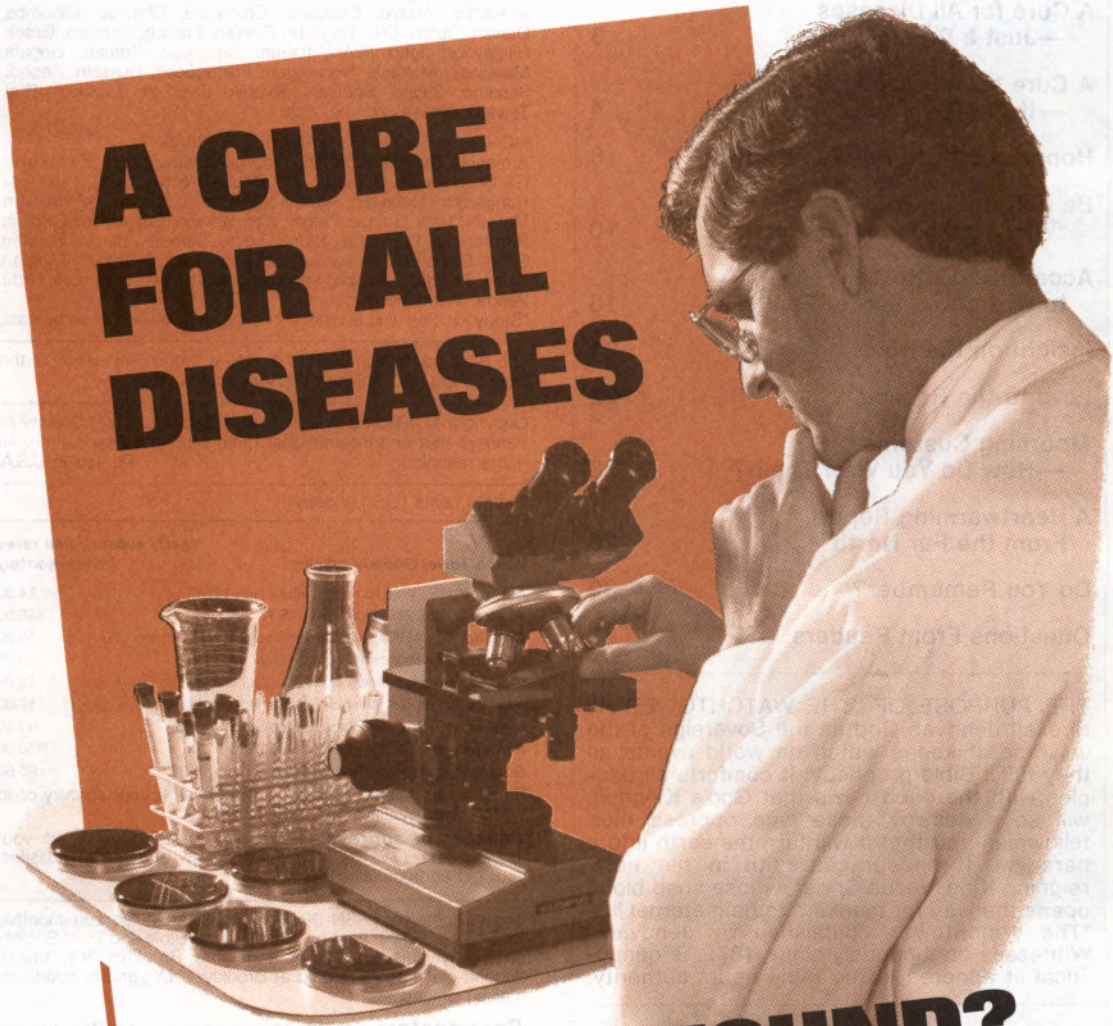


April 15, 1985

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**A CURE
FOR ALL
DISEASES**



CAN IT BE FOUND?

The Watchtower[®]

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

April 15, 1985
Vol. 106, No. 8

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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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A Cure for All Diseases *Just a Dream?*

JOHN was a very old man. He had been in exile on a small island for some time. It might appear he was to live out his life in isolation. But in that situation he received a message full of encouragement for him—and for us.

In a dramatic vision John heard a loud voice from heaven saying: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind . . . He 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."

Then, he saw a river with sparkling, crystal-clear waters. Along its banks he saw luxuriant fruit trees. The leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations. What an exhilarating experience!

If you heard and saw what John did, would you not be excited to learn that some day all pain and suffering will cease and that all ills will be cured? Indeed, it seems too good to believe!

Why So Hard to Believe

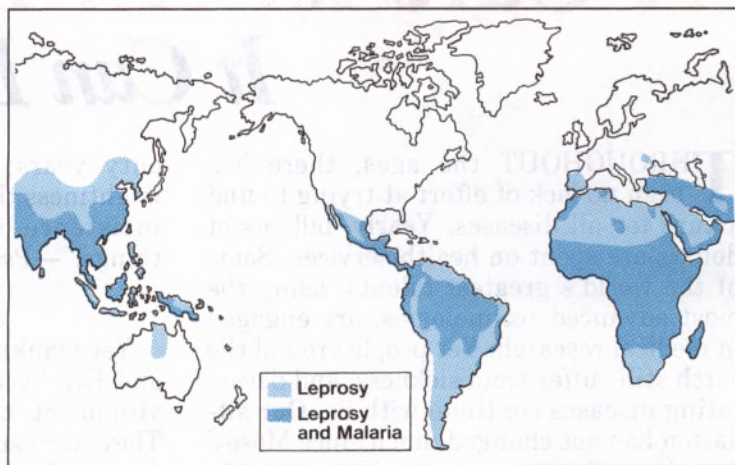
What happened there was a historical event that took place in the year 96 C.E. on the island of Patmos, off the coast of modern-day Turkey. The elderly John was the beloved apostle of Jesus Christ, and what he saw he recorded in the Holy Bible.—Revelation 1:9; 21:3, 4; 22:1, 2.

Even so, most people today find it difficult to believe that there is to be a time when diseases will be no more. Why? Human nature being what it is, we tend to reject anything that seems to go contrary to our common experience.

Regarding man's long struggle against disease, Richard Fiennes, pathologist to the Zoological Society of London, wrote in his book *Man, Nature and Disease*:

"Is the end of the battle then in sight? Man fights a hydra. When one head is removed, another appears in its place. Premature illness, incapacity, and death are still the most pressing of human problems; where in days gone by tuberculosis, pneumonia, and death in childbirth were the problems, today, coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, and other ailments have taken their place."

The killers of "days gone by" are not



Killers of the past still infect wide areas

totally banished either. *The Economist* of London reports that "in Asia, Africa and South America, one person in 10 is in some way disabled. Most of the poor will suffer diseases such as acute diarrhoea and pneumonia during their lifetimes. . . . Millions more will succumb to parasitic diseases such as malaria or schistosomiasis (ie, bilharzia [caused by a blood parasite]); others will be crippled by leprosy."

Even in the developed countries other heads of the "hydra" have baffled experts. "Doctors today are encountering exotic diseases that can be even more deadly than the classic killers such as smallpox and diphtheria," writes Edward Edelson in New York's *Daily News*.

A few years ago, the acronym AIDS would have meant hardly anything to most people. Today, this deadly disease has become known virtually to everyone, as have also Legionnaires' disease and toxic shock syndrome. Waiting in the wings are other potential killers: Ebola

fever, Lassa fever, Korean hemorrhagic fever, Reye's syndrome, Kawasaki disease, hemolytic uremic syndrome, and so on. "One thread that runs through the story of these exotic diseases is that they often present medicine with unsolved puzzles," says Edelson.

Despite medical advances, most people have resigned themselves to believing that sickness and death are ultimately unavoidable. It is difficult for them to imagine that there could ever be a time when death, pain, and disease will be no more.

What, then, about the stirring vision that John received? Will it finally turn out to be just an unfulfilled dream? We have good reasons to believe that this will not be so. Immediately after hearing the marvelous promises, John received this assurance: "Write, because these words are faithful and true." (Revelation 21:5; 22:6) How will these words come true? And will we see the fulfillment of them in our lifetime?

A Cure for All Diseases *It Can Be Found!*

THROUGHOUT the ages, there has been no lack of effort at trying to find a cure for all diseases. Yearly, billions of dollars are spent on health services. Some of the world's greatest talents, using the most advanced technologies, are engaged in medical research. Yet people around the earth still suffer from sickness, and devastating diseases continue with us. Our situation has not changed much since Moses' day. Over 3,000 years ago he wrote: "In themselves the days of our years are sev-

enty years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things."—Psalm 90:10.

A Healthy Start

Yet mankind had a perfect start. Adam and Eve lived in a clean, disease-free environment, the beautiful garden of Eden. They were supplied with plenty of healthful, wholesome food. They had stimulating, rewarding work to do. And they were

sound in body and mind.—See Genesis 1: 26-30.

God also told them how to maintain their perfect state. First he told them what they should do: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it." Then he told them what they should not do: "As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die." (Genesis 1:28; 2:17) If they, and eventually their offspring, would obey these two basic directives, they would be able to maintain their healthy, happy, and perfect state forever.

Many people today feel that the account of Adam and Eve is unscientific, merely a myth. But rather than dismissing these matters lightly, let us take a closer look.

In terms that we are familiar with today, the first command told them that they must take care of their *environment*. The second told them that they must keep their *life-style* within certain bounds set by God. Is this unscientific myth or does it underline a basis for healthful living? Note what the book *Health and Disease* by René Dubos and Maya Pines says on the matter: "One of the least appreciated influences on disease is environment. Where a man lives and how he lives may have a greater effect on his health—often in unsuspected ways—than the microbes he encounters or the genes he inherits."

What Is Disease?

In this context, disease is very much related to how we live and how we deal with our environment. Today we feel that our civilized way of life has done much to improve the general condition of health. But note what Dubos and Pines say: "The Australian aborigines, living in relative isolation in a Stone Age culture, are remarkably free of disease. In fact, it is only in the most advanced societies that civi-

lized man, through the science of modern medicine, begins to approximate the good health the world's least civilized people enjoy as a birthright."

Another of these "least civilized people" cited by the authors are the Mabaans of the Sudan. "The Mabaans enjoy longevity that would be remarkable in the most medically pampered society. Furthermore, their declining years are almost free of the usual degenerative diseases of old age. Scientists are still puzzled by the Mabaans' extraordinary health, but their stable, tranquil environment is almost certainly an important factor." To emphasize the influence of environment, the authors added: "When a Mabaan moves from home to the city of Khartoum, 650 miles [1,050 km] away, he is beset by a host of ills he has never known before."

