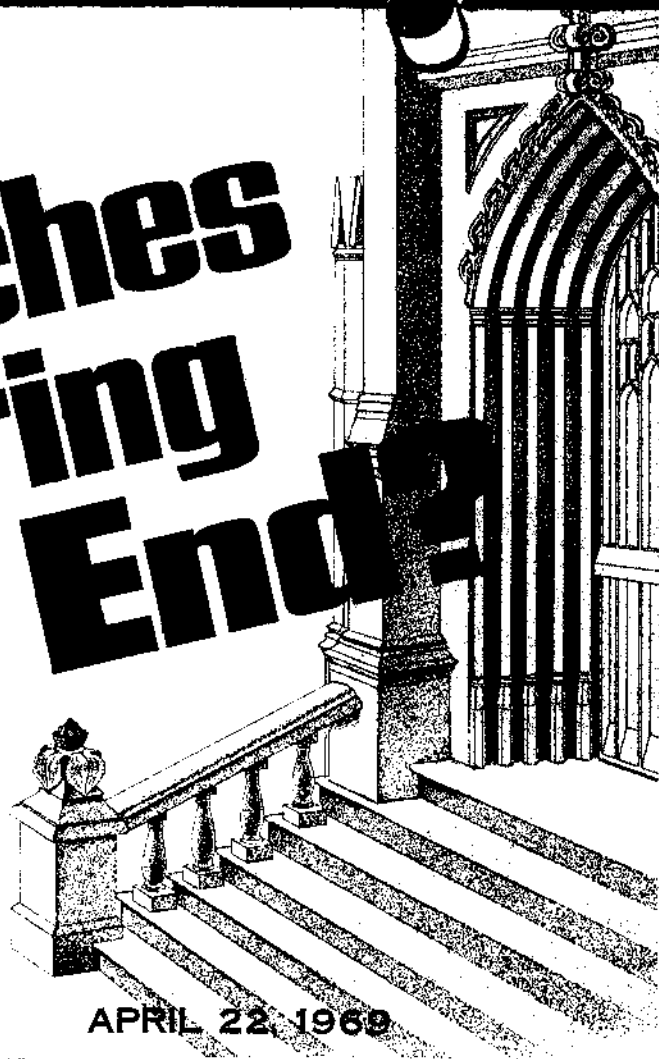


Awake!

**ARE
THE
Churches
Nearing
Their End?**



APRIL 22, 1969



THE REASON FOR THIS MAGAZINE

News sources that are able to keep you awake to the vital issues of our times must be unfettered by censorship and selfish interests. "Awake!" has no fetters. It recognizes facts, faces facts, is free to publish facts. It is not bound by political ties; it is unhampered by traditional creeds. This magazine keeps itself free, that it may speak freely to you. But it does not abuse its freedom. It maintains integrity to truth.

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"Awake!" pledges itself to righteous principles, to exposing hidden foes and subtle dangers, to championing freedom for all, to comforting mourners and strengthening those disheartened by the failures of a delinquent world, reflecting sure hope for the establishment of God's righteous new order in this generation.

Get acquainted with "Awake!" Keep awake by reading "Awake!"

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CONTENTS

The Churches Deep in Trouble	3	Contrast Between Churches and True Religion	23
Why the Trouble in the Churches?	5	Attitude Toward the Word of God	25
Are Church Practices Christian?	6	Leaving the Churches to Take Up True Worship	27
Do the Churches Uphold Bible Teachings?	10	Going Out of Business—What Will You Do?	28
Rejection of the Bible and God	15	Watching the World	30
Where the Churches Are Heading	17		
A World Without False Religion	20		

Awake!

"It is already the hour for you to awake."

—Romans 13:11

Volume L

London, England, April 22, 1969

Number 6

THE CHURCHES DEEP IN TROUBLE

FOR years Jehovah's witnesses have been saying that the churches of Christendom are failures, that they are in a dying condition, and that they someday soon will come to their end, along with all false religion in every part of the earth.

Shocking and unbelievable as that message may have seemed a few years ago, today it is no longer shocking or strange. Indeed, it is viewed by many as almost inevitable.

Why are the world's religious organizations in such deep trouble? Are they *really* nearing their end? Is it possible that God is not using them? What is their true condition?

Disintegration Within

The signs of serious trouble in the churches are everywhere. Just look at the headlines in newspapers and magazines! Even a financial publication, in discussing

Richmond Times-Dispatch

David Thomson, Editor, Chairman and Publisher
Allen S. Thompson, President and Associate Publisher
Walter D. Davis, Editor
John E. Ladd, Managing Editor

Richmond, January 1, 1967

Is the Church Dying?

The Christian church is in a sad state, written by a professor of religion who predicts: "One day, the church will be a thing of the past." On paper, membership figures are high, but satisfaction is low. Half the members are inactive.

The New York Times

Public Apathy Creating Crisis in Church of England

By EDWARD A. FINE
Special to the New York Times
LONDON — "The Church of England is in a state of crisis."

JOURNAL HERALD
Monday, January 20, 1967 Dayton, Ohio

Decline Of Religion

By Walker Lewis

U. S. News & World Report

CATHOLIC CHURCH MOVES TOWARD BIGGEST CRISIS IN 400 YEARS

Turnout over birth control is spreading through ranks of the hierarchy.

In other lands, women have been told to have children what is called the new morality.

THE SUNSHINE NEWS, DECEMBER 4, 1966-67

Pope Declares Church Facing Self-Demolition

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope the church threat.

the risks of making loans to churches, observed:

"Declining church attendance, reduced giving, lowering Sunday School enrollment and shrinking numbers of men entering seminaries cause grave concern not only for church leaders but for alert laymen as well."
—"Management Digest for Savings & Loan Executives," October 1968.

Perhaps you have observed that in your

own community church attendance has declined and that financial support has diminished. That the situation is even more serious than you may have thought is indicated by the special report to the New York *Times*, which predicted:

"'The Roman Catholic Church in Argentina has about 15 years left,' the priest said. . . . Catholicism in Argentina may die a quiet death, or there may be a violent explosion, he added. . . .

"'Everywhere in Catholic Latin America, the church is in a state of crisis. Splits have developed in nearly every country.'—April 21, 1968, p. 62.

But it is not only in Latin America that the churches are in deep trouble. Under a front-page heading reproduced on the previous page, the New York *Times* observed:

"'Like most European churches, the mother of Anglicanism [the Church of England] is facing a serious decline both in membership and in the quantity and quality of its clerical leadership. Church attendance has dropped to the point where only eight out of every 100 baptized persons worship on Easter.'"

