June 15, 1991

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

SOON NO MORE SICKNESS OR DEATH!

The Watchtower®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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THE BATTLE AGAINST SICKNESS AND DEATH IS IT BEING WON?

NO MORE sickness, no more death! To most people this might sound like little more than wishful thinking. After all, as medical doctor and professor of bacteriology Wade W. Oliver wrote: "Since earliest recorded history, disease has incalculably shaped the destiny of mankind . . . Great epidemics have swooped down upon man with fearsome speed . . . Illness has forever dogged his footsteps."

Is there any reason to believe that a drastic change is imminent? Is medical science close to eliminating all sicknesses and perhaps even death itself?

Unquestionably, doctors and researchers have done remarkable work in the fight against disease. What informed person can fail to be grateful for the successful treatment of cholera, finally achieved toward the end of the 19th century, or for the development of a vaccine against the dread smallpox? That vaccine was developed in 1796 by Edward Jenner from a less deadly cowpox ulcer. In 1806, United States president Thomas Jefferson expressed the feelings of many others when he wrote to Jenner: "Yours is the comfortable reflection that mankind can never forget that you have lived; future nations will know by history only that the loathsome smallpox existed."

Moreover, the successes of medical research in connection with diseases such as diphtheria and poliomyelitis must also be mentioned favorably and with gratitude. And few people today have anything but praise for more recent progress in the treatment of heart disease and cancer. Nevertheless, people are still dying from heart disease and cancer. The goal of eliminating *all* disease and sickness has proved to be quite elusive.

The "New" Diseases

Paradoxically, today's era that has seen the advent of CAT scans and reconstructive surgery has also seen the birth of a crop of "new" diseases, such as Legionnaires' disease, toxic shock syndrome, and the highly publicized killer named AIDS.

Granted, many question just how new these diseases are. An article in *U.S.News & World Report* comments that, in some cases, diseases that have been around for a long time have simply been more accurately diagnosed and given new names. Legionnaires' disease, for example, was first identified in 1976, but it may previously have been misdiagnosed as viral pneumonia. Similarly, toxic shock syndrome may previously have been mistaken for scarlet fever.

Nevertheless, a number of maladies seem unquestionably new. AIDS is no doubt the best known of these. This crippling and fatal disease was first identified and named in 1981. Another less known "new" disease is Brazilian purpuric fever. It was identified in Brazil in 1984 and has a mortality rate estimated to be 50 percent.

No Cure in Sight

So, in spite of man's best efforts, a full and permanent cure for human ailments is nowhere in sight. It is true that the average life expectancy for humans has increased by about 25 years since the year 1900. But this change has mainly been due to medical

THE "DISEASES OF EGYPT"

That men have fought illness in vain from early times is noted even in the Bible. Moses, for example, made an intriguing reference to "all the evil diseases of Egypt." —Deuteronomy 7:15.

These apparently included elephantiasis, dysentery, smallpox, bubonic plague, and ophthalmia. Moses' people escaped such ailments largely because of the advanced hygienic practices imposed upon them by the Law covenant.

A careful examination of Egyptian mummies, however, has resulted in the identification of a host of other "diseases of Egypt." These included arthritis, spondylitis, diseases of the teeth and jaws, appendicitis, and gout. An early secular medical writing, known as the Ebers Papyrus, even mentions diseases such as tumors, afflictions of the stomach and liver, diabetes, leprosy, conjunctivitis, and deafness.

Ancient Egyptian physicians did their best to combat these illnesses, some becoming quite specialized in their medical fields. Greek historian Herodotus wrote: "The country [Egypt] is full of physicians; one treats only the diseases of the eye; another those of the head, the teeth, the abdomen, or the internal organs." However, much of Egyptian "medicine" was really religious quackery and far from scientific.

Modern physicians have enjoyed much greater success in their battle against disease. Still, medical researcher Jessie Dobson drew this thought-provoking conclusion: "What, then, can be learned from a study of diseases of past ages? The general conclusion from a survey of the evidence seems to be that the diseases and afflictions of the remote past do not differ markedly from those of the present . . . Apparently all the skills and efforts of patient research have done little to eradicate disease." —*Disease in Ancient Man.*

techniques that have reduced the risk of dying during infancy or childhood. Man's life span basically remains near the Biblical "threescore years and ten."—Psalm 90:10, *King James Version.*

It thus made news when Anna Williams died in December 1987 at the age of 114. Commenting on Miss Williams' death, a columnist wrote: "Scientists think that 115 to 120 years is probably the upper limit of human longevity. But why should that be? Why should the human body give out after 70, 80, or even 115 years?"

In the 1960's, medical scientists discovered that human cells seem to have the capacity to divide only about 50 times. Once this limit is reached, it appears that nothing can be done to keep the cells alive. This tends to contradict earlier scientific theory that human cells could survive indefinitely if given the proper conditions.

Couple that with the realization that much human suffering is man-made. As one researcher perceptively concluded: "Diseases have not been conquered through bio-medical fixes alone. The history of disease is intimately bound up with social and moral factors."

The World Health Organization observed: "We have inflicted wounds on ourselves, in the belief that science, doctors and hospitals would find a cure, instead of preventing the very causes of illness in the first place. Of course we cannot do without the medical care facilities that actually save life, but let us be clear that they do not add to our 'health'—they stop us dying. . . . The self-destructive urge of the smoker and the drinker, the effects on mind and body of unemployment—these are some of the 'new diseases.' Why do we allow the 'road accident epidemic,' which plunders lives and drains our financial resources?"

Disease, sickness, suffering, and death are thus still very much with us. Nevertheless, we have reason to look forward confidently to a time when there will be no more sickness and no more death. Best of all, there is every reason to believe that that time is near at hand.

SOON NO MORE SICKNESS OR DEATH!

NO ONE enjoys being sick, nor do humans want to die. A professor of medical sociology asserts: "The search for longer life seems to be almost universal throughout history and in most societies. It is related to the basic drive for self-preservation . . . Ponce de Leon is only the most famous of a long line of men who spent their life seeking a longer life. Most of medical science is dedicated to preserving longer life through combating disease and death."

Death so offends our inner nature that when it overcomes friends and family members, we almost naturally try to cushion its impact. The book *Funeral Customs the*

World Over observes: "There is no group, however primitive at the one extreme or civilized at the other, which left freely to itself and within its means does not dispose of the bodies of its members with ceremony. . . . It satisfies deep universal urges. To carry it out seems 'right,' and not to carry it out, particularly for those who are closely connected by family, feeling, shared living, common experience or other ties, seems 'wrong,' an unnatural omission, a matter to be apologized for or ashamed of. . . . [Man] is a being that buries his dead with ceremony."

The Origin of Sickness and Death

The idea that sickness and death will one day be eliminated thus has powerful appeal, but is there a basis for such a belief? Indeed there is, and it is both reasonable, reliable, and infallible. It is the inspired Word of our Creator—the Holy Bible.

That book clearly explains the origin of human misery. It tells us that the first human, Adam, was created by God and placed in a paradise garden home located somewhere in the Middle East. Adam was created perfect; sickness and death were unknown to him. He was soon joined by an equally perfect wife, and together they enjoyed the prospect of eternal life on earth. —Genesis 2:15-17, 21-24.

This idyllic state did not last long. Why? Because Adam selfishly chose a way of life independent of God. Hard labor, pain, sickness, and eventually death resulted. (Genesis 3:17-19) His offspring inherited the unhappy sort of life that Adam had chosen. Romans 5:12 explains: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." Romans 8:22 adds: "We know that all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now."

On Earth or in Heaven?

Nevertheless, the Bible assures us that God will soon restore obedient mankind to the happy condition that Adam and Eve lost. Says Revelation 21:3, 4: "God himself will be with them. And 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." An ancient prophet similarly foresaw the time when "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'"—Isaiah 33:24.

Can you imagine a world without hospitals, mortuaries, and graves? Can you imagine living on and on, free from even the threat of suffering and death? Yes, God's promise touches emotions deep within all of us. Yet, how can we be sure that this wonderful prospect is for our planet Earth—not for heaven? Note the context of the aforementioned Scripture texts. The first verses of Revelation chapter 21 speak of "a new heaven and a new earth." The clear statement is made that God will be with mankind and that they will be his people. The promise in the book of Isaiah that no one will be sick is followed by a reference to "the people that are dwelling in the land," who have been "pardoned for their error."

So these encouraging promises refer to life on earth! And they harmonize with Jesus' prayer to his Father: "Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." —Matthew 6:10.

Why Soon?

