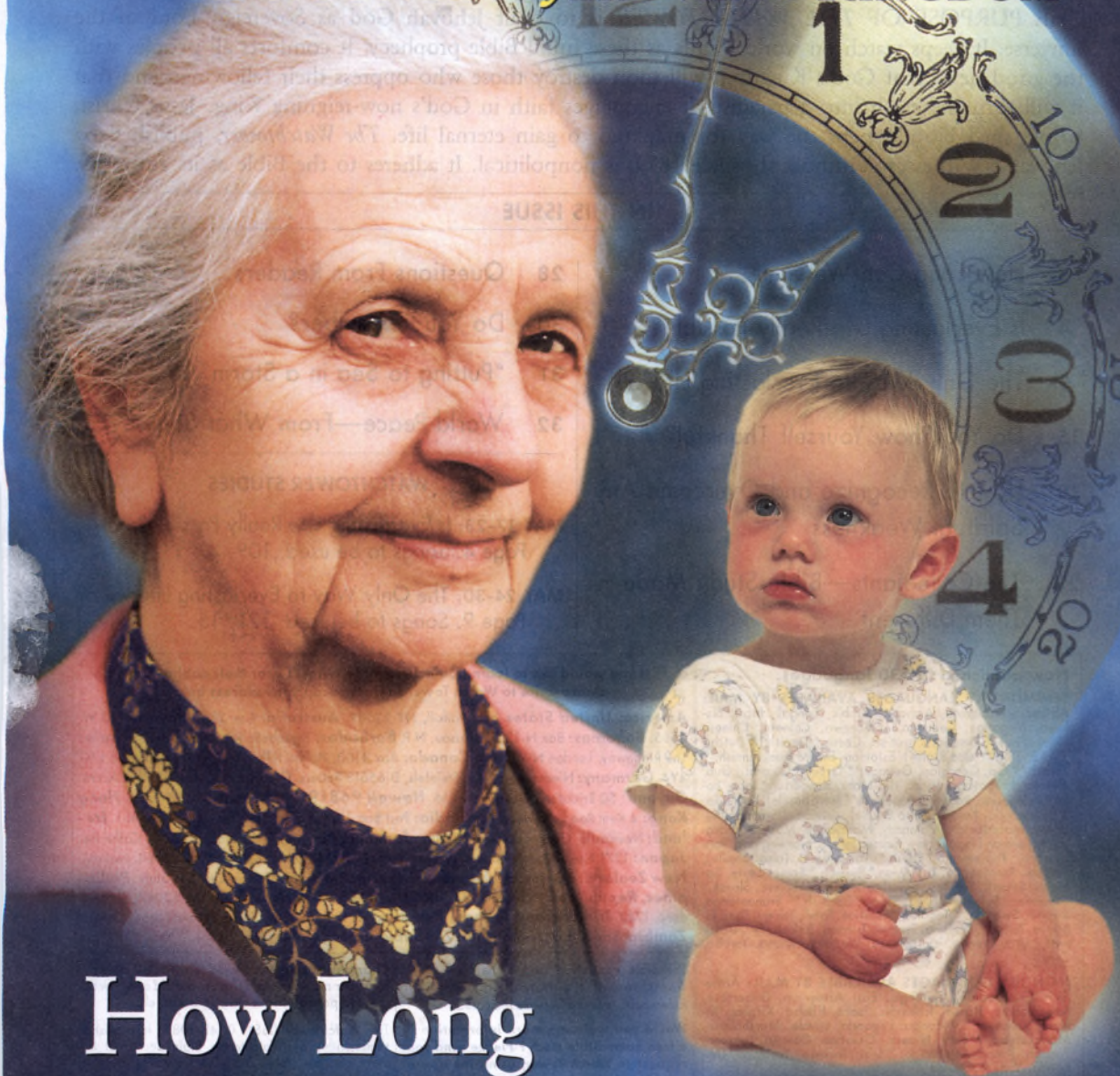


APRIL 15, 1999

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



How Long
Can We Live?

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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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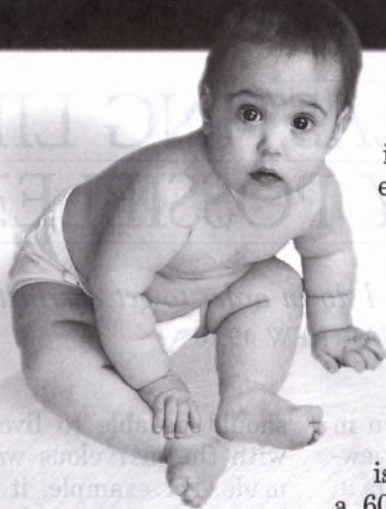
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How Long Can We Live?



People in general are living longer, causing many to wonder, 'How long can we live?'

ACCORDING to *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1995), in the past, Pierre Joubert was generally accepted as having lived the longest. In 1814 he died at age 113. True, others are said to have lived longer, but their ages were not creditably documented. Good documentation, however, has verified that a number of people have lived longer than Pierre Joubert.

Jeanne Louise Calment was born in Arles, southeastern France, on February 21, 1875. Her death on August 4, 1997—more than 122 years later—received much publicity. In 1986, Shigechiyo Izumi of Japan died at age 120. The *Guinness Book of Records 1999* lists 118-year-old Sarah Knauss as the oldest person at the time that was written. She was born on September 24, 1880, in Pennsyl-

vania, U.S.A. When Marie-Louise Febronie Meilleur of Quebec, Canada, died in 1998 at age 118, she was 26 days older than Sarah.

Indeed, the number of the very old has risen dramatically. The number of centenarians is projected to increase to over 2.2 million during the first half of the next century! Similarly, the number of people 80 years of age and older increased from 26.7 million in 1970 to 66 million in 1998. That is a 147-percent increase, compared with a 60-percent increase for the total world population.

And it is not simply that people are living longer. Many are also accomplishing things that most 20-year-olds cannot do. In 1990, 82-year-old John Kelley completed a marathon—a 26-mile 385-yard race—in five hours and five minutes. In 1991, 84-year-old great-grandmother Mavis Lindgren covered that distance in seven hours and nine minutes. And more recently, a 91-year-old man finished the New York City Marathon!

This is not to say that aged ones in the past did not accomplish astonishing feats. At 99 years of age, the Biblical patriarch Abraham “began running to meet” his guests. At 85 years of age, Caleb proclaimed: “As my power was then [45 years earlier], so my power is now for the war, both to go out and to come in.” And the Bible says of Moses that when he was 120 years of age, “his eye had not grown dim, and his vital strength had not fled.”—Genesis 18:2; Joshua 14:10, 11; Deuteronomy 34:7.

Jesus Christ spoke of the first man, Adam, and the ark builder Noah as historical individuals. (Matthew 19:4-6; 24:37-39) Genesis says that Adam lived to be 930, and Noah 950. (Genesis 5:5; 9:29) Have people really lived that long? Can we live even much longer, perhaps forever? Please examine the evidence in the following article.

IS EVERLASTING LIFE REALLY POSSIBLE?

"Teacher, what good must I do in order to get everlasting life?"

—MATTHEW 19:16.

THE Persian King Xerxes I, known in the Bible as Ahasuerus, was reviewing his troops prior to a battle in the year 480 B.C.E. (Esther 1:1, 2) According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the king shed tears as he viewed his men. Why? "It grieves me," Xerxes said, "when I reflect on the brief span of man's life. For of all these men, not one will be alive a hundred years from now." You too have probably noted that life is pathetically brief and that nobody wants to grow old, get sick, and die. Oh, if only we could enjoy life in youthful health and happiness!—Job 14:1, 2.

² Significantly, *The New York Times Magazine* of September 28, 1997, featured the article "They Want to Live." It quoted a researcher who exclaimed: "I really believe we could be the first generation that lives forever"! Perhaps you too believe that everlasting life is possible. You may think so because the Bible promises that we can live forever here on the earth. (Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3, 4) Yet, some people hold that everlasting life is possible for reasons other than those found in the Bible. Considering a couple of these reasons will help us to appreciate that everlasting life is really possible.

Designed to Live Forever

³ One reason many believe that humans

1. What can be said of our human life span?
2. What hope do many entertain, and why?
- 3, 4. (a) Why do some believe that we should be able to live forever? (b) What did David say about his formation?

should be able to live forever has to do with the marvelous way in which we are made. For example, it is truly miraculous how we were formed within our mother's womb. A leading authority on aging wrote: "After performing the miracles that take us from conception to birth and then to sexual maturation and adulthood, nature chose not to devise what would seem to be a more elementary mechanism to simply maintain those miracles forever." Yes, considering our miraculous makeup, the question lingers, Why do we have to die?

⁴ Millenniums ago the Bible writer David contemplated those very miracles, although he could not actually see inside the womb as scientists can today. David mused about his own formation when, as he wrote, he had been 'screened off in the belly of his mother.' At that time, he said, 'his kidneys were produced.' He also told of the formation of his "bones" when, as he observed, "I was made in secret." David then spoke of "the embryo of me" and noted in connection with that embryo within his mother's womb: "All its parts were down in writing." —Psalm 139:13-16.

⁵ Obviously, there was not a literal handwritten blueprint for the formation of David within his mother's womb. But in David's meditation on the making of his "kidneys," his "bones," and his other body parts, it

5. What miracles are involved in our formation in the womb?

seemed to him as though the development of these was according to a plan—that everything was, as it were, “down in writing.” It was as if the fertilized cell within his mother had a large room full of books with detailed instructions on how to form a human baby and these complicated instructions were passed along to each emerging cell. Thus, *Science World* magazine uses the metaphor of ‘each cell in a developing embryo having a complete cabinet of blueprints.’