Reports from Germany, Sweden, Denmark and other countries reveal a similar situation. Even in Spain "only 7 per cent of the working class attend Mass on Sunday," according to one report. A United States newspaper notes: "Voices all over the land, within and without, are proclaiming that the church is sick unto death."

Even priests and ministers now are in open rebellion and in disagreement with their churches. *The Canadian Magazine* of July 20, 1968, observed in a feature article "Why Clergymen Are Quitting": "The hot topic among clerics is who is leaving the church this month. For the exodus from the parish, a steady trickle for 20 years, is threatening to become a torrent."

U.S. News & World Report of December 9, 1968, also noted: "Ministers by the

thousands are leaving the church entirely . . . thousands of nuns—an estimated 3,600 in 1966—are also quitting their orders, leaving big gaps in church-run schools and hospitals."

This unprecedented exodus is occurring throughout the world. And the problem is that few persons desire to take the place of the departing clergy. Dean William R. Cannon of Candler School of Theology, a *Methodist-related school in Atlanta, Georgia*, very frankly described the situation:

The number of students preparing for the ministry "has dropped to so low a level that the situation is critical with no sign whatever of any improvement. Fewer and fewer students in our colleges are indicating any interest in the ministry. What is happening in the seminary is a picture in miniature of what is happening in the church."

What Does the Future Hold?

In view of the unmistakable trend, some persons actually believe we soon face a world without churches. The church "is far nearer its demise than most persons will admit," claimed Unitarian minister Stephen H. Fritchman.

The general view of many is that the churches will simply be discarded as obsolete. What do you think? Would that mean a godless society? Are the churches required in order for people to love God and live together in happiness? Or have they actually failed to make people more loving and upright?

Of particular concern, however, is what God thinks of the churches. Is he pleased with them? Or is it possible that He will replace them with something better?

Such questions concern us all. However, before we determine their answers it is vital that we first find out why the churches are in such deep trouble. Is it because they have not been doing the will of God? Let us see.

WHEN the extent of the trouble in the churches becomes apparent, one cannot help but ask, **WHY?**

Could the trouble be because the churches of Christendom have failed to teach God's Word? And have they also failed to practice true Christianity?

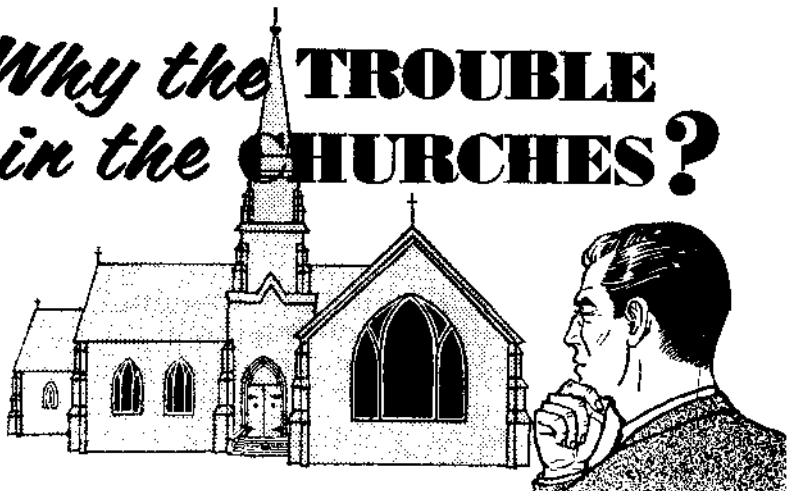
Frequently today this very failure of the churches is observed. For example, a New York editor noted that the World Council of Churches Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden, last summer was "pre-occupied with practical, social, political and economic issues of the day rather than with a far greater human hunger—the spiritual starvation of mankind."

An editorial in the *Tucson Daily Citizen* of July 27, 1967, was even more pointed, saying: "This is not Christianity these so-called Christian ministers are preaching. It is not even religion of any sort. . . . people are upset because the old values are being discarded as so much rubbish. If there are no absolute values . . . there is no need for a church."

Can the existence of an institution be justified when it no longer serves its intended purpose? No, for it is then obsolete, useless. This is what even some ministers are now saying about the churches because of their failure to uphold the teachings and practices of God's Word. Local pastor Melvin Westlund wrote in the *Westland, Michigan, Observer* of December 13, 1967:

"I don't blame people for staying away

Why the TROUBLE in the CHURCHES?



from church in droves. I don't blame them for going shopping on Sunday without giving church a thought. . . . one would be hard pressed for a single logical reason for attending church, let alone helping financially. . . . I believe that this kink of tommyrot [taught in the churches] is categorically and instinctively rejected by the public as being an insult to their intelligence and can only serve to foster disrespect and contempt for the church."

An increasing number of persons are observing that the churches have failed in their responsibility. "Sure, we're Biblical illiterates," admitted one woman, as reported in *The Arizona Republic* of October 22, 1967. "The ministers aren't preaching or teaching the gospel anymore."

Is this really so? Is it a fact that the churches of Christendom are not doing what God commanded them to do? Is this actually the reason for the trouble they are experiencing?

An examination of their practices and teachings, as well as their attitude toward God and his Word, will help us to a correct answer.

ARE CHURCH PRACTICES *Christian?*

DO THE churches of Christendom really practice Christianity? This is what has been generally assumed for a long time. But is it actually true?

Observe the war, killing, greed, class distinctions and other detestable practices so common in so-called Christian nations. Do the churches really condemn such practices? Or do they, in fact, condone and

even advocate them? How can we determine just how God views the churches?

This can be done by comparing the practices approved and encouraged by the churches of Christendom with what the Bible says is proper. Note the following examples. See for yourself whether these churches are in harmony with true Christian practice as set forth in God's Word.

DISUNITY AND CONFUSION

God's Word teaches Christians: "There should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought. Does the Christ exist divided?"—1 Cor. 1:10, 13.



BUT: An Episcopal minister said flatly: "Protestantism in this country surely manifests the greatest confusion since Babel."—Los Angeles "Times," March 3, 1961.

And a Catholic bishop said: "It looks like we have two churches now; one is the bishops' and the other is made up of most of the laity and clergy; as far as I can see the best we can do now is to try to keep a bridge open between them."—"The Texas Catholic Herald," October 11, 1968.

INVOLVEMENT IN WORLDLY POLITICS

Jesus Christ said concerning his true followers: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world."—John 17:16.

BUT: Paul Hardin, Jr., presiding bishop of the South Carolina United Methodist Conference, said: "We are a part of the world and not apart from it . . . We are realizing that the Church is not here to be aloof from the world but to relate itself to it."—The Charlotte "Observer," November 22, 1968.