Jehovah's Witnesses have helped millions to come to the realization that these promises will be fulfilled in the near future. On what basis, though, do they feel so sure of this? On the basis of overwhelming evidence that we are living in "the last days" of the present system, or arrangement, of things on earth. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Jesus' disciples asked for a sign as to when the conclusion

Sickness and death will soon be replaced by vibrant health and eternal life

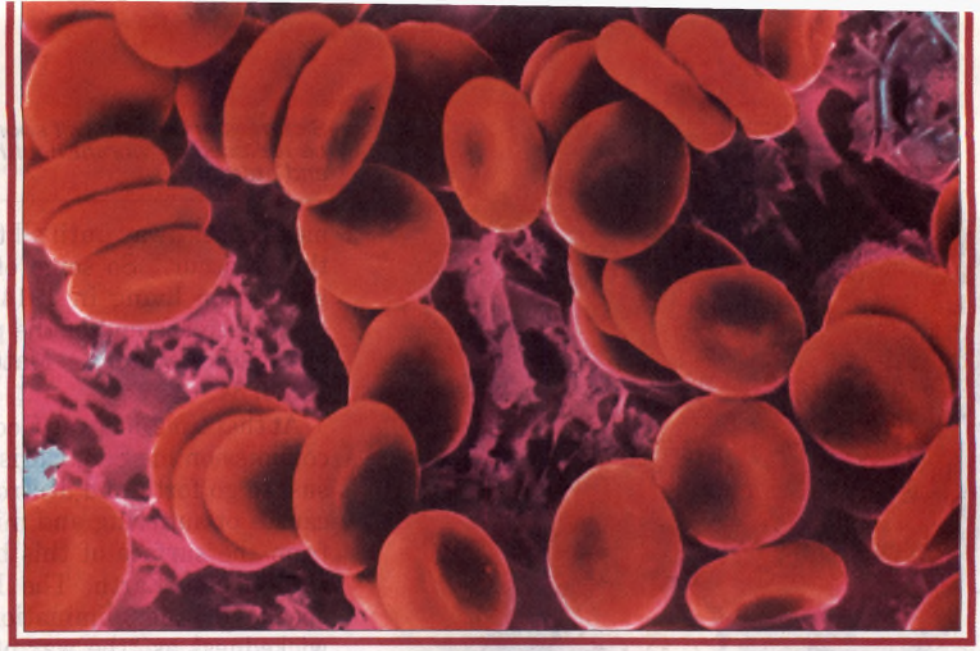
of the system of things would be. In response Jesus foretold in detail the escalating world events that have taken place since the outbreak of World War I in 1914.* Then he added: "When you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur." So some of the generation living in 1914 will live to see the end of the present world system.—Matthew 24:33, 34.

At that time Jehovah God will commission his Son, Christ Jesus, to go forth and destroy all causes of suffering and misery from the surface of this beautiful planet Earth. The Bible speaks of the elimination of wickedness as "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon.—Revelation 16:14, 16.

A vast number of God-fearing humans will survive this awesome development and live to see the peaceful reign of Christ Jesus begin. (Revelation 7: 9, 14; 20:4) Though his rule will be from heaven, its beneficial results will be enjoyed by all those living on earth—both the survivors of the war of Armageddon and the millions upon millions who will subsequently be raised from the dead. The promise will then become a reality: "He [Christ] must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." —1 Corinthians 15:25, 26.

We can thus confidently exclaim: "Soon no more sickness or death!" This is no pipe dream, nor is it wishful thinking. It is the sure promise of Jehovah God, "who cannot lie." Will you put your trust in this hope? It can benefit you everlastingly! —Titus 1:2.

* For further evidence that mankind is living in the last days, see chapter 18 of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



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SAVING LIFE WITH BLOOD—HOW?

"Choose life . . . by listening to [God's] voice . . ., for he is your life and the length of your days."—DEUTERONOMY 30:19, 20.

MANY people say that they respect life, giving as evidence their view of capital punishment, abortion, or hunting. However, there is a special way in which true Christians show respect for life. Psalm 36:9 says: "With you [God] is the source of life." Life being a gift from God, Christians adopt his view of lifeblood.

[2] Our life depends on blood, which carries oxygen throughout our body, removes carbon dioxide, lets us adapt to changes in temperature, and helps us to fight diseases. The One who provided our life also designed and provided the marvelous, life-sustaining liquid tissue called blood. This reflects his ongoing interest in preserving human life. —Genesis 45:5; Deuteronomy 28:66; 30: 15, 16.

[3] Both Christians and people in general should ask themselves: 'Can blood save my life only by its natural functions, or might blood save life in a more profound way?' While most people recognize the link between life and the normal functions of blood, there is actually much more involved. The ethics of Christians, Muslims, and Jews all focus on a Life-Giver who expressed himself about life and about blood. Yes, our Creator has much to say about blood.

1. How are true Christians unique in their respect for life?
2, 3. Why should we take God into account with regard to blood? (Acts 17:25, 28)

◀ *Magnified red blood cells. "Each microliter (0.00003 ounce) of blood contains from 4 million to 6 million red blood cells." —"The World Book Encyclopedia"*

God's Firm Stand on Blood

[4] Blood is mentioned more than 400 times in God's Word, the Bible. Among the earliest is Jehovah's decree: "Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. . . . But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it." He added: "For your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting." (Genesis 9:3-5, *New International Version*) Jehovah said that to Noah, progenitor of the human family. Hence, all humanity was put on notice that the Creator views blood as standing for life. Everyone who claims to recognize God as Life-Giver ought thus to recognize that He takes a firm position about using lifeblood.

[5] God again mentioned blood when giving Israel its Law code. Leviticus 17:10, 11, according to the Jewish Tanakh version, reads: "If anyone of the house of Israel or of the strangers who reside among them partakes of any blood, I will set My face against the person who partakes of the blood, and I will cut him off from among his kin. For the life of the flesh is in the blood." That law could have health benefits, but much more was involved. By treating blood as special, the Israelites were to show their dependence on God for life. (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20) Yes, the central reason why they were to avoid taking in blood was, not that it could be unhealthy, but that blood had special meaning to God.

[6] Where does Christianity stand on saving human life with blood? Jesus knew what his Father said about using blood. Jesus "did no wrong, [and] no treachery was found on his lips." That means he kept the Law perfectly, including the law about blood. (1 Peter 2:22, *Knox*) He thus set a pattern for his followers, including a pattern of respect for life and blood.

[7] History shows us what happened later when a council of the Christian governing body decided whether Christians had to keep all of Israel's laws. Under divine guidance, they said that Christians are not obliged to keep the Mosaic code but that it is "necessary" to "keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled [unbled meat] and from fornication." (Acts 15:22-29) They thus made it clear that avoiding blood is as morally important as avoiding idolatry and gross immorality.*

[8] The early Christians upheld that divine prohibition. Commenting thereon, British scholar Joseph Benson said: "This prohibition of eating blood, given to Noah and all his posterity, and repeated to the Israelites . . . has never been revoked, but, on the contrary, has been confirmed under the New Testament, Acts xv.; and thereby made of perpetual obligation." Yet, would what the Bible says about blood rule out modern medical uses, such as transfusions, which clearly were not used in Noah's day or in the apostles' time?

Blood in or as Medicine

[9] Medicinal use of blood is by no means modern. The book *Flesh and Blood,* by Reay Tannahill, points out that for almost 2,000

4. Early in human history, what did God say about blood?
5. What was the overriding reason why the Israelites would not take in blood?
6. Why can we be sure that Jesus upheld God's stand on blood?

* The decree ended: "If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!" (Acts 15:29) The comment "Good health to you" was not a promise to the effect, 'If you abstain from blood or fornication, you will have better health.' It was simply a closure to the letter, such as, 'Farewell.'

7, 8. How did it become plain that God's law on blood applies to Christians?
9. How was blood used medicinally in ancient times, in contrast with what Christian position?

TRANSFUSION AND INFECTION

After a broad review of whether blood transfusions may make a patient more susceptible to infection, Dr. Neil Blumberg concluded: "Of 12 clinical studies [of the matter], 10 found that transfusion was significantly and independently associated with an increased risk of bacterial infection . . . Additionally, transfusion at some distant time prior to surgery may affect patient resistance to infection if the immunologic effects of transfusion are as long-lived as some studies suggest . . . If these data can be extended and confirmed, it appears that acute postoperative infections could be the single most common significant complication associated with homologous transfusion."
—*Transfusion Medicine Reviews,* October 1990.

years, in Egypt and elsewhere, "blood was regarded as the sovereign remedy for leprosy." Romans believed that epilepsy could be cured by taking in human blood. Tertullian wrote about this "medical" use of blood: "Consider those who with greedy thirst, at a show in the arena, take the fresh blood of wicked criminals . . . and carry it off to heal their epilepsy." This was in stark contrast with what Christians did: "We do not even have the blood of animals at our meals . . . At the trials of Christians you offer them sausages filled with blood. You are convinced, of course, that [it] is unlawful for them." Consider the implication: Rather than take in blood, which represented life, early Christians were willing to risk death. —Compare 2 Samuel 23:15-17.

[10] Of course, back then blood was not being transfused, for experiments with transfusions began only near the 16th century. Yet, in the 17th century, a professor of anatomy at the University of Copenhagen objected: 'Those who drag in the use of human 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.'

10, 11. Why can it be held that God's standard on blood rules out accepting transfused blood?

[11] Yes, even in centuries past, people saw that God's law ruled out both the taking of blood into the veins and the taking of it through the mouth. Realizing this may help people today to understand the position that Jehovah's Witnesses take, one that accords with God's stand. While highly valuing life and appreciating medical care, true Christians respect life as a gift from the Creator, so they do not try to sustain life by taking in blood.—1 Samuel 25:29.

Medically Lifesaving?

[12] For years experts have claimed that blood saves lives. Doctors may relate that someone with acute blood loss was transfused and got better. So people may wonder, 'How medically wise or unwise is the Christian stand?' Before considering any serious medical procedure, a thinking person will determine both the possible benefits and the potential risks. What about blood transfusions? The reality is that blood transfusions are fraught with many risks. They can even be fatal.