In contrast, our "civilized" way of life has brought pollution of air and water, deforestation, overpopulation, and malnutrition for large segments of the population. Man's careless treatment of the environment has not only posed serious hazards to his health but also threatened the prospect of his continued existence on earth.—See Revelation 11:18.

It is not surprising, therefore, that disease has sometimes been defined as "a by-product of a civilized way of life." We consider ourselves civilized because we no longer live in the wild. Rather, we may live in cities in close contact with, if not literally on top of, one another. In fact, the word "civilized" comes from a Latin root meaning citizen or city dweller. But from where did the idea of city dwelling come?

The first record of it is given at Genesis 11:4: "They now said: 'Come on! Let us build ourselves a city and also a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a celebrated name for ourselves, for fear we may be scattered over all the surface of the earth.'" That proposal during

the days of Nimrod was in contradiction to God's purpose stated to Adam, namely, for humans to "fill the earth and subdue it." To do so, they were to spread out as their numbers increased. For refusing to do this, as well as for other reasons, Nimrod came to be known as being "in opposition to Jehovah." (Genesis 10:9) That defiant course, added to the rebellion in the garden of Eden, accelerated mankind down the road of decadence, disease, and death.

Even today, most of the diseases plaguing those in the affluent nations are the result of their life-style.

The Search for Health

Authorities have come to realize that mankind's health problems are not solved simply by having more medicine, more doctors, or more hospitals, even though these undoubtedly would provide short-term improvement. Rather, radical changes in the way people live and the way people deal with the environment are called for. For example, Dr. Halfdan Mahler, director-general of WHO (World Health Organization), in an essay on World Health Day, April 7, 1983, wrote:

"What can people do about their health? To give a few examples, they can take individual and community action to ensure that they have sufficient food of the right kind. They can get together to make the most of whatever safe water is available, or can be made available, making sure that it is protected from pollution. They can insist on acceptable standards of hygiene in and around their homes, in market places and shops, in schools, in factories, in canteens and restaurants. They can learn how to space the children they desire in such a way as to give each and everyone of them a good chance of survival, a reasonable education, and a decent quality of life."

Clearly, these are steps toward good

health. But the obvious questions are: How are the poor people in the underdeveloped countries to get sufficient food, safe water, and acceptable hygiene? Where will they get the finances and the skills needed to provide these essential things?

Interestingly, an article in *World Health*, the official magazine of WHO, declares: "Imagine an ideal world in which all the ingenuity, expense and human and material resources which are at present poured into military weaponry were instead devoted to improving the health of the world!" What would that do? Well, that article estimated that the arms race costs the world about \$600 thousand million a year, or one million dollars a minute, to maintain. Yet "the 14-year campaign to wipe out the killer disease of smallpox between 1967 and 1980 cost the world just \$300 million." Thus it concludes: "Clearly, if even a part of the resources at present allocated to military expenditure could be shifted instead to prevention, cure and research in the field of health, the world would be given a prodigious boost towards the goal of Health for all by the year 2000."

What about people in the developed countries? They may be better off in some respects, but, according to Dr. Mahler, they, too, "must rise to their health responsibilities, eating wisely, drinking moderately, smoking not at all, driving carefully, taking enough exercise, learning to live under the stress of city life, and helping one another to do so."

Thus we must ask: Will the nations be willing to change their policies and give the pursuit of health high priority? Will they be willing to put aside their political differences and pool their resources and efforts toward conquering disease? And will the people change their life-style to one that is more healthful? Realistically,

you will have to admit that this is very unlikely. A cure of all diseases will never be realized if we have to look to the nations for it.

The Cure Is at Hand!

To whom, then, shall we look? Well, recall the vision that the aged apostle John saw. He described it this way:

“He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of its broad way. 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.”—Revelation 22: 1, 2.

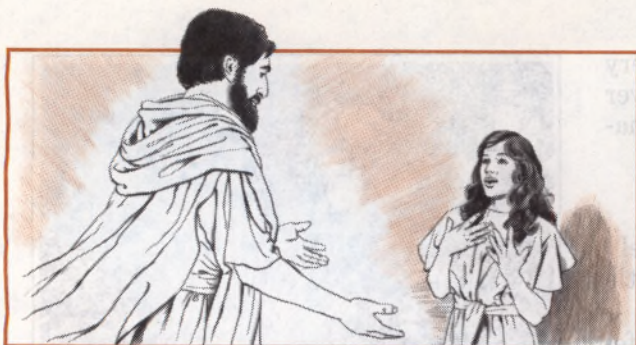
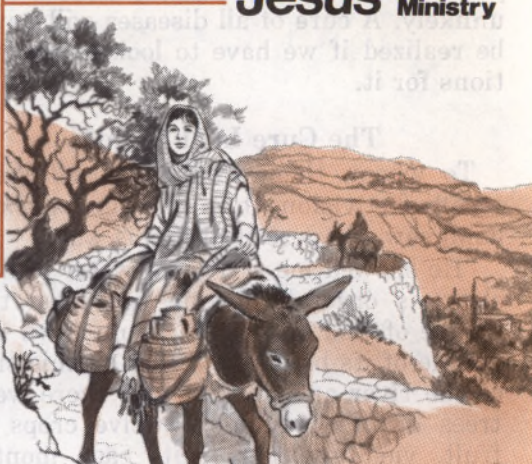
The symbolic “river of water of life” is seen flowing out from “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Clearly, then, it is to Jehovah God and the Messianic Kingdom of his Son that we must look for “the curing of the nations.” Is that not logical? God is the Creator of the human body and of the entire earth. He—more than any doctor or scientist—knows how matters can best be handled so that diseases can be overcome. Under God’s Kingdom rulership, mankind will be freed from the disease-causing and death-dealing contamination plaguing us now. Sustained and nourished by the pure, crystal-clear “water of life” and the fruits and leaves of the “trees of life”—Jehovah’s entire provision for gaining everlasting life—mankind will be cured permanently of all its diseases, spiritual and physical.* Humans will be brought back to the happy, healthy, perfect state enjoyed by their ancestors, Adam and Eve, at the beginning.



The time for God’s Kingdom to take action “to bring to ruin those ruining the earth” is at hand. (Revelation 11:18) Then many features of Bible prophecy will become a reality in a restored paradise. (Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6) This is good news for all those who desire good health God’s way. Soon the “new earth” that John saw will be here, in which “death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.”—Revelation 21: 1, 4.

Will you be among those who survive the end of this polluted and decaying system of things into that clean “new earth”? By making wise use of the time still available for learning more about God’s Kingdom and doing what he requires, you will live to see the day when a cure of all diseases will be realized.

* For a detailed explanation of these verses, please see “Babylon the Great Has Fallen!” *God’s Kingdom Rules!*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



Honored Before He Was Born

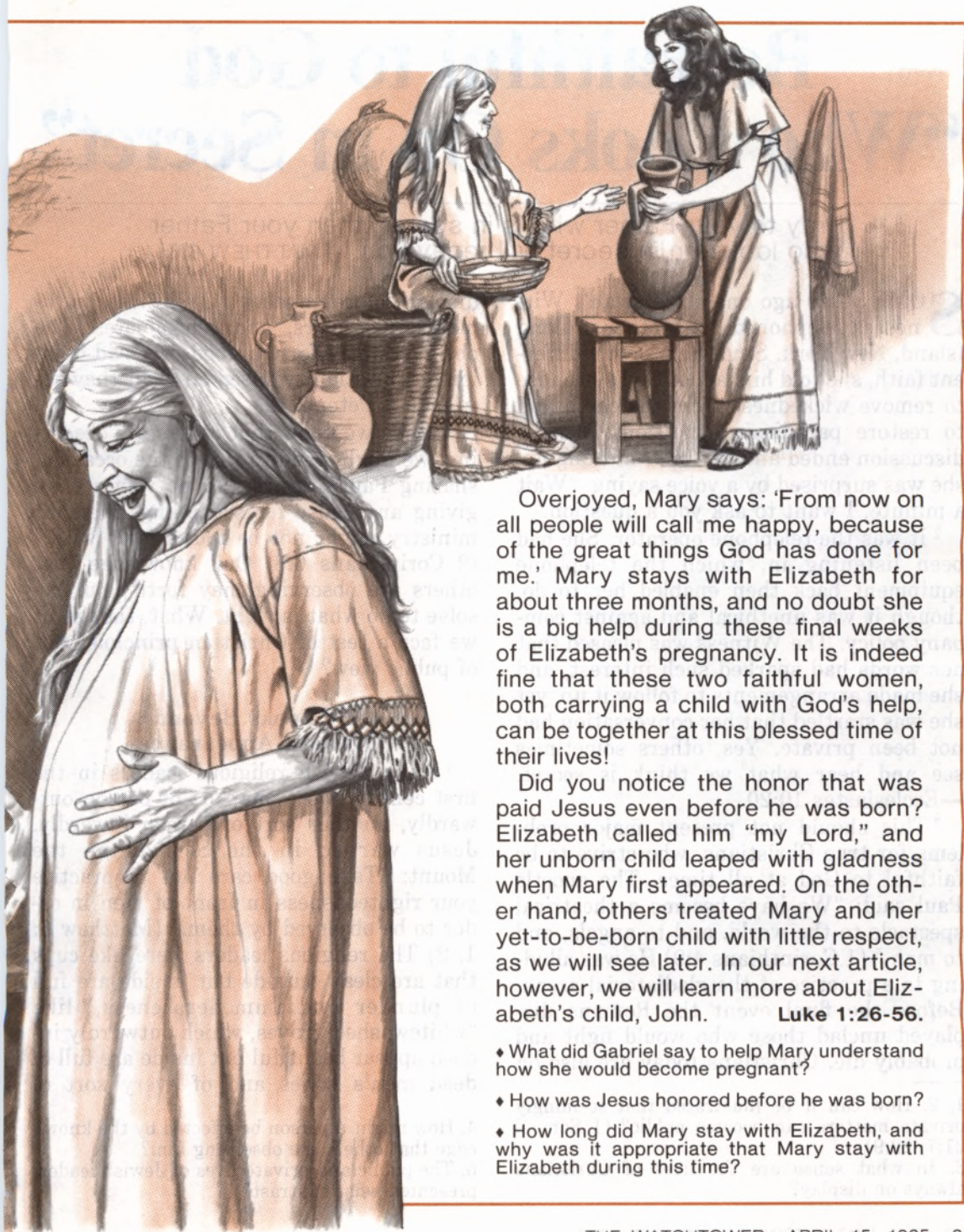
THE angel Gabriel has just finished telling the young woman Mary that she will give birth to a baby boy who will become an everlasting king. But Mary asks, 'How is this possible, since I have had no relations with a man?'