A disciple of Jesus Christ also said: "The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is . . . to keep oneself without spot from the world."—Jas. 1:27



BUT: "Church leaders . . . see nothing contradictory in maintaining Washington lobbies and trying to dictate to Congress the kind of legislation which should be enacted on almost every conceivable economic, social and political subject."—"Reader's Digest," May 1966.

Also, a conference under the auspices of the World Council of Churches, which represents some 237 churches and 300 million members, urged: "The Church must assume certain responsibilities in the area of political life, . . . it should seek dialogue with political leaders of all parties."—"World Conference on Church and Society, Official Report," Geneva, July 12-26, 1966, p. 112.

"Jesus, knowing they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew." He rejected the offer of political rulership.—John 6:15.

BUT: Episcopal bishop E. Crowther says clergymen should run for political office. He added: "I don't recall any bishops running for Congress . . . but I believe the church is moving in the direction of a tremendous social involvement which makes this next step a logical one."—Rochester "Times-Union," March 18, 1968.

SUPPORT OF WORLDLY WARS

Jesus Christ said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." His apostle John added: "Not like Cain, who originated with the wicked one and slaughtered his brother."—John 13:35; 1 John 3:12.

BUT: "Local Catholic hierarchies almost always supported the wars of their nations, blessing troops and offering prayers for victory, while another group of bishops on the other side publicly prayed for the opposite outcome."

—New York "Times," December 29, 1966.

And a British officer wrote: "The Christian Churches are the finest blood-lust creators which we have, and of them we made free use."—"A Brass Hat in No Man's Land" by F. P. Crozier.



A Catholic monsignor blesses rifles

A textbook observes: "The early Christians were ready to die for their faith. . . . Since they believed in peace, they would not serve in Rome's imperial armies."—"From the Old World to the New," Eugene A. Colligan, pp. 88, 89.

BUT: "When war comes [in our day], the various national Churches merge themselves in the warring nations. Pulpits are turned into amateur recruiting offices and Bishops bless the guns. These things are done in the name of the Prince of Peace."—"Everybody's" magazine, a London weekly, May 17, 1952.

Francis Cardinal Spellman told soldiers in Vietnam that "United States troops were the soldiers of Jesus Christ who were fighting a war for civilization."—New York "Times," December 31, 1966.

APPROVAL OF VIOLENCE, REVOLUTION

The wise counsel of God's Word is: "Return evil for evil to no one. . . . Be peaceable with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.'"—Rom. 12:17-19



BUT: "We have ministers and priests in America who advocate violence and breaking the laws of which they disapprove."—Miami "Herald," June 26, 1968.

And the keynote speaker at the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Samuel L. Parmar, said: "I would not condemn those who resort to violent action in order to bring about justice in society because the existing order may be allowing a good deal of violence and injustice."—New York "Times," July 9, 1968.

The Bible also says: "A slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all."—2 Tim. 2:24.

BUT: The churches say: "There are situations where Christians may become involved in violence." "The use by Christians of revolutionary methods—by which is meant violent overthrow of an existing political order—cannot be excluded a priori."—"World Conference on Church and Society, Official Report," Geneva, July 12-26, pp. 116, 143.

CLERGY-LAITY DISTINCTIONS

The Bible counsels Christians against having 'class distinctions among themselves.'—Jas. 2:4.

BUT: The situation in the churches led one foremost religious journal to say: "All are called to one service, and all are God's people. Our distinction between clergy and laity was not known to the New Testament."—"The Christian Century," October 12, 1955, p. 1168.

EXALTATION OF CLERGY

Jesus Christ said to his followers: "Do not you be called Rabbi . . . Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth . . . Neither be called 'leaders' . . . Whoever exalts himself will be humbled."—Matt. 23:8-12.



BUT: Religious leaders today assume titles such as "Rabbi," "Father" or "Reverend." Said Geoffrey Fisher shortly before retiring as Archbishop of Canterbury: "I hope that some will still call me 'Archbishop' and even 'Your Grace,' and address me in writing as some kind of Reverend, whether 'Most' or 'Right' I do not know."—London "Daily Telegraph and Morning Post," May 26, 1961.

MONEY-RAISING SCHEMES

Jesus Christ deplored religious commercialism. "He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. . . . 'Take these things away from here! Stop making the house of my Father a house of merchandise!' "—John 2: 15, 16.



BUT: The Roman Catholic Church has long employed bingo, begging and other money-making devices. And a Protestant journal observes: "One need not travel far in American Protestantism to find money-raising schemes that approximate the Roman Catholic Church's exploitation of games of chance . . . Thousands of Protestant church bazaars, carnivals and 'summer fairs' . . . are slightly more respectable than Las Vegas."—"The Christian Century," July 29, 1959, p. 867.

" 'I'll tell you what the church's attitude is,' said one active Lutheran. 'It is one of greed. They want your money. They can't survive without it. But if you give, they want more. They always act as if they can't get enough.' "—"The Lutheran," November 6, 1968, p. 22.

What does such an examination indicate about the Catholic and Protestant churches? Would you say that they really advocate and practice Christianity? Do they follow closely the example of Jesus Christ

and encourage obedience to God's Word?

Remember, it is not sufficient simply for the churches to claim that they are servants of God. Many who make that profession are actually God's enemies. The

Bible says: "They publicly declare they know God, but they disown him by their works, because they are detestable and disobedient and not approved for good work of any sort."—Titus 1:16.

When churches make themselves part of the world and try to dictate "the kind of legislation which should be enacted on almost every conceivable economic, social and political subject," is this Christian? Does God approve? In view of what God says in his Word, does he not rather detest such practices?

Also, when churches encourage the slaughter of fellow believers of another nationality on the battlefields and advocate violent overthrow of existing political order, could they possibly be approved by God who condemns such practices? What do you think of churches that promote

class distinctions by elevating a clergy class and bestow high-sounding titles upon priests and ministers when God's own Word condemns it? Is not God disgusted by such practices? Certainly he must be disgusted, too, by the money-raising schemes and rank commercialism in the churches.

Today the world is in need of a force that can unify peoples in peace. But of what use are the churches of Christendom in satisfying this need when by their own admission they themselves are disunited and confused? Is it reasonable to think that God will protect and preserve them?

Why have these churches acted in such flagrant disregard of God's Word? What are their doctrines and teachings? Are these, too, in conflict with the Bible?

DO THE CHURCHES UPHOLD BIBLE TEACHINGS?

IT HAS been thought by many persons that what the Catholic and Protestant churches teach is based on the Bible. But is this really so? Have these churches accurately represented the teachings of God's Word?

