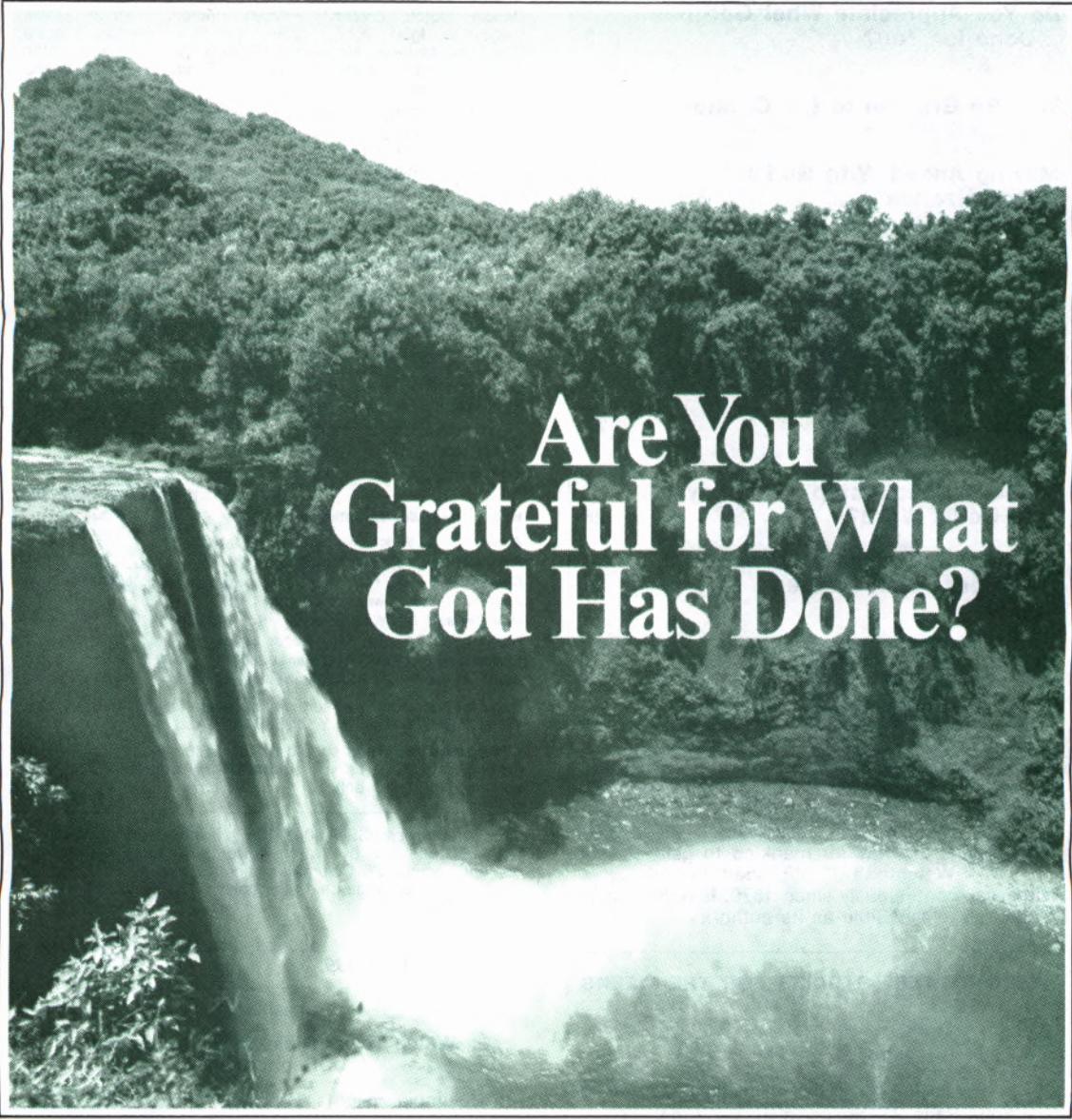


September 1, 1983

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**Are You
Grateful for What
God Has Done?**



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Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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Vol. 104, No. 17

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a Paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

- October 2: 'Select Capable, God-Fearing Men.'
Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 14, 39.
- October 9: 'Remember Those Taking the Lead Among You.' Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 54, 99.

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Do You Appreciate What God Has Done for You?

A CERTAIN woman tried to share the good news from the Bible with her neighbor, a Chinese housewife with two children. But such efforts met with this remark: "I would never become a Christian like you!"

Rather than being discouraged by this response, however, the Christian woman continued to show kindness to her neighbor, repeatedly going to her aid when she needed help. Gradually, the neighbor was moved by this kindness and eventually accepted a Bible study in order to learn more about the God whose worshipers display such unselfish love. In due time the Chinese woman herself became a worshiper of Jehovah, the God of the Bible, and this despite her husband's very severe opposition.

This experience proves that every normal person appreciates being treated with kindness and consideration. And it is only natural and right that we should express our appreciation to a person showing us such kindness. After all, suppose a friend invited you to a sumptuous meal on which much time, effort and money had been spent. After enjoying such a feast, would you dream of leaving the table without saying even one word to express your appreciation for the hospitality of your host? Well, then, what about the Creator? Do you appreciate what he has done for all of us?



Why Be Grateful to the Creator?

ANYONE who fails to show appreciation for kindness shown him usually is looked upon as lacking in feeling or in good upbringing. Naturally, of all the people entitled to our gratitude for showing us kindness, our parents rank among the foremost. It is universally recognized that children should be grateful to their parents for bringing them into the world and providing them with food, clothing, shelter, education, and so forth.

However, though we are indebted to our parents, indebtedness to our Creator is even greater. Why? Because we have received many more benefits from him.

To illustrate: We are grateful to our parents for bringing us into the world. But our life actually did not come from them in the first place. They only passed life on to us, for with the Creator is the actual source of life. (Psalm 36:9) We also appreciate our parents for having provided life's necessities. Yet, while these essentials were obtained by either their money or their labors, they did not create such needed things. Hence, we have much greater reason to feel indebted to our Creator.

Were it not for the One who created the earth and made all its provisions for sustaining human life, no amount of money or laborious effort could keep us alive. As the Christian apostle Paul pointed out to the Greeks in ancient Athens: "He [the Creator] himself gives to all persons life and breath and all things.

For by him we have life and move and exist."—Acts 17:25, 28.

Despite all that the Creator has done and is doing for mankind, millions today totally disregard him and certainly do not thank him for the numerous benefits they have received. Some, although grudgingly acknowledging that there must be a Creator, make little effort to learn more about him or his will. Others, numbering into the millions, even deny that there is a Creator, claiming that all things just came into existence by themselves. What shocking ingratitude! Such lack of appreciation is one of many indications that we are in "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Yet, we individually can and should be grateful to our Creator.

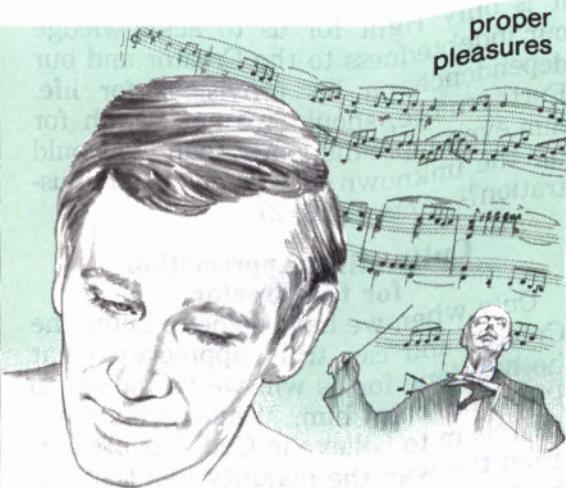
The Creator's Wonderful Gifts

The better we become acquainted with the One who made all things, the more we realize that he is the Giver of "every good gift." (James 1:17; Revelation 4:11) As it is, most of those who show no gratitude to the Creator try to justify their course by claiming that since no man has ever seen Him, we cannot be sure that He exists. True, the great Creator is invisible to us because he is a Spirit, and our eyes cannot see persons or things in the spiritual realm. (John 4:24) But man's inability to see the Creator really is no valid reason for taking His generous provisions for granted and



God's Word

sacred service



Show that you appreciate Jehovah's provisions

refusing to acknowledge our indebtedness to Him.

Suppose you came home one day and found that someone had left you a large bag of delicious fruit. The next day a basket of fresh garden vegetables was left, and the day thereafter you were given some fine cuts of meat. This went on for a whole week, but a note never was left to identify the giver. Would you conclude that all these gifts had come about "naturally" just because you had not seen anyone leaving the food? Rather, would you not make diligent inquiry among friends and relatives, trying to identify the kind giver so that you could express sincere appreciation to him or her?

The case with our Creator is similar. Though he is invisible to human eyes, his love, kindness and generosity toward mankind are amply proved by his won-



wholesome food

derful creation that satisfies our needs in every way. As the apostle Paul pointed out to inhabitants of ancient Lystra: "Indeed, [God] did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:17) So

it is only right for us to acknowledge our indebtedness to the Creator and our dependence on his provisions for life. Furthermore, should we not search for him even more diligently than we would for the unknown gift giver of our illustration?—Acts 17:26, 27.

Cultivating Appreciation for the Creator

Only when we have come to know the Creator and can truly appreciate what he has done for us will we be moved to love and obey him. While millions today claim to believe in God, it is obvious from the way the majority live that not many have genuine, heartfelt appreciation for their Maker. But we do not have to be similarly ungrateful. So the question that should interest us is, How can we cultivate a deep appreciation for our Grand Creator?

