

OCTOBER 8, 1979

Awake!

**THE
WORLD'S
BEST
SELLER**

**—ITS FIGHT TO LIVE
ITS VALUE TO YOU**

FEATURE ARTICLES

In most lands the Bible can be easily obtained. But it was not always so. Although the Bible teaches one to love God and one's neighbor, both brutal and crafty efforts have been made for centuries to destroy it. Why? Why is it that, despite such opposition, the Bible is the most widely distributed book in the world? As you read the following series of articles, consider how that book can benefit you

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WHY THIS MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED

"Awake!" is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. It also shows how to cope with today's problems. Most importantly, "Awake!" builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new order within our generation.

The Bible translation used in "Awake!" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

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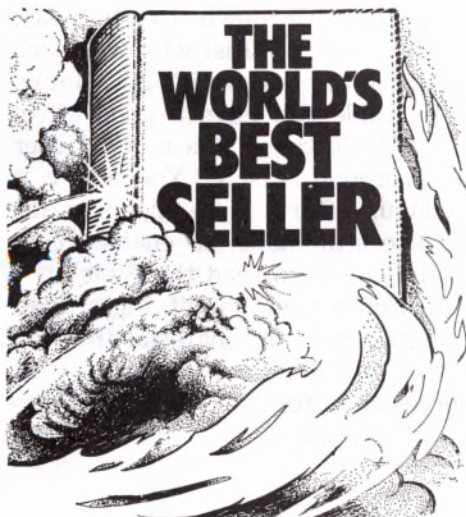
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Its Fight to Live

OUT of every thousand books published, only about fifty continue in popular use for at least seven years. Because people soon lose interest, the life-span of a book is quite short.

What would you think, then, about a book that has continued in popular use for over 3,000 years? Add to this the fact that it has survived the fiercest opposition faced by any book in the history of the world. Tyrants, kings, princes, yes, even whole empires, have striven to destroy it. Yet, today it has become the *world's best seller*!

At times it appeared to opposers that the destruction of the Bible was assured. Mighty rulers formed edicts and prohibitions condemning it to the fire, only to sound its death knell in vain. The book survived. Its preservation through wave after wave of assault throughout centuries has been termed "a miracle of history."

Just think! Is it not extremely strange that a book as old as the Bible and that has been subjected to such opposition would be the all-

time best seller? In some respects, books are like humans. They have a beginning, may grow in popularity, and usually become old and die. Libraries are often cemeteries of millions of dead books.

Yet, the Bible, with its written origins going back 35 centuries, is very much alive and is readable in the languages of 97 percent of earth's population. So amazing is its distribution that even before the term "best seller" was coined, the Bible was the most sought after book in the world.

More Needed than

Survival of the Book Itself

The Bible claims to contain the words of God, in that its writings were directly inspired by his spirit. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21) God said of his word: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but *the word of our God shall stand forever.*" (Isa. 40:8, *An American Translation*) But its 'standing forever' would mean more than that God's word would merely exist in a book for a long time.

Actually there are "books" in existence today that in written form appear to be older than the Bible. For instance, there exist clay tablets and other literary works of the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians that are believed to have been written centuries before the Bible began to be compiled in 1513 B.C.E. by Moses. But these ancient documents are written in dead languages and discuss matters that are of little interest to the masses of persons today. For all practical purposes, these "books" are dead.

To the contrary, the Bible says that God's Word would remain "at work in [the] believers." (1 Thess. 2:13) The force of its message would influence the lives of those who used it. In its rendering of that same verse, *The Jerusalem Bible* says of "God's message": "It is still a *living power* among you who believe it."

A Mammoth Challenge

Would God be capable of preserving his word as a "living power" forever? If so, it would mean overcoming enormous obstacles. Added to natural impediments would be an assault that ultimately would almost destroy the Bible as a living force among believers.

How the Bible overcame all this opposition makes for an absorbing discussion. Through centuries men have tried to burn and to bury it. Mighty kings and emperors have raised the power of entire empires against it. And yet the Bible re-

mains indestructible down to this day.

One might wonder: 'Just why was such effort put forth to preserve it? Is it simply so that the Bible can have a good effect on my life? Could there be a much deeper and more profound reason?' Yes, why is it that strenuous efforts were made in the past, and are still made, to enable *every person* to have and to read the Bible?

You will find a very happifying answer to such questions in the material that follows. It will also genuinely enhance your own appreciation for the Bible's preservation until our day.

The Bible Survives Natural Obstacles

THE imposing library at Alexandria, Egypt, was without question the greatest collection of books the world had yet seen. At one time its ancient shelves bulged with over half a million documents.

Scarcely 350 years from its construction in the third century B.C.E., fire devastated some of its books. Soon what was left of its valuable documents was pilaged and destroyed. These "compositions of ancient genius," stated historian Edward Gibbon, "irretrievably perished."

Yes, this huge collection of books, written for the most part on papyrus (a paper-like material made from the fibers of the plentiful Egyptian papyrus plant), was destroyed by a natural obstacle to a book's survival—fire, along with ravishing by

man. Had the books been stone or clay tablets rather than perishable papyrus, they might have fared better.

Yet on this same perishable material, papyrus, parts of the Christian Greek Scriptures may have been written in the first century C.E. Mainly used in Bible writing was parchment or vellum (a writing material made from the skins of animals [2 Tim. 4:13]). This too can be burned and in time will rot. How easily the original handwritten copies of the Bible could have perished without a duplicate to replace their priceless message! However, many copies were made and circulated, so the message was not lost, though written on perishable materials.

Small Minorities Entrusted with It

Another natural obstacle to its survival was the fact that the Scriptures were originally entrusted to disliked minorities. The apostle Paul acknowledged: "Jews were entrusted with the scriptures of God." (Rom. 3:2, Moffatt's translation) A number of Jews over a period of more than a millennium were used by God to record his words, and the nation endeavored to safeguard these sacred writings.

But just think! When Bible writing be-

gan, this nation was described as being "the least of all the peoples." Its puniness was contrasted with the greater might of neighboring nations, such as the Hittites, the Amorites and others. Yet what has happened to the literature of those stronger neighbors? It is dead. The remains of such lie buried in the earth or moldering in museums.—Deut. 7:1, 7.

The writers and protectors of the Christian Greek Scriptures ("New Testament") were also a small defenseless group that was intensely hated. It was said of this group by contemporaries: "Everywhere it is spoken against."—Acts 28:22.

Now, thousands of years later, the writings of these hated minorities have flooded the entire world. Quite contrary to what natural circumstances would suggest! Would it not seem that a much higher force acted as a protector?

Written in Languages Forgotten by the Masses

Can you read ancient Hebrew? Few can. Yet this is what the Bible was at first written in. Obviously if it were only in this script today, it would be a dead book!

However, at the time the script was used, all who utilized the Bible, as well as many in the surrounding countries, could read that style of writing with understanding. The ancient Hebrew script was understandable to worshipers of the true God for centuries.

Then in the critical seventh century before our Common Era, with the destruc-



The Bible was written on perishable material; here you see the oldest Biblical manuscript in the British Museum

tion of the Jewish capital at Jerusalem, there began a dispersing of the Jews into countries with strange languages. Greek became the international language. Though a small segment of Jews who resettled in Jerusalem managed to keep Hebrew a living tongue, soon many of the Jews who were "dispersed among the Greeks" were unable to read the Bible in Hebrew.—John 7:35.

Would the message of the Bible cease

to be a "living power" in their lives? Also, what about the millions of non-Jewish Greek-speaking people? Would knowledge of God's Word remain hidden from these?

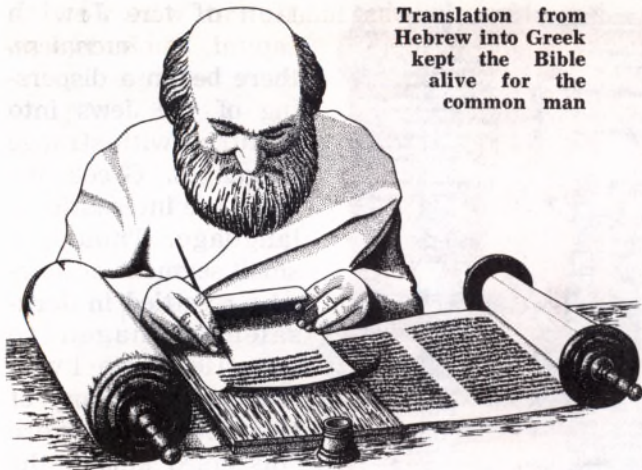
The First Translation

About 300 years before the Common Era, nearly a million Greek-speaking Jews lived in Alexandria, Egypt, a cultural center of the Hellenic world. Through their efforts and perhaps the cooperation of King Ptolemy Philadelphus, at last a translation of the Bible was made from Hebrew into the Greek language.

What a boon this was! Now the benefits from reading the Hebrew Scriptures were no longer limited to a few persons, but as first-century Jewish philosopher Philo observed: "The whole of the human race might reap the benefit of access to our wise and holy excellent laws."

Because Alexandria had a long history of "book production," it was not long before copies of this translation, called the "Septuagint," were being recopied and shipped world wide to Greek-speaking

Translation from
Hebrew into Greek
kept the Bible
alive for the
common man



Jews. It was truly "the people's Bible." For it was in the language of the general public, and its small cost, resulting from the publishing techniques in Alexandria, enabled many worshipers to have their own personal copy.

Early Christians Make the Bible Live

The use of the Hebrew Scriptures can be seen by the action of the apostle Paul. "He reasoned with them [Jews in the synagogue at Thessalonica] from the Scriptures, explaining and *proving by references* that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead." (Acts 17:2-4) To 'prove by references,' he pointed to various passages in the Hebrew Scriptures to establish the truthful basis of Christianity.