It is vital that we determine this, because God does not approve of organizations that misrepresent him. "The one with whom my own word is, let him speak forth my word truthfully," Jehovah God says. The religious leaders of Israel failed to do this, so Jehovah said to the nation:

"I will give you people to neglect, with finality, and I will desert you." Desertion by God meant their destruction.—Jer. 23: 28, 39.

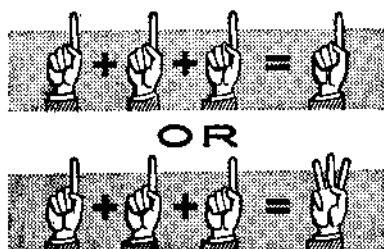
Jehovah God also will abandon to destruction today any organization that fails to speak forth his Word truthfully. Therefore, it is in our own vital interests to see if the churches of Christendom really are representing properly the teachings of God's Word. Determine this for yourself in connection with the following subjects upon which Bible teachings are clear.

GOD, HIS SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Bible teaches: God is "King of eternity," and is without beginning or end. (1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 90:2) But Jesus is "the beginning of the creation by God." He himself said: "The Father is greater than I am." —Rev. 3:14; John 14:28.

And the holy spirit is God's active force, not a person. "All became filled with holy spirit."—Acts 2:4.

The Bible says: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."—1 Cor. 14:33, AV.



HOW
DOES
IT
ADD UP
TO YOU
?

BUT: Says "The Catholic Encyclopedia" under its heading "Trinity": "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God," . . . the Persons are co-eternal and co-equal . . . This, the Church teaches."

Also, the Augsburg Confession, which formalized the teachings of Protestantism, says: "There are three persons of the same essence and power, who also are co-eternal, the Father, the Son and the Holy [Spirit]."

Although this teaching of the Trinity is the central doctrine of most churches, the word "Trinity" does not appear in any translation of the Bible. "It is not, as already seen, directly and immediately the word of God."—"New Catholic Encyclopedia," Vol. 14, p. 304.

BUT: Of the Trinity doctrine it is said: "If a man can lose his soul by denying it, he can also lose his wits trying to understand it!"—"Scottish Journal of Theology," 1967.

Thus, noteworthy is the admission of a prominent theologian: "The fact has to be faced that New Testament research over, say, the last thirty or forty years has been leading an increasing number of reputable New Testament scholars to the conclusion that Jesus himself . . . certainly never believed himself to be God."—"Bulletin of the John Rylands Library," Manchester, Vol. 50, Spring 1968, p. 251.

THE EARTH IN GOD'S PURPOSE

The Bible promises: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Ps. 37:29.



BUT: A total of 103 of the 134 officials who replied to a questionnaire said that, according to the teaching of their church, "eventually the earth will be burned up." Thus, most churches do not adhere to the Bible teaching that the earth will be the everlasting home of righteous mankind.



THE HUMAN SOUL

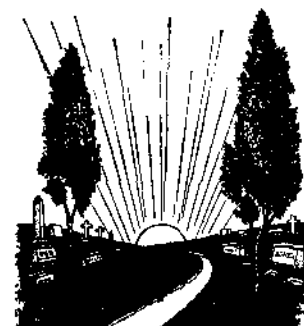
The Bible says: "Man came to be a living soul." "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." "He poured out his soul to the very death."—Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 18:4; Isa. 53:12.

BUT: John Heenan, as Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, said: "The soul cannot corrupt or fade or die."—The London "Sunday Express," November 22, 1959.

"In traditional Christianity . . . [the soul] is regarded as a spiritual entity that survives physical death."—"A Handbook of Theological Terms," Van A. Harvey (1964), p. 226.

THE CONDITION OF THE DEAD

The Bible teaches: "The living know that they shall die, but the dead know nothing more . . . Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening."—Eccl. 9:5, 10, Dy.



The Bible also says: "Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them."—Rev 20:13, AV.

BUT: "The Catholic Church always has seen . . . a real fire which will affect lost souls and make them feel pain similar to that which we feel now when we are burned by fire. While the fire in hell is real, it certainly differs from the fire with which we are most familiar. . . . the fire of hell is never extinguished . . . and does not destroy."—"What Happens After Death," Supreme Council, Knights of Columbus, p. 33.

"In traditional Christian THEOLOGY, both R[oman] C[atholic] and Prot[estant] H[ell] has been regarded as the state of utter and irrevocable damnation to which the unregenerated SOUL is condemned after death."—"A Handbook of Theological Terms," Van A. Harvey (1964), p. 115.



MARRIAGE AMONG GOD'S SERVANTS

The Bible says: "In the last times some shall depart from the faith, . . . Forbidding to marry." "It behoveth therefore a bishop to be blameless, the husband of one wife."—1 Tim. 4:1-3; 3:2, Dy.

BUT: The Roman Catholic Church forbids her priests to marry. "Priestly celibacy has been guarded by the church for centuries as a brilliant jewel, and retains its value undiminished even in our time. . . . Hence we consider that the present law of celibacy should today continue to be firmly linked to the ecclesiastical ministry."—Papal encyclical "Sacerdotalis Calebatus" issued by Pope Paul VI in 1967 New York "Times," June 24, 1967.

FORNICATION AND ADULTERY

God's Word says: "You must not commit adultery."—Ex. 20:14.

The Bible distinctly says: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, and they are fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, . . . those who practice such things will not inherit God's kingdom."—Gal. 5:19-21.



"There are advantages of adultery"

BUT: W. L. Gustin, minister of the Morton Methodist Church, Morton, Illinois, told parishioners: "I say loudly and I say clearly, there are advantages of adultery."—"Western Voice," Fort Worth, Texas, October 3, 1968.

BUT: Episcopal minister Frederic C. Wood told the all-girl student body at Goucher College, Maryland: "There are no laws attached to sex. I repeat: absolutely no laws. . . . Premarital intercourse . . . can be very beautiful."—"Theology Today," October 1965, pp. 396, 400.

Also, Kenneth C. Bailey, professor at a Lutheran school, wrote: "When circumstances no longer demand sexual chastity, it would be a mockery of the purpose of the commandment to insist upon it."—"Theology Today," July 1963, p. 191.

And Catholic priest J. Huyts, college professor at Heerlen, Netherlands, asserted: "Premarital sexuality can be highly responsible."—"Exploding Church" by Frederick Franck, p. 74.

HOMOSEXUALITY

God's Word says: "You must not lie down with a male the same as you lie down with a woman. It is a detestable thing."—Lev. 18:22.

The Bible describes ungodly persons: "Both their females changed the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature; and likewise even the males . . . became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another . . . those practicing such things are deserving of death."—Rom. 1:26, 27, 32.