'God's holy spirit will come upon you,' Gabriel explains, 'and for this reason the boy will be called God's Son.' To help Mary, Gabriel continues: 'Your aged relative Elizabeth, who people said could not have children, is now six months pregnant.' Mary believes Gabriel and says: 'Let it happen to me just as you have said.'

Soon after Gabriel leaves, Mary gets ready and goes to visit Elizabeth who lives with her husband Zechariah in the mountainous country of Judea. From Mary's home in Nazareth, this is a long trip of perhaps three or four days.

When Mary finally arrives at Zechariah's house, she enters and offers a greeting. At that Elizabeth is filled with holy spirit, and she says to Mary: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will have. What a privilege it is to have the mother of my Lord come to me! For, look! as soon as I heard your greeting, the infant in my womb leaped with great gladness.'





Overjoyed, Mary says: 'From now on all people will call me happy, because of the great things God has done for me.' Mary stays with Elizabeth for about three months, and no doubt she is a big help during these final weeks of Elizabeth's pregnancy. It is indeed fine that these two faithful women, both carrying a child with God's help, can be together at this blessed time of their lives!

Did you notice the honor that was paid Jesus even before he was born? Elizabeth called him "my Lord," and her unborn child leaped with gladness when Mary first appeared. On the other hand, others treated Mary and her yet-to-be-born child with little respect, as we will see later. In our next article, however, we will learn more about Elizabeth's child, John. **Luke 1:26-56.**

- ♦ What did Gabriel say to help Mary understand how she would become pregnant?
- ♦ How was Jesus honored before he was born?
- ♦ How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth, and why was it appropriate that Mary stay with Elizabeth during this time?

Be Faithful to God “Who Looks On in Secret”

“Pray to your Father who is in secret; then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you.”—MATTHEW 6:6.

SOME years ago one of Jehovah’s Witnesses telephoned her brother in Long Island, New York. Since he was of a different faith, she told him about God’s promise to remove wickedness from the earth and to restore paradisaic conditions. As the discussion ended and her brother hung up, she was surprised by a voice saying, “Wait a minute, I want to ask you a question.”

² It was the telephone operator. She had been listening in, which the telephone equipment back then enabled her to do, though it was unethical and against company policy. The Witness was pleased that her words had sparked such interest, and she made arrangements to follow it up, yet she was startled that her conversation had not been private. Yes, others sometimes see and hear what we think is secret. —Ecclesiastes 10:20.

³ This should not present major problems for true Christians, who strive to be faithful to God at all times. The apostle Paul said: “We have become a theatrical spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men.” (1 Corinthians 4:9) He was alluding to a practice at the gladiatorial arena. Before the final event the Romans displayed unclad those who would fight and probably die. Christians today are also on

display before unbelieving relatives, workmates, neighbors, and schoolmates. The observers may form a good or a bad opinion of Christianity based on what they see in us.—1 Peter 2:12.

⁴ When we know that others are observing, we might tend to rise to the occasion, sharing Paul’s desire: “In no way are we giving any cause for stumbling, that our ministry might not be found fault with.” (2 Corinthians 6:3) Our knowledge that others are observing may fortify our resolve to do what is right. What, though, if we face a test of Christian principles out of public view?

He Looks Beyond Outward Appearances

⁵ Many Jewish religious leaders in the first century were one sort of person outwardly, another sort of person inwardly. Jesus warned in the Sermon on the Mount: “Take good care not to practice your righteousness in front of men in order to be observed by them.” (Matthew 6: 1, 2) The religious leaders were like cups that are clean outside but ‘inside are full of plunder and immoderateness,’ like “whitewashed graves, which outwardly indeed appear beautiful but inside are full of dead men’s bones and of every sort of

1, 2. How can it be illustrated that seemingly private matters can become public? (1 Samuel 21:7; 22:9)

3. In what sense are the lives of Christians always on display?

4. How might a person be affected by the knowledge that others are observing him?

5. The public and private lives of Jewish leaders presented what contrast?

uncleanness.”—Matthew 23:25-28; compare Psalm 26:4.

⁶ Those words should help us to appreciate that Jehovah is interested in more than what might be seen by other humans. Jesus counseled: “When you pray, go into your private room and, after shutting your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; then your Father *who looks on in secret* will repay you.” (Matthew 6:6) Yes, God can hear our prayers offered when we are isolated from other humans. Nothing is beyond God’s notice. He is able to observe the embryonic formation of a person, perhaps reading the genetic material that later will shape the individual’s characteristics. (Psalm 139:15, 16; Genesis 25:23) He even can read the secret leanings of our hearts. (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; Jeremiah 17:10; Acts 1:24) Consider how these facts should affect us.

⁷ To become true Christians we had to work at overcoming serious faults and sins, even as did the early Christians. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Acts 26:20; 1 Peter 4:1-4) Yet what about faults that may not be known to other humans? That these failings are not publicly known does not make them any less significant. This is indicated by David’s words: “Anyone slandering his companion in secrecy, him I silence. Anyone of haughty eyes and of arrogant heart, him I cannot endure.” (Psalm 101:5) Even if it was done secretly, to just one listener, slander was wrong. So David would not condone this ‘secret’ sin.

⁸ Nor should the wrongdoer fool himself by thinking that the error would escape the notice of God “who looks on in secret.” Actually, God has proved that he is interested in humans’ being faithful even when

their actions are not publicly known. Recall the case of Achan. The Israelites were to destroy Jericho and its inhabitants, wicked Canaanites. Only the silver, gold, and copper were excepted, these being for the treasure of God’s sanctuary. (Joshua 6:17-19) Achan, however, gave in to temptation and took a costly garment, some silver and gold. He hid this under his tent, perhaps feeling that no one would know. But did he deceive the One “who looks on in secret”? No. God saw to it that Achan’s sin was publicly exposed, bringing death to him and to his household.—Joshua 7:1, 16-26.

⁹ Elihu wisely explained about Jehovah: “For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and all his steps he sees. There is no darkness nor any deep shadow for those practicing what is hurtful to conceal themselves there.” (Job 34:21, 22) If, then, we desire to gain and retain Jehovah God’s approval, we must seek to live according to his principles both when we know that others are observing us and when it appears that our conduct is hidden. At all times “his eyes are upon the ways of man.”

¹⁰ A Christian may undergo some test that is hidden to fellow worshipers. That happened to Paul while he was in prison. The Jews had charged him with “stirring up seditions” and ‘trying to profane the temple.’ (Acts 24:1-6) Paul testified to his innocence before Roman procurator Felix, who historians say was cruel and immoral. Felix detained Paul in prison “hoping for money to be given him by Paul.” (Acts 24:10-21, 26) While the apostle knew the Bible’s counsel about not giving or accepting gifts to affect judgment, he could have reasoned that giving a bribe would be an

6. What is Jehovah able to observe about us?
7. Wherein might a Christian have room for improvement?
8. How do we know that hidden wrongdoing does not escape Jehovah’s notice?

9. What must we do to gain and retain God’s approval?

10. (a) Paul set what fine example as to hidden conduct? (b) The possibility of secret faults in what areas deserves our attention?

expedient way to get free. Since the bribe could be hidden from others, Paul would not need to worry about stumbling them. (Exodus 23:8; Psalm 15:1, 5; Proverbs 17:23) Yet Paul did not reason that way. Many of Jehovah's people in modern times have faced other tests, such as those involving God's law on blood, self-abuse, and misuse of alcohol. Let us consider how such tests could confront you or your loved ones.

Obedience Tested Over Blood

¹¹ God's law on blood certainly is not new or unclear. Through our common forefather Noah, Jehovah commanded all mankind: "Flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat." (Genesis 9:4) The sacredness of blood, representing life from God, was stressed in the Mosaic Law. Blood could be used on the altar, but otherwise it was to be 'poured out on the ground as water.' (Leviticus 17:11-14; Deuteronomy 12:23-25) Did the prohibition against sustaining life with blood continue after the Mosaic Law ended? Absolutely. At what some might call the first Christian council, the apostles and older men (who comprised the governing body) concluded that Christians must 'abstain from idolatry, from fornication, from what is strangled [having blood left in] and from blood.' Misuse of blood was as serious a moral wrong as illicit sex relations.—Acts 15:20, 21, 28, 29.

¹² The early Christians obeyed God's law about blood. Though some people back then drank the blood of gladiators as a "cure" for epilepsy, true Christians would not. Nor would they eat food containing blood, even when their refusal meant death for them and their children. Since

that time, various theologians and others have acknowledged that Christians are under God's law against sustaining life by taking in blood.

¹³ In recent times blood transfusion has become a popular medical tool. The Christian may thus face a test involving it. Doctors, nurses, and even relatives may strongly urge him to accept blood. Informed persons, of course, know that transfusions themselves pose grave risks. *Time* magazine (November 5, 1984) said that "some 100,000 Americans contract hepatitis each year from blood transfusions," mainly from "a mystery virus that can be identified only by a process of elimination." *Time* also reported on over 6,500 cases of AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), some being "transfusion-linked cases." The report said: "Nearly half the victims have died, although the ultimate mortality rate may be 90% or higher." Of course, Jehovah's Witnesses do not base their refusal on the argument that blood is bad medicine. Even if doctors could give assurance that a transfusion would be totally safe, God's Word commands us to 'keep ourselves from blood.' —Acts 21:25.

¹⁴ Imagine if you were told that you badly needed a transfusion. God's law on blood would come to your mind, would it not? And your resolve to obey God, no matter what the immediate results of this, likely would be strengthened if fellow Christians were present. (Compare Daniel 3:13-18.) However, what if in private a doctor or a judge pressured you to accept blood, even telling you to let him bear the responsibility before God?

13. (a) Why might you sometime be confronted with a test regarding blood? (b) What major reason for Christians' not accepting blood should we keep in mind?

