Awake!

SOCIAL SECURITY —HOW SECURE IS IT?

Pages 17-24

IS IT SAFE TO TAKE MEDICINE?

Pages 5-9

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WHO IS THE HEAD OF YOUR HOUSE?

TODAY this is no idle question. Reporting on the remarks of a professor at a seminar on the role of children and parents, the Toronto *Star* said: "There is an alarming increase in the number of 'power drunk children' in North America who dominate and manipulate their parents' lives."

Now, what about your home? Notice that this professor did not say that the parents want it to be so, or that they admit that the children are in control. But if children "dominate and manipulate their parents' lives," who is really head of the house?

For instance, by screaming and by temper tantrums children may get their wishes. No, maybe not every time, but often enough so that they keep doing it. In some families children have virtual veto power over what the parents do, even dictating when the parents come and go.

Whether this is the situation in your home or not, its general prevalence compels every family to give it some thought. Why does this problem develop in the first place? How can it be overcome or prevented in your home, and with what results?

Child Tyrants, Why?

What may lead a child to try to be "head" of the house? A basic reason is that he (or she) is imperfect, just as are adults. The Bible mentions this, saying: "Boyhood's mind is loaded with a pack of folly." (Prov. 22:15, *Knox*) And add to that imperfect inclination some of these factors and influences:

The first step in a child's becoming "head of the family" may be taken when parents try to bribe him into behaving, such as, 'If you are good at the store, I'll buy you some candy.' No, they would not merely be giving him a gift, something that might show him their love and generosity. By this type of bribery they are actually putting their youngster in a position of control, catering to him. Do you think that a child does not sense this?

Many a youngster thus learns how he can control his parents, by a form of blackmail. One boy said, "I get what I want by keeping mother thinking I'll be bad." Yes, he controls her. 'But,' someone might think, 'is he not learning to behave?' On the contrary, this boy added: "Of course, I have to be bad often enough to convince her she is not paying me for nothing." So, who is really in control?

Another factor is the influence of the child's environment. He may see other children bossing their parents, so he tries it. If you are a parent, at the first signs of your child's

efforts in this direction be alert to act with firmness and yet love, thus helping him to see that he is not the head.

In Ulster, Ireland, many children are drawn into rock-throwing gangs that wield considerable power in school and in the neighborhood. This easily spreads to the home; they want to control there too. A recent report on the situation in Ireland said:

> "Some parents seem to be frightened of their children. 'He's more powerful than a man,' said the mother of one 11-year-old boy. 'That's why I took him to see the head doctor. He frightened me.'"

Additionally, a youngster may try to be "boss" in the home because he is confused as to who otherwise is in control. Perhaps his parents argue and scream over what will be done. Father shouts that he is the boss, only to have mother yell back rebelliously and sarcastically. Just where does that leave the child? He may put the friction to use, playing one parent against the other, and thus manipulate things in such a way that the child is, to some degree, the head.

What to Do?

While the factors and problems causing children to usurp headship are many, unquestionably the results are bad. The child is not happy—he suffers and his development is damaged.

> An Israeli report showed: "The power these young despots wield within the family apparently leaves them with anxieties about encountering a harsher reality outside the home. . . . They fear that they will have no one to turn to in a moment of need."

What is the answer, then? It is not some new theory or a recent development by a child psychologist. Basically, it is the application of counsel recorded many years ago in the Bible.

Part of the Creator's counsel is to view a youngster in the family as part of an arrangement in which the father is the assigned head. He is not to be a despot or a harsh boss, but a loving and considerate head of both his wife and his children. (Col. 3:18-21) Obviously, for a child to sense and respect this, the father must shoulder his responsibilities. Also, the mother should regularly manifest her regard for and cooperation with the arrangement.

The value of *both* parents working at this can be appreciated from what occurs when they do not. The book *Between Parent & Child* mentions homes where the father shirks his responsibility and the mother is "the last court of appeal in all matters of importance."

> "The husband in such a home seems to avoid being the head of the house. He openly refers to his wife as 'the boss.' When his children ask him for a decision, his response usually is 'Ask mother.' In such homes, children grow up with little respect or admiration for men. Both boys and girls see father through mother's eyes: a sweet, but 'half-baked' boy, a good-natured blunderer."

In contrast, God's Word advises: "Fathers, do not make your children angry, but bring them up in the discipline and training of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4, translation by C. K. Williams) Yes, the father is the head of the family and he needs to direct and share in the upbringing of his children. Is that so in your family?

The Bible also shows how important is a mother's contribution in the family. Respecting her husband's headship, she can work unitedly with him in directing the children. Proverbs 14:1 says: "The truly wise woman has built up her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands."—Compare Proverbs 1:8; Leviticus 19:3.

Does this mean that a child is given no room for personal development or expression? Not at all. But parents can give him some responsibility and independence in

such a way that he still knows he is not the head. Mother could ask, not, 'What do you want for breakfast?' but, 'We are having cereal today. Which of these three do you want?' So the child is given a measure of independence and choice but at the same time is made aware that he is not the head of the family.

An Essential Ingredient

For children to learn that they are not the head of the house requires discipline. Some parents object to that. And you can be sure that many children do. Still, note the comments of child psychiatrist Wayne Weisner:

> 'Children need discipline in order to become civilized. They even want it. They accept it most readily from parents who are firm, but always fair. Both parents must be in total agreement on what the discipline should be, otherwise the child's radar picks up the disagreement, and an implicit invitation to disobey.'

Of course, such sentiments are mere echoes of what God long ago recorded as to the best course for parents: "Correction and discipline are good for children. If a child has his own way, he will make his mother ashamed of him."—Prov. 29:15, *Today's English Version.*

Admittedly, there are many homes where the children are the head, dictating to and controlling their parents. But those homes are not happy. The parents are not happy. The children are not happy, nor will they be. The Word of God clearly shows that the greatest success and happiness result when a loving father exercises headship in conjunction with a respectful, cooperative wife. This arrangement provides for the secure climate and firm guidance with which children best develop into balanced, mature adults.

IS IT SAFE TO TAKE MEDICINE?

IF YOU looked in the medicine cabinet of a typical affluent home, what would you see? Often it is so stuffed with remedies that there is hardly room for a toothbrush. It seems to be a human weakness to want to take medicine. In fact, the late noted Canadian physician, Sir William Osler, once mused that "the desire to take medicine is perhaps the greatest feature which distinguishes man from animals."

In the United States, some $10 billion a year is spent for drugs to relieve various ailments. Doctors write some 2.4 billion prescriptions annually for medicines. And the use of prescription drugs is predicted to keep on increasing at the rate of 9.5 percent a year. Why?

One reason is that ever more effective medicines are being developed to combat many diseases. But largely responsible are the advertising

efforts of pharmaceutical manufacturers. Annually they spend some $800,000,000 to push their products. Thus there are more than 100,000 medications on the market, according to an estimate of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The nonprescription drug most widely used is aspirin, with Americans consuming upward of 15,000 tons of it a year!

But does it make good sense to use medicines so freely? Is there danger involved in their use?

Sobering Considerations

That the lives of many persons with serious infectious diseases have been saved by such modern-day drugs as penicillin is well known. But for some persons these medicines are a two-edged sword, since they may also cause harmful side effects, even death. Medical literature has often acknowledged the dangers involved, sometimes in a very impressive way.

This is done in the Life Science Library book *Drugs,* coauthored by Walter Modell, professor of pharmacology at the Cornell University Medical College in New York city. No doubt in a desire to emphasize the paradoxical nature of medicines, the first chapter of this volume is entitled "Poisons That Save Lives." There we read in its early paragraphs:

> "All drugs are poisons, and all poisons are drugs. It is no accident that the words 'poison' and 'potion' come from the same root, or that the Greek word *pharmakon,* which we find rooted in our own words 'pharmacy' and 'pharmacology,' originally meant both a healing draught and a deadly one.
>
> "In the broadest sense, a drug—or a poison—is any chemical that can effect an alteration in the function or structure of living tissue. . . . As commonly used, of course, the word 'drugs' implies *medicinal* chemicals—those substances that, in carefully regulated doses, produce desirable changes in the human body, counteracting disease or relieving distress."

It has often been termed "miraculous" how carefully regulated doses of modern drugs have saved patients. There is little question that there are untold thousands of persons alive today who would otherwise die if denied their so-called "wonder drugs." Yet Professor Modell put matters in balance, explaining:

> "Even the most beneficial drugs notoriously possess adverse effects. Some experts estimate that perhaps one American hospital patient in 20 lands in the hospital as a result of reactions to drugs. The best one can say of any drug is that its beneficial effects outweigh its harmful ones—for most patients, most of the time."

Do the Benefits Outweigh the Harm?

Doctors, by and large, will probably say that the benefits of medicinal drugs do outweigh their harm. They may point to their own individual medical experience—their own observation—where hundreds have been benefited by drugs and only a few adversely affected. But certain medical authorities are beginning to question such a conclusion.

For example, consider the use of antibiotics. In 1943 the first antibiotic, penicillin G, was marketed in the United States. Since then, antibiotics have become the most commonly prescribed class of drugs, with at least 8,000,000,000 doses being certified for use in 1972 by the Food and Drug Administration! In view of such massive use, some doctors are evidently overprescribing and misprescribing antibiotics. Regarding this, the lead article in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (*JAMA*) of March 4, 1974, entitled "This Is Medical Progress?", concluded:

"We believe it is appropriate to pose two questions, even though it may be impossible to develop the data sufficient to answer them: (1) Have we reached the point where the enormous use of antibiotics is producing as much harm as

good? (2) Are the risks beginning to outweigh the benefits?"