Use of the Bible, including the newly written Christian Greek Scriptures, by the early Christians led to a development that completely revolutionized the book industry. Up to that time books were made in the form of a scroll. This was fine for leisurely reading. But the Christians were using the Bible in missionary efforts,

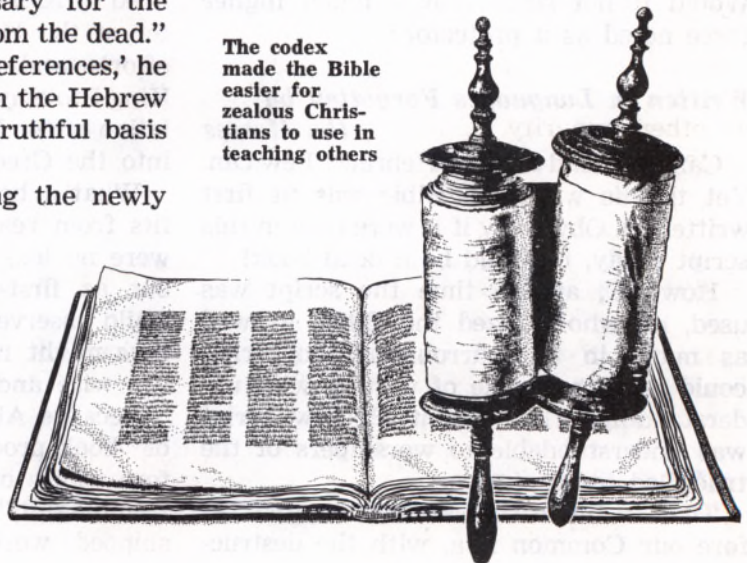
to 'prove by references' the basis of their religion. Can you imagine how awkward it would be to find one reference text after another in scrolls that may have been up to 35 feet (11 m) long!

Nearly a century before, the Romans had experimented with a new form of book with thick leather pages. The bulky contraption never became popular. However, someone used this idea, but made the pages of thin sheets of papyrus. This codex was ideal for quick references. It was the forerunner of today's book design. Who made this monumental breakthrough? The authoritative *Cambridge History of the Bible* says:

"Someone conceived the idea of making a codex not of parchment, but of papyrus. Where and by whom the idea was first tried out we do not know; but we do know that the new form is directly connected with the earliest days of Christianity, and the inventor may actually have been a Christian."

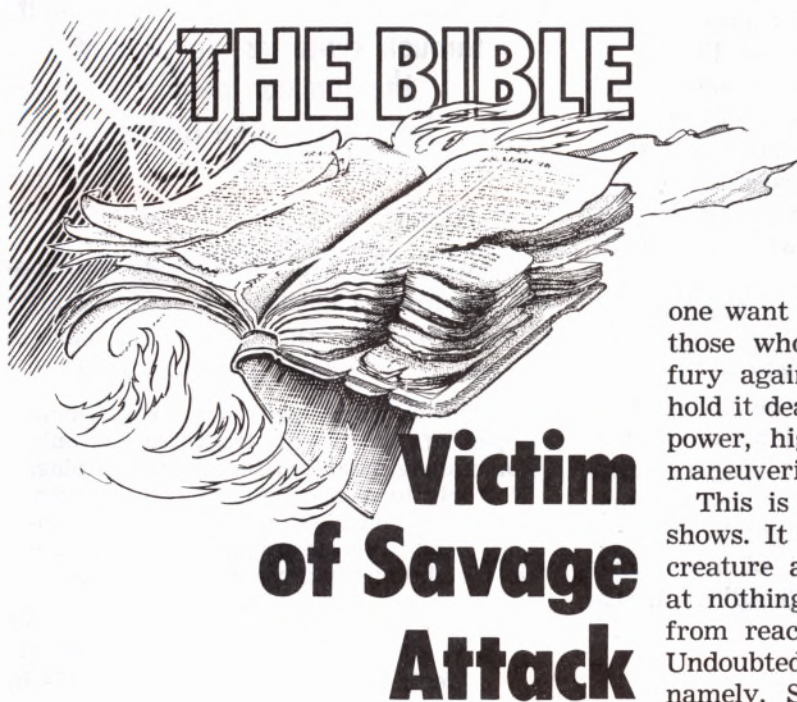
Today, then, when you open a book as opposed to using a scroll, you can think of the zealous witnessing activity of the

The codex
made the Bible
easier for
zealous Chris-
tians to use in
teaching others



Christians who adopted the codex as the form of their books. So by the opening centuries of our Common Era, the message contained in the Bible was very much

alive and was indeed "at work" in the hearts of many worshipers. But such a serene picture was not to last long, as we shall see.



HOW could you destroy a book? In several ways. To illustrate, consider how you could ruin a glass of pure water. You could (1) take a rock and smash it or (2) simply add some dirt or other impurity to the water, changing its content.

A similar two-pronged assault threatened to deal a deathblow to the Bible. A fierce attack against the book itself was coupled with attempts to tamper with its contents, to change its message. Either effort, if successful, would render the book useless and prove God incapable of preserving his own Word.

But Why?

You may feel that it is very strange that the Bible has been so intensely opposed. Since it teaches high morals and love, why should any-

one want to destroy it? Often, too, those who unleashed the greatest fury against the Bible claimed to hold it dear. It is almost as if some power, higher than mankind, was maneuvering matters.

This is precisely what the Bible shows. It identifies a wicked spirit creature as the one who will stop at nothing to prevent God's Word from reaching appreciative hearts. Undoubtedly this opposer of God, namely, Satan the Devil, masterminded the whole scheme to suppress the Bible.—2 Cor. 4:4.

Of course, some readers may object to such a conclusion. But what else could explain the *sustained* fight, through centuries, to prevent or discourage the common man from using the Bible and making it a living force in his life? No other book in history has been subjected to such prolonged onslaughts.

Brutal Attack in the

Roman Empire

Though Christians had been persecuted by Rome for many years, the first assault against their sacred writings came in the year 303 C.E. Emperor Diocletian then decreed

that *all Christian books* be handed over and burned. Refusal would bring death! Sadly, scores of precious Bible manuscripts were burned in the streets. However, some, like Felix of Thiabara (Africa), refused to turn over the Scriptures. He said: 'It is better for me to be burned than the divine Scriptures.' He paid with his life.

For almost a decade this savagery was vented against the Bible. Yet all the might of the Roman Empire could not destroy this book. Copies were carefully hidden until the persecution stopped. But this was a mere foregleam of what was yet to occur.

Living Book Among First Christians

The early Christians kept the Bible alive by using it extensively in their religious meetings and at home. Some Jews who later became Christians were commended for "carefully examining the Scriptures daily." Even in the second century, Irenaeus urged all to "diligently read the scriptures." And Clement of Alexandria suggested that all have "readings in the

Scriptures before meals."—Acts 17:11; 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 3:15.

What could explain the sustained fight, through centuries, to prevent the common people from having the Bible?

All were urged to obtain their own copies. Wealthier Christians even made gifts of Scripture to others, as did a certain Pamphilus, of whom Eusebius says:

"He was also ever ready to distribute copies of the Sacred Scriptures not only for reading, but even for private keeping. Not only to men, but even to the women whom he found to be interested in reading them. Thus he prepared many copies so that he might present them as gifts."

Nevertheless, in time there was a development that adversely affected the influence of the Bible in the lives of those who professed faith in it.

Religious Apostasy Almost Dooms Bible

The apostle Paul foretold a falling away from the true Christianity, an "apostasy," and the development of a religious "man of lawlessness" group that would highly exalt itself. (2 Thess. 2:3, 4) He showed that this "man of lawlessness" would develop from some elders or overseers ("bishops," *American Standard Version*) who would "rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves."—Acts 20:28-30.

True to prophecy, after the death



The Roman emperor decreed that Bibles be seized and burned

of Jesus' faithful apostles, false, imitation Christians, "weeds," became manifest. (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43) Some formed splinter groups, and they twisted the meaning of the Scriptures. (2 Pet. 3:16) This led to what some might view as an inconsequential maneuver, but it was one that had ruinous effects.

"The Holy Scriptures themselves, which inspire us with faith, the forerunner of knowledge, *can be of no use to you unless you understand them rightly,*" said Augustine, a church leader of the fourth century. He added in his work, *De Principiis*:

"Since the teaching of the Church transmitted in orderly succession from the apostles and remaining in the churches to the present day is still preserved, *that alone is to be accepted as truth,* which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition."

The "teaching of the Church" and "ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition" were placed on the same level as the Scriptures, to prevent heresies or the teaching of alleged religious error.

At the same time, the ceremonies and rituals of the church were stressed. It was



Bible reading came to be viewed as something only for the clergy



Magnificent, costly Bibles were produced, but were treated as if they were "sacred relics"

felt that these would be of greater benefit to the members than having them become confused by probing into the "depth of Holy Scripture." Magnificent church buildings, with Biblical scenes carved on their walls and housing images of Bible characters, were considered 'books of the ignorant.'

Some religious leaders, like **Chrysostom** of the fourth century, still were champions of personal Bible reading by all. But the die was cast! The people themselves, for the most part, no longer saw the importance of personally reading and studying the Bible. Some argued with Chrysostom, saying:

"We are not monks. I have to give my attention to public business; I carry on a trade; I must look after my wife and children and servants; in short I am a man of the world; it is not my business to read the Bible; that is the business of people who have renounced the world and devote themselves to a lonely life upon the top of the mountains."

So, gradually the feeling prevailed that Bible reading and study were only for the clergy and highly trained intellectuals.

A Sacred Relic?