14. What "secret" test involving blood might you face?

11. What is the basis for the Christian position on use of blood?

12. The early Christians took what stand on blood?

¹⁵ Reports from various lands indicate that sometimes doctors, hospital officials, and judges mistakenly think that Jehovah's Witnesses publicly object to blood transfusion but privately or inwardly feel differently. In one case a judge arbitrarily concluded "that the crux of the problem lay, not in [the patient's] religious convictions, but in her refusal to sign a prior written authorization for the transfusion

15. Some doctors and officials have what incorrect view as to our stand on blood?

of blood. She did not object to receiving the treatment involved—she would not, however, direct its use." On the contrary, rather than weakly refusing to 'sign authorization for blood,' Jehovah's Witnesses are on record as being strongly desirous of signing legal documents relieving medical personnel of any liability connected with refusing blood.*

* Many hospitals use Form P-47 REFUSAL TO PERMIT BLOOD TRANSFUSION as printed in the American Medical Association's *Medicolegal Forms with Legal Analysis*.

God's Law on Blood Recognized as Still Valid

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY (1733-1804) is most noted as the scientist who discovered oxygen, but he was also a theologian. He wrote:

"The prohibition to eat blood, given to Noah, seems to be obligatory on all his posterity." As to the claim that the Christian prohibition on blood was only temporary, Priestley added: "There is no intimation, or hint, of its being temporary, or any mention made of a time when the prohibition was to cease. . . . If we interpret this prohibition of the apostles by the practice of the primitive Christians, who can hardly be supposed not to have rightly understood the nature and extent of it, we cannot but conclude, that it was intended to be absolute and perpetual."

In 1646 *A Bloody Tenet Confuted, or, Blood Forbidden* (modern spelling) was published. On page 8 it concluded: "Let us lay aside this cruel custom of eating the lives of beasts, as it is used throughout all England, in unhallowed black [blood] puddings, as we will show our selves therefore to be merciful men, not inhumane; as we will not be found to be disobeyers of God in such express precepts, but obeyers of his will, and doers of those things that are right in his eyes, as we would have the favor of God, . . . and not to be cut off from our people, and have the face of God continually set against us for evil."

Thomas Bartholin was a 17th-century professor of anatomy at the University of Copenhagen. Writing on 'The Misuse of Blood,' he observed: 'Those who drag in the use of hu-

man blood for internal remedies of diseases appear to misuse it and to sin gravely. Cannibals are condemned. Why do we not abhor those who stain their gullet with human blood? Similar is the receiving of alien blood from a cut vein, either through the mouth or by instruments of transfusion. The authors of this operation are held in terror by the divine law, by which eating of blood is prohibited.'

Revelation Examined with Candour (1745) dealt with God's commands about blood. It reasoned: "A command given by God himself to *Noah*, repeated to *Moses*, and ratified by the apostles of *Jesus Christ*; given immediately after the flood, when the world, as it were, began anew; and the only one given on that great occasion; repeated with awful solemnity, to that people whom God separated from the rest of mankind, to be holy to himself; repeated with dreadful denunciations of divine vengeance, both against the *Jew* and the *stranger* that should dare to transgress it; and ratified by the most solemn and sacred council, that ever was assembled upon earth; acting under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God! transmitted from the sacred assembly to the several churches of the neighbouring nations, by the hands of no meaner messengers, than two bishops, and two apostles . . . Will any man, after this, dare to vilify this command? Will any man in his senses pronounce a precept, so given, so repeated, and so ratified by God himself, unmeaning and unimportant?"



The conduct of one Witness may make it easier for the next one to be faithful to God

¹⁶ Doctors and judges may try to persuade you to accept blood because they have seen people of other religions object to some medical step but then accept it 'behind closed doors.' Some officials have even claimed to know of a Witness who agreed to a secret transfusion. *If* that did occur, it might have involved someone who was just acquainted with Jehovah's Witnesses. Devoted servants of God know well that no such compromise would escape his notice. Recall when David sinned concerning Bath-sheba and Uriah. Jehovah saw it all and sent Nathan with the message: "Whereas you [David] acted in secret, I, for my part, shall do this thing in front of all Israel and in front of the sun." As God stated, David later felt the sad consequences of his "secret" sin.—2 Samuel 11: 27-12:12; 16:21.

¹⁷ Love for your Christian brothers should also help you to resist pressure to agree secretly to violate God's law on

16. If someone in private urged you to accept blood, what should you not forget?

17. (a) How could accepting a blood transfusion in secret make trouble for others? (b) Explain how one sister stood firm on the blood issue even in private, and what was the outcome of this?

blood. How so? Well, if a doctor or a judge tried to coerce you into accepting blood, even in secret, you should think of the added trouble that would bring on the next Witness. Note this experience:

Sister Rodriguez was being treated for an infection. Then she got very ill; her doctor diagnosed internal bleeding and advised her to rush to a major hospital. Sister Rodriguez told the emergency-room personnel: "No matter what, I cannot take a blood transfusion." She held to this later when nurses pressured her by their claiming that some Witnesses had taken blood. For days this sister continued to lose blood and weaken, finally being moved to the Intensive Care Unit. Then the hospital called in a judge of the state Supreme Court.

Some months later in the hospital's amphitheater, this judge spoke to over 150 doctors on the subject "Whose Life Is It, Anyway?" He, too, said he had encountered persons who at first refused blood but who acquiesced once a judge was involved. What though about Sister Rodriguez? He related that in privacy he had tried to convince her to let him 'bear the responsibility' by having the transfusion given under court order. What did she do? The judge told the assembled doctors that with all the strength she could muster,

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ God has what ability that should affect our actions?
- ☐ Achan's experience should teach us what vital lesson?
- ☐ What harm can result if a Christian secretly breaks God's law on blood?
- ☐ You should resolve what regarding Jehovah's view on blood?

Mrs. Rodriguez told him that she was not going to accept blood and that he should leave her alone and get out of the room. Consequently, the judge explained, he had no basis for ordering blood against her wishes.

¹⁸ This underscores the importance of making it absolutely clear that our position on blood is *nonnegotiable*. The apostles took such a resolute stand, declaring: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) Sister Rodriguez' case also shows the effect a Witness' compromise could have on others. While sick and physically weakened, she had to face extra pressure just because someone earlier may secretly have broken God's law. Of course,

18. What determination should we make clear regarding the blood issue, and with what likely results?

such a violation would be no secret to "the Judge of all the earth." (Genesis 18:25) Happily, Sister Rodriguez was as uncompromising in private as she had been in public. And later, in good health, she explained to the same medical assembly her continued determination to be faithful to God.

¹⁹ We, too, must be faithful whether our actions are public or not. Jehovah delights in such faithfulness and will reward it; he will justly respond to the works—public or private—of those unfaithful to his standards. (Psalm 51:6; Job 34:24) Lovingly he provides perfect counsel that will help us to overcome any hidden faults we have, as we will next consider.

19. At all times, we should be conscious of what fact?

Accept God's Help to Overcome Secret Faults

"For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me."—PHILIPPIANS 4:13.

THE lad was an epileptic.* He foamed at the mouth, had convulsions, and at times fell into the water or the fire. His worried father sought out a man noted for curing the sick. When it seemed that there was a lack of confidence in that man's ability, the father cried: "I have faith! Help me out where I need faith!"

* Matthew 17:14-18, Mark 9:17-24, and Luke 9:38-43 show that demon possession caused his condition. The Bible distinguishes between this epilepsy and that from natural causes.—Matthew 4:24.

1. What request did one concerned father make?

² We can learn something from this father who sought Jesus' aid. The man admitted that his faith might be faulty; he also was sure that Jesus wanted to help. It can be that way with us, as we face our own faults—even secret ones—and work to overcome them. We can trust that Jehovah God *wants* to help us, as he has helped others in the past. (Compare Mark 1:40-42.) He, for example, helped the apostle Paul to cope with faults that can result

2. How can we be sure that God wants to help us overcome faults?

from having an abundance or being in want. A poor person might crave riches; a wealthy person's failing might be his smugly trusting in success and looking down on those having less. (Job 31:24, 25, 28) How did Paul overcome or avoid such faults? He says: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me." —Philippians 4:11-13.

³ Drawing on God's power, we are wise to work at conquering our faults, not ignoring them just because they presently may be secret. The psalmist said of Jehovah: "He is aware of the secrets of the heart." (Psalm 44:21) If we do not overcome our faults, they may surface to our greater detriment. The principle applies: "The sins of some men are publicly manifest, leading directly to judgment, but as for other men their sins also become manifest later." (1 Timothy 5:24) Let us examine two common faults meriting attention by Christians who want to please Jehovah.

A Secret Fault Involving Sexual Desire

⁴ One of God's finest gifts is marriage, along with the ability and desire to reproduce. (Genesis 1:28) Sexual desire expressed in marital relations is natural and clean. The Bible commends finding sexual enjoyment with one's own mate. (Proverbs 5:15-19) However, sexual appetite cannot go unrestrained. As a comparison, consider our desire for food. That we have a returning appetite does not mean that we ought to develop an inordinate craving for food, or that we need no control as to when, where, and how we eat.—Proverbs 25:16, 27.

⁵ Paul may once have been married, and

3. Why is it wise for us to try to conquer our weaknesses?

4, 5. (a) The Bible presents what balanced view of sexual desire? (b) What warnings do we find in the Scriptures regarding sexual desire?

he knew that normal sexual expressions between mates were fitting. (1 Corinthians 7:1-5) So he had to be referring to something else when he wrote: "Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, *sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness.*" (Colossians 3:5) He must have meant sexual expressions beyond the proper marital setting and means. The apostle also said: "Each one of you should know how to get possession of his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in *covetous sexual appetite.*" (1 Thessalonians 4:4, 5) This frank, inspired counsel is beneficial both for married and for single Christians.

⁶ One way in which such "lust of carnal desire" (1 Thessalonians 4:5, *The New Testament for English Readers*, by Henry Alford) often is expressed is by a person's stimulation of his or her own sexual organs for the pleasure involved. This is called masturbation, or self-abuse. It is very common among single males and females. But it is engaged in also by many a married person. Its commonness leads many doctors to claim that it is normal and even beneficial. However, this practice runs contrary to God's counsel against "covetous sexual appetite." We can better appreciate why, and why Christians should overcome the habit, by considering some counsel that Jesus gave.