These are considered valid questions by certain medical men who have been alarmed by the increasing evidence of harm being done to many patients by antibiotics.

Illustrating the Need for Caution

Doctors have observed, for example, that the overuse of antibiotics has been a factor in the development of resistant strains of bacteria. According to figures cited in the above-mentioned *JAMA* article, these bacteria have multiplied to the point where it is possible that they may be causing up to 100,000 deaths a year in American hospitals!

The two doctors who presented this evidence in *JAMA* singled out chloramphenicol as a particularly dangerous antibiotic that may produce aplastic anemia as a serious side effect. They explained: "The problem of aplastic anemia has been well documented; this fatal reaction occurs about once in approximately 60,000 to 80,000 doses." With nearly four million patients a year reportedly being given chloramphenicol, it is apparently responsible for scores of deaths annually.

Regarding these deaths, the *JAMA* article laments: "A large majority of these usually fatal reactions occurred in patients who received chloramphenicol for either trivial infections, undocumented infections, or infections for which a safer and as effective alternate antibiotic could have been selected."

Surely there is need for caution in the use of such drugs as chloramphenicol. Most physicians are well aware of the dangers of these drugs, reserving them for certain life-threatening conditions. Yet evidently some doctors are either uninformed about the dangers, or they use very poor judgment in prescribing them.

But there is probably a more important reason why chloramphenicol is still used so frequently. The former head of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration claimed that its manufacturers "have successfully promoted Chloromycetin [trade name for chloramphenicol] contrary to the best advice of the medical profession."

Yet unwarranted claims for drugs are common. Thus one government agency found that, of 16,000 over-the-counter drugs it tested, 60 percent violated the law by claiming more for the preparation than it was able to do. The National Academy of Science reviewed 4,349 prescription and nonprescription drugs that were promoted for the treatment of 1,600 different conditions. It found that, of 1,610 claims made for the products, only 19 percent could be substantiated. Another survey showed that, of 1,859 drugs tested, only 301, or less than 17 percent, were effective for all the conditions for which they were promoted.

It is a big job to try to prevent the marketing of medicines that can harm people more than they help them. Thus about fifteen years ago a so-called "perfect sleeping pill" containing the drug thalidomide was widely used in many lands. However, a pharmacologist in the employ of the United States government held up its approval pending clarification of various suspicions she had regarding it. It was a good thing, since shortly thereafter it was discovered that thousands of babies born to women who had taken thalidomide during pregnancy were horribly deformed.

This further illustrates the need for caution in taking medicines. For even though no bad side effects may be experienced immediately—or even for days or weeks—they can be realized months or even years later. "In medicine today, we are using many stronger drugs and all kinds of esoteric chemicals and machines," observes Dr. Eugene Saenger, professor of radiology

at the University of Cincinnati. His conclusion: "There are certain to be some long-term consequences."

The fact is, some of these long-term consequences have only lately begun to be experienced.

A Calculated Risk

For example, between 1945 and 1971 the drug called diethylstilbestrol (DES) was commonly prescribed for pregnant women to prevent miscarriages. Although some miscarriages were probably prevented, what have been the delayed results? A high incidence of vaginal cancers in the teen-age daughters of the mothers who took this drug has resulted! Thus, a Los Angeles, California, specialist in gynecologic tumors advises: "Daughters of women who were given DES should be examined regularly from their 13th birthday on."

Similarly, the London *Daily Mail* of March 7, 1974, reported: "Sales over the counter of one of the most widely used pain-killers are to be banned following evidence that the drug can cause kidney damage. . . . In Britain it is estimated that up to 500 people have died each year from kidney failure directly attributable to excessive dependence on phenacetin compounds."

Also, a study of drugs that are commonly taken orally to control diabetes indicates that they may cause 10,000 to 15,000 deaths a year due to heart disease. This study, which was reported in the *JAMA* of February 10, 1975, indicates that the death rate from heart and related diseases was twice as high among diabetics taking these drugs as it was among diabetics treated either by insulin injection or by diet control.

Does this mean that drugs should be avoided altogether? No. They have relieved the suffering of tens of millions, and have saved perhaps millions of lives. How thankful such persons can be for them! The risk involved in taking them is often warranted. There are, no doubt, many thousands of patients with heart disease who would die within weeks if they failed to take digitalis. In fact, even to alter a carefully regulated dose could be hazardous. Yes, digitalis is a "poison," but when used wisely and under expert supervision, it has proved to be a real lifesaver.

A diabetic, too, is probably more likely to die from his disease if he does not take medicine than he is to die from the heart disease his medicine allegedly may cause. Similarly, one may accept the "risk" of taking even aspirin in preference to the discomfort and inconvenience of a headache. But the point to remember is that taking medicine is a calculated risk—it is a two-edged sword.

How are you to know, then, whether to take a medicine or not? For this you are largely dependent on the advice of a physician. As a protection to you, powerful drugs can be obtained only on a doctor's advice and prescription. Since his judgment can affect your health, and perhaps whether you live or die, you will do well to respect his judgment. But, for the same reasons, it is wise to ascertain carefully his qualifications. Is he conscientious as well as knowledgeable? Does he really have your welfare at heart? In certain cases you may want also to consult another physician as to whether the use of a certain drug is warranted.

Patients Often to Blame

The fact is, however, that patients themselves are often to blame for the overuse and misuse of drugs. Many of them feel cheated if the doctor does not prescribe some medicine or give them an injection. Dr. Calvin M. Kunin writes in the *JAMA:* "Patient pressure is one of the

most important factors that leads physicians to overprescribe in office practice. This is by no means subtle and often comes from the most articulate and best educated people including health professionals. Visualize the telephone calls to a busy physician requesting and sometimes even demanding that an antibiotic be prescribed."

Describing the problems, one surgeon and practitioner wrote: "When a man comes in to see me with a low backache that he acquired while cleaning out his basement, I feel like saying, 'Look, take your money and run.'" What the person needs is some heat and rest, and perhaps aspirin to kill the pain. But since this advice would displease the man, the doctor gives him what he wants. He makes a "big deal" out of it—the patient pays $10 for an office call, $20 for an X ray, $5 for some medicine and $3 for a diathermy treatment. "The man goes home [satisfied but] thirty-eight dollars poorer and physically no better."

Need to Exercise Common Sense

The foregoing indicates the need of common sense in the use of all types of medicines. It only makes sense, for example, not to use powerful drugs when weaker ones will serve, for the more powerful the drug, the more likely the danger of side effects. Thus, after making a big ado about "wonder drugs" in the treatment of arthritis, it was found that the old standby, aspirin, much of the time served as well, if not even better, than these "wonder drugs." So do not be disappointed if your physician advises *aspirin* instead of some expensive prescription drug, which is potentially more dangerous than aspirin.

Common sense when going to the medicine cabinet would also indicate not resorting to drugs for every little discomfort. A case in point is aspirin. As already indicated, it has its uses. But excessive use can cause a variety of disorders, such as bleeding, especially of the stomach. If there is any bleeding situation, such as menstruation, hemorrhoids, or an ulcer, aspirin may only make it worse. Aspirin especially should be avoided by pregnant women, since it is believed that it may damage the developing fetus.

It is noteworthy that habitual users of over-the-counter drugs for killing pain have been found to be more likely to have anemia, ulcers, high blood pressure, depression or anxiety states. Especially singled out for severe criticism by stomach specialists is Alka-Seltzer. Would it be alright to use it occasionally? Yes. Regularly? No.

And since all drugs have potential side effects, common sense would indicate not using or resorting to medicines if other remedies will serve. An instance where this applies is in constipation. For many, a laxative is an occasional necessary evil. But continual use can be harmful so that one is wise to give thought to practical nonmedical measures—the development of good bowel habits, proper diet and regular exercise. According to one well-known physician, these practical measures will serve for 95 percent of the people troubled with constipation and who therefore can treat it "with a minimum of medicine and a maximum of common sense."

It is clearly evident, then, that there is a real need to exercise caution and to use common sense when it comes to taking medicines. They can be beneficial, even lifesaving; but remember, too, they can possibly cause harm. The certain, lasting remedy for human ills will be realized only when, in God's righteous new order, Jesus Christ exercises his power to heal all human infirmities.—2 Pet. 3:13; Matt. 15:30, 31; Rev. 21:3, 4.

East Berlin and THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

By "Awake!" correspondent in West Germany

EAST BERLIN—What does mention of it bring to your mind? Perhaps you think merely of a modern European state under Communist domination where atheism predominates.

Did you realize, though, that East Berlin contains a wealth of information about the ancient Near East, some of it corroborating parts of the Bible? These materials are located in the famous Pergamum Museum, which ranks third, next to the British Museum and the Louvre, in collections from the ancient Near East.

Would you enjoy learning about some of this museum's storehouse of treasures? Let us begin with materials from Pergamum itself.