In time, the Bible was translated into Latin, the language of the common man. It was decided by the religious authorities that Latin be considered a sacred language. The Bible was to remain in Latin. But later a change gradually took place, and few common persons could then read Latin. No longer willing to put forth effort to understand the Bible, many found it easier simply to revere its pages. The Bible was used as a magical charm. If a person was about to engage in some important or hazardous undertaking, he would open the Bible and interpret the first passage that met his eye as a divine message to him. Magnificently bound copies, written on purple parchment with letters of silver and gold, were made. Sadly, these books became mere showpieces and were hardly read. Yes, the Bible was slowly becoming a "sacred relic" rather than a living, meaningful book.

No doubt you can see that the Bible was in danger. Even some of the priests or ministers could no longer read the Bible in Latin. What happened to some "sacred" writings of ancient Rome illustrates what could occur in the case of the Bible. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* explains:

"For centuries pagan Rome preserved certain old sacred texts, *even when the priest no longer understood them.*" (Italics ours)

Yes, no one could read them. Sacred and highly esteemed—but dead! Could the same fate overtake the Bible?

Translations into Languages of the Common Man

Though vernacular translations were made by the Roman Catholic Church for many centuries, these were not intended for the masses. Concerning the attitude of the Church authorities during the Middle Ages, the book *The Lollard Bible* says:

"If this translation were made for some king or exalted personage, or by some solitary student, and remain a hallowed but practically unused volume in a royal or monastic library, no objection was taken to the translation of such; but if the translation was used to popularize a

THE BIBLE PROHIBITED

"No man shall possess books of the Old or New Testament in Romance [the common language]."

— JAMES THE FIRST, KING OF ARAGON (SPAIN), A.D. 1223

"Lay [common] people shall not have books of scripture, . . . moreover we prohibit that lay people should be permitted to have books of the Old or New Testament."

— RELIGIOUS SYNOD OF TOULOUSE (FRANCE), A.D. 1229

'Wherefore, we strictly command all Archbishops, Bishops and all clerics, and all dukes, princes, etc., that you assist the said inquisitors and confiscate such books, written in the vulgar tongue, from all men. And all these are to be taken from all persons, secular and chiefly from lay [common] people (and the more especially, since it is not lawful, according to canon law, for lay people of either sex to read any books whatsoever of Holy Scripture written in the vulgar tongue).'

— KING CHARLES IV, EMPEROR OF GERMANY, A.D. 1369

knowledge of the biblical text among lay [common] people, prohibition immediately followed."

Such a translation was not made until the 12th century. And when that occurred, sparks flew!

The Waldensians of France

In the beautiful valleys of southern France lived a religious group called Waldensians. Shortly before 1180, an outstanding member of this group, Peter Waldo, reportedly paid two priests to translate portions of the

Bible into the vernacular. Its readers made real changes in their lives. Even one of their fiercest enemies acknowledged a striking contrast between their conduct and that of the people in general. He said:

"The heretics [Waldensians] are known by their manners and words; for they are orderly and modest in their manners and behaviour. They are free from falsehood and deceit. They are chaste, temperate, sober, and abstain from anger."

Infused with zeal from personally reading the Scriptures, they went up and down the countryside of France in pairs reading and teaching others the Scriptures. So zealous were they that one reportedly "swam over a river in the night and in the winter, to come to [a certain person] and teach him." What was found in the Scriptures had become to them a "living power"!

Filled with enthusiasm, they traveled to Rome, Italy, to obtain official approval from Pope Alexander III to use their Bible to teach others. Permission denied! One of the religious dignitaries at this Third Lateran Council, Walter Map, exclaimed:

"Shall not therefore the Word given to the unlearned be as pearls before swine?"

Just think! To enable the common person to read the Bible in a language he could understand was considered to be 'throwing pearls to pigs'!

A crusade was organized by Pope Innocent III to "exterminate" the heretics. Reports from those who led the crusade indicate that hundreds of men, women and children were cruelly butchered and copies of their Bibles were burned because, as one religious judge or Inquisitor at the time put it,

"They have translated the Old and New Testament into the vulgar [common] tongue, and thus they teach and learn it. I have heard and seen a certain ignorant rustic who recited Job, word for word;

and many who knew perfectly the whole New Testament."

Bibles Spread in the Common Tongue

Fire and sword caused the Waldensians to flee to other countries. Shortly thereafter translations of the Bible that the common man could read appeared in Spain, Italy, Germany and other countries. Wherever they appeared, bans and harsh persecution usually followed. Several official prohibitions of the Bible are shown on the opposite page. To violate these religious and secular laws often meant death by burning!

In England around 1382, John Wycliffe and his associates finished the first complete Bible in English. But many of the common people could not read. So he organized a group of men called Lollards to go and read the Bible to the people.

Shocking Persecution

Those "Biblemen," as they were sometimes called, created quite a stir. The religious authorities in England responded with unbelievable persecution. In 1401 the English Parliament stated that any who possessed the Bible in the common language should be "before the people, in a high place *caused to be burnt*, that such punishment may strike fear to the minds of others."

And indeed this caused such fear! One possessor of an English Bible, out of fear that this would incriminate him, remarked that "he would rather burn his books, than that his books should burn him." Yet many were not that easily deterred from reading the Word of God. Hundreds of these persons were burned alive for simply, as the court records show, "having a certain little book of scripture in English." Oftentimes these individuals were burned "with the books of their lore [the Scriptures] hanging about them."

This persecution raged through one



Officials decreed that any who possessed a Bible in the common language should be burned to death

country after another. In some lands, whole villages were massacred where persons persisted in reading the Bible in the vernacular. No man was safe from his neighbors, his employees or even his own children, as all, under fear of severe reprisals, were urged to report anyone seen reading the Bible in his own tongue. Needless to say, to avoid detection, there were many midnight Bible readings.

What would you have done under such circumstances? Would you have treasured the message of the Bible so much that you would have risked your life to read it?

Still, vernacular Bibles were being destroyed faster than they could be made, since they had to be *copied by hand*. This arduous task also made the Bible extremely expensive, surely out of reach of all but the wealthy. A complete German Bible reportedly cost 70 Florentine gold gulden. At the time, for one or two gulden a person could buy a fat steer. So a Bible was equal in value to a herd of cattle! Some poor persons even 'gave a load of hay for a few chapters of James or Paul in English,' according to historian John Fox.

Slowly, it appeared, the Bible would die as a living force among people in general. But at the darkest hour something was invented that greatly changed the picture.

Printing Press with Movable Type

With the printing press, Bibles could be reproduced faster than they were being destroyed. Reportedly, the first book off the press was the Latin Bible. Soon, however, copies in what was then the common language were rolling off presses.

Because the Bible could now be mass-produced the price of a copy was so low that the average man could afford having his own. Martin Luther and William Tyndale, who translated from the original languages, not merely from Latin, made the Bible easier to read. Tyndale used words that even 'a boy that drives a plow' could comprehend. Instead of "charity" he used "love"; instead of "church," "congregation"; instead of "penance," "repentance." This helped to make the Bible live for the 'man in the street.'

However, the fight against such Bibles was far from over. For decades after the first Bible began to be produced on the printing press in 1456, there was a virtual war to destroy copies in the vernacular. Tyndale's Bibles were burned as fast as they could be confiscated by the bishop of London. So intent was he on destroying all of Tyndale's Bibles that this cleric reportedly paid for copies so that he could burn them! On one occasion, through a friend, Tyndale sold him some defective copies and used the money to finish his revision. This resulted in a greater flood of his version into England!

For years, Tyndale was hunted down like an animal. Finally, he was betrayed and captured. His efforts cost him his

What would you have done if your life was threatened because you read the Bible?

life, as he was strangled and burned at the stake.

Why Translations Were Opposed

Do you find it difficult to understand why many religious officials opposed translating the Bible into the language of the common man? It was not that all these men were directly against the Bible. Some held it in high esteem. These mistakenly feared that unauthorized persons would make faulty translations and, hence, abuse the Word of God. Keeping it in the dignified, stable Latin language was their way of protecting the Bible from being "profaned" by loose translations into the developing vernacular languages.

Why, then, did they not produce an "authorized" translation? In time they did. A German version by Emser was published around 1527, and the English Rheims New Testament was issued in 1582. The reason given for slowness is expressed by Roman Catholic official Geiler of Kaysersberg (Germany), who said around 1500:

"It is dangerous to put knives into children's hands, for them to cut bread with themselves, for they may cut themselves. So also holy scripture, which contains the bread of God, should be read and explained by such as are already far advanced in knowledge and experience, and will set forth the undoubted meaning. For inexperienced people will easily take harm from their reading. . . . Therefore, if you wish to read the Bible, beware of falling into error."

But was fear that the unlearned reader might 'fall into error' the only reason for not encouraging Bible reading? No, for

noted Catholic scholar Erasmus candidly offered others, saying:

"The woman who is occupied in reading the sacred volumes neglects her domestic duties, . . . and perhaps the soldier will be slower to go forth to fight! and a great danger that would be! . . . In many places in the sacred volumes the vices of pastors and princes are reproved, and if the people were to read them, they would murmur against those set over them."

Regardless of the reason, the *effect* was that the Bible was almost destroyed as a living force in the life of the common man. Had such attitudes prevailed, regardless of how well meaning they might have been, the Bible would indeed have become a "sacred relic."

How thankful we can be that through the efforts of some very devoted men, as well as the use of the printing press, the Bible was published in a living language and was made available for use by the common man! And at a cost that the ma-

'Inexperienced people will easily take harm from reading the Bible,' explained one church official. But the scholar Erasmus candidly stated: "In many places in the sacred volumes, the vices of pastors and princes are reproved, and if the people were to read them, they would murmur against those set over them."

jority could afford. Indeed, the Bible had withstood a most savage attack.

But what about the second method of attack—tampering with the contents? Dirt added to a glass of pure water can ruin it. How did the Bible fare against this subtle attack?