⁶ Have you ever thought about the miraculous functioning of our bodies? Biologist Jared Diamond noted: “We replace the cells lining our intestine once every few days, those lining the urinary bladder once every two months, and our red blood cells once every four months.” He concluded: “Nature is taking us apart and putting us back together every day.” What does that actually mean? It means that regardless of how many years we might live—whether 8, 80, or even 800—our physical body remains very young. A scientist once estimated: “In a year approximately 98 percent of the atoms in us now will be replaced by other atoms that we take in in our air, food, and drink.” Indeed, as David lauded, we are “wonderfully made.”—Psalm 139:14.

⁷ Based on the design of our physical bodies, an authority on aging said: “It is not obvious why aging should occur.” It really seems that we *should* live forever. And this is why men are trying to achieve this goal through their technology. Not too long ago, Dr. Alvin Silverstein wrote confidently in his book *Conquest of Death*: “We will unravel the essence of life. We will understand . . . how a person ages.” With what con-

sequence? He predicted: “There will be no more ‘old’ people, for the knowledge that will permit the conquest of death will also bring eternal youth.” Considering modern scientific inquiry into the human makeup, does the thought of everlasting life sound so farfetched? There is another even stronger reason for believing that everlasting life is possible.

The Desire to Live Forever

⁸ Have you ever noted that living forever is a natural human desire? A doctor wrote in a German journal: “The dream of everlasting life is probably as old as mankind.” Describing the beliefs of certain ancient Europeans, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* states: “Worthy people will live forever in a shining hall thatched with gold.” And, oh, the lengths people have gone to in an effort to satisfy that basic desire for everlasting life!

⁹ *The Encyclopedia Americana* observes that in China over 2,000 years ago, “emperors and [common] folk alike, under the leadership of Taoist priests, neglected labor to search for the elixir of life”—a so-called fountain of youth. Indeed, throughout history, people have believed that by consuming various concoctions, or even by drinking certain water, they could stay young.

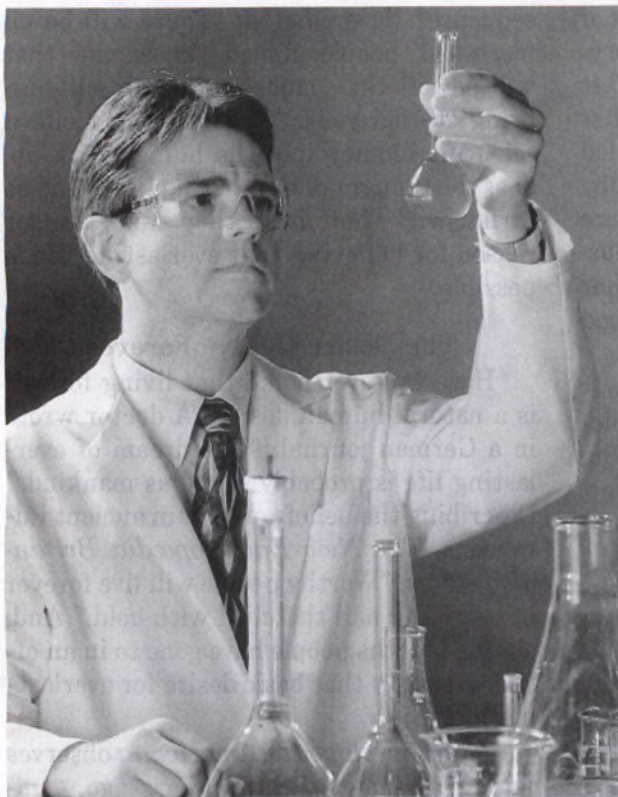
¹⁰ Modern efforts to try to satisfy man’s inherent desire for everlasting life are no less remarkable. A prominent example is the practice of freezing a human who succumbs to disease. This has been done in hopes of restoring life at some future time when a cure for the disease has been developed. A proponent of this practice, which

6. What evidence is there that we are, as David wrote, “wonderfully made”?

7. Based on the design of our physical bodies, what have some concluded?

8, 9. What natural desire have people throughout history entertained?

10. What modern attempt has there been to make extended life attainable?



is called cryonics, wrote: "If our optimism proves justified and it is learned how to cure or repair all damage—including the debilities of old age—then those who 'die' now will have an indefinitely extended life in the future."

¹¹ Why, you may ask, is this desire for everlasting life so embedded in our thinking? Is it because "[God] has put eternity into man's mind"? (Ecclesiastes 3:11, *Revised Standard Version*) This is a matter for serious reflection! Just think: Why would we have the inherent desire to live eternally—forever—if it was not our Creator's purpose that this desire be satisfied? And would it be loving for him to create us with the desire for everlasting life and then

11. Why do people desire to live forever?

frustrate us by never allowing us to realize that desire?—Psalm 145:16.

Whom Should We Trust?

¹² Where, or in what, should we put our trust for gaining everlasting life? In 20th- or 21st-century human technology? *The New York Times Magazine* article "They Want to Live" spoke of the "deity: technology" and of the "enthusiasms about technology's potential." One researcher was even said to be "blithely confident . . . that genetic augmentation techniques will become available in time to save [us] by halting aging, maybe reversing it." Really, though, human efforts have proved totally ineffective in stopping aging or in conquering death.

¹³ Does this mean that there is no way to gain everlasting life? Not at all! There is a way! The structure of our marvelous brain, with its virtually unlimited capacity for learning, should convince us of this. Molecular biologist James Watson called our brain "the most complex thing we have yet discovered in our universe." And neurologist Richard Restak said: "Nowhere in the known universe is there anything even remotely resembling it." Why would we have a brain with the capacity for storing and assimilating virtually unlimited information and a body that is designed to function forever if we were not intended to enjoy everlasting life?

¹⁴ What, then, is the only reasonable, fac-

12. What confidence do some have, but do you believe it is well-founded?

13. How does the structure of our brain indicate that we were intended to live forever?

14. (a) To what conclusion about human life do Bible writers point? (b) Why should we put our trust in God and not in man?

tual conclusion to which we must come? Is it not that we were designed and created by an all-powerful, intelligent Maker so that we could live forever? (Job 10:8; Psalm 36:9; 100:3; Malachi 2:10; Acts 17:24, 25) Therefore, should we not wisely heed the inspired command of the Bible psalmist: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs"? Why not trust in man? Because, as the psalmist wrote, "his spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish." Indeed, despite the potential for living forever, men are helpless in the face of death. The psalmist concludes: "Happy is the one . . . whose hope is in Jehovah his God."—Psalm 146:3-5.



Is It Really God's Purpose?

¹⁵ But you may ask, Is it really Jehovah's purpose that we enjoy everlasting life? Yes, it is! Dozens of times his Word promises it. "The gift God gives is everlasting life," the Bible assures us. God's servant John wrote: "This is the promised thing that [God] himself promised us, the life everlasting." No wonder a young man asked Jesus: "Teacher, what good must I do in order to get everlasting life?" (Romans 6:23; 1 John 2:25; Matthew 19:16) In fact, the apostle Paul wrote about "a hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times long lasting."—Titus 1:2.

¹⁶ What does it mean that God promised

15. What shows that it is God's purpose that we live forever?

16. In what sense may God have promised everlasting life "before times long lasting"?

everlasting life "before times long lasting"? Some think that the apostle Paul meant that before the first couple, Adam and Eve, were created, God purposed that humans should live forever. However, if Paul was referring to a point after humans were created and when Jehovah stated his purpose, it is still clear that God's will includes everlasting life for humans.

¹⁷ The Bible says that in the garden of Eden, "Jehovah God made to grow out of the ground . . . the tree of life." The reason given for putting Adam out of the garden was so that he could "not put his hand out and actually take fruit also from the tree of life and eat and live"—yes, forever! After expelling Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, Jehovah posted "the cherubs and the flaming blade of a sword that was turning

17. Why were Adam and Eve put out of the garden of Eden, and why were cherubs posted at the entrance?

itself continually to guard the way to the tree of life.”—Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24.

¹⁸ If Adam and Eve had been permitted to eat of that tree of life, what would that have meant for them? Why, the privilege of living forever in Paradise! One Bible scholar speculated: “The tree of life must have had some virtue by which the human frame was to be kept free from the decrepitude of age, or the decay that terminates in death.” He even claimed that “there was an herbal virtue in paradise capable of counteracting the effects” of aging. However, the Bible does not say that the tree of life in itself had life-giving qualities. Rather, that tree simply represented God’s guarantee of everlasting life to the one who would be allowed to eat its fruit.—Revelation 2:7.

God’s Purpose Unchanged

¹⁹ When Adam sinned, he lost the right to everlasting life for himself and for all of his yet unborn offspring. (Genesis 2:17) When he became a sinner because of his disobedience, he became defective, imperfect. From that time on, Adam’s body became, in effect, programmed for death. As the Bible says, “the wages sin pays is death.” (Romans 6:23) Moreover, the imperfect offspring of Adam also became programmed for death, not for everlasting life. The Bible explains: “Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.”—Romans 5:12.

²⁰ But what if Adam had not sinned? What if he had not disobeyed God and he

18. (a) What would eating of the tree of life have meant for Adam and Eve? (b) What did eating of that tree represent?