[13] Recently, Drs. L. T. Goodnough and J. M. Shuck noted: "The medical community has long been aware that while the blood supply is as safe as we know how to make it,

12. Thinking people may reasonably consider what about blood transfusions?

13, 14. (a) What are some ways in which blood transfusions have proved to be risky? (b) How did the pope's experience illustrate the health risks of blood?

blood transfusion has always carried a risk. The most frequent complication of blood transfusion continues to be non-A, non-B hepatitis (NANBH); other potential complications include hepatitis B, alloimmunization, transfusion reaction, immunologic suppression, and iron overload." Estimating 'conservatively' just one of those serious dangers, the report added: "It is anticipated that approximately 40,000 people [in the United States alone] will develop NANBH yearly and that up to 10% of these will develop cirrhosis and/or hepatoma [liver cancer]."—*The American Journal of Surgery,* June 1990.

[14] As the risk of contracting disease from transfused blood has become more widely known, people are reconsidering their view of transfusions. For example, after the pope was shot in 1981, he was treated at a hospital and released. Later he had to go back for two months, and his condition was so grave that it seemed he might have to retire as an invalid. Why? He got a cytomegalovirus infection from blood given him. Some may wonder, 'If blood given even to the pope is unsafe, what about transfusions given to us average people?'

[15] 'But can't they screen blood for diseases?' someone might ask. Well, consider as an example screening for hepatitis B. *Patient Care* (February 28, 1990) pointed out: "The incidence of posttransfusion hepatitis declined following the universal screening of blood for [it], but 5-10% of posttransfusion hepatitis cases are still caused by hepatitis B."

[16] The fallibility of such testing is also seen with another blood-borne risk—AIDS. The AIDS pandemic has, with a vengeance, awakened people to the danger of infected blood. Granted, there are now tests to screen blood for evidence of the virus. However, blood is not screened in all places, and it seems that people may carry the AIDS virus in their blood for years without its being detectable by current tests. So patients can get AIDS—have got AIDS—from blood that was screened and passed!

[17] Drs. Goodnough and Shuck also mentioned "immunologic suppression." Yes, evidence mounts that even properly crossmatched blood can damage a patient's immune system, opening the door to cancer and death. Thus, a Canadian study of "patients with head and neck cancer showed that those who received a blood transfusion during removal of [a] tumor experienced a significant decrease in immune status afterwards." (*The Medical Post,* July 10, 1990) Doctors at the University of Southern California had reported: "The recurrence rate for all cancers of the larynx was 14% for those who did not receive blood and 65% for those who did. For cancer of the oral cavity, pharynx, and nose or sinus, the recurrence rate was 31% without transfusions and 71% with transfusions." (*Annals of Otology, Rhinology & Laryngology,* March 1989) Suppressed immunity seems also to underlie the fact that those given blood during surgery are more likely to develop infections. —See box, page 10.

Any Alternatives to Blood?

[18] Some might feel, 'Transfusions are hazardous, but are there any alternatives?' We certainly want effective medical care of high quality, so are there legitimate and effective ways to manage serious medical problems without using blood? Happily, yes. *The New England Journal of Medicine* (June 7, 1990) reported: "Physicians, increasingly aware of the risks of [AIDS] and other infections transmitted by transfusion, are reconsidering the risks and benefits of transfusions

15, 16. Why are blood transfusions not safe even if the blood has been screened for diseases?

17. How may blood transfusions do damage that may not be immediately evident?

18. (a) The risks involved in blood transfusions are turning physicians to what? (b) What information about alternatives might you share with your physician?

and are turning to alternatives, including that of avoiding transfusions altogether."*

[19] Jehovah's Witnesses have long refused blood transfusions, not primarily because of the health dangers, but because of obedience to God's law on blood. (Acts 15:28, 29) Yet, skilled doctors have successfully cared for Witness patients without using blood, with its attendant risks. As just one among many examples reported in medical literature, *Archives of Surgery* (November 1990) discussed heart transplantation on Witness patients whose consciences permitted such a procedure without the administering of blood. The report said: "More than 25 years of experience performing heart surgery on Jehovah's Witnesses has culminated in successful cardiac transplantation without administering blood products . . . No perioperative deaths occurred, and early follow-up studies have shown that these patients have not been more susceptible to higher graft rejection rates."

The Most Valuable Blood

[20] There is, however, a soul-searching question that each of us needs to ask himself. 'If I have decided not to accept blood transfusions, why? Honestly, what is my primary, fundamental reason?'

[21] We have mentioned that there are effective alternatives to blood that do not expose one to many of the dangers linked to transfusions. Dangers such as hepatitis or AIDS have even moved many to refuse blood for nonreligious reasons. Some are quite vocal about this, almost as if they were marching under a banner, "Blood Is Bad Medicine." It is possible that a Christian might be drawn into that march. But it is a march on a dead-end road. How so?

[22] True Christians realize that even with the best of medical care in the finest of hospitals, at some point people die. With or without blood transfusions, people die. To say that is not being fatalistic. It is being realistic. Death is a fact of life today. People who disregard God's law on blood often experience immediate or delayed harm from the blood. Some even die from the transfused blood. Still, as all of us must realize, those who survive the transfusions have not gained everlasting life, so blood does not prove to have saved their lives permanently. On the other hand, most who refuse blood, for religious and/or medical reasons, yet accept alternative therapy do very well medically. They may thus extend their life for many years—but not endlessly.

[23] That all humans alive today are imperfect and are gradually dying leads us to the central point of what the Bible says about blood. God told all mankind not to eat blood. Why? Because it represents life. (Genesis 9:

* Many effective alternatives to blood transfusion are reviewed in the brochure *How Can Blood Save Your Life?,* published in 1990 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

19. Why can you be confident that you can refuse blood and still be treated medically with success?

20, 21. Why should Christians be cautious that they do not develop the attitude "Blood is bad medicine"?

22. What realistic view of life and death must we take? (Ecclesiastes 7:2)

23. How do God's laws on blood relate to our being sinful and in need of a ransom?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ What is the primary reason why Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions?
- ☐ What evidence confirms that the Biblical position on blood is not medically unreasonable?
- ☐ How is the ransom tied in with the Bible's law on blood?
- ☐ What is the only way in which blood can permanently save lives?

3-6) In the Law code, he set out laws addressing the fact that all humans are sinful. God told the Israelites that by offering animal sacrifices, they could show that their sins needed to be covered. (Leviticus 4:4-7, 13-18, 22-30) Though that is not what he asks of us today, it has import now. God purposed to provide a sacrifice that could fully atone for the sins of all believers—the ransom. (Matthew 20:28) This is why we need to have God's view of blood.

[24] It would be a mistake to concentrate principally on the health risks of blood, for that was not God's focus. The Israelites may have gained some health benefits by not taking in blood, just as they may have benefited by not eating the flesh of pigs or of scavenger animals. (Deuteronomy 12:15, 16; 14:7, 8, 11, 12) Remember, though, that when God granted Noah the right to eat meat, he did not forbid the eating of the flesh of such animals. But he did decree that humans must not eat blood. God was not focusing mainly on possible health risks. That was not the vital point to his decree on blood. His worshipers were to refuse to sustain their lives with blood, not primarily because doing so was unhealthy, but because it was unholy. They refused blood, not because it was polluted, but because it was precious. Only by sacrificial blood could they obtain forgiveness.

24. (a) Why would it be a mistake to treat health risks as the central point regarding blood? (b) What really should underlie our view of using blood?

[25] The same is true with us. At Ephesians 1:7, the apostle Paul explained: "By means of him [Christ] we have the release by ransom through the *blood* of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness." If God forgives the sins of someone and views that one as righteous, the person has the prospect of endless life. So Jesus' ransom blood is able to save life—lastingly, in fact, everlastingly.

25. How can blood lastingly save life?

WALK AS INSTRUCTED BY JEHOVAH

"Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way. I shall walk in your truth. Unify my heart to fear your name."—PSALM 86:11.

"MAYBE Jehovah's Witnesses are right in refusing the use of blood products, for it is true that an important number of pathogenic agents can be transmitted by transfused blood."—French medical daily *Le Quotidien du Médecin,* December 15, 1987.

1, 2. What moves Jehovah's Witnesses to refuse to accept blood transfusions?

[2] Some who read that comment might have felt it a mere fluke that Jehovah's Witnesses refused blood transfusions long before it became generally known how dangerous, even lethal, these can be. But the stand that Jehovah's Witnesses have taken on blood is not by accident, nor is it a rule invented by some strange sect, a stand springing from fear that blood is not safe.

Rather, the Witnesses refuse blood because of their determination to walk obediently before their Grand Instructor—God.

[3] King David, who felt his dependence on God, was determined to be instructed by him and to 'walk in his truth.' (Psalm 86:11) David was once advised that if he avoided becoming bloodguilty in God's eyes, his 'soul could prove to be wrapped up in the bag of life with Jehovah.' (1 Samuel 25:21, 22, 25, 29) As people wrapped valuables to protect and preserve them, so David's life could be protected and preserved by God. Accepting the wise advice, David did not seek to save himself by personal efforts but trusted in the One to whom he owed his life: "You will cause me to know the path of life. Rejoicing to satisfaction is with your face; there is pleasantness at your right hand forever."—Psalm 16:11.