First of all, it will do us good to reflect on the numerous benefits we have received from the Creator. He granted us our life, even though at present the human life span is of limited duration. (Psalm 90:10) Our appreciation will be enhanced, too, if we meditate on the fact that Jehovah God has also made generous provisions to sustain humans and other forms of life on earth. As the psalmist appreciatively said: “With the fruitage of [God’s] works the earth is satisfied. He is making green grass sprout for the beasts, and vegetation for the service of mankind, to cause food to go forth from the earth. . . . How many your works are, O Jehovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions.”—Psalm 104:10-24.

Mankind has even greater reason to be grateful to God, for humans have been given much more than have the animals. Of all the creatures on earth, mankind alone has the ability to reason, to appreciate beauty and spiritual values,

and above all, to know and worship the Creator. This is so because man alone was created in God’s image and has been endowed with qualities that reflect those of Jehovah God. (Genesis 1:27) Hence, we are capable of experiencing not just physical pleasures but also much deeper and more lasting mental pleasures. Man alone can appreciate fine music, literature, poetry, painting and numerous other forms of art. Only man knows the joy of pleasant and upbuilding conversation, as well as the satisfying sense of accomplishment when one has done something really worthwhile.

Unique in man also is the yearning for everlasting life. This is a desire implanted in the human heart by the loving Creator. (Ecclesiastes 3:11) But this is not just some vain hope that cannot possibly be fulfilled. Rather, due to the Creator’s great love for mankind, he has already made all the necessary arrangements for humans to enjoy everlasting life on earth amid delightful paradisaic conditions. Yes, God has lovingly made this possible through the ransom sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ.—Romans 5:12; 6:23; 1 John 2:1, 2.

While much pleasure is realized when our physical, mental and emotional needs are satisfied, the greatest blessing results from the filling of our spiritual need. (Matthew 5:3) We naturally want to know our origin, where we are heading and what purpose the Creator has for the earth and mankind. Moreover, we desire to know our Maker and enjoy a good relationship with him. Happily, those who are aware of their spiritual need and who act to satisfy it in a proper way are able to experience a deep and lasting joy that never is known by fleshly minded individuals.—1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

Having our *spiritual need* satisfied gives us true peace of heart and mind

and a great measure of happiness, even though we live in a world of unprecedented troubles. More importantly, consciousness of our spiritual need can result in the greatest blessing any human can experience—life eternal in God's righteous new system of things.—John 3:16; Philippians 4:6, 7; 2 Peter 3:13.

Getting Better Acquainted With Our Creator

If we are convinced that a loving and generous Creator exists, is it not logical that we would desire to know him better and show our appreciation for his loving-kindness by doing things that please him? By observing God's marvelous creation, we are able to perceive some of his fine qualities, such as love, generosity, consideration, wisdom and power. (Romans 1:20) However, a written record from God is needed if we are to learn of his thoughts and purposes toward humans. Besides, such a record should tell us about things God did in the past and will yet do for the blessing of mankind.

Happily, we have such a record in the most widely circulated book in human history—God's Word, the Bible. It is the Creator's will that his creatures be able to acquire accurate knowledge of him and develop a deep love for him by studying his Word and meditating upon it. They can thus learn of God's many wonderful deeds and can come to appreciate the various facets of his magnificent personality.—Joshua 1:8.

Showing God Our Appreciation

Diligent study of God's Word is essential if we want to develop a keen appreciation of the Creator. The more we learn about Jehovah and his many fine qualities, the more we are attracted to him. We cannot help being filled with love and admiration for such a kind, loving and magnificent God. Moreover, we may

be moved to express our feelings as did the psalmist, who said: "I shall remember the practices of Jah [Jehovah]; for I will remember your marvelous doing of long ago. And I shall certainly meditate on all your activity, and with your dealings I will concern myself. O God, your way is in the holy place. Who is a great God like God? You are the true God, doing marvelously."—Psalm 77:11-14.

How, then, can we show our heartfelt appreciation to the Grand Creator? Our love for him and gratitude for his loving-kindness should motivate us to serve him voluntarily. We should view this not just as a duty but more as a pleasure. Such joyful, willing service is desired by Jehovah, for the psalmist was inspired to say: "Serve Jehovah with rejoicing. Come in before him with a joyful cry."—Psalm 100:2.

Is it not a source of great pleasure to serve someone we truly love? Surely it is. And that is true, indeed, of our service to Jehovah, the Grand Creator.

Of course, serving Jehovah involves more than living a clean life and not doing what is bad in his eyes. Godly conduct is essential, but our service to the Creator also includes praising him actively and joyously. It means telling others about Jehovah's great deeds and grand purposes, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

So all who have true appreciation for our wonderful Creator will be very glad to respond to this happy call of the psalmist: "Sing to Jehovah, bless his name. From day to day tell the good news of salvation by him. Declare among the nations his glory, among all the peoples his wonderful works. For Jehovah is great and very much to be praised." (Psalm 96: 2-4) By such joyful service you, like so many others, can convincingly show that you really appreciate what the Creator has done for you.

Moving Ahead With God's Organization

IN 1922, when I was 14 years old, my father moved our family from Chicago, Illinois, to California. En route we visited old friends in Idaho. They informed us that in California there were people who were saying that, according to the Bible, millions of persons then living would never die.

Shortly after reaching California we saw in a newspaper the announcement "Millions Now Living Will Never Die." It was the subject of a public lecture to be given in San Jose. In this way my father located the Bible Students (as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known), and he began to take us to their public meetings.

Mother wanted me to become involved in some church Sunday school. Although my father was critical of preachers of all denominations, he agreed that this might be good for me. So I became a regular attender of the Methodist Sunday school. I eventually became treasurer of the school and played on its basketball team. At the same time, our family attended public lectures held by the Bible Students in San Jose, just a few miles from our home in Santa Clara.

My father wanted to see conditions improved and to that end campaigned for various political candidates, even paint-



As told by Grant Suiter

ing the name of one of them on the windshield of our Model T Ford. At the meetings Bible Students would kindly tell him that the real hope for mankind was not in political efforts but in God's Kingdom by Christ Jesus. Father would somewhat agree but would say that, while that was all right for the future, in the meantime he would like to make things as good as possible through political means. In time, however, my entire family—mother, father, sister and I—came to a greater appreciation of Bible truth and the requirements of God's Word.

Spiritual Growth

Eventually I could not conscientiously continue in the Methodist Sunday school, and so I resigned. By 1923 our family had relocated a few miles away in Oakland, where my father operated a small grocery store and I attended high school. Learning that Bible Students did not smoke, I tried to persuade Dad to quit selling cigarettes in his store. He disagreed with me but did talk the matter over with one of the Bible Students, Robert Craig.

After their discussion my father decided to sell the whole business and leave

Oakland. His decision was also prompted by efforts of a group to set him up in the bootlegging business, which he realized was not compatible with what he was learning through the Oakland Ecclesia (Congregation) of Bible Students. About the same time, with my parents' permission, I quit high school after only a year and a half of attendance because of the immoral influence in the schools.

We moved a few miles away to Mountain View, close enough to San Jose to attend the meetings of the ecclesia there again. My father operated another store, and I worked in it full time, never receiving any wages but just helping him. Dad subscribed to *The Watchtower* and *The Golden Age* (now called *Awake!*), and how I especially enjoyed the *The Golden Age!* I felt that I was getting more information from it than I would have received had I remained in high school.

The ecclesia meetings were becoming more and more interesting to me. I found particularly impressive the article in the March 1, 1925, issue of *The Watchtower* entitled "Birth of the Nation." The information there marked a great step forward in the understanding of the Bible Students respecting Jehovah's Kingdom by Christ Jesus, namely, that it had been set up or established in heaven in the year 1914. During this time our family was becoming close friends with the Bible Students in Mountain View, spending considerable time with them in their homes.

Eventually we learned that not only was prayer a part of ecclesia meetings but the friends also prayed in their private homes, including ex-

pressing thanks at mealtime. To his credit my father wanted to see prayer from the proper viewpoint. He had viewed it in general as hypocritical. I remember being present when prayer was being discussed by him and one of the Bible Students who was paying a visit at his store. The visitor pointed out how we should express thanks to Jehovah God for our blessings. But my father questioned him as to how it could be that we should thank Jehovah for all our blessings because surely we did not blame him for all our difficulties. Eventually, however, as a family, we understood prayer clearly and took full advantage of this loving provision.

A provision of the ecclesia from which I benefited a great deal was the School of the Prophets. This was a meeting of elders and other males for the purpose of receiving training in public speaking. The student would give a talk that he had prepared on an assigned subject, and the others would give him helpful counsel. However, the constructive criticism that I got at the school was nothing compared with that which I received from my father personally after he had attended one of the sessions to hear me try to make a speech.

My family and I were greatly helped by the pilgrims, who were special representatives of the Watch Tower Society. The ecclesiastas made yearly requests to the Society for their visits.

J. A. Bohnet made a particular impression and was of special help to me. He was a man who had characteristics that endeared him to some people but had the reverse effect on others. He loved Jehovah and evidently was modest, but he kept this quality somewhat concealed under a gruff exterior.



J. A. Bohnet greatly influenced my life

Baptism and Christian Ministry

It was a talk by Brother Bohnet in the home of a Bible Student in Mountain View that deeply affected my life. As I listened to him speak of the privileges of serving Jehovah and the responsibility to do so, I realized what I should do and what I wanted to do. Thus I made a personal dedication to Jehovah, and about the same time the other members of my family did also. On October 10, 1926, in San Jose, California, all of us together symbolized our dedication to Jehovah God by undergoing water immersion.