BUT: United Church of Christ minister Robert Wood said: "Homosexuality is moral because it provides an outlet for the expression of the human personality for those who cannot express themselves fully within heterosexuality."—Toronto "Star," June 15, 1963.

BUT: Ninety Episcopal priests generally agreed that the church should classify homosexual acts as "morally neutral." A leading clergy spokesman explained: "A homosexual relationship between two consenting adults should be judged by . . . whether it is intended to foster a permanent relationship of love."—New York "Times," November 29, 1967.

And, according to a Catholic paper, prominent Catholic theologian Edward Schillebeeckx "suggested that homosexual activity on the part of those created with such inclinations . . . indeed is quite virtuous."—"The Texas Catholic Herald," October 11, 1968.

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

The Bible says of Mary: Joseph "knew her not till she brought forth her firstborn son: . . . Jesus."—Matt. 1:25, Dy.

BUT: It is Catholic teaching that Mary was not only a virgin when Jesus was born, but ever afterwards. "She continued always in spotless virginity, before the birth, during the birth, and for ever after the birth."—Pope Paul IV, "Cum quorundam," 1555.

What does such an examination indicate? Would you say that these Catholic and Protestant churches uphold the teachings of the Bible? Do they endeavor to follow closely what God says in his Word? Obviously they do not. The belief that all teachings of the churches are based upon the Bible is a complete misconception. And now these churches are making clear their tremendous apostasy by condoning immorality, including fornication, adultery, and even homosexuality.

Although not all clergymen approve of homosexuality, the trend is toward such approval. *McCall's* magazine, reporting on the results of a survey involving 3,000 Protestant clergymen, said in its February 1968 issue: "To follow a single thread through 3,000 letters is not easy; but one such thread was so clear as to be unforgettable—the surprising compassion extended to the homosexual."

The fact is that religious leaders of the major churches of Christendom have come out loud and clear in their claims that Bible standards are no longer applicable. For example, observe the excerpts from an article appearing in a recent issue of a foremost Protestant journal. It is a Presbyterian minister, Gordon Clanton, who writes:

"Unconditional biblical prohibitions . . . are out of date, are part of the Pre-Pill Age. A relevant ethic cannot be appropriated 'in toto' from another time. . . .

"The Old Testament prohibition against nonmarital intercourse was a good rule for

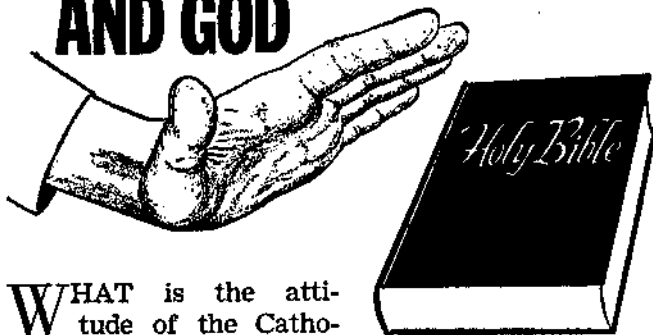
its time . . . And in the time of Jesus . . . the teaching that sex should be reserved for marriage was sound, since the begetting of children outside of marriage was (and is) socially undesirable. But such a sweeping rule is no longer needed. . . . Now we must go further and proclaim that, properly understood and lovingly practiced, sex outside of marriage is indeed a positive good. . . .

"Meanwhile the church should be seeking to weaken rather than strengthen the hold of pre-Pill morality on society. Creative guidance demands that the church be an agent for re-education."—"The Christian Century," January 8, 1969, pp. 45, 46.

Does it not appear from this that such religious ministers seek to weaken and tear down Bible teachings, rather than to uphold and strengthen them? If the churches that they represent did not approve of what they teach, would ministers be allowed to continue to preach and remain in good standing with their respective churches? Apparently their churches do approve.

You may not personally have heard your minister express these views that appear so prominently in religious publications, but do you really know whether he subscribes to them? Explained United Church of Canada minister W. G. Berry: "The preachers have accepted these things but they have not preached or taught them. Consequently, there is a gap between the pulpit and the pew." However, the true attitude of these churches and their ministers toward the Bible and God is becoming more apparent each year.

REJECTION OF THE BIBLE AND GOD



WHAT is the attitude of the Catholic and Protestant churches and their ministers toward the Bible? Do they really believe it to be true? In fact, do they really believe in God? Note what religious leaders themselves say.

Robert T. Anderson, a conservative Methodist theologian at Michigan State, says: "The Bible is the greatest collection of mythology in the history of Western civilization." (*Time*, February 4, 1966) Also, Danish clergyman Harald Sandbæk asserted: "The Old Testament is legend . . . Neither is the New Testament historical. . . . The Bible is a book just like others, and a lovely book. But one should not believe it."—*Kalundborg Folkeblad*, August 5, 1966.

And the new Sunday School course of the United Church of Canada says concerning the first eleven chapters of the Bible book of Genesis: "These chapters are not history. . . . The first historical person to emerge in the Biblical narrative is Abraham."—*The Junior Teacher's Guide*, Year I, p. 4.

Yes, even in Sunday schools it is taught that many Bible characters and events are legends, despite the fact that Jesus Christ and his disciples said otherwise. (Jude 14; Heb. 11:4; Matt. 24:37) Actually there is very little contained in the

Bible that the churches have not declared untrue. Frequently one reads of ministers denying the miracles of Jesus, his virgin birth, his resurrection, and other Bible accounts.

For example, during a telecast on their moon space flight the astronauts read from the Bible's account of the earth's preparation for human habitation. But later an Episcopal minister asserted concerning the Bible account that was read: "It's a myth in the true sense

. . . No modern Bible scholar accepts Genesis as a scientific treatise on creation." When anyone expresses confidence in the Bible as truth you can almost count on a church minister ridiculing what is said. —*New York Times*, December 30, 1968, p. 18.

God Rejected

From the rejection of God's Word the Bible, it was but a natural step for ministers to reject God, the Bible's author. For without belief in God's Word, there can be no true faith and knowledge of God.

Thus, it is little wonder that the "God is dead" idea has become so popular in the churches of Christendom, and that some ministers call themselves "Christian atheists." Clergyman E. Harrison wrote in his book *A Church Without God*:

"Father Jackson, who says, 'If there is a God, we can't speak of him as a supreme being,' is a university chaplain; Thomas Altizer, who wrote 'The Gospel of Christian Atheism,' is an Associate Professor of Bible Studies at an American university; I am on the staff of an Anglican parish in Toronto. I claim to be a Christian and an Anglican; yet I can say, in all seriousness, that there is no God."

