Awake!

How LONG Would You Like To Live?

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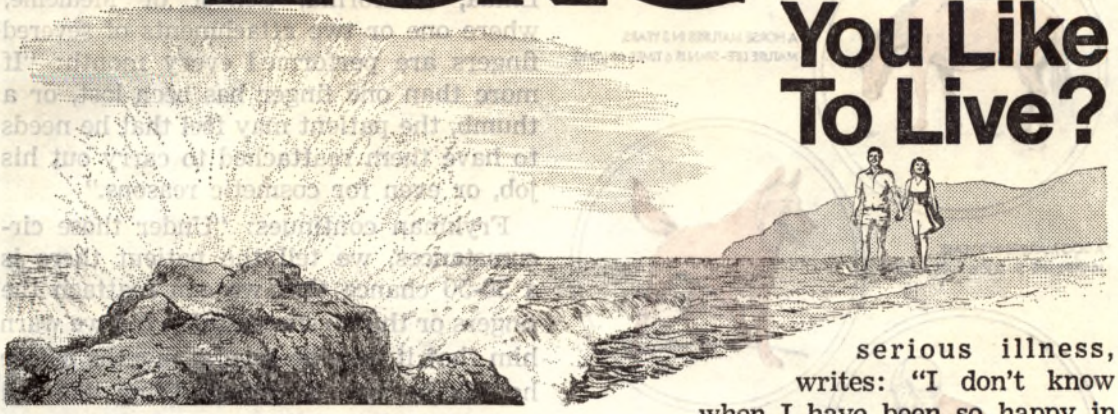
How LONG Would You Like To Live?



WHEN things go well, life is enjoyable. The thought of living on and on, even forever, may well appeal to you. But then hardships, perhaps great obstacles and tragedies, may enter your life. Yet, even then, you are not eager to die.

The fact is that people generally cling to life, cost what it may. In 1974, in the United States alone, cancer patients paid out seven billion dollars in an effort to stop that killer and continue living.

The New York *Times* of July 22, 1974, reported concerning a cancer patient, a doctor, who used every conceivable means to fight his illness and yet died at the age of thirty-nine, as follows:

"There are many other dying patients who, like Dr. Leinbach, put up a fight to the very last. . . . Their will to live is a basic human instinct . . . his widow insisted that every day he managed to stay alive was of great value to him. 'Of all the things Gary wanted,' she said, 'it was life.' . . . Just before his death, she had asked him if he considered the vigor of his efforts to stay alive worthwhile. She said he had answered clearly: 'Yes.'"

When we have health there is a tendency to take life for granted. A magazine writer, after a brush with death during a serious illness, writes: "I don't know when I have been so happy in terms of enjoying the simplest things—things which I had taken completely for granted before. I sometimes laugh at myself. It's like going through a second childhood. I enjoy a drink of water. I enjoy a piece of fruit. I enjoy the sunlight. I go into my garden and look at the trees. I discover that I had never really seen what a tree looked like in all those years that I had good health. And I enjoy the birds' singing—just everything!"

A teacher of philosophy expressed the sentiment of many others when he said: "It is outrageous that such a beautiful phenomenon as intelligent, sentient life should be encased in such fleeting vulnerable bodies."

Potential to Live How Long?

One may grant that it is reasonable that man should live much longer, even forever, but is it scientifically possible? In its discussion of "Death," under the subheading "Potential Immortality," the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1959 ed., Vol. 7, p. 112A) states:

> "It may fairly be said that the potential immortality of all essential cellular elements of the body either has been fully demonstrated, or has been carried far

enough to make the probability very great, that properly conducted experiments would demonstrate the continuance of the life of these cells in culture to any indefinite extent."

Of course, this is the result of an experiment with cells in the laboratory. The *Encyclopædia* goes on to say that the cause of death is not surely known (that is, death by degeneration, old age). It may be from cell deterioration in the body. Or it may be from a gradual breaking down of organized functions of the cells and their inability to "cooperate" within a total organism, rather than the dying off of individual cells, which, when destroyed, are, in the natural process, replaced by new cells. An exception to this restorative ability is found in the nerve cells, which, when destroyed, are not replaceable. However, a damaged nerve cell can heal itself. Even a severed nerve, if properly sutured, can regenerate itself, though healing of the nerves is a relatively slow process.

Says Gary K. Frykman, assistant professor of orthopedic surgery at the Loma Linda, California, School of Medicine, where one or two attachments of severed fingers are performed every month: "If more than one finger has been lost, or a thumb, the patient may feel that he needs to have them reattached to carry out his job, or even for cosmetic reasons."

Frykman continues: "Under those circumstances, we tell the patient there is a 50-50 chance that we can reattach the fingers or thumb successfully, but we warn him that it may be several months before he will be able to get anything like full use out of them." Thus, nerves do possess regenerative or healing power.

What Hope from the Scientific Field?

Medical researchers have labored hard and long on ways to delay aging and to prolong life. Can we look to them with hope? They can help a little. But there is no solid evidence of any progress toward a dramatic increase in the human life-span. The increase of the average life expectancy during the past fifty years is due primarily to a decrease in infant and child mortality. Writing in *Bestways* magazine, Graduate Pharmacist Louis Stambovsky decries the fact that mankind, maturing at twenty-one years of age, lives only about forty or fifty years of mature life. He calls attention to this interesting fact:

"It seems that every mammal [among animals] who lives in the manner and intent normal for his species, lives six to seven times its maturity age. The horse matures in about three years and dies between 18 and 21. The dog reaches a total growth in about three years and should attain the same span as the horse. This formula is applicable to the monkey, cat, bear, etc. Man's maturity age is 21. By parallel deduction, he should live between 120 and 140 years."

What prospect do science and medicine hold out? The *Scientific American,* summing up the matter, said:

> "Even if the major causes of death in old age—heart disease, stroke and cancer—were eliminated, the average life expectancy would not be lengthened by much more than 10 years. It would then be about 80 years instead of the expectancy of about 70 years that now prevails in advanced countries."

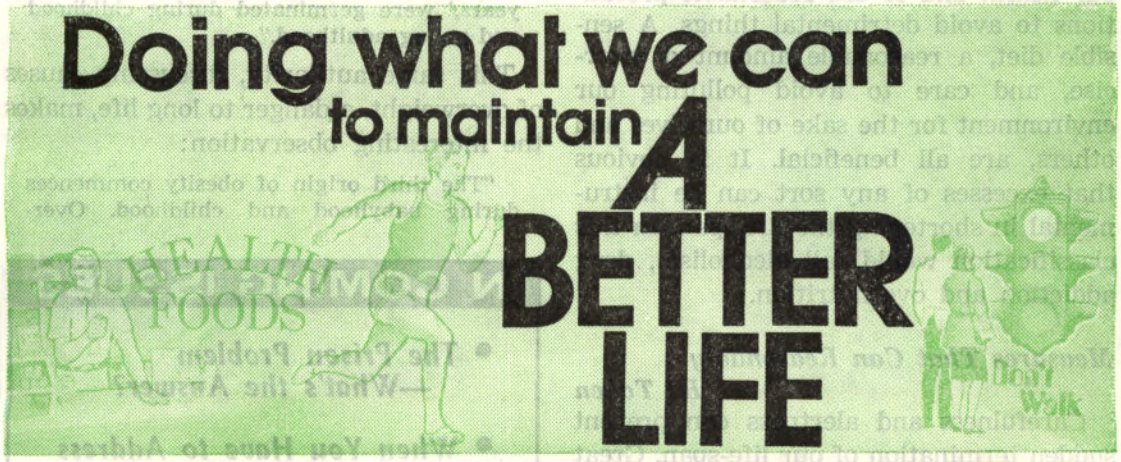
These statements are in agreement with the Bible writer Moses, who described the experience of most persons who reach old age: "In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things; for it must quickly pass by, and away we fly."—Ps. 90:10.

No Reason to Give Up

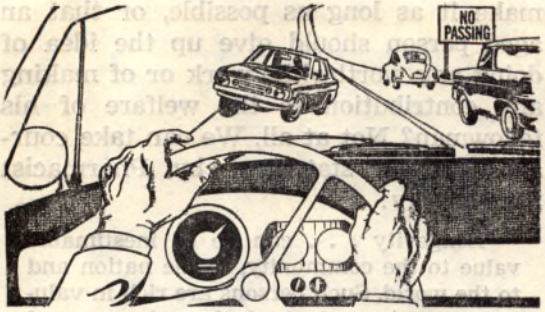
Do these sobering facts mean that a young person should not care for life, to make it as long as possible, or that an aged person should give up the idea of doing any worthwhile work or of making any contribution to the welfare of his fellowman? Not at all. We can take courage from a statement by Pharmacist Stambovsky:

> "Longevity . . . can be of inestimable value to the community, to the nation and to the world. Such persons are rich in valuable experience, gained through years of trial and error, successes and failures. Witness Edison whose fertile brain was active in the eighties; Gladstone was selected prime minister of England at 60, many years ago when 60 was really ancient, a position he held until 82. Walter Damrosch embarked upon a career as a concert pianist at 78."