[4] With that attitude, David did not feel that he personally could choose which divine laws were valid or needed to be obeyed. His attitude was: "Instruct me, O Jehovah, in your way, and lead me in the path of uprightness." "Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way. I shall walk in your truth. Unify my heart to fear your name. I laud you, O Jehovah my God, with all my heart." (Psalm 27:11; 86:11, 12) At times walking in truth before God might seem inconvenient or might mean great sacrifice, but David wanted to be instructed in the right way and to walk in it.

Instructed About Blood

[5] It is worth our noting that from boyhood on, David had been taught God's view of blood, which view was no religious mystery. When the Law was read to the people, David would have heard this: "The soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have put it upon the altar for you to make atonement for your souls, because it is the blood that makes atonement by the soul in it. That is why I have said to the sons of Israel: 'No soul of you must eat blood and no alien resident who is residing as an alien in your midst should eat blood.'" —Leviticus 17:11, 12; Deuteronomy 4:10; 31:11.

[6] As long as God used Israel as his congregated people, those wanting to please him needed to be instructed about blood. Generation after generation of Israelite boys and girls were thus instructed. But would such instruction continue after God accepted the congregation of Christians, constituting them "the Israel of God"? (Galatians 6:16) Yes, indeed. God's view of blood did not change. (Malachi 3:6) His stated position about not misusing blood existed before the Law covenant came into force, and it continued after the Law was terminated.—Genesis 9:3, 4; Acts 15: 28, 29.

[7] Respect for blood is central to Christianity. 'Is that not an exaggeration?' some may ask. Yet, what is central to Christianity if not Jesus' sacrifice? And the apostle Paul wrote: "By means of [Jesus] we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness." (Ephesians 1:7) *The Inspired Letters,* translated by Frank C. Laubach, renders the verse: "The blood of Christ paid for us and now we belong to Him."

[8] All who hope to survive the impending "great tribulation" and to enjoy God's blessings on a paradise earth depend on

3. (a) How did David feel about dependence on Jehovah? (b) What outcome did David look forward to because of trusting in God?
4. Why did David want to be instructed by Jehovah?
5. What would David have known about God's stand on blood?
6. How was there a continuing need for God's servants to be instructed about blood?
7. Why is being instructed by God about blood important to us?
8. How do the "great crowd" depend on blood for life?

Jesus' shed blood. Revelation 7:9-14 describes them and says retrospectively: "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Note the language here. It does not say that these who are saved through the tribulation had 'accepted Jesus' or 'put faith in him,' though those certainly are vital aspects. It goes a step further and says that they "washed their robes and made them white in [Jesus'] blood." That is because his blood has ransoming value.

[9] Appreciation for this value helps Jehovah's Witnesses to be resolved not to misuse blood, even if a physician sincerely claims that a transfusion is vital. He may believe that potential benefits of a transfusion outweigh the health risks posed by the blood itself. But the Christian cannot ignore an even graver risk, the risk of losing God's approval by agreeing to a misuse of blood. Paul once spoke of those who "practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth." Why was any sin of that sort so serious? Because such a man "has trampled upon the Son of God and . . . has esteemed as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified."—Hebrews 9:16-24; 10:26-29.

Help Others to Be Instructed

[10] We who appreciate Jesus' ransom sacrifice take care not to practice sin, rejecting the lifesaving value of his blood. Having thought the matter through, we realize that simple gratitude to God for life should *move* us to reject any compromise of his righteous laws, which we are confident were given with our best interests at heart —our long-term best interests. (Deuteronomy 6:24; Proverbs 14:27; Ecclesiastes 8:12) What, though, about our children?

[11] While our offspring are babes or too young to understand, Jehovah God can view them as clean and acceptable on the basis of our devotion. (1 Corinthians 7:14) So it is true that infants in a Christian household may not yet have understood and made a choice about obeying God's law on blood. Are we, however, doing our best to instruct them in this vital matter? Christian parents ought to consider that seriously, for some parents seem to have a mistaken attitude about their children and blood. Some appear to feel that they do not really have much control over whether their minor children are given a transfusion. Why this mistaken view?

[12] Many lands have laws or governmental agencies to protect neglected and abused children. The children of Jehovah's Witnesses are not being neglected or abused when parents decide against allowing their beloved son or daughter to be given blood, requesting at the same time the use of alternative therapies that modern medicine can provide. Even from a medical standpoint, this is not neglect or abuse, considering the admitted dangers of transfusion therapy. It is an exercise of the right to weigh the risks involved and then to choose the treatment.* Yet, legal provisions have been resorted to by some medical personnel seeking authority to force an unwanted transfusion.

[13] Some parents, aware that it may be easy for medical personnel to get court backing for transfusing a minor, might feel that the matter is out of their hands, that there is nothing that parents can or need

9. Why is obeying Jehovah regarding blood so serious?

10. What is behind our determination to abstain from blood?

* See *How Can Blood Save Your Life?,* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., pages 21-2, 28-31.

11-13. What mistaken view about their children and blood do some Christian parents have, and why?

A judge or a hospital administrator may want to know what a Christian youth really believes, and why

do. How mistaken that view is!—Proverbs 22:3.

[14] We have noted that David was instructed in the way of God from his youth up. That equipped him to regard life as a gift from God and to know that blood represents life. (Compare 2 Samuel 23:14-17.) Timothy was instructed in God's thinking "from infancy." (2 Timothy 3: 14, 15) Do you not agree that even when David and Timothy were below what is today a legal age of adulthood, they must have been able to express themselves well on issues involving God's will? Similarly, long before becoming of age, young Christians today should be instructed in God's way.

[15] In some places a so-called mature minor is granted rights similar to those of adults. Based on age or mature thinking, or both, a youth may be viewed as mature enough to make his own decisions on medical treatment. Even where this is not the law, judges or officials may give much weight to the wishes of a youth who is able to express clearly his firm decision about blood. Conversely, when a youth cannot explain his beliefs clearly and maturely, a court might feel it has to decide what seems best, as it might for a baby.

[16] One young man had studied the Bible off and on for years but was not baptized. Despite his being just seven weeks from the age when he would gain the "right to refuse medical treatment for himself," a hospital treating him for cancer sought court backing to transfuse him against his wishes and those of his parents. The conscientious judge quizzed him about his beliefs on blood and asked basic questions, such as the names of the first five books of the Bible. The young man could not name

14. How were David and Timothy instructed in their youth?

15, 16. (a) What view has developed in some places about the rights of minors? (b) What led to one minor's being given blood?

them nor give convincing testimony that he understood why he refused blood. Sadly, the judge authorized transfusions, commenting: "(H)is refusal to consent to blood transfusions is not based upon a mature understanding of his own religious beliefs."

[17] Matters may turn out differently for a minor well instructed in God's ways and actively walking in His truth. A younger Christian had the same rare type of cancer. The girl and her parents understood and accepted modified chemotherapy from a specialist at a noted hospital. Still, the case was taken to court. The judge wrote: "D.P. testified she would resist having a blood transfusion in any way that she could. She considered a transfusion an invasion of her body and compared it to rape. She asked the Court to respect her choice and permit her to continue at [the hospital] without Court ordered blood transfusions." The Christian instruction she had received came to her aid at this difficult time.—See box.

[18] A 12-year-old girl was being treated for leukemia. A child-welfare agency took the matter to court so that blood could be forced on her. The judge concluded: "L. has told this court clearly and in a matter-of-fact way that, if an attempt is made to transfuse her with blood, she will fight that transfusion with all of the strength that she can muster. She has said, and I believe her, that she will scream and struggle and that she will pull the injecting device out of her arm and will attempt to destroy the blood in the bag over her bed. I refuse to make any order which would put this child *through* that ordeal . . . With this patient, the treatment proposed by the hospital addresses the disease only in a physical sense. It fails to address her emotional needs and her religious beliefs."

17. What position did a 14-year-old girl take about being given blood, with what result?

18. (a) An afflicted girl took what firm stand about receiving blood? (b) What did the judge decide about her treatment?

THE COURT WAS IMPRESSED

What did the court decision state regarding D.P., mentioned in paragraph 17?

"The Court was most impressed with the intelligence, poise, dignity, and forcefulness of this 14-1/2 year old youngster. She may have been overwhelmed by the discovery that she had a deadly form of cancer . . . Nevertheless, it was a mature young person who came to Court to testify. She appeared to have focused clearly on the difficult task facing her. She had attended all counseling sessions, agreed to a plan of therapy, developed a coherent philosophy on how she as a human being would face this medical challenge, and she came to the Court with the poignant request: respect my decision . . .

"In addition to her maturity, D.P. has expressed sufficient grounds for her decision for the Court to respect it. Spiritually, psychologically, morally, and emotionally she would be harmed by a treatment plan which included blood transfusions. The Court will respect her choice of treatment plan."

Parents—Instruct Well

[19] Such experiences carry a powerful message for parents who desire that all in their family live according to God's law on blood. One reason why Abraham was God's friend was that He knew that the patriarch would "command his sons and his household after him so that they [would] keep Jehovah's way to do righteousness." (Genesis 18: 19) Should this not be true of Christian parents today? If you are a parent, are you

19. What special obligation should parents discharge toward their children?

instructing your dear children to walk in Jehovah's way so that they will always be "ready to make a defense before everyone that demands . . . a reason for the hope in [them], but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect"?—1 Peter 3:15.