Finds from Ancient Pergamum

This museum contains a reconstruction of an altar to Zeus known as "the Pergamum altar." The altar of burnt offering itself is located in an enclosure atop an "altar building." To reach the altar one must ascend a 65-foot-wide stairway of 24 steps, as if one were approaching a throne room. On either side of the stairway are stone reliefs engraved with mythological figures. But why is this relic of ancient pagan worship of interest today?

Dr. Elizabeth Rode, who directed the work of rebuilding it, comments in *Pergamon, Burgberg und Altar* (Pergamum, Castle Mound and Altar): "It is believed that the oldest written testimony about the altar can be found in the words of the evangelist John." What "words" of the apostle John did this author have in mind?

Evidently she was thinking of what appears in the Bible at Revelation 2:12, 13: "And to the angel of the congregation in Pergamum write: '. . . I know where you are dwelling, that is, where the throne of Satan is; and yet you keep on holding fast my name, and you did not deny your faith in me even in the days of Antipas, my witness, the faithful one, who was killed by your side, where Satan is dwelling.'"

Was Pergamum's throne altar to Zeus the reason why the Scriptures say that "the throne of Satan" was at Pergamum? Dr. Rode continues:

> "Sad to say the question goes unanswered as to whether early Christianity considered the 'Throne of Satan' to be this old altar of the gods which is rooted in tradition, or whether this expression was used with reference to the honored Augustus altar located in Pergamum, but hated by the Christians, because they were here forced to sacrifice to Caesar."

Pergamum's "castle mound" is another

Reconstruction of a monument containing an altar to Zeus, located in the Pergamum Museum, East Berlin

interesting item. A look at its restoration here reveals that worship of the State was a prominent feature of this ancient city. For instance, the Athena national sanctuary contains a statue of Pergamum's King Attalus I. An inscription indicates that this sanctuary too contained an altar. The castle mound also features a temple begun by the Roman emperor Trajan and completed by his successor Hadrian. Both were worshiped there. And there is another temple in this location, an Ionic one with a theater terrace that is dedicated to Caesar Caracalla (Marcus Aurelius Antonius).

The powerful grip of pagan religion on ancient Pergamum is further evident in the hall where sculptures are displayed. There is one of Aesculapius, god of medicine, who was worshiped by means of a living snake kept in a temple. Another sculpture displays Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and sensuousness, sitting on a turtle. There are also the great "mother goddess," Meter, the Egyptian Isis and many other gods, Greek and Roman, as well as ones from Asia Minor. Indeed, Christians at Pergamum were under pressure to 'deny their faith in Jesus Christ.'

A Look at Babylon

Another feature of the Pergamum Museum is the restoration of Babylon's "Procession Street," built by Nebuchadnezzar II for the god Marduk. A cobblestone taken from it bears the inscription: "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, Son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon am I. The Babel street I have paved for the procession of the great Lord Marduk with Shadu-cobblestones."

Picture yourself walking along this passageway to the Ishtar Gate. On each side of you tower massive fortress walls. Can you imagine how difficult it would have been for enemy forces to enter Babylon through this street? Professor R. Koldewey, who directed excavations at Babylon, explains in *Das wieder Erstehende Babylon* (Babylon Rises Again):

> "When the defenders were on the wall the street became a deathtrap for any intruder. This impression of horror and shock, which the walls as such made upon the intruder, and even exerted upon the peaceful newcomer, was substantially augmented by the impressive decoration of long rows of lions striding toward the stranger. These were of glazed enamel colors in flat relief on the brick walls."

Toward the end of Procession Street is a full-size reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate, another impressive reminder of ancient Babylon. This brick structure, containing an arched entranceway straddled by two huge towers, stands some fifty feet high. The sides of the archway and the towers are adorned with an interesting pattern in which rows of bulls alternate with rows of a "serpent dragon." The latter appears with the head of a serpent, a lionlike body and hind feet of an eagle. Ishtar, whose name this gate bears, was the goddess of sex and fertility and was worshiped in Uruk as mother-goddess and queen of the heavens.

Musing about processions that had taken place on Babylon's Procession Street, archaeologist Koldewey made an interesting comparison: 'I once saw appear in the portal of the cathedral at Syrakus (a city on the island of Sicily) a larger than life-size silver image of Mary, loaded with dedication gifts, rings, gems, gold and silver, being carried by 40 men on a litter high above the heads of the swarming crowds. In a festive parade accompanied by noisy music and the fervent praying crowds it was brought to the Garden of Latomien. Similarly I can imagine a pro-

cession bringing the god Marduk on his triumphal march along the procession street through Babylon.'

Confirmation of a Bible Account

Work at reconstructing these treasures turned up some interesting corroboration of the following Bible account about Jehoiachin, one of the kings of ancient Israel:

> "[Nebuchadnezzar] took Jehoiachin into exile to Babylon . . . And it came about in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin the king of Judah . . . that Evil-merodach the king of Babylon, in the year of his becoming king, raised up the head of Jehoiachin the king of Judah out of the house of detention . . . And he took off his prison garments; and he ate bread constantly before him all the days of his life. As for his allowance, an allowance was constantly given him from the king, daily as due, all the days of his life."—2 Ki. 24:15; 25:27-30.

During efforts to assemble and rebuild the vast collection of ancient Near Eastern relics, some three hundred cuneiform tablets were discovered. These had been in buildings next to Nebuchadnezzar's palace. Most of them concerned merely deliveries or distributions of foodstuffs. Interestingly, though, some of these tablets contained the name Jehoiachin. As to the value of this discovery, Hans Bartke comments in the book *Bibel, Spaten Und Geschichte* (Bible, Spade and History):

> "These tablets are not of great importance nor do they give much information. But chiefly they certify that Jehoiachin was actually in Babel, lived in the King's palace and received his portion of foodstuffs. . . . these tablets represent a corroboration of the Biblical report. They are therefore suited to strengthen confidence in the Biblical record."

Space does not permit a more extensive investigation here of the Pergamum Museum's collection of relics. However, in recent years governmental agreements have made it easier for residents of Western countries to enter East Berlin. Are you planning a trip to Germany soon? If so, you may find it to be well worth your while to visit this museum of East Berlin and peruse its treasures from the ancient Near East.

THE BREAD We Eat

IN A *ristorante* in Buenos Aires, Argentina, hungry patrons watch as a *porteño* of Italian ancestry sends a disk whirling into the air and catches it, repeating the performance over and over to make a pizza. In Lebanon a housewife flips a similar disk from forearm to forearm, each time rotating it to maintain its circle. In Mexico a young woman pats out a *tortilla* disk between her palms, much as

does her counterpart in distant India.

Still differently, a cook in Ethiopia, when making *injera,* pours a ring of soupy liquid on a griddle, and with a counterclockwise movement fills it in with ever smaller circles spilling from a ladling tin. Yet, a cook in Europe or in the Americas will punch down a spongy mass and watch it "rise" again. In China a housewife will work and "rest" a similar glob.

There are many different approaches in fashioning the hundreds of forms in which our daily bread appears.

Some of these aforementioned breads, even though they end up being flat, do contain leavening or "lightening" agents, substances that will make them *rise.* However, the yeast is especially effective in raising dough that contains wheat flour.

The Stuff Called Gluten

What gives wheat flour this distinction? The amount of gluten that it contains. Gluten is described in the dictionary in these words: "A tenacious tough elastic protein substance . . . that gives to dough cohesiveness and ability to hold gases." Those words supply the very epitome and heart of what gluten is and does; yet a whole marvelous God-given chemistry goes on unseen in it and in the dough beneath our hands.

I first met gluten on the field of battle. That was what my kitchen had become when, as a bride, I first attempted to make bread. I held what must have been the rather outstanding distinction of having produced leavened loaves that had decreased in size rather than increased. Thus they had compacted into something that Egyptian pharaohs would have welcomed had they been seeking *rye* bricks!

Subsequent ventures were not that disastrous, but fell short of the quality or dependability that is needed when valuable ingredients are put to work. My problems did not disappear until I found that baking bread was like learning a second language. Professional bakers may quail at my words when I say that; just as you, when you learn a language, must at some point stop translating and think in the new language, so with bread you must put aside measured quantities and *think* texture. Ingredients vary from one place to another, and, most importantly, moisture content in flour, as well as chemical structure, varies so greatly that to measure by volume can be catastrophic.

For instance, use American ingredients and follow an unaltered French bread recipe and you may produce a product that tastes nothing at all like the delicious loaves one seeks out in the city along the Seine. The famous chef Julia Child and her companion Simone Beck take eleven pages to give a recipe for making French bread adjusted to U.S. flour and leavenings. An additional six pages, making seventeen pages in all, are needed to explain it in its various forms! All of this to produce a product that has FOUR ingredients, one of which is water! Yet, the chemistry is so delicately balanced that to do other than follow these instructions is to miss the mark of realizing the flavor and texture of the product that is famous from Normandy to Provence.

Admittedly, careful measuring by weight can produce superb subtleties of texture and flavor, but most of us need a way to make an everyday nutritious loaf of bread that tastes good, that keeps reasonably well and that can be achieved dependably. One word of caution: You can make this bread fairly rapidly, but, as Julia Child warns about yeast products, you miss something if you do not let the flavor of your yeast develop. So, whenever possible,

I start my bread at least the day before I wish to bake it, and I do all the rising of it at as cool a temperature as time and materials permit.