There are reasons, then, for doing the best we can with this life. How can it be made more enjoyable and profitable? Furthermore, is there an even better hope —that of everlasting life? Let us survey the matter further.



EVEN though medical efforts to lengthen life have achieved only slight success, this does not mean that each individual should not do what he can to reach the age of seventy years, or even more, and particularly, to make his life a *better* one. For, whatever a person might do to extend his life-span, it is of little profit unless his life can be reasonably happy and of some benefit to others.



Careless driving can drastically shorten one's life-span

Many are the ideas put forth today for attaining to longer life—"health" foods, diets and exercises, both physical and mental. It is a common sight to see health seekers jogging down city streets and country roads. Health magazines and health-food stores abound. Thousands of psychiatrists serve as personal analysts, and there are devotees of various forms of meditation. Environmentalists fight for reduction of pollution that now menaces health in all countries.

It is certainly good to be concerned with our health and to use reasonable precautions to avoid detrimental things. A sensible diet, a reasonable amount of exercise, and care to avoid polluting our environment for the sake of ourselves and others, are all beneficial. It is obvious that excesses of any sort can be instrumental in shortening the life-span. In this classification would fall alcoholism, drug addiction and overnutrition.

Measures That Can Reasonably Be Taken

Carefulness and alertness can prevent sudden termination of our life-span. Great care in driving a car and in crossing streets would preserve tens of thousands of lives. Older persons can avoid the overexertion and fatigue caused by shoveling snow or any unusually strenuous activity. Everyone, young and old, can be seriously affected by overanxiety and tension as a result of rushing to keep pace with the business or social world. Hypertension, brought on to a great degree by modern living, is one of the worst killers of our time.

Vital also to longevity is the proper care of children in their earliest years. Says Graduate Pharmacist Louis Stambovsky:

> "When should preventive measures commence to prevent the so-called diseases of old age? As early as possible, even at the moment of conception. We cannot build a strong machine, if the mother's building materials are inadequate, quantitatively or qualitatively. Pre-natal dietary fortification has achieved amazing results. Controlled studies reveal dramatic evidence of such supplementation; the offspring were superior in every respect and the mother also benefited by uncomplicated delivery with less post partum complications. Assuming that we have a normal child entering the world, a sufficiency of constructional and functional nutritional bio-chemicals are vital from here on if we are to strive for a disease-free long life. . . . Many or most of the pathologies observed during the 'golden years,' were germinated during childhood and young adulthood."

This same authority, discussing causes of overweight, a danger to long life, makes the interesting observation:

> "The third origin of obesity commences during babyhood and childhood. Over-

IN COMING ISSUES

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- ***When You Have to Address an Audience.***
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feeding during these periods will create an abnormal number of fat cells that never fully disappear. . . . these persons remain fat even after excessive intake ceases and perhaps remain so permanently throughout their entire lives."

A Better Way

But, after all is said and done along health lines, who knows *exactly* what is good for the human body? To a great extent each individual has to find out for himself what foods, exercises, and so forth, are practical and helpful for him. Even then, it is virtually impossible to get all the needed vitamins, minerals, proteins and other essentials in the right proportions and combinations. With the adulterated, processed foods and the pollution of air and water and even of vegetables, meats and fruit, a person cannot avoid some of the things that damage his health.

Therefore, it is appropriate to consider very seriously the Bible's statement: "Bodily training is beneficial for a little; but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." In view of this fact, the counsel is given: "Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim."—1 Tim. 4:7, 8.

What is meant by "godly devotion"? Well, the Bible describes it simply as doing what is right as directed by the Creator. He said to those who professed to serve him: "He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Jehovah [God] asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?" —Mic. 6:8.

How will the pursuing of godly devotion prove to be the desirable and most beneficial thing? First of all, truthful, honest dealings will eliminate much trouble in your family and among friends and business associates. Honesty will prevent anguish of mind through qualms of conscience. It will induce others to trust in you. Even though your honesty may at times cause you financial loss because you refuse to enter into a dishonest arrangement or to lie to gain a point, those who practice honesty have found that, even in this dishonest world, it pays off in the long run.

To be able to practice complete truthfulness and honesty, a person needs a guide. The Bible is the most reliable guide. Also, it is a great incentive to honesty to know that, not only are people observing your fruitful course, but the Creator sees it and will reward you in the way that will be most beneficial to you. Jesus Christ said of *people's* reaction to wholehearted, honest, generous action: "Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing. For with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return."—Luke 6:38.

Honesty and truthfulness are appreciated by others

And as to *God's* concern for the person

who does what is right because of his love for his Creator and for truth and justice, the Bible says: "As regards Jehovah, his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him."—2 Chron. 16:9; Ps. 34:15.

The Bible is the only sure guide for a better life

Practicality of Truthful, Honest Conduct

Will the honest, truthful course really prove to be practicable? Examples can be cited that answer Yes. Probably you yourself have found that this is true. Jehovah's Witnesses have found that it is so. Many people acknowledge that the Witnesses conscientiously follow what they believe to be Scripturally right. They have come from all backgrounds, but have changed their former course of life and, to the best of their ability, have conformed to Scriptural principles. Some experiences may be related briefly that show that truthfulness and honesty, not only contribute toward a good conscience, but also are conducive to better relations with others and bring good to the one adhering to right principles.

In Sweden, where unemployment is an increasing problem, one of Jehovah's Witnesses applied for a job and was carefully questioned by the managing director and his assistants. After a pause the manager asked: "Do you belong to a religious organization?" On receiving the reply, "Yes, I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses," the man said: "Excellent. We already have three Witnesses at the plant and find them really good people. You must keep a very high standard of morals, don't you?" It turned out that the manager had in the past been a trainee in a company in the United States where Witnesses were employed. The Witness, in relating this experience, added: "It was a proof of the truthfulness of Jesus' words when he spoke of the material necessities of life and then said: 'Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you.' "—Matt. 6:33.

A gas-station attendant in Spain pumped petrol (gasoline) for a customer, but before he was paid his co-worker inadvertently served another patron out of the same pump, canceling the quantity and price. The customer demanded proof and became quite annoyed when he discovered what had happened. He remarked: "Why, only if you were one of Jehovah's Witnesses would I accept your word for it." The attendant was able to answer truthfully: "I am a Witness." "Then enough said. If you say forty liters, then it was forty liters. I am an inspector of police in Granada and I know enough about the Witnesses to know that they would not lie." And he paid for the gasoline.

Many Heartaches Can Be Avoided

Moreover, staying by right morals prevents many diseases and heartaches and

much hurtfulness to others. Morality is the primary basis for family life. Those who have ignored this principle have found that promiscuity, even when engaged in openly with the knowledge of both parties of a marriage, results in the eventual breakup of the marriage. Though the couple may be living together in only a consensual arrangement, they experience the same emotional upsets and jealousies that a legitimately married couple undergo when unfaithfulness on the part of either mate takes place. And promiscuity on the part of parents has a most demoralizing effect on their children.

All the problems caused by dishonesty, untruthfulness and immoral living result in frustration, confusion and mental anguish, not to speak of bad consciences. This, in turn, brings loss of joy and, all too often, produces physical and mental sickness.

There is no doubt that a psychosomatic process operates in the human body. The things that affect our physical health affect our mental condition, and our mental attitude has much to do with our physical health. If you are unhappy or discontented, you do not feel well physically. Unhappiness results in tension, discouragement, depression and dejection, often anger and self-pity or self-incrimination. These, in turn, can bring upon us the worst of maladies.

Untruthfulness and dishonesty can break up a marriage

Lost Happiness May Be Regained

Perhaps a person has not lived in a way that is good, and is unhappy. It is never too late to seek to remedy the situation, hoping to regain a great measure of happiness. Consider the example of a man in Niger, Africa, who had the reputation of being a drunkard and spendthrift, who cared little for his family and provided little for them. His wife had left and had obtained a well-paying job as a schoolteacher in another country (Togo). In his unhappiness, the man sought help from the Bible. It was not long after he had begun a serious study of the Scriptures that he started to change his habits. He stopped giving himself to excesses in wine and began to use his money in providing for the needs of his family. He even sent half his salary each month to his wife. The wife finally visited him and was astonished to see the changes that he had made in his life. She decided to give up her job in Togo and remain with her husband, looking into the Bible along with him. How happy this family was to be united again!

Really, who can say that it is not practical to practice good and beneficial things, even in a selfish world? It certainly makes life more worth while now. But is this all? Is there more than a temporary reward?

Present Life NOT THE ALL-IMPORTANT THING

WHILE it is good to make one's life as long and happy as possible, there are limitations even to this. It is not good to make this life *everything,* to do just *anything* to stay alive. Nor is it wise to pursue goals with such fervor that right principles are ignored, that God is left out of the picture, or that any hope of life in the future is excluded.

