with the gun. Even though it was a town of just ten thousand people, murder and violence were common at that time. The population was dominated by a gang that took over the toll bar at the entrance of town. The gang members made their living by stopping the buses and robbing them. Farmers were also robbed as they brought their produce into town. Young girls were raped at gunpoint before their parents' eyes. Mothers would not even let their daughters go alone to the corner to shop.

Imagine our thoughts when the gang leader entered the Kingdom Hall one day. He was drunk. The circuit overseer, who was giving the talk, grew pale. "I believe!" yelled the gang leader as he thumped the back of the bench with such force that it broke. Then he grabbed the circuit overseer. But suddenly he calmed down, and an old school friend of his in the audience was able to lead him away.

Eventually, an army general challenged the gang leader to a duel. The general had a dead dog hung up in the plaza with a sign saying: "Get out of town, or the same will happen to you." The gangster left, and conditions improved in Vallegrande.

Sometimes we traveled for 12 hours on horseback to preach in outlying villages. A schoolteacher in one of the villages received us hospitably and later became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. One time I borrowed a mule to go out there, but every time it passed the home of one of its

former owners, it headed there, and they had to lead us out onto the trail again.

Challenges—But Still Rich

As is true of many other missionaries, I have found that the greatest challenge may not be the heat or the insects, the cold or the altitude, or even the disease and the poverty. Rather, it can be personality conflicts. 'Why do such difficulties arise in Jehovah's organization?' I wondered, and I even began to doubt that Jehovah was making me rich with blessings. Then I recalled the scripture about Jehovah's blessing at Proverbs 10:22. The second part of the verse says, "And he adds no pain with it." So we should not blame Jehovah for these difficulties. I came to realize that they are part of what Adam passed on to us and are included in what Paul describes at Romans 8:22: "All creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together."

I had been corresponding with Walter Meynberg of the Canadian Bethel, and while I was on vacation in Canada in 1966, we were married and were assigned to La Paz, the principal city of Bolivia. What a blessing it has been to see the congregations here multiply from just one when I arrived in Bolivia to 24, in every corner of the city. It has been similar in other cities of the country. Indeed, the group of about 160 publishers who were preaching the good news in Bolivia when I first arrived in 1955 has grown to some 7,000!

My mother's determined example that she set so long ago has resulted in more than ten of my immediate family being in the full-time service. I am delighted to say that my father became a dedicated Witness, and over 30 persons with whom I was privileged to study the Bible have been baptized. Are these not riches? Yes, I believe they are. Indeed, 'the blessing of Jehovah—that is what has made me rich.'

"THIS HOUSE IS YOURS"

THIS house is yours—to it we've added." How fittingly these words summed up the feelings of those who had just completed two years of hard work at the Watch Tower Society's Australia branch office! The words were addressed to Jehovah God, and they were part of a song composed for a special occasion. What occasion? The dedication of new extensions to the Bethel home and factory.

Expansion So Soon?

Surprisingly, less than seven years earlier, a similar dedication had taken place for the then newly built Bethel complex at Ingleburn, on the southwestern outskirts of Sydney, Australia. Why was further expansion needed so soon?

For one thing, the number of Witnesses in Australia has grown from fewer than 32,000 in 1981 to a peak of 51,152 in October 1989, and that necessitated an increase in the Bethel staff. In addition, there was a dramatic increase in the amount of literature that Australia sent to other branches. At present, Australia produces publications in 37 different languages to serve the needs of Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Vanuatu, Niue, Western Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Wallis Islands, as well as Australia. Hence, the Bethel family has grown rapidly to 164 members.

To accommodate this growing family, early in 1987 a new three-story office extension was completed, providing much-needed additional office space. Next, the Governing Body approved the construction of a three-story factory enlargement and a five-story residence extension. In January 1988 work began on the new fac-

tory addition, which would provide a further 38,800 square feet of floor space. A few months later, work began on the residence extension, which would provide 51 more bedrooms.

Sacrifices and Generous Giving

Invitations were sent to congregations throughout the country calling for volunteers who could become part of a "construction family" for up to two years. The response was overwhelming, and volunteers from all trades responded readily. More than 700 separate application forms were received, and over the construction period, a total of 270 volunteers came and worked on the project for periods ranging from two weeks to almost two years.

One Witness owned an earth-moving business in the northern state of Queensland. He sold part of his business, and he and his wife became part of the construction family from its inception. He purchased a large tracked excavator and did most of the necessary excavating work at no cost to the Society. When the bulk of the excavation was completed, he sold the machine and then stayed on to work in other areas of construction. This is just one example of the fine, selfless spirit shown by all throughout the project.

Witnesses donated the use of concrete truck pumps to pour the 4,300 cubic yards of concrete needed for the eight floors in the two buildings. Others donated the materials needed for three 5,800-gallon concrete water tanks, and Witnesses working at the factory donated their labor to construct the tanks.

Not all the volunteers were skilled tradesmen, of course. Indeed, many young men learned new skills right on the site. Several became competent bricklayers as



*New addition to
Watch Tower printery
at Ingleburn, N.S.W.,
Australia*



C. Barber



T. Jaracz



D. Sydlik

they helped to lay the half million bricks needed for the project. Others learned to lay wall and floor tile, and in just a few weeks, one sister became very proficient at hanging wallpaper.

Dedication Day

Dedication day, Saturday, November 25, 1989, dawned clear and sunny—a beautiful, late spring day. The second level of the new factory addition had been cleared to form the main auditorium for the dedication program. Closed-circuit television tied in sections of the other two factory floors and the shipping floor, the Bethel auditorium, and the Bethel dining room. This allowed comfortable indoor seating for more than 3,000.

Because space was limited, only those baptized for about 40 years were invited to attend, along with personal guests of the Bethel and construction families. Refreshments were available during the morning, and a tasty box lunch was provided at midday. At 9:00 a.m., the annual meeting of the Watchtower Society of Australia was held, and all 21 members of the Australia corporation attended. After the necessary legal details had been

cared for, others were invited into

the meeting, and all were delighted to hear a discourse by Theodore Jaracz of the Governing Body.