The baptisms then were conducted somewhat differently from today. The elder doing the baptizing said to me: "Brother Grant, in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit, I now baptize thee into Christ." Each of us being baptized wore half-sleeved long, black robes that reached from the neck down to the ankles. To ensure that the robe remained down and modestly covered the candidate it was heavily weighted in the bottom hem by means of lead weights.

After the baptism, and after we had dressed, my father said to the elder overseeing the baptism: "You folks go out with the literature, don't you? We want to do that work, too, now." So our family started out in the field ministry.

My first time in the field service was when an elder, H. O. Lawrence, arranged to take me. He equipped me with some booklets and drove to the territory in San Jose. I thought he was going to work with me from house to house, but he told me to get out of the car and said, "Now you go down this side of the block." Then he drove away. So I went down that side of the block and placed three booklets on a contribution of 25 cents and I was very happy. As a result of thus sharing in the Christian

ministry, I really felt a part of God's organization.

About this time we received instructions in our monthly service directive *The Bulletin* (now called *Our Kingdom Ministry*) to tell the householder something about the Devil's organization. So when people dismissed me by saying that they were not interested I would somewhat insistently proceed to tell them of the existence of the Devil's organization and its coming destruction. This was quite a variation from our usual presentation about the prospect of living forever on a Paradise earth without ever having to die.

The San Jose Ecclesia used to travel long distances to reach people with the Kingdom message. What were called canvassing parties went out regularly into Santa Clara Valley and the surrounding hills. I can remember the land as far as the eye could see being covered with orchards in blossom. We would take a lunch with us and spend the entire day, sometimes traveling 75 miles (121 km) or more to get to the area where we were going to witness.

Radio Station KFWM in Oakland was used for many years to broadcast the Kingdom message, and various ecclesiastas in the surrounding area took turns in providing programs for the station on weekends. I had the privilege of reading Bible lectures over the KFWM facilities, such as the one on July 24, 1927. The call letters of this radio station lent themselves to being the initials for 'Kingdom For World of Mankind.'

Expanding My Service

One day while we were driving home from a meeting, Brother Lawrence, who had first taken me in the field service, offered me an application to serve at the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. Sometime prior to this, shortly af-

ter our baptism, I had overheard my father say to my mother that if he were in my place he would make Jehovah's service his life's work. This is what I wanted, too, and I felt that in making application for Bethel the opportunity was presented to me to do this.

The May 15, 1928, issue of *The Watchtower* announced that from July 30 to August 6 there would be an international convention of the Bible Students in Detroit, Michigan. I wanted very much to attend, and my family and friends made it possible for me to do so. During the convention Donald Haslett, a secretary of J. F. Rutherford, the president of the Society, announced from the platform that brothers were needed for Bethel service. He said that those wishing to apply could be interviewed by Brother Rutherford. I responded, filled out another Bethel application, and Brother Rutherford told me to report at Bethel on August 13, 1928.

There were, all together, 13 of us who reported for Bethel service on August 13, just one week after the Detroit convention. At that time 95 members of the Bethel family worked in the production and shipping of Bible literature at the newly completed 117 Adams Street factory, and a somewhat smaller number worked in the Bethel home and various offices of the Society. My first job at Bethel was taking booklets away from a machine that was used to fold the booklets after the covers had been fastened to them with wire stitches. I worked in the printery for less than two weeks when I was transferred to the office, the Service Department. Sharing in this activity really gave me the sense of moving ahead with God's organization.

Since I had nowhere to go for my first vacation, in 1929, I spent it at Bethel. So I was at hand when Brother Rutherford gave his talk at the Masonic Temple



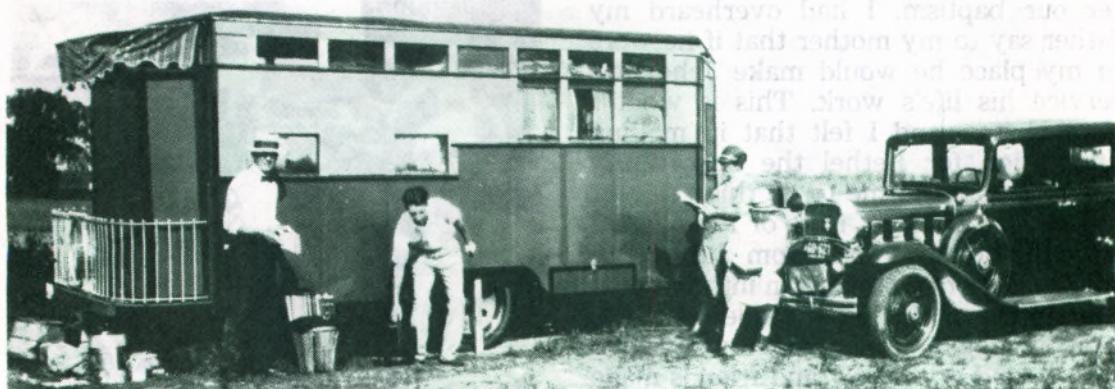
With my sister and my parents

in Brooklyn on Jehovah's permission of wickedness and the vindication of His name. Prior to this time we did not understand this matter, and so Brother Rutherford's talk was a thrilling clarification of a vital, fundamental subject.

Moving Ahead in the 1930's

A real highlight of 1931 was receiving the name Jehovah's Witnesses, thus providing a unifying name for all of God's people. The following year the term for identifying a congregation of God's people was changed from "ecclesia" to "company," a change that was based on a consideration of Psalm 68: 11 (*Authorized Version*). So throughout the world we had "companies" of Jehovah's Witnesses and not "classes," or "ecclesiastas."

In 1932 my father disposed of his business in California, and he, my mother and my sister entered the pioneer service. They built themselves a house car, and for the next 20 years it served as the pioneer home for my parents. My sister, Grace, served with them until 1939 when



My parents pioneered for 20 years in this house car

she was invited to become a member of the Brooklyn Bethel family. She continues to serve here, and since 1959 as the wife of Simon Kraker.

The factory manager, Robert J. Martin, died on September 23, 1932, and Nathan H. Knorr was appointed by Brother Rutherford in his place. Brother Knorr had previously been on the dispatch desk.

The following year real troubles began for God's people. On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany, and on June 28, 1933, the German branch of the Watch Tower Society in Magdeburg was seized and closed down. Pope Pius XI declared 1933 a "Holy Year," and Brother Rutherford soon afterward spoke over 55 radio stations on the subject "Effect of Holy Year on Peace and Prosperity." It was my privilege to be his announcer for that program.

In the early 1930's considerable opposition to our work developed and there was widespread persecution. Jehovah's Witnesses were organized into "divisions" for the purpose of giving a concentrated witness in trouble areas. In Germany the persecution increased to such an extent that on October 7, 1934, companies of God's people in many countries sent

telegrams to Hitler warning him to put a stop to it.

About this time there were many discussions among God's people regarding the identity of the "great multitude" of Revelation 7:9, *Authorized Version*. It was generally believed at the time that they were a secondary, less faithful heavenly class. At one Bethel study, conducted by Brother T. J. Sullivan, I asked: "Since the great multitude gain everlasting life, do those who make up that group maintain integrity?" There were many comments but no definitive answer. When I was called on for my own comment I said that I was only trying to get a yes or no answer.

Well, on May 31, 1935, at the Washington, D.C., convention, Brother Rutherford spoke on this very subject. I was sitting in the balcony looking down over the crowd, and what a thrill it was as his talk unfolded! The great multitude was clearly identified Scripturally to be those who survive Armageddon with the prospect of living forever on earth. Yes, here was further information on 'the millions now living who will never die.'

On July 12, 1937, I was appointed by Brother Rutherford as Bethel servant.

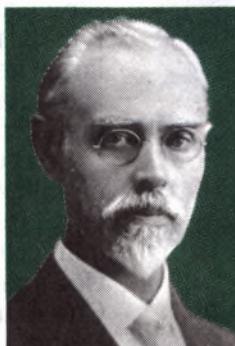
For the last four and a half years of Brother Rutherford's life I had the privilege of working closely with him. Late in 1937 the name of *The Golden Age* was changed to *Consolation*, prompting a humorous remark by Brother Rutherford to me while I was driving him through Scranton, Pennsylvania, near the hometown of C. J. Woodworth, editor of the magazine. It was difficult to get through Scranton by car in those days, and referring to Brother Woodworth as "Woody," Rutherford said: "It is no wonder Woody wants consolation, living in a place like this."

World War II a Trialsome Period

In September 1939 World War II erupted. In October our Paris branch office was closed and our work was banned in France. The following year Canada banned our work. That summer of 1940 Brother Rutherford was sick, and we did not know whether he would be able to attend the convention arranged in Detroit, Michigan. He attended, but during his public talk he had a message delivered to me saying that he would be returning immediately to Bethel and for me to make arrangements for this.

The following summer was the great convention in St. Louis, Missouri, the largest held by Jehovah's Witnesses up to that time. I was assigned to receiving supplies for the cafeteria and only got into the main auditorium for the session on the final day when the book *Children* was released. During this convention the booklet *Jehovah's Servants Defended*

W. E. Van Amburgh whom I succeeded as secretary-treasurer of the Watch Tower Society in 1947



also was released, providing information to help us combat religiously inspired police action against our house-to-house ministry.

The publication was most timely. Later that year my father was arrested and imprisoned for sharing in the ministry. Mother, who was thereby left alone in the house car, was mobbed. Although she was not harmed physically, the mobsters stripped the house car, and so my mother was forced to take shelter with Witnesses in the area.

On October 1, 1941, it was my privilege, in the absence of Brother Rutherford, to preside at the annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. It was at that meeting that I was elected as a director of the Society's Pennsylvania corporation.