For example, some people count it all-important merely to stay alive. They are willing to go against all the standards that they believe in, even violating their own consciences to keep from dying. This was demonstrated during the Nazi war-criminal trials, when the defendants answered to charges of brutality and even mass murder of innocent people by saying that they 'did it because of fear of

In Nazi war-criminal trials, defendants admitted to violating consciences because of fear of death

their superiors in the Nazi command.' With them the Bible's words were proved to be outstandingly true, that they "for fear of death were subject to slavery." (Heb. 2: 15) Certainly a life prolonged a few years through slavery to fear is not a desirable one.

Neither is a life a good or happy one if it is devoted solely to the gaining of a great name. Some have sought to leave a monument of some kind, so that their name might achieve "immortality." Or they have enslaved themselves to a career or to a pursuit and have become so involved that they do not have time for real enjoyment of life; or they neglect the spiritual aspect of life. Others have made enjoyment of life their whole objective, only to come to the close of their life with a feeling of emptiness.

The Result of Thorough Investigation and Experimentation

King Solomon, famed as one of the wisest and richest men ever to live on earth, made a careful investigation of the pursuits of mankind and their result to the individual. Solomon had the wealth, power and facilities to undertake a thorough study of this matter. He avoided the immoral and sordid things, which may appear pleasurable but bring no real satisfying or lasting happiness. But he did try the pleasurable pursuits that wealth and power could afford. He says:

> "I engaged in greater works. I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself. I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted in them fruit trees of all sorts. . . . I acquired menservants and maidservants . . . Also, livestock, cattle and flocks in great quantity I came to have . . . I accumulated also silver and gold for myself, and property peculiar to kings . . . I made male singers and female singers for myself and the exquisite delights of the sons of mankind, a lady, even ladies. . . . And anything that my eyes

A life devoted entirely to pleasure results in emptiness

asked for I did not keep away from them. I did not hold back my heart from any sort of rejoicing, for my heart was joyful because of all my hard work."

Yet, what was the result? Solomon tells us:

"And I, even I, turned toward all the works of mine that my hands had done and toward the hard work that I had worked hard to accomplish, and, look! everything was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing of advantage under the sun."—Eccl. 2:4-11.

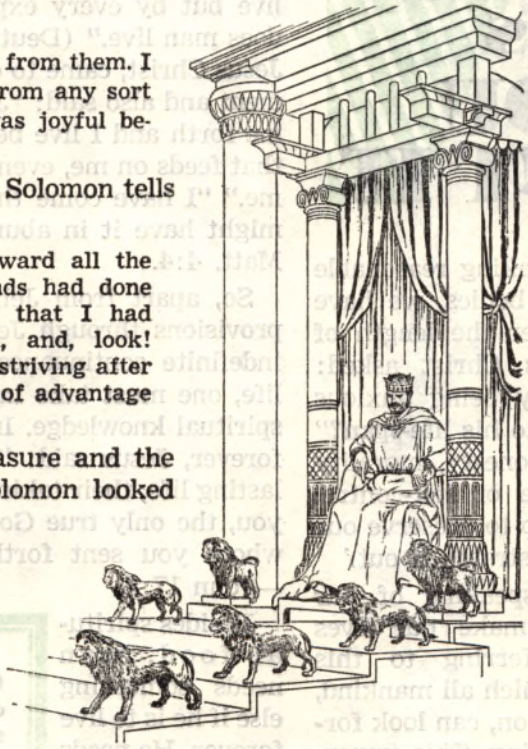
Seeing the futility of pleasure and the building of great works, Solomon looked at those who had human wisdom, including himself, and the results in this life to the person who has become known for his wisdom. He expressed the situation that he then faced:

"I myself said in my heart: 'An eventuality like that upon the stupid one will eventuate to me, yes, me.' Why, then, had I become wise, I overmuch so at that time? And I spoke in my heart: 'This too is vanity.' For there is no more remembrance of the wise one than of the stupid one to time indefinite. In the days that are already coming in [as a person ages], everyone is certainly forgotten; and how will the wise one die? Along with the stupid one."—Eccl. 2:15, 16.

Solomon finally says:

"The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man. For the true God himself will bring every sort of work into the judgment in relation to every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad."—Eccl. 12:13, 14.

So, even though an objective may be commendable, a pursuit of it to the point of neglecting our own really important interests, not allowing ourselves time or opportunity to think of what God has in mind as to mankind's future, actually ends up in vanity. Certainly the world goes on unthankful, and eventually forgetful and unappreciative. And finally the individual has gone out of existence. So, is there a future beyond death to which he could have looked?



Wealthy King Solomon, after observation and experience, recommended: "Fear the true God and keep his commandments" as the wise course for humans

A TIME WHEN LIFE CAN BE as LONG as YOU WANT IT

ASIDE from taking reasonable care of our bodies, we have little control over the length of our lives. Jesus Christ asked: "Who of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his life-span?" (Luke 12:25) Honesty, morality and the exercise of self-control and love can help to preserve our life, but cannot 'stretch it out.'

Jesus, when speaking of our helplessness to make our lives longer, was referring to this present life in which all mankind, due to imperfection, can look forward only to dying. This imperfection is due to sin. "Sin is lawlessness," and is what causes people to do "little" or "big" lawless things. (1 John 3:4) And sin is not merely lawlessness against our fellowmen or against governments, but is lawlessness against God, the Universal Lawmaker and the one responsible for our lives. Therefore, sin works in *us against* our life, and as long as a person has sin, which reveals itself in human imperfection, he can never increase his life-span.

But God purposes a time when an individual can live as long as he desires, not by his own efforts, but by God's arrangement.

Requirements for Long Life

Men of science overlook, not only the cause of death, but also the prime requirements for gaining everlasting life. Not only do we need natural food, but we must also have spiritual food to stay alive. Almighty God had this vital fact recorded in his Word, the Bible: "Not by bread alone does man live but by every expression of Jehovah's mouth does man live." (Deut. 8:3) When the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came to earth, he repeated that statement and also said: "Just as the living Father sent me forth and I live because of the Father, he also that feeds on me, even that one will live because of me." "I have come that they might have life and might have it in abundance."—John 6:57; 10:10; Matt. 4:4.

So, apart from Jehovah God and his spiritual provisions through Jesus Christ, there can be no indefinite continuance of life. To gain life, one must take in spiritual food or spiritual knowledge. In regard to living forever, Jesus said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." —John 17:3.

Besides spiritual food, man needs something else if he is to live forever. He needs to be relieved of the inheritance of sin and death.

Only by means of Christ's ransom sacrifice can mankind be recovered from sin and death

But how could this be done? God, in his love, arranged for his Son to give his perfect human life as a ransom. Jesus said that he came "to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matt. 20:28) He gave his perfect human life as a ransom to bring people out of slavery to sin and death. (Rom. 5:21) That sacrifice provides the basis for the restoring of vital good relations with God, the Life-Giver.

To benefit from that sacrifice, however, one must have faith in God's Son and what he accomplished on man's behalf, just as Jesus said: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

God has provided opportunity for endless life-span for those who have died

God's Rulership Needed

People can exercise faith in that provision of God now, and may do so, but their life-span is not lengthened measurably beyond the average. Why not? Are the promises of God through Christ untrue? No, but it is because something else is needed. That is a *government,* the long-awaited *kingdom of God,* that will enforce God's law. It must do away with lawlessness in the earth. It must abolish all man-made forms of government and bring in an entirely new system of things. Only in that way can an environmental "atmosphere" be created that will enable those who desire to live lawfully to do so to the full extent. Otherwise, we would have constant repetition of world history. The greedy and unscrupulous would continue to take advantage of the honest and upright ones.

But with the enforcing of God's just and righteous laws in the earth right-hearted persons will have protection. And with such conditions, it is logical that most people will see the advantages of living under such a government and will be happy to do the right thing. The Bible states the principle: "When there are judgments from you [God] for the earth, righteousness is what the inhabitants of the productive land will certainly learn."—Isa. 26:9.

At the time that God takes action to remove this present system of things on the earth, do those practicing what is right according to God's commands have to die? In other words, will they have an end to their life, or can they live on with an unbroken life-span? About what takes place at that time, we have Scriptural descriptions to answer our question. The prophet Daniel, writing of that time, said: "In the days of those kings [who would be ruling at the time of the end] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself *will not be passed on to any other people.* It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and *it itself will stand to times indefinite.*" (Dan. 2:44) God's government over earth will not change hands or come to an end. Those on the Kingdom's side, on earth, will therefore receive its protection for survival. They do not need to be put to death. If they seek God's

kingdom and practice God's righteousness, they can live as long as God rules the earth, which is *forever*.—Matt. 6:33; compare Psalm 37:37-40.

Hope for the Living and the Dead

Another most encouraging prophecy is the vision that Jesus Christ gave to the apostle John. John actually saw a visionary representation of the people who will receive the protection of that Kingdom. He was shown a great crowd of indefinite number and was told: "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation [the crushing and the putting to an end of world governments]." There John was told that God's tent (of protection) would be spread over them, and that they would be led to "fountains of waters of life." —Rev. 7:9, 14-17; compare Psalm 145:20.