19. Why did Adam die, and why do we, his offspring, also die?

20. What indicates that humans were meant to live forever on earth?

had been granted to eat of the tree of life? Where would he have enjoyed God’s gift of everlasting life? In heaven? No! God said nothing about Adam’s being taken to heaven. His work assignment was here on earth. The Bible explains that “Jehovah God made to grow out of the ground every tree desirable to one’s sight and good for food,” and it says: “Jehovah God proceeded to take the man and settle him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to take care of it.” (Genesis 2:9, 15) After Eve was created as a mate for Adam, the two were given additional work assignments here on earth. God told them: “Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth.”—Genesis 1:28.

²¹ Think of the marvelous earthly prospects those instructions from God opened for Adam and Eve! They were to rear perfectly healthy sons and daughters in the earthly Paradise. As their beloved children grew older, these would share with them in being fruitful and in doing pleasant garden

21. What marvelous prospects did the first humans enjoy?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Why do many believe that everlasting life is possible?
- ☐ What should convince us that we were meant to live forever?
- ☐ What was God’s original purpose for mankind and the earth?
- ☐ Why can we be certain that God will fulfill his original purpose?

work to maintain that Paradise. With all the animals in subjection to them, humankind would be very contented. Think of the joy of extending the boundaries of the garden of Eden so that eventually the entire earth would be a paradise! Would you enjoy life with perfect children in such a beautiful earthly home, without any concerns about growing old and dying? Let the natural impulses of your heart answer that question.

²² Well, then, when Adam and Eve disobeyed and were put out of the garden of Eden, did God change his purpose for humans to live forever in Paradise on earth? Not at all! For God to have done that would have been to admit defeat as to his ability to carry out his original purpose. We can be sure that God does what he promises, as he

22. Why can we be sure that God did not change his purpose for the earth?

himself proclaims: "So my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isaiah 55:11.

²³ That the purpose of God for the earth has not changed is made clear in the Bible, where God promises: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." Even Jesus Christ said in his Sermon on the Mount that the mild-tempered ones would inherit the earth. (Psalm 37:29; Matthew 5:5) Yet, how can we obtain everlasting life, and what must we do to enjoy such life? This will be discussed in the following article.

23. (a) What reconfirms that it is God's purpose that the righteously inclined live forever on earth? (b) What will we discuss next?

THE ONLY WAY TO EVERLASTING LIFE

"I am the way and the truth and the life."—JOHN 14:6.

IN HIS famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus compares the way to everlasting life to a road that a person enters through a gate. Notice that Jesus emphasizes that this way to life is not an easy one, saying: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into de-

1, 2. To what did Jesus compare the way to everlasting life, and what is the import of his illustration?

struction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into [everlasting] life, and few are the ones finding it."—Matthew 7:13, 14.

² Do you get the import of this illustration? Does it not reveal that there is but one road, or way, leading to life and that it will require careful attention on our part to avoid straying from that way to life? What, then, is this only way to everlasting life?



For young and old, Jesus is the only way to endless life

Do you know when, after Adam sinned, Jehovah God indicated that mankind could enjoy everlasting life? It was right after Adam's fall. Let us now examine how the provision of Jesus Christ as mankind's Savior was first foretold.

The Promised Seed

⁵ Jehovah God identified in symbolic language the promised Savior. He did this when he pronounced sentence upon "the serpent" who had spoken to Eve and had tempted her to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 3:1-5) Of course, that serpent was not a literal snake. It was a powerful spirit creature who is identified in the Bible as "the original

Role of Jesus Christ

³ Clearly, Jesus has an important role relative to that way, as his apostle Peter proclaimed: "There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven [except that of Jesus] that has been given among men by which we must get saved." (Acts 4:12) Similarly, the apostle Paul declared: "The gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) Jesus himself revealed that the only way to everlasting life is through him, for he declared: "I am the way and the truth and the life."—John 14:6.

⁴ So it is crucial that we accept Jesus' role in making everlasting life possible. Let us, therefore, examine his role more closely.

3, 4. (a) How does the Bible show the vital role of Jesus in our salvation? (b) When did God first reveal that mankind could gain everlasting life?

nal serpent, the one called Devil and Satan." (Revelation 12:9) Satan used this lowly animal as his mouthpiece to seduce Eve. Thus, in sentencing Satan, God said to him: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He [the woman's seed] will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel."—Genesis 3:15.

⁶ Who is this "woman" for whom Satan has enmity, or hatred? Just as "the original serpent" is identified in Revelation chapter 12, so is this woman that Satan hates. Observe in verse 1 that she is said to be "adorned with the sun, standing on

5. How can we identify the serpent who seduced Eve?

6, 7. (a) Who is the woman that bears the "seed"? (b) Who is the promised Seed, and what does he accomplish?

***In God's due time, the old will
return to youthful vigor***

the moon, and with the twelve stars on her head." This woman represents God's heavenly organization of faithful angels, and the "male child" to whom she gives birth represents God's Kingdom, with Jesus Christ ruling as King.—Revelation 12:1-5, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

⁷ Who, therefore, is the "seed," or offspring, of the woman, mentioned at Genesis 3:15, that will bruise Satan "in the head," thus giving him a deathblow? It is the one whom God sent from heaven to be born miraculously of a virgin, yes, the man Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-23; John 6:38) Chapter 12 of Revelation reveals that as a resurrected heavenly Ruler, this Seed, Jesus Christ, would take the lead in the conquest of Satan and would establish, as Revelation 12:10 says, "the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ."

⁸ This Kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ is thus a new thing that God provided for in connection with his original purpose for humans to enjoy everlasting life on earth. After Satan's rebellion, Jehovah immediately acted to undo all the bad consequences of wickedness by means of this new Kingdom government. When on earth Jesus revealed that he would not be alone in this government. (Luke 22:28-30) Others were to be selected from among humankind, and these would join him in heaven to share in ruling, and thus they would come to consti-

8. (a) What new thing did God provide in connection with his original purpose? (b) Who constitute God's new government?



tute a subsidiary part of the woman's seed. (Galatians 3:16, 29) In the Bible the number of these corulers with Jesus—all taken from among sinful humankind on earth—is given as 144,000.—Revelation 14:1-3.

⁹ Before that Kingdom could begin to rule, however, it was vital that the primary part of the seed, Jesus Christ, appear on earth. Why? Because he had been appointed by Jehovah God as the One "to break up [or, undo] the works of the Devil." (1 John 3:8) Among the works of Satan was his inducing Adam to sin, which brought the condemnation of sin and death upon all of Adam's offspring. (Romans 5:12) Jesus undid this work of the Devil by giving His life as a ransom. Thus he provided a basis for the release of humankind from condemnation to sin and death and opened the way to everlasting life.—Matthew 20:28; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7.

9. (a) Why did Jesus need to appear on earth as a human? (b) How did Jesus undo the works of the Devil?

What the Ransom Accomplishes

¹⁰ Since the life of Jesus was transferred from heaven to the womb of a woman, he was born a perfect human, untainted by the sin from Adam. He had the potential of living forever on earth. Similarly, Adam was created as a perfect human with prospects of enjoying everlasting life on earth. The apostle Paul had in mind the similarity between these two men when he wrote: "The first man Adam became a living soul.' The last Adam [Jesus Christ] became a life-giving spirit. The first man is out of the earth and made of dust; the second man is out of heaven."—1 Corinthians 15:45, 47.

¹¹ The similarity between these two—the only two perfect men to have walked the earth—is underscored by the Bible's declaration that Jesus "gave himself a corresponding ransom for all." (1 Timothy 2:6) To whom did Jesus correspond? Why, to Adam when he was still a perfect man! The first Adam's sin resulted in the condemnation to death of the whole human family. The sacrifice of "the last Adam" provides the basis for deliverance from sin and death, so that we can live forever. How precious Jesus' sacrifice is! The apostle Peter noted: "It was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were delivered." Rather, Peter explained: "It was with precious blood, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, even Christ's."—1 Peter 1:18, 19.

¹² The Bible beautifully describes the way that the condemnation to death of the human family will be undone, saying: "Through one trespass [Adam's] the result to men of all sorts was condemnation, likewise also through one act of justification [Jesus' en-

tire course of integrity, culminating in his death] the result to men of all sorts is a declaring of them righteous for life. For just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] many were constituted sinners, likewise also through the obedience of the one person [Jesus] many will be constituted righteous."—Romans 5:18, 19.

A Glorious Prospect

¹³ This provision of God should make us so happy! Are you not thrilled that a Savior has been provided? When asked, "Does the prospect of living forever appeal to you?" in a survey once conducted by a newspaper in a major American city, a surprising 67.4 percent of the respondents answered, "No." Why did they say that they did not want to live forever? Evidently because life on earth is now associated with so many problems. One person said: "I don't relish the thought of looking 200 years old."

¹⁴ Yet, the Bible is not talking about living forever in a world where people suffer disease, old age, and other tragedies. No, for as Ruler of God's Kingdom, Jesus will undo all such problems caused by Satan. According to the Bible, God's Kingdom "will crush and put an end to all" oppressive governments of this world. (Daniel 2:44) At that time, in answer to the prayer Jesus taught his followers, God's "will" is to "be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9, 10, *Today's English Version*) In God's new world, after the earth has been cleansed of all badness, the benefits of Jesus' ransom will be applied fully. Yes, all who qualify will be restored to perfect health!

¹⁵ To people living in God's new world, this

10. How were Jesus and Adam similar?

11. (a) What effect did Adam and Jesus have on humankind? (b) How should we view Jesus' sacrifice?

12. How does the Bible describe the undoing of our condemnation to death?

13. Why do many feel as they do about living forever?

14. Why will living forever be a complete pleasure?

15, 16. What conditions will exist in God's new world?