⁷ Jesus said: "Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman *so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" (Matthew 5:28) He knew that passionate thoughts of adultery are often the precursors of immoral acts. Yet, even those who excuse masturbation admit that it usually involves sexual fantasies. After speaking of youths' "con-

6. Why do Christians rightly avoid self-abuse?

7. How does Matthew 5:28 provide added reason to abstain from masturbation?

scious attention to the pleasure masturbation can bring," the book *Talking With Your Teenager* adds: "They may imagine themselves in wild sexual situations or with partners of the same sex or with older people like teachers, relatives, even

[parents]. They might have fantasies about sexual violence. All of this is absolutely normal." But is it? How could Christians consider such fantasies and masturbation "normal" in the light of Jesus' warning about 'adultery in the heart' or



He Overcame Self-Abuse

AS A YOUNG MAN, C — had normal sexual feelings, but he also had a problem. From the age of 13 he had the habit of self-abuse, usually in the secrecy of his bedroom. He was a bit ashamed of it, but he felt that it was not hurting anyone else.

By the time he was 19, the practice was ingrained. On occasion C — confessed it to his priest, but he was told that though wrong, it was not too serious. When C — joined the military, he did not have much privacy. Hence, he seldom resorted to self-abuse, which, incidentally, shows that his past habit was not the result of uncontrollable passion.

Upon getting out of the military, C — returned home. He began purchasing pornographic magazines and, aroused by these, he was soon back to his former ways. When he began living alone, it was easy to get sexually stimulating material. Often he masturbated several times a day.

Then he began to study the Bible with a minister of Jehovah's Witnesses. As he learned God's view of immorality, C — felt ashamed of purchasing pornographic materials, and he wanted to break the habit of self-abuse. He tried. But after a week or two he would feel sexual tension, would stop by some newspaper stand, and would become aroused by the immoral material. Back home, he would feel that since he had already failed, he might as well go one step farther. Afterward, remorse would come. Would he never be able to break this bad habit?

Finally C — spoke to a spiritual elder at the congregation. This minister was understanding and helped him to look up Bible-based material that would help him to improve his self-control. The minister also explained:

'Imagine the desire to be like a chain. The first link is small and weak. But each successive link gets larger and harder. That is the way it is with urges leading to masturbation. So you need to stop the impulse as soon as possible. The longer it goes on, the more intense your desire becomes. Finally it will be almost unstoppable. Yes, try to break the chain at the first link. As soon as you sense the urge coming, DO SOMETHING! Get up and change your position, polish your shoes, empty the garbage can—anything to break the link. You might begin reading something out loud, such as the Bible or a Christian publication that will channel your thoughts along clean lines.'

This minister would inquire of C — at the meetings as to how things were going, regularly commending and encouraging him in his resolve. For seven weeks C — succeeded. Then, when he was frustrated and discouraged over another problem, he succumbed again, buying some erotic literature. That led to a relapse. Such episodes were setbacks, but the minister urged him to continue the struggle. Gradually the intervals lengthened to 9 weeks, then 17 weeks, then even longer. Slowly his confidence grew that he would be able to master the secret problem.

Finally C — faced up to the fact that Jehovah knew all that he was doing. Thus, if he wanted to serve God with a completely clear conscience, he would have to get this practice out of his life totally. He did it! Now he is not even able to recall how long it has been. As an exemplary Christian, C — has been given responsibility in the congregation, and he is making plans to increase his service to God's praise. He is a different person.

Paul's counsel against "covetous sexual appetite"? No, such fantasies and self-abuse—whether by a youth or by an adult, by a single person or by a married person—need to be overcome.

Overcoming This Private Fault

⁸ If a Christian had this secret fault, what could he do to conquer it, "to get possession of his own vessel in sanctification and honor"? (1 Thessalonians 4:4) Through his Word, God provides valuable help.

⁹ First it is important to recognize that Jehovah does have standards. He makes plain the wrongness of extramarital sex, both fornication and adultery. (Hebrews 13:4) Hence, if we believe that his ways are the best, we will seek satisfying rewards of sexual expression only within marriage. (Psalm 25:4, 5) The book *Adolescence*, by E. Atwater, points out that regarding masturbation, youths commonly express 'reticence, embarrassment and misgivings.' One reason given is that 'the closeness of a love relationship that accompanies sexual intercourse is missing in masturbation.' Yes, there is benefit in controlling sexual desire until this can be expressed in loving marital relations.

¹⁰ God's Word provides additional help by counseling: 'Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are well spoken of and whatever virtue there is, continue considering these things.' (Philippians 4:8) Clearly, erotic pictures and immoral novels are not 'chaste and well spoken of or virtuous.' Yet these things are often the fare of masturbators. Anyone determined to overcome this fault

must, then, absolutely avoid such erotic material. Experience has proved that if a person's desires begin to be drawn toward the erotic in a way that previously resulted in masturbation, determined concentration on what is righteous and chaste can cool the desires. This is especially important if a person is alone or in the dark, when the secret fault of self-abuse is most common.*—Romans 13:12-14.

¹¹ A related aid is keeping active, in line with the admonition: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked." (Ephesians 5:15, 16) Ask a mature Christian confidant for suggestions about positive things to do. (Isaiah 32:2) Many who have overcome this fault admit that their knowing that a concerned Christian would be checking with them on their progress helped them to develop self-control. Of course, the One who should be our closest confidant is Jehovah. So it is vital to turn to him in prayer, seeking his help. (Philippians 4:6, 7) If someone who has battled this fault for a time should "stumble," he can ask God for power, then he can renew his efforts and likely succeed again, for an even longer period.—Hebrews 12:12, 13; Psalm 103:13, 14.

Battling Misuse of Alcohol

¹² 'Wine makes God and men rejoice,' says one Bible verse. (Judges 9:13) You may agree, for alcoholic beverages have been an aid to relaxation and a source of pleasure for many. (Psalm 104:15) Few

* Sometimes during sleep the body experiences an *involuntary* sexual release, which natural occurrence is not the same as *conscious* self-abuse.

8, 9. Appreciation of what facts can help a person to break the masturbation habit?

10. What are some steps that a person can take to help himself overcome the practice?

11. Describe additional things that have proved beneficial in coping with this fault.

12. What is the Christian view of alcoholic beverages?

would deny, however, that using alcohol can pose both physical and moral dangers. A major problem is outright drunkenness. This fault is so serious that God warns that drunkards can be expelled from the congregation and barred from the Kingdom. (1 Corinthians 5:11-13; Galatians 5:19-21) Christians are aware of this and would agree that they must avoid getting drunk. But, aside from drunkenness, how might use of alcohol become a secret fault?

¹³ A Christian could drink only moderately, yet still have a serious fault. Consider the experience of a man whom we will call Heinz.

He, his wife, and children became true Christians and were very active in the local congregation. In time Heinz was appointed as an elder and came to be viewed as a 'pillar' among the congregations in the city. (Galatians 2:9) Understandably, he faced pressures in rearing his family and some anxiety in caring for the flock. (2 Corinthians 11:28) His job, though, brought on him a lot of stress because the company he worked for was growing, and his boss wanted him to handle numerous problems and decisions.

Many evenings Heinz was quite tense. He found that a drink or two would help him to relax. Of course, being a mature Christian he carefully avoided overdrinking or drunkenness. Though he did have some drinks to unwind in the evening, he did not *need* alcohol during the day, nor did he even drink with most meals. He was not known to be 'given to a lot of wine.'—1 Timothy 3:8.

Unexpectedly Heinz was hospitalized for a common operation. Some unusual symptoms appeared. What was their cause? It did not take the medical staff long to determine that Heinz was experiencing withdrawal symptoms. Yes, his body had become dependent on alcohol. This came as a surprise to the family, but they rallied around him and supported his resolve to avoid alcohol completely.

13. Illustrate how dependence on alcohol could develop.



¹⁴ Some sense that alcohol has taken on an unusual role in their lives, so they try to conceal their drinking, not wanting family and friends to realize how much they drink or how often. Others may not feel that they are dependent on alcohol, still, drinking has become a focal point of their day. Those in either category are at great risk of overdrinking on some occasion or of being hidden alcoholics. Consider this proverb: "Wine is a ridiculer, intoxicating liquor is boisterous, and everyone going astray by it is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1) The point is that drinking too much can cause a person to act boisterously and be ridiculous. However, wine might ridicule someone in another sense. A person merits ridicule if he thinks that his drinking is hidden from God.

¹⁵ One of the fruits of God's spirit is self-control, and we need that in all aspects of life. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Paul likened the Christian to a runner. In a normal race the runner "exercises self-control in all things" just to "get a corruptible crown." Similarly, the Christian needs to display "self-control in all things" in order to gain a prize of much higher value—LIFE. Paul stressed that

14. What could lead to being ridiculed by alcoholic beverages?

15. How do Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 bear on a Christian's use of alcohol?

we must 'lead our body as a slave' to be sure 'that after we have preached to others we might not become disapproved somehow,' such as over a secret fault involving alcohol.—1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

¹⁶ What can help a Christian to deal with this fault? It is helpful to appreciate that though a drinker may conceal his pattern from other humans, he is not hiding it from God. (1 Corinthians 4:5) Thus, honestly—in the sight of God—a person should think about his drinking habits. (We mean drinking for pleasure or effect, not just a small amount as a common beverage with meals.) Some, however, may say, 'But I don't *have* to drink. I just enjoy it; it relaxes me. I could abstain if I wanted to.' Well, in view of the potential dangers of overdrinking or alcohol dependency, why not do just that for a month or two? Or, since there is a strong tendency to deny that there is a problem, resolve for a month to abstain at all times when having a drink is normal. For example, the person who usually has a drink after work, before going to bed, or at a social gathering could avoid doing so. He can thus monitor how he feels. If it is difficult, or he 'just can't relax,' he has a serious fault.

¹⁷ Once a sincere Christian realizes before God that he has a fault involving alcohol, it will be easier to overcome it. He may already know that the Bible says that it is 'a person of stupidity' who reasons 'that stolen waters are sweet, and bread [or alcohol] taken in secrecy—it is pleasant.' However, such ones, says Proverbs, will wind up impotent in death. In contrast, the wise person loves reproof, and he happily 'leaves the inexperienced ones and *keeps living* by walking straight in the

way of understanding.' (Proverbs 9:1, 6, 8, 13-18) Yes, God provides additional help to overcome secret faults by letting us know what lies ahead, what the end results will be.