How, then, can a person live as long as he desires under the rule of God's selected King, Jesus Christ? It will be by his choice to live in willing obedience to the laws of that Kingdom government. An opportunity will be afforded also to those who have died in the past, and who will be resurrected, to show if they will accept God's provisions under right conditions. The apostle John describes what he saw further along in the vision, saying:

> "I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. And the sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds."—Rev. 20:12, 13.

Those who then obey will gradually be healed of their imperfection. The same vision depicts the life-giving benefits of Christ's sacrifice as flowing in a stream, and adds:

> "And on this side of the river and on that side 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.*"—Rev. 22:1, 2.

This healing by the symbolic "leaves" will continue through the thousand-year reign of Christ until all those maintaining faith in Christ's atonement sacrifice and who render obedience to him will have reached human perfection of mind, heart and body. (Rev. 20:4) The death produced by sin no longer will pull them down, for "the sting producing death is sin." Then the death that we have inherited from our sinful forefathers will be no more. Then

During Christ's Kingdom rule, obedien humans will partake of God's provisions fo eternal life, a part of which provisions ar represented by the symbolic "trees of life'

it can be said: 'The last enemy, death, has been brought to nothing.'—1 Cor. 15:26, 56.

So, during the thousand-year period of the absolute rule of the kingdom of God, every individual on earth can choose to live on and on, or he can terminate his existence at any time he chooses. If he hates to do what is right and does not have love, respect and regard for his fellowman, and particularly if he does not appreciate the lovingkindness of God, he can choose to be disobedient. But he cannot continue living, for during this time those whose deeds disqualify them from being written in the "book of life" will be put to death permanently. They will be "hurled into the [symbolic] lake of fire," "the second death," from which there will be no resurrection.—Rev. 20:14, 15.

By study of the Bible with the help of others having faith in God, one can get the truth that leads to life

Hence, it is just as Moses said to the Israelites as they were about to enter the Promised Land, to live under God's government there: "Choose life in order that you may keep alive." We may now make a choice, not merely to prolong our present life, as those Israelites then could do, but to assure permanent life in a "new earth"—an unbroken life-span.—Deut. 30:19; 2 Pet. 3:13.

Is this not fully desirable? Certainly it is to those who appreciate life. But if a person cannot tolerate righteous conditions and insists on carrying on practices that bring harm to himself and his fellowman, he has no place in the "new earth" society.

Bible Knowledge Will Help You to Choose Life

It all comes down to the question: Do you want to live forever? You may not be able to do much toward your life now, except make it more purposeful, better and happier, while entertaining a hope for the future. But you can choose now how long you want to live in 'the life that is to come.' (1 Tim. 4:8) Choosing life now by taking hold of God's instructions and provisions, you may be among the "great crowd" that survives the destruction of the present system of things, which all the evidence indicates is near at hand. Or you can join them in the righteous "new earth" by a resurrection.

To strengthen yourself to maintain a God-pleasing course in the midst of a frustrated, confused and corrupt world, you will want to identify and associate with "God's household, which is the congregation of the living God, a pillar and support of the truth" in the earth. (1 Tim. 3:15) Those now looking forward to Christ's Kingdom rule over earth are striving to live so as eventually to inherit life and are happy to help you in your sincere search —to see *from the Bible* what is the truth that leads to life and what is the true congregation of God. Jehovah's Witnesses devote their time and energy freely and voluntarily to assisting all seekers of Bible truth, that they may find the way to "everlasting life."—John 3:16.

Choosing Between *Two Loves in My Life*

THE director's voice boomed over the sound system: "Cut! Let's try the scene again, kids. And this time, more animation. Make the viewer feel a little uneasy in his seat, as though he could be Dracula's next victim!"

It was July 1973, and we were on location in London, England, shooting the motion picture *Vampira*. I was playing the female lead opposite the well-known film star David Niven. For me it was a lifelong ambition fulfilled.

From high school on, my goals revolved around becoming a successful entertainer. When I graduated in 1966, I joined a singing group called the Doodletown Pipers. We traveled around the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico, performing in some of the best-known nightclubs and theaters. But in 1968 I left the Pipers in search of bigger things.

George Schlatter, the producer of *Laugh-In*, then the number one television program, insisted that I become a member of his family of "crazy-wackos," as he fondly referred to the cast. I was recuperating from an automobile accident in which a friend had been killed, and I was in a state of deep depression. So this was just the boost I needed. For one whole television season I became known to millions of Americans as the "Bikini Girl."

Offers began to flood in. In 1969 Bob Hope took me on his annual trip to Vietnam, where we entertained the troops. Later I appeared in Las Vegas with such entertainers as Eddie Fisher, Alan King and Buddy Hackett. My own thirty-minute act included singing, dancing and comedy routines.

One day in 1973 my manager received a call from London. Jeremy Lloyd, one of the writers on *Laugh-In*, had written the screen play for a horror spoof and wanted me for the lead. He insisted that only I could play the part of Vampira, Dracula's wife. Gleefully I accepted. This was my big chance. I had appeared in two minor movies, but nothing of any great note.

The filming was to be done in England, and was to take about two months. So, early in July I was packed and on my way. Little did I realize how profoundly my life would be affected, or the hard-to-make decisions that would result.

Beginning of a New Love

Soon I was to develop warm, loving relationships, closer even than I had with members of my own family. Don't mis

understand, I was blessed with a wonderful, close family—with a father who supported and guided me and my brothers, and a mother who nurtured and cared for us. But there was another dimension, a spiritual one, to these new friendships. My cousin Peggy was responsible.

Peggy had also been in the entertainment field and had lived a freewheeling sort of life, as entertainers often do. But suddenly, in 1972, a great change came over her. She had become a Bible student. I was skeptical, however, and watched her for quite a while, figuring that the change wouldn't last. But it did, and I finally agreed to study the Bible with her to find out what it was all about.

We had only had three or four studies when I got the call from London. So off I went, followed by Peggy's encouragement, "Keep studying." Monday, the day after arriving, I phoned Jehovah's Witnesses. The man who answered was quite nice, taking down the information and promising that I would be contacted.

That very day Una called. "You must come over this evening," she encouraged. "We're preparing for our *'Watchtower'* study." *"Watchtower"* study? I really didn't know what she was talking about, but agreed to come anyway.

There were a lot of young people there. Robin and Una have four children, three of them close to my age. They literally adopted me, although I continued to stay at the hotel. I often had dinner with them and would help to wash dishes and clean up; I was welcomed as part of the family, which impressed me.

Una studied the Bible with me, using the aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. To me, it was the most marvelous thing to learn that God really has a purpose, and that the benefits of his kingdom are near at hand for the whole earth. And to realize that God is a real Person, with the personal name Jehovah! (Ps. 83:18) I became so excited about these things that I started talking to everyone on the movie set.

Una mentioned an upcoming international assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses August 1-5 at Twickenham Stadium, and encouraged me to come. Strangely, those were the only days that I had off during the whole month. So I went.

Over seventy nations were represented, and the people were embracing and greeting one another as if they'd been acquainted forever. And no police officers were around. There was no trash on the ground, no pushing, shoving or cursing, and there were over 50,000 people! It was unbelievable! I had never been in an environment like that. And the talks were interesting, especially the Bible dramas.

Upon returning to work, I rushed excitedly into the makeup room, chattering about all the things I'd seen and learned. The room cleared. Undaunted, I continued talking about these things to anyone who would listen. If there was indeed a true religion, I was convinced that it would produce people like Jehovah's Witnesses. I was beginning to love, not only these people, but also the God whom they represented.

A Different Love

"Could you move over a little to your left for me, please; I want to catch the right light on your lovely face." This was D——, the cinematographer. Everything that you see on the screen, he captures on film.

I had never really paid much attention to D—— prior to that afternoon. He had seldom spoken to me from back of that big camera. But, all of a sudden, as he continued to poke his head from behind it, I began to "notice" him for the first time.

He was really very attractive, literally tall, dark and handsome!

I have always been drawn to older, mature men—the quiet, loner types. When I think of it, D—— was about the only man on the entire set who had not made a pass at me. Naturally, then, he became extraordinarily fascinating. Moreover, he was reputedly one of the top cinematographers in Europe.

One afternoon not long afterward, D—— invited me to join him for a cocktail in the nearby "pub." Actually, a more accurate statement would be that I invited myself; I was quite bold. The man was incredibly shy, another attribute that attracted me. Day after day we would enjoy lunch together, laughing and talking about the most insignificant things—it really didn't matter, so long as we were together. Meanwhile, I continued my Bible studies at night.

"We dined at the most expensive restaurants in Europe. Money was no object."

So my conversation began to include Bible subjects. Each day I would eagerly tell him about the wonderful things that God promises those who serve Him, and how He purposes to restore this earth to a paradise. D—— would always pay close attention and nod his head affirmatively each time that I asked whether he would enjoy these things.

