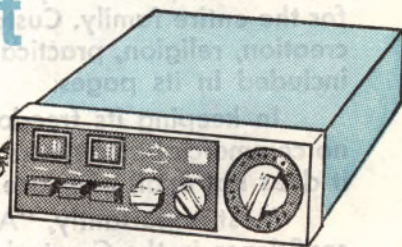


Awake!

What About

CB RADIO?



ALSO
IN THIS ISSUE:

What Can Be Done About CATARACTS?

MARCH 8, 1977



Average Printing Each Issue:
10,125,000

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It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events. And it gives practical suggestions to help you to cope effectively with the mounting problems of our time.

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ARE YOU SENSITIVE IN A RIGHT WAY?

THERE are both wrong and right ways of being sensitive. Being sensitive in a wrong way is a weakness, a sign of immaturity, a definite liability. Being sensitive in a right way demonstrates strength, is a sign of maturity.

We continually meet up with people who are sensitive in a wrong way. Such sensitiveness is sometimes called touchiness. Thus some persons are touchy when it comes to their appearance, because they happen to be overweight or because they limp or have some facial defect.

Others, again, are sensitive because of their nationality or race or the color of their skin. As a result, their friends and acquaintances lean over backward, as it were, so as not to give them any grounds for feeling slighted or ignored. By being sensitive or touchy they call attention to the very thing that they would have others ignore. If they forgot the matter, doubtless others would also.

Then, again, it is a common failing to be extremely sensitive to correction or criticism. Often employees or students are very touchy about any suggestion of discipline. No doubt one reason why the Bible so strongly stresses the need for discipline is that the human tendency is to resent it, to shrink from it because of touchiness. Literally scores of times the

Bible calls attention to the value of discipline. Thus we read: "Take hold on discipline; do not let go. Safeguard it, for it itself is your life." "The reproofs of discipline are the way of life." "Listen to discipline and become wise." Yes, the wise person is not touchy when receiving correction.—Prov. 4:13; 6:23; 8:33.

King David of ancient Israel was a wise man in this regard. In one of his psalms he says: "Should the righteous one strike me, it would be a loving-kindness; and should

he reprove me, it would be oil upon the head, which my head would not want to refuse." (Ps. 141:5) And not only did he say that, but he lived by those words. On several occasions he was reproved for taking a wrong course, but at no time did he resent it. His son, King Solomon, expressed similar sentiments in one of his proverbs, saying: "Open reproof is better than love concealed. The blows a friend gives are well meant."—Prov. 27:5, 6, *The New English Bible*.

Ironically, so often it is the one who is very sensitive as to his own feelings that is lacking in sensitivity toward another person's feelings and so rides roughshod over others. Such a one may be unable to stand any criticism but will freely criticize others. An extreme case was Adolf Hitler. It is reported that he brooked no dissent or criticism on the part of his associates, his underlings, or, for that matter, on the part of anyone. Yet he was devastating in his criticism of others. Not only could he calmly ordain the murder of millions of innocent Jews, but he took pleasure in seeing these and other foes tortured. Thus he not only had the conspirators on his life fiendishly tortured, but had movies made of their agonies for his own enjoyment. Truly, being highly sensitive as to one's own feelings but whol-

ly insensitive to the feelings of others is a bad combination.

How does the right kind of sensitivity manifest itself? One way this can be illustrated is in the field of the arts. A fine musician is sensitive as to the beauties of sound, melody and harmony. An artist that works with a brush is sensitive to the various nuances of light and shade, of colors and of form. To the extent that these artists are sensitive to such outside stimulation, to that extent they bring happiness to themselves and others.

So, too, persons can be alert and sensitive in their observations of others around them. Such sensitivity may manifest itself in compassionate neighbor love. In the Biblical illustration of the "good Samaritan" both a priest and a Levite lacked this kind of sensitivity. Without the slightest feeling of compassion they could ignore a man lying by the roadside who had been beaten and robbed. But the "good Samaritan" had this sensitivity; he had empathy, he had fellow feeling. He showed this by doing all that he could to bring relief to the victim of the robbers.—Luke 10:29-37.

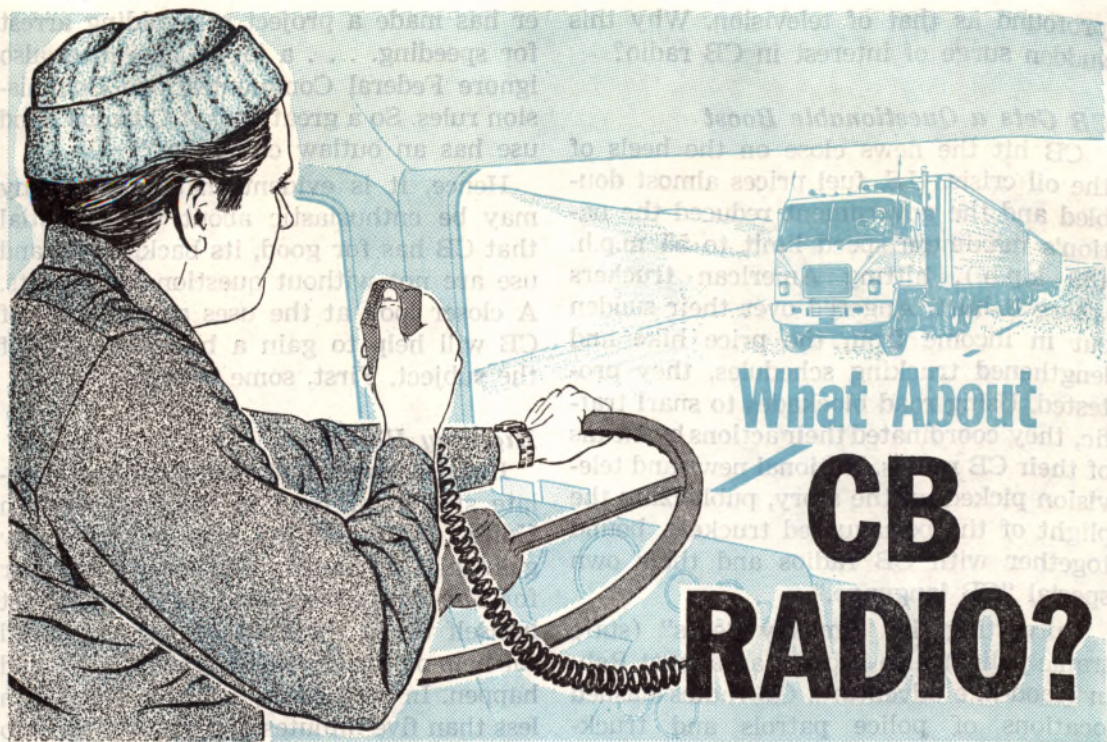
Jesus himself had this compassionate sensitivity. Thus we read that on one occasion he was filled with indignation, "being thoroughly grieved at the *insensibility* of [the] hearts" of the sticklers for the sabbath who would rather see a man suffer than see him healed on the sabbath.—Mark 3:1-5.

Yes, Jesus "felt pity for [his people], because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matt. 9:36) He devoted his life to serving their needs. And he commissioned his apostles to do the same, saying: "As you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.' Cure sick people, raise up dead persons, make lepers clean, expel demons. You received free, give free."—Matt. 10:7, 8.

Another right kind of sensitivity has to do with our consciences. Due to the wickedness of this system of things and in-born selfishness, ever so many people "walk in the unprofitableness of their minds, . . . because of the *insensibility* of their hearts. Having come to be past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to loose conduct to work uncleanness of every sort with greediness." All such no longer have a sensitive conscience. Rather, they are "marked in their conscience as with a branding iron." If we ignore the promptings of our conscience in little matters, we can become more and more careless, with the result that we will find ourselves committing gross sins.—Eph. 4:17-19; 1 Tim. 4:2.

Still another facet of the right kind of sensitivity is that which has been termed sensitive mental perception. It is a keen discernment as to the best course of action to take under given circumstances. It is the peculiar ability to deal with others without giving offense, because of being sensitive to the moods and thinking of others. A sensitive person can detect such by observing little things, such as the facial expression, the tone of voice, the person's stance or even the way that he is dressed. Those dealing with mentally disturbed persons ought to have this sensitive mental perception and so should all Christians who would preach and teach the good news of God's kingdom effectively to others.

Truly there are many facets to this matter of being sensitive. To be sensitive in the wrong way may at times be merely a matter of thoughtlessness. But more often it is a weakness, if not also a manifestation of selfishness, as in being insensitive to the needs or plight of others. Being sensitive in a right way is the course of wisdom and is prompted or made possible by empathy, fellow feeling, love.



HER husband was having a heart attack. Stopping on the highway, she flagged down a passing motorist, who happened to be a trained nurse. Grasping the urgency at once, the nurse remembered that her husband had just installed a CB (Citizens Band) radio in their car. "I don't know how to use this thing," she called into the microphone, "but I have a very sick man here." Shortly an emergency squad appeared and rushed the man to the hospital.

Emergency rescues similar to this are becoming commonplace on American highways, since fascination with CB radio recently swept across the nation. Though government provision for a Citizens Band has existed for almost 20 years, "it took 16 years, 1958 to 1974, for us to get to the first million licensees," said a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) official. "Then it took eight months to get

the second million, and three months to get the third." Since then the number of licensees has multiplied again.

Because many operators have more than one unit, and many others transmit illegally without licenses, some authorities estimate that now there are more than 20 million CB radios in use. Nearly one out of every 10 passenger cars and well over half of all long-distance trucks are reportedly so equipped, and the FCC official in charge of CB regulation predicts that someday there may be as many as 60 million license holders. One promoter of the generally inexpensive, easily installed units enthused: "CBs will be like alarm clocks—every home will have one."

Some say that the CB phenomenon represents "the biggest explosion of communications since the invention of the telephone." Others forecast that its social effect on Americans may be almost as

profound as that of television. Why this sudden surge of interest in CB radio?