At this point we have before us flour, yeast, sugar, salt, one can of milk, and a little vegetable oil or melted butter. For the bread we are going to make, that is all that we need. If sugar is not on hand, or oil is not available, you can do without them. In dire circumstances you can even do without the salt. It won't taste as good, but it will nourish you. The absolute essentials are the flour, the yeast, the can of milk or another liquid—even water. But now, let's make this bread under optimum circumstances.

Begin with the Yeast

I actually don't measure, and the object of this recipe is to teach you *not* to; but since you aren't really in my kitchen and there is a difference between a teaspoon and a gallon, I shall speak in approximates so you will have a "ball park" impression of amounts. Take about a cup of warm water, not hot; put about one teaspoon of sugar into it and a packet of dry yeast or a cake of yeast; dissolve it.

As we go along in this recipe we're going to talk about *why* we are doing things. Well, you may not know it, but the moment you introduce that yeast to water, you have planted a garden. Yes, and your teaspoon of sugar was "fertilizer" for it. As you look at this beige "soup" that you've created, you are actually looking at a microscopic botanical explosion beyond the range of your vision. Now, add enough flour to thicken your soup. You have just given your yeast something really substantial to feed upon, and therefore to multiply it greatly. But you have also released another invisible drama!

The marriage of gluten and yeast has begun. For just as the water awakened the yeast to frenzied life and reproduction, so the water releases the gluten from the flour and it begins to develop in lengthening microscopic threads, a process that you can accelerate by stirring. And it is illustratively, though not technically, the beginning of a symbiotic relationship. What is symbiosis? It is a living together of two dissimilar things by means of an interdependence.

Well, let's set this aside in a place that is not too warm, not too cold. If you want, this little "garden" can go on for days, just so long as you "feed and water" it. You can allow it to sour, or you can use buttermilk as your liquid, and start it as the long-running starter for sourdough.*

If it is difficult to obtain yeast where you live, then you must "grow" a large amount of this if you are going to be baking bread daily. So add liquid and flour ("feed" it) over a period of time until you have enough. You should use at least a cup of what you have grown here if you wish to leave some for future use, but we will proceed on the basis that we're doing this just once. Sometimes in the first fifteen minutes you will see bubbles, indicating that your yeast is alive and all of what we have been talking about is going on. If you would like not to be bothered with this for several hours, or you would like to go to bed, just stir in 1 to 1 1/2 cups of flour. If it is any stiffer than "gluey," then add some water. At this point it is almost impossible to do anything to hurt it except to get it too warm or to kill it with an excess of salt. For that reason I've not told you to put in salt.

* For more details, see *Awake!*, September 8, 1968.

Look! The Dough Begins to Grow

You will notice that, as time passes, the dough increases in size. It is because both of your ingredients are growing. The gluten has grown into a marvelous cellular network that entraps the natural by-product of living organisms. YOU are alive, and the by-product of your lungs is carbon dioxide. It is the by-product of activated yeast too! So, as the tendrils of gluten slither outward and upward, intertwining, they encapsulate the gas from the living yeast.

After it has climbed the sides of your bowl to double itself, stir it down, add enough flour to make it workable and begin that age-old work of bakers the world over. Knead it. It will come naturally. Put the real action into the heel of your hand, bringing the dough forward toward you with your fingers, and rhythmically pushing it down and away, moving the mass around circularly as you do it. Again, what is going on *inside?* You are stimulating the activity of the gluten by aiding in the stringing out and the lengthening of the gluten threads. Thus, you are toughening it, much as you might tighten the weave of a tapestry by introducing more weft threads across the warp.

In making some kinds of Chinese bread, or *man t'ou,* a Chinese housewife too uses yeast, making use of the power inside her dough. But in her other kinds of *man t'ou* products her mother will have taught her to let the dough "rest." Why? Chinese cookery is stovetop. So Chinese bread is steamed, including *man t'ou.* She wants her steamed bread to be tender. As she lets the dough "rest," the tendrils of gluten relax, wither and recede. Her "dragon" sleeps. Quickly, deftly she will form bits of her quiescent dough into flower-shaped rolls and put them on her steaming rack. In minutes, out will come something between a Western fluffy dumpling and bread. Delicious!

This same desire not to stimulate the gluten is what prompts the warning, "Handle lightly," in recipes for baking-powder biscuits or scones. Bakers of these touch them lightly with fork or fingers, just enough to bring the ingredients together. The desire here is to have a baked product that is both fluffy and "short," tender to the point of almost coming apart.

More Watching and Working

Let's look again at our mixture of yeast and flour and sugar. After we have done some kneading, why don't we just put all the rest of our ingredients in? Pour in a standard 13-fluid-ounce can of evaporated milk. You can mix one teaspoon of salt in this milk first, or mix it in your dry flour—ABOUT 4 more cups. It could be as little as 3 1/2 cups or as much as 5 cups. At this point you may want to add 3 tablespoons of oil or *cooled* melted butter. This will improve the keeping quality of the baked bread. A little more won't hurt, nor will its total absence. But notice, the only standard measure you have here is the milk. Add the flour slowly until you begin to get a ball. Keep on adding. Eventually it will stick together enough to be removed from the bowl to a floured breadboard. Now work your dough, kneading it, adding flour as you go, working it in—and keep *thinking* about what is happening to the gluten in there. It will encourage you not to quit too soon. (Egyptian rye bricks. Remember?)

Actually, all recipes for making bread require you to use judgment. Look at them, don't they say something about

"until smooth and elastic"? That's the clue. *Look* at your dough. It will have a wet, sticky appearance even after you have gotten all the flour into the mass that you can. But it will *change* at some point after that, simply from the action of your hands as you press it against the breadboard. The outer surface *will* become smooth, and you will feel the elasticity develop. The dough will no longer open to be gluey inside. If you were to pull it apart, it would be the same inside as out, possessed of a oneness, a cohesiveness so that, when you stretch it, it will resist. From the moment you recognize this quality, *from that day forward,* you can make this bread . . . without measuring. The key to your bread is *not* in your knowing how much specifically of any one thing you put in it; but in your recognizing when it has reached this stage. And *this* knowledge overcomes the variabilities in the ingredients from one time to another or one place to another.

Pour a little oil in your bowl or grease it, pick up your dough and roll it around in the bowl. This will coat the doughball with oil. Lightly cover the bowl with a towel. Leave it to double. Punch down, work it a little and now put it into two greased loaf pans. Have the dough touch the ends. It will give it purchase to help it to climb. Oil the top and set aside to double.

Having found your basic dependable "non-recipe," you may want to branch out—but however far your branches reach, always remember that you are "gardening" and "weaving" when you are making bread! The pizza maker when tossing the dough disk, though he does it partly for showmanship, is weaving a tough platter with gluten threads for what he will serve up upon it. The Lebanese lady is doing much the same thing.

The Moment of Success and Satisfaction

But now we come to the moment when you first share the kitchen miracle of bread with your family. No, this is not when you bring it to the table. It is when you put it into the oven at 350 degrees Fahrenheit, and it first perfumes your kitchen. It is an aroma that touches the deepest reservoir of the physical sense of well-being. Do you want a shining crust? Butter the top. Do you want a thick heavy crust to crunch? Then see to it that a pan of water accompanies your bread into the oven. Set the pan of water on the floor of the oven, and its steam will seal your bread in a protective crust. Forty or fifty minutes later the bread should be done. Turn it out of its pans, rap it on the bottom, and if it sounds hollow it is done.

So versatile are breads that some are made to rise *under* water. Some, such as bagels, are boiled two minutes before being baked! Like *injera,* the bread of Ethiopia, some part of it can even be precooked and then used to make the batter. You can do almost anything with bread, except say "No, thank you" when, hot from the oven or fire, it is offered to you. So, whether your favorite is pizza, *piti* (Syrian or Arabic "pocket bread"), *chapati, tortilla, injera* or *man t'ou,* biscuits or scones or Norwegian *flatbrød*—try making your own bread!—*Contributed.*

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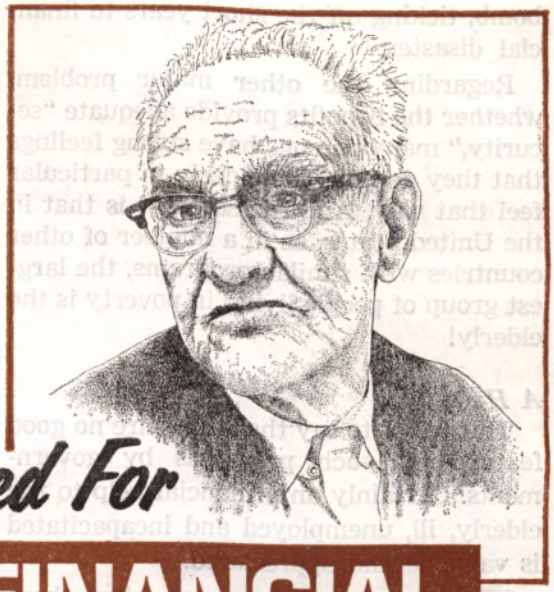
The Need For FINANCIAL SECURITY



ALL people want financial security, regardless of how old they are. But especially when persons are advanced in years does the need for such security become more urgent. They are at the time in life when they have to work less, or even retire. But they still want to live in reasonable comfort and dignity.

To assist the elderly, and others, many countries throughout the world have "social security" systems. These are usually plans for providing benefits such as pensions for elderly persons, income for the disabled or unemployed, and medical care for those who cannot afford it.