We dined at the most expensive restaurants in Europe. Money was no object. And there were always the beautiful, exquisite gifts for me to open. The man was an absolute jewel! He was kind, generous, loving, thoughtful and warm. His mild sense of humor was typically English—charming. I had never met anyone like him. For the first time in my life I found myself seriously considering marriage. Whenever I was with him I felt completely happy.

It was a Saturday afternoon in August, while we were sailing slowly down the river Thames, that D—— proposed marriage. My first thought was, "Won't it be absolutely wonderful to live together in paradise forever!" The Bible's promise was close to my heart: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Ps. 37:29.

Both Loves Grow

The film was completed in September, and I returned home to Los Angeles to get my affairs in order. We corresponded regularly, at least three times a week. His absence only made me realize how much I was in love with him. But, at the same time, I became more involved in Bible study and with the fellowship of the Witnesses of the local congregation.

Frank and Annette, the couple who studied the Bible with me in America, were in the full-time preaching work, and soon much of my time was spent with them in this activity. I really enjoyed it. So the tenor of my letters to D—— came to focus primarily on the things I was talking to others about.

How fine it will be, I would write, when God's kingdom does come and God's will is really done on earth, even as Jesus taught his followers to pray! (Matt. 6:9, 10) The coming of God's kingdom will mean the end of all present-day forms of rule, I explained, even as the Bible says: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Dan. 2:44) Then, after the establishment of his rule, God "will wipe

"He had purchased a castle and had made other postmarriage living arrangements."

out every tear from [people's] eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore." —Rev. 21:4.

These promises had come to mean so much to me, and I wanted so badly for D—— to start studying the Bible and also come to learn and believe them. I sent him Robin's address and phone number. However, periodic checks with Robin revealed that D—— never made an attempt to get in touch with him, and this grieved me.

On January 5, 1974, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah God by being baptized. About three months later D—— arrived in the States. He was working on a film and, upon its completion, he had intentions of taking me back with him to live in England. He had purchased a castle and had made other postmarriage living arrangements.

I went into shock at the prospect of meeting him again. I didn't know what to do. I literally begged Frank to accompany me, for it had really begun to disturb me that D—— manifested no interest in spiritual matters. Frank tactfully explained that I would have to resolve the situation myself, based on my knowledge and love for God's righteous laws and principles. He assured me, though, that Jehovah would be with me.—1 Cor. 10:13.

It was exactly as I had imagined. The moment that I set eyes on D—— my heart began to beat fast and loud. I felt sure that everyone in the room could hear it. (Song of Sol. 4:9) That feeling was still there all right! Suddenly he reached for me, motioning for a warm embrace. I immediately extended my right arm . . . and we shook hands. Such a puzzled look appeared on his handsome face!

Making Clear Where I Stood

D—— invited me to join him for lunch in order for us to finalize our plans. I made absolutely sure that the restaurant was well lit and full of people. In fact, we wound up sitting outside in a sidewalk café.

"A great deal has happened since last we were together," I said. "I wrote you about my newly found religious beliefs, and how Jehovah's standards must be met if we are to have his favor. So, I'm going to talk now and I would appreciate it very much if you would allow me to finish all that I must say to you, without interruption."

I then proceeded to explain how marriage is a divine institution, authorized by God, and so his laws must be respected in order for marriage to be a real success. (Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:22-24; Matt. 19:4-6) I also told him that if I wanted to be obedient to Jehovah, I could marry only one who was himself a servant of the true God. The Bible commands Christians to marry "only in the Lord," and also says:

"We wound up sitting outside in a sidewalk café."

"Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness?" —1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14.

Furthermore, I reemphasized the Bible's standard of conduct for single persons. They are not entitled to sex relations; this privilege is reserved for married people.

(Heb. 13:4) Also, I explained how the Bible warns against uncleanness and loose conduct.—Gal. 5:19-21.

The whole morning I had been praying for God's help to explain these things. And now how grateful I was to have been able to call back to mind what I wanted to say! But it was time for D—— to go back to work. "Please have dinner with me tonight," he said. "We'll talk some more. There is so very much I still do not understand, darling." He seemed so sincere.

As I slowly drove homeward, I felt quite pleased with myself. But I was very disappointed in D——. I had been hoping that he would say, "When do I start my Bible study?" So I asked Jehovah in prayer that, if need be, he would just completely remove from my heart the desire and love I felt for this man.

Grateful for My Decision

At seven-thirty D—— phoned and wanted to come by and pick me up. Well, I was determined to find out just what his intentions were before I made another move. So I insisted that he tell me exactly why he had never contacted Robin to study the Bible, and why, in all his letters, he had never responded regarding the spiritual matters about which I had written so much. I told him that he must tell me, or else forget the whole matter —our relationship and all. There was a long pause.

Finally, he said: "If I told you the reason, you would hit the ceiling." The conversation teetered for a moment or two until, upon my persistence, he blurted it all out: "I attend a spiritistic church; I have for years."

"I was determined to find out just what his intentions were before I made another move."

He went on to relate that for the past twenty years he has been in close and constant contact with his deceased father. He believed that his father had survived in some spirit form, and that the frequent communications he carried on were with his father. He said, in effect, that he didn't really believe in God.

I was stunned! For all these months he had kept from me his true beliefs and feelings about God, apparently realizing that I wouldn't marry him if I knew! I felt like a victim of deception. How close I had come to entering a relationship that could never bring what I wanted from marriage—what Robin and Una and Frank and Annette had! As I quietly sat and listened, every vestige of feeling that I had felt for him began to vanish.

Then I started to talk to him as I would to someone I had just met at the door in the preaching work. I explained the grave danger that he was in spiritually, describing the source of spiritism. I told him that his dead father was unconscious, and that no part of him was alive somewhere. The Bible says: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." —Eccl. 9:5; Ezek. 18:20.

So, I explained, it was not his father with whom he was communicating, but it was with an evil spirit who was impersonating his father. (2 Cor. 11:14, 15; Eph. 6:11, 12) And particularly *did I* stress that there is, indeed, a true God, and that no matter what he had done in the past, if he turned to Jehovah with the desire to serve Him, God would gladly accept him.—Isa. 55:7.

When I said good-bye and hung up, immediately I thanked Jehovah for the wisdom of his principles that protected me

from making a grave mistake that I would regret the rest of my life. Although D—— made attempts to continue our relationship, I never saw him again. And how grateful I am that I have held to my decision to obey the Bible principle to marry "only in the Lord"!—1 Cor. 7:39.

I appeared many times on radio and television to publicize the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Africa

An Unexpected Development

It was about this time that I received a call from the American Broadcasting Company, ABC television. Months before, prior to my baptism, I had done a pilot show, and now they wanted it as a regular-feature program. So I found myself under contract to play the character role Christie Love. Since I was legally bound, I fulfilled my obligation, but I refused to play any scenes that violated Scriptural principles. The New York *Sunday News* commented about this:

"When the series swung into production, she refused to carry through the concepts of the swinging, slugging Christie Love character. She demanded violence be kept out of the scripts. She wouldn't be a party to lying on the show, even though Christie Love as an undercover cop required deception to be effective. She wouldn't raise her voice to a superior. She insisted on being modest at all times and subdued her natural sensuality."

The show ran for twenty-six weeks on national television. Sometimes the schedule was hectic to produce the weekly one-hour show, but it was understood by all that on my nights for Christian meetings I was to quit at 5 p.m.—no matter what. It was in my contract. I never missed meetings, and despite the heavy schedule, I was able to spend much time in the preaching work.

A Full, Happy Life

I can truthfully say how delightfully happy I am today. I have many loving friends, and have had marvelous experiences. One of these was being able to share in publicizing the terrible persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi, East Africa, and in Benin. And since last year I have enjoyed being a regular pioneer, as full-time preachers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. What a pleasure it has been to see three persons with whom I have studied the Bible dedicate their lives to Jehovah and be baptized!

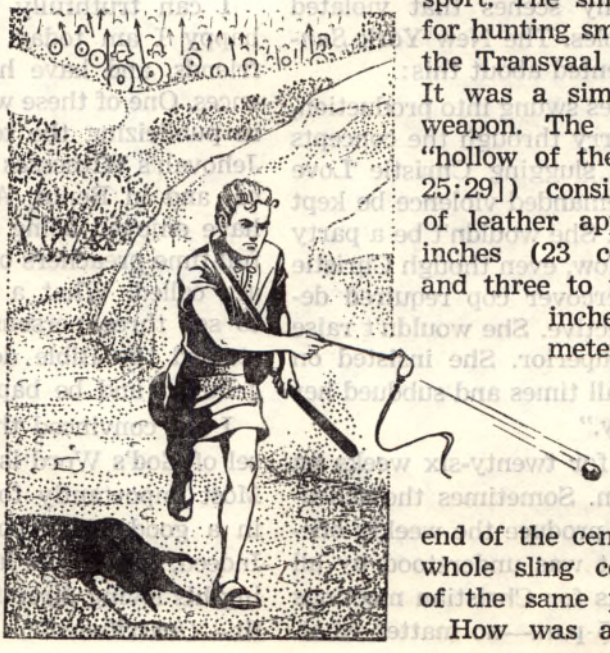
I am convinced that heeding the counsel of God's Word is the best way to live. Most importantly for me, it has resulted in a good, clean conscience before God. Indeed, Jehovah is faithful, and by following his loving direction we can only benefit.—*Contributed.*

The Sling
—ANCIENT BUT EFFECTIVE WEAPON

By "Awake!" correspondent in South Africa

"THEN David thrust his hand into his bag and took a stone from there and slung it, so that he struck the Philistine in his forehead and the stone sank into his forehead, and he went falling upon his face to the earth." (1 Sam. 17:49) This famous exploit, one of the most dramatic incidents recorded in the Bible, well illustrates the power of the sling. With one stone, young David felled the giant Goliath, powerful champion of the Philistines.

