

1975 YEARBOOK

of Jehovah's Witnesses

Containing Report for the Service Year
of 1974

Also Daily Texts and Comments



Corporate Publishers

**WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
OF NEW YORK, INC.**

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

124 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.

Branch offices appear on last page

Made in the United States of America

(4) What is the divine penalty for sin upon the sinners? and who are the sinners? (6) Of what nature was the Man Christ Jesus from infancy to death? (7) Of what nature is Jesus since the resurrection; and what is his official relation to Jehovah? (13) What will be the reward or blessings which will come to the world of mankind through obedience to Messiah's kingdom? (16) Have you turned from sin to serve the living God? (17) Have you made a full consecration of your life and all your powers and talents to the Lord and his service? (18) Have you symbolized this consecration by water immersion? (22) Do you believe you have a substantial and permanent knowledge of the Bible which will render you more efficient as a servant of the Lord throughout the remainder of your life?

7 Those submitting their answers to the Society's V. D. M. department received a reply that included "some kindly suggestions and hints" respecting their answers. Among other things, it was desired that the questions be answered by individuals in their own words.

vom Explaining matters a little further, George E. Hannan writes: "These questions were to serve as a guide in determining how well an individual understood the basic doctrines of the Bible. Any dedicated person who obtained an 85-percent rating was considered qualified to teach. All such brothers were qualified to give public talks and chart talks. These questions encouraged all who associated with the Society to read the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, looking up all the Scriptural references." 77

So it was that, as the new president of the Watch Tower Society, J. F. Rutherford took immediate steps to accelerate the work of preaching the good news of God's kingdom. Blessings followed. The year 1917 witnessed increased field activity to the praise of Jehovah God.

"DO NOT BE PUZZLED AT THE BURNING AMONG YOU"

Not all persons within the organization, however, were happy when J. F. Rutherford was elected president. In fact, beginning early in 1917, several individuals ambitiously sought to gain administrative control of the Society. They became very uncooperative, and thus a period of fiery testing began. Of course, Christians expect to be opposed and persecuted by worldly foes. But trials that originate within the Christian organization itself often are unexpected and are more difficult to bear. Yet, with divine aid all such

hardships can be borne. Peter told fellow believers: "Beloved ones, do not be puzzled at the burning among you, which is happening to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were befalling you. On the contrary, go on rejoicing forasmuch as you are sharers in the sufferings of the Christ."—1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

Jehovah and his "messenger of the covenant," Jesus Christ, came to inspect the spiritual temple in 1918 C.E. Judgment then began with the "house of God" and a period of refining and cleansing commenced. (Mal. 3:1-3; 1 Pet. 4:17) Something else also occurred. Men manifesting the marks of an "evil slave" came forward and figuratively began 'beating' their fellow slaves. Jesus Christ had foretold how such ones would be dealt with. At the same time he showed that a "faithful and discreet slave" class would be in evidence, dispensing spiritual food.—Matt. 24:45-51.

The identity of the "faithful and discreet slave," or "faithful and wise servant" (*King James Version*), was a matter of quite some concern back in those years. Much earlier, in 1881, C. T. Russell wrote: "We believe that every member of this body of Christ is engaged in the blessed work, either directly or indirectly, of giving meat in due season to the household of faith. 'Who then is that faithful and wise servant whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household,' to give them meat in due season? Is it not that 'little flock' of consecrated servants who are faithfully carrying out their consecration vows—the body of Christ—and is not the whole body individually and collectively, giving the meat in due season to the household of faith—the great company of believers?"

So it was understood that the "servant" God used to dispense spiritual food was a class. With the passing of time, however, the idea adopted by many was that C. T. Russell himself was the "faithful and wise servant." This led some into the snare of creature worship. They felt that all the truth God saw fit to reveal to his people had been presented through Brother Russell, that nothing more could be brought forth. Annie Poggensee writes: "This caused a great sifting out of those who chose to stay back with Russell's works." In February 1927 this erroneous thought that Russell himself was the "faithful and wise servant" was cleared up.

Shortly after Brother Rutherford became president of the Watch Tower Society, a real conspiracy developed. The seed of rebellion was planted and then the trouble spread, as explained below.