God Rewards Private Actions

¹⁸ Some people live in fear that their bad ways will be found out, by men or by God. Let that not be so with us. Instead, let us live with an awareness that we cannot hide things from Him, "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." (Ecclesiastes 12:14) Let us accept Jehovah's help to overcome our faults, even hidden ones. We then can look forward to the time when "the secret things of darkness" are brought to light and "the counsels of the hearts" are made manifest. "Then each one will have his praise come to him from God."—1 Corinthians 4:5; Romans 2:6, 7, 16.

18. As we overcome our secret faults, of what can we be confident? (Proverbs 24:12; 2 Samuel 22:25-27)

Do You Recall?

- ☐ How does God feel about secret faults on which we may be working?
- ☐ What Scriptural counsel indicates that self-abuse is to be avoided?
- ☐ How can a Christian overcome the habit of self-abuse?
- ☐ Since the Bible does not condemn it, how could the use of alcohol become a secret fault?
- ☐ What wise steps can be taken in dealing with a private fault involving alcoholic beverages?

16. How can a person determine whether alcohol has become a fault in his case?

17. Why must a Christian having a hidden fault involving alcohol work to conquer it?

Insight on the News

Blood-Substitute Research

● Fluosol-DA, an oxygen-carrying blood substitute made from chemicals, failed to pass medical tests in the United States, and experimentation with the fluid on humans has been stopped by its manufacturer. For almost five years, Alpha Therapeutic Corporation, the U.S. producer of the "synthetic blood," Fluosol-DA 20%, had been working with selected hospitals in the United States and Canada on clinical trials of its use. More than 120 patients were studied. Reports indicate that Fluosol was not as valuable a stand-in for blood as had been hoped for and that other readily available solutions were just as effective as Fluosol. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that one hospital used for the research gave two reasons for Fluosol's failure. "It didn't carry enough oxygen to vital organs," said the article, "and it didn't stay in a person's system long enough to keep him alive until natural production replenished red blood cells."

The Fluosol study did highlight, though, that surgeons use blood too freely and, according to the *Tribune*, "that it is possible to operate on someone who is quite anemic without blood transfusions." Dr. Bruce Friedman, a director at the University of Michigan hospitals, said: "My guesstimate is that 25 percent to 33 percent of the blood used in this country isn't needed." Although testing on hu-

mans has ceased, it appears that research to improve fluorocarbon "artificial blood" will continue.

● A similar blood substitute is being developed by Dr. Henry A. Sloviter at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine. This "artificial blood" is a chemical compound treated with ultrahigh-frequency sound waves and then coated with egg-derived lecithin. It has been tested only on animals so far, but no harmful effects were seen even when large amounts of the milky-white fluid were infused. The *Almanac*, published by the university, notes that it has these advantages over natural blood: "Appears to be safe without regard to blood type; does not require refrigeration; and eliminates the risk of transmitting infectious diseases such as AIDS, hepatitis and malaria in transfusions." It will not be ready for general use for at least three years.

● Research continues on another continent. "Australian scientists have developed a blood substitute which they say is better for most uses than human whole blood and plasma," claims *The Bulletin*, an Australian financial magazine. Named CH (casein hydrolysate), it is a protein and can be made from milk or soybeans. Dr. Louis Hissink, one of the developers of CH, "believes that it is dangerous to introduce blood from another person into a patient," continues the article, "not only for the chance of bringing disease but also because of im-

mune reactions set up." Hissink says: "At last, it is becoming clear to people that blood (from donors) is not such a great thing after all." CH has yet to gain Australia's state health department approval.

Jehovah's Witnesses have always been interested in this type of research. While the Witnesses may allow nonblood fluids to be used for transfusion purposes, they will not compromise their religious beliefs—even when faced with danger—to allow for a blood transfusion. At all times these Christians hold firm to the Biblical injunction: "Keep abstaining from . . . blood."—Acts 15:29.

Alcohol Abuse

● Alcohol abuse has affected even the young and the elderly. A survey conducted for the Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse of 27,414 New York State students aged 12 to 18 found that 10 percent got drunk at least once a week. On the other end of the age scale, the journal *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality* states that alcohol abuse "is a significant problem among older people with an expected incidence of 10% to 15%—the prevalence being higher among those who are institutionalized." Interestingly, one evidence of mankind's being "in the last days" is that people are "without self-control." (2 Timothy 3:1-3) And the abuse of alcohol is but one indication of lack of self-control.

Love to the Rescue

EARLY last September two storm systems collided over Korea. In a matter of hours, some areas were drenched with more than 20 inches (50 cm) of rain. The result was the worst flood to hit the country in 40 years. Over 200,000 people were left homeless, and 181 were reported dead or missing. Property loss ran into millions of dollars, and crop damage was beyond reckoning.

The downpour started Friday evening and continued all day Saturday. Six dams on the upper Han River overflowed, swelling the river to more than a foot and a half (0.5 m) over its safety level. Early Sunday morning, without any warning, a drainage sluice gave way, and the surging river spilled into the surrounding countryside. By the time the waters began to subside that evening, some 60,000 people in this area were rendered homeless.

Every section of the country was hit by flooding. But the capital city of Seoul, where there are 174 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, was hit the hardest, especially the two areas served by the Mangwondong and Sungnaedong Congregations. Between them a total of 130 Witness families lost their homes. Immediately and spontaneously, Jehovah's Witnesses in Korea responded to the needs of their fellow Christians.

Although phone lines were down in many areas, reports started to come in to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society. Two committees were quickly formed to organize relief for Witnesses in the two badly devastated areas. The traveling circuit overseers in Seoul were instructed to get in touch with the brothers to see what the needs were or what could be done to aid those in the two worst-hit areas.

Witnesses in other areas learned about the extent of the damage through TV news reports. They started calling the branch asking where to send donations

for their brothers in distress. (The Watch Tower branch in Japan also phoned, offering to help.) Donations of money started to come in from all over the country. Rice, noodles, and other foodstuffs, along with clothing and blankets, were also made available. These were distributed quickly by the committees on the scene. The brothers contributed so generously that soon the Seoul office had to make it known that no more money donations were needed.

Next came the enormous task of cleaning up. Three hundred Witnesses volunteered for this service. They were sent out in twos to each home to assist with the cleanup and to help get things back to normal as quickly as possible. One volunteer observed: "Through the training in our assembly and convention organizations, we know how to cooperate and get things done." Many in the community were upset when they saw some people taking advantage of the victims. On the other hand, they were surprised to see the calm, joyful, and generously helpful attitude of the Witnesses, even in such dire circumstances.

"Once more it has been demonstrated," said one Witness at the scene, "that disaster can take away our material goods quickly, but it cannot take away our faith." With tears of joy, a Witness woman said: "Even though we lost everything, we are not helpless. The warm love of our brothers has given us strength."

Truly, it was wonderful to see love in action. The initiative by the Witnesses on the scene and the immediate response of those 'related in the faith' were outstanding. (Galatians 6:10) The brothers in Korea were greatly encouraged by this experience. They were convinced by the well-organized assistance so lovingly given that there can be only one explanation—love came to the rescue!

Mourning Customs

How Do You View Them?

THROUGHOUT history, death has been the common experience of mankind. But long-time acquaintance has not lessened the devastating effect that death has on the survivors. The knowledge that someone who was a part of your life has gone seldom fails to cause deep and lasting grief, and an aching sense of loss.

Religion should soften the pain that death causes, but often it does the opposite. In some lands the pain death brings to bereaved ones is turned into terror when they are told that their parents and relatives who have died are now vengeful spirits who have to be placated with proper mourning ceremonies. Otherwise they will haunt the living. In addition, when a Christian family is bereaved, there may be decisions to face regarding local customs, such as wearing special garments and engaging in rituals that others may expect.

Jehovah God has promised one day to remove the painful experience of death from the human family. (Revelation 21:4) And meantime he has given us his Word, the Bible, as a 'light to our roadway.' (Psalm 119:105) Whenever we are in doubt as to the proper thing to do, the Bible shows us the way God wants us to act. (Isaiah 30:21) Let us consider the guidance it gives for that saddest of times, when someone close to us dies.

Mourning Is Proper

As already noted, it is natural to feel deep sadness when someone we love dies. But Christians know that there will be a resurrection. Hence, they do not have the hopeless, frantic sorrow that those without

hope often manifest. (1 Thessalonians 4:13) Death does not necessarily mean good-bye forever, though it does mean that for a time.

Thus, Abraham 'bewailed Sarah and wept over her' when she died. (Genesis 23:2) Isaac, his son, needed "comfort after the loss of his mother." (Genesis 24:67) The sadness of the friends and relatives of the dead Lazarus was so great that Jesus himself "gave way to tears." (John 11:35) It is an act of love for friends of the bereaved family to visit and offer comfort during such a stressful time.—John 11:31.

However, you will notice that in the Scriptural accounts of mourning, and of comforting the bereaved, appeasement of the dead is never mentioned. God's servants knew that the dead were asleep, unconscious. (John 11:11-14; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) The dead do not suffer in an afterlife, nor do they turn into vengeful, dangerous spirits. (Psalm 146:3, 4) Hence, Jehovah's people were not to copy the surrounding nations in actions that reflected a wrong attitude toward the dead.—Deuteronomy 14:1; 18:10-12.

Today, too, when considering things that are commonly practiced out of 'respect for the dead,' we must determine what that practice means *at present*. Is it now linked with a wrong teaching or some superstition? If it is, should a Christian follow it?—Romans 13:12-14.

What Mourning Customs?

Among some peoples of the world, widows and widowers are supposed to wear special garments and stay in a state of

mourning, with many restrictions on their freedom, for a year. Is this custom compatible with Christian beliefs?

Understandably, a Christian who has lost a loved one might dress and act more subdued for a time. (Compare 2 Samuel 13:19; 2 Kings 6:30.) But this is quite different from wearing, for a lengthy period, clothing that in the minds of the community is connected with non-Biblical beliefs about the dead. When Christian widows have refused to follow such customs, they have sometimes been threatened by relatives and neighbors who claim that "bad luck" will come to them or that the "spirit" of the dead husband will be upset and bring calamity upon them. These superstitious ones may also fear that the rain will be held back, or that there will be a crop failure.