At 1:45 p.m., 15 minutes of Kingdom music introduced the dedication program. The audience was happy to hear reports, interesting anecdotes, experiences, and comments by the three members of the Governing Body present. Of these, Carey Barber and Daniel Sydlik were making their first visit to the land down under. Brother Barber spoke on the subject "The Harvest Is the End of the Age," while Brother Sydlik handled the theme "Happy Is the People Whose God Is Jehovah." Brother Jaracz, who was serving the Australia branch as zone overseer, delivered the dedication discourse.

A delightful feature of the program was the singing of a four-stanza song just before the dedication discourse. Based on Isaiah's words at Isaiah 60:22, the title of the song was "The Little One Becomes a Thousand." In the lyrics gratitude was expressed to Jehovah that many willing volunteers had been privileged to add to 'his house' in this part of the worldwide field.

Scenes From
the Promised Land

A JORDAN
THAT YOU MAY
NOT KNOW



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

THE very mention of the Jordan River may call to your mind familiar scenes: Israelites under Joshua crossing its drained bed near Jericho; Naaman bathing seven times in its waters to be healed of leprosy; many Jews, and then Jesus, coming to be baptized there by John.—Joshua 3:5-17; 2 Kings 5:10-14; Matthew 3:3-5, 13.

Evidently, all these famous events occurred in the long and best-known part of the Jordan, the section south of the Sea of Galilee and on down to the Dead Sea. But diligent students of God's Word may overlook another stretch of the Jordan—the northern portion of the river and its surrounding area. Note the map.* The low region in the center is part of the Great Rift Valley, the geological fault extending from Syria to Africa.

The three main sources of the Jordan River are streams that come from snow melting on lofty Mount Hermon. The easternmost stream (page 17, top) emerges from a limestone cliff near the base of the

* Compare the larger map and picture in the 1990 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses.

mountain. This is where Caesarea Philippi was located; recall that Jesus visited there shortly before he was transfigured on "a lofty mountain." (Matthew 16:13-17:2) Another stream emerges from the mound where the city of Dan was built, in which Israelites of the northern kingdom set up a golden calf. (Judges 18:27-31; 1 Kings 12:25-30) A third stream joins with these two to form the Jordan River, which falls over a thousand feet in about seven miles.

Then the valley flattens into the Hula Basin, causing the waters of the Jordan to spread, creating a broad, marshy area. In ancient times much of the water collected in a shallow body known as Lake Hula (or Huleh). But Lake Hula is not there anymore because in recent times the upper Jordan was straightened, canals were added to drain the marshy area, and the outlet of the lake was deepened. Hence, if you look at a map of the area and see, north of the Sea of Galilee, a lake (Hula), you will know that the map is of the region in ancient times, not of how you will find it today.

If you visit, though, you will find a nature reserve that can give you an idea of how the area looked in Biblical days, when it was home to special types of plants, such as waving forests of papyrus and reeds.—Job 8:11.

The area was home to a constantly changing assortment of birds. Herons, storks, pelicans, turtledoves, and other birds abounded, in part because the swamp and lake formed an excellent resting area on the migration route between Europe and Africa. (Deuteronomy 14:18; Psalm 102:6; Jeremiah 8:7) Other creatures appropriate to the area would have been less visible, but



▲ Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est. ▼



Animal photos: Safari-Zoo of Ramat-Gan, Tel Aviv



Based on a map copyrighted by Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est. and Survey of Israel.

their presence made passage across the Hula Basin uninviting. These likely included the lion, the hippopotamus, the wolf, and the wild boar. (Job 40:15-24; Jeremiah 49:19; 50:44; Habakkuk 1:8) During some periods mosquito-borne malaria prevailed, evidently one of the fevers mentioned in the Bible.

Understandably, both individual travelers and large caravans would skirt this swampy area. So where could they cross the Jordan River in the valley north of the Sea of Galilee?

Nearer the Sea of Galilee was an outcropping of basalt rocks; this damlike formation was the reason why water backed up and created Lake Hula. You can see part of the outcropping on page 16. As the Jordan plunges through it south to the Sea of Galilee (visible in the distance), it moves so swiftly that white water results. Clearly, ancient travelers would have found it dangerous to descend into that deep gorge and cross the swift Jordan waters.

Between the swampy area of the Hula Basin and the gorge was a short, level stretch where the water flowed quietly. Here ancient travelers could ford the river safely, and it became part of a main travel route through the Promised Land. Now there is a bridge at this location, which is still a prime spot to cross the Jordan.

The Hula Basin is today a fertile agricultural area; there are even fishponds. All of this is possible because of the abundant waters that flow down this part of the Jordan River.

Hula

Sea of Galilee

THE COMING FINALE OF "THE BOOK OF THE WARS OF JEHOVAH"

"It is said in the book of the Wars of Jehovah."—NUMBERS 21:14.

IT IS little appreciated by men of today that the God of the Bible, Jehovah, is a warrior, a manly person of war. This fact was dramatized when he delivered his people of ancient times from oppression in Egypt. Pharaoh had been incited by the invisible enemy of that people, Satan the Devil, to try to work them to death. Now, coming to a realization of what he was losing by letting the Israelites go free, Pharaoh and his military forces went in pursuit of them.

² Pharaoh, however, did not discern

1, 2. On what ancient occasion did Jehovah display to the Egyptians that he was a warrior God, and how did he do it?

that the God of the Israelites could become a warrior God in order to deliver His people. As those Egyptian forces were pressing through the dry bed of the Red Sea in vengeful pursuit, the God of the endangered Israelites took action and drowned the charioteers and the horsemen, letting the heaped-up waters cave in upon the escape corridor that had been miraculously opened for the Israelites.—Exodus 14: 14, 24-28.

³ Safe on the eastern bank of the Red

3. In their victory song, the Israelites characterized Jehovah as what sort of God, but what fact do the nations of today ignore?



Sea, the jubilant Israelites sang a victory song, extolling their heavenly Deliverer: "Let me sing to Jehovah, for he has become highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has pitched into the sea. My strength and my might is Jah, since he serves for my salvation. This is my God, and I shall laud him; my father's God, and I shall raise him on high. Jehovah is a manly person of war. Jehovah is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his military forces he has cast into the sea, and the choice of his warriors have been sunk in the Red Sea." (Exodus 15:1-4) There at the Red Sea, Jehovah displayed himself as a warrior capable of spectacular deeds. This fact the worldly nations have ignored.