C. T. Russell had seen the need to send someone from headquarters to Britain to strengthen the Bible Students there after the outbreak of World War I.

He intended to send Paul S. L. Johnson, a Jew who forsook Judaism and became a Lutheran minister before coming to a knowledge of God's truth. Johnson had served as one of the Society's traveling speakers and was well known for his ability. Out of respect for Russell's wish, the executive committee that served for a short time before Rutherford's election as president sent Johnson to England, giving him certain papers that would facilitate entry into that country. He was to learn all he could about the work in England and then make a full report to the Society, but he was to make no personnel changes at the British headquarters. However, his reception in England during November 1916 seemed to warp his judgment and finally his reason, "until," as A. H. Macmillan stated, "he came to the ridiculous conclusion that he was the 'steward' of Jesus' parable of the penny. He later thought he was the world's high priest." In discourses to Bible Students throughout England, Johnson characterized himself as Russell's successor, contending that the mantle of Pastor Russell had fallen upon him just as Elijah's cloak ("official garment") fell upon Elisha.—2 Ki. 2:11-14.

Evidently, Johnson's aspirations had developed even earlier, for Edythe Kessler recalls: "In 1915 I left Bethel and, before starting for Arizona, I visited a couple of old friends I had known for years, and while I was there they entertained a pilgrim, P. S. L. Johnson by name. Satan was already showing his ugly underhanded methods to gain control, no matter how. Johnson said, 'I'd like to talk with you. Let's sit in the living room,' which we did. He commenced by saying: 'Sister, we know that it is possible for Brother Russell to pass on most any time, but the friends need not be fearful when that happens. I can step into his place and take right over without any stopping of the work.'"

While in England, Johnson endeavored to take complete control of the British field of activity, even trying, without authority, to dismiss certain members of the London headquarters staff. So much confusion resulted that the branch overseer complained to Brother Rutherford. In turn, Rutherford appointed a commission of several brothers in London who were not members of the headquarters staff. They met, heard and weighed the facts and recommended that Johnson be recalled. Rutherford told Johnson to return. Instead of doing so, Johnson sent letters and cablegrams charging the committee with bias, and also trying to justify his course. Seeking to make his position indispensable in Britain, he improperly used the documents furnished him by the Society and impounded its funds in the

London bank. Later it became necessary to take court action to have these monies freed.

Johnson finally returned to New York, where he persistently attempted to persuade J. F. Rutherford to send him back to England, but to no avail. Thinking Rutherford was not the right man for the position, Johnson was sure that he himself ought to be the Society's president. He sought to influence the board of directors. By making it appear that Brother Rutherford was unfit as president, Johnson persuaded four of the seven board members to side with him. The four opposed the Society's president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer, and the dissident directors sought to wrest administrative control from the president.

J. F. Rutherford held meetings with the opposers and tried to reason with them. A. H. Macmillan says that Rutherford "even came to several of us and asked, 'Shall I resign as president and let those opposing ones take charge?' We all replied, 'Brother, the Lord put you where you are, and to resign or quit would be disloyalty to the Lord.' Furthermore, the office force threatened they would quit if these men got control."

At an extended session of the Society's 1917 annual meeting, the four dissident directors tried to present a resolution to amend the bylaws of the Society. This was a design to place administrative powers in the hands of the board of directors. Since this was contrary both to the organizational arrangement in vogue during Brother Russell's presidency and to the wish of the shareholders, Rutherford ruled the motion out of order and the plan was foiled. Opposition got stiffer thereafter, but there were some developments the opponents never expected.

"THE FINISHED MYSTERY"

Throughout his entire administration as the Society's president, Brother Russell, along with the vice-president and secretary-treasurer, had made decisions about new publications. As a group, the board of directors had not been consulted. Rutherford followed the same policy. Hence, in the course of time the Society's three officers made a far-reaching decision.