CB Gets a Questionable Boost

CB hit the news close on the heels of the oil crisis. U.S. fuel prices almost doubled and the government reduced the nation's maximum speed limit to 55 m.p.h. (89 k.p.h.), hitting American truckers where it hurt. Angered over their sudden cut in income from the price hike and lengthened trucking schedules, they protested. Using road blockades to snarl traffic, they coordinated their actions by means of their CB radios. National news and television picked up the story, publicizing the plight of the beleaguered truckers, bound together with CB radios and their own special "CB language."

Outwitting the "Smokey Bears" (state traffic police) also became an almost Robin Hood-like adventure. CB radios flashed locations of police patrols and truck-weighing stations over the air. Speed and weight limits were broken with a devil-may-care attitude. Of course, broadcasters of information aimed at breaking the law chose not to identify themselves. The FCC-required CB license call letters were replaced with comic names such as Rubber Ducky, Big Daddy, Phantom Lady and others that appealed to the drivers' own egos.

The special "CB language" also prevailed, using words, numbers and expressions known mainly to those who became part of the CB "club." A compact car became a "roller skate"; a four-lane highway, a "super-slab"; a talkative person, a "ratchet-jaw."

All of this caught the imagination of the public, and many wanted to join the "fun." "With such secret-fraternity language to give humor and spice to the game," writes a CB user in the *New York Times Magazine*, "the new breed of C.B.-

er has made a project of avoiding arrest for speeding. . . . a lot of operators also ignore Federal Communications Commission rules. So a great deal of Citizens Band use has an outlaw character."

Hence, it is evident that, while many may be enthusiastic about the potential that CB has for good, its background and use are not without questionable aspects. A closer look at the uses and misuses of CB will help to gain a balanced view of the subject. First, some benefits . . .

Highway Helpers

Imagine yourself stranded out on a desolate stretch of road in the southwestern United States—a flat tire or an empty gas tank for company. Recently a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal* purposely set himself up in these situations and called for help on his CB radio to see what would happen. In both cases, someone stopped in less than five minutes and gladly helped to get the newsman back on the road again, without charge.

Information far more useful to honest travelers than "Smokey" locations is also available over CB radio. Help in finding campsites, inexpensive motels, good restaurants, mechanics, post offices and other local information is a service that CBers cheerfully render to each other. "In some cases," says one, "we have even been told to pull over and wait, and within a minute or two we have had an escort to lead us where we wanted to go."

Reports of accidents, breakdowns, road hazards, traffic jams, drunk drivers, crimes, and even speeders crackle over the Citizens Band. Some law-enforcement agencies are taking advantage of this instant information. The Missouri State Highway Patrol, for example, equipped over 700 patrol cars and nine troop headquarters with CB radios that monitor the emergency channel, 9. As a result, each month

hundreds of stranded Missouri motorists or those injured in accidents receive prompt assistance, while hundreds of others are arrested for drunken driving, speeding and other crimes. Noting the potential of CB for highway safety, the federal government's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration launched a program encouraging CB operators to report emergency information.

Long-distance truckers have found that CB helps them to stay awake on their lonely drives. Before CB, said one, "I was being bored to death. I used to do anything to occupy my mind and stay alert." But now, he says, "It's a whole new world." A drastic reduction in the amount of amphetamines that truckers use to stay awake has resulted.

Husbands have also found that CB is a very convenient way to let their wives know when to get a meal ready after work, or to advise them that they will be late due to a traffic jam or some other problem. Farmers working far from the farmhouse find that CB radio offers them similar advantages.

Clearly there are many practical benefits that CB radio can provide for the highway traveler and others. However, as is the case with other modern conveniences, there are certain pitfalls that a wise person will consider so that this convenience will be his servant, not his master.

The Pitfalls

According to FCC regulations, the purpose of the Citizens Band is "to provide for private short-distance radiocommunications service for the business or personal activities of licensees." The regulations prohibit use of CB equipment for any purpose "contrary to Federal, State or local law." Transmission of "obscene, indecent, profane words, language or meaning" is also banned, as are "music, whistling,

IN COMING ISSUES

- ***The Debt Load Affects You.***
- ***Antarctica, the World's Largest "Refrigerator."***
- ***Respect for the Dead
—How Shown?***

sound effects, or any material for amusement or entertainment purposes."

Obviously much of what is currently transmitted over CB radio does not conform to the law. And encouragement to break traffic laws, transmitting without a license or failure to use call letters are not the only questionable practices among some CB users. With so many millions on the air, more and more people are using their equipment without regard for others.

For example, some people, in their desire to be heard, jack up the power of their sets far above the legally authorized 4 watts. This frequently causes what is called "bleed-over" into other CB channels, interfering with their reception. Also, this often interferes with nearby radios, television sets and other electronic equipment. When U.S. marshals raided the homes of seven illegally operating New Jersey CBers and confiscated their equipment, they found that some of the units were transmitting with over 1,000 watts of power!

Other CB abuses include "hogging" a channel by individuals or groups who then threaten anyone else who tries to use "their channel." Many people talk far longer than the legally allowed five minutes, as well as neglecting the required one-minute break between transmissions.

Foul language and immoral "humor" also are problems. Writes one disillusioned

operator to *CB Magazine*: "I am just sitting here listening to my CB radio and the disgusting way they talk. . . . Some of the men and women are using very foul language and very suggestive phrases. If your family was in the car, Mr. CBer, would you want them to hear this?"

Not only that, but some even use CB to solicit for prostitution. "In some areas of the country," reports *Newsweek* magazine, "the almost constant chatting of prostitutes and bootleggers is overwhelming ordinary folks who only want to strike up a conversation, report an accident or tell their families they'll be late for dinner."

With such degrading conversation and other material, as well as a lot of just plain useless talk, says one concerned operator, "the Citizens Band can be a mass of garbage, practically useless, especially around urban areas. All the blather and illegality are infuriating to serious C.B.-ers."—*New York Times Magazine*, April 25, 1976, p. 60.

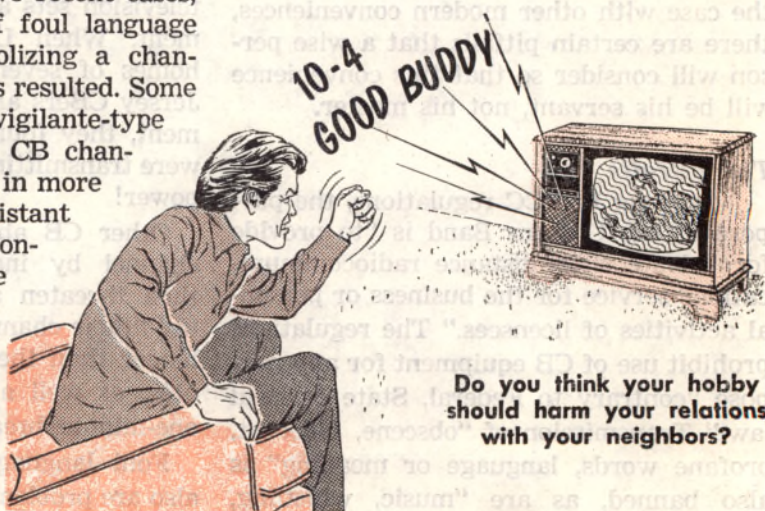
Effect on People

CB abuses have also led to family problems, hard feelings with the neighbors, injury and even death. In two recent cases, one over a CBer's use of foul language and another over monopolizing a channel, fights and two murders resulted. Some CBers have even formed vigilante-type groups to "clean up" the CB channels, but this often results in more havoc than help. The assistant police chief of Helena, Montana, tells about some who "took it on themselves to find" a person who was using foul language on the air. "A fight ensued, and it turned out it was the wrong man."

"What is it about CB radio that makes grown adults act like children?" asks the CB columnist for the Easton, Pennsylvania, *Express*. "You hear them arguing and bickering, blustering and threatening each other over such trivial things as who's used their handle [nickname] the longest or who's got the 'toughest' radio in the neighborhood." Some may ask: "Could part of the reason that many 'grown adults act like children' be that juvenile CB language, childish nicknames and immature purposes often predominate the Citizens Band, thereby creating a childish atmosphere?"

Another problem, TV interference, makes for angry neighbors. Even when a CB is transmitting at legal power, the transmission can sometimes cause television-picture distortion in nearby sets and possibly an unwanted voice over the speaker. "The CB TVI [television interference] problem is approaching wild-fire dimensions," said *CB Magazine*. FCC officials estimated the number of complaints about interference in 1976 at as many as 150,000.

CB users may correctly argue that often it is the television receivers that are at fault for not having preventive circuits.



However, as *CB Magazine* points out: "After all, until the CBER got his CB set, the neighbor's equipment 'worked just fine.'" The article also urges that CB users "begin to shoulder more of the responsibility for the problem."

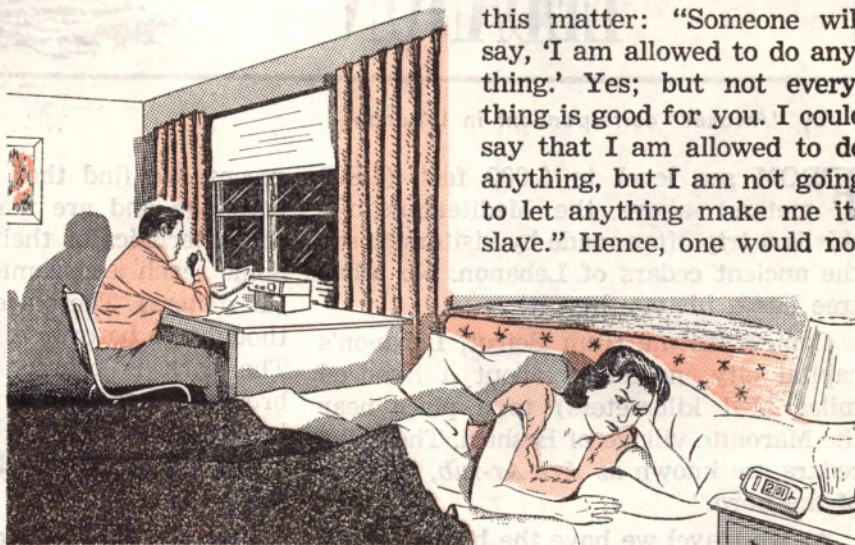
Certainly a Christian operating a CB set would not want to interfere with a neighbor's electronic equipment, any more than he would want others to interfere with his own. Even though the deficiency may be in the neighbor's TV set, a Christian would endeavor to solve any problem without asserting his "rights." The principle from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount should govern: "If a person wants to go to court with you and get possession of your inner garment, let your outer garment also go to him."—Matt. 5:40; 7:12.