Bible passage will have an application: "Let his flesh become fresher than in youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor." (Job 33:25) Another Bible promise will also have a fulfillment: "The eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness."—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

¹⁶ Just think: Regardless of our physical age then, whether we are 80, 800, or even older, our bodies will remain in radiant health. It will be as the Bible promises: "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'" At that time this promise will also be fulfilled: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Isaiah 33:24; Revelation 21:3, 4.

¹⁷ In that new world, we will be able to use our magnificent brain in the way our Creator meant us to when he designed it with unlimited learning capacity. Why, just imagine the marvelous things we might accomplish! Even imperfect humans have produced from the storehouse of elements in the earth everything we see around us—cellular phones, microphones, watches, pagers, computers, airplanes, yes, name any item. None of them were made from materials they brought from a faraway place in the universe. With endless life before us, the potential for creative achievement in the coming earthly Paradise will be limitless!—Isaiah 65:21-25.

¹⁸ And life will not be boring. Even now we look forward to our next meal, although we may have eaten tens of thousands of

17. What accomplishments might we expect of people in God's new world?

18. Why will life never be boring in God's new world?

meals. In human perfection, we will enjoy to a heightened degree the delicious produce of the Paradise earth. (Isaiah 25:6) And we will have the eternal pleasure of caring for earth's abundant animal life and enjoying its spectacular sunsets, mountains, rivers, and valleys. Truly, life will never become monotonous in God's new world!—Psalm 145:16.

Meeting God's Requirements

¹⁹ Would you expect to receive God's grand gift of everlasting life in Paradise without any effort on your part? Is it not reasonable that God would require something? Surely it is. God does not, in effect, just throw the gift at us. He extends it to us, but we must reach out and take it. Yes, effort is involved. You may ask the very question that the rich young ruler asked Jesus: "What good must I do in order to get everlasting life?" Or you may frame the question the way a Philipian jailer did to the apostle Paul: "What must I do to get saved?"—Matthew 19:16; Acts 16:30.

²⁰ On the night before his death, Jesus showed a basic requirement when he said in prayer to his heavenly Father: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Is it not a reasonable requirement that we take in knowledge of Jehovah, who made everlasting life possible, and knowledge of the one who died for us, Jesus Christ? Yet, more is required than simply taking in such knowledge.

²¹ The Bible also says: "He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life." Then it adds: "He that disobeys the Son will not

19. Why is it reasonable to believe that there are requirements for receiving God's gift of life?

20. What is an essential requirement for everlasting life?

21. How do we show that we are meeting the requirement of exercising faith?

see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.” (John 3:36) You can show that you are exercising faith in the Son by making changes in your life and bringing it into harmony with God’s will. You must reject any wrong course that you may have been following and take action to do what is pleasing to God. You need to do what the apostle Peter commanded: “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the person of Jehovah.”—Acts 3:19.

²² May we never forget that it is only by exercising faith in Jesus that we can enjoy everlasting life. (John 6:40; 14:6) We show that we exercise faith in Jesus by ‘following in his steps closely.’ (1 Peter 2:21) What is included in doing that? Well, in prayer to God, Jesus exclaimed: “Look! I am come . . . to do your will, O God.” (Hebrews 10:7) It is vital to imitate Jesus in agreeing to do God’s will and dedicating your life to Jehovah. Afterward you need to symbolize that dedication by water baptism; Jesus too presented himself for baptism. (Luke 3:21, 22) Taking such steps is completely reasonable. The apostle Paul noted that “the love the Christ has compels us.” (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15) In what way? Well, love moved Jesus to give his life in our behalf. Should that not compel us to respond by exercising faith in him? Yes, it should compel us to follow his loving example of giving of himself in helping others. Christ lived for doing the will of God; we must do likewise, no longer living for ourselves.

²³ That is not the end of the matter. The Bible says that when 3,000 were baptized at Pentecost 33 C.E., they “were added.” Added to what? “They continued devoting them-

22. What actions are included in following in Jesus’ steps?

23. (a) To what must those who receive life be added? (b) What is required of those in the Christian congregation?

selves to the teaching of the apostles and to sharing with one another,” Luke explains. (Acts 2:41, 42) Yes, they met together for Bible study and association and thus were added to, or became a part of, the Christian congregation. Early Christians regularly attended meetings for spiritual instruction. (Hebrews 10:25) Jehovah’s Witnesses today also do this, and they would like to encourage you to attend these meetings with them.

²⁴ Millions now are following the cramped road leading to life. Staying on this cramped road takes real effort! (Matthew 7:13, 14) Paul indicated this in his warmhearted appeal: “Fight the fine fight of the faith, get a firm hold on the everlasting life for which you were called.” Putting up this fight is needed to “get a firm hold on the real life.” (1 Timothy 6:12, 19) That life is not the present life of aches and pains and suffering brought upon us by Adam’s sin. Rather, it is life in God’s new world, which will soon be realized when Christ’s ransom sacrifice is applied in behalf of all lovers of Jehovah God and his Son after this system of things is removed. May all of us choose life—“the real life”—everlasting life in God’s glorious new world.

24. What is “the real life,” and how and when will it be realized?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Who are the serpent, the woman, and the seed of Genesis 3:15?
- ☐ How did Jesus correspond to Adam, and what did the ransom make possible?
- ☐ What can you look forward to that will make God’s new world so enjoyable for you?
- ☐ What requirements do we need to meet to live in God’s new world?

DO YOU SHOW YOURSELF THANKFUL?

AT A MISSIONARY HOME IN WEST AFRICA, THERE ONCE LIVED A WATCHDOG NAMED TEDDY.

WHEN SOMEONE THREW TEDDY A PIECE OF MEAT, HE SWALLOWED IT IMMEDIATELY, WITHOUT SAVORING, WITHOUT CHEWING. PANTING UNDER THE TROPICAL SUN, HE WAITED FOR THE NEXT MORSEL TO BE TOSSED HIS WAY. WHEN

THE MEAT WAS GONE, HE TURNED AND WENT ON HIS WAY.

TEDDY NEVER EXPRESSED THE SLIGHTEST GRATITUDE FOR WHAT

HE RECEIVED. NO ONE EXPECTED HIM TO. HE WAS, AFTER ALL, JUST A DOG.



AS TO gratitude, we often expect more of fellow humans than we do of animals. Usually we are disappointed. Many people snatch what they can from life and look for more. This too is not surprising. The Bible foretold that in the last days, men would be unthankful.—2 Timothy 3:1, 2.

However, servants of God have a different spirit. They take to heart the counsel of the apostle Paul, who admonished fellow believers: “Show yourselves thankful.”—Colossians 3:15.

Jehovah Shows Himself Thankful

Jehovah God sets the perfect example in showing appreciation. Consider how he



views his faithful servants. Paul, under inspiration, wrote to Hebrew Christians: “God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering.”—Hebrews 6:10.

Examples of Jehovah’s appreciation for his faithful servants abound. He blessed Abraham by multiplying his literal offspring, so that they became “like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore.” (Genesis 22:17) In appreciation for Job’s faithfulness under trial, Jehovah not only restored Job’s great wealth but also gave in “double amount.”

(Job 42:10) Jehovah's dealings with humans throughout the millenniums have proved the truthfulness of the statement: "As regards Jehovah, his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him."—2 Chronicles 16:9.

God's appreciation for and inclination to reward those who seek to do his will are primary features of his personality. Recognition of this is central to Christian faith. Paul wrote: "Without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe . . . that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him."—Hebrews 11:6.

If Jehovah instead manifested a harsh, critical spirit, all of us would be condemned. The psalmist made this point long ago: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" (Psalm 130:3) Jehovah is neither unappreciative nor critical. He cherishes those who serve him. He shows himself thankful.

Jesus—A Deeply Appreciative Person

Reflecting perfectly the qualities of his heavenly Father, Jesus Christ showed himself thankful for the things others did in faith. Consider what once took place at the temple in Jerusalem: "Now as [Jesus] looked up he saw the rich dropping their gifts into the treasury chests. Then he saw a certain needy widow drop two small coins of very little value there, and he said: 'I tell you truthfully, This widow, although poor, dropped in more than they all did. For all these dropped in gifts out of their surplus, but this woman out of her want dropped in all the means of living she had.'"—Luke 21:1-4.

From a monetary point of view, the contribution was small, especially when com-

pared with those of the rich people. Most of those present would hardly have noticed her. Yet, Jesus did see that widow. He discerned her circumstances. Jesus saw her and appreciated her.

Another incident involved a wealthy woman, Mary. As Jesus was reclining at a meal, she poured very expensive perfumed oil upon Jesus' feet and upon his head. Some criticized her action, reasoning that the oil could have been sold and the money used to help the poor. How did Jesus respond? He said: "Let her alone. Why do you try to make trouble for her? She did a fine deed toward me. Truly I say to you, Wherever the good news is preached in all the world, what this woman did shall also be told as a remembrance of her."—Mark 14:3-6, 9; John 12:3.

Jesus did not critically bemoan that the precious oil had not been put to another use. He appreciated the generous expression of Mary's love and faith. The incident is recorded in the Bible as a remembrance of her fine deed. These accounts and others show that Jesus was a deeply appreciative man.

If you are a servant of God, you can be sure that both Jehovah God and Jesus Christ deeply appreciate your efforts to promote pure worship. Such knowledge draws us to them and motivates us to imitate them by proving ourselves thankful.

Satan's Critical Spirit

Now let us consider an example of one who does not show himself thankful—Satan the Devil. Satan's lack of appreciation contributed to his spearheading a disastrous rebellion against God.

Having nurtured a critical spirit of discontent in himself, Satan began to sow it in others. Consider events in the gar-

**Jesus expressed
appreciation for Mary's
fine deed**

den of Eden. Jehovah had created the first man and woman, had put them in a paradisaic garden, and had told them: "From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction." There was but one restriction. God said: "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 2:16, 17.