One widow did not follow the customs, whereupon her son said: "My father's spirit will not rest in peace." In another place, the chief of the tribe threatened to dismiss all servants of Jehovah from that area! Some local people were so upset that they vandalized the local Christian meeting place with crowbars and axes. In still another area, a Christian widow was stripped naked and brutally lashed with a *sjambok* (whip) by tribal police.

Why did these Christian widows refuse to do what their neighbors expected of them? Perhaps you personally see little harm in going along with local customs for the sake of "decency." And with some customs, that may indeed be true. But how would a Christian be viewed if he or she shared in rituals designed to appease the "spirits of the ancestors"? Remember, those who engaged in such practices in earlier times were not allowed to remain part of the Israelite community or the early Christian congregation.—Deuteronomy 13:12-15; 18:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 John 9, 10.

Consider some of the reasons for this. For one thing, by having any part in such rituals, a person would be supporting and, in effect, promoting a non-Christian religion. He would be showing that in his heart he is still a part of false religion.—Revelation 18:4.

All around the world, Jehovah's Witnesses are well known for teaching the Bible. One Biblical truth that they highlight is that the dead are unconscious, neither suffering in hell nor wandering the earth and able to harm their descendants. The Bible says: "As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5) This teaching has comforted hundreds of thousands. Thus, people in most communities do not generally expect these Christians to take part in rituals designed to appease the dead.

What would happen, then, if true Christians, because of pressure from their relatives or neighbors, consented to follow non-Christian mourning customs? Would the neighbors not conclude that perhaps the Christians do not really believe what they preach? That perhaps they can be made to compromise in other areas? Undoubtedly. Thus, a lot of good work would be destroyed, and people might be stumbled.—Matthew 18:6; 2 Corinthians 6:3.

Hence, the elders and others in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses give as much support as possible to those who have recently been bereaved. They give whatever support is needed to help them stand firm for truth in the face of any pressure to follow unchristian practices.—Compare 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

What if, despite such help, a Christian begins to follow non-Christian mourning customs? Elders would act with kindness. The apostle Paul counseled: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such

a man in a spirit of mildness." (Galatians 6:1) The disciple James adds: "My brothers, if anyone among you is misled from the truth and another turns him back, know that he who turns a sinner back from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins."—James 5:19, 20.

It is good to remember that God himself "does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) The elders would first try hard to restore the erring one. In most cases it will doubtless be found that intense grief combined with fear of neighbor has pressured the mourning one to take the wrong step. Hopefully, with kind, empathetic help, he will henceforth 'make straight paths for his feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather that it may be healed.'—Hebrews 12:13.

However, if a Christian follows non-Christian mourning customs and, refusing the help of fellow Christians, insists on continuing with the non-Christian course, then eventually the elders may have to act to make sure that such practices do not confuse onlookers or introduce wrong practices into the Christian congregation. Anyone who worships his ancestors is no longer a true Christian, and steps should be taken to make sure that everyone recognizes this fact.—1 Corinthians 5:13.

Blessings From Faithfulness

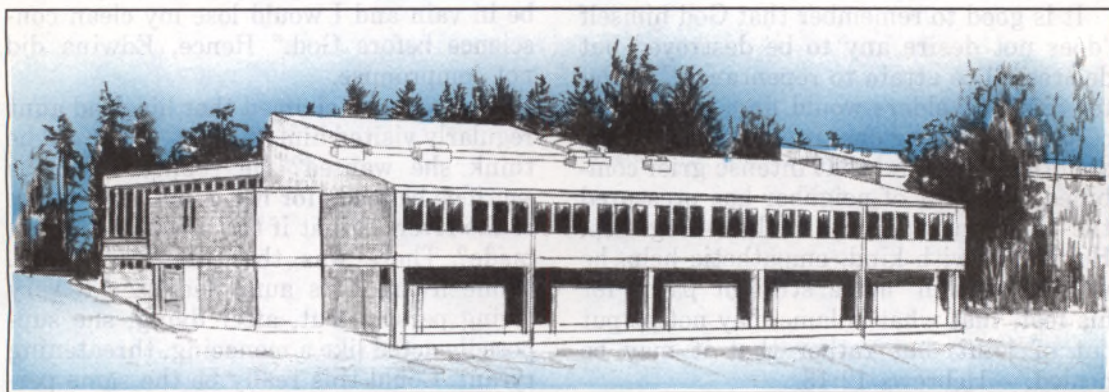
Many Christians have found that faithfulness in this important matter brings good results. Edwina Apason, a Christian woman in Suriname, relates her experience: "Once, when conducting a Bible study, I received a shocking message. While participating in a protest demonstration, my oldest son, who was not a Witness, had been shot to death. This painful loss triggered more strain, for my relatives said: 'If you don't follow the mourning customs, you have no motherly

feelings for your son.' Custom required that I cut my hair, wrap my head in a white scarf, wear mourning clothes for months, deliberately walk slowly, and talk softly in a muffled voice—all of this to show the people and the supposed 'spirit of the dead' that I really was sad. Yet, if I did these things, surely my preaching would be in vain and I would lose my clean conscience before God." Hence, Edwina did not compromise.

Another man claimed that his dead aunt regularly visited him at night. What did he think she wanted? He replied: "That a sacrifice be made for her down at the edge of the river." What if the sacrifice was not made? There was the threat of death. While living, this aunt had been a very loving person. But, after dying, she supposedly acted like a menacing, threatening tyrant. Could this really be the same person? With reasoning and the use of the Scriptures, this man and others like him have been freed from fear of the dead. These people have learned that the visions, voices, and apparitions are the work of fallen angels, demons.—Compare 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14; Ephesians 6:12.

Jehovah's servants are aware that if they stay in the way that he sets out for them, this will eventually lead to the blessing of everlasting life. (Isaiah 30:21) Satan is constantly using cunning and devious means to try to trip them and make them stray from that way. (1 Peter 5:8, 9) He recognizes that they may be especially vulnerable when mourning the death of a loved one. Nevertheless, Christians are determined to be faithful to Jehovah in all things, despite any pressure. In this, as in other matters, they "must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) Thus they prove the depth of their devotion to Jehovah God, and they can look forward to his rewarding them with life in his new system where death and mourning "will be no more."—Revelation 21:4.

A Heartwarming Report From the Far North



FINLAND is situated in the far north of Europe, its northern reaches stretching well into the Arctic Circle. It is famous for the scenic beauty of its forests, lakes, coastline, and offshore islands. It is noted also for seasonal contrasts, for long winter nights, and for the summer midnight sun.

Over 90 percent of the five million Finns are nominally members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the state religion of Finland. But, with the standard of living steadily rising, interest in spiritual things has generally lost its place in their lives. There is, however, a different kind of spiritual growth taking place in this country. The result is that there are now more than 15,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in Finland, one of every 320 inhabitants of the land. Using the words of the prophet Isaiah, the time came for Jehovah's Witnesses in Finland to "stretch out the tent cloths" and to "make the place of [their] tent more spacious"—once again.—Isaiah 54:2.

"Are they really going to build again?"

That was the reaction of some of the older members of the Finnish Bethel, or headquarters, family when they learned of the plans to expand the branch facilities once again. But, in spite of the inconveniences during the construction period, they were happy to be on hand at the dedication of the new extension on May 5, 1984, when M. G. Henschel, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, was a special guest.

Early Flashes of Truth

"In the past the King of Sweden ordered the Finns to be converted by force," said Erkki Kankaanpää, the coordinator of the Finnish Branch Committee, in his opening speech on the dedication program. He was referring to the clergy's strong grip on the people when Finland was under Swedish domination. "But that was not the flash of truth in Finland."

That "flash" came in 1909 when some colporteurs, or full-time preachers, came

to Finland, distributing C. T. Russell's books. As a result, Österman, a businessman, and Harteva, an engineer, became interested. They obtained more books from the Swedish branch office and started to translate and publish them in Finnish. In 1912 the *Watchtower* magazine was published in Finnish.

The two brothers were most courageous and resourceful in preaching the good news. Once Brother Harteva was relating the newfound truth to a former schoolmate.

"And how many are there of you people in Finland?" the schoolmate asked.

"There are two of us," he replied unhesitatingly. "But, if you join us, that will make three."

At another time, Brother Österman was offering the passersby at a marketplace a booklet entitled *What Say the Scriptures About Hell?* on a contribution of two Finnish marks. He surely had their attention when he shouted: "A ticket to hell—one mark in, and another one out!"

Brother Russell visited Finland in 1912. The October 1, 1912, issue of *The Watch Tower* reported: "The public meeting was crowded to the capacity of the hall—1000—many standing; some almost in tears because they could not gain admission." Although the work was still new, said the report, "it seems to make excellent progress. The number of Colporteurs engaged, and the fact that it is self-sustaining, speak well for the depth of interest."

Subsequent visits by other members from the Brooklyn headquarters, including J. F. Rutherford, the second president of the Society, proved to be most strengthening to the brothers. In fact, in December 1945, when Brother N. H. Knorr and Brother M. G. Henschel visited Finland for the first time, there were some 1,800 Witnesses.

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy complete freedom of worship in Finland, and



they are making full use of it. Last April an all-time peak of 15,263 persons shared in preaching the Kingdom good news throughout the country. More than 900 have taken up full-time preaching work as pioneers, special pioneers, or serving as members of the Bethel family at the branch headquarters.

Developments at the Branch

The first branch building in Finland was constructed in 1933 in Helsinki, the capital. It consisted of a factory and a Bethel Home, and it was well situated for its purpose. But after many years of service, it became too small. Thus in 1957, a site for a new branch was obtained in the city of Vantaa, about 17 kilometers (10 mi) from Helsinki.

In January 1962 the branch was transferred to the new facility. Everyone thought at that time that this new home would be all that would ever be needed to support the preaching work in Finland.



In 1913 J. F. Rutherford (with hat at his feet) met with a large group of Finnish brothers

That was not to be the case. Since then, the dining room, dormitory, office, bindery, in fact, nearly all the facilities have been expanded to care for the increase in the number of publishers and the resulting growth of the Bethel family.

The Finnish Bethel is ideally located in that it is convenient to transportation and enjoys the peace and quiet of the countryside. It is situated on a small hill and has a beautiful garden for a yard. That it is an asset to the community is recognized even by the authorities, who have been most accommodating. For example, some time ago, when the original plans for a highway would have put it right through our property, they agreed to alter the plans upon our request. And, even though the area had been designated as a park, we were

granted permission to expand our facility. Naturally, we are grateful for such special consideration.