Another matter that Christian CB owners should consider is illustrated by a letter from a disturbed wife, who writes of her husband: "He is indulging now so much in it that he uses it at nighttime, after he closes up the business at 11:00 p.m.—until around 2:00 a.m. It causes great upset." Would a Christian want to indulge himself in such a hobby to the extent that it interferes with proper family life, stealing time from more profitable pursuits, just so he can play?

Also, in view of the sound Biblical principle that "bad associations spoil useful habits," can one say that because many

of those who use CB equipment are not lawbreakers, foulmouthed and immoral, one is justified in spending a lot of time on the air with them for other than purposeful information? Would you pick up a telephone, dial any number at random, and associate with whoever answered? —1 Cor. 15:33.

It is worth while to consider the practical outlook of the Bible on this matter: "Someone will say, 'I am allowed to do anything.' Yes; but not everything is good for you. I could say that I am allowed to do anything, but I am not going to let anything make me its slave." Hence, one would not



Should your family life suffer over your conversations with strangers?

want to become enslaved to one's CB equipment any more than to a television set or to any pursuit that can squander valuable time.—1 Cor. 6:12, *Today's English Version* (1976).

If a person has a CB radio for his personal or secular business—fine. But why not use it as a tool, not a toy? "If the individual CB user would be a little more polite, a little less talkative, not trying to hog the airways," says the FCC's head of CB operations, "it would make our problem less severe. You know, there's a lot of people who don't want to talk indiscriminately; they have installed their units for a very specific purpose." Certainly this is the view that a Christian would take.

THE STATELY CEDARS

OF LEBANON



By "Awake!" correspondent in Lebanon

FROM sea level to 6,000 feet (1,829 meters) above the Mediterranean—this is a trip often made by visitors to see the ancient cedars of Lebanon. No other tree has a history like it!

Come with me from Beirut, Lebanon's capital city, northeast about a hundred miles (161 kilometers) to a place near the Maronite village of Beshari. There the cedars are known as *Arz Ar-rub*, "Cedars of the Lord."

As we travel we have the blue Mediterranean on our left and the mountains on our right. We go around the beautiful bay of Jouni through the renowned city of Byblos (Biblical Gebel, where the Egyptians came for cedar) and on toward Tripoli. Just outside the village of Chekka we take a road up the mountains. Our 6,000-foot (1,800-meter) climb begins.

Now, keep on the watch. You will soon get your first glimpse of the majestic cedars. What a breathtaking sight these magnificent trees give, some of them being huge specimens towering over a hundred feet (30 meters)!

Unlike other trees, the branches of *cedrus libani* are in tiers, pyramid-style. Note how they spread out flat, some branches reaching out as far as the tree is tall. Going closer to these beautiful ever-

greens, we find that trunks are gnarled with age and are massive—showing the characteristics of their ancient forebears. Some reach a circumference of forty feet (12 meters). There are trees here that are thought to be over a thousand years old. The bark is coarse, rough and reddish brown frosted with white. The needles are bright green, about one half inch (1.3 centimeters) long, and the tree bears egg-shaped cones.

Stepping out of the coolness of the cedar forest into sunlight, we can view the cedars from a distance. Imagine, these mountains were once covered with lofty cedars! Indiscriminate use and failure to replenish and the ravages of war, however, have left few groves remaining. This particular grove of about 400 trees was probably preserved because of the difficulty of access. However, since World War II efforts have been made to replant cedar trees as well as others.

But why so famous? Because of the cedar's frequent appearance in art and literature, especially in Scripture. The Bible refers to this monarch of trees over seventy times. It is used to represent stateliness, loftiness and strength, real or apparent. For instance, the Messiah is likened

to a twig taken from the very top of a cedar tree. The growth of the righteous one is like a firmly rooted cedar. By contrast, unfaithful ones are likened to a cedar because of their self-exaltation and feeling of false security.—Ezek. 17:22-24; Ps. 92:12; Isa. 2:11-13; Jer. 22:13-15, 23.

But the majestic cedar is far more well known for its use in building the gorgeous temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem in the days of King Solomon. Its beauty, fragrance and durability, besides its warm red tone, well recommended it for that purpose.—1 Ki. 6:9, 15-18, 20.

Ah, but how could the trees be cut and shipped from here to Jerusalem? It is hardly likely that they were cut and shipped from this location. But, remember, in ancient times the trees covered the upper limits of the mountains of Lebanon, which stretch from north to south some ninety-five miles (153 kilometers). Today,

farther south, near the Druzes village of Barouk, there is a younger grove of around 900 trees. Choice cedar may have been cut at this location or nearby by the Sidonians, who were expert woodcutters. The logs then could have been floated on the Litani River, which flows south and then around the southern end of the Lebanon range of mountains into the Mediterranean, near Tyre. There the logs could have been formed into rafts and floated south along the coast, possibly to Joppa, modern Tel Aviv. The logs may have been cut there and transported twenty-five miles (40 kilometers) overland to the temple site in Jerusalem.

The ancients truly valued cedarwood. It is a majestic tree with a meaningful history. Soon in the earthly paradise of God majestic cedars will again flourish, covering the mountains, to the praise of their Maker.

Aftermath of Tremors in Turkey

By "Awake!" correspondent in Turkey

THE earthquake that devastated the region around Lake Van in eastern Turkey on November 24, 1976, was the worst Turkish quake in nearly forty years. It measured 7.6 on the Richter scale and ravaged an area of some 300 square miles (800 square kilometers). At least 120 towns and villages were affected. Some victims, isolated by eight inches (20 centimeters) of snow that blocked the narrow mountain roads, received very little aid. Hence, a great many of the estimated 30,000 to 50,000 persons left homeless suffered from exposure and hunger in temperatures below freezing.

As of December 7, government authorities said that 3,790 persons had died. But other sources suggest that possibly as many as 7,000 met death in the disaster area, in a situation complicated not only by freezing weather conditions but also by problems associated with rescue and relief operations.

According to reports from the area, rescue operations set up primarily by the Turkish army have been hampered seriously by gasoline

shortages, lack of medical supplies and, perhaps worst of all, by corruption and chaos in the distribution of blankets, food, thermal tents, mobile hospitals, stoves and fuel donated by a number of countries. Whole truckloads of essential supplies from other parts of Turkey have been "lost" on the way. Allegations that the rich and influential have been the only ones really benefiting from the aid have been confirmed by foreign journalists and by Turkish relief workers in the quake zone itself.

Many Turkish people have expressed their disapproval of the abuses in relief and distribution. But far more significant have been the efforts of so many to provide aid for needy persons caught in dire straits after the Lake Van catastrophe. While none of Jehovah's Witnesses live in that area, or were directly affected by the earthquake, they share concern for suffering fellow humans and especially seek to bring them "comfort from the Scriptures."—Rom. 15:4.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT CATARACTS?

IT HAPPENS to more than a million persons each year. The problem affects twice as many women as men. It usually occurs when persons are in their sixties but can happen at any age, even before birth. What are we talking about?

Loss of vision through *cataracts*. You have often heard of cataracts, but do you really know what they are? What can be done to restore vision once cataracts develop? Let us begin by taking a closer look at your eyes.

The eyeball is a complex, three-dimensional, full-color motion-picture camera. It is shaped like a sphere and, for the most part, is filled with a jellylike transparent substance called *vitreous humor*. Encasing this semiliquid substance is a three-layered "skin." The outer layer is known as the *sclera*, the middle one is the *choroid* and the inner layer is the *retina*. But none of these three layers encircle the entire eyeball. They all leave space at the front.

In the forepart of the eyeball the *sclera* merges into a convex transparent tissue called the *cornea*. It is shaped somewhat like a tiny bowl placed at the front of the eye with the bottom facing out. Behind the *cornea* is the *iris*, a thin circular curtain of muscular tissue that constitutes the colored part of the eye. The *iris* has a hole at its center, known as the *pupil*. Two sets of muscles in the *iris* can change the size of the *pupil*, controlling the amount of light that enters. Filling the space between the *cornea* and the *iris* is a clear fluid called *aqueous humor*.

Do you realize that actually your eyes

do not 'see' anything? Instead, they bend and focus rays of light, which the optic nerve (attached to the rear of the eyeball) transmits to the visual center of the brain. To make that possible, the eye has another major part.

Just behind the *iris* is a transparent *crystalline lens*, which is about the size of an aspirin tablet. The lens is biconvex, that is, it is convex at both its front and back. The *cornea* and the lens work together to bend light rays and focus them at the back of the eyeball on the inner of its three surrounding layers, the *retina*. A group of muscles attached to the lens can make it change shape so as to bring things into focus. A cross-section view of the lens would reveal that, when focusing on a distant object, it is oval-shaped like a football. The lens would appear rounder when the eye views something up close.

Aging and Cataracts

It is in the lens that cataracts develop. They cause clouding of the lens and may spread until the entire lens loses its transparency. The word "cataract" comes from a Latin term meaning "waterfall." This is because it appeared to ancient physicians that a veil of blurry water had fallen over the lenses of persons who had cataracts.

Some people think that cataracts are growths that form on the lens. However, Dr. David K. Berler points out: "A cataract is not a growth, or something new to the eye; it's merely a change in clarity of the normal lens." What causes this?