⁴ The prophet Moses, who led in the singing of that inspired song, spoke of Jehovah as "my father's God." The Hebrew Abraham was an outstanding forefather of the nation of Israel. From him, through Isaac and Jacob and the 12 sons of Jacob, stemmed the 12 tribes of Israel. Abraham proved himself to be an exemplary worshiper of Jehovah God. He was a man of such strong faith that when Jehovah called him to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldeans, he unhesitatingly set out for the land that Jehovah was going to show him, confident that God would fulfill His promise to give it to him and to his offspring.

⁵ Because of Abraham's magnificent faith, Jehovah promised to give Abraham a "seed," or offspring, by means of which all the families of the earth, including the families of today, would bless themselves. (Genesis 12:2, 3; 22:17, 18) Abraham was brought into such a close relationship with his God that he was known as "Jehovah's friend," God himself calling the faithful patriarch "my friend."—James 2:23; Isaiah 41:8.

4, 5. Those jubilant 12 tribes of Israel stemmed from what common forefather, and whose friend did this one become because of what quality?

⁶ Although moving about like a stranger in the Promised Land, Abraham proved that he could act as a fighter, a warrior. On one occasion four kings from outside invaded the Promised Land and made off with Abraham's nephew Lot and Lot's family. Abraham, moved by strong family ties, armed 318 of his male servants, and together with reinforcements from three of his local allies, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, he chased after the marauders. Making a surprise attack upon them by night, Abraham and his band defeated the invaders, even though they were a far superior force. A "slaughter of the kings" occurred. (Hebrews 7:1; Genesis 14:13-17) Abraham rescued Lot and his family and recovered all that was stolen.

⁷ Abraham recognized that his military exploit had proved successful only with the help of Jehovah God, and on his triumphal journey homeward, he was able to make a public acknowledgment of that fact. He knew that the approved priest of his God was to be found in the city of Salem. So to that city he marched. The latter part of Genesis chapter 14 informs us of what then took place:

⁸ "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine, and he was priest of the Most High God. Then he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, Producer of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, who has delivered your oppressors into your hand!' At that Abram gave him a tenth of everything. After that the king of Sodom said to Abram: 'Give me the

6. Although a peaceful wanderer in the Promised Land, how did Abraham prove himself to be a fighter trusting in Jehovah?

7-9. (a) What priest did Abraham visit, and what blessing did he obtain? (b) How did Abraham show that he wanted to be made rich only by the Most High God? (c) As confirmed by Melchizedek, who gave Abraham the military victory?

souls, but take the goods for yourself.' At this Abram said to the king of Sodom: 'I do lift up my hand in an oath to Jehovah the Most High God, Producer of heaven and earth, that, from a thread to a sandal lace, no, I shall take nothing from anything that is yours, in order that you may not say, "It was I who made Abram rich." Nothing for me! Only what the young men have already eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol and Mamre—let them take their share.'"
—Genesis 14:18-24.

⁹ As these verses show, Melchizedek, the royal priest of the city of Salem, confirmed Abraham's conviction that it was the Most High God who fought for him and his military forces and gave him the victory. King-Priest Melchizedek did not detract from Jehovah's part in the matter.

The Book of Jehovah's Wars

¹⁰ The description in Genesis 14 of the invasion of the Promised Land and of Abraham's defeating of the armed invaders is the first mention of warfare in the Holy Scriptures. Thus, more than four centuries before his exploit at the Red Sea, Jehovah displayed himself as a warrior, "a manly person of war." Yet, that was only a beginning. Far greater and more resounding victories would follow, including a final one in this "conclusion of the system of things."—Matthew 24:3.

¹¹ According to what is said at Numbers 21:14, a "book of the Wars of Jehovah" was written up. This reliable record, or history, of God's wars in behalf of his people, perhaps had its beginning with this battle in behalf of the faithful Abra-

ham. Moses knew of this book but gives us no further details about it. Hence, we are not informed of all the ways that Jehovah demonstrated himself to be a warrior during the period of time covered by that book of the Wars of Jehovah. Since the mention of that book, however, the major portion of the Holy Bible came to be written, and this gives us plenty of accounts of Jehovah's military exploits.

The Greater Melchizedek—A Warrior

¹² After Abraham defeated Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings, Melchizedek blessed him. King-Priest Melchizedek prophetically pictured One who would be the High Priest of the Most High God and also a mighty warrior backed up by the Supreme God. Psalm 110, composed under inspiration by the warrior-king David, is addressed to this One greater than Melchizedek of Salem when it says: "The rod of your strength Jehovah will send out of Zion, saying: 'Go subduing in the midst of your enemies.' Jehovah has sworn (and he will feel no regret): 'You are a priest to time indefinite according to the manner of Melchizedek!' Jehovah himself at your right hand will certainly break kings to pieces on the day of his anger."—Psalm 110:2, 4, 5.

¹³ The inspired writer of the book of Hebrews revealed the identity of the One to whom those words were really addressed when he said: "A forerunner has entered in our behalf, Jesus, who has become a high priest according to the manner of Melchizedek forever." (Hebrews 6:20) In the following chapter of Hebrews,

12. Melchizedek pictured what greater Official of the Most High God, and what psalm composed by David is addressed to this one as a priest and warrior?

13. In Hebrews chapters 7 and 8, the One greater than Melchizedek of old is identified as whom, and into what lofty place did this One enter and with what kind of sacrifice?

10. What is the first mention of warfare in the Bible, and why was it just a beginning of Jehovah's victorious wars?

11. What is "the book of the Wars of Jehovah," but where else is there an abundance of accounts of his military exploits?

the greatness of Melchizedek of old is explained. But his priestly greatness is, nevertheless, surpassed by the One whom he foreshadowed, the resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ, who entered into the holy presence of Jehovah God himself with the value of a sacrifice far grander than anything that King-Priest Melchizedek of Salem could ever have offered.—Hebrews 7:1-8:2.

¹⁴ The royal priest Melchizedek blessed a warrior, the victorious Abraham. But what about the Greater Melchizedek, the Founder of true Christianity? The clergy of Christendom claim to represent Jesus Christ in blessing the armies of so-called Christian nations and praying for them. But has Jehovah's High Priest in heaven backed up the clergymen of Christendom in this? Has he thus accepted responsibility for all the bloodspilling that has gone on during the so-called Christian Era, including the blood that was shed during World Wars I and II? Absolutely not! At no time did he authorize his true disciples to make themselves a part of this world and to join in its blood-spilling militarism.