Charles Taze Russell had written six volumes of *Millennial Dawn*, or *Studies in the Scriptures*, but often spoke about writing a seventh volume. "Whenever I find the key," said he, "I will write the Seventh Volume; and if the Lord gives the key to someone else, he can write it." The Society's officers arranged to have two Bible Students, Clayton J. Woodworth and George H. Fisher, compile a book consisting of com-

mentaries on Revelation, The Song of Solomon and Ezekiel. The coeditors assembled material from Brother Russell's writings and this was published under the title "The Finished Mystery" as the seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*. Containing largely the thinking and comments of C. T. Russell, it was termed the "posthumous work of Pastor Russell."

By about mid-1917 it was time to release the new book. That significant day was July 17. "I was on duty in the [Brooklyn Bethel] dining room when the phone rang," says Martin O. Bowin. "We were getting ready for the noonday meal. I was the nearest one to the phone, so I answered it. Brother Rutherford was on the other end. 'Who is there with you?' he asked. I answered, 'Louis.' He said to come to his study quickly, and 'Don't bother to knock.' A stack of books was handed to us, with orders to put one at each place setting and get it done before the family arrived for the noon meal." Soon the dining room was filled with members of the Bethel family.

"As usual," continues Brother Bowin, "thanks to God was given. Then it started! . . . Headed by . . . P. S. L. Johnson, . . . this demonstration against dear Brother Rutherford began. Hurling vicious charges loudly, they walked back and forth, stopping only at Brother Rutherford's table to shake their fists at him and further denounce him. . . . All this lasted for about five hours. Then everyone got up from the table with all the dishes and a lot of untouched food still on the table, to be cleaned up by brothers with little energy with which to accomplish it."

This incident revealed that some members of the Bethel family sympathized with the opposers. If such opposition continued, eventually it would disrupt the entire operation of Bethel. So J. F. Rutherford acted to correct the situation. Though fully acquainted with the legal structure of the Society, Rutherford had consulted a prominent corporation lawyer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, concerning the status of the Society's board of directors. The written opinion received disclosed that the four dissidents were not legal members of the board. Why not?

C. T. Russell had appointed those men as directors, but the Society's charter required that directors be elected by vote of the shareholders. Rutherford had told Russell that appointees had to be confirmed by vote at the following annual meeting, but Russell never took that step. So, only the officers who had been elected at the Pittsburgh annual meeting were duly constituted board members. The four appointees were not legal members of the board. Rutherford knew this throughout the period of trouble, but had not men-

tioned it, hoping that these board members would discontinue their opposition. However, their attitude showed that they were not qualified to be directors. Rightly Rutherford dismissed them and appointed four new board members whose appointment could be confirmed at the next general corporation meeting, early in 1918.

Brother Rutherford did not summarily dismiss the former directors from the Christian organization. Instead, he offered them positions as pilgrims. They refused, voluntarily left Bethel and began spreading their opposition by an extensive speaking and letter-writing campaign throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. Consequently, after the summer of 1917, many congregations of Bible Students were composed of two parties—those loyal to Jehovah's organization and others who had become spiritually drowsy and had fallen victim to the smooth talk of the opposers. The latter became uncooperative and would not engage in the work of preaching the good news of God's kingdom.

FUTILE EFFORTS TO GAIN CONTROL

The opposition group that had recently left Bethel thought they would be able to control the Bible Students' convention held at Boston, Massachusetts, in August 1917. Mary Hannan, who was in attendance at that assembly, reports: "Brother Rutherford was alert to this effort on their part and did not give them an opportunity to get on the platform at any time during the sessions. He acted as the chairman all the time." The convention was a thorough success, to Jehovah's praise, and the opposers were unable to disrupt it.

J. F. Rutherford knew that the annual corporation meeting of January 5, 1918, would afford the dissidents another chance to get control. He was reasonably sure that the Bible Students in general did not favor such a move. Yet, they would have no opportunity to express themselves at the election, since it was a matter to be handled only by members of the legally constituted corporation, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. So, what could Rutherford do? He could give all of Jehovah's dedicated servants an opportunity to make expression. Accordingly, *The Watch Tower* of November 1, 1917, suggested that a referendum vote be taken by each congregation. By December 15, 813 congregations sent in their votes and the poll indicated that 10,869 of the 11,421 votes were for J. F. Rutherford as the Society's president. Among other things, the referendum vote also showed that all the faithful

members of the board of directors as reconstituted in July 1917 were preferred over the rebellious individuals who claimed to be board members.