The reasons for cataracts are not well known. But a factor nearly always present

is aging. The lens of your eye is not solid like a piece of glass, but is a living organ that continues to grow throughout your life. Like an onion it is composed of many layers of cells. As new layers form, those beneath them become compressed, dehydrated and stiff. With the passing of time proteins in the nucleus of the lens can undergo changes that cause it to become deep yellow, brown or sometimes nearly black. Or, fibers in the many layers of cells surrounding the nucleus may become swollen or distorted, resulting in formation of gaps filled with fluid and debris. All of this scatters light, blurring vision.

Other Causes

However, aging is not the only cause of cataracts. A defect in your body's ability to utilize sugar may be implicated. According to one study, persons with diabetes proved to be four to six times more likely to develop cataracts than nondiabetics of the same age and sex. What is the reason for this? An article appearing in *Scientific American* of December 1975 noted that diabetes results in a raised level of glucose in the eye's aqueous humor. This triggers a chemical reaction that produces the sugar alcohol "sorbitol" in the lens. The consequent increase of pressure within lens fibers causes them to take up water from the aqueous and vitreous humors. As a result, the lens fibers become swollen and disrupted, eventually leading to loss of transparency.

Other causes of cataracts can include a drastic change of diet leading to deficiencies

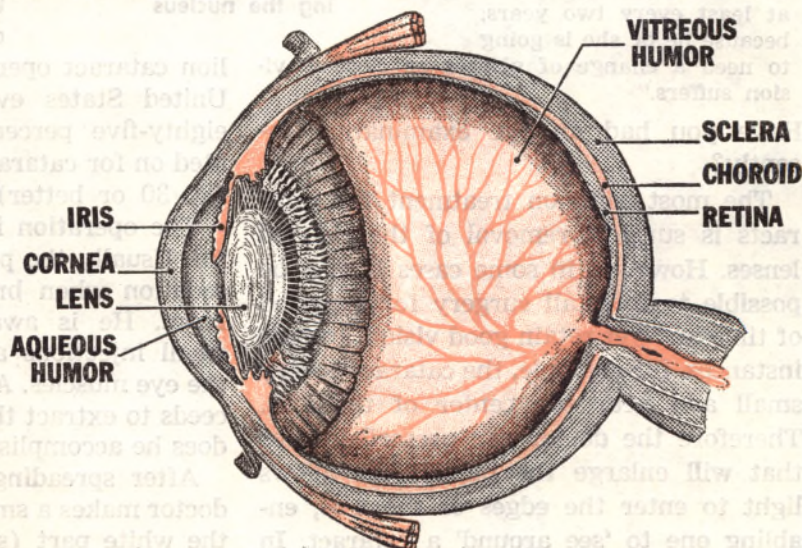
of certain vitamins or other elements of good nutrition. Traumatic cataracts result from a blow to the eye or the piercing of the eye by some sharp object, which dislocates and damages the lens. According to the book *Living with Your Eye Operation*, cataracts can result also from the effects of "ultraviolet light, X-ray, infrared (heat), and other kinds of radiation, including microwaves from ovens, radar, and diathermy." This publication therefore suggests that people wear goggles or sunglasses to filter out harmful rays when using sunlamps or other equipment that emit eye-damaging radiation.

Can You Avoid

Prolonged Vision Defects?

While no one can assure that you will never develop cataracts, there are steps that you can take so that you will suffer only minimal impairment of vision from them. How so?

It has been noted that in many cases a diet rich in vitamins A, B (especially B₂, or riboflavin) and C has been effective in retarding development of cataracts. Might such a diet help you? If you are a



diabetic, be sure not to neglect the disease. Proper management of diabetes can help you to avoid serious complications that may lead to cataracts.

When approaching the age when cataracts are most likely to develop, it makes sense to have regular eye examinations. In an interview published in *U.S. News & World Report*, Dr. Carl Kupfer, director of the National Eye Institute, offered this advice:

"We assume that every child has an eye examination at birth to pick up congenital defects. Next would be an examination during the age of 3½ to 4½. Then, if there are no problems, I would wait until the child enters puberty.

"After that, if a person is not having any symptoms of trouble, I don't think routine checks are necessary until the mid-40s period. After that time until about 60, a person should see an eye doctor at least every two years, because he or she is going to need a change of glasses as close-up vision suffers."

Have you had an eye examination recently?

The most common treatment for cataracts is surgical removal of the clouded lenses. However, in some cases it may be possible to forestall surgery for a period of time and yet retain good vision. In rare instances, for example, the cataract is very small and near the center of the lens. Therefore the doctor can prescribe drops that will enlarge the pupil. This allows light to enter the edges of the lens, enabling one to 'see around' a cataract. In

other cases, also very rare, cataracts may form around the edges of the lens while its center remains transparent. If this happens, special glasses or contact lenses can serve to direct more light toward the center of the lens.

But what if the only way to restore your eyesight is to resort to surgical removal of the lens? Is it a dangerous, painful operation? What would be your prospects for regaining good vision?

"Ninety-eight Percent Successful"

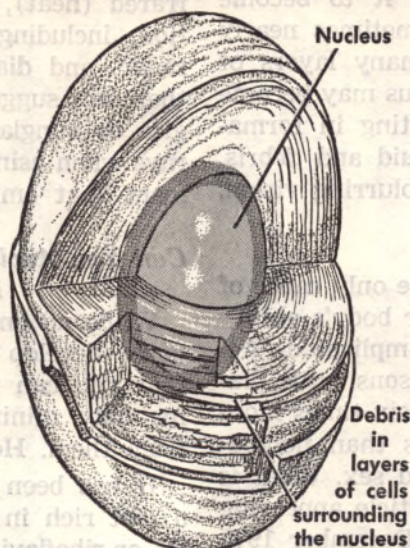
"Cataract removal is the most successful blindness-prevention operation," notes the book *Living with Your Eye Operation*, adding: "Today cataract removal operations are about ninety-eight percent successful. Testimony to their rate of success is the staggering statistic of a quarter of a mil-

lion cataract operations performed in the United States every year. . . . About eighty-five percent of all persons operated on for cataract achieve normal vision (20/30 or better)."

The operation itself is not overly painful. Usually the patient is put under mild sedation when brought to the operating room. He is awake but tranquil. Then small injections are given to anesthetize the eye muscles. After that the doctor proceeds to extract the cataractous lens. How does he accomplish that?

After spreading apart the eyelids, the doctor makes a small arc-shaped cut where the white part (sclera) of the eye meets

ENLARGEMENT OF THE LENS



A cataract may develop either in the nucleus of the lens or in the layers of cells surrounding the nucleus

the upper part of the iris. Then the cornea can be folded down, giving access through the pupil to the lens. Some surgeons remove a small section of the iris too. A special enzyme serves to dissolve the fine "zonules" that grip the lens, making it easier to extract.

There are different methods of removing the lens. Some surgeons use tweezer-like forceps. Others employ a *cryoprobe*, which is a small probe attached to a freezing unit that keeps the tip at about 15 degrees Fahrenheit (-9.4 degrees Centigrade). This freezes the lens so that it adheres to the probe and comes out gently in one piece. When the lens is gone, the void is filled with saline solution, which helps the eye to maintain its proper shape and internal pressures.

Another method of lens removal is *phacoemulsification*. This involves a special probe that pierces the lens. Dr. Berler explains: "This probe vibrates about 40,000 times a second, shattering the cataract, which is then sucked out in fragments through a very fine tube. A second tube injects fluid into the eye, so that there is a constant circulation of fluid going in and debris going out." An advantage of this procedure is that only a very small incision is necessary to admit the special vibrating probe. It can be closed up with a single stitch and the patient may be able to leave the hospital the same day or shortly thereafter.

After the Operation

An operation to remove cataracts, however, leaves the eye without a lens to focus sharp images on the retina. What compensates for this?

Special eyeglasses are the most readily available replacement for missing lenses. However, cataract glasses are very thick. Besides being heavy, they magnify everything some 25 to 30 percent, making things appear closer than they really are. And there is a great deal of distortion at the edges. When looking to the sides or up and down, a person wearing cataract glasses must learn to turn his head, rather than just his eyes.

Much of this problem disappears with contact lenses. Their magnification is much less; and since they adhere closely to the cornea, contact lenses move with the eyes, eliminating the need for exaggerated head movements.

Some researchers have developed plastic lenses that go right into the eye, replacing the normal lens. One type fits in the same location as the original lens. Another type is positioned in front of the iris. However, plastic lenses cannot change their shape to focus on objects at varying distances.

Has your vision become blurred? Could the problem be cataracts? If so, a relatively simple and painless operation along with corrective lenses is likely to restore good vision. Is it not worth a visit to your eye doctor to find out?

A CAR THAT "SEES"

✓ Visitors to the International Ocean Exposition, Expo '75, in Okinawa, saw many things of interest. Among them was a Computer-controlled Vehicle System, called simply CVS. Its cars, capable of carrying six passengers, were designed to operate either on a fixed track or on a public highway. Among their technological innovations was the "ability" to "see" another vehicle. The futuristic car would slow down or even stop if something suddenly pulled in front of it. It could also follow another vehicle and govern the distance between cars so as to prevent accidents. The cars on hand for the exposition were completely computer controlled, having no operators.

Can We Rely on *Bible Prophecy*?

LET us turn our attention back in time to the first century of our Common Era, when Nero was still emperor of the Roman Empire. The year is 66 C.E. The place is Jerusalem.

Historical records provide us fairly reliable information as to what actually happened there at that time. True, we do not have many details regarding any particular family that was then living in Jerusalem. Yet, from the information available, we can conclude with a degree of certainty

what the attitude of some of the people was.

The following story is based on events that fulfilled a prophecy of Jesus Christ. As you will see in the footnotes, its basic facts are drawn from the Bible and other historical records. The family of Pashhur and Abigail is imaginary, but the way in which they reacted before the then prevailing crisis may well have been typical of a number of families living then.