Soon, however, Satan challenged Jehovah's credibility. In part, he wanted to make Eve so ungrateful to Jehovah that she would be moved to rebel against him, even as Satan himself had rebelled. "Is it really so that God said you must not eat from every tree of the garden?" Satan asked. (Genesis 3:1) The clear implication was that God was holding back something precious from Eve, something that would open her eyes and make her like God himself. Instead of showing herself thankful for the many blessings Jehovah had showered upon her, Eve began to crave what was forbidden.—Genesis 3:5, 6.

The disastrous consequences are well-known. Though given the name Eve "because she had to become the mother of everyone living," in another sense she became the mother of everyone dying. From Adam all humans have inherited the sin



that produces death.—Genesis 3:20; Romans 5:12.

Imitate God and Christ

Consider the contrast between Satan and Jesus. Satan is described as "the accuser of our brothers . . . , who accuses them day and night before our God." (Revelation 12:10) Jesus is "able also to save completely those who are approaching God through him, because he is always alive to plead for them."—Hebrews 7:25.

Satan accuses servants of God. Jesus appreciates them and pleads on their behalf. As imitators of Christ, Christians should strive to look for the good in one another, appreciating and valuing one another. In doing so, they show themselves thankful to the one who sets the supreme example in appreciation, Jehovah God.—1 Corinthians 11:1.

How to Recognize and Overcome Any Spiritual Weakness



ACCORDING TO GREEK MYTHOLOGY, ACHILLES WAS THE BRAVEST OF the Greek warriors in the Trojan War, a campaign against the city of Troy. Legend says that when Achilles was an infant, his mother dipped him in the waters of the River Styx, thus making him invulnerable except for where his mother held onto him—the proverbial Achilles' heel. That was precisely where the fatal arrow, shot by Paris, son of King Priam of Troy, struck and killed Achilles.

Christians are soldiers of Christ, engaged in a spiritual warfare. (2 Timothy 2:3) “We have a wrestling,” explains the apostle Paul, “not against blood and flesh, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.” Yes, our enemies are none other than Satan the Devil and the demons. —Ephesians 6:12.

Obviously, this would be a one-sided fight were it not for the help we receive from Jehovah God, who has been described as “a manly person of war.” (Exodus 15:3) To protect ourselves against our vicious foes, we are given



a spiritual suit of armor. That is why the apostle urged: “Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil.”—Ephesians 6:11.

The suit of armor provided by Jehovah God is, without a doubt, of the finest quality, capable of withstanding any kind of spiritual assault. Just look at the list that Paul gave: girdle of *truth*, breastplate of *righteousness*, footgear of the *good news*, large shield of *faith*, helmet of *salvation*, and sword of the *spirit*.

What finer equipment could one hope for? With such a suit of armor on, a Christian soldier has every opportunity to come

out victorious, in spite of formidable odds.—Ephesians 6:13-17.

Even though the spiritual suit of armor from Jehovah is of the finest quality and is a source of security for us, we must not take things for granted. Bearing in mind the supposedly invincible Achilles, is it possible that we too may have a weak spot, a spiritual Achilles' heel? That could prove fatal if we are caught unawares.

Examine Your Spiritual Armor

A two-time Olympic gold medalist ice skater, who was apparently in top physical condition, suddenly collapsed and died during a practice session. Shortly thereafter a sobering piece of news was reported in *The New York Times*: "Half of the 600,000 Americans who have heart attacks each year have no symptoms beforehand." Clearly, the state of our health cannot be determined simply by how we feel.

It is the same when it comes to our spiritual well-being. The Bible's advice is: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12) Even though our spiritual armor is the best available, weakness can develop. This is because we are born in sin, and our sinful and imperfect nature can easily overpower our resolve to do God's will. (Psalm 51:5) Despite our good intentions, our treacherous heart can deceive us by fabricating specious reasonings or excuses, so that we easily overlook our weakness and deceive ourselves into thinking that all is well.—Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7:21-23.

In addition, we live in a world in which the sense of right and wrong is often confused and distorted. Whether something is right or wrong may be determined by how the person feels. This kind of thinking is promoted in advertisements, popular entertainment, and the media. Obviously, if we are not careful, we can be lulled into thinking that way,

and our spiritual suit of armor may begin to weaken.

Rather than falling into such a dangerous situation, we should heed the Bible's advice: "Keep testing whether you are in the faith, keep proving what you yourselves are." (2 Corinthians 13:5) When we do so, we will be able to spot any weaknesses that may have developed and take the necessary steps to repair them before our enemies spot them and launch their attack. How, though, do we go about making such a test? What are some symptoms we should watch for in this self-examination?

Recognizing the Symptoms

One common symptom that may indicate spiritual weakness is a slacking off in our personal study habits. Some feel that they should study more, but they just cannot seem to get around to it. With today's busy life, it is easy to fall into such a bad situation. What is worse, however, is that people often rationalize that they are not doing

**"KEEP TESTING WHETHER YOU
ARE IN THE FAITH,
KEEP PROVING WHAT YOU
YOURSELVES ARE."**

—2 Corinthians 13:5.

so bad, since they read Bible publications whenever they can and they are able to get to some Christian meetings.

Such reasoning is a form of self-deception. It is like a man who feels that he is too busy to sit down and eat a proper meal, so he grabs a bite here and there as he dashes from one thing to another. Though he may not suffer from starvation, health problems may set in sooner or later. Similarly, without a steady intake of nourishing spiritual food, we could soon develop weak spots in our

ASK YOURSELF . . .

- ◆ Am I as eager to spend time preparing for meetings as I am to shop or watch TV?
- ◆ Do I envy the so-called good life that others are leading?
- ◆ Am I easily irritated when others do or say something not to my liking?
- ◆ Do I find counsel hard to accept, or do I feel that others are always picking on me?
- ◆ Do I find it difficult to get along with others?
- ◆ Have my standards been brought down along with the world's?
- ◆ Do I have specific spiritual goals?
- ◆ What am I doing to reach my spiritual goals?



spiritual armor. Being constantly bombarded by worldly propaganda and attitudes, we could easily succumb to Satan's deadly attacks.

Another symptom of spiritual weakness is loss of the sense of urgency in our spiritual warfare. A soldier in peacetime does not feel the tension and danger of battle. He may thus feel no urgency to be ready. If he is suddenly called into action, he may well be unprepared. It is the same spiritually. If we allow our sense of urgency to slip, we can become unprepared to fend off attacks that may come our way.

How, though, can we tell if we have fallen into this situation? We could ask ourselves some questions that may reveal the real state of affairs: Am I as eager to engage in the ministry as I am to go on an outing? Am I as willing to spend time preparing for meetings as I am to shop or watch TV? Do I have second thoughts about pursuits or op-

portunities that I gave up when I became a Christian? Do I envy the so-called good life that others are leading? These are searching questions, but they are helpful in spotting any weakness in our spiritual suit of armor.

Since the protective armor we have is spiritual, it is essential that God's spirit flow freely in our life. This is reflected in the degree to which the fruitage of God's spirit is manifest in all our activities. Are you easily irritated or even upset when others do or say something not to your liking? Do you find counsel hard to accept, or do you feel that others are always picking on you? Are you deeply envious of other people's blessings or accomplishments? Do you find it difficult to get along with others, especially your peers? An honest self-appraisal will help us to see if our life is filled with the fruitage of God's spirit or if the works of the flesh are insidiously making their appearance.—Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 4:22-27.

**"BE VIGILANT WITH A VIEW TO PRAYERS.
ABOVE ALL THINGS, HAVE INTENSE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER,
BECAUSE LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SINS."**

—1 Peter 4:7, 8.

Positive Steps to Overcome Spiritual Weakness

It is one thing to recognize the symptoms of spiritual weakness; it is quite another to face them and take steps to correct matters. Regrettably, many tend to make excuses, to rationalize, to minimize the problem, or to deny that it exists. How dangerous that is—like going to battle wearing a suit of armor with missing pieces! Such a course would lay us wide open to Satan's attack. Rather, we should take positive steps quickly to correct any defects we may notice. What can we do? —Romans 8:13; James 1:22-25.

Being engaged in spiritual warfare—a battle that includes control of the Christian's mind and heart—we must do all we can to safeguard our faculties. Recall that among the pieces of our spiritual armor are "the breastplate of righteousness," which protects our heart, and "the helmet of salvation," which protects our mind.

Learning to use these provisions effectively can mean the difference between victory and defeat.—Ephesians 6:14-17; Proverbs 4:23; Romans 12:2.

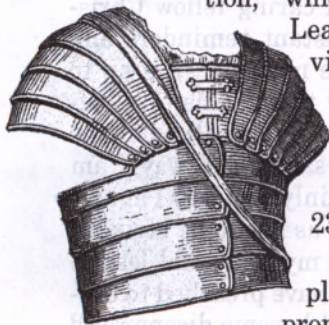
Wearing "the breastplate of righteousness" properly requires that we

constantly check ourselves regarding our love of righteousness and hatred of lawlessness. (Psalm 45:7; 97:10; Amos 5:15) Have our standards been brought down along with the world's? Do we now find entertaining—whether in real life or por-

trayed on TV and movie screens, in books and magazines—things which once might have shocked or offended us? Love of righteousness will help us to see that what is glorified in the world as freedom and sophistication may really be promiscuity and conceit in disguise.—Romans 13:13, 14; Titus 2:12.