Two months later, on Sunday, December 7, 1941, N. H. Knorr, G. E. Hannan and I were returning by automobile from the field service in a nearby section of Long Island. We were listening to the car radio and heard the shocking announcement that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. The implications were very great for Jehovah's people—the United States was at war, the Society's president was seriously ill and there were enemies pressing in on every side to stop our preaching activity.

Although Brother Rutherford died just one month and one day later, the Kingdom work progressed unabated. Brother Knorr was elected president, and a year later on February 1, 1943, he announced the opening of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, for the training of missionaries.

On May 8, 1945, U.S. President Harry S. Truman announced the surrender of Germany. In August the United

States dropped the atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the postwar period was upon us.

Postwar Developments

New York City gave notice that they were taking the rear of our Columbia Heights Bethel home that extended down to Furman Street for the building of a promenade and highway. The Society, however, was able to purchase properties on Columbia Heights for a Bethel home addition, and government approval was received on October 11, 1946, for the construction. So on January 27, 1947, demolition began on the rear portion of our building on Furman Street, and during 1948 and 1949 the new Bethel addition was constructed, this fine new addition being dedicated in 1950. A large nine-story addition to the 117 Adams Street factory was also completed at about the same time.

The Society's secretary and treasurer, W. E. Van Ambburgh, had become incapacitated due to advanced age and illness and so resigned from his position. I was elected to succeed him on February 6,

1947, and Brother Van Ambburgh died the following day.

Shortly afterward, in the spring of 1947, I was sent by the Society to visit several countries of Europe that had been ravaged by World War II. It was indeed a privilege to associate with faithful servants of Jehovah who recently had been released after long years in Nazi concentration camps. It was a joy to me to provide them spiritual encouragement as a principal speaker during the conventions that were then held.

Since coming to Bethel in 1928 I had never been back to California. My parents pioneered mostly in the East, so I was able to see them from time to time, particularly at large conventions. But in the summer of 1947 the opportunity materialized for me to make a return visit to California. A convention was arranged for Los Angeles, August 13 to 17, and the Society provided transportation for those who had been members of the Bethel family for 15 years or more. What a pleasant trip and convention!

Special Privileges of Service

Through the years I have also enjoyed unique privileges in connection with the expansion of God's visible organization. The most recent of many acquisitions of the Watchtower Society that I helped to negotiate was the purchase early this year of the new properties at 175 Pearl Street and 360 Furman Street in Brooklyn. It is my heartfelt hope that these large new facilities will be used in further tremendous expansion of the Kingdom proclamation in all the earth.

I have traveled hundreds of thousands of miles not only throughout the United States but in many other countries, delivering talks to large audiences of God's people to encourage them in their Christian ministry. For example, during the around-the-world "Everlasting Good



I spoke many times at large conventions—such as here at Yankee Stadium in 1958

News" convention tour in 1963, I served as one of the Society's official representatives, just one of the many privileges for which I am grateful to Jehovah. Serving as a speaker during the many historic conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses in Yankee Stadium, such as in 1958 when over a quarter of a million people were present, also was a special privilege.

A Forward-Moving Organization

In our human experience the years bring changes, sometimes unhappily taking their toll, as in the case of my father's death December 31, 1954, in Illinois, the state of his last pioneer assignment. The following year my sister, Grace, and I relocated my mother from Illinois to New York, where she lived until her death May 6, 1962. But a very happy change for me was when Edith Rettos, a zealous pioneer, became my wife on May 12, 1956. She has since served faithfully alongside me here at Bethel.

As I advance in years of service here at the headquarters of Jehovah's visible organization, what especially brings joy to my heart is the continued evidence of God's blessing upon the work that he has commissioned his people to do, namely, the preaching of this good news of the Kingdom in all the earth before the end comes. (Matthew 24:14) I witnessed the enlargement of the Governing Body in 1971, and again in 1974, and since then have shared in many of the responsible decisions that have been made affecting the branches and the worldwide preach-



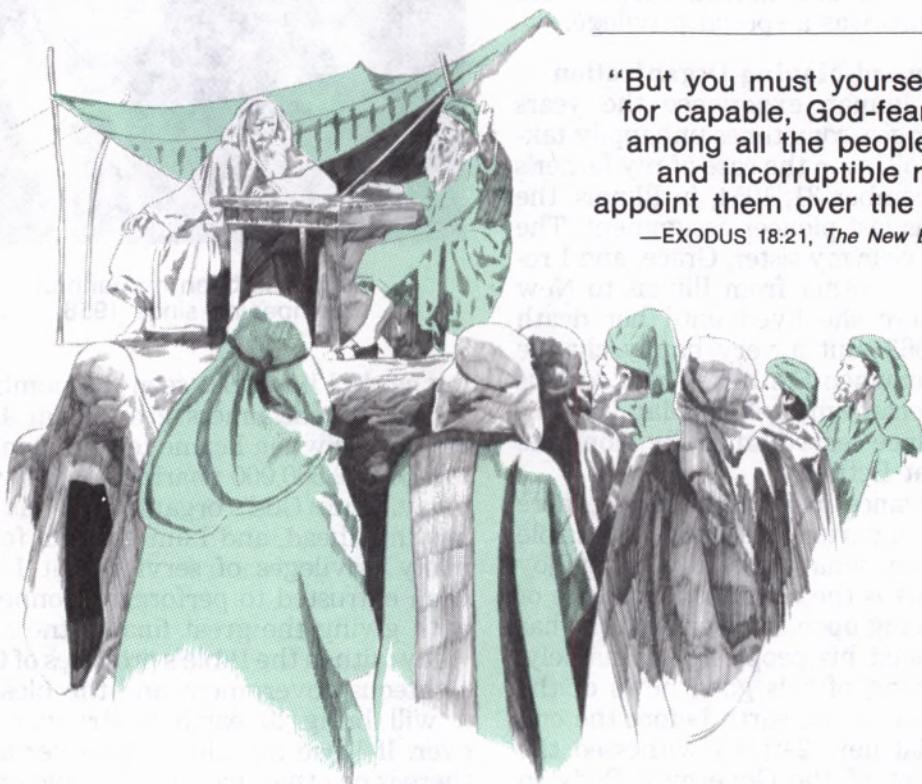
Edith has been my faithful companion since 1956

ing work. I have also seen the number of Kingdom proclaimers grow from 44,080 worldwide when I came to Bethel in 1928 to about 2,500,000 sharing in that work today. Truly God's organization has been moving ahead, and I am grateful for the many privileges of service that I have been entrusted to perform in connection with giving the great final witness.

My faith in the Bible's promises of God's righteous government and the blessings it will bring to earth is stronger than ever. If I had my life to live over again, there is no other way that I would choose to live it. What a joy and privilege it has been to serve here at Bethel these past 55 years with the largest and most wonderful Christian family on earth!

While the above article was being prepared for publication, Brother Suiter experienced a severe fall in his room at Brooklyn Bethel. This resulted in critical damage to his spine. At the time of this writing, he was receiving all possible loving care in the Watchtower Society's infirmary at Bethel. His condition is described as critical, though stabilized. We pray to Jehovah that He will care for this loyal brother and comfort him and his family members during this time of his disability.

'Select Capable, God-Fearing Men'



"But you must yourself search for capable, God-fearing men among all the people, honest and incorruptible men, and appoint them over the people."

—EXODUS 18:21, *The New English Bible*.

FROM the time of Homer [about the 9th century B.C.E.] to our days many words have died; many others have been born. *Episkopos* [overseer] and *presbyteros* [older man] have continued to live.¹ This comment of a modern Greek scholar highlights the rich vitality of meaning of the Greek terms for "overseer" and "older man." For thousands of years these words have been

associated with an integral part of Jehovah's organizational arrangement for his people. If you are associated with Jehovah's Witnesses, then the following discussion of how these terms found their way into the Christian congregation will be of special interest to you.

² Bible history, of course, takes us much further back than the Greek poet Homer. In the 16th century B.C.E. Moses re-

1. Why do the terms "overseer" and "older man" have special interest for Jehovah's Witnesses?

2, 3. Whom did Moses have to convince in order to serve as the God-appointed leader of the Israelites?

ceived the commission from Jehovah to go back to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of slavery. Since he had been away from his own people for some 40 years, to whom was he to present his credentials? "You go," said God, "and you must gather the *older men* [Greek, *gerousia*, "council of elders"; see *Septuagint Version*] of Israel . . . And they will certainly listen to your voice, and you must come, you and the *older men* of Israel, to the king of Egypt."—Exodus 3:16, 18.

³ Evidently from the time of the patriarchs the older men were highly esteemed because of their experience, knowledge, wisdom and sound judgment. They were the ones Moses had to convince so that they would accept him as their God-appointed leader for deliverance.

Qualifications for Older Men in Israel

⁴ Once the Israelites were out in the desert, free from their Egyptian captors, Moses' judicial responsibility toward the nation became overwhelming. His visiting father-in-law, Jethro, saw it so clearly that he offered a practical suggestion that evidently had Jehovah's approval. He said: "It is not good the way you are doing. You will surely wear out, both you and this people who are with you, because this business is too big a load for you. You are unable to do it by yourself. Now listen to my voice. I shall advise you, and God will prove to be with you. You yourself serve as representative for the people before the true God . . . But you yourself should select out of all the people *capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit . . .* and they must carry the load with you." (Exodus 18:17-23) This new judicial arrangement in Israel served to spread the

4. What suggestion did Jethro offer to Moses, and in what did it result?

load to other capable men. The congregation of Israel now had an organized body of elders qualified to handle judicial matters and disputes.