AN IMPORTANT PROPHECY

The busy streets of Jerusalem swarm with crowds. Richly dressed priests push their way past common laborers in plain attire. The self-satisfied wealthy make their passage, attended by servants. Loud voices bargaining over merchandise in the numerous shops give evidence of the general prosperity. Amidst the crowd we see Pashhur, a merchant in fabrics. He is a convert from Judaism to Christianity. A disciple who had known Jesus Christ personally studied the Scriptures with him, leading to his becoming a Christian.

Pashhur had been only a youth when Jesus died thirty-three years earlier. Mainly, all he remembered was that Jesus was widely talked about, and was a very controversial figure. Only after examining the

Scriptural evidence did Pashhur become convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah. As a resident of Jerusalem, Pashhur's interest had been caught by Jesus' prophecy about the city's destruction. Referring to copies of the Scriptural scrolls written by Matthew and Luke as confirmation, the disciple who studied with Pashhur had explained:

"One day four of the apostles came to Jesus on the Mount of Olives. They wanted to know the sign that would tell them when Jerusalem's destruction would be. However, they were also curious about Christ's presence and the conclusion of the system of things. The answer that Jesus gave to their question dealt with more than the desolation of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish system of

things; he spoke about the conclusion of the entire world system.”*

With that the disciple quoted the following words of Jesus as they are recorded by the Christian disciple Luke:

“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her; because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled. Woe to the pregnant women and the ones suckling a baby in those days! For there will be great necessity upon the land and wrath on this people; and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations.”†

* Matt. 24:1-3; Mark 13:3, 4; Luke 21:5-7.

† Luke 21:20-24.

A Deserved Fate

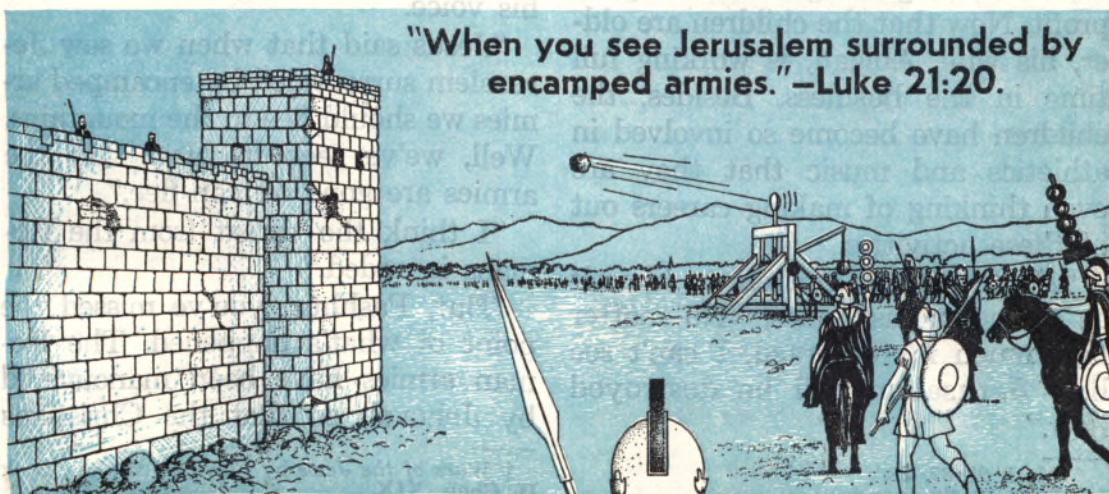
As far as Pashhur is concerned, Jerusalem deserves such a fate. Eyewitnesses had told him how the people had cried out for Jesus’ execution, saying: “Take him away! Take him away! Impale him!” And when the Roman governor asked: “Shall I impale your king?” it was the chief priests themselves who answered: “We have no king but Caesar.”‡ This murderous action of the religious leaders had disgusted Pashhur!

Many of Jesus’ followers had been treated similarly. More than twenty years after Jesus’ death, the apostle Paul was mobbed in Jerusalem.[□] And recently, James, Jesus’ half brother, and other faithful Christians had been stoned to death in Jerusalem.[△] As Pashhur makes his way home through the busy streets, he thinks: “The city has certainly lived up to

‡ John 19:15.

□ Acts 21:26-32.

△ *Antiquities of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, Book XX, Chap. IX, par. 1.



its reputation!" Jesus' words come back to him: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent forth to her."*

There is no question in Pashhur's mind: Jerusalem does deserve what Jesus had foretold for her. "The days will come upon you," Jesus said, "when your enemies will build around you a fortification with pointed stakes and will encircle you and distress you from every side, and they will dash you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not discern the time of your being inspected."†

"But *when?*" That question preoccupies Pashhur, particularly now that revolt against Roman occupation has broken out in Jerusalem.

Putting Off Its Coming

He and his family hope that the destruction will not come too soon. After years of hard work, their fabric business is beginning to show a good profit. Now that the children are older, his wife, Abigail, is working full time in the business. Besides, the children have become so involved in athletics and music that they are even thinking of making careers out of these activities.

"Ah," Pashhur mutters to himself as he nears his house, "No matter how much it's deserved, I can't see how Jerusalem will be destroyed now."

He pauses at the doorstep and looks toward the temple. It was just recently that the Roman armies had almost taken it. They had come to put down the revolt. But then their leader, Cestius Gallus, ordered his men to begin withdrawing.

"Who knows why?" Pashhur pondered. "Well, that does not matter now. I only know that thousands of the withdrawing Romans were killed.‡ What a victory for Jerusalem—and what a close call for us!"

Pashhur, consoled by this thought, breathes a sigh of relief and goes into the house. Some of his associates from the Christian congregation are already there. He greets them warmly, curious about why they have come.

"We must leave Jerusalem at once!" says the elder in the group.

"Why? It isn't likely that Rome will send another army so soon after the last one's defeat," replies Pashhur with a degree of conviction in his voice.

"Jesus said that when we saw Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies we should flee to the mountains. Well, we've seen it. Now that the armies are gone we can flee."

"I think the threat from the Romans is ended."

"But, Pashhur, you've missed the point of what's happened. The Roman armies have been maneuvered by Jehovah so that the Christians

* Matt. 23:37, 38.

† Luke 19:43, 44.

‡ *Wars of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, Book II, Chap. XIX.

can escape from Jerusalem before the city is destroyed. Remember Jesus' instructions, 'When you see *Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies*, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains.'"^{*}

"Jesus did not mean right *now*," Pashhur answers. "That time will come later. And when it does my family and I will leave Jerusalem."

No amount of persuasion can con-



The Christians leave Jerusalem

vince Pashhur to take his family and travel with the other Christians to the region around Pella in the mountains of Gilead.[†] Numerous visits by his Christian brothers do not make him or his family see the necessity of leaving Jerusalem at a period when things are going so well for them

^{*} Luke 21:20, 21.

[†] *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, translated from the Greek, by C. F. Cruse (1894), page 75.

materially. Besides, they have confidence in Jerusalem's army.

When Pashhur says good-bye to the last of the Christians leaving Jerusalem he feels that they will return as soon as the situation settles down, and he will be magnanimous about it when they do; he won't chide them.

During the years 67, 68 and 69 the situation does not stabilize in Jerusalem. It deteriorates. At last, warring Jewish factions prevent flight from the city. Worst of all, Pashhur and his family miss the spiritual association of their Christian friends who have fled across the Jordan River into the mountains of Gilead.

The Prophecy Fulfilled

The spring of 70 C.E. brings an altogether different source of terror. The Roman armies return under the command of the new emperor's own son, Titus, and surround Jerusalem. For miles around they cut down the trees, make pointed stakes of them and build a solid palisade around the city. Escape is now impossible![‡]

The fear-filled days under siege pass, one by one. Pashhur's store of food runs out. Pitiless hunger strikes his household. Outside, unrestrained soldiers loot what food they can find. So as not to add to Pashhur's already

[‡] *Wars of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, Book V, Chap. XII.



The Arch of Titus in Rome, which shows Jews being taken captive in 70 C.E. This confirms the truthfulness of God's prophetic Word

constant worry, Abigail does not mention her hunger, but neither she nor her husband can hide their anguish from each other.

One day, as the famine bears down ever more heavily, an unusual commotion brings Pashhur out to investigate. When he comes back Abigail quickly discerns he has seen something dreadful. "Mary, the daughter

of Eleazer from Bethzub has eaten her infant son," he explains.* "It is happening again the same as in Jeremiah's day. We, too, shall perish, Abigail."†

Jerusalem does not suffer long. By the summer of 70 C.E. the Romans finally capture and destroy it. During the entire siege, over a million Jews are killed; some 97,000 are taken captive.‡ Among the dead, Pashhur and his family. They had known of Jesus' prophecy and the instructions that he had given for salvation. But because they refused to act on that knowledge, they paid the price of disobedience.□

* *Wars of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, Book VI, Chap. III, par. 4.

† Deut. 28:53; Lam. 2:20.

‡ *Wars of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, Book VI, Chap. IX, par. 3.

□ Matt. 7:24-27.

A LESSON FOR TODAY

Yes, this Bible prophecy was fulfilled. The same will be true of all that is foretold or promised in God's Word. As Joshua, the ancient leader of God's nation of Israel, said: "You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed."—Josh. 23:14.

Of course, as noted at the beginning of our story, the Bible does not tell about the individual lives of those living just prior

to or during Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E. It does not even tell about Jerusalem's destruction; secular history does. However, likely there were families resembling the one we have described, that failed to act on knowledge and flee to the mountains in obedience to Jesus' instructions.

But of what concern is all of this to us living today? We do not face any similar situation—or do we?

The fact is, we do! The prophecy of Jesus identified more than merely the end of the Jewish system of things back in

70 C.E. That prophecy also identified the time of Christ's "presence" in Kingdom power, the time when the end of this *entire world* system of things would be at hand. One reason why we know this is so is that Jesus said: "When you see these things occurring, *know that the kingdom of God is near.*"—Luke 21:31.