[20] Though it would be good for our children to be informed about the disease dangers and other risks of blood transfusions, instructing our children in God's perfect law on blood does not primarily mean trying to instill fear of blood. If, for example, a judge asked a girl why she did not want to be given blood and her answer was essentially that she thought blood too risky or scary, what could be the effect? The judge might conclude that she was simply immature and overly frightened, just as she might be so afraid of an appendectomy that she would cry and resist this operation that even her parents felt was best for her. Moreover, we noted earlier that the fundamental reason why Christians object to transfusions is not that the blood is polluted but that it is precious to our God and Life-Giver. Our children should know that, as well as that the possible medical hazards of blood give added weight to our religious position.

20. What should we primarily want our children to know and to believe about blood? (Daniel 1: 3-14)

Key Points of Instruction

- ☐ What view should we have about being instructed by Jehovah?
- ☐ Why is obeying God's law on blood so important?
- ☐ Why is it vital that youths be able to explain clearly and firmly their convictions about blood?
- ☐ How can Christian parents help their children to be well instructed in Jehovah's law on blood?

[21] If you have children, are you sure that they agree with and can explain the Bible-based stand on transfusions? Do they truly believe this stand to be God's will? Are they convinced that to violate God's law would be so serious that it could put at risk a Christian's prospect for everlasting life? Wise parents will review these matters with their children, whether they be very young or almost adults. Parents may hold practice sessions in which each youth faces questions that might be posed by a judge or a hospital official. The goal is not to have a youth repeat by rote selected facts or answers. It is more important that they know what *they* believe, and why. Of course, at a court hearing, the parents or others might present information about the risks of blood and the availability of alternative therapies. But what a judge or an official would likely seek to learn from speaking with our children is whether they maturely understand their situation and options and also whether they have their own values and firm convictions.—Compare 2 Kings 5:1-4.

[22] All of us need to appreciate and resolutely hold to God's view of blood. Revelation 1:5 describes Christ as the one who 'loves us and who loosed us from our sins by means of his own blood.' Only by accepting the value of Jesus' blood can we gain full and lasting forgiveness of our sins. Romans 5:9 clearly says: "Much more, therefore, since we have been declared righteous now by his blood, shall we be saved through him from wrath." How wise, then, for us and for our children to be instructed by Jehovah on this matter and to be determined to walk in his way forever!

21. (a) Parents should learn what about their children and the Bible's view of blood? (b) How can parents help their children in connection with blood?

22. What can be the permanent result of our being instructed by God about blood?

YOUTHS
Will You Pass the Test of Christian Loyalty?

"YOU don't think of immoral conduct as disloyalty. You're simply having fun. True, you know that if your parents or the elders were to find out, it would cause heartbreak and a lot of problems. But when you are having fun, you just block all those thoughts out."

The young man just quoted had carried on a secret practice of fornication. He led a double life, deceiving his parents and the Christian congregation. Little did he realize at the time that he was failing a test of Christian loyalty.

Thousands of Christian youths have failed similar tests of loyalty. And little wonder! Why, Satan the Devil is 'waging war' with God's people, doing all he can to break their integrity. (Revelation 12:17) Especially has he made youths a target of his "crafty acts." (Ephesians 6:11, *Kingdom Interlinear*) It thus takes real effort and determination to remain loyal.

Just what is loyalty? In the Hebrew Scriptures, the original language word for "loyalty" indicates a loving attachment to a person with a purpose in view. (Psalm 18:25) It does not describe some weak bond that can easily be broken but an attachment that remains intact until its purpose in connection with that person is fulfilled. In the Greek Scriptures, the original language word for "loyalty" carries the thought of holiness, righteousness, or reverence.

Loyalty thus involves a right relationship with God. Ephesians 4:24 tells us to "put on the new personality which was created . . . in true righteousness and loyalty." Do you want to be loyal to Jehovah? Then you must cultivate a loyal attachment to him, an unbreakable bond, a determination to please him in all your ways. You must adhere to Jehovah's righteous standards—no matter how tempting it might be to do otherwise!

The Pressures to Be Disloyal

Commendably, most young people among Jehovah's Witnesses are striving to remain loyal, and they enjoy a clean conscience as a result. The apostle Paul nevertheless prophesied that during "the last days," disloyalty would characterize people in general. (2 Timothy 3:1, 2) Tragically, some Christian youths have allowed this disloyal world to 'squeeze them into its own mold.' (Romans 12:2, *Phillips*) How has Satan accomplished this?

Peer pressure is one potent tool of Satan. Most people want to be well-thought-of by others, and Satan knows how to play on this natural desire. Wanting to be viewed as normal, some Christian youths have engaged in unwholesome conversation, immoral conduct, smoking, drunkenness—even drug abuse—all in the interests of being accepted by their peers.

Satan wants us to 'conduct ourselves in harmony with the desires of our flesh,

doing the things willed by the flesh.' (Ephesians 2:3) He well knows how powerful the pull of sexual desire can be during "the bloom of youth." (1 Corinthians 7:36) And he wants you to give in to those desires. Some Christian youths unwittingly play into his hands by viewing pornographic literature, movies, and videos or by practicing masturbation. These things, in turn, often lead to serious acts of disloyalty. Has Satan's world 'squeezed you into its mold' in some of these areas?

Leading a Double Life

While committing a gross wrong such as fornication is in itself a very serious matter, some youths compound their difficulties. They are like the "men of untruth," spoken of at Psalm 26:4, "who hide what they are." Such youths lead a double life, acting one way while in the company of their parents or other mature Christians and another way when in the company of their peers.

Leading a double life, however, is self-defeating and dangerous. Wrong acts unchecked almost always lead to other wrong acts. And while one's conscience may be bothered at first, the longer one persists in wrongdoing, the less one's conscience reacts to wrongdoing. One may literally 'cease feeling pain' over doing wrong.—Ephesians 4:19, *Kingdom Interlinear.*

At this point it becomes extremely difficult to confess one's wrongdoing and get help. This is particularly so if other Christian youths are involved in the wrong. A misguided sense of loyalty often prevails. The youth quoted at the outset explained: "You realize what you're doing, and you know that it's wrong. In order for the other individuals involved not to get in trouble, you agree not to tell anyone."

While a person may 'hide what he is' from his parents or the congregation, he cannot hide from Jehovah. "There is not a creation that is not manifest to his sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting." (Hebrews 4:13) The Bible assures us: "He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed." (Proverbs 28:13) In time the wrong will be exposed. One simply cannot outsmart Jehovah. Proverbs 3:7 says: "Do not become wise in your own eyes. Fear Jehovah and turn away from bad." Remember, too, that "the eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch upon the bad ones and the good ones."—Proverbs 15:3.

The aforementioned youth, along with several others involved in the secret wrongdoing, was thus found out, and he and his companions had to be expelled from the Christian congregation. They later recovered spiritually and were reinstated. Still, what a hard way to learn the meaning of loyalty!

'Setting Matters Straight' With God

What if one has already proved disloyal in some way, perhaps by committing a wrong act? It is easy to fool oneself and deny the need to correct matters. One youth who secretly engaged in fornication said: "I increased my field ministry, thinking that this would somehow cover up the wrong." The wayward nation of Israel similarly tried to appease Jehovah with sacrifices. But Jehovah rejected such hypocritical devotion. He urged them: "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the badness of your dealings from in front of my eyes; cease to do bad." Jehovah would accept their sacrifices only after they 'set matters straight with him.' The same holds true today for any who may be involved in wrongdoing.—Isaiah 1:11, 15-18.

One cannot set matters straight with Jehovah simply by confiding in a peer. For one thing, peers do not always offer the best help, since oftentimes they are equally limited in experience in life. More important, they cannot forgive your sin. Only God can do that. So "pour out your heart" to him in confession. (Psalm 62:8) Though you may be deeply ashamed of your conduct, be assured that Jehovah 'forgives in a large way.'—Isaiah 55:7.

You will need additional help. "Let your parents know, let the elders know right away—right in the beginning," exhorts one young Christian who benefited from such help. Yes, your parents are probably in a good position to help you. "Give your heart" to them, letting them know the full extent of your problems. (Proverbs 23:26) They can arrange for you to receive further assistance from the congregation elders when that is necessary.—James 5: 14, 15.

Manifesting True Loyalty—How?

Of course, it would be best never to fall into disloyal conduct in the first place. Psalm 18:25 tells us: "With someone loyal you [Jehovah] will act in loyalty; with the faultless, able-bodied man you will deal faultlessly." Jehovah richly blesses those who loyally maintain high standards of conduct.

There are other ways, though, in which your loyalty may be put to the test. For example, suppose a friend of yours has embarked upon a wayward course. Will you let misguided loyalty to that friend overshadow your loyalty to Jehovah? The loving thing to do would be to approach that friend and urge him to report the matter to his parents or to the elders. Tell your friend that if he does not do so within a reasonable period of time, you will have to do so yourself. Proverbs 27:5 says: "Better is a revealed reproof than a concealed love." By assisting your friend in this way, you manifest not only the genuineness of your friendship but also the depth of your loyalty to Jehovah.

Whatever the test, the strength to display loyalty stems from having a strong personal relationship with Jehovah. Meaningful prayer and diligent personal study are essential if we are to enjoy such a relationship. Interestingly, all the erring youths mentioned earlier admitted that their prayers and personal study habits had become routine—and in time nonexistent. Jehovah ceased being real to them, and unclean conduct soon followed. Are you, by prayer and personal study, strengthening your relationship with Jehovah so as to remain loyal?

