

Students, in turn, found it necessary to adjust their thinking to some extent. But they were grateful for God's guidance and were eager to be "taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isa. 54:13.

God's people had to adjust their thinking about 1925, for instance. Expectations of restoration and blessing were attached to it because they felt that that year would mark the end of seventy jubilees of fifty years each since the Israelites had entered Canaan. (Lev. 25:1-12) A. D. Schroeder states: "It was thought that then the remnant of Christ's anointed followers would go to heaven to be part of the Kingdom and that the faithful men of old, such as Abraham, David and others, would be resurrected as princes to take over the government of the earth as part of God's kingdom."

The year 1925 came and went. Jesus' anointed followers were still on earth as a class. The faithful men of old times—Abraham, David and others—had not been resurrected to become princes in the earth. (Ps. 45:16) So, as Anna MacDonald recalls: "1925 was a sad year for many brothers. Some of them were stumbled; their hopes were dashed. They had hoped to see some of the 'ancient worthies' [men of old like Abraham] resurrected. Instead of its being considered a 'probability,' they read into it that it was a 'certainty,' and some prepared for their own loved ones with expectancy of their resurrection. I personally received a letter from the sister who brought me the truth. She advised me that she had done wrong in what she had told me. . . . [But] I was appreciative of my liberation from Babylon. Where else could one go? I had learned to know and love Jehovah."

God's faithful servants had not dedicated themselves to him only until a certain year. They were determined to serve him forever. To such persons the unfulfilled expectations concerning 1925 did not pose a great problem or affect their faith adversely. "For the faithful ones," remarks James Poulos, "1925 was a wonderful year. Jehovah through his 'faithful and discreet slave' brought to our attention the meaning of the twelfth chapter of Revelation. We learned about the 'woman,' God's universal organization; the war in heaven and the defeat and expulsion from the heavenly courts of Satan and his demons, by Jesus Christ and his holy angels; the birth of the kingdom of God." Evidently, Brother Poulos has in mind the very noteworthy article "Birth of the Nation," appearing in *The Watch Tower* of March 1, 1925. Through it, God's people clearly discerned how these two great opposing organizations—Jehovah's and Satan's—were

symbolized. They then learned, too, that the Devil has had to confine his operations to the earth since his ouster from heaven as a result of the 'war in heaven' beginning in 1914.

CELEBRATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

"At our early conventions, between sessions as the friends were chatting together," writes Anna E. Zimmerman, "you might have seen some friends hand you their 'Manna' book [*Daily Heavenly Manna for the Household of Faith*], asking you to please write your name and address in their 'Manna.' You would write it on the blank page opposite the date of your birthday, and when your birthday came along and they read their text that morning for the day they might decide to write you a card or letter, wishing you a happy birthday."

Yes, in those earlier days, dedicated Christians commemorated birthdays. Well, then, why not celebrate the supposed birthday of Jesus? This they also did for many years. In Pastor Russell's day, Christmas was celebrated at the old Bible House in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Ora Sullivan Wakefield recalls that Brother Russell gave members of the Bible House family five- or ten-dollar gold pieces at Christmas. Mabel P. M. Philbrick remarks: "A custom that certainly would not be carried on today was the celebration of Christmas with a Christmas tree in the Bethel dining room. Brother Russell's usual 'Good morning, all' was changed to 'Merry Christmas, all.'"

What caused the Bible Students to stop celebrating Christmas? Richard H. Barber gave this answer: "I was asked to give an hour talk over a [radio] hookup on the subject of Christmas. It was given December 12, 1928, and published in *The Golden Age* #241 and again a year later in #268. That talk pointed out the pagan origin of Christmas. After that, the brothers at Bethel never celebrated Christmas again."

"Did we mind putting those pagan things away?" asks Charles John Brandlein. "Absolutely not. This was just complying with new things learned, and we had never known before they were pagan. It was just like taking a soiled garment off and throwing it away." Next, birthday celebrations and Mother's Day were discarded—more creature worship. Sister Lillian Kammerud recalls: "How readily the brothers all dropped these holidays and admitted they were glad to be free. New truths always make us happy and . . . we felt we were privileged to know things that others were ignorant about."