The expansion this time consists of a new wing with 3,400 square meters (36,500 sq ft) of floor space. It includes an underground level for parking and storage. On the ground level are the machine shop, carpenter shop, and garage. On the upper floor is the bindery, along with adequate space for the locker rooms and some recreational facilities. The structure matches the existing building in design—red bricks with exposed wood beams in an attractive blond color.

Volunteers to Meet the Challenge

When the building project was announced, many Witnesses volunteered

their services. Forty-five of them were invited to come and work for about a year. Who would supervise this challenging project? A brother who is an architect and a pioneer who used to own a construction business were among the volunteers. The job of excavating for the basement was done by a brother who owns an earth-moving company. Another brother who is an expert in explosives took care of the boulders. Still another brother took a two-month course for operating the large crane so that there was no need to hire an outsider to do the job.

Due to the willing spirit of the brothers, the project was completed at only about a third of the cost that a commercial contractor would charge. But what about the quality? "You could not get such quality work even if you spent the big money with commercial contractors," remarked one of the inspectors when he saw the completed building. What a testimony to the wholehearted service rendered by the brothers!

The Task Ahead

"However, it is not the architecture or the building materials that are significant to Jehovah," said Brother Henschel in his dedication talk. "It is the way the building is used that matters." He referred to the temple in Jerusalem built by King Solomon. It was undoubtedly the most glorious building in existence then, or perhaps ever. Yet Jehovah rejected it when the Israelites failed to render pure worship in his house.

So the new building is dedicated to advancing the Kingdom interests in Finland. Jehovah has indeed blessed the work in this part of the field. In the 1984 service year, 127,625 books and 128,083 booklets were produced in Finland. Over 562,531 copies of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* have been published. That

is enough to provide one of every two Finnish households with a copy! Also, every month more than 350,000 copies of the *Awake!* and *Watchtower* magazines are produced.

All of this presents a tremendous challenge to the Finnish Bethel family, which now consists of 73 members. But that is nothing new. Two years ago, the Bethel family took on the challenge of converting from letterpress to offset printing. Brothers throughout the country provided the finances, and those at Bethel worked hard to acquire the new skills. The result has been gratifying. The factory in the Finland branch is capable of producing multicolored magazines and books.

For the task ahead, more expansion is planned. Already, work is underway for a new, spacious Kingdom Hall to be added to the Bethel Home. Thereafter, 28 new rooms, together with a new kitchen and a dining room, will be built to accommodate additional members of the family. Jehovah has provided the means and the strength for tackling similar tasks in the past, and the Witnesses in Finland are confidently looking ahead to future blessings. They echo the sentiments of one Witness at the dedication program: "It is wonderful to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses in these times!"

In Our Next Issue

- **Why God Has Not Yet Executed His Judgment**
- **Accepting the Challenge of Christian Maturity**
- **Single and Happy as a Pioneer**

Do You Remember?

Have you found the recent issues of *The Watchtower* to be of practical value? Then why not test your memory with the following:

□ **What is Armageddon?**

Armageddon is the worldwide situation where all earthly nations will battle against God's Son, Christ Jesus, and his angelic army in "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." (Revelation 16:13, 14, 16)—1/1, page 6.

□ **Who today holds the key position in Jehovah's earthly organization?**

The Kingdom publisher holds the key position because, in living up to Jehovah's name, the publisher must be a zealous minister.—1/1, page 14.

□ **Why is it that agencies such as the UN are powerless to prevent wars?**

The nations around the earth are dedicated to national sovereignty and rights, so they care little about international sovereignty or rules of conduct. Their repeated failure emphasizes the Bible truth that "it does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23)—2/15, page 4.

□ **Why is a "greedy person" also called "an idolater" in Ephesians 5:3-5?**

Those who are obsessed with a desire for sex, love for money, voraciousness for food and drink, or an ambition for power and fame, become slaves to such desires and make them, as it were, their idols. Hence, their chief aim in life now becomes a satisfying of their greedy desires.—2/15, page 25.

□ **What was it, in all probability, that moved Abraham and Isaac to represent their wives as their sisters?**

Jehovah had already indicated to Abraham that the blessing of "all the families of the ground" depended on Abraham's seed. (Genesis 12:2, 3) Hence, Abraham (and later Isaac) needed to stay alive to produce offspring and thus fulfill Jehovah's promise. For this reason, when they were in dangerous territory with their wives, these men probably determined that it was prudent not to let their marriage relationship be known. In so doing, the line of the seed would not be endangered.—3/1, page 31.

□ **How did Noah set a fine ex-**

ample for family heads today?

Of Noah it is recorded: "Noah proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so." (Genesis 6:22) Noah's faithfulness and diligence impressed on the minds of his sons the importance of showing the same qualities in their lives. He spent a lot of time talking to and working with his sons. They were sharing and doing things together as a family. Being "a preacher of righteousness," Noah also taught his own family Jehovah's laws and requirements. (2 Peter 2:5) In all these aspects Noah set a fine example for family heads today.—3/15, page 26.

□ **In what ways are Jehovah's Witnesses different from the world?**

They are different in being zealous preachers of the good news of God's Kingdom, in their shunning what is bad in God's eyes, in maintaining neutrality toward worldly affairs, and in their demonstrating their love and consideration for the whole association of their Christian brothers. (Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 1:9; John 15:19; 13:35)—4/1, pages 10-14.

Questions From Readers

■ **If a Christian feels that someone in the congregation is not the best of association because of that person's conduct or attitude, should he personally 'mark' that individual in accord with 2 Thesalonians 3:14, 15?**

Those who become part of the Christian congregation do so because they love Jehovah and sincerely want to live by his principles. It is better to fellowship with these than with worldly people.

We may be more comfortable with certain Christians, as Jesus 'especially loved' the apostle John and was particularly close to 3 of the 12. Still, he chose, was interested in, and loved all of

them. (John 13:1, 23; 19:26; Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33) Though all brothers have failings of which we must be understanding and forgiving, we know that for the most part fellow believers are wholesome companions. (1 Peter 4:8; Matthew 7:1-5) Love for one another is an identifying mark of the Christian congregation.

—John 13:34, 35; Colossians 3:14.

On occasion, however, someone may have an attitude or way of life of which we personally do not approve. The apostle Paul wrote about some in Corinth whose personal views about the resurrection were not right and who may have had an 'eat, drink, and be merry' attitude. Mature Christians in the congregation needed to be cautious about such ones, for Paul advised: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Corinthians 15:12, 32, 33.

This general counsel is also valid today. For example, a Christian couple may find that their children are adversely affected when they spend time with certain other youngsters, who may not yet take the truth seriously or may be worldly minded. These other children may yet benefit from godly training. But until there is evidence of that, the couple might restrict their children as to playing with and visiting those youngsters. This would *not* be a 'marking' such as spoken of in 2 Thessalonians chapter 3. The parents simply are applying Paul's advice to avoid "bad associations."

Situations that call for 'marking' are more serious than the above example involving children. Occasionally a person in a congregation pursues an unscriptural course that is very disturbing, though it does not yet justify the disfellowshipping action mentioned at 1 Corinthians 5:11-13. Such conduct occurred in the congregation of ancient Thessalonica, so Paul wrote: "We hear certain ones are walking disorderly among you, not working at all but meddling with what does not concern them."—2 Thessalonians 3:11.

What were other Christians in Thessalonica to do? Paul wrote: "We are giving you orders, broth-

ers, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the tradition you received from us. For your part, brothers, do not give up in doing right. But if anyone is not obedient to our word through this letter, keep this one marked, stop associating with him, that he may become ashamed. And yet do not be considering him as an enemy, but continue admonishing him as a brother."—2 Thessalonians 3:6, 13-15.

Thus, without naming the lazy meddlers, Paul exposed to the congregation their serious course. All Christians who were aware of the identity of the disorderly ones would then treat them as "marked." The counsel, "keep this one *marked*," used a Greek word meaning "be you putting sign on," that is, 'taking special notice of someone.' (*New World Translation Reference Bible*, footnote) Paul said, "Stop associating with" the marked one "that he may become ashamed." Brothers would not completely shun him, for Paul advised them to "continue admonishing him as a brother." Yet by their limiting social fellowship with him, they might lead him to become ashamed and perhaps awaken him to the need to conform to Bible principles. Meanwhile the brothers and sisters would be protected from his unwholesome influence.—2 Timothy 2:20, 21.

The Christian congregation today also applies this counsel.* *The Watchtower* of February 1, 1982, page 31, stressed that marking is not to be done over mere private opinions or when a Christian personally chooses to avoid close association with someone. As shown by the case in Thessalonica, marking involves serious violations of Bible principles.

* See *The Watchtower*, May 15, 1973, pages 318-20.

ples. First the elders try repeatedly to help the violator by admonishing him. If the problem persists, they may, without naming the person, give a warning talk to the congregation concerning the disorderly conduct involved, even as Paul warned the Thessalonians. After that, individual Christians would keep the erring person "marked."

Good judgment is needed rather than predetermined rules about every aspect of marking. Paul did not give detailed rules regarding that problem in Thessalonica, such as stipulating how long someone had to have been refusing to work before he could be marked. Similarly, the elders are in touch with the flock and can use reasonableness and discernment in determining whether a particular situation is sufficiently serious and disturbing so as to require a warning talk to the congregation.*

One purpose of marking is to move a disorderly Christian to feel ashamed and stop his unscriptural course. Individuals who had marked him, particularly the elders, will continue to encourage him and note his attitude as they have contact with him at meetings and in field service. When they see that the problem and attitude necessitating the marking have changed for the better, they can end their limitation as to socializing with him.

Consequently, marking should not be confused with a personal or family application of God's advice to avoid bad association. While marking is not something that is needed often, it should be plain that marking is a Scriptural step that is taken when it is warranted, which step our Thessalonian brothers took.

* For example, elders should exercise discernment in dealing with a Christian who is dating a person not "in the Lord."—See *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1982, page 31.

THAT is what people say about the book *"Let Your Kingdom Come."* A letter of appreciation explains: "It gives a clear picture of what the Kingdom is, how it is established and maintained, and what it will do for us and for the earth. It certainly helps to keep alive in our hearts that Kingdom hope and sharpens our desire to strive diligently to be among those who will be granted life at that time."

'It Makes the Kingdom Real'


"Let your Kingdom come"