Purity of The Bible Text Threatened

W I HAVE written letters at the request of the brethren. But the apostles of the Devil have filled them with tares, *removing* many things and *adding* others. Woe is reserved for them. Since certain people have dared to tamper even with the sacred writings of the Lord it is not surprising that they have made attacks on less important writings." So Dionysius of Corinth, a professed Christian overseer in the second century, bemoaned what had been done to his own writings.

His words show that some in his day "dared to tamper even with the sacred writings," the Scriptures. In fact, Marcion of that same period is said by Tertullian to have "openly used the knife, not the pen, since he made such an excision of the Scriptures as suited his own subject matter." "He has erased everything that was contrary to his own opinion."

You might be surprised that attempts were made to meddle with the text of the Bible. Can we be sure that such tampering was not eventually successful, changing the meaning of the Bible message? Also, the Bible had to be copied by hand for centuries. Could copyists' mistakes have ruined its purity? The answer to these questions will help us to see how easily the Bible's living message could have been irreversibly corrupted. However, because of some highly exceptional circumstances, it was preserved.

No Book Copied with Such Care

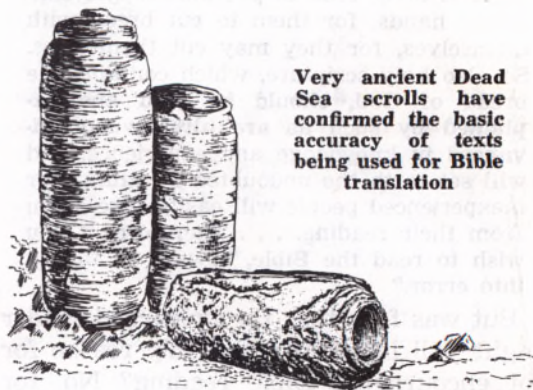
Centuries before the Common Era, the Hebrew Scriptures were meticulously copied by devoted scribes. These were called Sopherim, a term apparently derived from the Hebrew verb "to count." Why? "The early scholars were called Sof'rim," according to the Talmud, "because they counted all the letters of the Law."

The letters in each new manuscript were carefully counted and the number had to be identical with the original. What care! Just consider the toil to count every letter. It is reported that they counted 815,140 Hebrew letters in the Scriptures. Every care was taken to prevent corruption of the text.

Yet, to have no mistakes in copying would have required God to perform a miracle every time a scribe picked up a pen. This simply did not happen. Mistakes were made. Were these serious enough to ruin the meaning of the Bible? Or is there evidence to show that, despite thousands of years of recopying, the Hebrew text is virtually the same? For many years such questions went unanswered, because the oldest Hebrew manuscripts went back to only around 900 C.E.

"An Absolutely Incredible Find!"

Near the beginning of 1947, in a small cave overlooking the Dead Sea in Pales-



Very ancient Dead Sea scrolls have confirmed the basic accuracy of texts being used for Bible translation

tine, a 15-year-old boy stood in the dim light and stared bewilderedly at a mass of leather wrapped in a linen cloth. The unsightly bundle was stored in a large, two-foot-high clay pot. How disappointing! He was anticipating hidden treasure in the jar.

However, this lad held in his hands what has since been termed "the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times . . . an absolutely incredible find!" Here were parts of the Bible that date back into the second century B.C.E., 1,000 years earlier than the oldest copies available up to that time. How would they compare with the more recent copies? Millar Burrows, who worked with the scrolls for years, analyzing carefully their contents, stated this conclusion:

"Many of the differences between the St. Mark's Isaiah scroll and the Masoretic text [the Bible manuscripts in the ninth century] can be explained as mistakes in copying. Apart from these, there is a remarkable agreement, on the whole, with the text found in medieval manuscripts. Such agreement in a manuscript so much older gives reassuring testimony to the general accuracy of the traditional text.

"It is a matter for wonder that through something like a thousand years the text underwent so little alteration."—*The Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 109, 303, 304.

One scroll contained almost the complete book of Isaiah. Out of the 1,292 verses of Isaiah in the English Bible, only 13 were adjusted by the translators of the *Revised Standard Version* because of the text of this scroll. This did not mean that there were no more variations than this, but the vast majority of others were mere *changes in spelling and grammar*. Remember, these Hebrew scrolls were penned 1,000 years apart.

What About the

Christian Greek Scriptures?

Especially is the matter of accurate transmission a blazing issue in connection

with the Christian Greek Scriptures. For, as mentioned earlier, tampering was attempted. Doubt on the purity of the text loomed for many centuries like a dark cloud, because even up into the 17th century, the oldest authoritative copies of the "New Testament" in the original Greek language went back only to the 10th century—over 900 years after the originals were penned. No one could prove that tampering or the pen of careless scribes had not destroyed the Christian message.

A "Pearl" Hidden in

Secluded Monastery

In 1844, Konstantin von Tischendorf, in search of ancient copies of the Bible, entered the library of the monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai south of Palestine. His eyes were attracted by a large basket of book pages. A closer look left him stunned!

Here were pages from a copy of the Bible in Greek far older than any he had ever seen. Hardly containing himself, he inquired about these pages. His heart sank. They were used to start fires! Two heaps had already been burned! The monks gave him 43 pages, but they refused to cooperate further.

He made a second trip to the monastery—no success. A third trip—again all appeared lost. He made arrangements to leave, considering it a hopeless search. Three days before departing, he was talking to the steward, or caretaker, of the monastery who invited him into his small room. The steward remarked that he had read an old copy of the Bible and abruptly pulled down a heap of loose leaves wrapped in a red cloth.

As he opened this bundle, ah! here was the "pearl" Tischendorf had been searching 15 years to find. This Bible manuscript, now called the *Codex Sinaiticus*, contained all the "New Testament." Believed to have been written around 350 C.E., it was over six centuries older than

authoritative manuscripts at the time. Did it reveal any tampering with the text?

Tampering Discovered and Corrected

It was obvious from the start that the text of Tischendorf's discovery was basically identical with that which was the foundation for today's Bibles. Yet it revealed evidence of tampering.

An example is the familiar account at **John 8: 1-11** (*Authorized Version*) about an adulterous woman about to be stoned, and that reports Jesus as saying, 'Let him that is without sin cast the first stone.' It was not in this early manuscript. So later editions of the Bible have removed it or put it in a footnote to refine the Bible text. Other additions were also found and deleted.—Matt. 17:21; 18: 11; Acts 8:37.

In more serious cases, tampering had been done with the text to support a false teaching, such as at 1 Timothy 3:16. The *Authorized Version* states, "God was manifest in the flesh," as opposed to "He who was manifested in the flesh." (*American Standard*) Quite a difference! Which is correct? If the first is, it would appear that Jesus is God, contrary to passages that say he is God's Son.—Mark 13:32.

In older manuscripts the words for "God" and "who" (masculine) were similar (OC—who, masculine) (ΘC—God). Recent manuscripts usually had ΘC or the equivalent. But in the manuscript found by Tischendorf it is OC, or "who," referring to Jesus, not God. A scribe had changed the term so it read "God." The

Alexandrian manuscript of the fifth century makes us wonder if it was an innocent mistake. At first glance, it appeared to be ΘC, but by examination with a microscope it was found to have been originally OC, and 'a much later hand' added

the lines to change it. Recent versions have refined the text by reading properly, "He who was manifested in the flesh." (See interlinear word-for-word reading, *Interlinear Greek English New Testament*, Nestle; also *Emphatic Diaglott*.)

A blatant example of tampering was also found at 1 John 5:7 where the phrase: "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one," (*Authorized Version*) was added. Not only were the words not in the Sinaiticus, but they could not be found in any Greek manuscript before the 16th century. The

evidence indicates that a manuscript now found at Trinity College, Dublin, was purposely written about 1520 to insert that spurious verse! Basically, all modern versions have omitted this glaring tampering.

A Host of Witnesses

Even earlier manuscripts than those dated as of the fourth century were forthcoming. In Egypt were found copies of the Bible written on papyrus, some even wrapped around mummies! These were carefully restored and they dated back to the third century C.E. One small fragment of the book of John was even dated back to 125 C.E.! How did these compare with those manuscripts of the fourth century and, hence, with our Bibles today? It



Where copyists had tampered with the text, this was exposed through discoveries made by men such as Tischendorf, who found the Sinaitic manuscript at St. Catherine's Monastery

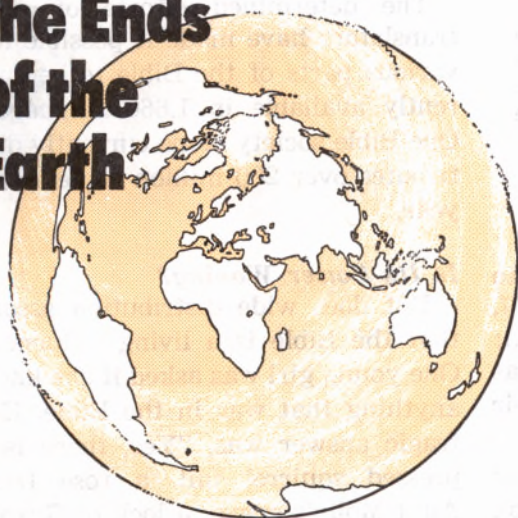
is not letter-for-letter exactness, but the message is the same. Any tampering is easily exposed. The message rings clear.

Over 5,000 Greek manuscripts provide ample means virtually to reconstruct the original text. Frederic Kenyon, who has spent nearly a lifetime studying these ancient manuscripts, concluded:

"It is indeed a striking proof of the essential soundness of the tradition that with all these thousands of copies, tracing their ancestry back to so many different parts of the earth and to conditions of such diverse kinds, the variations of text are so *entirely* questions of details, not of essential substance.

