representing blood, did not belong to Noah and his family but belonged to the Life-Giver. Accordingly, it would be appropriate to pour out the blood on the earth, which is God’s symbolic “footstool.”—Isa. 66:1.

The command to Noah also applies to Christians. In the first century C.E., the Christian governing body published the decision, backed by the holy spirit, that Christians must ‘abstain from things strangled and from blood.’ (Acts 15:19, 28, 29) What would that mean in practice? The expression “things strangled” designates the flesh of animals that were killed in a manner that left their blood in the meat. Christians could not eat such flesh. How about the phrase ‘abstain from blood’? This would prohibit the using of blood drained from such a creature, as in the case of some pagans, who made and ate blood sausage or other blood-containing foods or who drank blood that came from animals or warriors killed in the arena. Christians would not do any of these things. When they drained blood from a creature, they would do what God’s servants in the past had done, abstain from it. They could thus underscore their appreciation for the sacredness of blood and life and also demonstrate their dependence on the merit of Christ’s blood.

So, if medical personnel suggest that a Christian permit some of his blood to be withdrawn and deposited in a blood bank for later transfusion purposes, the Christian is not without guidance from the Bible as to the proper course. He can mention that ancient Israelites were told that removed blood was to be ‘poured out on the ground as water,’ to show that it was for God and not to sustain the life of some earthly creature. (Deut. 12:24) And he can refer to the pointed command that Christians ‘abstain from blood.’ In view of this, how could he allow his blood to be collected in a blood bank for later transfusion into himself or another person?

What about a device such as a heart-lung pump or a dialysis (artificial kidney) machine? Might a Christian use such?

There are Christian witnesses of Jehovah who, with a good conscience, have allowed these devices to be used, provided that the machines were primed with a nonblood fluid, such as Ringer’s lactate solution.

When this sort of device is operating, the patient’s blood flows from a blood vessel through tubing and the machine (where it is pumped, oxygenated and/or filtered) and then flows back into his circulatory system. The machine temporarily performs some of the functions normally handled by the patient’s own organs.

Some Christians have conscientiously reasoned that the blood is flowing continuously and that the external circuit might be viewed as an extension of the circulatory system. They have considered it comparable to a piece of tubing that might be implanted in the body to shunt blood around a blockage in a vessel.

Of course, each Christian should weigh what is involved in the use of these and similar devices. He could consider whether he views the blood involved to be blood that clearly has left his body and so should be disposed of or as blood that, basically, is still part of his circulatory system. (Deut. 12:16) Then he can make a decision that will leave him with a clear conscience before God.—1 Pet. 3:16.

Would it be wrong to submit to a blood test?

Based on their knowledge of the Scriptures, most of Jehovah’s Witnesses, if not all, do not object to such tests. The small quantity of blood removed from the body is not eaten or injected into someone else. It is merely examined or tested before being disposed of.—Deut. 15:23.

Are serum injections compatible with Christian belief?

In our issue of June 1, 1974, we presented in this column a detailed consideration of the use of vaccines (which do not contain blood) and of serums that are made from blood. For such details, please see that presentation on pages 351, 352.

It acknowledged that the medical profession is increasingly turning from the use of whole blood transfusions. Instead, human blood is being separated into primary components that can be transfused—red cells, white cells, platelets and plasma. On this we said: “We believe that the use of blood as a [life-sustaining] transfusion, or the use of a blood component to accomplish a similar purpose, is obviously in conflict with the Scriptural command to ‘abstain from blood.’ (Acts 15:20).”

What, however, about accepting serum injections to fight against disease, such as are employed for diphtheria, tetanus, viral hepatitis, rabies, hemophilia and Rh incompatibility?

This seems to fall in a different category. Christians believe the amount of a blood derivative which would not be a direct respect for God’s law would be a very small amount. It is possible that this question will have to be decided on an individual basis, with each one to strive to live in the way which is pleasing to the Lord and to be responsive to the guidance which He gives in His Word.—Ps. 119:6.

How concerned should a Christian be about blood in food products?

God said to Noah about his human family: “Every living being which moves will be food for you. As I live, says the Sovereign One, you will be as flesh food to me... I have given you every green plant, herb, and vegetable of the earth as food.” (Gen. 9:2, 3, 4) Thus, no doubt, we want to avoid eating blood even in the originating food before it or other foods to which it was added.