⁵ What a contrast with this present world system where so few really appreciate high principles—where bribery and corruption undermine the rulers and the ruled! Back there in ancient Israel the men who were to serve with Moses in administering justice to the nation were to be carefully sought out. As Jethro put it: "You must yourself *search* for capable, God-fearing men among all the people, honest and incorruptible men, and appoint them over the people." (Exodus 18:21, *The New English Bible*) It was not simply a matter of choosing men who were older in years. Moses was to "search" for capable, qualified, incorruptible men. What a marvelous standard for those who must care for the interests of Jehovah's people today!

Older Men Empowered by Jehovah

⁶ Some time later the Israelites complained about the conditions in the wilderness. Moses, feeling that the administrative burden of the nation was now too great for him, confessed the problem to Jehovah. What was God's solution? We read: "In turn Jehovah said to Moses: 'Gather for me seventy men of the older men [Greek, *presbytérōn*, *Septuagint Version*] of Israel, whom you do know that they are older men [*presbýteroi*] of the people and officers of theirs, . . . and I shall have to take away some of the spirit that is upon you and place it upon them, and they will have to help you in carrying the load.'"—Numbers 11:16, 17.

⁷ Moses did as he was commanded, and we are told: "Then Jehovah came

5. Was Moses to choose just any older men that were available?

6, 7. What action did Jehovah take in order to appoint older men in Israel?

down in a cloud and spoke to him and took away some of the spirit that was upon him and put it upon each of the seventy older men [*presbytérōus*]. And it came about that as soon as the spirit settled down upon them, then they proceeded to act as prophets." (Numbers 11: 24, 25) Here was clear evidence of the theocratic appointment of these "older men." Jehovah had organized his people for deliverance from captivity and now he was using 'capable, trustworthy men, who feared God' to share the responsibility of leadership and administration with Moses.

⁸ In time, the nomadic Israelites conquered the Promised Land and went back to fixed dwellings in towns and cities, as had been their way of life in Egypt. This meant that the older men now became responsible for the people at a community level. They acted as a body of overseers for their respective communities, providing judges and officers for the administration of justice and the maintenance of peace, good order and spiritual health.—Deuteronomy 16: 18-20; 25:7-9; Ruth 4:1-12.

Is Gray-Headedness Sufficient?

⁹ Does the foregoing mean, then, that any older man in Israel would automatically be an "older man" in a judicial or administrative capacity? Would a certain age limit convert an Israelite into an "older man" in that sense? No, such a conclusion would not be reasonable. Elihu expressed matters clearly, saying: "It is not those merely abundant in days that prove wise, nor those just old that understand judgment." And the wise congregator wrote: "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty *when it is found in*

8. When the Israelites settled in the Promised Land, what role did the older men play?

9, 10. Along with physical maturity, what are other requirements for an "older man"? Give Scriptural support.

the way of righteousness." (Job 32:6, 9; Proverbs 16:31; Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10) The Hebrew Scriptures clearly show that in the qualified "older man" old age and experience had to be allied with wisdom and a righteous course of conduct.

¹⁰ However, age and experience are of great value. To qualify for privileges of service, older men must accept the guidance of God's spirit and acquire *understanding* of his Word. It is not enough to be able to quote scriptures. Knowing how to apply them wisely is the vital factor for an "older man."—Proverbs 4: 7-9; Titus 1:9.

Older Men in the Christian Congregation

¹¹ From what we have considered, it is obvious that since ancient times qualified "older men" have been used to take the lead in the affairs of Jehovah's people. But by the time that Jesus Christ was on the earth the Jews had established in Jerusalem a central body of priests and elders known as the Sanhedrin. It served as a Jewish high court. (Matthew 26: 57-68) Nevertheless, evidence indicates that groups of older men were still active in community affairs in the cities and not just at a national level.—Luke 7:3-5.

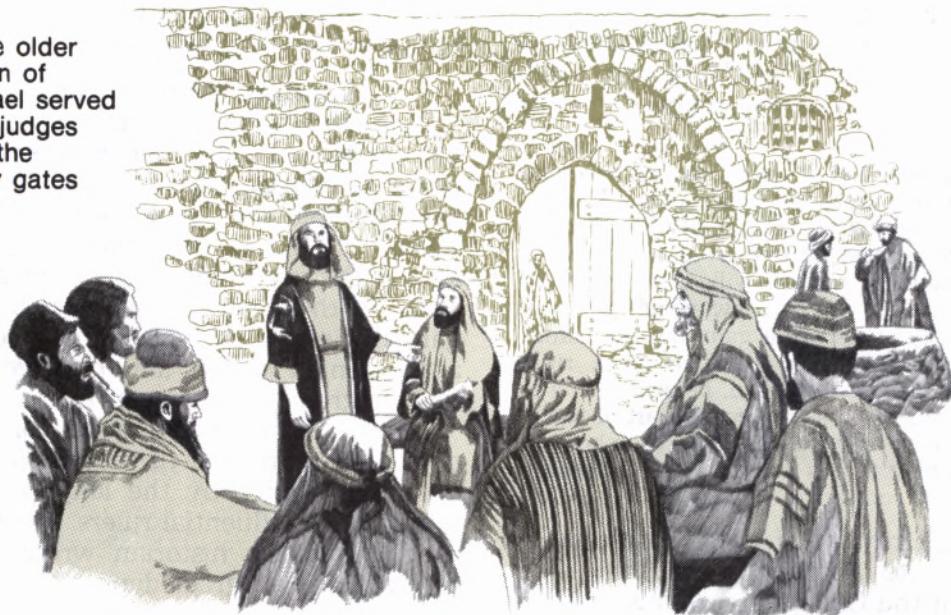
¹² With this historical background in mind, it is easy to see how the early Christian congregation would continue to use a theocratic arrangement similar to that approved by Jehovah in Moses' time. Under the guidance of God's holy spirit, those appointed as "older men," or elders, in the Christian congregation would be 'capable, honest, incorruptible and God-fearing men.'

¹³ From Pentecost of 33 C.E. onward

11, 12. (a) Did the Jewish communities still have older men when Jesus Christ was on earth? (b) Under what kind of arrangement were elders appointed in the Christian congregation?

13. Why were active, capable men needed in the Christian congregation?

The older men of Israel served as judges at the city gates



the congregation of believers grew rapidly. (Acts 2:41; 4:4) They were not separated into private, secluded Bible study groups as if they were some Essene sect. Christianity was not a private affair. It was to be made public knowledge, to be announced to the nations. (Matthew 5: 14-16; 28:19, 20) For this reason, active, capable men were needed to take the lead in the Christian organization. Logically they would be the "older men."

Qualifications for "Older Men"

¹⁴ Certainly, by the seventh decade of the Common Era spiritual qualifications had been established for those older men who would take the lead in the Christian congregation. Thus we find ample references to these in the writings of the apostles Peter and Paul. For example, Peter wrote:

"Therefore, to the older men among you I give this exhortation . . . : Shepherd the flock

14. What requirements for elders did Peter highlight?

of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:1-3)

Logically, when Peter stressed that the "older men" were to serve not "for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly," he was echoing the counsel that Moses select 'capable, God-fearing, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit.'—Exodus 18:21.

¹⁵ Paul, in his letter to his trusted collaborer Titus serving on the Mediterranean island of Crete, instructed him to "correct the things that were defective" in the congregations and to "make appointments of older men [*presbytérois*] in city after city." Interestingly, the Greek word translated "older men" implies a "mature man, suitable by his experience and prudence for the ruling of his family or people." (*Episcopos y Presbyteros*, by Professor Manuel Guerra y Gómez)

15. What requirements did Paul set out for an "older man"?

This understanding is also highlighted in the requirements that Paul spelled out to Titus for those Christians who would qualify to serve as overseers. He wrote:

"If there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing children that were not under a charge of debauchery nor unruly. For an overseer [Greek, *episkopon*] must be free from accusation as God's steward, not self-willed, not prone to wrath, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, not greedy of dishonest gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, self-controlled, holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict." (Titus 1:5-9)

A careful review of these requirements helps us to appreciate that an "older man" in the Christian congregation had to reach a high standard of conduct and spirituality.

¹⁶ It is also interesting to note how Paul uses the Greek terms *presbýteros* and *epískopos*, "older man" and "overseer." We can deduce from this that the qualified older men fulfilled the duties of overseer in the congregations. Other texts show there could be a number of such older men-overseers in the same congregation.—Acts 14:23; 20:28; Philippians 1:1.

¹⁷ In writing to Timothy, Paul also laid out requirements for an overseer, but in slightly different terms, perhaps taking into account different circumstances. (1 Timothy 3:1-7) Since the early Christian congregation was by its nature an evangelizing organization, it was taken for granted that these older men would also be zealous in proclaiming the good news. There was no room for sluggish-

16. How do we know that elders were also overseers in the first century C.E.?

17. (a) What requirements for an overseer did Paul send to Timothy? (b) Why must an elder also be active in the preaching activity?

ness.—Luke 24:46-48; 1 Corinthians 9:16; compare Matthew 25:24-27.

Apostasy Makes Inroads

¹⁸ As the congregation moved forward into the second and third centuries, things began to change. The apostasy that had been foretold took root. (Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Peter 2:1) Ambitious men rose up from among the very elders in the congregations. With subverted motives they began to view their office of overseer as a position of power and prestige. Certain congregation overseers even became "bishops" ruling over a diocese or group of churches. In time these bishops were voted into office by the laity, some of whom were influential rulers. Therefore, as one Catholic historian wrote: "This brought a very great danger, especially from the moment that the episcopate's prestige was increasing and these positions were accompanied by considerable income and material interests . . . [thus] raising to the most influential sees [bishops] political men."

¹⁹ Yes, each bishop became raised up like a powerful monarch. In turn, this

18. How did apostasy affect the position of overseers?

19. What was the final result of the apostasy?

Can You Answer?