Putting on "the helmet of salvation" involves keeping vividly in mind the marvelous blessings ahead, not allowing ourselves to be sidetracked by the glitter and glamour of the world. (Hebrews 12:2, 3; 1 John 2:16) Having this outlook will help us to put spiritual interests ahead of material gain or personal advantage. (Matthew 6:33) Thus, to be sure that we have this piece of armor properly in place, we must honestly ask ourselves: What am I pursuing in life? Do I have specific spiritual goals? What am I doing to reach them? Whether of the remaining anointed Christians or of the multitudinous "great crowd," we should imitate Paul, who said: "I do not yet consider myself as having laid hold on it; but there is one thing about it: Forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pursuing down toward the goal.—Revelation 7:9; Philippians 3:13, 14.

Paul's description of our spiritual suit of armor concludes with this admonition: "With every form of prayer and supplication you carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit. And to that end keep awake with all constancy and with supplication in behalf of all the holy ones." (Ephesians 6:18) This indicates two positive steps we can take to



overcome or prevent any spiritual weakness: Develop a good relationship with God, and form a close bond with fellow Christians.

When we have the habit of turning to Jehovah with prayers of “every form” (confession of our sins, petition for forgiveness, request for guidance, thanksgiving for blessings, praises from the heart) and “on every occasion” (publicly, privately, personally, spontaneously), we gain an intimacy with Jehovah. That is the greatest protection we can have.—Romans 8:31; James 4:7, 8.

On the other hand, we are admonished to pray “in behalf of all the holy ones,” that is, for our fellow Christians. We may in our prayers remember our spiritual brothers in distant lands who are suffering persecution or other hardships. But what about Christians with whom we work and associate day after day? It is proper to pray in their behalf also, even as Jesus prayed for his disciples. (John 17:9; James 5:16) Such prayers draw us close together and strengthen us to withstand the attacks of “the wicked one.”—2 Thessalonians 3:1-3.

Finally, keep firmly in mind the apostle Peter’s loving admonition: “The end of all things has drawn close. Be sound in mind, therefore, and be vigilant with a view to prayers. Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers

a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:7, 8) It is so easy to let human imperfections—other people’s and our own—work their way into our hearts and minds and become obstacles, stumbling blocks. Satan well knows this human weakness. Divide and conquer is one of his wily tactics. We must, therefore, be quick to cover over such sins with intense love for one another and not “allow place for the Devil.”—Ephesians 4:25-27.

Keep Spiritually Strong Now

When you notice that your hair is out of place or that your necktie is crooked, what do you do? You most likely straighten things out as soon as possible. Few people would simply leave them alone, feeling that such physical anomalies do not matter. Let us respond just as quickly when it comes to our spiritual weaknesses. Physical blemishes may invite people’s disapproving glances, but spiritual defects that are left uncorrected can result in Jehovah’s disapproval.—1 Samuel 16:7.

Jehovah has lovingly given us all that we need to help us root out any spiritual weakness and to keep spiritually strong. By means of Christian meetings, Bible publications, and mature and caring fellow Christians, he provides constant reminders and pointers as to what we must do. It is up to us to accept and apply them. This takes effort and self-discipline. But recall what the apostle Paul honestly said: “The way I am running is not uncertainly; the way I am directing my blows is so as not to be striking the air; but I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow.”—1 Corinthians 9:26, 27.

Be alert, and never allow a spiritual Achilles’ heel to develop. Rather, humbly and courageously let us do what is necessary now to recognize and overcome any spiritual weakness that we have.

In Our Next Issue

Everyone Will Be Free

“Let the Reader Use Discernment”

Be Vigilant and Be Diligent!

GENESIS DAT YER

The
CollegiantsBIBLE STUDY
MADE THEM
DIFFERENT

Hebr. 11.4.3.

Col. 1.6.16.

Ioan. 1.4.3.

Tsal. 33.4.6.

† Dreef.

2. Cor. 4.4.6.

Den

Dach.

† Iere.

† sal.

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Den

Dach.

† Iob.

† Trou.

† Ierem.

Den

Dach.

† Tsal.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE COLLEGIANTS?
THIS TINY 17TH-CENTURY DUTCH RELIGIOUS GROUP WAS DIFFERENT
FROM THE ESTABLISHED CHURCHES OF THAT TIME. HOW SO, AND WHAT CAN
WE LEARN FROM THEM? TO FIND OUT, LET US TRAVEL BACK IN TIME.

IN 1587, Jacobus Arminius (or, Jacob Harmensen) arrived in the city of Amsterdam. He had no trouble finding employment, for his résumé was impressive. At the age of 21, he was graduated from Holland's Leiden University. After that, he spent six years in Switzerland, studying theology under Théodore de Bèze, the successor to Protestant Reformer John Calvin. No wonder that Protestants in Amsterdam were pleased to appoint 27-year-old Arminius as one of their pastors! A few years later, though, many church members regretted their choice. Why?

The Predestination Issue

Soon after Arminius stepped into the pulpit, tension arose among Amsterdam's Protestants about the doctrine of predestination. This doctrine formed the core of Calvinism, but some church members felt that a God who had pre-

destined salvation for some and damnation for others was harsh and unjust. The Calvinists expected that Arminius, being a pupil of Bèze, would straighten out the dissenters. However, Arminius sided with the dissenters instead, to the consternation of the Calvinists. By 1593 the dispute had grown so heated that it split the city's Protestants into two groups—those who supported the doctrine and those who rejected it, the moderates.

Within a few years, this local dispute turned into a nationwide Protestant schism. Finally, in November 1618 the stage was set for a showdown. The Calvinists, backed by the army and public opinion, summoned the dissidents (then called Remonstrants*) to a

* In 1610 the dissidents had sent a formal remonstrance (a document stating reasons for opposition) to the Dutch rulers. After that act, they were called Remonstrants.

Background: Courtesy of the American Bible Society Library, New York

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national council, the Protestant Synod of Dordrecht. At the end of the meeting, all Remonstrant ministers were given a choice: Sign a pledge never to preach again, or leave the country. Most chose exile. Strict Calvinists occupied the pulpits that the Remonstrant ministers had left. Calvinism had triumphed—or so the synod hoped.

Birth and Growth of the Collegiants

Like elsewhere, the Remonstrant congregation in the village of Warmond, near Leiden, lost its pastor. Unlike elsewhere, however, the congregation did not accept the synod-approved replacement. Moreover, when a Remonstrant minister risked his life to return to Warmond in 1620 to care for the congregation, some congregation members rejected him as well. These members had begun holding their religious meetings in secret without the help of any clergyman. Later, these meetings were called colleges and those attending, Collegiants.

Though the Collegiants arose more out of circumstance than out of principle, that situation soon changed. Congregation member Gijsbert van der Kodde argued that by meeting without clerical supervision, the group was conforming more closely to the Bible and to the way of the early Christians than were the established churches. The clergy class, he said, had been invented after the death of the apostles to create jobs for men unwilling to learn a trade.

In 1621, Van der Kodde and like-minded members moved their meetings to the neighboring village of Rijnsburg.* Some years

* Because of this location, the Collegiants were also called Rijnsburgers.



Rembrandt van Rijn

later, when religious persecution had given way to tolerance, the reputation of the Collegiants' meetings spread throughout the country and attracted "birds of different feathers," as historian Siegfried Zilverberg put it. There were Remonstrants, Mennonites, Socinians, and even theologians. Some were farmers. Others were poets, printers, physicians, and tradesmen. The philosopher Spinoza (Benedictus de Spinoza) and the pedagogue Johann Amos Comenius (or, Jan Komenský), as well as the famous painter Rembrandt van Rijn, sympathized with the movement. The different ideas that these pious people brought with them influenced the development of Collegiant beliefs.

After 1640 this dynamic group grew rapidly. Colleges sprang up in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Leeuwarden, and other cities. Professor of history Andrew C. Fix notes that between the years 1650 and 1700, "the Collegiants . . . grew into one of the most important and influential religious forces in seventeenth-century Holland."

The Collegiants' Beliefs

Since reason, tolerance, and free speech were the hallmarks of the Collegiant movement, individual Collegiants were free to hold different beliefs. Still, they were bound together by some common convictions. For example, all Collegiants appreciated the importance of personal Bible study. Each member, wrote one Collegiant, should "investigate for himself and not come to know God from another." They did. According to the 19th-century church historian Jacobus C. van Slee, more Bible knowledge was

found among Collegiants than in other religious groups of the time. Even opponents praised the Collegiants for their ability to use the Bible skillfully.

The more the Collegiants studied the Bible, though, the more they developed convictions that differed from those held by mainstream churches. Sources dating from the 17th to the 20th century describe some of their beliefs:

The Early Church. Collegiant and theologian Adam Boreel wrote in 1644 that when the early church became involved in politics at the time of Emperor Constantine, it broke its covenant with Christ and lost the inspiration of the holy spirit. He added that as a result, false teachings multiplied and continued until his day.

The Reformation. The 16th-century Reformation led by Luther, Calvin, and others had not gone far enough in reforming the church. Instead, according to leading Collegiant and physician Galenus Abrahamsz (1622-1706), the Reformation made the religious situation worse by giving rise to quarreling and hatred. True reform should change the heart, which the Reformation failed to do.

The Church and the Clergy. The established churches are corrupt, worldly, and devoid of divine authority. Whoever takes religion seriously could do no better than leave the church to which he belongs so as not to become an accessory to its sins. The office of clergyman, said the Collegiants, is contrary to the Scriptures and "injurious to the spiritual welfare of the Christian congregation."