This may call for the example, in some localities, of strangled, or killed by leaving the blood in the local practice, Christ in a common practice, Christ is on occasion, from merchants, but he is not known to sell meat that has been bled properly.

However, the selling or serving of blood in a meat shop, such as the Union Market, is not proper, and these areas have little or no interest in blood. Some of the Isle of Wight may freely eat meat that is served that which is served as is 1 Corinthians 10:25, “I myself eat nothing to meat that had been offered to idols, and the thing that is sold in the market, and I will not eat anything that is sinful and I will not be a part of it.” It is not certain and this is a need for a blood that is to be a need for the blood that is to be a need to be killed in the area of the wild animals also known to be butchered, a butcher shop.

But what about food products that contain blood or serum or plasma proteins?

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This seems to fall into a 'gray area.' Some Christians believe that accepting a small amount of a blood derivative for such a purpose would not be a manifestation of disrespect for God's law; their conscience would permit such. (Compare Luke 8:1-3.) Others, though, feel conscientiously obliged to refuse serums because these contain blood, though only a tiny amount. Hence, we have taken the position that this question must be resolved by each individual on a personal basis. We urge each one to strive to have a clear conscience and to be responsive to God's guidance found in His Word.—Ps. 119:105.

How concerned should a Christian be about blood in food products?

God said to Noah, and thus to the whole human family: "Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you ... only flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat." (Gen. 9:3, 4) Thus, true worshipers should want to avoid eating meat with blood left in it or other foods to which blood has been added.

This may call for a degree of care. For example, in some lands animals usually are strangled, or killed in some other way that leaves the blood in them. Where this is the local practice, Christians usually buy only from merchants, butchers or farmers who are known to sell meat from animals that have been bled properly.

However, federal regulations on the slaughtering of animals in many countries, as for example, in the United States, require that animals be properly bled. Hence, Christians in these areas have little need for concern. They may freely eat meat that is sold in markets or that is served in restaurants. (Compare 1 Corinthians 10:25, 26, where the reference is to meat that had been offered to idols: "Everything that is sold in a meat market keep eating, making no inquiry on account of your conscience; for 'to Jehovah belong the earth and that which fills it.'") However, there may be a need to make inquiry about meat from animals killed locally, such as meat from "wild" animals, whether obtained from a hunter, a butcher shop or a restaurant.

But what about food products that may contain blood or some blood component, such as plasma protein?

Some governments require that producers list the ingredients on the label of processed food. Christians who have checked labels over a period of time may have noted that in their area blood is practically never used in foods. Hence, they may rightly have limited their reading of labels only to such times when there is some reason to believe that blood might have been added to an item.

However, recently the Federal Republic of Germany passed a law allowing meat companies to use, without listing it on a label, up to 2 percent (or, in some cases, 10 percent) dried blood plasma in "wiener, frankfurters and similar products including pate and roulade ... meatballs, meat stuffings, fricassee, ragout, meat in lard, ..." What is the conscientious Christian to do in such cases?

He could make inquiry of the butcher or the producer. It is reported that in response to such inquiries, some producers in one Scandinavian land readily gave assurance that blood is not an ingredient in their processed meats; they do not want to lose business. But, in some places, Witnesses who inquired of butchers or meat producers were given vague or questionable replies. It may be noted that, even if the law permits companies to add some blood without stating it, this does not necessarily mean that all or even most of them do so.

Therefore, Christians, individually, must decide what to do. The consciences of some may move them to avoid anything about which they have serious questions or to make such inquiry as is needed to settle their consciences. (Rom. 14:23) In instances where it does not seem possible to get absolute information through reasonable inquiry, other Christians may conclude: 'Where there is no substantial reason for me to think that blood is present or there is no definite way that I can determine it, I can with a clear conscience "keep eating."' They should, however, consider the conscientious feelings of others, even as Paul counseled.—1 Cor. 10:28-30; Rom. 14:13-21.

True Christians ought not to be indifferent about blood. They should do what they can to avoid a clear violation of God's law. A deep respect for that law is of central importance. By doing all that they reasonably can to "keep themselves ... from blood," God's people manifest appreciation for the sanctity of life and of the blood representing it.—Acts 21:25.