True, at times you may wonder if you are missing out on having a good time. "Sometimes it seems as if worldly people are having fun," said one young woman. "But when you get caught up in a situation, you can see that it is not fun at all." She spoke from experience, having engaged in sexual immorality, resulting in pregnancy and abortion. "Being in the truth is a protection," she now says—a lesson she learned the hard way. Psalm 119:165 reminds us that "abundant peace belongs to those loving [God's] law."

Therefore, do your utmost to remain loyal. Work at building an enduring relationship with Jehovah. Hate what is bad and cling to what is good. (Romans 12:9) Psalm 97:10 tells us: "O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad. He is guarding the souls of his loyal ones; out of the hand of the wicked ones he delivers them." Yes, as a Christian youth, you will benefit from Jehovah's protection and enjoy eternal life if you pass the test of Christian loyalty.

WITNESSING IN FRANCE

A Land of Variety

FRANCE is a country of great variety. Majestic mountains, rolling hills, storm-swept rocky cliffs, warm sandy beaches, open grain fields, small hedged farms, extensive vineyards, pasturelands, coniferous and deciduous forests, hamlets, villages, towns, large modern cities—France is all of this, and more.

Although much of the countryside has retained its charm, the French social scene has undergone rapid changes in recent years. "French society is not going through a period of crisis," says the 1989 edition of *Francoscopie,* "but through a real upheaval. Social structures, values, cultural standards, and attitudes are undergoing deep changes at an accelerated pace."

These drastic changes have also affected the religious realm. Though Catholicism is still the religion of the vast majority, it is now more a tradition than a religion with any real influence on the life of most members. The people's increasing indifference toward spiritual values has halted the growth of the churches.

In sharp contrast, the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses in France has moved forward rapidly in the past few years. From Alsace in the northeast to Brittany on the Atlantic, from the lofty Alps to the low-lying Loire Valley, even on the Mediterranean isle of Corsica, Witnesses face different circumstances and meet people with different backgrounds. Let us take a pictorial tour and see what it is like to preach the Kingdom good news in France, the land of variety.—Matthew 24:14.

ALSACE

Bordering Germany, Alsace is a province well-known for its vineyards and charming flower-filled villages. Strasbourg, its capital, has been a Protestant stronghold since the Reformation, and the Alsatians generally have a healthy respect for the Bible. Jehovah's Witnesses have been preaching the Kingdom good news in this region since early in this century. Today, the work is well established, as exemplified by the experience of one youngster named Sylvie, who took advantage of the opportunity to preach in school.

In a discussion with several classmates, Sylvie brought up the purpose of life and the prospects for the future. One boy became sufficiently interested to let Sylvie and another Witness call on him at home. "Though this Catholic youth had been an altar boy, he had many questions that had never been answered," said Sylvie. "We used the Bible to answer some of them, and he accepted a regular Bible study." The young man was baptized one year later and after qualifying entered the full-time ministry as a regular pioneer. Sylvie too has since taken up that privilege of service.

BRITTANY

Jutting out into the Atlantic, Brittany is a province of strong Catholic tradition. However, through the persistent efforts of the Witnesses, an increasing number of people in this area are accepting the Kingdom message. Here is an example of what is happening in this northwestern region of France.

"A young couple moved into the apartment above ours," reports a local Witness. "Some time later, I met the young woman on the staircase, with her son in her arms. Upon learning that his name was Jonathan, I asked if she knew the origin of that name. 'I think it comes from the Bible, but that is all I know,' she replied. She listened to the explanation I offered, and she mentioned that both she and her husband were intrigued by the Bible. Though we had further conversations, nothing concrete developed then.

"A little later, the couple asked me for advice on certain problems. I used the Bible to answer, and they were impressed by the information it had to offer. I invited them once more to study the Bible. The following day the young woman accepted. A few weeks later, her husband joined the study. Both are now baptized Witnesses."

THE ALPS

The Alps are famous for spectacular scenery. People go there to marvel at the majestic peaks, particularly Mont Blanc, the highest summit in Western Europe. In this region also, the number of Kingdom publishers who glorify the Creator is increasing. People of all ages and from all walks of life are joining their ranks, as the following account shows.

Four youths in that area had quite a record. They stole cars and other goods, often got drunk, used and peddled drugs, and were involved in prostitution and spiritism. They were unemployed and in frequent trouble with the police, and all of them had been in prison. However, all four had heard about the truth in their childhood because their families had studied with Jehovah's Witnesses from time to time.

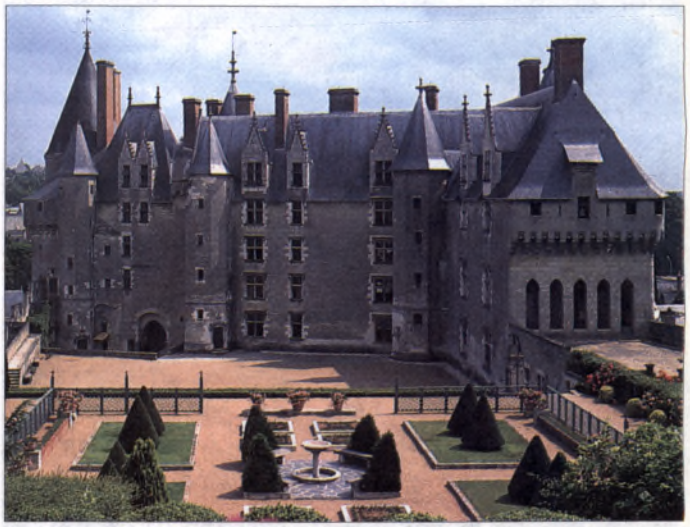
After some years of wild living, one of the youths had

a change of heart and decided to serve Jehovah. This caused a chain reaction. One day the police were carrying out a routine check, and they asked one of the youngsters to open his bag. Expecting to find drugs or stolen goods, they were surprised to find only a Bible and some booklets. The young man used the Bible to explain what brought about the changes in his life. Finding that hard to believe, one of the policemen asked: "You mean you don't smoke, drink, or take drugs anymore?" The policemen finally accepted the explanation and let him go without further ado. Today these four young men are baptized, all are serving in the congregation as ministerial servants, and three of them are regular pioneers.

LOIRE VALLEY

The Loire Valley is called the garden of France. It stretches from Orléans, 70 miles south of Paris, to the mouth of the Loire River on the Atlantic Coast. This region is known for its many castles, the former residences and hunting lodges of royalty. There are congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in all the major towns in this area.

During school recess one day, little Emma, an outgoing and affectionate girl of six, went back to her classroom to greet her teacher. Shocked to see her teacher smoking, she burst into tears and ran away.



The teacher went after her and asked why she was crying, yet Emma would not say anything. When the teacher insisted, Emma sobbed and replied: "It's because you're smoking. You are going to get sick and die!"

The next day the teacher called Emma's mother to say how touched she was by the daughter's reaction. So the mother explained the Witnesses' stand regarding tobacco. The teacher then confided that her family had already asked her to give up smoking, but it had not worked. This time, however, she was so moved by Emma's genuine response that she stopped smoking in just two days.

CORSICA

The isle of Corsica, though called "the scented isle," is also known for the strong spirit of its inhabitants, often resulting in bloody vendettas. For years the Witnesses were viewed as a religion "from the Continent." However, the power of Bible truth is changing the hearts of many there.

One newly baptized Witness related that once he returned from vacation to discover that all the portable equipment from his farm had been stolen. "By trusting in Jehovah," he confided, "I was able to react differently from the way I would have reacted in the past." While speaking to his neighbors, he calmly mentioned his loss.

"Later, some neighbors had problems. I left my work to go and help them out. A few days later, I received a phone call from one of them asking me to come over as soon as possible. Thinking he was in trouble again, I went over right away. He invited me to sit down and asked: 'Do you know why I asked you to come? It's about your equipment. I was the one who stole it. But when I saw your kind and friendly attitude, I said to myself, "I can't do that to him!" And after you helped us out, I couldn't sleep at night anymore.'" True Christianity in practice led to a good outcome.

At the end of the second world war, when the Kingdom witnessing work opened up again in France, there were only 1,700 Witnesses in the whole country. The task of reaching the entire population with the Kingdom message seemed an impossibility. However, over the years, Jehovah has blessed his people in France with the needed equipment —printing plants, Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and so on—and the willing spirit to accomplish the task. Today, with over 117,000 active preachers, the message that Jehovah's Kingdom by Christ is the only hope for humanity is being preached throughout this land of variety.

Examining Facets of God's Priceless Gem THE BIBLE!

IN 1867 a South African farmer named Schalk van Niekerk was watching children play with some stones. One particularly bright and pretty stone caught his eye. "You can have it, if you like it," said the children's mother. Van Niekerk, though, sent the stone to a mineralogist for examination. Little had the children realized that they were playing with a large diamond worth £500!

Is it possible that you too possess a priceless jewel without realizing it? Many, for example, own a Bible, as it is an all-time best-seller, available in whole or in part in over 1,900 languages. Yet, most people have not read the Bible and hence know little about its contents.

The Bible claims to be "inspired of God" and therefore the Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16; compare 1 Thessalonians 2:13.) It is mankind's most precious possession. By means of it, we learn how to get the best out of life now and, more important, how to gain everlasting life! (John 17:3, 17) Could anything be more precious than that?