Such views are not uncommon among religious leaders who are approved by and in good standing with their respective churches. Recently *McCall's* magazine questioned 3,000 ministers about their views of God and other matters, and in its February 1968 issue said about the "revolutionary young men" in the ministry: "A considerable number rejected altogether the idea of a personal God." Also a report in the *National Observer* of January 31, 1966, says: "A 'God is dead' mood pervades the thought of 90 percent of the Protestant theologians under 40." Is it not evident that these churches have rejected God and his Word?

In what has this resulted? It has left those who look to them for guidance floundering around without a sure guide or destination. Consequently we find a rise in crime, immorality and venereal disease, as well as increased disrespect for authority. A generation of pleasure seekers has been bred who think more of material possessions than of their fellowman. Yes, all this has been contributed to by the churches' terrible failure!

The Bible Is True

It is not that there is basis for saying the Bible is untrue. To the contrary, the evidence highlights the reliability of the Bible.

Recently Professor W. F. Albright of Johns Hopkins University wrote about the tremendous increase in knowledge of the historical background of the Bible, and said: "The result is throughout favorable to the Biblical record, and new confirmations are turning up almost daily."—*Cape Cod Standard-Times*, July 14, 1968.

Also, Professor Siegfried Horn, professor of archaeology at Andrews University, Michigan, observed: "Excavating the city of Shechem 40 miles north of Jerusalem, I've found nothing that does not substan-

tiate the truth of the Bible."—*The Examiner*, Launceston, Australia, January 8, 1966.

Yes, the Bible has so consistently proved true in its details that Dr. Ze'ev Shremer, leader of an Israeli geological expedition, was quoted as saying: "We have our own maps and geodetic survey plans, of course, but where the Bible and the maps are at odds, we opt for The Book."—San Bernardino, California, *Sun*, October 19, 1967.

But the Bible is not only historically and geographically accurate, it is dependable in every other way as well. Jesus was right when he said in prayer to God: "Your word is truth."—John 17:17.

True, clergymen may say that it is unsophisticated in this space age to believe in Jesus' virgin birth, the resurrection and other such "miracles." But consider, for example, the everyday "miracle" of birth. Two tiny cells, incapable of thought or planning, unite to form one cell, and almost immediately this cell begins to divide and grow according to a predetermined plan of marvelous complexity. In time, a living, thinking human creature is produced that possesses more than a hundred different kinds of cells that number into the thousands of millions!

Now, is it difficult to believe that the Powerful One responsible for establishing the laws that make this miraculous growth possible could also create the earth, and even bring back to life in a resurrection persons who have died? Also, could He not have transferred the life of his heavenly Son to the womb of a virgin girl so that this one was born as an earthly son? Such a powerful God could do this! What is said in the Bible is true. You can rely on it.

What, then, will happen to the churches that have rejected the Word of God? Will God preserve them? What does the evidence indicate?

Where the **CHURCHES** Are Heading

ALL the facts clearly show that the churches of Christendom are turning farther and farther away from God and the Bible.

Clergyman D. R. Keating very pointedly observed, writing in the Winnipeg, Canada, *Tribune*: "It is true that this is not Christianity you see in the churches. Here you see instead the very opposite to New Testament Christianity. . . . What church am I talking about? Well, I am a minister of the United Church of Canada but I wouldn't dare presume to say that this is not also true of the whole church—Catholic or Protestant—at least in this basic way."

Rejection by People

The churches cannot avoid the consequences of their unchristian practices and teachings. As the Bible says: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap."—Gal. 6:7.

Both Catholic and Protestant churches and their clergy have sown disrespect for the Bible. The value of God's Word has been destroyed by them in the minds of people. And now the clergy are even beginning to sow doubt about the existence of God. What is the consequence of this activity?

The consequence is that many people feel the churches are obsolete, unneeded. Thus they are rejecting them. But this is understandable.

For since the churches are supposed to

teach people about God, and yet they discard his Word and abandon God himself, does it not reasonably follow that people would conclude that the churches are of no use, as well as hypocritical? Thus the churches of Christendom and their clergy have sown the seeds for the very disrespect and trouble that they are now reaping.

Rejection by God

However, the real threat to the continued existence of all false religious organizations comes, not from men, but from God. How does God view them?

Well, how would you view organizations that claimed to represent you and your teachings, and then practiced and taught the very things you condemned? Would you feel kindly toward those that ridiculed your word, while at the same time they posed as your servants? God views all false religions in the same way as you would such ones.

Whatever else the churches of Christendom might have done, they have failed to do God's will. In particular they have not followed Jesus' example of telling people that man's only hope for lasting peace and good government is God's kingdom. Jesus' words, therefore, aptly apply to them: "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from

me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matt. 7:22, 23.

They have done what *they* believed to be right, not what God says is right. They have set aside God's Word—and this is lawlessness! They clearly have left God. And the Bible says: "If you leave him, he will cast you off forever." (1 Chron. 28:9) So just as God cast off the ancient nation of Israel because they rejected him and his Word, he has rejected the churches of Christendom for the same reasons.

God soon will destroy all organizations that advocate false religion. Their end is near! They have claimed union with God, but they have rejected what He says and instead have served the interests of those opposed to God. Thus all false religion is appropriately represented in the Bible as a harlot, called Babylon the Great. And God foretells that the political powers will 'hate the harlot and make her devastated and naked, and they will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire.'—Rev. 17:5, 16, 17.

Last Days for Entire System

It is a fact, not only are the religions of Christendom and those outside Christendom nearing their end, but also this entire system of things faces imminent destruction at God's hand. We are living now in what the Bible calls "the last days." (2 Tim. 3:1) But can we be certain that these are "the last days" of this system

and of the churches that have made themselves an integral part of it?