Well, what did Jesus foretell would mark the time of the end of this entire system, and when the kingdom of God was near? Among other things that would be occurring, Jesus said: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be great earthquakes, and in one place after another pestilences and food shortages."—Luke 21:10, 11.

The fact is that these are events we have actually seen taking place today! In this century, since 1914, mankind has been plunged into two catastrophic world wars, and today the nations sit on the brink of even more devastating nuclear warfare. Also, earthquakes, pestilences and food shortages are more widespread than at any other time in history.

So when one compares Jesus' complete prophecy with present-day events, it becomes clear that *right now* this prophecy is undergoing a remarkable fulfillment. What does this mean?

It means that the end of this entire system is near, even as the surrounding of Jerusalem by the Roman armies under Cestius Gallus was a sign that Jerusalem's end was at hand. And just as special action was necessary for preservation then—fleeing to safety in the mountains—so appropriate action is needed today in order to be *saved* out of a global destruction that is about to come as God executes judgment on the wicked.

The Action Needed

It is not flight to a particular geographical place that will save one. Jesus himself

showed this. He concluded his prophecy speaking specifically about the time of the end of this entire system of things, by saying:

"Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:34-36.

Yes, not a flight to some literal mountains, but spiritual awareness is what is now vital. We need to be alert to the present-day fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, and to be mindful that its fulfillment means that the end of this system is close. Therefore, we need to be very careful of our conduct, even as the apostle Peter wrote:

"Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah . . . Hence, beloved ones, since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace."—2 Pet. 3:11-14.

This is the action needed. Our flight to a place of refuge today is accomplished by conforming our lives to God's righteous requirements. Yes, by doing the will of God we will escape the destruction that is coming upon the entire world of humankind, as the apostle John wrote: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

Do not doubt for a moment that these

Bible prophecies will be fulfilled! Just as surely as Jesus' prophecy regarding Jerusalem's destruction in the first century came true, so will the prophecies about

the end of this present system of things be fulfilled. Yes, we have every reason to believe in the reliability of Bible prophecy and to act on that belief.

I WAS AN EVANGELICAL PASTOR

THE religious scene in Colombia has witnessed some very pronounced changes during recent years. The vast majority of my countrymen still profess the Roman Catholic faith. But few could be called ardent Catholics. The last few decades have seen more and more going over to other religions, including fundamentalist Protestant groups that emphasize personal salvation in their preaching.

For the first eighteen years of my life I was a devout Roman Catholic. I went to Mass daily, confessed and took Communion two or three times a week, and participated in the crusades of the Church, such as the Sacred Heart of Jesus Crusade. In my hometown of Armenia, Quindío, our family became close friends of the priests.

About the year 1945, an elderly Evangelical couple turned up on our doorstep in search of a place to stay overnight. They had with them a copy of the Bible, the first one that we had ever seen. Mother became so interested in it that she kept the visitors up almost till daybreak talking about it. She soon realized that what her church taught was not in complete harmony with the Word of God. Mother became an Evangelical. Before long, Fa-

ther and the rest of us in the household were investigating the Bible with her.

Little did we realize what was in store for someone who, living in a Roman Catholic community, left the Church. Former friends became bigoted enemies. When my baby brother died, the priest refused us permission to bury him in the Church cemetery. As there was no other cemetery, we had no recourse but to bury him in our backyard.

A year later, when Mother died, we passed through a similar experience. "For studying the Bible," said the priest from the pulpit, "that woman does not deserve to be buried in holy ground. Any old coffee patch will do." That sort of treatment did not endear the Church of my youth to me. Refused permission to bury her in the cemetery, Father, in desperation, spoke to the gravedigger who then agreed to open the cemetery at three o'clock in the morning. So at that predawn hour, unknown to the priest, Mother was buried.

The last time that I entered a Catholic church was in 1948. While visiting some relatives in Santa Rosa de Cabal, I attended a Mass at which the priest sermonized against a certain newspaper that had

printed something offensive to the Church. In his denunciation, the priest said that anyone who bought the newspaper would burn in the fires of hell the same as if he were a Liberal. That comment about Liberals did not sit very well with me, for at that time I was a Catholic Liberal.

It was in the same year that political violence flared up throughout Colombia, touched off by the assassination in Bogotá of a popular Liberal party leader, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. For years the nation was on the verge of civil war. All that bloodshed between the clergy-supported Catholic Conservatives and the Catholic Liberals left me somewhat confused and disillusioned with the Church.

My uncle was serving as a policeman when the violence was at its worst. Preoccupied with so much killing going on among professed Catholics, he asked a priest from the town of Armenia if he did not think it was something very sinful. The priest replied reassuringly that, if my uncle was afraid to use his firearms, he would bless them so there would be no danger. The priest reminded him of what Peter did in trying to defend the Christ, how he took out his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's slave, Malchus. (John 18:10, 11) In the same way, added the priest, the Church had to defend the Roman Catholic faith even if it meant destroying the enemies from their mother's womb. That estranged me even more from the Church.

So I continued investigating the Bible with the Evangelicals and in 1949 was baptized by them. The following year I was ordained in Pereira as a pastor and assigned to my hometown of Armenia.

My Life as an Evangelical

The Evangelical group with which I first associated was founded by an American. Returning to the United States in

about 1930, he sold, not only the church building, but also the religious movement. A couple of members thought it rather immoral that the congregation should be sold as if composed of irrational animals. So they formed an independent movement that they called "Fundamental Apostolic Colombian Church." One of the statutes on which it was founded was that its ministers should receive no salary. They had in mind what Jesus said about 'the hired man who does not care for the sheep.' —John 10:11-15.

Some thirty years later, the founder of the original movement returned to Colombia. He was so impressed with the progress of the breakaway group that he asked to become an associate. Ostensibly, he agreed to the statutes. However, within a year or so, some of us realized that many of the other pastors were no longer employed secularly. We discovered that the American was secretly paying them. Confronted with his violation of the statutes, he said that we could put the matter to a vote. The majority of the pastors were more than content to remain with the American.

The fact that most of my colleagues preached for a salary discouraged me. I had acquired the knowledge that the Divine Word should not be preached for hire. (Matt. 10:8) Besides, as a fingerprint expert and an accountant, I had turned down very good job offers in order to become a pastor. It also was disheartening to observe the contention and competition among the pastors and disquieting to become aware of the differences that divide the Evangelicals into so many sects.

Then, for economic reasons, I moved to Bogotá in 1954, and did not resume serving as a pastor until after leaving the city in 1960. However, during this time I continued studying the Bible and comparing its teachings with those of the various

sects. On becoming disenchanted with one sect, I would pass over to another.

I first attended the services of a Pentecostal group. To my surprise, the one officiating was a woman. I realized that, Scripturally, the woman should not exercise authority over the man. (1 Tim. 2: 11, 12) When I asked about the point, I was informed that the former pastor had abandoned the congregation because it had been unable to meet his salary demands. They offered me the opportunity to serve as pastor. So one night I met with the ones in charge in order to compare their teachings with my beliefs.

Among other things, they claimed that they had received the gift of healing, so they had no need for doctors or medicine. All that they had to do was pray, they said, and they would be healed of any ailment. Later, on the subject of the Lord's Supper, I asked them why they celebrated it using individual cups. They acknowledged that when Jesus was on earth the participants did share a common cup. However, at that time there was not the same risk of getting a contagious disease as there is now. I asked them where their faith in their so-called healing power was if they were so concerned about infection from use of the common cup in imitation of the Lord. That brought our meeting to an abrupt end at three o'clock in the morning.

A couple of days later I visited the church, but the woman who presided was not there. That morning she had become ill and had to be taken to the hospital. For me, this confirmed that they did not have the gift of healing.

Thereafter, I became associated with another religious organization with Pentecostal tendencies. In a revival campaign staged at the Fairgrounds in Bogotá, an exhibition of the gift of healing was programmed for the final day. Yielding to the

insistence of a friend and to my own curiosity, I went.

An elderly blind man was led to the platform and took a kneeling position. Men as well as women began to pray over him, asking that the spirit of blindness be dispelled and his sight be restored. After a while, the blind man was asked if he could see. He moved his head from side to side and replied that he could not.

They had asked the audience to stand and join in praying. Being somewhat incredulous, I had remained seated. Having observed this, they were now saying that I was the culprit. Because of my lack of faith, they had been unable to perform the miracle. After urging me to participate, they again prayed over the blind man. Still I refused to cooperate. Asking the blind man if he could see, the answer remained negative. Once more they blamed their failure on that "unbeliever" who had entered in among them.

Approached afterward by the ministers in charge, I pointed out to them that faith on the part of the unbelievers was not a prerequisite to Jesus' success in performing miracles. (Matt. 8:16; John 9:1-7, 35-39) On the contrary, he had often performed them to convince the unbelievers that he was truly sent from God. (John 10:37, 38, 42; 11:42-45) So if they did indeed heal by the power of God, let them overcome my disbelief by effecting the miracle!

My Contact with Jehovah's Witnesses

Now I must tell you about another facet of my life. It has to do with my relations with Jehovah's Witnesses through the years.

It all began in 1952. On a visit to the home of my fiancée, I noticed a book that her father had obtained. It was entitled "This Means Everlasting Life." Knowing that I was interested in anything related

to the Bible, he gave it to me. A fellow pastor informed me that it was "Russellism," a name he used with reference to Jehovah's Witnesses. Although it had some good parts, it was dangerous, he told me, because it also contained error. I was curious to know what error it contained. The more I investigated, the more I came to know about Jehovah's Witnesses.

At the time that I was ordained to be a pastor, a friend named Fabio Rodas was also. Soon thereafter, though, Fabio became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. When I next met up with him, he cleared up some doubts I had in connection with the book I had received. From then on, whenever we met, he provided me with more Witness publications.