However, to appreciate this gem and all its facets, one must become familiar with it. At first glance, this may seem quite difficult. After all, the Bible is a collection of 66 different books. What do those books contain? Is there some reason for the order in which they appear? If so, how can a person locate special passages in the Bible?

Becoming acquainted with the Bible is a challenge. But like a real jewel, the Bible does have symmetry and order. We can see that if we briefly consider its contents.

The Hebrew Scriptures —Pointing to Christ

The Bible is generally divided into the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament." These are misnomers, though, giving the impression that the "Old Testament" is out-of-date and is of little value. A more appropriate name for that section of Scripture would be the Hebrew Scriptures, since this section was originally written mainly in the Hebrew language. The "New Testament" was written in Greek in the first century C.E.; hence, it is more appropriately called the Christian Greek Scriptures.

The first book of the Bible, *Genesis,* starts off eons ago when God creates heaven and earth and later begins preparing the earth for human habitation. The first human couple are created perfect; however, they choose the course of sin, with tragic consequences for their offspring. Yet, like a gem seen in dim light, the Bible provides a sparkle of hope for fallen mankind: a "seed" that will eventually undo the effects of

sin and death. (Genesis 3:15) Who will this Seed be? Genesis begins tracing the lineage of this coming Seed, focusing on the lives of some of the Seed's faithful ancestors, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Exodus next describes the birth of Moses. In many ways Moses' life foreshadows that of the coming Seed. After ten plagues, Israel makes a grand Exodus from Egypt and is established as God's chosen nation at Mount Sinai. *Leviticus,* as the name indicates, sets forth God's regulations for the Levitical priesthood in Israel. *Numbers* tells of the occasions when the Israelites were numbered (by means of a census) and of events during Israel's sojourn in the wilderness. And now, poised to enter the Promised Land, Israel receives Moses' final exhortations. This is the subject of *Deuteronomy.* Pointing to the coming Seed, Moses urges the nation to listen to 'a prophet that God will raise up.'—Deuteronomy 18:15.

The historical books follow. These are for the most part in chronological order. *Joshua* describes the conquest and

TABLE OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Indicating the writer, the place of writing, the time of completion of writing, and the time covered by the events of the book.

Names of writers of some books and of places where written are uncertain. Many dates are only approximate, the symbol a. meaning "after," b. meaning "before," and c. meaning "circa," or "about."

Books of the Hebrew Scriptures (B.C.E.)

Book	Writer(s)	Place Written	Writing Completed	Time Covered
Genesis	Moses	Wilderness	1513	"In the beginning" to 1657
Exodus	Moses	Wilderness	1512	1657-1512
Leviticus	Moses	Wilderness	1512	1 month (1512)
Numbers	Moses	Wilderness/ Plains of Moab	1473	1512-1473
Deuteronomy	Moses	Plains of Moab	1473	2 months (1473)
Joshua	Joshua	Canaan	c. 1450	1473-c. 1450
Judges	Samuel	Israel	c. 1100	c. 1450-c. 1120
Ruth	Samuel	Israel	c. 1090	11 years of judges' rule
1 Samuel	Samuel; Gad; Nathan	Israel	c. 1078	c. 1180-1078
2 Samuel	Gad; Nathan	Israel	c. 1040	1077-c. 1040
1 Kings	Jeremiah	Jerusalem/Judah	580	c. 1040-911
2 Kings	Jeremiah	Jerusalem/Egypt	580	c. 920-580
1 Chronicles	Ezra	Jerusalem (?)	c. 460	After 1 Chronicles 9:44, 1077-1037
2 Chronicles	Ezra	Jerusalem (?)	c. 460	1037-537
Ezra	Ezra	Jerusalem	c. 460	537-c. 467
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	Jerusalem	a. 443	456-a. 443
Esther	Mordecai	Shushan, Elam	c. 475	493-c. 475
Job	Moses	Wilderness	c. 1473	Over 140 years between 1657 and 1473
Psalms	David and others		c. 460	
Proverbs	Solomon; Agur; Lemuel	Jerusalem	c. 717	
Ecclesiastes	Solomon	Jerusalem	b. 1000	
Song of Solomon	Solomon	Jerusalem	c. 1020	
Isaiah	Isaiah	Jerusalem	a. 732	c. 778-a. 732
Jeremiah	Jeremiah	Judah/Egypt	580	647-580
Lamentations	Jeremiah	Near Jerusalem	607	
Ezekiel	Ezekiel	Babylon	c. 591	613-c. 591
Daniel	Daniel	Babylon	c. 536	618-c. 536
Hosea	Hosea	Samaria (District)	a. 745	b. 804-a. 745
Joel	Joel	Judah	c. 820 (?)	
Amos	Amos	Judah	c. 804	
Obadiah	Obadiah		c. 607	
Jonah	Jonah		c. 844	
Micah	Micah	Judah	b. 717	c. 777-717
Nahum	Nahum	Judah	b. 632	
Habakkuk	Habakkuk	Judah	c. 628 (?)	
Zephaniah	Zephaniah	Judah	b. 648	
Haggai	Haggai	Jerusalem	520	112 days (520)
Zechariah	Zechariah	Jerusalem	518	520-518
Malachi	Malachi	Jerusalem	a. 443	

Books of the Christian Greek Scriptures (C.E.)				
Book	Writer	Place Written	Writing Completed	Time Covered
Matthew	Matthew	Palestine	c. 41	2 B.C.E.–33 C.E.
Mark	Mark	Rome	c. 60-65	29-33 C.E.
Luke	Luke	Caesarea	c. 56-58	3 B.C.E.–33 C.E.
John	Apostle John	Ephesus, or nearby	c. 98	After prologue, 29-33 C.E.
Acts	Luke	Rome	c. 61	33-c. 61 C.E.
Romans	Paul	Corinth	c. 56	
1 Corinthians	Paul	Ephesus	c. 55	
2 Corinthians	Paul	Macedonia	c. 55	
Galatians	Paul	Corinth or Syrian Antioch	c. 50-52	
Ephesians	Paul	Rome	c. 60-61	
Philippians	Paul	Rome	c. 60-61	
Colossians	Paul	Rome	c. 60-61	
1 Thessalonians	Paul	Corinth	c. 50	
2 Thessalonians	Paul	Corinth	c. 51	
1 Timothy	Paul	Macedonia	c. 61-64	
2 Timothy	Paul	Rome	c. 65	
Titus	Paul	Macedonia (?)	c. 61-64	
Philemon	Paul	Rome	c. 60-61	
Hebrews	Paul	Rome	c. 61	
James	James (Jesus' brother)	Jerusalem	b. 62	
1 Peter	Peter	Babylon	c. 62-64	
2 Peter	Peter	Babylon (?)	c. 64	
1 John	Apostle John	Ephesus, or nearby	c. 98	
2 John	Apostle John	Ephesus, or nearby	c. 98	
3 John	Apostle John	Ephesus, or nearby	c. 98	
Jude	Jude (Jesus' brother)	Palestine (?)	c. 65	
Revelation	Apostle John	Patmos	c. 96	

division of the Promised Land. *Judges* relates the dramatic events of the following years when Israel is governed by a series of judges. *Ruth* tells of a God-fearing woman, who lives during the period of the Judges and who has the privilege of becoming an ancestress of Jesus Christ.

The period of rule by judges, however, comes to an end. *First Samuel* tells of the tragic rule of Israel's first king, Saul, as seen through the eyes of the prophet Samuel. *Second Samuel* describes the successful reign of David, Saul's successor. *First* and *Second Kings* then take us from the glorious reign of Solomon to the sad Babylonian exile of the Israelite nation in 607 B.C.E. *First* and *Second Chronicles* recapitulate this history as viewed from the vantage point of a nation returned from this exile. Finally, *Ezra, Nehemiah,* and *Esther* describe how the Israelites are restored to their homeland and some of their subsequent history.

The poetic books are next, containing some of the most beautiful poetry ever written. *Job* provides a stirring picture of integrity under suffering and its reward. The book of *Psalms* contains songs of praise to Jehovah and prayers for mercy and help. These have comforted countless servants of God. In addition, Psalms has numerous prophecies that further enlighten us about the coming Messiah. *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes* reveal facets of divine wisdom by means of pithy sayings, while the *Song of Solomon* is superlative love poetry with profound prophetic meaning.

The next 17 books —from *Isaiah* to *Malachi*—are mainly prophetic. All, except *Lamentations,* bear the name of the writer. Many of these prophecies have already had remarkable fulfillments. They also point to climactic events in our day and in the near future.

The Hebrew Scriptures thus present astounding variety in form and style. Yet, all have a common theme. Their prophecies, genealogies, and dramatic events sparkle with practical wisdom and prophetic meaning.

The Christian Greek Scriptures —The Seed Appears

Four thousand years have elapsed since man's fall into sin. Suddenly there appears on the earthly scene the long-awaited Seed, the Messiah, Jesus! The Christian Greek Scriptures record the ministry of this key figure in human history in four different but complementary books, called Gospels. These are *Matthew, Mark, Luke,* and *John.*

How precious to Christians are these four Gospel accounts! They tell of Jesus' astounding miracles, his meaningful parables, his Sermon on the Mount, his example of humility, his compassion and implicit obedience to his Father, his love for his "sheep," and finally his sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. A study of the Gospels builds in us a deep love for the Son of God. Above all, we are drawn close to the one who sent Christ—Jehovah God. These accounts are worth reading over and over again.