Yes we can, for the facts prove that it is our generation, beginning with the outbreak of world war in 1914, that remarkably has experienced the fulfillment of the very things Jesus and his disciples said would occur during "the last days." We have witnessed in this generation world wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, a landslide of lawlessness, deterioration of love and the many other things that were prophesied. And Jesus said that the generation of mankind seeing all these things occur in conjunction with one another would also see the end of the system.—Matt. 24:3-24; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

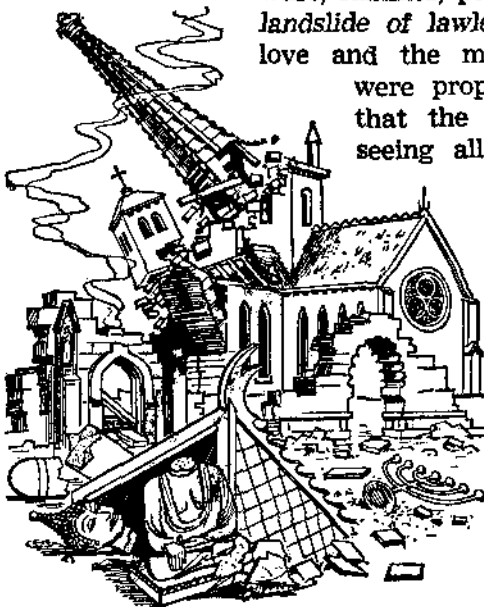
Is it not clear that our generation is the one of which the Bible prophecies speak? Can you not see that 1914 marked a turning point, that a terrible deterioration in morals and human relationships has occurred

since then? Many have noted the change. Just last August 3 *The Royal Gazette* of Hamilton, Bermuda, observed in an editorial:

"Tomorrow is the anniversary date of an event from which the world never seems to have recovered. On August 4, 1914, there began the first holocaust of this century and mankind still ponders the question 'Why?'"

"None, save those who lived in the sunshine of the pre-1914 world, can plumb the sad contrast between those days and these. A half century of peace and progress—in a word, of civilisation—ended on that fateful day in 1914. . . . The 'Why?' still haunts a harassed world."

The Bible answer is that 1914 began



"the last days" of this system. The generation of mankind that witnessed those events of nearly fifty-five years ago is now getting old. This means that time is fast running out! This system, and the churches that have long supported it, are rapidly nearing their end. It is our day of which the Bible speaks when it says: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Dan. 2:44.

Action That Is Now Urgent

It is, therefore, urgent that you now examine whether any religious organization with which you may be associated is approved by God. You need to investigate its teachings and practices and see if they line up with God's Word. This can be done by checking the facts in the early part of this magazine, comparing what the Bible clearly says with what your church practices and teaches. What do you find by such an examination?

Perhaps you reason that only certain ministers or certain segments of your church teach unbiblical doctrines and condone unscriptural practices. But what if such ministers and theologians continue in good standing in the religious organization of which you are a member? Then is it not time to face the fact that the religion itself is bad, that it is disapproved by God? This means that you are faced with a serious decision. If you choose to stay with an organization whose ministers reject God's Word, then you turn your back on God himself. It is that serious. Your very life is involved.

Do not conclude that your church has been around so long that it will never end. It is unwise to assume the attitude that no one knows the future so it is simply idle talk to say that God will soon destroy

this system of things and its churches. No doubt many persons in ancient Israel took that same attitude. Their system of worship with its high priest, its temple and animal sacrifices had been in existence for hundreds of years. Yet Jesus said: "Your house is abandoned to you." (Matt. 23:38; Luke 19:44-46) Within that very generation Israel's entire religious system was destroyed by the Roman armies! Similarly, the world's churches today face certain destruction, within this very generation!

Should we be saddened by this prospect? No, it will rather be a relief. This, in effect, is what 700 French Catholic workers, technicians, teachers and priests noted in a recent letter to the pope:

"St. Peter's basilica in Rome is the symbol of ecclesiastical pride. It reminds us of the shameful sale of indulgences and how the popes concerned themselves about building monuments while the members of the Church were tearing each other to pieces. We do not know when that temple will be destroyed, but however beautiful it may be, we will shed no tears, for it has brought us too much pain."—"Le Monde," December 6, 1968.

That destruction is near! Therefore, do not hesitate! Heed God's counsel: "Get out of her [Babylon the Great], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind."—Rev. 18:4, 5.

But it is not enough simply to leave all organizations that practice false religion, to sever all relations with them. More is required. To obtain God's favor and protection it is necessary that you really come to know God's Word and let it govern in your life. This will produce remarkably fine effects, and lead to a marvelous future in God's righteous new system.

A WORLD WITHOUT FALSE RELIGION



THE Bible makes it clear that a world without false religion is near at hand. Why? Because all who advocate and insist on clinging to false religion in spite of being shown that it misrepresents God and his purposes will be destroyed forever. What a blessing that will be to lovers of truth!

This does not mean that all religion will be gone. Not all religion is false. John 4:23 speaks of "true worshipers" and James 1:27 refers to "worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God." Furthermore, while the Bible strongly condemns all false religion, it does speak of the "church of the living God." (1 Tim. 3:15, AV) This is made up of "true worshipers" whom the Lord Jesus said would rule with him from the heavens. Associated with members of this true church on earth today are hundreds of thousands of persons who worship in harmony with God's Word of truth. What blessings these will enjoy when all false religion is gone!

Blessings of God's New System

Under the rule of Jehovah's kingdom all earth's inhabitants will be educated in the Word of God. No longer will anyone say, as did that church member in Arizona: "We're Biblical illiterates," because the churches of Christendom will no longer be

overseeing their religious instruction. And note how God describes the grand effects: "They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."—Isa. 11:9.

Since only the worship of the true God Jehovah will be practiced in his new system, no longer will there be religious disunity. With worship built around the principles found in God's Word, there will be no allowance for clergymen who claim pompous religious titles and who demand special consideration and favors. All then living will truly be "brothers." What a fine contribution this will be to the unity of the human family!—Matt. 20:25-27; 23:6-12.

The whole earth will radiate with peace and happiness because all will love God and love one another. (Matt. 22:37-39) What will that mean? Everyone will be law-abiding. Thus there will be no place for ministers and priests who "advocate violence and the breaking of laws." It will be a blessing to mankind to have that disruptive influence gone.

Also in God's new system men will never fight another war. No, nothing will cause their love for fellow humans to grow cold, for all supporters of war will be gone. Churches that have served as "blood-lust creators" for the armies of the old system will of necessity be gone. All resources and efforts, therefore, will be channeled to peaceful endeavors, and to helping one another.—Ps. 46:9; Mic. 4:3, 4.

Under the Kingdom rule God's high standards of morality will prevail. As shown in his Word, these make no allowance for fornication, adultery and homosexuality. Those who encourage immorality will not be permitted to corrupt the inhabitants of that new system. So there will be no clergymen there who insist on telling people that "premarital intercourse . . . can be very beautiful" or that "there are advantages of adultery" or that homosexuality is "quite virtuous." The removal of this corrupting influence will indeed be a blessing.

Truly the things God has in store for his people are beyond their fondest imaginations! God promises to 'open his hand

and satisfy the desire of every living thing.' (Ps. 145:16) The inhabitants of God's new system will receive these blessings because they practice the worship that is pleasing to Jehovah God. In ancient Israel God blessed his people with material prosperity when they obeyed his laws, but withheld such prosperity when they did not. (Deut. 30:8-10, 17, 18) Similarly, material blessings will abound in full measure under the rule of God's kingdom because true worship will everywhere be practiced.—Ps. 67:6, 7; 72:16.