At the annual shareholders' meeting on Saturday, January 5, 1918, the seven individuals receiving the highest number of votes were J. F. Rutherford, C. H. Anderson, W. E. Van Amburgh, A. H. Macmillan, W. E. Spill, J. A. Bonnet and George H. Fisher. Not one of the opponents succeeded in establishing himself on the board. The officers of the Society were then elected from the duly chosen board members, J. F. Rutherford receiving all the votes cast for president, Charles H. Anderson all of those for vice-president and W. E. Van Amburgh all the votes for secretary-treasurer. Therefore, these men were duly elected as officers of the Society. The opposers' attempt to gain control had been foiled completely.

Faithful ones and opposers now were beyond reconciliation. The opposition group formed an entirely separate organization headed by a "Committee of Seven." Separation certainly was complete by March 26, 1918, when the opposers celebrated the Memorial of Christ's death apart from the faithful congregations of God's people. The unity of those forming the opposition group was short-lived, however, for at their convention in the summer of 1918 differences arose and a split occurred. P. S. L. Johnson organized a group with headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he published *The Present Truth and Herald of Christ's Epiphany*. There he remained, characterizing himself as "earth's great high priest" until his death. Further dissension from 1918 onward caused division until the original dissident group that had separated from the Watch Tower Society disintegrated into a number of schismatic sects.

Many who withdrew in the years following the death of C. T. Russell did not actively oppose their former Christian associates. Some returned, repented of their actions and associated with God's people once again. This was a time of severe testing, as Mabel P. M. Philbrick indicates in stating: "My own sorrow was great as I realized that my own father and dearly loved stepmother who had been in line for the heavenly prize were falling away. Many efforts were put forth and many tears shed until I got my bearings, for I well knew that one who lost his crown had no life to look forward to anywhere. The thought of second death for them seemed unbearable. However, one day in prayer Jehovah gave me much comfort as I fully began to want his will to be done. Suddenly I began to appreciate that his love and justice were far greater

than my own and that if he didn't count them worthy of life, I couldn't hold on to them either, for my father and mother were no different than someone else's father and mother. From that moment on I had peace of mind."

Not only did those who separated from Jehovah's faithful servants in those days break up into sects, but, in most cases, their numbers dwindled and their activities became inconsequential or ceased entirely. Surely they are not fulfilling Jesus' commission to his followers to preach the good news in all the earth and make disciples.—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

How many forsook true Christianity during the critical years of 1917 and 1918? An incomplete earth-wide report shows that the Memorial of Jesus Christ's death on April 5, 1917, was attended by 21,274. (Due to difficulties inside and outside the organization in 1918, attendance figures were not gathered that year.) At the Memorial celebration on April 13, 1919, a partial report gave an attendance of 17,961. Though incomplete, these figures make it clear that far less than 4,000 had ceased walking with their former associates in God's service.

CHRISTIANS IN THE CRUCIBLE

During 1917 to 1919 the Bible Students were also objects of an international conspiracy fomented particularly by the clergy of Christendom. *The Finished Mystery*, seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, roused their clerical ire. Within seven months of this publication's initial release it was enjoying unparalleled circulation. The Society's outside printers were busy on the 850,000 edition. By the end of 1917 the book also was available in Swedish and French, and translation into other languages was under way.

On December 30, 1917, mass distribution of 10,000,000 copies of a new issue of the four-page, tabloid-size tract *The Bible Students Monthly* began. Entitled "The Fall of Babylon" and with the subtitles "Ancient Babylon a Type—Mystic Babylon the Antitype—Why Christendom Must Now Suffer—the Final Outcome," it contained excerpts from the Seventh Volume, with very pointed references to the clergy. On its back page appeared a graphic cartoon depicting a crumbling wall. Some of its stones bore such words as "Protestantism," "Eternal torment theory," "Doctrine of the trinity," "Apostolic succession" and "Purgatory." With Scriptural foundation the tract showed that the great majority of the clergy "have been unfaithful, disloyal, unrighteous men" who were more responsible than any other class on earth for the war then raging and the great trouble