"And it is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God."—*The Story of the Bible*, pp. 136, 144.

A LIVING BOOK Reaches the Ends of the Earth



The Bible comes off a double winner! It survives as a book and with a pure text. However, does it seem reasonable that its survival with a refined text happened merely by accident? Is it just by chance that a book completed nearly two millennia ago, and subjected to intense assaults, would still exist along with thousands of ancient copies, some dating back to perhaps within 25 years of the originals? Is this not abundant evidence of the power of the One of whom it is said: "The word of our God shall stand forever"? —Isa. 40:8, *An American Translation*.

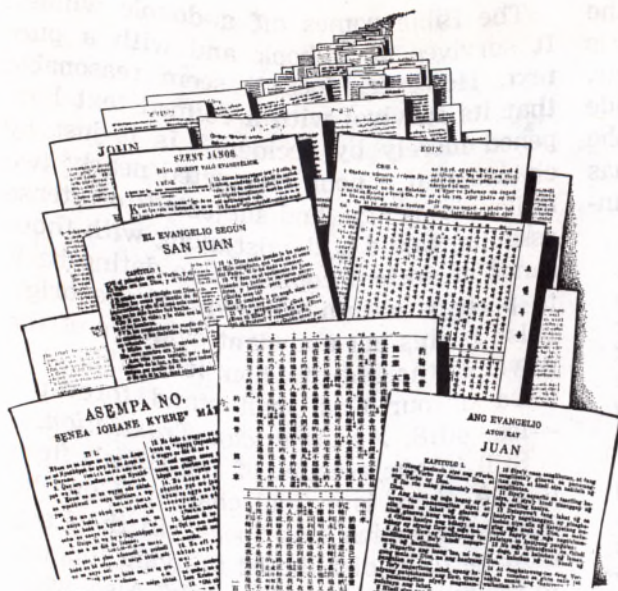
Still in our account of the Bible's fight to live, there is a final chapter. How did this book, which was "born" in the East, manage to be distributed in living tongues to the far corners of the earth? Also, what is the all-important reason *why* God has seen that his Word may be available to people everywhere?

H E HAD conquered Europe and feared no one. No opposing forces seemed unconquerable. Yet, after considering the history of the Bible, Napoleon admitted: "The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it."

Indeed, it is a book that has proved to be indestructible! And its powerful influence is not limited to the land of its origin. Though born in the Middle East, the Bible has marched into one land after another. It has "learned to speak" in hundreds of languages to the very hearts of mankind. However, this march into lands having unfamiliar languages was not without serious problems.

Into the Languages of the World

Between the ends of the 15th and 19th centuries the number of languages in



The Bible, the whole or in part, is now in 1,660 languages, the tongues spoken by nearly all mankind

which the Bible "spoke" rose from 30 to over 450. This was no easy task, for translators were often confronted with *unwritten* languages or ones whose structures were totally foreign, as Adoniram Judson, the translator of the Burmese Bible, explains:

'When we find the letters and words all totally destitute of the least resemblance to any language we have ever met with, and these words not clearly divided but run together in one continuous line, a sentence or paragraph seeming to the eye but one long word; when we have no dictionary and no interpreter to explain a single word and must get something of the language before we can avail ourselves of the assistance of a native teacher—that is work!'

Yet there were other more severe obstacles.

The Chinese Bible

When Robert Morrison secretly began to translate the Bible in Canton, China, in 1807, he had to contend with a Chinese law that said: 'From this time forward, such Europeans as shall privately print books and propagate their religion shall be executed.'

In an abandoned warehouse, living under constant fear of detection, he finished the book

of Acts. He had copies printed and freely distributed these, *with false covers*, to the book sellers. To conceal the handmade wood printing blocks, he buried them, only to find later that termites had destroyed them all! Still not deterred from his goal, in time he completed the entire Bible.

However, his translation was in the literary language, which was not spoken by the majority of Chinese, so Isaac Schereschewsky began a version in the common dialect. After he had just started, a spinal disease rendered him a complete invalid. He had the use of only one finger! Still, on went the translation. With his one good finger he typed while his helpers converted the words into Chinese characters. For *seven years*, according to the book *Chinese Versions of the Bible*, 'he had literally one object—to make plain the Word of God to the Chinese. Day by day, without rest or intermission, he toiled on.' At last "the One-Finger Bible," as it was called, put God's Word into the language spoken by more people than any other in the world!

The determined efforts of such translators have made it possible for various parts of the Bible to be currently available in 1,660 languages. One Bible society alone currently distributes over 200 million copies each year.

Is Its Power Waning?

But does wide distribution assure that the Bible is a living influence? One young girl was asked if she knew anything that was in the Bible. Her tragic answer was, "Yes, there is a pressed squirrel tail, a rose from Aunt Molly's grave, a lock of Grand-

pa's hair, an insurance receipt, and Pa's Masonic emblem!" Many are like her.

You may own a Bible. But when was the last time you read several pages? How familiar are you with its contents? One Baptist minister observed: "Many know the Bible as we know of George Washington, Socrates, Napoleon, and others—historically. They are dead so far as our knowing them personally is concerned. Just so dead is the Bible in the thinking of many today."

The enlarging influence of television and radio, along with increasingly busy schedules, has discouraged book reading. Additionally, many doubt that the contents of a book several millennia old can help them to cope with today's emotional strains and pressures. Yet, not all feel this way.

The Bible—A Living Force to Millions

There is a former Brazilian prostitute who ran her own brothel; a former hardened killer in a Guatemalan prison; a former member of a shoplifting gang in Ireland who "earned" for himself £100 (about \$200, U.S.) a day; an American housewife whose marriage problems caused her to attempt suicide twice and to have a nervous breakdown; and a former Guyanese drunk who was a habitual gambler and "took a delight in beating women." What do they all have in common?

All of them changed their conduct to harmonize with the Bible's principles of morality and honesty. The list of examples could go on and on as, yearly, thousands of persons—old and young alike—have found the strength to cope with the pressures of today's world with help from the Bible. Their lives have reached levels of personal dignity, happiness and satisfaction previously undreamed of.

How did they do it? Did they merely pick up a Bible, begin reading, and make such transformations? Hardly! As one said: "I've always wanted to understand the Bible, but it is difficult!" In every case they received personal assistance, much like the Ethiopian court official mentioned in Acts chapter 8. While reading the Scriptures, he was approached by one of the early Christians, Philip, who asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" His modest reply was, "How can I unless I have someone to guide me?" Philip freely assisted him.—Acts 8:30, 31, Phillips' translation.

Attending meetings designed for group Bible study also helped these ones to mold their lives. These meetings are similar to those of the first-century Christians. There the Bible is copiously read. Also, qualified teachers serve as did the 'prophets and teachers' in the first century. (Eph. 4:11-14) Of these, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* says: "The prophets and teachers explain to the believers, and apply to their lives and circumstances, the message of salvation that was brought them by the apostles."

Have others noticed the effects of such Bible study? In the cases mentioned earlier, all became Jehovah's Witnesses. Concerning the Witnesses, *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* mentions that they have a "current reputation as one of the best-behaved groups in the world," with "indefatigable zeal" in preaching, and their "conjugal [marriage] and sexual morality is quite rigid."

From Africa comes the following report:

"From all accounts, those areas in which Jehovah's Witnesses are strongest among Africans are now areas more trouble-free than the average. Certainly they have been active against agitators, witchcraft, drunkenness and violence of any kind. A close study of the Bible is encouraged."—*The Northern News* (Zimbabwe Rhodesia).

Naturally, their conduct is not perfect, but the overall condition is certainly striking. Such a large international brotherhood of over two million persons applying Bible counsel clearly shows that now, as never before, the message in the Bible is a "living power," at work in the believers!—Isa. 2:2-4.

Is the Bible a Living Force in Your Own Life?

No doubt you want happiness and success in life. Who in his right mind does not? Notice this recommendation:

"This book of the law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for *then you will make your way successful* and then you will act wisely."—Josh. 1:8.

Yes, the key to a successful life is not the mere possession of the Bible, but reading and carefully following it. Though much of the Bible is crystal-clear, some parts are "hard to understand." (2 Pet. 3:16) These difficult portions help to reveal one's motives. (Heb. 4:12) If a person, deep inside, is unconcerned about learning and doing God's will, he can point to difficult passages as a "reason" for not reading much of the Bible.—Compare Matthew 13:10-16.

We must face the fact that making the Bible a living force in our own lives requires real effort. Proverbs 2:1-5 shows that to find 'the knowledge of God' we must 'cry out for understanding and search for it as for hid treasure or for silver.' "Hid treasures" are not in the open for easy picking. You have to dig. While digging for treasure, some have sacrificed food and sleep. Ah, but when the treasure is found, it was all worth it!

So, too, time, concentration and meditation are all needed to read the Bible with benefit. Oftentimes a translation in

modern language can be helpful. Many have made it a goal to read the Bible through every year. By reading three chapters a day it can be done.