The Warrior God Makes a Beautiful Name for Himself

¹⁵ Nehemiah 9:10 refers to Jehovah's deliverance of the 12 tribes of Israel from Egypt, saying: "Then you gave signs and miracles against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted presumptuously against them [the Israelites]; and you proceeded to make a name for yourself as at this day."—Compare Exodus 14:18.

¹⁶ The prophet Isaiah refers to the qual-

ity of this name when he speaks of Jehovah as "the One making His beautiful arm go at the right hand of Moses; the One splitting the waters from before them in order to make an indefinitely lasting name for his own self." And addressing Jehovah, he says: "Thus you led your people in order to make a beautiful name for your own self." (Isaiah 63:12-14) Appealing to Jehovah to act again for his people, Daniel addressed him as "you who brought your people out from the land of Egypt by a strong hand and proceeded to make a name for yourself as at this day."—Daniel 9:15; Jeremiah 32:20.

¹⁷ In due time, Jehovah God will send forth Jesus Christ, the Greater Melchizedek, as a mighty warrior. By means of him, Jehovah will make a name for himself surpassing anything in the past as described in the book of the Wars of Jehovah or in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Holy Bible. In the last chapter of the second-to-last book of the Hebrew Scriptures, an international attack against Jerusalem is foretold. (Zechariah 14:2) Then, according to verse 3, "Jehovah will certainly go forth and war against those nations as in the day of his warring, in the day of fight." In this way the God of the Bible will show all the modern nations that he is still the warrior God he was in the days of ancient Israel.

¹⁸ This is a prospect yet ahead of us. But which Jerusalem will suffer such an all-out attack? The prophecy was not fulfilled upon the Jerusalem of Zechariah's day. That city was destroyed by the armies of Rome in 70 C.E. Jerusalem was rebuilt, however, and today is viewed as sacred by Christendom as well as by the fleshly

17. Whom will Jehovah send forth to fight in his name, and what will he thus show all the nations today?

18, 19. Which Jerusalem will be the subject of an all-out attack by the nations?

14. Has the Greater Melchizedek authorized the clergy of Christendom to share in the military ventures of so-called Christian nations?

15, 16. What did Jehovah make for himself when he fought for his people to deliver them from Egypt?

nation of Israel. In the six-day war of 1967, fleshly Israel took possession of all rebuilt earthly Jerusalem. However, there is not a shred of evidence that Jehovah God took any part in the fighting then. His enthroned King, Jesus Christ, does not reign in earthly Jerusalem, and it is no longer "the city of the great King," that is, of Jehovah.—Matthew 5:35.

¹⁹ No, this official capital city of the Jewish member of the United Nations is not the Jerusalem mentioned in Zechariah's prophecy. Rather, Zechariah is referring to the Jerusalem that we read about in the book of Hebrews. There, Paul addresses anointed Christians and says: "You have approached a Mount Zion and a city of the living God, *heavenly Jerusalem*, and myriads of angels." (Hebrews 12:22) This heavenly Jerusalem is none other than God's Messianic Kingdom, represented on earth today by a small band of anointed Christians who cherish the hope of being fellow rulers with Jesus Christ in that Kingdom. These will be the object of the prophesied attack.

²⁰ Neither these, however, nor the great crowd of Christians with an earthly hope who have come out of all the nations to join them in pure worship need fear the outcome of this attack. When the fright-inspiring armies of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, came against Jerusalem during the reign of King Hezekiah, the endangered Israelites were given a calming view of the situation when King Hezekiah said to them: "With him there is an arm of flesh, but with us there is Jehovah our God to help us and to fight our battles." The result was that "the people began to brace themselves upon the words of Hezekiah the king of Judah." (2 Chronicles

20. What words did King Hezekiah say to his threatened people to brace them up, and upon the words of what King greater than Hezekiah do Jehovah's Witnesses today brace themselves?

32:8) Jehovah's Witnesses of today, when threatened by the national forces of this world system, can brace themselves upon similar words from a king greater than Hezekiah, Jesus Christ.

²¹ At that time, the faith-inspiring words of Jahaziel the Levite will be called to mind: "You will not need to fight in this instance. Take your position, stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah in your behalf. O Judah and Jerusalem, do not be afraid or be terrified. Tomorrow go out against them, and Jehovah will be with you." (2 Chronicles 20:17) Yes, throughout that dangerous time, Jehovah will be with his people. Their safety and preservation will depend upon his fighting for them. And fight he will, by means of his warrior King, Jesus Christ! The result? The total annihilation of the Devil's visible organization on earth.—Revelation 19:11-21.

²² How beautiful a name God will make for himself by his awe-inspiring victory in

21. (a) Why will the words of Jahaziel be called to mind during the coming attack on heavenly Jerusalem? (b) What will be the outcome of the battle that is to be fought?

22. (a) What will be the triumphant conclusion of the book of the Wars of Jehovah, and what will Jehovah make for himself thereby? (b) What will lovers of Jehovah's name be moved to do by his victory?

Questions for Review

- ☐ What do men of today little appreciate about the God of the Bible, Jehovah?
- ☐ What war did Abraham fight, and who gave him the victory?
- ☐ What is "the book of the Wars of Jehovah"?
- ☐ What will be the finale of "the book of the Wars of Jehovah," and in what will it result?

this "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon! (Revelation 16:14, 16) A new chapter, as it were, will be added to the book of the Wars of Jehovah. It will be a triumphant conclusion, a grand finale with regard to this system of things. The entire book will show that

Almighty God has never lost a battle. How jubilantly lovers of Jehovah's name will laud him thereafter! Then, indeed, the last verse of the book of Psalms will be grandly carried out: "Every breathing thing—let it praise Jah. Praise Jah, you people!" —Psalm 150:6.

SETTLING THE UNIVERSAL ISSUE FOR GOOD

*"Jehovah himself at your right hand
will certainly break kings to pieces on the day of his anger."—PSALM 110:5.*

THE universal sovereignty of the Creator of heaven and earth is the foremost issue before men and angels. Shortly, the issue will be settled for all time, but for many centuries Jehovah's enemies have challenged his sovereignty. Indeed, the destruction in 70 C.E. of the city of Jerusalem together with its temple dedicated to Jehovah may have cast doubt on the universality of the Creator's sovereignty. Nevertheless, there was a valid reason why Jehovah did not then choose to be a warrior God in behalf of fleshly Israel.