- What kind of men were chosen to share the judicial responsibility with Moses in ancient Israel?
- In what capacity did the "older men" serve when the Israelites had settled the Promised Land?
- What are some of the outstanding qualities expected in Christian elders, or overseers?
- How did the foretold apostasy affect the elder arrangement?

contributed to the divisions and schisms in Christendom, which had long before ceased to be true Christianity. The theocratic arrangement of capable, honest, spiritually minded elder-overseers degenerated into a hierarchy of clergymen. The voluntary service to the congregation was transformed into a paid profession requiring years of higher education in theology, philosophy and canon law.

²⁰ Did this mean that true Christianity, with its original theocratic arrangement for each congregation, would never be

20. What questions now require answers?

restored? Or that the wholesome simplicity of service rendered by "older men," or "overseers," was lost forever? And what about Isaiah's prophecy pointing to an upgrading of the theocratic organization? It states: "Instead of the copper I shall bring in gold, and instead of the iron I shall bring in silver, and instead of the wood, copper, and instead of the stones, iron; and I will appoint peace as your overseers and righteousness as your task assigners." (Isaiah 60:17) The following article will answer these vital questions.

'Remember Those Taking the Lead Among You'

"Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith." —HEBREWS 13:7.

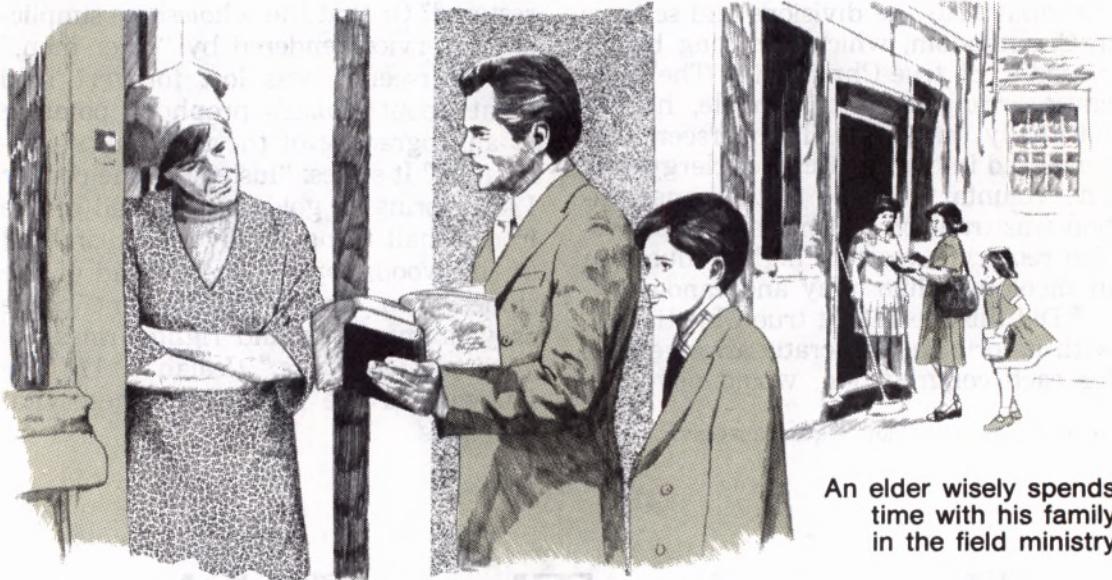
IN THE last quarter of the 19th century true worship began to be restored by means of a small group of dedicated Bible students associated with Charles Taze Russell in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They first sought a restoration of true Bible doctrine, clean from the contamination of Babylonish tradition and philosophy. However, the initial process of restoration was slower in the field of congregation organization. Although the Bible Students had elders and deacons (ministerial servants), false religious ideas

1. What changes took place regarding true worship in the late 19th century, but how were Christian elders chosen?

still prevailed in some respects. Thus right into the 20th century elders were chosen by the congregations through a democratic voting process, indicated by a show of hands.

² Even so, a high standard was demanded, for *The Watch Tower* of November 1, 1909, said on page 325: "In the selection of Elders the consecrated should remember that the responsibility rests upon them; and no vote should be cast without studious consideration of the Divine will, and prayer for Divine guidance." The article went on to em-

2. Nevertheless, what high standard was set for elders among Jehovah's people?



An elder wisely spends time with his family in the field ministry

phasize three characteristics of a good elder: (1) He was to be adept at teaching; (2) he should teach truth and not error; and (3) humility and piety were "paramount and primary qualifications for eldership."

Theocratic Order Restored

³ In 1919 a first step was taken to restore theocratic control of appointments. The congregations were invited to recommend a zealous brother as service "director," to take the lead in preaching. He would not be subject to local yearly election but would be appointed directly by the Watch Tower Society, the legal representative of the congregation of the anointed. Then in 1932 the elective elders who were to have cooperated with the service "director" were replaced by a service committee of mature brothers filling various service positions in the congregation but still elected by the congregation. The term "elder" was dropped

3, 4. What historic changes took place regarding appointments to congregational responsibility in (a) 1919? (b) 1932? (c) 1938? and (d) 1971?

in favor of "company servant," "Bible study servant," and so forth.

⁴ The complete break with elections did not take place until 1938, when it was shown that the power of appointment rested with the Governing Body of the worldwide Christian congregation. From that time onward, qualified men were appointed directly by the Society as "servants" to care for various duties in the congregation. However, in the *Watchtower* issues of November 15 and December 15, 1971, a further clearer understanding of the roles of the elder and overseer was presented. Valid reasons were given for a return to the Bible terminology of older man, or elder (*presbyteros*), and overseer (*episkopos*).

⁵ Once again the high standards set by holy spirit and stated in God's Word were emphasized. And why is that? Because to be worthy of respect the elder has to be "taking the lead" in Christian conduct

5. (a) Why must special care be taken in the recommending of elders? (b) What factors should be taken into account?

and in the ministry *before* his recommendation and appointment. (Hebrews 13:7, 17) Therefore, the bodies of elders should not act hastily in making recommendations of new elders. (1 Timothy 3:6; 5:22) Remember, often much more time and discussion are involved in removing an unqualified elder than in recommending his appointment. In fact, an additional guideline to follow is whether the congregation already *before* his appointment treats the brother as if he were an elder. Has he so gained their respect by fulfilling Bible requirements that there is no doubt about the recommendation?

'Presiding Over His Household in a Fine Manner'

⁶ Let us briefly review some of the qualifications for an elder as the apostle Paul states them and see what they mean in practical terms today. Paul wrote:

"If there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing

6. What are some of the qualifications for an elder in relation to his family?

children that were not under a charge of debauchery nor unruly."—Titus 1:6.

"The overseer should therefore be . . . a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness; (if indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?)."—1 Timothy 3:2, 4, 5.

⁷ The requirement of properly caring for one's household presents a challenge for many elders. How can an elder take the lead in the congregation and yet not neglect the spiritual and emotional needs of his wife and children? It is not easy. Certainly, spiritual maturity is required to keep a fine balance between these responsibilities. Sometimes members of the congregation demand time and attention that the elder rightfully should give to his family. Why is his concern for his family so vital? Because if he neglects his family relationships or the minor dependent children turn spiritually delinquent,

7. What kind of delicate balance is required between the elder's responsibility to his family and to the congregation?

He also
schedules time
to enjoy
wholesome
recreation
with his
loved ones



then, regardless of all his abilities and zeal, he will no longer qualify to be an elder. Therefore, we should remember that shepherding begins at home! Yes, a careful balance has to be manifested, by both the elder and his family, and also the congregation in its demands.—Ephesians 5:28-33; 6:4; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Peter 3:7.

'Not Self-Willed But Reasonable'

⁸ Another series of requirements has a great bearing on how the elder treats his fellow elders and the congregation in general. As Paul puts it in his letters to Titus and Timothy:

"For an overseer must be free from accusation as God's steward, not self-willed, not prone to wrath, . . . not a smiter, . . . self-controlled."—Titus 1:7, 8.

"Not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent."—1 Timothy 3:3.

⁹ These requirements indicate that an elder must be Christlike in personality. That surely is a high standard. But the standard is the same for every Christian! We all have to be imitators of Christ, and that means we must be peaceable. (1 Corinthians 11:1) As the Bible writer James expressed it: "The wisdom from

8, 9. What qualities should an elder manifest in his relations with others?

In Our Next Issue

- Why So Many Religions All Claiming to Be Christian?
- "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism"
- The World Jesus Would Not Pray For

above is first of all chaste, then *peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits . . .* Moreover, the fruit of righteousness has its seed sown under peaceful conditions for *those who are making peace.*"—James 3:17, 18.

¹⁰ As elders, do we 'make peace'? No elder would want to be a cause of strife and contention. A body of elders should set a good example in this respect. Thus, the congregation will not be upset because of disputes among the elders. Let all of us remember the words of Paul: "I desire that in every place the men carry on prayer, lifting up loyal hands, apart from wrath and debates."—1 Timothy 2:8.

¹¹ Occasionally, there will be differences of opinion. The reasonable man, although perhaps having a strong personality, will not be self-willed and obstinate. He will be willing to yield when Scriptural principles are not involved. And when they are involved he will see the wisdom of maintaining self-control. He will call to mind the principle expressed at 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5 that love "does not become provoked."—Colossians 3:12-14.

'Holding to the Faithful Word'

¹² What will help an elder to develop further the essential qualifications? In fact, in some cases, what can he do to retain them? We have the answer in Paul's words:

"Holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict."—Titus 1:9.

"Qualified to teach."—1 Timothy 3:2.

10, 11. (a) How could an elder's attitude affect a congregation? (b) Even when there are differences of opinion, what attitudes should prevail?