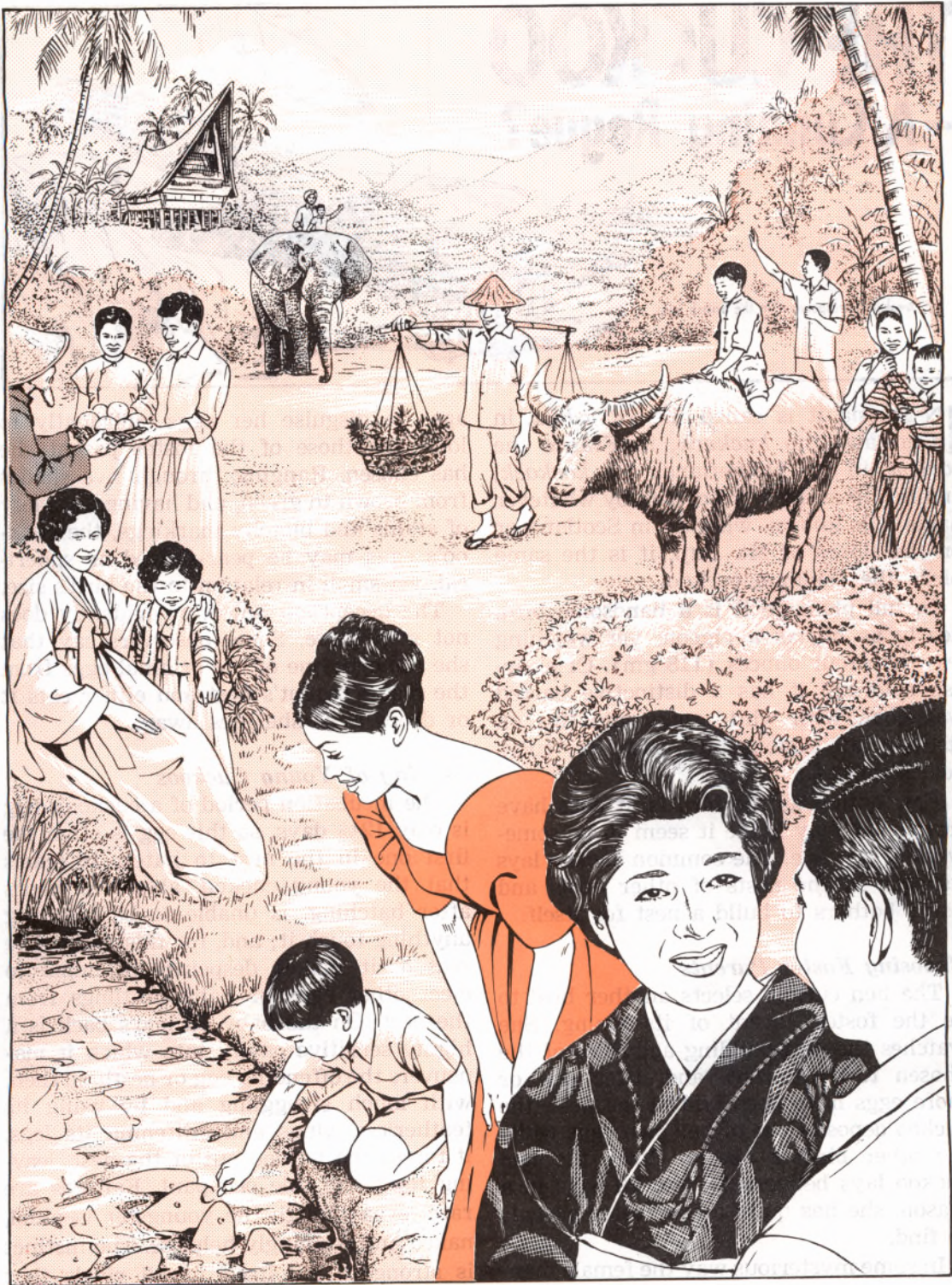
Never forget what some did in the past merely to have a Bible that they could read with understanding. They were willing to face death on a burning stake to do so. Recall how some men, at the risk of their lives, translated the Bible so the *common man* could read it. Such examples should surely move us to show our appreciation for this precious book by carefully reading it.

A Book That Offers Hope of Eternal Life

Now to that yet unanswered question: *Why* has God seen to it that the Bible was preserved and made available in a form that all, earth wide, can understand? Because it enables us to get to know our Creator and it contains his promise of everlasting life. He wants every person to have these blessings. The Bible, at Titus 1:2, refers to "a hope of the *everlasting life* which God, who cannot lie, promised before times long lasting."

Everlasting life under what conditions? The Bible speaks of a 'new heavens and a new earth where righteousness is to dwell.' When righteousness prevails, all will have God's words at work in their hearts and will deal lovingly with one another. God will bless these with perfect health and freedom from want. What a world! Are we not deeply thankful that God saw that this promise was preserved through his Word till our day?—Ps. 37:10, 11; 85:10-12; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:3-5.

God wants you to know about and enjoy this hope. It is offered to all who are willing to make the Bible a living force *right now* in their life. Why not make it such in yours? Jehovah's Witnesses will be glad to help.



THE CUCKOO

—A Cunning Rogue?

By "Awake!" correspondent in the British Isles



IN Russia it is called the *kukusbka*, in Germany the *kuckuck*, in France the *coucou*, in the Netherlands the *koekoek*, and in Japan the *kak-ko*. Yet, by whatever name it is known, whether in Scotland or on the slopes of Mt. Fuji, it is the same bird—the common cuckoo.

In full plumage it is a handsome bird, nearly as big as a pigeon, yet weighing less than four ounces (113 gm). Of clear-ash coloring, it has a distinctive barred waistcoat, with white spots and tips on its long tail. Among bird cries, its "cuckoo" is unique.

Fascinating as the bird is, it does have traits that may make it seem to be somewhat of a rogue. The common cuckoo lays its eggs in the nests of other birds and never bothers to build a nest for itself.

Choosing Foster Parents

The hen cuckoo selects another bird to be the foster parent of its young. She watches the nest-building activities of the chosen foster parent, and after one or more eggs have been laid in the nest, the cuckoo deposits one of her own eggs while the other bird is absent. Since the hen cuckoo lays between 12 and 20 eggs in a season, she has quite a few foster parents to find.

In some mysterious way the female man-

ages to disguise her eggs sufficiently to look like those of the foster parent she has chosen. Ranging through five shades from brown to green, and having a variety of stains and blotchy markings, the cuckoo's eggs may be pear-shaped or spherical, yet small in relation to the bird's size.

The deception, however, evidently does not stop there. Some observers say that she removes one of the original eggs from the foster parent's nest and either eats it or drops it as she flies away.

Rearing of Young Cuckoos

The incubation period of a cuckoo's egg is only 12½ days, so this egg is often the first one in the nest to hatch. It seems that the young cuckoo, about 10 hours after hatching, is unable to bear having anything touch it; and, for this instinctive reason, it makes desperate attempts to eject other eggs or baby nestlings from the nest. On the baby cuckoo's back is a highly sensitive cavity into which it maneuvers the offending egg or nestling, then, with much struggling and by using its featherless wings and stiffening its legs, it forces the burden out of the nest, leaving itself the sole occupant. Failures are rare, even though the youngster is blind, naked and seemingly helpless. The instinct is strong to rid itself of all rivals that

would contend with it at feeding times.

Such is the impressive power of its commanding call "chiz, chiz, chiz," that not only do its foster parents spend all their time in searching for food for it, but other birds also feel compelled to drop tidbits, intended for their own offspring, into the baby cuckoo's ever-open mouth. Often overflowing the frail nest not built for it, it strongly resents any kind of interference, hissing defiance and pecking furiously at a human hand and sometimes even at the bird that has just fed it!

It seems strange that the instinct of the foster parents to rear this unlovable nestling is so strong, so compelling. However, any possible perception they might have that this is not one of their offspring evidently is swallowed up in the struggle to feed it for the necessary 20 days or so before it is ready to fend for itself.

Mysteries of Migration

When the seasons change, the cuckoos are on their way from the British Isles to Africa. But the young ones often go weeks after their parents have left. How do they, along with other migrants, find their way over vast landmasses and seas, often flying at great heights where oxygen is likely to be scarce, beset with cold and high winds—and yet arrive at their destinations with the precision of a computerized journey? Only the Creator knows.

In the spring they find their way back again. Year after year adult birds return to the exact territory they occupied the summer before. Each cock announces its arrival by persistent calling, thereby staking out its claim to a certain stretch of land as its feeding ground.

As for the female, whom will she select as the foster parents for her young? Robins, meadow pipits, sedge warblers, reed warblers, pied wagtails, dunnocks, bullfinches and others have become unwitting parents to those greedy baby cuckoos. But

the female remembers the species that reared her and she chooses the same species to hatch her eggs and rear her young.

Useful Feeding Habits

Despite its many unfavourable characteristics, the common cuckoo does have some useful habits. Always a greedy creature, it is this insatiable desire for food that apparently accounts for its eating destructive larvae that other birds will not touch. These larvae, among them the tiger, ermine, drinker or gold-tail moths, have irritating hairs that protect them from other birds, yet hold no fear for the hungry cuckoo. Similarly two other larvae, the magpie moth and the gooseberry sawfly, have protective coloring that scares off other birds, but not so the cuckoo, which finds them very much to its liking. Beetles, worms, centipedes—all are greedily devoured by this ever-hungry bird.

According to human standards, the cuckoo might well be classed as a rogue. But, then, it is not human. The way in which it imposes the care of its offspring on others may seem shocking, but the other birds are not complaining. The cuckoo lives according to the pattern set for it by the Creator, contributing its part to the balance of nature. And while it does so, it carries on in a way that fascinates all who observe it, and that, too, is evidently what the Creator purposed.

In Future Issues

- ***Wise Counsel Protects
Against Crime***
 - ***From Soccer Stardom
to Godly Devotion***
 - ***Why Schools Are Failing***
-

Getting More Out Of Later Life

EVERYONE wants to be able to enjoy living. It is no different if you are one who is in the later years of life. Although perhaps being more restricted in what you can do physically, you certainly want to get the most that you can out of life.

Those who have been better prepared for retirement say that, while they miss certain aspects of their former work, they now enjoy the less hectic pace. They can do things they had cultivated a liking for earlier in life but could not pursue due to a lack of time.

Many appreciate having more time to enjoy the wonders of creation. They enjoy working in gardens, going on trips, observing the trees, plants, flowers and animals. They find mental and physical stimulation in taking walks, enjoying this activity alone or in the company of others.