Kingdom and Paradise. One of the founders of the Amsterdam college, Daniel de Breen (1594-1664), wrote that Christ's Kingdom was not a spiritual kingdom resid-

ing in one's heart. Teacher Jacob Ostens, a Collegiant in Rotterdam, said that "the patriarchs looked forward to earthly promises." Likewise, Collegiants awaited the time when the earth would be transformed into a paradise.

Trinity. Some leading Collegiants, influenced by Socinian beliefs, rejected the Trinity.* For instance, Daniel Zwicker (1621-78) wrote that any doctrine contrary to reason, such as the Trinity, was "impossible and false." In 1694 a Bible version translated by Collegiant Reijnier Rooleeuw was published. It rendered the latter part of John 1:1: "And the word was a god" instead of the orthodox rendering: "And the word was God."##

Weekly Meetings

Although the Collegiants were not all in accord as to beliefs, their colleges in different cities functioned quite similarly. Historian Van Slee reports that in the early days of the Collegiant movement, meetings were hardly prepared in advance. The Collegiants felt that based on the apostle Paul's words about the need to "prophecy," all male members could address the college freely. (1 Corinthians 14:1, 3, 26) As a result, meetings often lasted far into the night and some in attendance fell "fast asleep."

Later, meetings became more organized. Collegiants met not only on Sundays but also on weekday evenings. To enable the speaker and the congregation to prepare in advance for all the meetings of that year, a printed program listed the Bible verses to

* See *Awake!*, November 22, 1988, page 19, "The Socinians—Why Did They Reject the Trinity?"

Het Nieuwe Testament van onze Heer Jezus Christus, uit het Grieksch vertaald door Reijnier Rooleeuw, M.D. (The New Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ, translated from Greek by Reijnier Rooleeuw, M.D.)



Village of Warmond where Collegiants first began, and De Vliet River where baptisms took place



be considered as well as the speakers' initials. After the meeting was opened with song and prayer, a speaker explained the Bible verses. When finished, he asked the men to express themselves about the topic just discussed. Then a second speaker showed the application of the same verses. Prayer and song closed the meeting.

Collegiants in the town of Harlingen, in the province of Friesland, had a novel way for keeping their meetings on schedule. A speaker who talked longer than he was supposed to had to pay a small fine.

National Assemblies

The Collegiants also felt the need for larger gatherings. Thus, starting in 1640, Collegiants from all over the country traveled twice a year (in spring and summer) to Rijnsburg. These gatherings, writes histori-

an Fix, allowed them to become "acquainted with the ideas, feelings, beliefs, and activities of their brothers from far and wide."

Some of the visiting Collegiants rented rooms from the villagers while others stayed in the *Groote Huis*, or Big House, a mansion of 30 rooms owned by the Collegiants. Communal meals for 60 to 70 people were served there. After dinner, visitors could stroll through the mansion's sizable garden to enjoy 'God's works, a quiet conversation, or a moment of contemplation.'

Although not all Collegiants felt that baptism was necessary, many did. Thus, baptism became a feature of the large gatherings. Historian Van Slee says that the ceremony usually took place on Saturday morning. Song and prayer were followed by a discourse on the need for immersion. Then the speaker invited those adults who want-

ed to be baptized to make a confession of faith, such as, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God." After the discourse was closed with prayer, all present walked to the baptism pool and witnessed men and women kneeling in the pool, so that the water reached their shoulders. The baptizer then slowly pushed the head of the new believer forward and under the water. After the ceremony, all returned to their seats for another discourse.

On Saturday afternoon at 5:00 p.m., the actual meeting began with a short Bible reading, song, and prayer. To ensure that there was always a speaker on hand, the colleges of Rotterdam, Leiden, Amsterdam, and North Holland took turns providing speakers for each assembly. Sunday morning was reserved for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. After a discourse, prayer, and song, the men and then the women partook of the bread and the wine. More discourses followed on Sunday evening, and on Monday morning everyone came together for the closing talk. Most talks given at these conventions, notes Van Slee, were of a practical nature, stressing application over explication.

The village of Rijnsburg was pleased to host these gatherings. One 18th-century observer wrote that the influx of strangers, who consumed quite a bit, generated good revenue for the village. In addition, after each convention the Collegiants donated a sum to Rijnsburg's poor. The village, no doubt, felt the loss when those meetings were discontinued in 1787. After that the Collegiant movement faded away. Why?

Why They Faded Away

By the end of the 17th century, a dispute had arisen about the role of reason in religion. Some Collegiants felt that human rea-

soning should take precedence over divine revelation, but others disagreed. Eventually, the dispute divided the entire Collegiant movement. Only after the major proponents of both sides of the dispute had died did the Collegiants unite again. Nevertheless, after this schism the movement "was never again the same," notes historian Fix.

Increasing tolerance within the 18th-century Protestant churches also contributed to the Collegiants' decline. As the Collegiant principles of reason and toleration became more accepted by society at large, "the once lonely light of Collegiantism dissolved into the bright dawn of the Enlightenment." By the end of the 18th century, most Collegiants had been absorbed by the Mennonites and other religious groups.

Since the Collegiants did not aim for unity of thought within their movement, there were about as many different views as there were Collegiants. They recognized this and, therefore, did not claim to be "united . . . in the same line of thought," as the apostle Paul urges Christians to be. (1 Corinthians 1:10) At the same time, however, the Collegiants looked forward to the time when fundamental Christian beliefs, such as unity of thought, would become a reality.

Considering the fact that the true knowledge had not yet become abundant in the days of the Collegiants, they set an example many religions today could note. (Compare Daniel 12:4.) Their stressing the need for Bible study was in line with the apostle Paul's counsel: "Make sure of all things." (1 Thessalonians 5:21) Personal Bible study taught Jacobus Arminius and others that some long-held religious doctrines and practices were not based on the Bible at all. When they realized this, they had the courage to differ with established religion. Would you have done the same?

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Some of Jehovah's Witnesses have been offered employment involving religious buildings or property. What is the Scriptural view of such work?

This issue may face Christians who sincerely want to apply 1 Timothy 5:8, which emphasizes the importance of providing materially for one's household. While Christians certainly should apply that counsel, it does not justify their accepting any and all kinds of secular work, no matter what its nature. Christians appreciate the need to be sensitive to other indications of God's will. For example, a man's desire to support his family would not justify his violating what the Bible says about immorality or murder. (Compare Genesis 39:4-9; Isaiah 2:4; John 17:14, 16.) It is also vital that Christians act in harmony with the command to get out of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion.—Revelation 18:4, 5.

Around the globe, God's servants face many employment situations. It would be pointless and beyond our authority to attempt to list all the possibilities and to make categorical rules. (2 Corinthians 1:24) Let us, though, mention some factors that Christians should consider in making personal employment decisions. These factors were set out briefly in *The Watchtower* of July 15, 1982, in an article about benefiting from our God-given conscience. A box raised two key questions and then listed other helpful factors.

The first key question is this: *Is the secular work itself condemned in the Bible?* Commenting on this, *The Watchtower* noted that the Bible condemns stealing, misuse of blood, and idolatry. A Christian should avoid secular work that directly promotes activities that God disapproves of, such as those just mentioned.

The second question is: *Would doing this work make one an accomplice in a condemned practice?* Clearly, a person employed in a gambling den, an abortion clinic, or a house of prostitution would be an accomplice in an unscriptural practice. Even if his daily work there was merely sweeping floors or answering the telephone, he would be contributing to a practice that God's Word condemns.

Many Christians faced with employment decisions have found that analyzing just those questions helps them reach a personal decision.

For instance, from those two questions, one can see why a true worshiper would not be a direct employee of a false religious organization, working for and in a church. Revelation 18:4 sets out the command: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins." A person would be sharing in the works and sins of Babylon the Great if he was a regular employee of a religion that was teaching false worship. Whether the employee was a gardener, a janitor, a repairman, or an accountant, his work would serve to promote worship that conflicts with true religion. Moreover, people who would see this employee working to beautify the church, keep it in repair, or carry out its religious pursuits would reasonably link him with that religion.

What, though, about someone who is not a regular employee of a church or religious organization? Perhaps he is called upon just to do emergency repair work on a broken water pipe in the church basement. Would that not be different from his offering a bid on a contract, such as for shingling or insulating the church roof?

Again, a vast variety of situations could be imagined. So let us review five additional factors that *The Watchtower* set out:

1. *Is the work simply a human service that of itself is not Scripturally objectionable?* Take the example of a postman. His delivering mail would hardly mean that he was promoting a condemned practice if one building in the area he served was a church or an abortion clinic. God provides the sunlight that shines through the windows of all buildings, including a church or such a clinic. (Acts 14:16, 17) A Christian who is a postman might conclude that he is performing a human service to all, day after day. It could be similar with a Christian who responds to an emergency—a plumber called to stop flooding in a church or an ambulance attendant called upon to treat someone who collapsed during church services. He might consider this simply an incidental rendering of human aid.

2. *To what extent does the person have authority over what is done?* A Christian store owner would hardly agree to order and sell idols, spiritistic amulets, cigarettes, or sausages made from blood. As owner he is in control. People might urge him to sell cigarettes or idols and make a profit, but he would act

consistent with his Scriptural beliefs. On the other hand, a Christian employee at a large food store may be assigned to run the cash register, polish floors, or do bookkeeping. He does not control what products are ordered and sold, even if a few of these are objectionable, such as cigarettes or items for religious holidays.* (Compare Luke 7:8; 17:7, 8.) This is related to the next point.

3. *To what degree is the person involved?* Let us return to the example of a store. Probably an employee assigned to run the cash register or to fill the shelves only occasionally handles cigarettes or religious items; that is a small part of his overall work. What a contrast, though, with an employee in the same store who works at the tobacco counter! All his work, day in and day out, focuses on something contrary to Christian beliefs. (2 Corinthians 7:1) This illustrates why the degree of involvement or contact must be evaluated in deciding employment questions.