² What was the reason? By that time Jehovah God had turned his favor to a new nation, a spiritual Israel, "the Israel of God," as the apostle Paul calls the congregation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 6:16) So far, though, during all the so-called Christian Era, Jehovah has not fought for spiritual Israel as a warrior God in the same

way that he fought for natural Israel under the Mosaic Law covenant. He even permitted Roman soldiers, at the instigation of the Jews, to put Jesus Christ to death on a torture stake at Calvary. That was 37 years before the second destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, in 70 C.E.

³ From the days of the prophet Moses down to the reign of King Hezekiah of Jerusalem, Jehovah God fought miraculously for the nation of Israel, and the Israelites fought under him with lethal weapons. (Deuteronomy 1:30; 3:22; 20:3, 4; Joshua 10:42) But not so in the case of spiritual Israel! From the death of Jesus Christ outside Jerusalem down through our Common Era, this warrior God has not chosen to fight in physical warfare for the Israel of God. Correspondingly, he has not authorized the spiritual Israelites making up the Christian congregation to

3, 4. From the days of Moses down to King Hezekiah, how had God shown himself to be a warrior, but in the case of the spiritual Israelites, what has been true as to his fighting and their fighting?

1, 2. In the year 70 C.E., what event may have cast doubt upon the universality of the sovereignty of Jehovah God, but by then, to whom had his favor been turned?

fight with material weapons of war. Christians have another kind of warfare to wage.

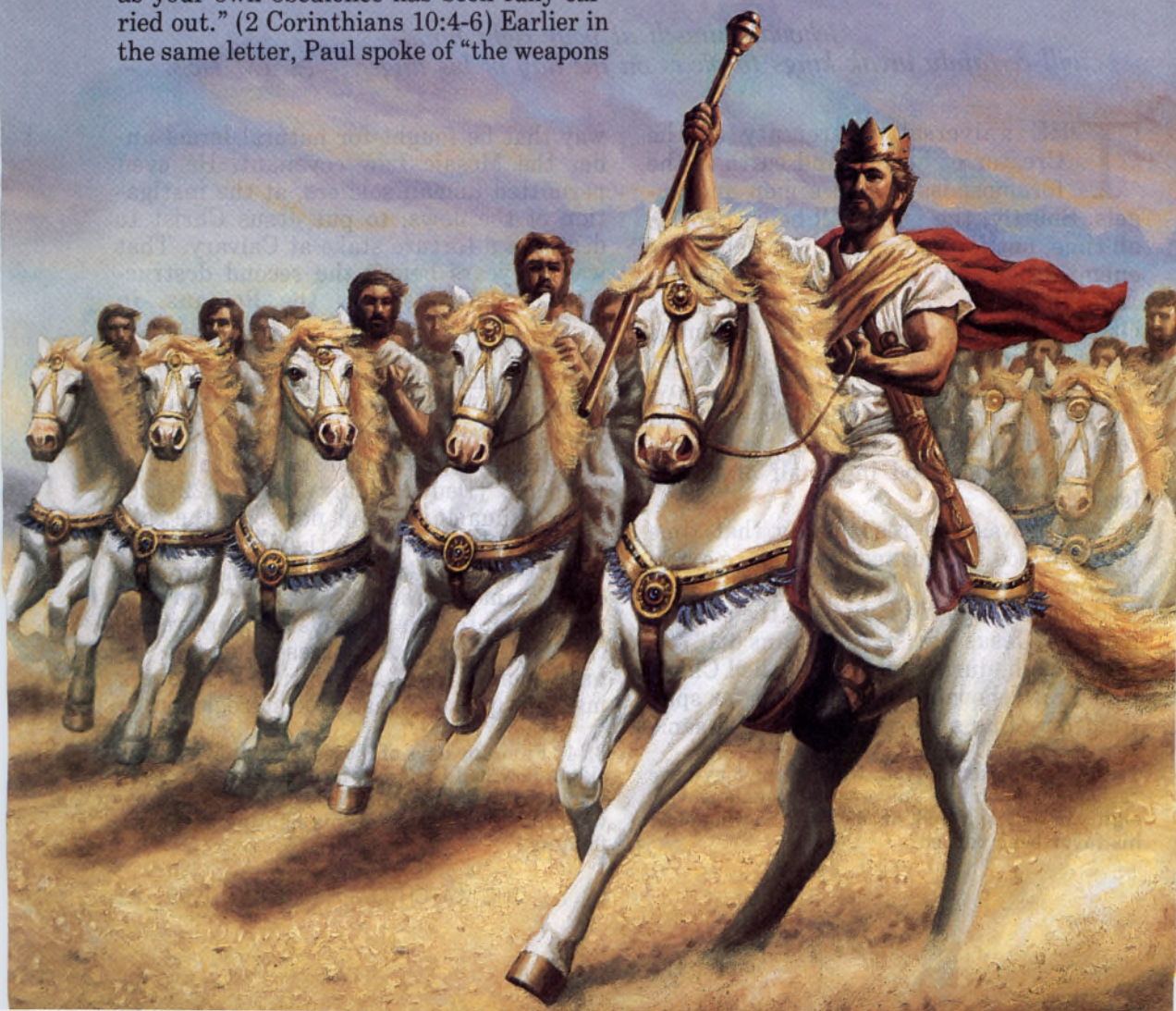
⁴ In agreement with this, one of the leading fighters for the Christian faith wrote to fellow Christians at Corinth, Greece: "The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things. For we are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God; and we are bringing every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ; and we are holding ourselves in readiness to inflict punishment for every disobedience, as soon as your own obedience has been fully carried out." (2 Corinthians 10:4-6) Earlier in the same letter, Paul spoke of "the weapons

of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."—2 Corinthians 6:7; see also Ephesians 6:11-18.

Jehovah to Fight at Armageddon

⁵ Jesus Christ, when on earth, never resorted to lethal weapons in self-defense. On the night of his betrayal in the garden of Gethsemane, his devoted disciple Simon Peter drew a sword and struck off the ear of the servant of the Jewish high priest.

5. In the garden of Gethsemane, what position did Jesus take toward the use of material weapons in self-defense, and what course of action do his disciples take?