Then there are those who find much pleasure in having the time to read more. And if their eyesight is not keen enough, they like to listen to recordings, radio programs, or have others read to them. And they enjoy good conversations with people of all age groups.

Literary historian Malcolm Cowley, when he passed the age of 80, made this comment on what was to him another pleasurable activity:

"There are other pleasures as well, including some that younger persons find hard to appreciate. One of them is simply sitting still, like a snake on a sun-warmed stone, with a delicious feeling of indolence that was seldom enjoyed in earlier years.

"At such times the older person is completely relaxed."



Keeping Active

But it is also true that activity is needed. It is generally recognized that remaining physically and mentally active is important for physical and mental health. Anyone whose health allows greater activity, but who just sits around constantly, is going to become quite depressed. Such a person can also become less sound physically.

In this regard, Dr. Robert Butler, director of the National Institute on Aging in America, stated:

"Any type of useful activity in which one really feels a sense of accomplishment or of doing something worthwhile can make retirement more meaningful.

"Just imagine if you literally closed up shop and were not doing anything that gave you any sense of purpose or substance. That can be very devastating."

A woman in her mid-70's remarked that she could not comprehend why anyone her age with comparable health and fi-

nances should have a problem leading an interesting life. The key for her was engaging in a variety of activities. She said of those who were not finding any enjoyment: "Maybe they just don't have enough varied activities, . . . but I'm having a great time." She did concede that when her advancing years began to limit her mobility, then she would have to cut down on some of her activities. But not until then.

A Need for People

You may enjoy new hobbies and new activities. And you may also enjoy having more time to be by yourself. But there is no substitute for companionship with people. Solitude thus needs to be balanced with interchange with people.

We were created with a need for people. No one can truly be happy if totally isolated, no matter how much money that one has. Isolating oneself because of age, when one is fit enough to do otherwise, can be very damaging to the mind and spirit, and can actually hasten death. A Bible proverb says: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth." (Prov. 18:1) A case in point was the later life of billionaire Howard Hughes.

One elderly person advised: "Don't get bugged [bothered] about being lonesome. Just get out." He meant that one should take the initiative in seeking out people. Similarly, Dr. Constance Freiss of New York advised: "Contact. Contact with people. That is the most important thing [especially] for old people who live alone. I tell my patients to get out every day and talk to someone—even if it's only the lady at the check-out counter in the supermarket."

Similarly, Dr. Butler recommended activities that bring one in contact with people. He said of the elderly:

"They can be encouraged to enter into

activities in which they help other people. They also can be urged to join social organizations, to become active physically and to develop or sustain friendships.

"People need to be physically fit, personally fit, which means keeping their minds active, and socially fit—maintaining relationships with others."

Keeping Good Relationships

A key to developing and keeping good relationships with others is to have a wholesome, positive outlook toward them. What can hurt relationships is a person's not being willing to work at being compatible with others. Some older persons may, for example, not want to listen to the views of others, wanting only to expound their own.

This does not mean that you always have to agree with others regardless of what they say. But there are so many things that are not 'life or death' matters; different views can be allowed. Do not become unreasonably unyielding when it does not really matter.

When others see an older person display a mild disposition, with a willingness to listen, they are more prone to want to talk to the individual. As one older man said: "I found that I could get much greater enjoyment out of the company of younger people when I didn't act like I knew it all, or take offense at differing opinions. Instead, I made sure to ask them their views on things, commending them when they expressed interesting and helpful ideas. By doing this, I also found that often they took a greater interest in me, and time and again asked my opinion, as well as showing interest in my personal experiences from former years."

Too, some older ones need to fight the impulse to complain when in the company of others. While you may have more to complain about because of the problems that advancing years bring, a spirit of constant complaint can drive others away.

On the other hand, "pleasant sayings are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and a healing to the bones." (Prov. 16:24) 'You reap what you sow' is certainly true of human relationships, is it not? (Gal. 6: 7, 8) If we are hostile to others, always complaining and in a perpetually sour mood, others will likely avoid us.

Hard Facts

It is fine to try to make life more worth while and interesting. Certainly you should. And others can help you to do this. Yet, one hard fact to face is this: No matter how interesting or productive one's advancing years may be, sooner or later life will cease. At the present time, death takes everybody. That is why the Bible says that "death spread to all men."—Rom. 5:12.

No matter how delicately we may prefer to put it, human existence today can be compared to a death sentence. The day we are born, we are "sentenced" to old age and death, for they come on relentlessly. How sad that life is so brief and trouble-filled, whereas it can be enjoyed so much where there are good health, security and desirable surroundings!—Job 14:1.

What we really need is something that would accomplish what Ponce de León had in mind when seeking his "Fountain of Youth." We need a "breakthrough" that would combine the vigor of youth with the wisdom of age.

Yet, another hard fact is this: Even if we had that, there would still not be real happiness if we were surrounded by poverty, inflation, crime, disagreeable neighbors, horrible wars and all the other insecurities of this present system. What we really need is to have that marvelous combination of the vigor of youth and the wisdom of age, but in a world of complete peace and security, surrounded by decent people.

Not Just a Dream

Is such a hope only a dream? No, it is not! Far from being just a dream, it will soon be a reality! But, how can this be when all indications are that the troubles of life are getting worse, not better?

The very worsening events of our time are a clear indication that we live in the era foretold in Bible prophecy that would see the end of this present unsatisfactory system. The calamities that have overtaken our generation since the first world war are visible evidence that this trouble-filled system of things has entered its "last days."—2 Tim. 3:1-5; Matt. 24:3-12.

What is to follow? "The day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men," as Bible prophecy puts it. After this cleansing of wickedness from the earth, God will usher in a new order of his making, one in which "righteousness is to dwell." (2 Pet. 3:7, 13) In that new system established by God, "death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."—Rev. 21:4.

Therefore, we can now do as Jesus comfortingly said: "Raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) When that righteous new order begins, no more will there be the unpleasant effects of aging. Instead, older persons will be restored to the vigor of youth. Even the dead will be raised to have the opportunity to live forever under God's new system of things. (Acts 24:15) That is why older persons today need not despair. Instead, they can have a grand, sustaining hope for relief from the ravages of old age and death.

In view of the foregoing, those Christian witnesses who are advancing in old age keep active, walking to the homes of the people to make contact with others, getting their views on life's prospects and telling them about what the Bible says regarding the near future. In this way they get the most out of their later life.



THE TOKYO SUMMIT

THE leaders of the seven most industrialized democracies today open their summit conference . . . to find a way out of the deepening world oil crisis," reported the "Mainichi Daily News."

But did they find a way out? What was the result of this impressive summit conference held in Tokyo, Japan, this past summer, representing the leaders of some of the most powerful nations? Indeed, why was the meeting held?

Since the "oil crisis" of 1973, when the oil-exporting nations dramatically increased oil prices, the countries having to import oil have been hard pressed by inflation, recession and disorder in world money markets. For this reason, beginning in 1975, annual economic summit conferences were held to find solutions.

But are the nations better off now than they were four years ago? No, for there was even greater urgency at the Tokyo meeting because of the "energy crisis" of 1979.

So this summit meeting concentrated on energy. The main issues were: the oil supply, oil prices, inflation, the gap between richer and poorer nations, and international money woes.

However, as if to taunt the summit, on the very day its meeting opened, a three-day conference of the Organiza-

tion of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) concluded in Geneva, Switzerland. Its result? The OPEC nations announced another large increase in oil prices, pushing the price as high as \$23.50 (U.S.) a barrel, when not too long ago it was about one tenth that price! This increase, on top of others made this year, means that oil prices have risen about 50 percent in 1979!

What Was the Outcome?

What did the Tokyo summit accomplish? Since the main target was the oil problem, a joint declaration said: "The most urgent tasks are to reduce oil consumption and to hasten the development of other energy."

The participating nations agreed to try to maintain, for about five years, a level of oil imports no greater than that of 1977 or 1978. However, some observed that this was not much help, since oil imports were at peak levels then.

The summit declaration also spoke of intensifying efforts "to pursue the economic policies appropriate in each of our countries to achieve durable external equilibrium." In other words, each country will make its own decision as to what is "appropriate" economic policy.

One paragraph caused discomfort for Japan. It said: "We deplore the decision taken by the recent OPEC conference. We recognize that relative moderation was displayed by certain participants. But the unwarranted rise in oil prices nevertheless agreed upon are bound to have very serious economic and social consequences."

The "Daily Yomiuri" reported: "Foreign Minister Sonoda was displeased with the strong censure of OPEC." Why this sensitivity? Because Japan imports

almost all its oil from OPEC. Thus the article concluded: "One top Foreign Ministry official said after the Tokyo summit that Japan would take steps to placate" the oil-producing nations.

Obviously, these seven nations did not achieve one of their most important goals—unity of action. Also, the problems confronting these, and other nations, are just as large now as they were before the Tokyo summit. Actually, they are larger, because the price of oil is much higher now.

GREECE—tenth member of THE COMMON MARKET

Report from Greece

A MONTH before the Tokyo summit, another meeting having to do with economics took place in Athens, Greece. At this meeting the Greek government signed a document with representatives of the nine nations of the Common Market (officially known as the European Economic Community). Thus, Greece became the Common Market's 10th member. The treaty will officially integrate Greece into the group as of January 1, 1981, after the other member nations have ratified the agreement.

Since the Common Market was established to try to eliminate customs barriers, and to unify transport, trade and farm policies, Greece expects to benefit. One way is in agriculture. Opening up before Greece is the possibility of selling its agricultural products in a huge market made up of over 270 million Europeans. And prospects are that they will obtain better prices than previously possible. Of course, for those who used to buy their products, it will mean higher prices too.