One of the largest social security systems in the world is in the United States. Since that country is a main foundation of the Western world's economy, what happens to its social and financial affairs is of great interest elsewhere.

People throughout the world might expect that the United States, with all its wealth and resources, certainly would have an adequate system for taking care of needy persons. This would include reasonable security for the elderly who retire after a lifetime of hard work.

However, is this the case? Many authorities are now saying, No. They claim that there are serious and growing problems, as well as great concern over the nation's social security system.

Basic Problems

Among the problems related to social security are two basic ones: (1) How to pay the growing costs for the increasing number of persons eligible for benefits; (2) The fact that the benefits by themselves do not provide reasonable security for many, particularly the elderly.

Some economists say that the problems are not severe. But others say that they are genuinely "alarmed" at the growing difficulties. Indeed, a headline in a Detroit newspaper asked: "Social Security Now a Fraud?" The article suggested that it was.

The first major problem, how to finance the program, is now coming into clearer focus. It is obvious that the present means of financing the benefits are becoming inadequate. Thus, *U.S. News & World Report* stated:

> "The huge social security system for the aged, their dependents and survivors, and the disabled is in serious trouble. . . .
> "Simply put, the problem is that benefit costs have raced ahead of income."

The publication also noted that by the early 1980's, "the key retirement and survivors part of the system will be bankrupt." Similarly, the American Institute for Economic Research declared: "The Social Security Act has become a time

bomb, ticking off the short years to financial disaster."

Regarding the other major problem, whether the benefits provide adequate "security," many persons have strong feelings that they do not. The elderly in particular feel that way. And the sad fact is that in the United States, as in a number of other countries with similar programs, the largest group of people living in poverty is the elderly!

A Help

This is not to say that there are no good features of such programs by governments. Certainly any financial help to the elderly, ill, unemployed and incapacitated is valuable and appreciated.

Why, it was not long ago when there was no assistance at all by government. Only within this century, indeed, within just the past few decades, have government payments for the elderly and others in need become widespread in most countries. However, many societies in times past were rural and lived off the land. Usually, families took care of their own elderly folks, and friends would help.

But with the onset of the industrial age, workers left the farms by the millions and crowded into cities, where the factories were located. Especially was this the case in Europe and North America. In the cities families and relatives tended not to be as close as before. Friendships were more difficult to cultivate. So relatives and friends were not as likely, or able, to help to care for the needs of the elderly as when they all lived as closer-knit units in a rural society.

But as the industrial labor force grew in strength, it was able to bargain for more benefits. Gradually governments were pressured to help.

Among the first industrial nations to put into operation some sort of social security arrangement was Germany. Accident insurance was introduced there in 1883, and health insurance the next year. Compulsory social security assistance came in 1891.

The need for government help became far more apparent after the Great Depression of the 1930's. Then millions of people were thrown out of work in all the industrial lands. For instance, the book *Social Security in Canada* says of that land: "The widespread unemployment during the depression of the 1930's forced the development of a number of unemployment assistance measures."

In the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law in 1935. At first, only retirement benefits were provided. Later, survivor benefits were added. Then the program was broadened to include disability and unemployment benefits.

In 1975 more than thirty million individual Americans received regular monthly cash payments from the government for the old age, disability and survivors provisions of the act. More than ten million received unemployment benefits in the recent recession, and millions of others got help for medical bills, for dependent children and for other reasons.

But in most lands the largest element in social security payments are those made to elderly retired people. Usually, the retirement age is about sixty-five, with reduced benefits if one chooses to collect earlier, for instance, in the United States, at the age of sixty-two.

How are such payments under social security financed? What are the benefits? Are they enough for one to live decently? And is the American system really in trouble?

WHO PAYS FOR "SOCIAL SECURITY"?

WHO pays for the benefits that go to people in need? What kind of burden is this placing on those who have to pay?

In some lands the benefits, such as pensions for elderly people, are paid directly out of government funds. In the Soviet Union and China the entire amount is financed by the place where a person has worked, or by supplementary payments from the government.

Generally, though, the term "social security" is attached to programs where both the worker and the employer pay into the arrangement. For example, the system in the United States requires that part of the salary of an employee be deducted from each paycheck. During 1975 this tax rate for social security alone was 5.85 percent, which included coverage for medical benefits. The employer was also required to pay 5.85 percent.

Thus, a worker who paid this 5.85-percent tax on an income of $5,000 a year had $292.50 deducted from his paychecks. And his employer had to contribute another $292.50 of the company's funds to the program.

However, not all of a person's income is taxed for social security. In 1975 this special tax was paid up to $14,100 of an employee's annual income. Income beyond that was not taxed for this specific purpose.

Growing Burden?

Over the decades, some people have come to regard these payments as an evergrowing burden. They feel that the tax, especially for low-income families, is really beginning to hurt.

When social security was first introduced in the United States, the employee had to pay only 1 percent of his salary for this tax. The employer added another 1 percent. But in 1975 the rate was nearly six times as much.

Not only has the tax rate jumped nearly sixfold, but the amount subject to the tax has risen dramatically too. At first, the maximum amount of income that could be taxed for social security was $3,000 a year. But that figure kept rising, reaching $14,100 a year in 1975. And late in 1975 the government announced that during 1976 the income taxable for social security would rise to $15,300.

Thus there has been a double-barreled rise—in the percent of income contributed, and also on a larger amount of the income. How huge this kind of tax rise has become can be seen by making a comparison: 1 percent of the $3,000 at the start was only $30; but 5.85 percent of the $14,100 in 1975 was $824.85, and in 1976 it is scheduled to be $895.05. That represents a gigantic increase in the maximum deductions from one's paychecks—about thirty times as large as when the program began. This is far greater than any cost-

of-living increase in that same period due to inflation.

A main reason why some regard this as a growing tax burden is that it is in addition to all the other taxes a person has to pay. And these, too, have been increasing over the years. City sales taxes, once nonexistent, have gone up significantly, now 6 to 8 percent in some places. There are state income taxes today where there were none years ago. Property taxes have also risen. And then there is the federal income tax. Now American workers are so heavily taxed that many of them pay more than one third of their income for these various taxes.

Other countries have also seen similar increases in social security taxes. In West Germany, during 1975, the average monthly payment was 9 percent apiece from employee and employer alike on a maximum amount of 33,600 Deutsche Marks a year (about $13,400). If an employee earned less than 280 D.M. a month (about $120), then the employer was required to pay the entire 18 percent. Regarding that nation's system, *U.S. News & World Report* said:

> "West Germany's social-security system, already so costly some managers say it hampers their investment planning, will be even more expensive next year.
>
> "The Government has decreed a 50 per cent increase in employer and employe payments to Bonn's unemployment-insurance fund. . . .
>
> "To the average German industrial worker, this means a personal contribution of almost $130 a month. His employer hands over a matching $130 and bears some other social-security-type items. . . .
>
> "Social-security costs have soared recently—from some 128 million dollars annually for one group of German firms to 240 million three years later.
>
> "That's why executives say the room for investment maneuver is vanishing."

Cutting into Savings

In recent times, taxes and the cost of living have increased faster than the real income of people. So, many now are having great difficulty saving money for their old age.

Americans find that, on the average, they are not able to save much more than they did thirty years ago. And, of course, due to inflation the money saved is now worth far less, indeed, only a fraction of what it used to be. In view of this, the rising social security tax takes a bigger bite out of those savings. The Detroit *News* observed:

> "In 1942 the average American household, after all tax deductions and living expenses were paid, could afford to put $767 in the bank. During that year, for every $100 that Americans could afford to save, $3.70 was being taken out of U.S. payrolls by the Social Security Administration for the retirement fund. . . .
>
> "By 1950 the payroll bite had grown to $20.40 for every $100 and . . . In 1960 . . . $63.90 for every $100 . . .
>
> "Last year was the worst in history. Even though the average American household was saving at slightly above 1945 levels, the Social Security Administration took $84 for every $100 we saved."

For such reasons, economist Milton Friedman termed the last twenty years of social security "a crushing defeat for the average wage earner," since it took such a growing portion of his meager savings. And for low-income workers, the tax represented a more significant burden, since it was greater than their federal income tax payments.

Still, there is this to consider: In today's industrial society, if workers had to pay directly for those in need, such as the pensions and medical payments that elderly members of their own families now get, could they afford it? Few would be

able to. Thus, without question, social security systems do take much of the burden of caring for those in need off the workers.

Yet, how much real security is this growing tax burden buying? What is happening to those in need, such as the elderly retired who desire to live in reasonable dignity and comfort?

HOW MUCH "SECURITY" IS THERE?

OF COURSE, the benefits that come from social security programs vary from country to country. In a few places it seems enough to provide decent living conditions.

For example, an observer in Sweden said of that nation's large benefits: "Many of those who have pensions say that they never before had it so good financially as they now have it."

But countries like that are the exception. The general condition even in wealthy Western lands is that those trying to live mainly on social security payments are in deep trouble.

A Drop in Living Standards

Most older persons who retire with little income other than social security experience a significant drop in their standard of living.

During 1975 in Canada, one basic government old-age pension plan paid a single person having no other income about $210 a month, with a retired couple getting about $400 a month, adjusted for inflation. But these payments make it apparent that persons who had been making several times that while working would suffer a sharp drop in their standard of living if they did not have some other substantial source of retirement income.