12. What further vital requirement does Paul highlight?

¹³ What can an elder do in order to 'hold firmly to the faithful word' and be "qualified to teach"? First, he must regularly set aside time for personal Bible study. This includes his preparation for Christian meetings and speaking assignments. For the sake of his own spiritual health, this preparation should not be superficial. For example, he may be able to underline the answers for a *Watchtower* study article in a short time, but does that mean that the material has been *studied*? Does he thoroughly understand the development of the theme? Have the cited Bible texts been checked to determine their application? Obviously, that is impossible in a brief session of underlining. Personal study and family study require time.—Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2; 77:6, 12.

¹⁴ Secondly, since a busy schedule does not allow time for everything, an elder must pay special attention to Christian publications and articles that have a direct bearing on his 'art of teaching, exhortation and giving reproof.' A simple help in that respect is to keep a neat and tidy personal library. An elder especially needs to have quick access to accurate Scriptural information, and that means making regular use of Watch Tower publication indexes. Why is all of this so important? The apostle Paul wrote: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." —1 Timothy 4:16.

¹⁵ Yes, life and salvation can be involved in an elder's counsel. For example, in matters affecting abortion, blood transfusions and Christian neutrality an

13. How should an elder pay special attention to his spiritual health?

14. What can an elder do in order to pay attention to his art of teaching?

15. Why is unscriptural counsel dangerous?

elder can have a profound effect for good or for bad on his own conscience and that of others, as well as on people's relationship with Jehovah. Therefore, we can see it is not wise to try to answer questions when we are not absolutely sure of the Bible principles involved. Counsel lacking a sound Scriptural basis could cause irreparable damage.—Philippians 1:9, 10.

¹⁶ Another reason for paying attention to yourself as an elder is the need to cultivate and maintain an intimate relationship with Jehovah. Sadly some elders have neglected this relationship to the point of falling into such sins as adultery. How could this be possible? Simply because they have allowed Jehovah and his promises to recede into the background. Their spiritual vision has become blurred, and selfish fleshly desires have taken over. Indifferent to reproach on Jehovah's holy name and the suffering caused to their loved ones, a few elders have been disloyal to their marriage vows. Certainly, such men have been causes for stumbling. Their sin cannot be lightly excused or dismissed, just because we live in an age of sexual permissiveness.—Matthew 13:41; 18:7-9; Hebrews 13:4.

Faithful Elders and Their Wives

¹⁷ On the other hand, it must also be stated that, with few exceptions, the elders worldwide have stood firm for integrity and truth. Their fine example in more than 45,000 congregations is a source of encouragement to God's people. During these "critical times hard to deal with," diligent overseers have been busy day and night, like the apostle Paul. (2 Timothy 3:1; Acts 20:31) These elders are willing to visit the spiritually sick

16. Why have some elders fallen into gross sin, and is this a light matter?

17. What fine example are the majority of the elders setting?

person in his home, regardless of such things as distance or weather conditions. And how fine it is to see these 'older men' taking the lead in field service on a regular basis!

¹⁸ We also greatly appreciate the sacrifices the elders' wives sometimes have to make! At times, such women are left at home while their husbands attend special meetings or are making shepherding calls. Sometimes carefully made personal plans have been set aside because of some urgent problem in the congregation. Yes, we commend these fine sisters, too, who circumspectly avoid trying to draw out their husbands on confidential matters. They show respect for the elders and are an asset to the congregation.

—Compare Romans 16:12; Titus 2:3-5.

¹⁹ When we review the role of the elders in the Christian congregation today and see how the great majority are self-sacrificing and are taking the lead in a fine way, our hearts go out in gratitude to Jehovah for his having instituted this loving arrangement. Capable men, who appreciate spiritual values, making themselves available for service in the congregation! That is why Paul could say to Timothy: "If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work." That "fine work" does not imply position, power and prestige, as in Christendom. It calls for selflessness, sacrifice and service. If you are a dedicated and baptized man who is not yet an elder, are you willing to reach out for that responsibility with a pure motive?—1 Timothy 3:1; Luke 17:10.

²⁰ Those who are faithfully taking the

lead are respected in the congregation. Loyal ones in the congregation willingly respond to their loving example and follow Paul's counsel: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith. Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you."—Hebrews 13:7, 17.

²¹ Let all of us show submissiveness to the theocratic arrangement and respect for the elders who are genuinely taking the lead, that they may do so with joy and not with sighing. By doing this, we show that we also respect the Supreme Overseer, Jehovah, and his Deputy Overseer, Jesus Christ.—1 Peter 2:25; Revelation 1:1; 2:1-3:22.

Do You Recall?

18. What fine role do elders' wives play in the congregation?
19. (a) What does being an elder mean? (b) What question might dedicated men who are not elders ask themselves?
- 20, 21. (a) How should we view the faithful elders in the congregation? (b) By doing this, what else do we manifest?

- What high standard was required for the "elective elders"?
- From 1919 to 1938, what steps were taken to restore theocratic order in the Christian organization?
- To fulfill his responsibilities to his family and the congregation, what balance must an elder maintain?
- In their relationships with others, what outstanding qualities should the elders manifest?
- Why is it vital that an elder 'hold firmly to the faithful word'?
- Why should we be grateful for the elder arrangement in the congregation?

Insight on the News

"Murky" Faith

"Does anyone really know why he's a Christian?" asks the German newspaper *Die Welt* in an article on the Easter holidays. The question was raised because "a generation has grown up that may formally belong to the church, pay church taxes and more or less take advantage of its services," says the article, "but it does not know even the most elementary thing about its faith." In fact, their faith is "so blurred," it adds, "that anything that fits a person's fancy can now pass for Christianity."

Similarly, a new Gallup poll conducted during the same holidays and reported on in *The New York Times* found that "America's image of Jesus Christ is to some extent murky." The survey notes "widespread commitment to Jesus" on the one hand and "prevalence of unorthodox belief" on the other, according to the *Times*. Illustrating the "low level of biblical knowledge" among those polled, it noted that 43 percent could not name even one of the four Gospels and nearly 60 percent did not know Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount.

What a contrast this "blurred" and "murky" faith is to the true Christian faith! At Hebrews 11:1 the apostle Paul described it in these words: "Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld." Rather than being "anything that fits a person's fancy," Paul explained: "Faith follows the thing heard. In turn the thing heard is through

the word about Christ." (Romans 10:17) By diligently taking in accurate knowledge of God's Word, the Bible, we can have the kind of faith that leads to everlasting life.—John 17:3.

'Raging Epidemics'

"After the conquest of diphtheria, smallpox and polio," says *The Washington Post*, people generally "believed that modern medicine had beaten infectious disease. More antibiotics and vaccines were coming, and more success was thought to be imminent."

Has this belief proved true? The article continues: "Today, new epidemics are raging, one upon another, of diseases most people cannot even name. Each year, the CDC [Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia] investigates more than 1,000 new outbreaks of diseases such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Legionnaires' disease and toxic shock syndrome."

Much of this is of man's own doing, says the article. "Technological advances as diverse as air conditioning and tampons have created ideal breeding grounds for germs that had been around for millennia. Modern transportation has conveyed exotic germs into new populations." Immoral life-styles have spread and worsened diseases such as AIDS.

The paradox of today's 'raging epidemics' in the face of medical advances is unique. This, along with wars, famines and increasing crime, adds to the irrefutable evidence that is now fulfilling Je-

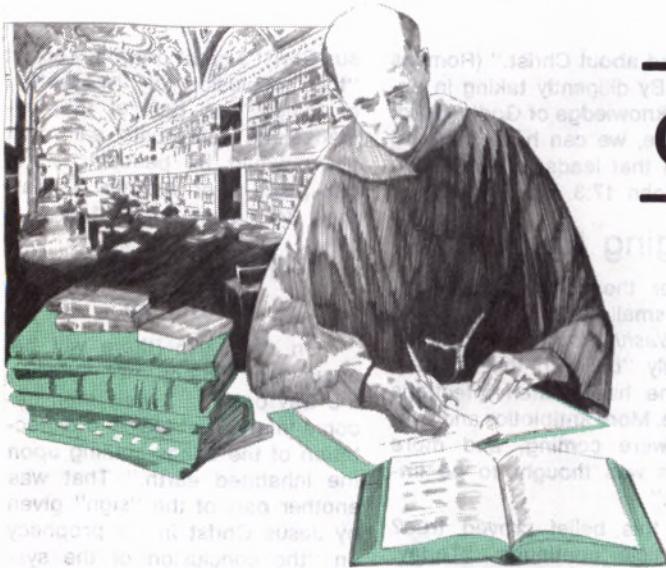
sus Christ's great prophecy about "the conclusion of the system of things." As part of that evidence, he specifically said that there would be pestilences "in one place after another."—Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:10, 11.

Fear Grips Children

"On the earth [there will be] anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . , while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." That was another part of the "sign" given by Jesus Christ in his prophecy on "the conclusion of the system of things."—Luke 21:25, 26; Matthew 24:3.

Today such fear is affecting not only grown-ups but also children. Dr. Ruth Formanek, a child psychologist and a professor of education at Hofstra University in the state of New York, notes how fear grips today's youngsters. In reporting on her findings, the *Liverpool Daily Post* says: "In a study of 400 children conducted in 1935 the fears that came up most frequently were animals, dark rooms, high places, strange persons." Now, Dr. Formanek says, "children still have these fears but they have been greatly added to." They worry about their parents getting divorced, their fathers getting cancer, their mothers becoming drug addicts and the possibility of nuclear war. Then she adds: "I am amazed at how depressed children can become. They have so many worries today."

Catholic Scholarship



—Is It Loyal to God's Word?