However, Greek industry may not be

as competitive as that of the other nine nations because it is less modern. Hence, many wondered just how much the Greek people will really be benefited. As an Athens newspaper commented: "Our way will not be strewn with flowers, and one should not disregard or underestimate the difficulties we shall be called on to face."

Keep in mind, too, that nine other European countries preceded Greece as members of the Common Market. True, they have gained some economic benefits. But have their economic problems been solved, or even reduced? Have they found a solution to their energy crisis, which threatens to crumble the foundations of the Common Market and the world economy as well? Has inflation been conquered in those countries, or unemployment?

Such questions justify the anxieties of those who are not so optimistic about these attempts to solve the problems, not only of Greece, but of all humankind, by imperfect human means.

Watching the World



"Synthetic Blood" Saves Life

◆ For the first time, oxygen-carrying "synthetic blood" is asserted to have saved a man's life in Japan. A man bleeding heavily after surgery was given over two pints (1,000 ml) of the experimental substitute, called Fluosol-DA, to replace his rare type blood. Surgeon Kenji Honda said that "the patient suffered no ill effects from his unprecedented emergency treatment and is doing fine." Previously the substitute had been used only in animal experiments and on healthy human volunteers with "no adverse effects," according to Dr. Ryoichi Naito, chairman of the pharmaceutical company that has been developing the substance.

Medical World News notes that, "unlike whole blood, [Fluosol-DA] poses no typing or infection problems and can be mass-produced, autoclaved [sterilized], and stored frozen for at least two years." Fluorocarbon compounds such as Fluosol-DA can absorb large amounts of oxygen and thus perform in a manner similar to blood in carrying this vital gas throughout the body. The only drawback so far discovered is that the substance tends to linger in the body for a brief period, with unknown effects. A California subsidiary of the Japanese pharmaceutical company plans soon to

start clinical trials in the United States.

U.S. President on "Purpose"

◆ President Carter's speech on American energy problems contained some realistic observations on the nation's materialistic way of life: "In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We have learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose."

Falling Objects

◆ All the publicity that surrounded the fall of the American satellite Skylab overshadowed the almost daily fall of many other objects. The North American Defense Command says that pieces of space vehicles have been falling for years at an average of about one a day. Of some 11,000 objects put into space by various nations, about 4,600 remain, according to the organization. Pieces weighing up to 150 pounds (68 kg) have fallen on

land in various countries. In 1970, five 150-pound pieces of a Soviet craft fell in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas with little notice being taken.

"Lick Your Wounds!"

◆ Scientists at the Royal Children's Hospital of Melbourne, Australia, say that the natural tendency of mammals to lick their wounds may indeed accelerate healing. In experiments with rats as described in the British scientific journal *Nature*, the researchers learned that when the rodents could lick small cuts, they healed much faster than those not accessible to licking. They concluded that something in saliva promotes healing, with possible good potential for healing after surgery—if the substance can be isolated for medical use.

Worst Energy Gluttons

◆ The recent gasoline crisis in the United States highlights the extent of American energy gluttony compared with the rest of the world. World Bank figures now put the average energy consumption of each American at more than double that of each person in other industrial nations, almost 21 times what persons in middle-income countries use and more than 210 times the energy used by individuals in less-developed countries. And according to London's *Financial Times*, American imports of oil have grown by one third in the past four years, while Japan, Germany, France and Italy actually reduced their imports.

Meanwhile, a new report from the Harvard Business School called "Energy Future" states that energy use by Americans could be reduced 40 percent by means of numerous conservation practices, including better insulation and improved auto mileage. Many of these are already practiced in other nations. Why not the U.S.? The book asserts that conservation is ignored by

many American politicians because it 'doesn't sound glamorous.'

Life Beneath the Ice

◆ Could any form of life survive in almost freezing water beneath 18 feet (5.5 m) of ice while receiving less than one tenth of one percent of the light at the surface? Yes, according to divers for America's National Science Foundation. They recently found vast mats of pinkish-orange-colored algae under the ice covering of two freshwater lakes in Antarctica. Zoology professor George M. Simmons, Jr., marveled that the tiny organisms can live "where there are four months of darkness and four months of twilight, and still manage to photosynthesize light and cycle nutrients and keep an incredible ecosystem going." In fact, the algae produce so much oxygen that the water was said to fizz like an opened soft-drink bottle when scientists broke through the ice.

Similarly, at the top of the world near Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, marine biologists found life under thick Arctic ice where they had thought none could exist. Dr. David Norton reports that the dark icy water is "teeming with an unusual variety of life for the Arctic—crustaceans, mollusks, starfish and fish." He also noted that during the winter when the seabed under the ice is in total darkness, "lo and behold, these plants [kelp] put on an annual spurt of growth during this period of pitch black." Scientists do not know how this is possible.

Penance for Squirrel

◆ Bombay's *Indian Express* reports that a poor Hindu man who made the mistake of killing a squirrel "was recently compelled to shave his head and offer meals to Brahmins." The newspaper also notes that "he had to offer a silver squirrel at the Siddhnath temple in Ujjain, before his cast panchayat [village council] agreed

to take him back in the community." And his father banned him from home until he had "cleansed himself of the 'sin.'" Hindus believe that animals house migrating souls of the dead.

Disco Fingers and Feet

◆ Dangers to sight and hearing from flashing lasers and overloud disco music have been joined by disco hazards to other parts of the anatomy. In the *New England Journal of Medicine*, physicians at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University Hospital tell of treating a young girl for a finger infection. Finger-snapping to the music had caused a callous that split and became infected. And Temple University's Center for Sports Medicine describes a new disease called disco foot. As a result of foot contortions in pointed, high-heeled shoes, says Dr. Ray Moyer, "you can get bunions, blisters, trouble with your arches and sore knees. Some people even break their spikes and their ankles at the same time."

Driving Comparison

◆ According to a recent study of traffic fatalities among the industrialized nations, Americans have the fewest highway deaths based on distance traveled, and Turks have the most. The report in London's *Daily Telegraph* lists American fatalities as 3.3 per 100 million miles (161 million km), while Turkish fatalities are nearly 10 times as great, at 32.2. Speed limits are the same, about 55 m.p.h. (90 km/h). Comparative highway deaths for other countries over the same distance are 4 for Britain, with a 70 m.p.h. (113 km/h) speed limit; 4.7 for Japan, 62 m.p.h. (100 km/h); 6.4 for Italy, 87 m.p.h. (140 km/h); 7.9 for the Federal Republic of Germany, no speed limit; 12.9 for Greece, 62 m.p.h. (100 km/h); and 22.5 for Portugal, 75 m.p.h. (120 km/h).

"Gays" Ruin Scenic Stop

◆ Homosexuals often contend that they should be viewed the same as heterosexuals in their sexual activity. However, it is of interest to note that the beautifully scenic Willamette Falls rest stop near West Linn, Oregon, recently had to be closed due to blatant homosexual activity involving its rest rooms, picnic tables and the surrounding area. Numerous arrests only publicized the location, to which "ministers, a grade-school principal, a doctor, school teachers, an engineer and a biologist," among others, flocked for open sexual activities, according to the *Oregon Journal*. People who came to use the place for its intended purpose often had to leave in disgust. Due to the cost in money and manpower, police finally decided to close down the location.

Battered Parents

◆ It has been well established that millions of children around the world are severely beaten and otherwise abused by parents. Not so well known is the fact that parents are often beaten, and sometimes viciously, by their children, mostly adolescents or young adults. In the United States it is estimated that about one of 10 children attacks his parents. This type of violence is most likely to occur in homes where one or both parents have abdicated parental authority. What makes the problem more difficult is that most parents assaulted by their children do not want to report the incident to police, even if their lives are endangered. And when someone else calls the police, parents often lie to protect their children, as well as the image the parents have of themselves.

Nuclear Cargo Ships

◆ How many nuclear-powered cargo ships are now plying the seas? At one time some thought that the number would constantly increase. However,

not a single nuclear-powered cargo ship is in active service today. The last one was the Otto Hahn, a cargo vessel of the Federal Republic of Germany. Several months ago it was decided that the 17,000-ton freighter was too expensive to run and so was dry-docked.

Big City

◆ A recent report in the *Mainichi Daily News* headlined: "Greater Tokyo Now Holds 27,042,000." The Tokyo metropolitan sphere, including Tokyo, Saitama, Chiba and Kanagawa Prefectures, covers an area of 5,175 square miles (13,403 km²), a little larger than the U.S. State of Connecticut. This is less than 4 percent of the entire land surface of Japan, yet almost 25 percent of Japan's population lives there!

Leprosy Resists Drug

◆ Leprosy can now be added to the list of diseases that are developing resistance to modern drugs. British specialist Anthony Bryceson recently told the Canadian Dermatological Association that leprosy could become a "big problem" in the 1980's. He noted that some who have been treated with the drug diasone have started to relapse, and the first cases of resistance to diasone among formerly untreated persons began to appear last year. Other drugs are more costly and have more side effects.

Behind Soviet Drinking

◆ According to an Associated Press report, Soviet factory managers have indicated that a significant percentage of their workers arrive on Monday morning too drunk or with

too much of a hangover to work effectively. This information was included with a recent government release of statistics in its continuing campaign against alcoholism. In an effort to list the causes of so much drunkenness, sociologist Vasili Belov, writing in a Soviet economic journal, included "the primitive level of spiritual life in some people and their lack of any clear moral ideal." Yet at the same time Soviet psychiatrist Dr. V. Krupko, writing in the newspaper *Rural Life*, was attacking religion and belief in God as "a real danger" to a person's "psyche." And the official newspaper *Pravda* was boasting of a study from the autonomous Chuvash Republic showing that over 97 percent of people under 20 and almost 94 percent of those from 21 to 30 have no religion.