On account of Fabio's kind insistence, in time I agreed to let the Witnesses study the Bible with me. But I stubbornly refused to disavow my belief in the Trinity, that "mystery" that alleges that God is not one, but three in one. My conviction was based almost entirely on one verse, 1 John 5:7. The Witnesses would invariably point out to me that that part of this verse is spurious, a later uninspired addition to the Holy Scriptures. To me, though, that was just a weak argument deceitfully employed by them.

But then, in 1956, in Bogotá, I had one of those chance encounters with Fabio. I accepted his invitation to go to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. There I was introduced to the Rivera family and arrangements were made for them to study with me. I presented them with my insistence on the Trinity. With calmness, one of them took a Spanish Catholic Nacar-Colunga Bible, turned to 1 John 5:7, and had me read the corresponding footnote. I read: "This verse, that in the Vulgate says: 'Three are those that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the three are one,' is

not found in the ancient manuscripts, neither Greek nor Latin, etc., and is unknown from the Fathers. It appears to have Spanish origin and to have come forth little by little by way of an exegesis [interpretation] of the preceding verse. Only in the 13th century did it acquire the form that it has today in the Vulgate."

On reading that, I could see that Jehovah's Witnesses were right in saying that this part of the verse had no rightful place in the inspired Scriptures. And I was astonished to learn that the Evangelicals participated in the same deception as the Roman Catholics in using it to support their Trinity concept.

From then on, I had more confidence in the Witnesses. When I again served as pastor, their teachings influenced the content of my sermons. As a source of sermon material, I even pasted in my Bible the "Scriptural Summary, Without Comment, of Primary Doctrines," published by the Witnesses in the back of their book *"Equipped for Every Good Work."*

Yet, I refused to sever my ties with the Evangelicals. Why? Above all, I did not want to displease my family, all of whom were Evangelicals, several of them pastors, including my father. I also harbored certain unfounded prejudices against the Witnesses. Perhaps, too, I was looking for a way out, an escape from a responsibility that was becoming more evident the more I studied with Jehovah's Witnesses.

My Departure from Evangelicalism

Once I saw the importance of the name of the true God, Jehovah, I used it constantly in my preaching. As a result, my superiors wondered to what extent I had been influenced by Jehovah's Witnesses. I was called before the church court. To have their confidence in me reaffirmed, they asked me to give a sermon exposing

the errors of Jehovah's Witnesses. Since that would require me to be inconsistent with my own beliefs, I replied: "Under no circumstances will I give such a sermon. If what I have been teaching from the Bible harmonizes with the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses, then I will have to become one of them. 'Choose for yourselves whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.'" —Josh. 24:15.

To sever all ties with the Evangelical organization, I moved my family from Pereira to Cali. That was toward the end of 1967. Early one Sunday afternoon, I headed for the center of town wondering how I could locate the Witnesses. Then, on the bus, I noticed a copy of *The Watchtower* sticking out of a man's back pocket. I decided to follow him. He led me directly to the Kingdom Hall. After the meetings that afternoon, arrangements were made for me to study again.

Previously I had studied with the Witnesses up to the point of baptism. But they had refused to acknowledge as valid my Evangelical baptism, even though, as I reasoned, I had been immersed or baptized 'in the name of the Father, Son and holy spirit.' (Matt. 28:19) On approaching the subject this time, I asked the one considering it with me, José Patrocinio Hernández: "But, why should I be baptized again?" He simply asked me: "Did you know the name of the Father when you

were baptized?" Since I did not, it was obvious that I had not been baptized 'in His name.'

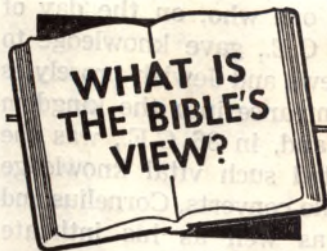
Then, in connection with being baptized 'in the name of the holy spirit,' he asked me: "Did the organization that baptized you give evidence of having God's spirit by preserving peace and unity?" (Eph. 4:3) Then I recalled that the very Evangelical minister that baptized me, Angel de Jesús Vélez, just two weeks later had formed a new, dissident sect. Since "contentions, divisions, sects" are not "the fruitage of the spirit" but "the works of the flesh," it was clear that they did not have God's spirit.—Gal. 5:19-23.

And so, at long last, on May 10, 1969, in company with my two older children, I submitted to Christian baptism in symbol of my dedication to God. My wife and two younger children did so later.

In retrospect, I appreciate the sentiments of the apostle Paul when he said: "You were once darkness, but you are now light in connection with the Lord. Go on walking as children of light, for the fruitage of the light consists of . . . truth." (Eph. 5:8, 9) The recollection of my experiences as a part of religious systems of Christendom impresses me with how great my darkness was. Now, as a child of light, how grateful I am to serve as a God-ordained pastor or shepherd and to bring forth the fruitage of the light, namely, the truth.—Contributed.

'Carrying Utensils Through The Temple'

● While Jesus Christ was on earth, it apparently was customary for people to make use of the temple area as a shortcut. In connection with his cleaning the temple shortly before Passover of 33 C.E., we read: "He would not let anyone carry a utensil through the temple." (Mark 11:16) What was the reason for this? Jesus Christ evidently did not want the Israelites to detract from the sanctity of the temple by using the sacred area as a public thoroughfare when carrying items from one part of Jerusalem to another part.



Who Is the Rock-Mass?

"YOU are Peter," said Jesus Christ, "and on this rock-mass I will build my congregation." (Matt. 16:18) Just who is the one upon whom the congregation is built? This question can be answered by considering the context of Jesus' words and other scriptures that speak of the "rock-mass."

The Son of God had asked his disciples: "Who are men saying the Son of man is?" Their reply: "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "You, though, who do you say I am?" Jesus continued. Peter answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." At this point Jesus said: "Happy you are, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but my Father who is in the heavens did. Also, I say to you, You are Peter, and on this rock-mass I will build my congregation, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the

keys of the kingdom of the heavens."—Matt. 16:13-19.

Note what was being discussed—the identity of the "Son of man." Peter correctly identified Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Because this had been revealed to Peter by the Father, evidently through the operation of the holy spirit, the Son of God could speak of Simon Peter as "happy." Peter's happiness was one of a spiritual kind, testifying to his having an approved standing with the Father.

Then comes the statement about the rock-mass, which Jesus preceded with the words: "I say to you, You are Peter." Does this mean that the Son of God now changed the subject under consideration from his own identity to that of Peter? This does not appear to have been the case. Why not? Because after directing his comments to Peter, Jesus, according to the Bible record, "sternly charged the disciples not to say to anybody that he was the Christ." (Matt. 16:20) So the whole import of what was being discussed continued to be the identity of Jesus, the "Son of man."

But what did Jesus mean when he said, "You are Peter"? The name Peter was not originally borne by "Simon son of Jonah." It was given to him by the Son of God when he was called to be a disciple. John 1:42 reports: "When Jesus looked upon him he said: 'You are Simon the son of John [Jonah]; you will be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter)." As Simon Peter had correctly identified Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," so Jesus now identified Simon by the name that he had given him, "Peter." In view of Simon's confession of faith in Jesus, the name "Peter" (meaning "stone" or "rock," that is, a separate stone or boulder) was most appropriate. It revealed that Simon, in the conviction expressed, had the firmness and solidity characteristic of stone and, therefore, could be of fine service to the Son of God. The name "Peter" identified Simon as to who he was just as correctly as the expression "the Christ, the Son of the living God" identified Jesus.

The Son of God, though, did not then go on to say, 'and on you, Peter, I will build my congregation.' No. He said, "on this rock-mass I will build my congregation."

Since the subject under consideration was the identity of Jesus, the "rock-mass" must have been the one whom Peter acknowledged as "the Christ, the Son of the living God."* In other words, Jesus was saying, 'Upon the rock-mass, which you, Peter, confess, I will build my congregation.'

This understanding is also confirmed by Jesus' saying that "the gates of Hades will not overpower" the congregation. In a revelation to the apostle John, the Son of God states: "I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Rev. 1:18) Hence, because it is built on the one who can release its members from Hades and death, the congregation cannot be overpowered by or permanently restrained in Hades.

Manifestly, the "keys of the kingdom" that were given to Peter could not have been the "keys of death and of Hades." They must have related to opening up the opportunity for individuals to enter the kingdom. Jesus' words at Luke 11:52 point to what these "keys" are. He said to Jewish religious leaders who refused to take advantage of Kingdom opportunities: "You took away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not go in, and those going in you hindered!" In keeping with the fact that "keys" were committed to Peter, this

* Augustine (354-430 C.E.), usually called "Saint Augustine," at one time believed that Peter was the rock-mass but later changed his view. He wrote: "The rock is not so named from Peter, but Peter from the rock (*non enim a Petro petra, sed Petrus a petra*), even as Christ is not so called after the Christian, but the Christian after Christ. For the reason why the Lord says, 'On this rock I will build my church,' is that Peter had said: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' On this rock, which thou hast confessed, says he, I will build my church. For Christ was the rock (*petra enim erat Christus*), upon which also Peter himself was built; for other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

apostle was the one who, on the day of Pentecost of 33 C.E., gave knowledge to the assembled Jews and Jewish proselytes about gaining entrance into the kingdom of the heavens and, in 36 C.E., was the one who imparted such vital knowledge to the first Gentile converts, Cornelius and his household, as well as his intimate friends.—Acts 2:14-41; 10:19-48.

Other parts of the Bible provide additional evidence that the rock-mass definitely is the Christ. The apostle Peter refers to fellow believers as "coming to [Jesus Christ] as to a living stone, rejected, it is true, by men, but chosen, precious, with God." These Christians "as living stones are being built up a spiritual house." (1 Pet. 2:4, 5) The apostle Paul made the same point when writing to Christians at Ephesus: "You have been built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, while Christ Jesus himself is the foundation cornerstone." (Eph. 2:20) Referring to the rock-mass from which the Israelites at two different locations received a miraculous supply of water, Paul wrote: "They used to drink from the spiritual rock-mass that followed them, and that rock-mass meant [was a prophetic type of] the Christ."—1 Cor. 10:4; Ex. 17:5-7; Num. 20:1-11.