That is often what happens in most Western industrial lands. A retired person usually receives in monthly payments far less than he was making in salary when working. In Australia, for instance, the wage averaged over $150 a week during 1975. But the basic payment to a retired single person was $36 a week, with retired couples getting $60 a week. In the United States, the average skilled worker made more in a week than the average retired person received in a month under social security.

The Elderly Are Hurting

In these Western industrial nations, the largest group of people living in poverty is usually the aged. And their situation has become worse in recent years due to rampant inflation.

In Canada the Toronto *Star* reported that "about 50 per cent of Canada's aged live in poverty," according to a government survey. They did not have sufficient income "to live with dignity and freedom from want." It noted that "poverty among the elderly is two to three times the level of other age groups." The *Star* also said: "The trouble is that most senior citizens do not have a company pension independent of public assistance."

The problem is severe when the elderly cannot live with their own families, such as their children, or do not own a house that is paid for. An Australian observer says of such pensioners: "Where persons have to pay high rent for their accommodations, they are in a very difficult economic situation." Those who must pay today's high rents, or who still have substantial mortgage payments on a house, find these costs a crushing burden.

That is why many "senior citizens" feel that they have been thrown on society's scrapheap after a lifetime of hard work. One Canadian who headed an official investigation team said: "I found, again and again, that the loss of even marginally effective income at retirement robs people of a decent standard of living and reduces the quality of the lives which they led before retirement." He added: "They are the forgotten people of Canadian society."

The mayor of one city there stated: "I had one old fellow in to see me who represented 140 pensioners. He broke down and pleaded for help. It was terrible to see a man who spent his whole life working stuck in a situation where he was frightened he couldn't pay his rent." In another city an official said that he had been visited by an elderly woman who "wept uncontrollably" in his office and admitted that she was so short of money that "she had to eat pet food."

"The Problems Never Stop"

One old person in this situation stated: "I am so tired of fighting, so frustrated, so upset. We stay in the house always not to spend, we eat so cheaply, and my wife, she cries a lot, trying to understand. I used to think the old had no troubles. Now I am old and the problems never stop."

The Toronto *Star* reported of Canada's elderly: "Many of them die alone in a room. Many of the rooms are drab and unkempt. It is not unusual to find that some have died in a back lane."

Regarding the United States, columnist Jack Anderson wrote: "Society shunts its undesirable elderly into corners, to await death alone and uncared for. America simply does not seem to care. And now there is a grim new phenomenon: the old are beginning to drift out of the corners and crowd into sordid 'geriatric ghettos.' Flophouse hotels and old apartment buildings have been jerry-built into unlicensed bedlams for the old." He also stated: "The best estimate is that six million old people live in poverty: without adequate food, gouged by high-cost prescription drugs, ill-sheltered and unloved."

A New York *Post* article by Harriet Van Horne put the figure of elderly folks living in poverty higher. She declared: "In fact, 30 per cent of the elderly live below the poverty line. That is at least eight million people." In addition, there are millions of others who are barely above the poverty line. This columnist also said:

> "The Eskimos were kinder. When their aged kinfolk became nonproductive, they were put out on an ice floe, where they obligingly froze to death overnight.
>
> "By contrast, we're a rotten lot. We put our old folks into nursing homes, where 27 per cent die in their first month of residence. Arriving sane, they descend rapidly into senility and confusion.
>
> "Those who survive are often starved, abused, drugged, neglected and reduced to quivering bags of bones."

Thus, Dr. Robert N. Butler, author of the book *Why Survive?*, stated: "In truth, it is easier to manage the problem of death than the problem of living as an old person" on a low pension in an expensive society. He noted that "some 30 per cent of the housing of older people had no inside flush toilets, some 40 per cent had no bath or shower with hot water, and some 54 per cent minimal heat in winter."

Obviously, then, for a large number of old people, "social security" provides very little real security. Unless one has other income, or is cared for by one's family, he or she will be in a desperate condition although living in a relatively rich country.

But must this always be? Is there any hope that this condition will end before long?

Will THE PROBLEMS Be Solved?

WILL the financial problems of social security, and the bad conditions for so many elderly, ever be solved? Yes, they will. That is an absolute certainty!

How will this come about? By some new idea in social security management? No, that is not likely in the Western world, because its financial affairs have steadily worsened in recent years.

Social Security's Future

The problems of social security, as the system is now arranged, are expected to increase greatly before long. Last year, in the United States, social security payments exceeded taxes collected for that purpose by about three billion dollars.

This trend is picking up speed, as the number of elderly who are retiring increases. The amounts that will have to be paid out in the future to workers who are now contributing to social security are staggering. Some economists believe that those benefits never will be paid.

The Wall Street Journal noted that these obligations now already contracted, without considering increases in payments to offset inflation, will amount to at least a '2.5 trillion (2,500 billion dollars) projected deficit in the Social Security System.' It added: "As liberals like to argue, the nation owes this debt to itself, and it will be paid off by raising taxes in the future. Of course this is nonsense. Increasing future taxes by these magnitudes can only disintegrate the tax base."

What is wrong? For one thing, those who set up the social security program felt that an ever-growing population would supply an ever-larger number of young workers who would pay the taxes and take care of the elderly who were retiring. But that is not how things have worked out. Population trends in the United States are down, not up, as families are having fewer children.

Thus the huge flood of new workers to pay taxes has not materialized. Instead, there is a growing tide of older retired people that must be supported by proportionately fewer workers.

In *Vital Speeches of the Day,* corporation official William Cotter, who was part of a group appointed by the government to look into the problem, said this:

> "Since current retirees will now receive their benefits from current workers, the number of workers per retiree becomes an important calculation.
>
> "When the system was instituted, there were 7 workers providing taxes for each retiree receiving benefits. At the present time, there are just 3 workers for every retiree. And that ratio is declining.
>
> "Our task force, using Bureau of the Cen-

sus population extrapolations, estimated that by the end of the century, there will be but 3 workers for every two retirees."

Obviously that will mean an impossible tax burden to bear. This is why some experts feel that the program is headed toward certain bankruptcy, or, at the very least, radical change. They say that since the system cannot pay for itself even now, there is no way it can do so when far heavier burdens are placed upon it in the future. Thus, a special investment bulletin from the American Institute for Economic Research declared:

"That benefits for those entitled to receive them under the Social Security Act and numerous private pension plans are in jeopardy is readily apparent.

"The old age pension aspect of Social Security has become a self-destruct mechanism tending to impoverish those who must pay Social Security taxes in the years ahead and to increase the risk that those entitled to benefits may not receive them."

Government Rescue?

Can the government come to the rescue? That is what some hope. But as *The Wall Street Journal* points out: "The federal government, believe it or not, is in the same boat."

The government of the United States, as is the case with many others, is having the same difficulty—expenses keep growing faster than income. The deficit in the government's budget for fiscal 1975 was about $43 billion. The deficit for fiscal 1976 is expected to be about $70 billion. These are the largest deficits in peacetime history. And the national debt is approaching $600 billion.

Since government debts are so huge already, any hope that the vast future payments of social security can be made by government funds is unrealistic, many economists feel.

Also, history shows much instability of governments, leaders, social systems and economic arrangements. So to put one's trust in failing human institutions for security does not make sense.

What the Future Holds

What people need is a far better system of security than anything humans have yet devised. They desperately need a permanent end to insecurity.

Is there a genuine, realistic hope for that kind of security? Yes, there is! And today's unsettled conditions merely serve to corroborate the reality of that hope.

Bible prophecy clearly foretold that this present system of things would enter a "time of the end," or a period called "the last days" when all human institutions would experience great distress and failure. (Dan. 11:40; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Matt. 24:3-14) The very conditions that now exist world wide signify that we are in this time.

This means that the time is actually at hand when mankind's Creator, Jehovah God, will intervene in man's affairs to set things straight here on earth. Jesus Christ told his followers to look forward to this when he spoke of God's government, his heavenly kingdom, controlling the earth at the appointed time. (Matt. 6:9, 10) Hence, we are getting very near to the day when the present unsatisfactory system of things will be crushed out of existence to make way for a new order under God's direction. —2 Pet. 3:13.

Bible prophecy foretells that in God's new order there will be no more insecurity of any kind to mar the happiness of earth's inhabitants. Gone will be all war, hunger, greed, economic competition and oppression. Instead, people "will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace," with true "security to time indefinite." How welcome that will be in view of today's growing insecurity!—Ps. 37:11; Isa. 32:17.

THE UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD OF THE SLOTH

"WHAT is that old mop doing in the crotch of this tree?' How surprised the questioner was to learn that what he took to be an "old mop" was in reality an animal—a mammal! For the first time in his life he had seen a sloth in its native habitat.

Sloths live in the tropical forests of South and Middle America. They are among the slowest of all creatures. This sluggishness is attributed to their low body temperature. For most of their lives sloths hang upside down from limbs, sit in the fork of a tree or rest their backs on a lower limb. Whenever they are in the trees, their claws are always hooked with a viselike grip to a branch. For sloths, eating, sleeping, yes, even mating and giving birth, are all upside-down activities.

Usually only one baby sloth is born at a time. The youngster might appropriately be described as a ball of fur. Carried by its mother on her chest, the baby clings to her long hair.