The outcome of that renowned fight depended, not on weapon superiority or skill, but upon Jehovah God, who supported young David. Before the encounter, David said: "I am coming to you with the name of Jehovah of armies, . . . whom you have taunted. . . . And all this congregation will know that neither with sword nor with spear does Jehovah save, because to Jehovah belongs the battle." Doubtless the stone from David's sling was guided and given unusual force by God. It sank into Goliath's forehead, striking down the giant. Thereafter, David "definitely put him to death" by means of Goliath's own sword.—1 Sam. 17:45-51.



Even though David had God's help in this conflict, the sling certainly played a significant part. Why was it so effective? Exactly what is a sling? And how is it used?

The Sling and Its Use

Among the early settlers of southern Africa, stone slinging was a competitive sport. The sling was also used for hunting small game, both in the Transvaal and in Rhodesia. It was a simple, easily made weapon. The center part (or "hollow of the sling" [1 Sam. 25:29]) consisted of a piece of leather approximately nine inches (23 centimeters) long and three to three and a half inches (7.5 to 9 centimeters) wide in the middle, tapering off at both ends. Leather thongs were attached to each end of the center part. Or, the whole sling could be cut out of the same piece of leather.

How was a sling used? A

right-handed person would loop the end of one of the thongs around a finger of his right hand, or would tie it to his right wrist, with the thong passing over the palm of the hand. The end of the other thong would be doubled back and held in the same hand.

The slinger would place a stone in the center part of the sling. With his left hand stretched forward, he would hold the stone in position. Then, letting go with his left hand, he would swing his right hand downward counterclockwise. As the sling came to a level behind him, he would swing it forward horizontally, also counterclockwise, in a full circle above his head. At just the right moment, he would release the unattached thong, thus slinging the stone forward. Some slingers often do not swing the sling overhead, but throw simply with a powerful downward swing of the arm.

Great Force and Range

With the length of the slinger's arm and the thongs to give it momentum, the stone can be hurled with tremendous force. In fact, a stone slung in this manner can penetrate the door of an automobile! But it requires much practice and perfect timing to use the sling accurately.

Smooth stones are usually used as missiles. David chose this type when he went to meet Goliath. (1 Sam. 17:40) Stones about two and a half inches (6.3 centimeters) in diameter are the most suitable. But slingstones can vary considerably in size.

Being such a simple weapon and with ready-made ammunition, it is not surprising that the sling has continued to be used from very early times. Says the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Eleventh Edition, Vol. 25, p. 242): "The sling as a weapon is probably the earliest form of device known to mankind by which an increase of force and range was given to the arm of a thrower of missiles."

For example, the writer of an article in the *Scientific American* of October 1973, said: "I asked some young men in eastern Turkey to sling ordinary pebbles for me. In five out of 11 trials the pebbles struck beyond a mark placed 200 meters [656 feet] away, and the three best casts fell between 230 and 240 meters [755 and 787 feet] away. None of the young men appeared to be a skilled slinger; at least none had a sling in his possession at the time. Moreover, the missiles were pebbles selected at random rather than the carefully shaped stone, clay or lead missiles launched by slingers in Greek and Roman times. On the basis of Xenophon's comment alone it seems probable that a slinger casting lead missiles could attain a range in excess of 400 meters [1,312 feet]."

Since the sling was a weapon of such range and force, it was used in warfare by the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans and others. Slingers also occupied a place in the armies of Israel and Judah. (2 Ki. 3:25; 2 Chron. 26:14) Speaking of a company of seven hundred left-handed Benjaminites, the Bible says: "Every one of these was a slinger of stones to a hairbreadth and would not miss." (Judg. 20:15, 16) According to the Jewish historian Josephus, slingers fought in the Jewish armies against Rome as late as the first century of our Common Era.

Today, of course, men possess missiles infinitely more powerful and devastating. But how comforting it is to know that soon, under the reign of the Prince of Peace, all weapons—whether slings or military rockets—will be things of the past and earth's inhabitants will learn war no more!—Isa. 2:4; 9:6.

Let's Have a Look at The Flowering Dogwood

IS THERE anyone whose spirit is not uplifted by seeing the blossoming trees of springtime? One of the prettiest is the flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*).

Dogwood grows in the temperate regions of the northern hemisphere, and one type thrives in Peru. The flowering dogwood is found over a wide range of the eastern United States. In fact, it flourishes from Florida to southern Canada and westward to Kansas and Oklahoma. It is a bushy tree, seldom reaching more than forty feet (12 meters) in height. The dogwood is often found growing under the taller trees in the woodlands. There are some forty kinds of dogwood, fourteen of which grow in the United States.

But, why the name "dogwood"? The origin of the name is uncertain and sources tend to disagree about the beginning of its use. We do know, however, that in England during the early seventeenth century a diluted decoction made from the bark of the European species (*Cornus sanguinea*) was used to wash mangy dogs and for treating dog bites. That may account for the name "dogwood."

The bark of the flowering dogwood contains the same substances found in the cinchona tree, though in different proportions. As you may know, the cinchona tree is the source of quinine. From the days of the Spanish explorers in South America, its value for reducing fever has been well known. During the Civil War in the United States, however, the bark of the dogwood tree was employed in making a tonic used in treating wounded and sick soldiers. It was used both for fever and as an antiseptic.

A Beauty Linked with Legend

Yet, the famous blossom is the thing that most people think of when you mention the name "dogwood." It is a beautiful flower. Its petals are called bracts because, technically, they are not petals. The true flower of the dogwood is the cluster of tiny yellow blossoms gracefully surrounded by white or pink bracts. These bracts are notched with rust-colored touches at the tip. This rusty touch has given rise to a legend.

According to that legend, Jesus Christ was impaled on a dogwood tree. Because of his compassion for the dogwood and so that it would no longer be used as an instrument of impalement, Jesus decreed

that it should become a smaller tree and that its petals should bear the marks of the nailprints in his hands. This, says tradition, resulted in the rust-colored touches around the notches in the bracts. So prominent has this legend become that it is the *only* thing many people think of when they see the dogwood today. But remember, this is only fictitious tradition. The Bible says nothing of the sort.

Both Useful and Pretty

In making the dogwood, the Creator produced not only a pretty tree but quite a useful one. In addition to the antipyretic use of its bark, the American colonists found the dogwood's hard, heavy and close-grained wood excellent for tool handles, shuttle blocks for weaving, engraver's blocks and bearings, as well as charcoal for gunpowder. They made a good black ink by mixing dogwood bark with sulfate of iron. Sufferers from intermitting fevers dosed themselves with a medicine brewed from the bark, and they even used the twigs for brushing their teeth! The colonists made furniture from the trunks and lower branches and warmed themselves before fires fueled with the smaller limbs. The leaves were used as fodder for cattle, and are quite rich in calcium. Moreover, the colonists knew that the Indians colored their blankets and belts with a scarlet dye derived from the root bark of the dogwood.

Would you like to have a flowering dogwood in your yard so that you can enjoy its beauty all year around? Besides purchasing a nursery specimen, a person can graft dogwoods, grow them from cuttings or plant the seed and await the sprout. The bright-red fruit, or drupes, which ripen in the autumn when the trees are a brilliant scarlet, are both decorative and useful, as they contain two seeds. These seeds should be soaked overnight in rainwater and the outer covering peeled off before planting. Dogwoods grow readily from cuttings of the mature wood, and they have been grafted in North America since 1731. The faint pink and the deep red grafted together produce a stunning effect at the height of the blooming season.

Some Helpful Hints

Dogwoods are equally at home in the full sun or in the shade of larger trees. However, they seem to bloom more beautifully in full sunlight. They adapt to almost every variety of soil, from good to very poor. Nursery specimens actually are easy to plant. But do not fertilize them, as this can kill them. They must be planted shallow and kept well watered and well mulched, especially during the first summer. A piece of chicken wire placed around the little tree will protect it from men and machines until it becomes larger and less vulnerable.

At the height of the blooming season, you may want to bring some dogwood indoors to beautify the interior of your home. Here is a tip that will make the blossoms last longer and stay fresher looking: split the stems and peel back an inch or two. Then plunge them at once into hot, but not boiling, water for a minute. This stops the capillary action and will prolong the fresh look, as will daily changing of the water in the flower container.