The combined testimony of the Scriptures thus makes it clear that Jesus, the one whom Peter acknowledged as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," is the rock-mass. It is on him that the congregation is built, with the apostles, including Peter, serving as a secondary foundation.

"Like A Winter Torrent"

◆ Because his brothers failed him in his time of need, Job compared their dealings to a "winter torrent." (Job 6:15) Such a torrent may be of considerable size when swollen by melting ice and snow. But in the summer when there is a real need for water it may dry up, providing no refreshment for man and beast.



China's Catholicism

◆ Only a few Roman Catholic priests still function in the People's Republic of China, according to the *Washington Post*. And the few existing Catholic Church congregations "are made up of a dwindling number of elderly believers." Priest Fu Tin-shan of Peking said that Peking's Catholic clergy approve of divorce and abortion and believe that the Vatican "has always been a tool of imperialism." According to the *Washington Post*, Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Party "scored more points than God" in Fu's explanation of Chinese Catholic theology.

Telling Them Apart

◆ In some lands, boy and girl students dress so much alike that, at a glance, some find it difficult to tell them apart. American psychologist Mary Jenni and her zoologist husband Donald say that there is a simple method of telling the students apart: It is how they carry their schoolbooks. It was noted that beyond the lower grades, girls usually wrap one or both arms around their books and either rest them on their hips or clasp them against their chests. Male students invariably carry books in one hand at the side of the body. While the reason may be cultural, it was thought that the wider hips of girls make

it easier to rest books in that area, since trying to carry them at the side would extend the arm outward at an awkward angle. The existence of a "genetic predisposition for females to assume more closed positions than males" was not ruled out. The same book-carrying pattern was noted in a number of different countries of North and South America. However, is this the case elsewhere? How do they carry their books in your land?

What Were the Flashes?

◆ During some of the Apollo moon missions, astronauts saw peculiar, unexplained flashes of light while in deep space. Recent experiments in New York's Brookhaven National Laboratory have led scientists there to the conclusion that the flashes were the results of cosmic rays passing through the astronauts' eyes. Each particle created an "electromagnetic shock wave" resulting in crescent-shaped flashes in their vision. Thus, outside the protective envelope of earth's atmosphere, cosmic rays could be a real threat to man.

Viewer Saves Lives

◆ A heat-sensitive infrared viewer was used to save lives in the flash flood that overwhelmed campers along a river canyon in Colorado last year. The viewer, which can identify

heat patterns, was used by helicopter police to scan the canyon for survivors. It located people who were stranded in heavily wooded areas or were clinging to canyon walls. Use of the device brought much quicker rescue than would searching the canyon on foot.

Fresh Water Under Ocean

◆ A zone of fresh water has been found under the Atlantic Ocean's floor. It is beneath the Continental Shelf and extends as much as sixty miles (about 100 kilometers) from the United States coast. One view is that the fresh water entered the sediments of the Continental Shelf thousands of years ago when the ocean level was hundreds of feet lower than it is today, and when the shelf was exposed to rainwater.

Talking to Computers

◆ Attempts are being made to design computers that can "understand" human speech and respond to questions. Of course, answers can be only those programmed into the computers. However, even with the use of a very limited vocabulary, small variations in voice sounds have disorganized the computers. For instance, the difference between "ice cream" and "I scream" proves far too complicated for the computer. Yet, the human ear can distinguish between hundreds of thousands of sounds and differences of meaning.

New Life in Thames

◆ A sea horse was the most recent find among fish that have returned to the section of the Thames River that passes through London. The sea horse, along with the eighty-six other species that have now returned, had once disappeared due to pollution. By 1957, sewage, industrial waste and detergents had virtually killed all fish in that section of the river. But now they have begun to come back, the result of a successful antipollution campaign.

Paying New Fathers

◆ Sweden is experimenting with a system of paid paternity leave. Under the plan, a father can stay home with his newborn child for up to seven months while collecting 95 percent of his salary. If the mother also works, the parents can split the seven-month period between them in any way they want. So far only about 7 percent of Sweden's new fathers have taken advantage of the program, but the number has quadrupled since 1974 and is expected to increase.

Paris to Saigon

◆ It is now possible to travel by train about 10,000 miles (16,000 kilometers) from Paris to Saigon, the longest rail route in the world. The last link was completed when the government of Vietnam announced that reconstruction work had been finished on the 1,050 miles (1,690 kilometers) of track linking Hanoi in the north to Saigon in the south. It is said that agreements have been reached on the servicing of international passenger trains.

More in Less

◆ Continuing development of electronic devices has resulted in more and more being put in less and less space. This is particularly true of computer semiconductor memory units whose circuitry is embedded in flat "chips" of silicon. In 1971, a memory unit was able to store 1,000 "bits" of information. In 1974, 4,000-bit units were developed. This year, computer manufacturers are introducing 16,000-bit memory chips. They are contained in an area about one eighth of an inch long and one quarter of an inch wide (three tenths by six tenths of a centimeter).

Four Millionth Invention

◆ The Patent Office in Washington, D.C., announced the issuing of patent number four million. Since the office was

founded in 1790, it took 121 years, to 1911, for the first million patents. But the last million came in only fifteen years, since 1961. *The Wall Street Journal* commented: "While only a few of those 4 million inventions have proved to be dramatically important to mankind, the total represents an enormous collection of human creativity."

"Free" World Shrinking

◆ The number of nations regarded as "free" continues to shrink. These are countries where liberties such as freedom of the press, religion and assembly are enjoyed. At the close of 1976, fewer than 20 percent of the world's four billion people lived in such "free" nations. That is the lowest proportion since the surveys began in 1952.

Expanding Deserts

◆ According to Egyptian professor Mohammed Kassas, each year the Sahara desert consumes an area twice the size of Cyprus. Much of the loss is due to man's abuse of the land. He warned that any hope that the underdeveloped nations could open up large areas of desert to agriculture was a "dream." Without regular rainfall, or dependable irrigation systems, deserts can support only limited agriculture. He added: "All over the world, when you go out into the desert and use modern intensive agriculture, the system fails." Under present conditions, he said, traditional and simpler agricultural techniques based on existing natural cycles are all that will succeed in the desert.

New VD Strain Spreads

◆ Various countries have reported a new strain of gonorrhea that is completely resistant to penicillin. It is thought to have originated in Asia and Africa. Now Canada also reports occurrence of the disease. And as others have already

noted, the *Toronto Star* observed: "Penicillin is normally used to treat venereal diseases but researchers have found the new strain may even thrive on it."

Painless Dentistry

◆ A new method of removing tooth decay has been developed at the Tufts University Dental School in Massachusetts. A chemical spray removes the decay. Dentists use a needle to squirt the chemical onto the cavity. Within minutes the decayed material breaks up. Some preliminary drilling may be required to expose the cavity enough for the chemical to work. Afterward, only a small amount of drilling is needed to give the hole its proper shape for filling. While the method has been tested on human patients, any general application is thought to be years away.

Sexually Abused Children

◆ Los Angeles police estimate that about 30,000 children are sexually abused there each year. Of that number, some 25,000 young boys from fourteen to seventeen years of age are used by approximately 15,000 adult males for homosexual acts. Often, these youngsters are runaways who allow such abuse to make money. A police official said: "This is not just a Los Angeles problem, although it is becoming more prevalent here. It's like a contagious disease, similar to the contagion of narcotics abuse, and it's spreading all over the country."

Overnutrition "Plague"

◆ The lack of an adequate diet causes more deaths in many countries than any other factor except old age. However, researchers of the Worldwatch Institute state: "The number of people afflicted by the modern plague of overnutrition is approaching the number suffering malnutrition." Persons with an affluent diet consume large amounts of animal fats,

refined products and sugar, as well as other commercially processed and chemically preserved foods. This diet has been linked to six of the ten leading causes of death. The condition is most common in North America, but has taken hold in western Europe, Japan and the Soviet Union.

Main Cause of Hunger

◆ Economists of the World Bank have concluded that world hunger is more of a distribution problem than a matter of how much food is produced. In most underdeveloped nations the wealthier people who can afford the food eat well. But, according to *Science* magazine, "even if incomes in underdeveloped countries increase as projected, the poor will not be able to buy themselves a substantially better diet for the foreseeable future." These economists estimate that 75 percent of the populations of underdeveloped

countries have inadequate diets.

Call Your Own Bus

◆ The city of Angers in northwestern France uses a novel system of bus transportation. The service consists of a small fleet of deluxe "mini" buses that run along an established route. Subscribers to the system pay from eight to twenty-five cents a ride, depending upon usage, and also \$4 a year for a magnetic card that is inserted into a signal box at any one of a number of posts along the line. When the card is inserted, a signal indicating the passenger's position is sent to the central control office. Within five minutes a bus comes by to pick him up. Some buses run at regular twenty-minute intervals, while others are held in reserve. If a signal is from a point more than five minutes away from a regular bus, the controller radios for a reserve bus.

Were Funds Misspent?

◆ Mayor Ella Stack of Darwin, Australia, a city ravaged by a cyclone on December 25, 1974, said recently that much of the money raised internationally for the victims of that disaster had been misspent. Dr. Stack had been deputy director of the defunct Cyclone Tracey Relief Fund, and was quoted as saying: "The trust fund spent \$8.5 million of its \$10 million in direct grants and a vast proportion of that money was wasted—much of it either bet away or spent on drink."

"Handsome" Buddha

◆ A 13-meter (43-foot) "great image of Buddha in Tokyo" was recently erected at the city's Jorenji temple. The giant figure is just the third largest in the nation. But, reports the *Daily Yomiuri*, "the temple claims that the bronze image . . . is handsomer than" the largest one in Nara, Japan.

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