MODERN Catholic scholars have been very active and productive. But have they manifested loyalty to God's Word, the Bible?

These scholars have produced some fine translations of the Bible, particularly in English, French and Spanish.* Moreover, by and large, recent Catholic translators have subscribed to the sentiments expressed in the Preface of *The Jerusalem Bible*: "The translator of the Bible into a vernacular . . . [must not] impose his own style on the originals: this would be to suppress the individuality of the several writers who responded, each in his own way, to the movement of the Spirit. . . . The first duty of the translator is to convey as clearly as he can what the original author wrote. . . . It would certainly be dangerous to give

the form of the translation precedence over the meaning."

The Jerusalem Bible is particularly noteworthy for recognizing that the Hebrew tetragrammaton standing for God's unique name should not be translated as a common noun—which is what most modern translators do—but should be transliterated. It does this by using "Yahweh," a form of the divine name Jehovah. Regarding the reasons for doing so, it states: "Those who may care to use this translation of the Psalms can substitute the traditional 'the Lord'. On the other hand, this would be to lose much of the flavour and meaning of the originals. For example, to say, 'The Lord is God' is surely a tautology [a meaningless repetition], as to say 'Yahweh is God' is not." All of this is very well expressed.

Discernment Needed

At times, however, one can detect religious bias in the work of Catholic scholars. To illustrate: The *Catholic Confraternity Version* has Jesus Christ say

* For example, see *The New American Bible*; *La Bible de Jérusalem*; *Nácar-Colunga*.

to his mother at the wedding feast in Cana: "What wouldst thou have me do, woman?" That might lead a reader to think that Jesus was seeking guidance from his mother. But the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* reads: "Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet." (John 2:4) It is obvious from this more accurate translation that the *Confraternity* translators had been influenced by what their church teaches about Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The need for discernment is further emphasized when we observe that reliable information is sometimes mixed with comments that downgrade the Bible. For example, in a footnote on Genesis 2:17, *The Jerusalem Bible* makes this perceptive comment on the significance of partaking of the forbidden fruit: "It is the power of deciding for himself what is good and what is evil and of acting accordingly, a claim to complete moral independence by which man refuses to recognise his status as a created being. The first sin was an attack on God's sovereignty, a sin of pride."

These comments show keen discernment. But the very next sentence reveals that the translators did not believe Adam and Eve actually existed and literally ate the forbidden fruit, for it reads: "This rebellion is described in concrete terms as the transgression of an express command of God for which the text uses the *image* of a forbidden fruit." (Italics ours.) According to what the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says, the Genesis account is merely an allegory, not historical.

Note how the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967) expresses such a sentiment, saying: "It is evident that the narratives of Genesis about the creation of the world and of man, about Eden and the Fall, etc., are not really history in the ordinary sense of the word." This reference work goes on to say: "The Bible,

as a literary work, has a tradition that includes myth as a literary genre and does not reject mythical patterns from other civilizations."^{*}

Is this being loyal to God's Word? Jesus Christ referred to the creation account as actual history, stating: "Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body? They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide."—Matthew 19:4-6, JB; Genesis 1:27; 2:24.

The apostle Paul also treated this Genesis account as historical. Thus he warned Christians against being deceived, as was Eve by the serpent's cunning. (2 Corinthians 11:3) That warning would be pointless if Eve had not actually existed and been seduced. Furthermore, in urging Christian women to be in subjection, Paul said that Adam was created first and that Eve, not Adam, was deceived. (1 Timothy 2:11-14) Again, the apostle's argument would carry no force if the Genesis account was not historical.

The Flood of Noah's Day

According to *The Jerusalem Bible*, such accounts as that of the Noachian flood are based on traditions regarding which "it would be unreasonable to expect the minute precision of a modern historian." In much the same vein the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states: "It is generally agreed now that the episode of Noe and the ark is not a piece of historical reporting but an imaginative literary creation of another form entirely . . . To read it as history upon the presumption that the author's intention was the detailed description of an an-

* "Myth" here is used in the sense of its being an allegory.

cient happening leads only to confusion, to intellectual difficulties, and thence to difficulties of faith."

But Jesus Christ treated the Flood as an actual happening, for he foretold that as it actually was in the days of Noah it would be in the days of His presence. (Matthew 24:37-39) The apostle Paul points to Noah as an example of faith. (Hebrews 11:7) And in both of his divinely inspired letters, the apostle Peter makes reference to Noah and the Deluge.—1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5.

What About Jonah?

Now, please consider the book of Jonah. *The Jerusalem Bible* calls it a "droll adventure" and says: "Though God is indeed master of nature, the successive prodigies here narrated read like a succession of practical jokes played by God on his prophet: the sudden storm, the choice of Jonah by lot, the great fish, the plant growing in a night and withering in an hour; while the whole story is told with undisguised irony quite alien to the writing of history. The book is intended to amuse and instruct."

Jesus Christ, though, considered Jonah to be a historical figure. For instance, Jesus said: "No sign will be given [this generation] except the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah was a sign for the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be a sign for the present age. . . . At the judgment, the citizens of Nineveh will rise along with the present generation, and they will condemn it. For at the preaching of Jonah they reformed, but you have a greater than Jonah here." Jesus also stated: "Just as Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man spend three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth." (Luke 11:29-32; Matthew 12:40, *The New American Bible*) Unless Jonah actually lived and had these experiences, Jesus'

words would have no force. Are these Catholic scholars loyal to God's Word when they, unlike Jesus Christ, stamp the book of Jonah as fiction?

The Song of Solomon

Let us consider another example, the Song of Solomon. According to *The Jerusalem Bible*, this book could not have been written earlier than the second half of the fifth century before our Common Era, long after King Solomon's day. Interestingly, however, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1908 supports Jewish tradition that it was indeed written by Solomon by observing: "Tradition, in harmony with the superscription, attributes the song to Solomon. Even in modern times quite a number of expositors have held this opinion . . . De Wette says: 'The entire series of pictures and relationships and the freshness of the life connect these songs with the age of Solomon.' The song evidences the love of Solomon for nature (it contains twenty-one names of plants and fifteen of animals), for beauty and art, and for regal splendour . . . There is also evident a strain of the most tender feeling and a love of peace which are well in keeping with the reputation of Solomon."

The Gospel Accounts

And how do Catholic scholars view the Scriptural accounts about Jesus Christ? Regarding Jesus' being raised from the dead, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states: "Any attempt to demonstrate the fact of Christ's Resurrection from the Gospel accounts . . . must begin with the realization that these accounts are not biographies of Jesus and still less scientific history." But if they are not "scientific history," what are they? Fiction? Myths?

This stated Catholic position regarding the Gospels flies directly in the face of Jesus' words assuring his apostles that

"the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, . . . will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you." (John 14:26, JB) Moreover, the testimony of the apostle Paul regarding Christ's resurrection is in perfect agreement with that of the Gospel accounts.—1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

Will You Be Loyal to God's Word?

The Roman Catholic Church has gone on record as encouraging the laity to read the Bible. Yet, as we have seen, its

scholars say much that actually betrays disloyalty to the Bible.

However, what about you? Do you view the Bible as God's inspired Word? If you do, then be loyal to it. Read and study the Scriptures regularly. Of course, the Bible is written in such a way that human instruments are needed to help make its message clear. But should not all truth lovers be careful that those to whom they go for help to understand God's Word are indeed loyal to it?

Questions From Readers

- When Hebrews 8:13 spoke of the Law covenant as "growing old . . . [and] near to vanishing away," was it referring to the approaching end of the Jewish system in 70 C.E.?

No. Some have explained Hebrews 8:13 that way. But the context indicates that it refers to the situation of the Law covenant from the time when Jeremiah foretold the new covenant.

In Hebrews chapter eight the apostle Paul contrasts two covenants. The "first covenant" was the Law covenant that Moses mediated. The "second," or new, covenant is a "better covenant" that has Jesus as Mediator and that "has been legally established upon better promises."—Hebrews 8:6, 7.

Paul quoted Jeremiah 31:31-34, where Jehovah promised to "conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant." Then the apostle wrote: "In his saying 'a new covenant' he has made the former one obsolete. Now that which is made obsolete and growing old is near to vanishing away."—Hebrews 8:13.

The book of Hebrews was written during "the conclusion of the [Jewish] systems of things," likely about nine years before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (Hebrews 9:26) Hence, some have explained the verse this way: God's approval of the Law ended with Jesus' death, but temple worship continued until 70 C.E. Thus when Paul wrote Hebrews 8:13 the Law covenant was 'growing old and near to the complete vanishing' that came in 70 C.E.

Another explanation, however, accords better with what Hebrews chapter 8 says.

Paul was emphasizing God's statement through Jeremiah that a new covenant would replace the Law covenant, which was not faultless, for it could not produce a righteous people. (Romans 3:20) In Jeremiah's day it must have surprised the Jews to hear that the Law covenant was to be replaced

by a new covenant that could provide for sins to be completely forgiven.

Yet, once God had specifically foretold the new covenant, the old covenant was in a sense obsolete. Even though God allowed it to remain until the Messiah came and served as Mediator of the new covenant, it could be said about the Law covenant that its days were numbered from Jeremiah's writing what he did. That is why the verse begins: "In his saying 'a new covenant' he has made the former one obsolete." Or, as J. B. Phillips renders it: "The mere fact that God speaks of a new covenant . . . makes the old one out of date."

The prospective obsolescence that existed from when Jeremiah 31:31-34 was written became a full reality when Jesus' death brought the Law to an end. So some 28 years later Paul could add in the next verse: "For its part, then, the former covenant used to have ordinances of sacred service and its mundane holy place."—Hebrews 9:1.