But Jesus miraculously restored the ear to its place and said: "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father to supply me at this moment more than twelve legions of angels? In that case, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must take place this way?" (Matthew 26: 52-54) In the face of all of this, true imitators of the self-sacrificing Son of God keep their neutrality, both directly and indirectly, when it comes to worldly warfare.—John 17:16; 18:36.

⁶ Here, then, let the nations be served with notice that during "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at "the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon," Jehovah's Witnesses will not share in the fighting. They will leave that

6. During the war of the great day of God the Almighty at Armageddon, what position will Jehovah's Witnesses take?

to the warrior God, "Jehovah of armies," along with his legions of angels under the captaincy of Jesus Christ.—Revelation 16: 14-16; 19:11-21; Psalm 84:12.

Jehovah About to Resume His Military Activities

⁷ The God of ancient Israel came to be known and addressed as Jehovah *tseva-'ohth'*, or Jehovah of armies. (1 Samuel 1: 3, 11) At Romans 9:29 (*King James Version*) the Christian apostle Paul refers to Isaiah 1:9 and writes: "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomor-rha." Also, the Christian disciple James writes: "The cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." (James 5:4, *KJ*; *American Standard Version*) So Paul and James ranked God as Jehovah of armies during the first century of our Common Era.

7. As a warrior God, by what title did Jehovah come to be designated, and does he still rank as such?

The "great crowd" will applaud God's victorious Shepherd-King



During the following 18 centuries, God has not engaged in fleshly warfare in behalf of spiritual Israel, the Israel of God, in the way that he did for ancient Israel, yet he is still Jehovah of armies.

⁸ At the birth of the Messianic Kingdom in 1914 at the end of "the times of the Gentiles," war broke out in the heavenly domain of Jehovah God. (Luke 21:24, *KJ*) Who authorized that war? Jehovah God himself. He sent his enthroned Son into the field of battle under the name Michael because this One is most qualified to answer the question contained in that name, that is, "Who Is Like God?" Michael promptly went into action as the fighting representative of Jehovah of armies.

⁹ Accordingly, we read at Revelation 12:7-10: "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. 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. And I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down.'"

¹⁰ By now, more than 70 years after that battle in the heavens, only "a short period of time" remains before the war of Jehovah's great day breaks out and God vividly displays himself as Jehovah of armies to the present generation of mankind.—Revelation 12:12; Zechariah 14:3.

8-10. (a) Who authorized the war in heaven, and why was Michael most qualified to do battle? (b) What was the result of the war in heaven, and how much time remains before the war of Jehovah's great day?

The Fighter for Jehovah's Vindication

¹¹ Under inspiration, wise King Solomon of ancient Israel wrote: "For everything there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens: . . . a time for war and a time for peace." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) On earth the disciples of the reigning King who is "something more than Solomon" await the time and the occasion for Him to lead the victorious heavenly angels into the battle engagement at Har-Magedon. (Matthew 12:42; Revelation 19:11-16) There he "will shepherd [the nations] with a rod of iron," breaking them "with an iron scepter." (Revelation 19:15; Psalm 2:9) How his peacekeeping, protected disciples will applaud his awe-inspiring deliverance of them! This will include both the remnant of the "little flock" of his Kingdom coheirs and the "great crowd" of his "other sheep" that entertain the hope of inheriting the Paradise earth under his pacific reign of a thousand years. (Luke 12:32; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:16) Jubilantly, "under the very shadow of the Almighty One," they will applaud the resounding victory of the Shepherd-King, Jesus Christ, in vindication of the universal sovereignty of Jehovah God.—Psalm 91:1.

¹² Without exaggeration, it may now be said that war from far beyond the realm of man and involving the use of precisely aimed weapons outclassing his nuclear bombs looms before all earthly nations, whether inside or outside the United Nations organization. Listen: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered, and let those who intensely hate him flee because of him. As smoke is driven away, may you

11. What appointed time do the remnant of the little flock and the great crowd await, and what will they then jubilantly applaud?

12. War looms from where for the nations, and with what result according to Psalm 68:1, 2?

drive them away; as wax melts because of the fire, let the wicked ones perish from before God.”—Psalm 68:1, 2.

¹³ The preparations for the war of all wars are now under way. As God’s foremost Fighter, the Battler for Jehovah’s vindication is addressed in the following words composed under inspiration by a member of the nation of Israel: “You are indeed more handsome than the sons of men. Charm has been poured out upon your lips. That is why God has blessed you to time indefinite. Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one, with your dignity and your splendor. And in your splendor go on to success; ride in the cause of truth and humility and righteousness, and your right hand will instruct you in fear-inspiring things. Your arrows are sharp—under you peoples keep falling—in the heart of the enemies of the king. God is your throne to time indefinite, even forever; the scepter of your kingship is a scepter of uprightness.”—Psalm 45:1-6.

Nations Mass Themselves Together Against Jehovah

¹⁴ Shortly after the establishment of the Christian congregation on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., anointed Christians discerned an application of Psalm 2:1, 2. This scripture reads: “Why have the nations been in tumult and the national groups themselves kept muttering an empty thing? The kings of earth take their stand and high officials themselves have massed together as one against Jehovah and against his anointed one.” After the apostles of Jehovah’s Anointed One had suf-

13. As preparations for war go on, to whom are the words of Psalm 45:1-6 now addressed in a most timely way?

14, 15. After release from detention, what words from Psalm 2 did the apostles quote as being fulfilled, and what request to God did they make?

fered their first arrest and mistreatment by enemy Jews, they rejoined their fellow Christians and then quoted these words of Psalm 2 as composed by King David. Acts 4:23-30 reports the matter, saying:

¹⁵ “After being released they went to their own people and reported what things the chief priests and the older men had said to them. Upon hearing this they with one accord raised their voices to God and said: ‘Sovereign Lord, you are the One who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them, and who through holy spirit said by the mouth of our forefather David, your servant, “Why did nations become tumultuous and peoples meditate upon empty things? The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers massed together as one against Jehovah and against his anointed one.” Even so, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with men of nations and with peoples of Israel were in actuality gathered together in this city against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, in order to do what things your hand and counsel had fore-ordained to occur. And now, Jehovah, give attention to their threats, and grant your slaves to keep speaking your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand for healing and while signs and portents occur through the name of your holy servant Jesus.’”