With its horizontal branches and colorful foliage, the dogwood is quite striking in appearance and, understandably, has been chosen by both Virginia and North Carolina as their state flower. It is also the provincial flower of British Columbia, Canada, and the state tree of Missouri. The dogwood is a delight to use in landscaping either a small yard or an industrial park. But to many of us, the dogwood is a beautiful tribute to Jehovah God, who created all the vegetation on the earth that makes life so pleasant for mankind.

Coffee, Tea, and Christians

WHEN 10 a.m. comes in Poland, it is time for *drugie śniadanie.* In Germany the 4 p.m. *kaffeeklatsch* is almost a ritual. Who in England would think of skipping "teatime"? And in the United States the midmorning or afternoon "coffee break" is ingrained. Yes, throughout the world persons have the habit of pausing over a cup of coffee or tea.

But popular as such customs are, serious questions or objections sometimes come up about the wisdom of drinking tea or coffee. Such questions particularly arise with Christians who are striving to guide their life by the wise advice and principles of God's Word. The objections that are raised center on two main points:

Some persons feel that it is unwise, even unchristian, to drink such beverages because they contain caffeine. They point out that caffeine is a drug, and they hold that it is addictive, much as are cocaine, heroin and nicotine (from tobacco). So, they reason, if a Christian rightly avoids addiction to these other drugs, should he not also shun the caffeine in coffee and tea?

The other main major objection to these beverages is the claim that they harm your health. Heart disease, ulcers and cancer of the bladder are some of the problems that have been linked with coffee and tea. Thus, it is reasoned, since a Christian has dedicated his life and body to God, he should avoid things that would harm him needlessly.—Rom. 12:1.

Amidst the many claims made, how can you reach a balanced decision? The counsel of the Bible can aid you to do so.

A Drug

Caffeine is a drug, a stimulant, found in "food" such as coffee, tea and chocolate products. A cup of coffee contains between 100 and 150 milligrams of caffeine, a cup of tea 90 milligrams, a bottle of cola drink 40 to 72 milligrams, a cup of cocoa 50 milligrams and a bar (85 grams; 3 ounces) of bittersweet chocolate about 75 milligrams.

With most persons caffeine stimulates the heart and kidneys, quickens reaction time and promotes alertness. Caffeine, though, seems to aid some older persons to relax. Also, caffeine is sometimes used to treat headaches, because it affects the blood vessels of the brain. Yes, the drug caffeine produces effects on the human body.

However, does the Bible condemn eating or drinking things that contain natural substances that may stimulate or relax you?

We are helped to get a correct answer by examining what the Scriptures say about alcoholic beverages, for alcohol is also a drug, one that calms or acts as a depressant on the brain.

There is no question that God's Word is opposed to drinking so much wine, beer or other alcoholic beverages that one becomes drunk. Christians are warned against "excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches." (1 Pet. 4:3; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) And we read: "Wine is a ridiculer, intoxicating liquor is boisterous, and everyone going

astray by it is not wise."—Prov. 20:1.

What about drinking such things in moderation? While the Bible does not specifically urge all persons to drink things containing the drug alcohol, it does not say that doing so in moderation is wrong just because a drug is involved. In Biblical times wine was a common beverage with meals. (Gen. 27:25; 1 Sam. 16:20) Everyone has to take in fluids. And there simply is no Biblical ban on sometimes making wine, beer or the like part of one's normal fluid intake. Jesus did so.—Luke 7:34.

The Bible does not ignore the fact that beverages containing the drug alcohol can affect a person's body or mind. Psalm 104:15 lists as one of God's provisions "wine that makes the heart of mortal man rejoice." Accordingly, God's Word often associates wine with joy and pleasure. (Eccl. 9:7; John 2:2-10) And alcohol's ability to calm or depress the nervous system of a distressed person is also noted in the Bible without disapproval.—Prov. 31:6, 7.

Do you see the significance of this? Since the Bible does not forbid a Christian's including some alcoholic beverages in his fluid intake, how can it truthfully be said that because coffee and tea contain caffeine it is unscriptural to consume them, even to use these drinks because of their awakening or calming effect?

'But,' some may object, 'don't coffee and tea drinkers get addicted to caffeine?' In *Drugs, Society, and Human Behavior,* Professor R. S. Oakley comments:

> "Dependence on caffeine is real, and one withdrawal symptom that has been well substantiated is the headache, which generally develops in habitual users . . . after about 18 hours of abstinence. Some reports suggest that nausea and lethargy may precede the actual headache."

On the other hand, in an article on coffee *Science Digest* (June 1975) quotes Dr. M. Seevers of the University of Michigan as saying: "No physical dependence occurs with any of the psychomotor stimulants," such as coffee.

However, even if dependence or a mild form of "addiction" to the caffeine in coffee or tea is possible, from the strictly Biblical standpoint that does not mean that a Christian must avoid them. Nearly everyone knows that a person can get addicted to alcohol and experience severe withdrawal symptoms if deprived of it. Yet, the Bible does not forbid drinking alcoholic beverages in moderation.

Still, the fact that some tea and coffee drinkers seem to become "addicted" and "must" have their regular dose of caffeine should give a reasonable person food for thought. What if you found that when deprived of coffee or tea you became nervous, somewhat sick or even irritable to the point of not manifesting the "fruitage of the spirit"? (Gal. 5:22, 23) You might conclude that a serious review of your way of life and habits is in order.

Caffeine and Your Health

Many persons have reconsidered their drinking of coffee and tea after reading reports that these beverages can damage their health. But, to be fair, there have also been reports contesting these dangers, indicating that moderate use of tea or coffee poses no substantial risk for most persons. Dr. Jean Mayer, former professor of nutrition at Harvard University, reviewed both sides in a June 1976 article. Summarizing some of his comments:

> *Heart disease:* A study by a drug surveillance program "found that persons who drink one to five cups [of coffee] a day have a 60% greater risk of a heart attack." Yet another long-term and highly regarded study "found no statistical relationship between coffee and any form of heart disease."
>
> *Cancer:* "Two studies at the Harvard School of Public Health showed a statisti-

cal relationship between coffee and a higher incidence of cancer of the bladder and lower urinary tract." However, 'a Canadian study found no such relationship.'

Ulcers: Coffee stimulates secretion of gastric acids. "A study of college students revealed that men who drink one or two cups a day have a 150% greater risk of later developing ulcers. . . . In contrast to these findings, a large, long-term study done by [a medical-care program] could detect no association between drinking coffee and developing peptic ulcers."

Various other health aspects related to use of caffeine might be considered, but note the conclusion of the *Science Digest* article cited earlier:

"Most medical experts today admit there is no firm proof that coffee by itself can precipitate fatal diseases."

Not to be overlooked is this: Even if it is determined that there is a potential risk, might it not depend on how much and how regularly a person drinks coffee or tea? And might the "risk" be related to an individual's condition of health?

What the Bible says about alcoholic beverages can be tied in here. Who does not know that overindulgence in them can damage your health? And is it not clear that some persons, because of their health or previous experience with alcoholic beverages, should not drink them at all? Nonetheless, the Creator, who has seen more of the effects of alcoholic drinks than any human, does not categorically condemn their moderate use. So, would this not be true also of coffee and tea?

As to another Bible example, consider honey. Some persons, believing that refined sugar is bad for one's health, prefer to use honey as a sweetener. Still, the Bible points out: "Is it honey that you have found? Eat what is sufficient for you, that you may not take too much of it and have to vomit it up. The eating of too much honey is not good."—Prov. 25:16, 27.

Yes, you could damage your health by consuming too much honey, too much sugar, salt, fat, milk, alcohol or a caffeine-containing food or drink. And there undoubtedly are some persons who should abstain altogether from sugar, alcoholic drinks or the rest. But other persons may find that they can or want to eat or drink these things in moderation. And when it comes to consuming such things, we cannot ignore the fact that a person is doing something that is basically normal and necessary—eating or drinking. It is not as if he was forcing upon his body an unnatural process that is unquestionably defiling and harmful, such as taking smoke into the lungs in order to satisfy an addiction to nicotine.

Nevertheless, even in eating and drinking it is reasonable to be aware of what might pose some health risk. Whether it is honey, salt, fat, milk, an alcoholic drink, or a caffeine-containing beverage, you can give thought to factors such as: The condition of your body and any tendencies toward certain diseases that you have; the amount and regularity of eating or drinking the "food"; your circumstances and what is available to eat or drink; and, finally, what you have learned about the effect of this "food" on the health of others who have consumed it over the years.

Conclusion

While "moderation" is an important word when it comes to coffee and tea, equally important is "understanding." Whether you do or do not choose to drink either beverage, strive to show understanding toward those doing otherwise.

Since there is no Scriptural basis for categorically ruling out all drinking of coffee or tea, you should, without criticizing, allow others to make their own decision. And they should deal likewise with you. For from the Biblical standpoint, whether a Christian will drink coffee or tea in moderation is a personal matter.