Full-grown sloths are about the size of large domestic cats. Their long arms and legs terminate in curved claws, measuring about three inches in length. The coarse hair of the sloth runs the opposite direction to that of other mammals, from the belly to the back.

There is something else that is quite different about the hair of the sloth. You may have heard the expression, 'A rolling stone never gathers moss.' But can you imagine an animal that is so slow that plants begin to grow in its hair? Well, that is the case with the sloth. During the rainy season, algae flourish luxuriantly in the sloth's hair, giving it a greenish tinge.

Besides supporting this plant growth, the hair of the sloth may provide shelter for an insect—a moth resembling a clothes moth. The reason for this is still a mystery. *The International Wildlife Encyclopedia* notes: "No one has been able to find out why the moths live in sloths' hair. They do not feed there, nor have their eggs or caterpillars been found in the fur."

The whole life of a sloth appears to be in slow motion. About eighteen hours of the day sloths doze or sleep, being most active at night. For a sloth to cover a distance of four miles as it moves hand over hand, deliberately attaching each set of claws to tree limbs, may take more than a month and a half. On the ground the sloth's movement is even slower, as it is mainly designed for an upside-down

existence in the trees and not for walking. After getting a hold with its claws, the sloth drags itself forward. What may take seven seconds for the animal in the trees may take a whole minute on the ground. Amazingly, though, sloths are fastest in water. Bodies right side up, they swim by swinging their arms alternately. Sloths have been known to cross bodies of water a mile or more wide.

One might think that a creature as sluggish as the sloth could hardly have survived to the present time. But it is not helpless. The animal is able to defend itself with its long claws and its sharp teeth. Viewed from the ground, a sloth can easily be mistaken for a termite nest or a clump of dead leaves. So the animal may often escape detection by predators. Additionally, tough skin, a heavy coat of coarse, shaggy hair and twenty-three pairs of ribs contribute their part in protecting the animal's vital organs. What is especially amazing about sloths is their ability to survive wounds, beatings and even doses of poison that would kill other mammals.

Two Basic Kinds

Why not take a closer look at the unusual sloth? Note the long arms. If each of the arms terminates in two long curved claws, you are examining a two-toed sloth. The longer arms of the three-toed sloth are equipped with three curved claws, as are each of the legs of both varieties.

There are yet a number of other features distinguishing the two basic kinds of sloths. "Two-toes" is larger and tailless. "Three-toes," on the other hand, has a stumplike tail and is equipped with two or three more vertebrae in its long neck. The total number of vertebrae—nine—is unusual for mammals, nearly all of which have seven neck vertebrae. "Three-toes," because of having more neck vertebrae, can hang upside down and yet keep its head nearly right side up. It is capable of turning its head through an arc of 270 degrees, almost full circle!

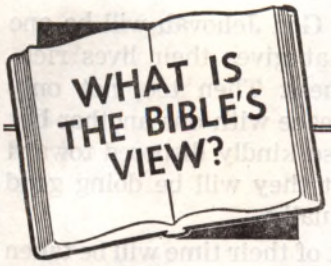
Commenting on a feature that is unique to the male of the three-toed sloth, the work *The Animal Kingdom* states: "An extremely odd thing about the males is the bright-yellow spot, about the size of a silver dollar, on the back. In this one spot the hair is short and glossy; so far no one has come up with an explanation for this strange feature." Here, then, is another mystery about the sloth that is begging to be solved.

"Three-toes" has not fared well in zoos. This is mainly because its diet is confined to the buds, leaves and tender twigs of the *Cecropia* tree. Not as restrictive in its eating habits, "Two-toes" has adapted far better to captivity.

Of the two basic kinds, "Two-toes" is the more active. When threatened, it will quickly strike with its long arms, inflicting serious wounds with its curved claws. It can also bite viciously with its full set of eighteen teeth. Faced with similar danger, "Three-toes" swings its arms more slowly and seldom bites.

"Two-toes" is also less awkward than its relative. It makes its descent from a tree head first. But "Three-toes," when moving from a limb to the tree trunk, first turns around and then proceeds backward down the tree.

Strange, yet fascinating, is the upside-down world of the sloth. Perhaps you have seen one or more of these creatures in a zoo. On the other hand, at some time in the future you may visit the tropics of Middle or South America. Should that be the case, do not be surprised if what appears to be a dead object up in a tree begins to stir. It may well be that slow-moving sloth enjoying life in his native upside-down world.



Will Everlasting Life Be Boring?

THE good news that Jesus Christ preached when he was on the earth included his words: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

Where will those gaining salvation enjoy everlasting life? From the Scriptures we learn that some will gain everlasting life in the heavens. This Jesus made clear when he said to his followers: "In the house of my Father there are many abodes. . . . I am going my way to prepare a place for you. Also, if I go my way and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you home to myself, that where I am you also may be." The early Christians had this hope, even as the apostle Paul wrote that there was awaiting him "a house not made with hands, everlasting in the heavens." (John 14:2, 3; 2 Cor. 5:1) From Revelation 7:4-8 and 14:1, 3 it is clear that the number having this destiny is limited to 144,000.

And that there is an earthly destiny for many of humankind is seen from Jesus' model prayer, for in it he told his followers to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10) An earthly destiny for many is also indicated by such prophecies as Habakkuk 2:14 and Revelation 21:4: "The earth will be filled with the knowing of the glory of Jehovah as the waters themselves cover over the sea." "He [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." This prophetic promise is often applied to the heavenly realm, but is that right? The immediate context of this prophecy refers to "a new earth" and states that 'the tent of God will be with *men* and he will dwell with them,' in a representative capacity, of course.—Rev. 21:1, 3.

However, there are some who profess not to be interested in everlasting life under these conditions, either in heaven or on the earth. Say they: "I would not want to live forever under such conditions. Life would be boring, yes, insufferably dull if there were no such things as wars, violence and catastrophes. I crave excitement. It takes things like these to make life interesting."

But will those who gain everlasting life in the heavens be bored? Heaven is not a place of idleness. Thus Jesus said: "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working." (John 5:17) Both he and Jehovah God are described as being happy and so they could not be bored; one reason for their happiness is their being busy. And regarding the followers of Jesus Christ who gain heaven, we are told: "Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; . . . they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years." As the 'seed of Abraham' they will share with Jesus Christ in blessing all the families of the earth.—Rev. 20:6; Gen. 22:17, 18; Gal. 3:16, 29.

Then, will those gaining everlasting life on earth be bored? Those who profess to need the excitement of wars, accidents, violence and catastrophes to make life interesting are certainly lacking in empathy. Would they

themselves want to be the victims of these things so that other people might not be bored with life? Hardly! Such a mental attitude reveals an unthinking selfishness as well as an immaturity of heart and mind.

The Bible tells that Abraham lived for 175 years and then died, "old and satisfied." He certainly was not bored. (Gen. 25:8) True, old age with helplessness might be boring, but the Bible holds out no such dreary prospect. Perpetual youth will be the lot of those who live forever. A noted Christian minister once painted the following beautiful word picture concerning that time: "Picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. . . . Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be."

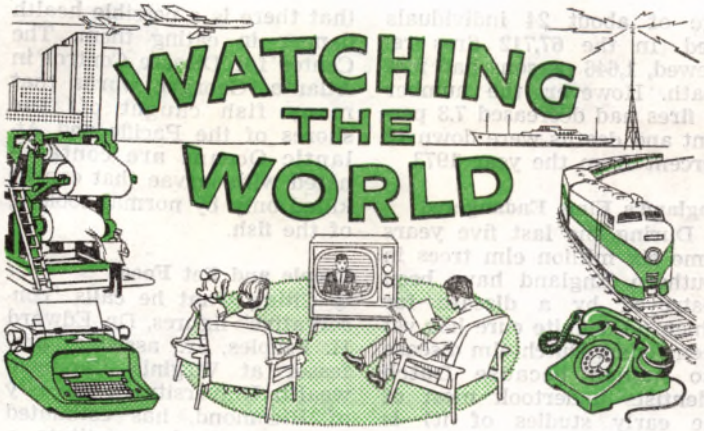
Yes, even today, under present imperfect conditions, there are men who live until in their nineties and who are anything but bored. For example, a famous cellist recently died at the age of ninety-six years. Until his death he led a full and happy life, and, without a doubt, he would have liked nothing better than to live forever bringing happiness to people by means of his musical gifts.

That is the way it will be in the new system of things when people begin to enjoy the blessings of God's kingdom. They will be at peace with Jehovah God, their Creator and Benefactor. They will keep on worshiping Him with spirit and truth. This worship of their God Jehovah will be one of the things that gives their lives richness and happiness. Then too, not only will they be at peace with one another but they will all be so kindly disposed toward one another that they will be doing good to others continually.

Of course, part of their time will be taken up caring for their physical needs; they will need to work to get the necessary food, clothing and shelter for themselves. They will need to eat meals regularly, and eating never gets boring no matter how often we do it. More than that, there will be ample time for relaxation and for visiting with friends, relatives or some noted servants of Jehovah God like Noah or Abraham.

Yes, just as we never tire of eating, so mankind will never get tired of learning new things, acquiring new skills. There will be time daily for such things. Mankind will have ample time to exercise both mind and body. With commercialized, competitive sports a thing of the past, no doubt there will be more healthful ways of expending energy, such as in community games, in hiking, in swimming. Lovers of music will learn to play expertly the grandest of music, that will then be composed, on all the variety of instruments that perfect men will no doubt invent.