¹⁶ However, when it comes to tumultuous nations, kings taking their stand together as one, political leaders massing together against Jehovah and his Anointed One, Jesus Christ, what in all human history can compare with what started 76 years ago in 1914? That was not only the

16, 17. (a) In all human history, has anything ever occurred to compare with what started to occur in 1914? Explain. (b) What course of action are the nations continuing to take, thereby obligating Jehovah God to write what, as to ‘the book of his wars’?

year when the first world war of all human existence erupted but particularly the year when the times of the Gentiles, "the appointed times of the nations," ended! (Luke 21:24) Psalm 2 clearly had its greater fulfillment starting in that year.

¹⁷ At the end of the times of the Gentiles in 1914, none of the nations—not even the nations of so-called Christendom, many citizens of which religiously view themselves as spiritual Israelites—were inclined to welcome Jehovah's Anointed One, Jesus Christ, to the throne of rulership over the earth. And now, 71 years after "this good news of the kingdom" began to "be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations," from 1919 onward, the nations inside and outside of Christendom are certainly not going to hail the long-announced King of Jehovah and swear allegiance to him as they renounce their own rulership over the earth. (Matthew 24:14) On the contrary, they have at long last come to the time and situation when they are obliging Jehovah to write, as it were, the grand finale to "the book of the Wars of Jehovah."—Numbers 21:14.

Glorious Triumph of the Warrior God

¹⁸ Forward, then, into battle action, O Jehovah of armies, with your royal Son, Jesus Christ, at your side! To him are addressed the prophetic words: "Go subduing in the midst of your enemies. Jehovah himself at your right hand will certainly break kings to pieces on the day of his anger. He will execute judgment among the nations; he will cause a fullness of dead bodies. He will certainly break to pieces the head one over a populous land."—Psalm 110:2, 5, 6.

18. Of what action on Jehovah's part are we in favor, and who will be at his side, as it were, for the fulfillment of Psalm 110?

¹⁹ O Jehovah of armies, let your faithful servants on earth become the jubilant witnesses of your peerless victory by means of your warrior King, Jesus Christ, on the occasion of the war of the great day of God the Almighty at the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon! (Revelation 16:14) Alongside the remnant of true spiritual Israelites, let the great crowd of sheeplike ones who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" exultantly "come out of the great tribulation" to be your earthly witnesses for all eternity! (Revelation 7:14) Under your loving care, let them survive without dying into the warless realm of your victorious Son, who will rule over the cleansed earth that is to be transformed into a beautiful paradise, in harmony with your original purpose. Let them be a visible testimony to all the resurrected dead in vindication of the sovereignty that is rightly yours over all the universe! We thank you that you will then have settled the universal issue for good, yes, forever!

19. Regarding the war of the great day of God the Almighty that is just ahead, what prayer do we offer to him in behalf of the great crowd of other sheep?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What is the foremost issue before men and angels?
- ☐ What contrast exists between Jehovah's fighting for ancient Israel and for spiritual Israel?
- ☐ During Armageddon, what position will Jehovah's Witnesses take, and why?
- ☐ When did Psalm 2:1, 2 have an unprecedented fulfillment?
- ☐ How will the universal issue be settled for good?

HONOR JEHOVAH WITH YOUR RICHES

I'M NOT rich; I'm just a youth and have very few possessions.' 'I never had much education; what could I give Jehovah?' 'I have a severe impairment; Jehovah will have to pass me over.' 'I am advanced in years; it is too late for me to gain riches.'

Do thoughts like these run through your mind as you consider the title of this article? Yet, you may be richer than you think. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus to the congregation in Smyrna: "I know your tribulation and poverty—but you are rich." (Revelation 2:9) Jesus had said earlier in the Sermon on the Mount: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth . . . Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21) Do these words of our Master buoy you up? Yes, there may be something in you that our heavenly Father, Jehovah, and his Son consider very valuable. Let us investigate.

The Magnificence of Youth—Strength and Zeal

How can a youth render valuable service to Jehovah? Proverbs 20:29 assures us that young ones have a magnificent resource—physical vigor. How refreshing it is to see a youth devote his energy and freshness to the service of our God!

Let us turn the pages of history back to the beginning of the 1930's when a number of youths heard about the truth contained in the Bible. One 16-year-old borrowed from his friend the Bible-study aid *Creation*, published by the Watch Tower Society. By the time he reached the chapter "The New Creation" and read about consecration, he knew what he wanted to do with his life. Immediately, he dedicated

himself to the almighty Creator. The following year he read another publication, *Vindication* (Book One), and learned about the prospect of sharing in the vindication of God's name and sovereignty. This information sparked a burning desire in him for the full-time service. That same year he applied for pioneer privileges, and to this day he continues in full-time service. While a number of his contemporaries have now completed their earthly course, many of those remaining still show a spirit of whole-souled devotion to our heavenly Father.

Do Christian youths today demonstrate this same valuable quality? They certainly do! *Yearbook* reports show that a multitude as numerous as dewdrops are now joining the pioneer ranks. (Psalm 110:3) The Philippines reported that 13 percent of all regular pioneers are under 20 years of age. Is that true elsewhere? Yes, it is. For example, a survey in the small islands of Trinidad and Tobago reveals that 282 new pioneers were enrolled between September 1, 1986, and September 30, 1988. Of that number, 48 were under 20 years of age. Would you like to hear from one of these?

Meet Charmaine Francis. She says: "From the time I was an infant, my parents talked to me about serving Jehovah and keeping faithful to him. When my parents would ask what I would do if they were put in jail for preaching the good news, I would say, 'I'll serve Jehovah.' I made my dedication when I was 13, and I got baptized when I was 14. Right after that, on every school vacation, I engaged in auxiliary pioneering. In 1983 I entered regular pioneer service. In my first year of pioneering, I had the joy of helping a housewife to become a servant of Jehovah.

I am now conducting nine Bible studies. One is preparing for baptism, and three others are attending meetings."

Now, youths, do you not agree that you too have something valuable with which to honor Jehovah? Of course you have! Even though you may not now be in full-time service, you can honor Jehovah according to your circumstances. You may still have many years of schooling ahead of you. Yet, you have a valuable opportunity to praise Jehovah to your teachers and classmates. Christian Kalloo, who is ten years old, brought to school his copy of the book *Life—How Did It Get Here—By Evolution or by Creation?* The result? He placed seven copies with those interested in that subject. He also placed one in the house-to-house ministry. You can do likewise.—Compare Matthew 21:15, 16.