Effects of TV Violence

◈ To test the effects of TV violence, children of the same temperament were recently matched together in pairs. One was shown violent programs and the other was shown nonviolent programs. In every pair the child exposed to the violent TV programs became the more physically aggressive of the two. As to the long-term effects of viewing TV violence, *Science Digest* reports this about a ten-year experiment: "A boy's aggressiveness at age 19 was directly and significantly related to the amount of violent television he watched at age eight regardless of his initial level of aggressiveness, social status, intellectual ability, or parents' behaviors." The publication concluded: "Scientists are discovering that certain effects, notably increased aggression, may last a lifetime."

Fanatical Priest Arrested

◈ In Greece, the Athens *Daily Post* tells of "a fanatic priest" who was arrested for firing a shotgun in an attempt to prevent Jehovah's Witnesses from carrying on their peaceful Christian work in his village. The priest was charged with illegal possession of arms, illegal use of arms, disturbance of public order and tranquillity and insult. Police also arrested five villagers who aided the priest.

Few Jobless

◈ In an era when high and persistent joblessness affects many nations, the number of Switzerland's unemployed remains very low. It is only about 15,000, according to a recent report. Since the country's population is about 6.4 million, that is an unemployment rate of less than one quarter of one percent.

Largest Stone Meteorite

◈ A meteorite shower in China produced what is claimed to be the largest stone meteorite known. The shower occurred in northeast China's Kirin Province. On its way through the earth's atmosphere, the meteor broke up into more than 100 meteorites. The largest one struck close to a village and shattered on impact. It weighed a total of 1,770 kilograms (3,900 pounds), nearly 700 kilograms (1,540 pounds) more than the largest stone meteorite previously reported.

Wrong Drugs Given

◈ Dr. M. R. Achong of St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario, in Canada, told a meeting of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons that many patients get drugs needlessly. His analysis involved patients in three hospital wards—gynecology, surgery and medical. For 50 percent of the gynecology patients, 42 percent of the surgical patients, and 12 percent of the medical patients the drugs ordered were either needless, unsuitable or given in wrong doses. In London, Ontario, kidney expert Dr. Adam Linton said that a study of 82 kidney patients at Victoria Hospital revealed that 39 of them had been given drugs known to be harmful to the kidneys. In 17 cases, he stated, it appeared that the drug had directly caused kidney failure.

Birth Defects from Pills

◈ The *New England Journal of Medicine* says that a study of 50,000 pregnant women showed that those who took female hormones in early pregnancy had more than twice as many babies with heart defects. Those who took birth-control pills in early pregnancy had three times as many babies with heart defects.

Trumpet Helps Mailman

◈ Ancient Greek historian Herodotus said regarding mail carriers: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." He would have been proud of the postman servicing the village of Mikrolivado in Greece. While on his way there to deliver mail he was attacked by a pack of six wolves. But by blowing a trumpet that he was carrying he dispersed the wolves and continued his work.

Replacing Slide Rules

◈ At one time many mathematicians and scientists used slide rules to make numerical computations. However, the recent widespread use of pocket calculators is making the slide rule an 'endangered species.' One slide-rule manufacturer said: "The slide rule will still be around, the way the horse is still around. But the electronic calculator is taking its place, the way the automobile

replaced the horse." Some people still buy slide rules, since they cost less than the cheapest calculator and have no batteries to replace.

Giant Sturgeon Returns

◈ Because of overfishing, the giant sturgeon, native to the Amur River basin in the Soviet far east, was in danger of becoming extinct. However, a ban was put on all fishing of this species twenty years ago. Since then their numbers have doubled. Some fully grown sturgeons reach a length of six meters (20 feet) and weigh up to a ton.

Which European Has More?

◈ The Statistical Department of the European Common Market reports that among Common Market countries, Denmark has proportionately more telephones, 429, for each 1,000 of its citizens. Great Britain has the most televisions, 309. Luxembourg has the most cars, 357. The country listed as having the least in all three categories was Ireland.

Coldest January

◈ This past January was the coldest in the eastern two thirds of the United States "since the founding of the Republic," according to the National Weather Service. It reached this conclusion after consulting government records dating back to the year 1800, and from earlier written records.

Unusual Reactions to Fire

◈ A Tokyo insurance company says that nearly one third of the victims of fire claim that they fled their burning house with articles of almost no value. They took such things as a pillow, potlid, flower vase, umbrella, or just one shoe. A combination of panic and the instinctive urge to want to save something may be one reason why. Many said that when they came to their senses and found themselves with useless items, they dashed back into their burning house to recover something more valuable. Only 10 percent said that they gathered up cash and brought it out of the house.

Business Crime Wave

◈ American businesses of all sizes are being hit with a soaring crime wave. Crime now costs businesses about $40 billion a year, more than 17 percent of the total income before taxes. That is about $185 for every man, woman and child in the country. Business crime includes bribery, kickbacks, bankruptcy fraud, embezzlement, pilferage, insurance fraud, theft of trade secrets, and others. According to insurance officials, 30 percent of all business failures each year are the direct result of internal theft. And this theft is being committed by all kinds of people, from ordinary workers to chief executives.

Unlisted Telephone Numbers

◈ In a search for more privacy, more people are asking that their telephone numbers not be listed in telephone books. In Los Angeles, about 38 percent of the phones are now unlisted; in Chicago, 33 percent; in New York city, more than 30 percent, a third more than five years ago. While privacy increases, the overall usefulness of the telephone system decreases, since potential callers cannot find out what number to call.

Addicted to Gambling

◈ An earthquake jolted the mountain gambling resort of South Lake Tahoe in the United States. While it shook hundreds of gamblers who were "feeding" slot machines in a casino, most of them kept right on playing. A spokesman for one of the casinos said: "The floor would have to fall out from under them before they'd stop gambling."

Trapped by Poor Spelling

◈ A teller at a New York City bank was handed a badly scrawled stickup note by a robber. Written on a withdrawal slip, the note was so poorly made out, and the spelling so bad, that the teller told the man: "I don't understand you. You'll have to make it out again." However, she understood enough to know what his intentions were. To her surprise, the man walked back to the customers' counter, pulled out a new withdrawal slip and began to rewrite his stickup note. In the meantime, the clerk pushed silent alarms, and the robber was quickly captured.

Charity Frauds

◈ When funds are solicited for some charities, very little goes to the needy people. Most of the money collected goes for "expenses." The Toronto *Star* reports that a "charitable organization" in that city raised about $500,000 in the name of under-privileged children. But a court judge found that less than 10 percent of the money was actually used for the children. In his comments on the case, the judge said that the evidence showed "excessive disbursements for directors' salaries, staff wages and bonuses."

Suicide "Epidemic"

◈ The Detroit *News* observes that "experts call youthful suicides a frightening 'epidemic.'" The suicide rate among persons under the age of twenty-five has tripled in a recent ten-year period. The actual number is even higher since many suicides, such as by drugs, go undetected. Females account for more than 70 percent of the attempted suicides, but 40 percent of the actual ones.

Persistent Ants

◈ Pest-control experts admit: "Eradication of the imported fire ant in the U.S. is currently

impossible." Fire ants were first discovered in the country in 1918, in Alabama. Since then they have spread to eight southeastern states, from the Carolinas to Texas, infesting an estimated 150 million acres (60 million hectares). The ant's sting is painful, and each ant is capable of about twenty stings. For a small number of people, the sting may be fatal. The ants also pose an agricultural problem because, at times, their large mounds interfere with the harvesting and mowing of forage and field crops. In some places, these mounds may stand about 18 inches (46 centimeters) high, or more, and there may be as many as 30 to 50 mounds an acre. However, the fire ants are not without merit. They have the beneficial effect of being predators of other insects that are dangerous to livestock and field crops.

Most Feared Disease

◈ A Gallup Poll taken of Americans confirms that the disease they fear most is cancer. Of those polled, 58 percent listed cancer first, followed by blindness (21 percent), heart disease (10 percent), arthritis, polio and the loss of a limb (2 percent each). Tuberculosis and deafness were each listed by only one percent of the people, with 3 percent being undecided.

Fairy Tales by Phone

◈ *Soviet Life* magazine hails the fact that "twenty-five types of information are supplied by telephone in Leningrad." Included in this service is the opportunity "by dialing the right number [to] hear a fairy tale," says the report. "This is the sixth year that the city's best actors have been telling these stories to little Leningraders."

Lowest Fertility Rate

◈ American women are bearing fewer children than at any time in the country's history. On the average, the fertility rate has fallen to 1.8 children for each woman. At that rate, each married couple would not quite replace themselves. Hence, in time, there would be no increase in the nation's population. In fact, there would be a decrease. One consequence that has been immediately noticed is that there are now 7.6 million fewer American children ages 13 and under than there were in 1970. As a result, the elementary school-age population has declined by 5.8 million, or over 10 percent since 1970. This also affects a wide range of other activities, such as a decline in the manufacture of children's clothing, baby food and other items.