Acts of Apostles takes up where the Gospels leave off. It recounts the early years of the Christian congregation from the days of Pentecost to Paul's imprisonment in Rome in 61 C.E. In this book, we read about Stephen, the first Christian martyr, the conversion of Saul, who later becomes Paul the apostle, the bringing in of the first Gentile converts, and Paul's exciting evangelizing trips. These accounts are both thrilling and faith building.

Twenty-one letters, or epistles, now follow. The first 14, by Paul, are named after the recipient Christians or congregations; the rest are named after the writers—James, Peter, John, and Jude. What a wealth of admonition and encouragement these letters contain! They cover doctrine and the fulfillment of prophecies. They help Christians remain separate from the wicked environment in which they must live. They stress the need to cultivate brotherly love and other godly qualities. They set the pattern for proper congregation organization, under the leadership of spiritually older men.

As the Hebrew Scriptures end on a prophetic note, so do the Greek Scriptures. *Revelation,* written by the apostle John about 96 C.E., draws together the threads of prophecy and the Bible's main theme—the sanctification of Jehovah's name by his Messianic Kingdom. A series of visions graphically portray the destruction of the religious, military, and political forces of Satan's corrupt system. These are replaced by Christ's governmental city, which turns its attention to the management of earth's affairs. Under this Kingdom rule, God promises to "wipe out every tear . . . and death will be no more."—Revelation 21:4.

Is there any question, then, that the Bible is a flawless gem, reflecting divine light? If you have not read it through, why not begin doing so now? You will be attracted by its symmetry, enlightened by its brilliance, moved by its beauty, and thrilled by its message. It is indeed a "perfect present . . . from the Father of the celestial lights."—James 1:17.

In Our Next Issue

- **Is Mother-Goddess Worship Still Alive?**
- **Woman's Role in the Scriptures**
- **'Living With Jehovah's Day Close in Mind'**

Questions From Readers

■ **How strenuously should a Christian resist a blood transfusion that has been ordered or authorized by a court?**

Each situation is unique, so there is no all-inclusive rule on this. Christians are known for respectfully 'paying back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's,' obeying the laws of the secular government. Yet, they realize that their overriding obligation is to render "God's things to God," not violating his law.—Mark 12:17.

Romans 13:1-7 discusses the relationship of Christians to the governmental "superior authorities." Such governments have the authority to enact laws or to issue directions, usually to promote the general welfare of the populace. And governments 'bear the sword' to enforce their laws and 'to express wrath upon the one practicing what is bad according to their laws.' Being subject to the superior authorities, Christians desire to obey laws and court decrees, but this subjection must be relative. If a Christian is asked to submit to something that would be a violation of God's higher law, the divine law comes first; it takes precedence.

Some modern laws that are basically good may be misapplied to authorize the forcing of a blood transfusion on a Christian. *In this case* Christians must take the same stand that the apostle Peter did: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

Jehovah commanded the Israelites: "Be *firmly* resolved not to eat the blood, because the blood is the soul and you must not eat the soul with the flesh." (Deuteronomy 12:23) A Jewish Bible translation of 1917 reads: "Only be stedfast in not eating the blood." And Isaac Leeser rendered the verse: "Only be firm so as not to eat the blood." Does that sound as if God's servants were to be casual or passive about upholding his law?

With good reason Christians have been absolutely determined to obey God, even if a government directed them otherwise. Professor Robert L. Wilken writes: "Christians not only refused [Roman] military service but they would not accept public office nor assume any responsibility for the governing of the cities." (*The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*) Refusal could mean being branded lawbreakers or being condemned to the Roman arena.

Christians today must also be steadfast, firmly resolved not to violate divine law, even if that puts them in some jeopardy as to secular governments. The highest law of the universe—God's law—requires that Christians abstain from blood, just as they are commanded to avoid fornication (sexual immorality). The Bible calls these prohibitions "necessary things." (Acts 15:19-21, 28, 29) Such divine law is not to be taken lightly, as something to be obeyed only if it is convenient or presents no problems. God's law must be obeyed!

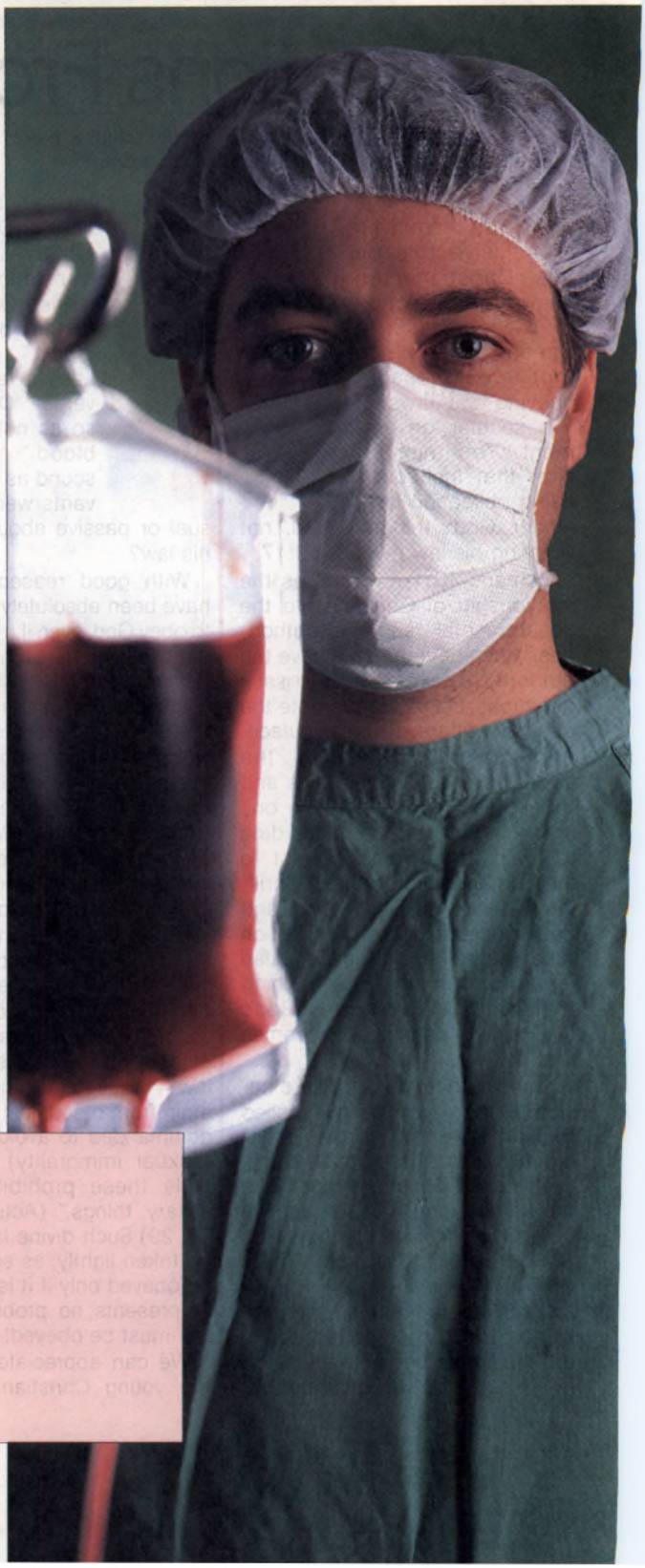
We can appreciate, then, why the young Christian mentioned on page 17 told a court that "she considered a transfusion an invasion of her body and compared it to rape." Would any Christian woman, young or old, passively submit to rape, even if there were a legal grant that the fornication by sexual assault be carried out?

Similarly, the 12-year-old quoted on the same page left no doubt that 'she would fight any court-authorized transfusion with all the strength she could muster, that she would scream and struggle, that she would pull the injecting device out of her arm and would attempt to destroy the blood in the bag over her bed.' She was firmly resolved to obey the divine law.

Jesus withdrew from the area when a crowd wanted to make him king. Similarly, if a court-authorized transfusion seemed likely, a Christian might choose to avoid being accessible for such a violation of God's law. (Matthew 10:16; John 6:15) At the same time, a Christian should wisely seek alternative medical treatment, thus making a genuine effort to maintain life and to regain full health.

If a Christian did put forth very strenuous efforts to avoid a violation of God's law on blood, authorities might consider him a lawbreaker or make him liable to prosecution. If punishment did result, the Christian could view it as suffering for the sake of righteousness. (Compare 1 Peter 2:18-20.) But in most cases, Christians have avoided transfusions and with competent medical care have recovered, so that no lasting legal problems resulted. And most important, they have maintained their integrity to their Divine Life-Giver and Judge.

How can blood save your life?

Giving blood transfusions has been highly touted as a safe, lifesaving procedure. But Dr. Alan A. Waldman explains: "[The] relatively serene perception of the safety of blood products was dramatically transformed with the detection of transfusion-associated AIDS."

Yet AIDS is not the only danger. "Several other developments have contributed to the feeling that there are unknown and uncontrolled dangers to the use of donated blood," Dr. Waldman points out. "Now, even matters once regarded as settled—for example, the effectiveness of testing for carriers of hepatitis B virus—have been called into question."
—*Diagnostics & Clinical Testing,* July 1989.