Many persons, no doubt, will want to use their spare time throughout the centuries to study the great variety of plant life, of which, we are told, there are at present more than 350,000 known species. They can also spend as many years as they want to in becoming fully acquainted with the many, many different kinds of mammals, reptiles, birds, fish and insects. Others may prefer directing their skills in the line of such arts as painting and sculpture or in the fields of science. Yes, humankind will be ever learning, ever coming up with new ideas. Bored? Never! Not for all eternity!



"Jesus Christ of Malawi"?

◈ Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda recently was called "Jesus Christ of Malawi," disclosed the *Malawi News* of December 6, 1975. Rather than rejecting this expression ascribed to Mr. L. Juma Phiri, District Party Chairman at Dedza, President Banda reportedly "explained that any Minister of religion who was a true christian of whatever denomination would not be angry with the remarks by the Party Chairman." According to the newspaper, Dr. Banda said that if a true Christian read how the Jews started "thinking of Messiah to come and save them, he would understand why Messiah was everything for the Jews." According to Dr. Banda, "the same thing was true" in Malawi, the newspaper reported, "because before he returned home people were looking for someone to save them from the colonial yoke. He said if any church leader was offended then he is not a christian."

"Swords into Plowshares"

◈ Just outside the precincts of the United Nations and opposite its secretariat building is a wall bearing the inscription: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." For years the source of those words went unidentified. In recent months, however, the name "Isaiah" was inscribed under this quotation. Bible readers will find it at Isaiah 2:4 in the *King James Version*.

Women's Voices in Song

◈ Some 600 Israeli Jews recently registered complaints with the national radio network. They held that it should not broadcast the singing of women. Thereafter a leading rabbi of the country's Sephardic community ruled that the religious could listen to the singing of a woman if they did not know her and the melody was not a love song. Interestingly, after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea centuries ago, the men sang a song to Jehovah God. In response to the men, Moses' well-known sister "Miriam sang unto them." (Ex. 15:1, 20, 21, *The Holy Scriptures*, Jewish Publication Society of America) The fact that the men knew her posed no problem at all.

The Ancients Had It First

◈ Today some people either divide their gardens or surround them with marigolds or other plants that are said to ward off insect pests. Others spread sea kelp on their plots to keep potato beetles at a distance, or they plant cabbage in leaf-filled ground so that maggots will be repelled. But a recent study by Canadian scientists shows that agriculturists of ancient times used similar methods. Some early writers recommended placing rows of such plants as cumin, garlic and ivy alongside other plants with a view to repelling or killing insects. To fight weeds, Cato and Varro suggested covering the ground with the residue remaining after the oil is removed from crushed olives. Pliny the Elder advised mixing cypress leaves with the seeds of vegetables to keep maggots from devouring the roots of plants. To cope with fungal plant diseases, Democritus favored soaking seeds in leek juice before they were planted. According to the survey, ancient Greek and Roman farmers used substances prepared from minerals and chemicals readily available in plants, trees, animals and the soil. Their battle against insect pests included coating seeds, using smoke and employing pesticides, herbicides and substances that helped to control rodents.

Cancer Death Upsurge

◈ Normally, in the United States the annual cancer death-rate increase is one percent per 100,000 individuals. For some undetermined reason, however, it jumped 5.2 percent during the first seven months of 1975, according to provisional data released by the National Center for Health Statistics. Comparable figures have been released by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. For the first half of 1975, there was a 6-percent cancer death-rate increase among its life-insurance policy holders, though the increase had not risen above one percent annually for years back to 1968. This company's statistics for the first six

months of 1975 indicated a 7-percent rise in lung-cancer deaths, compared to the same six-month period in 1974. The foregoing provisional statistics for the nation were based on only a 10-percent sample of deaths. Nevertheless, American Cancer Society statisticians have called the recent increase "unbelievable, a baffling mystery."

Proper Use of Antibiotics

◈ United States physicians made a poor showing in a 1974 test on antibiotic therapy. A recent issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that the average score for 4,143 doctors who took a fifty-question test on use of antibiotics was 68 percent, or 34 correct answers. Incorrect use of antibiotics is a notable health-care problem in the country.

State of Health

◈ Japan's Health and Welfare Ministry recently announced the results of a health survey involving 700 communities throughout the nation. Some 50,900 individuals belonging to 15,300 households were interviewed. It was found that about one out of four Japanese wore eyeglasses. Also, one in every ten persons had experienced some illness during the year. However, there had been a decline in the number of the sick. The figure had dropped 20.8 percent, to 101.2 per thousand in 1974, compared with 127.7 in the previous year. According to *The Japan Times*, the Ministry ascribed the drop "to the absence of mass outbreaks of influenza in 1974."

World's Highest Fire-Death Ratio

◈ According to a report released in November by Japan's Fire Defense Agency, that nation had the highest fire-death ratio in the world during 1974. For every 1,000 fires an average of about 24 individuals died. In the 67,712 fires reviewed, 1,646 persons had met death. However, the number of fires had decreased 7.3 percent and deaths were down 12 percent from the year 1973.

England's Elms Endangered

◈ During the last five years some six million elm trees in southern England have been destroyed by a disease for which no definite cure has yet been found. Dutch elm disease (so named because Dutch scientists undertook most of the early studies of it) is spread by a type of flying Scolytus beetle. The pest is attracted only by elms and, in springtime, deposits poisonous fungus in the vascular system of the tree. This prevents both nutrients and water from reaching its leaves. The result? By the summer, dead branches are found on the stricken trees. It is estimated that 20,000 elm trees are being killed daily in southern England, and cases of this disease have been noted in the northern part of the country.

The Long Jump

◈ For some time four inmates of a prison in Sicily practiced the long jump. Officials apparently approved of this form of exercise. But imagine their consternation when all four convicts jumped a twelve-foot span from the roof of a prison building to one outside, and then made their escape!

Adult Education

◈ In the year 1957, one out of thirteen eligible adults in the United States was taking part in adult-education programs. According to recent information from federal records, however, the number of participants has increased. It now stands at one adult in eight.

Do You Like Raw Fish?

◈ If you enjoy raw fish such as herring, it is good to realize that there is a possible health danger in eating them. The Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, warns that many fish caught off the shores of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans are contaminated with larvae that can be killed only by normal cooking of the fish.

People and Pet Foods

◈ Citing what he calls "conservative" figures, Dr. Edward H. Peeples, Jr., assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in the city of Richmond, has estimated "that pet foods constitute a significant part of the diet of at least 225,000 American households." About a million persons are said to be involved. Though Dr. Peeples' conclusions are not founded on statistical information, he has been able to compile considerable evidence that many people eat pet foods due to necessity. A report issued in 1974 by the Senate Nutrition Committee stated that "one-third of the pet food purchased in slums is eaten by humans." Although that figure was based merely on "an educated guess" of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, such information poignantly illustrates the poverty and hardship experienced by many people.

School Crime Jumps

◈ Reported instances of violence and crime in New York City schools were up 55 percent for September through November, the first three months of the current academic year, compared with the same period last year. This was so despite the fact that the school system was nearly closed down for six days in September due to a strike. The Board of Education disclosed that reported robberies of students, teachers and other persons on school property reached 173, a rise of 67 from last year. From September

through November, 1975, there were 289 assaults on teachers reported, 95 more than there were for the same three-month period in 1974.

Enzyme for Snakebite

◈ The enzyme trypsin has reportedly been used with success in cases of snakebite. Victims die because nerve conduction is blocked by protein molecules in the venom of elapid snakes such as mambas and cobras. However, trypsin breaks down such molecules. Experimental animals all survived the effects of the poison when a dose of this enzyme was injected within fifteen minutes. At least half the animals lived if trypsin was administered fifty minutes after they were bitten. In reporting these findings published in a Chinese scientific periodical, *The Journal of the American Medical Association* commented: "The antivenoms or antisera against snake toxins are expensive, not always readily available, and may cause severe reactions. The simple injection of trypsin into the bite area is a valuable addition to available methods of elapid snakebite treatment."

Highest Tax Burden

◈ Taxes of all kinds have been rising in most nations. Which country pays the most? *The Wall Street Journal* reports that the people who live in Israel do, stating "Most Israelis anticipate that taxes will be raised again—though taxes already amount to 46% of Israel's gross national product, making Israelis the world's hardest-hit taxpayers."

World Road Toll

◈ About a quarter of a million people world wide die in road accidents each year, according to the U.N.'s *World Health* magazine. The U.S. leads the list, with about 50,000 deaths annually, while France and Western Germany follow, with about 16,000 each. Italy is next, with about 10,000, and Great Britain has over 7,000. On the other hand, only 7 persons die per 100 million passenger miles in America, whereas 13 die in Britain, 55 in Kenya, and 65 in Uganda.

Women at Work

◈ The percentage of working women is greater in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union than it is in the West. Considering women 15 to 64 years of age, 82 percent are employed in Russia, compared to 49 percent in the United States. Other sample percentages are: East Germany, 80; Hungary, 73; Poland, 63; Czechoslovakia, 59; Sweden, 59; Denmark, 58; Japan, 56; England, 52; West Germany, 49; Italy, 29.