4. *What is the source of the pay or the location where the work is done?* Consider two situations. To improve its public image, an abortion clinic decides to pay a man to clean neighborhood streets. His pay comes from the abortion clinic, but he does not work there, and no one sees him in the clinic all day. Rather, they observe him doing a public work that of itself is not in conflict with the Scriptures, no matter who pays him. Now a contrast. In a nation where prostitution is legalized, the public health service pays a nurse to work at brothels, running health checks intended to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Though she is paid by the public health service, her work is entirely at houses of prostitution, making the immorality safer, more acceptable. These

* Some Christians working in hospitals have had to consider this factor of authority. A physician might have authority to order medications for or medical procedures on a patient. Even if a patient did not mind, how could a Christian doctor in authority order a blood transfusion or perform an abortion, knowing what the Bible says on such matters? In contrast, a nurse employed at the hospital might not have such authority. As she performs routine services, a doctor might direct her to perform a blood test for some purpose or to care for a patient who came for an abortion. In line with the example recorded at 2 Kings 5:17-19, she might conclude that since she is not the one with authority who orders a transfusion or performs an abortion, she could carry out human services for a patient. Of course, she still would have to consider her conscience, so as 'to behave before God with a clear conscience.'—Acts 23:1.

examples illustrate why the source of one's pay and the location of the work are aspects to consider.

5. *What is the effect of doing the work; will it hurt one's own conscience or stumble others?* Conscience should be considered, both our own and that of others. Even if a certain work (including its location and source of pay) seems acceptable to most Christians, an individual may sense that it would trouble his personal conscience. The apostle Paul, who set a fine example, stated: "We trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things." (Hebrews 13:18) We ought to avoid doing work that would leave us disturbed; yet, we also should not be critical of others whose consciences differ. Conversely, a Christian might see no conflict with the Bible in his doing a certain work, but he realizes that it would be very disturbing to many in the congregation and in the community. Paul reflected the right attitude in his words: "In no way are we giving any cause for stumbling, that our ministry might not be found fault with; but in every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers."—2 Corinthians 6:3, 4.

Now let us go back to the main question of working on a church building, such as installing new windows, cleaning the carpets, or servicing the furnace. How might the above factors be involved?

Recall the aspect of authority. Is the Christian the owner or manager who can decide whether to take on such work on a church? Would a Christian having that authority want to share with Babylon the Great by bidding on a job or contracting to help some religion promote false worship? Would that not be comparable to deciding to sell cigarettes or idols in one's own store?—2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

If the Christian is an employee without the deciding voice over what jobs are accepted, other factors ought to be considered, such as the location and the extent of involvement. Is the employee asked simply to deliver or put in place new chairs on an occasion or to render human service, such as a fireman's putting out a fire in a church before it spreads? Many would see this as different from an employee of a business spending a long time painting the church or regularly doing gardening to make it attractive. Such regular or extended contact would increase the likelihood that many would link the Christian with a religion that he claims he does not endorse, potentially stumbling them.—Matthew 13:41; 18:6, 7.

We have brought up a number of important considerations as to employment. These were presented in the context of a specific question involving false religion. Yet, they can equally be considered in connection with other types of employment. In each case, a prayerful analysis should be made, taking into con-

sideration the specific—and probably unique—aspects of the situation at hand. The factors presented above have already helped many sincere Christians to make conscientious decisions that reflect their desire to walk straight and upright before Jehovah. —Proverbs 3:5, 6; Isaiah 2:3; Hebrews 12:12-14.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

□ **Why is Paul's expression "ambassadors substituting for Christ" such an appropriate one for anointed Christians? (2 Corinthians 5:20)** In ancient times, ambassadors were dispatched mainly during periods of hostility to see if warfare could be averted. (Luke 14:31, 32) Since the sinful world of mankind is alienated from God, he is sending his anointed ambassadors to inform people of his terms for reconciliation, urging them to seek peace with God.—12/15, page 18.

□ **What are four things that strengthened Abraham's faith?** First, he demonstrated his faith in Jehovah by paying heed when God spoke (Hebrews 11:8); second, his faith was closely related to his hope (Romans 4:18); third, Abraham often spoke with Jehovah; and fourth, Jehovah gave Abraham support when he followed divine guidance. The same things can strengthen our faith today.—1/1, pages 17, 18.

□ **What is meant by the expression "Do not bring us into temptation"? (Matthew 6:13)** We are asking God not to allow us to fail when we are tempted to disobey him. Jehovah can guide us so that we do not succumb and are not overreached by Satan, "the wicked one." (1 Corinthians 10:13)—1/15, page 14.

□ **What must one do to receive God's forgiveness for wrongdoing?** Confession to God must be coupled with contrition and "fruits that befit repentance." (Luke 3:8) A repentant spirit and a desire to right the wrong would also move one to seek the spiritual help of Christian elders. (James 5:13-15)—1/15, page 19.

□ **Why should we strive to be humble?** A humble person is patient and long-suffering, and he does not take himself too seriously. Humility attracts true friends who love you. More than that, it brings Jehovah's blessing. (Proverbs 22:4)—2/1, page 7.

□ **What crucial difference is there between the death of Jesus and that of Adam?** Adam's death was deserved, for he willfully disobeyed his Creator. (Genesis 2:16, 17) In contrast, Jesus' death was wholly undeserved, for "he committed no sin." (1 Peter 2:22) So when Jesus died, he had something of enormous value that the sinner Adam did not possess at his death—the right to perfect human life. Thus, Jesus' death had sacrificial value in ransoming mankind.—2/15, pages 15, 16.

□ **In Ezekiel's prophetic vision, what did the city picture?** Since the city lies in the midst of profane (non-sacred) land, it must be something earthly. It appears to picture, therefore, the earthly administration that benefits all who will make up the righteous earthly society.—3/1, page 18.

□ **Why did Jesus wash the feet of his disciples when celebrating the Passover in 33 C.E.?** Jesus was not instituting a ritual of foot washing. Rather, he was helping his apostles to adopt a new frame of mind—one of humility and a willingness to perform the lowliest of tasks in behalf of their brothers.—3/1, page 30.

□ **In our teaching others, what is more important than natural abilities?** It is the qualities we possess and the spiritual habits we have cultivated that students can imitate. (Luke 6:40; 2 Peter 3:11)—3/15, pages 11, 12.

□ **How can public speakers improve their reading of the Scriptures?** By practicing. Yes, by reading out loud over and over again until they can do so fluently. If audio-cassettes of the Bible are available, it is wise to listen to the reader's sense stress and modulation and to note how names and unusual words are pronounced.—3/15, page 20.

□ **How does 'the spirit return to God' when a person dies? (Ecclesiastes 12:7)** Since the spirit is the life-force, it "returns to the true God" in the sense that any hope of future life for that person now rests entirely with God. Only God can restore the spirit, or life-force, causing a person to come back to life. (Psalm 104:30)—4/1, page 17.



"Putting to Sea in a Storm"

WOULD you not view such a venture as ill-timed, foolish, and potentially disastrous? Some, however, thrust themselves into such a situation in a figurative way. How so? The 17th-century English author Thomas Fuller said: "Act nothing in a furious passion. It's putting to sea in a storm."

Pursuing a course of action while in a state of unrestrained anger can have tragic consequences. This is borne out by an event recorded in the Bible. Simeon and Levi, sons of the ancient patriarch Jacob, reacted to the violation of their sister Dinah by storming forth in a vengeful rage. The result was wholesale murder and plunder. It is no wonder that Jacob condemned their wicked deed, saying: "You have brought ostracism upon me in making me a stench to the inhabitants of the land."—Genesis 34:25-30.

Wisely, God's Word, the Bible, recommends the opposite course. It says: "Let anger alone and leave rage; do not show yourself heated up only to do evil." (Psalm 37:8) Following that advice can prevent great sins.—Ecclesiastes 10:4; see also Proverbs 22:24, 25.



WILL globalization of education and religion bring world peace? This is the dream of Dr. Robert Muller, former assistant secretary-general of the United Nations and recipient of the 1989 UNESCO Prize for Peace Education. As reported in *The Vancouver*

Sun newspaper, Dr. Muller is "convinced all the globe's students must be taught a core set of facts and values about the planet, humanity and non-violence." He envisions the day when around the world all institutions for learning will teach children about the UN as the best hope for peace. He also believes that "all the world's religions should become members of a fledgling UN-like organization called the United Religions," reported the *Sun*. Then "all religious teaching will promote non-violence."

Will world peace ever become a reality? Most assuredly! But not by means of any human agency. More than 2,700 years ago, an in-

WORLD PEACE FROM WHAT SOURCE?

spired penman identified the superior source of education for peace when he foretold that righthearthed people would be "taught by Jehovah," and their peace would be "abundant."—Isaiah 54:13.

God is the one "who gives peace," says the Bible. (Romans 16:20) Even now a marvelous global ed-

ucation program is under way as Jehovah instructs his people to "seek peace and pursue it," to "beat their swords into plowshares," and not to "learn war anymore."—1 Peter 3:11; Isaiah 2:2-4.

Worship that is founded on truth, free from hypocrisy and deceit, is approved and blessed by God. (Matthew 15:7-9; John 4:23, 24) Only true worship, in full harmony with God's Word, can produce people who live in peace and unity and who have genuine love for one another.—John 13:35.

To learn more about what God's Word says regarding world peace, we invite you to contact the publishers of this journal.