Our Grand Instructor Educates Us

The prophet Isaiah said: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has given me the tongue of the taught ones." He gave credit to Jehovah for his speaking ability. He also recorded Jehovah's promise: "My spirit that is upon you and my words that I have put in your mouth—they will not be removed from your mouth or from the mouth of your offspring or from the mouth of the offspring of your offspring." (Isaiah 50:4; 59:21) Just as men unlettered and ordinary became Jesus' apostles and God made them wise in spiritual matters, so Jehovah has made ordinary people wise today.

The *Yearbook* for 1986 has encouraging information for those who have had little or no formal education. In many countries Jehovah's Witnesses arrange for literacy classes to be held in order to teach adults to read. How Jehovah has blessed such ones! Between 1962 and 1984 in Nigeria, some 19,238 made excellent progress in learning to read and write and are now

able actually to read the Bible for themselves and also to those to whom they bear witness. What a rich blessing they have had! One brother did so well that he became the instructor of the reading class in his congregation.

Also consider Ezekiel Ovbiagele's experience. He was unable to read when he was baptized in 1940. After learning to read, he progressed to the point of being enrolled as a pioneer, and still later, in 1953, he was appointed as a traveling overseer.

There are no age barriers in the learning process. Some may quote the old proverb: "You cannot teach an old dog new tricks!" That may be true of dogs, but people are not animals. Even the elderly can and do learn if they really wish to know and serve Jehovah. You may know of some who have done so. For example, Alice Okon in Nigeria was encouraged to read the Bible and learn of the hope it offers; she responded and rejoiced in the hope ahead. At 80 years of age, she was not too old to learn. Do you not think she made Jehovah's heart glad? She is rich in faith. Proverbs 3:14 assures us that having wisdom "is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself." When one can speak the truth accurately, his words become like "apples of gold in silver carvings."—Proverbs 25:11; Colossians 3:16.

Rich in Faith and Fine Works Even Though Disabled

A person who is born with a physical disability may feel very discouraged as he grows older and becomes aware of his situation. And it is traumatic when someone falls victim to disability in adulthood. Is the situation hopeless for such ones? No, it may even open the way to everlasting life.

During World War I, Edward Stead ran a livery stable in the small town of Arva-

da, Wyoming, U.S.A., and his wife operated a small hotel. Exposure to the dreadful Spanish flu lowered his resistance, and he fell victim to rheumatoid arthritis, which locked his joints so that his body was contorted into the shape of his wheelchair. Though otherwise helpless, he could still speak, and he had a little movement in his hands. For a time he contemplated suicide. Then he came in contact with the truth, and he eagerly embraced it.

At first he sat at the entrance to the hotel and talked to the guests about his newfound faith. He was able to move his hands enough to open up a Bible publication to show to those who stopped to listen. Some who appreciated his efforts called him the crippled sky pilot. Next, he decided he could witness in other towns if a special cab was built for him on a pickup truck. This was done, and for many years he pioneered in this unusual manner, logging thousands of miles between Wyoming and Texas, in company with two or three young pioneers who looked after him. For as long as he lived, he was a great encouragement to all who knew him.

If you feel discouraged because of a physical disability, please read the account on pages 22-5 of *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1986. All the men mentioned there are elders, spiritual counselors, qualified to comfort their brothers who may be sound in body but in need of spiritual upbuilding. How rich they are in the sight of God!—1 Timothy 6:18.

Esterleta Dick, 63 years of age, has been a baptized Witness for 16 years. In 1978 she lost her eyesight, but she has been serving as a regular pioneer for the past two years. How is this possible? Well, let her answer.

“One day,” she says, “a young pioneer sister asked me: ‘Sister Dick, you always reach your goals as an auxiliary pioneer. Why not try to be a regular pioneer?’”

Esterleta feared she would be a hindrance to the brothers, but she remembered that the circuit overseer had encouraged pioneer service. She says: “I started off, and now I have spent two years in the pioneer service. I do street witnessing and have quite a lot of return visits. Moreover, I conduct six home Bible studies. How? Prior to visiting the householder, the study material is read to me at home along with the cited scriptures, so that I am able to comment at the study. Three of my Bible students attend the meetings with me, and one is baptized.”

Anyone Can ‘Fill His Hand’ With a Gift

Is giving limited to the spiritual area? No. When King David of old was making preparations for building the temple, he asked: “Who is there volunteering to fill his hand today with a gift for Jehovah?” (1 Chronicles 29:5) Anyone could do so. Similarly today, young or old, in good health or not, many wish to make a voluntary material contribution to further the Kingdom interests. It may be done through the branch office of one’s country or through the local congregation. In this way anyone may, according to his ability, help bear the expense of seeing that the good news is preached in all the inhabited earth. It is a privilege.—2 Corinthians 9:8-12.

More important, you do have spiritual riches with which to honor Jehovah. The young have the vigor and freshness of youth. The unlearned can learn to offer Jehovah the fruit of their lips. The disabled can and have progressed in knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, so that many are not only full-time praisers of Jehovah but also counselors and shepherds in the Christian congregation. Are you not richer than you thought? So, honor Jehovah with your riches.—Hebrews 13:15, 16.

Comfort in Time of Need

The following letter was received from a man in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.: "Please send the illustrated 192-page hardcover book *Is This Life All There Is?* I would like to have two copies of this, as I want one for a friend. I saw the offer in a small pamphlet called *What Hope for Dead Loved Ones?* that

I received in my door. I just lost a loved one who was very dear to me for 35 years, and I found the words on the pamphlet so interesting and comforting that I didn't want to ruin it by cutting the ad out where the name and address goes. Thanks for all your trouble. From now on I will make it a point to read all the literature that you print."



**What Hope
for Dead Loved Ones?**

Everette Dick, 63 years of age, has been a baptized Witness for 16 years. In 1978 she lost her eyesight, but she has been serving as a regular pioneer for the past two years. How is this possible? Well, let her answer.

One day, she says, "a young pioneer sister asked me: 'Sister Dick, you always reach your goals as an auxiliary pioneer. Why not try to be a regular pioneer?'"