Think of it! In God's new system there will be no slums or overcrowded, deteriorating housing conditions. The earth will be cultivated and cared for, and everyone will have a beautiful place in which to live. God's heavenly kingdom will thus bless his "true worshipers."—Isa. 65:21-23.

In fact, God will see to it that the happiness of his true worshipers is never marred by sickness or painful diseases, nor even cut short by death. His own Word guarantees: "God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear

**"They will not plant and someone else do the eating. . . . They will not toil for nothing."
—Isa. 65:22, 23.**



from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more." (Rev. 21:3, 4) "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside *forever* upon it."—Ps. 37:29.

Even many in the past who were deluded by false religion will then be given the opportunity to take up the true faith. Jesus Christ revealed this remarkable hope when he said: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) They will come forth into the earth restored to a Paradise state.—Luke 23:43.

Do you, too, desire to live forever under the righteous Kingdom rule? Do you want to be governed by God? If so, you must prove this by becoming acquainted with his Word, by bringing your life into harmony with it and breaking free from all false religion.

Surviving into God's New System

But is it possible to live in harmony with God's righteous Word amid this wicked system of things? Yes, it is, for Jehovah God is building up in the earth an organization of people with whom you can associate and from whom you can receive help and encouragement. These persons are united earth wide in doing God's will. And as this system and its churches draw closer to their end and sink deeper into trouble, Jehovah's organization is prospering and growing.

You can identify this organization today by its strict adherence to God's laws and commands. Jehovah's people truly love one another, and therefore have overcome the national, racial and social barriers that divide the rest of humanity. They do not kill their fellowman in time of war, or at any other time. They show kindness and consideration to all. And they practice

genuine brotherhood, treating people of all races and social backgrounds alike. The results of applying God's Word by them are indeed marvelous.

Testimony to this is incorporated in the United States Congressional Record, 1958, appendix, page A6907. Describing an assembly of nearly 200,000 of Jehovah's witnesses in New York city that year, it said: "New Yorkers are unanimous in agreeing that the Witnesses' conduct has been exemplary. . . . Executive vice president of the New York Convention and Visitors Bureau, called the Witnesses 'an asset to the community.' He described their behavior as 'out of this world.'"

Will it not be grand when only those who abide by the teachings of God's Word remain on earth? We can rejoice that that time is very near at hand! When God soon destroys this wicked world of mankind and its churches, his organization of Christian witnesses will survive and carry true worship on into His grand new system of things. The Bible assures us of this, saying: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

A Vital Decision

Therefore, you now have a vital decision to make. Will you remain a part of the world and pass away with it? Or will you learn God's will and do it, and survive into His new system of things?

Each year now tens of thousands of persons all over the earth are leaving the churches and taking up true worship with Jehovah's people. But you may ask: How can they be certain they have found the true organization of God? Listen to a few of their experiences and see the sharp contrast between the churches of which they had been active members and the true Christian organization with which they are now serving.

CONTRAST BETWEEN CHURCHES

and

TRUE RELIGION

ARE you included among those who are disturbed by the unchristian practices and teachings of their church? Have you, too, observed the conditions of which the following once prominent church member writes?

"In 1962 I became an active member of the First Methodist Church in Topeka, Kansas, the largest Methodist church in the state. In time I became deeply concerned, because I could see that the church was largely a social institution, much the same as a country club.

"While serving on the Membership and Evangelism Commission it became apparent to me that the church was more interested in the number of members than the individual spiritual growth of its people. The absence of spirituality was doubly emphasized during my consecutive one-year terms as Vice-President and President of the Methodist Men's Club, a social club much the same as any other community club.

"At the meetings of the Official Board I became even more confused and disillusioned. Here again, very little reference was made to God or his purposes. Instead of spiritual emphasis, there was great stress placed on becoming involved in politics and racial issues, as well as how to get members to give more money.

"An adult Sunday school class was but another disappointing experience for my wife and me. Needless to say, we expected to study the Bible or at least material that was relevant to the Bible. Instead we were subjected to a course in psychology, sociology, and philosophy. Seldom was the Bible mentioned, and when someone did mention it, he was listened to with polite tolerance and then his utterances were promptly ignored for their lack of sophistication.

"Amazingly, this lack of spirituality was perhaps most evident in the pulpit itself. Scrip-

tures were read before the sermon was preached, and only in closing were they again mentioned. Sandwiched in between was a long discourse on what some historian, politician, philosopher, or poet had to say on a given subject. Parishioners were continually instructed to become involved in the world and its problems. One could have heard a similar discourse at any political rally.

"I began to wonder how the church could justify its purpose or even its existence, since obviously it was not founded on God's Word. I knew enough about other denominations to realize that the situation in them was basically the same as in the Methodist Church. Therefore, I did not know where to turn for true guidance.

"Then one day my wife received a visit by one of Jehovah's witnesses, and she agreed to a regular home Bible study. Later, in April of last year, the overseer from the local congregation of Jehovah's witnesses visited us. I was delighted to find that Jehovah's witnesses were not concerned so much with obtaining new members, but with proclaiming the word of God as found in the Bible. I was also impressed that they answered my questions by referring directly to the Bible.

"I consented to a regular Bible study. Soon my wife and I began attending the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses. We wanted to see if they really showed love among themselves, as the Bible says Jesus' true followers would. (John 13:35) We had already seen that this quality was not manifest at the Methodist Church. What a marvelous contrast to find it readily apparent among Jehovah's witnesses!

They were united in one effort in praising Jehovah God and proclaiming His Word.

"After I had studied for about two months, the senior minister of the Methodist Church called upon us to inquire as to why he had not seen us at church for some time. We told him we had been studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses and were leaving the church. He could not understand why we should want to leave. But we explained that our main purpose in attending church had been to learn more about God, and that we had learned practically nothing at the Methodist Church.

"Furthermore, we pointed to the unscriptural teachings of the church, including the Trinity and immortality of the soul doctrines. We asked him to define the Trinity. He said it was a mystery and had to be accepted. We asked him where in the Bible we could find the word Trinity. He could not answer, because the word is not even in the Bible. He soon left.

"Now we have resigned from the Methodist Church. How happy we are to be numbered among God's dedicated, baptized Witnesses!"

Yes, what a marvelous contrast is experienced by those who come into association with the true Christian organization that is doing God's will! Another person writes about this contrast:

"Since I had decided to become a minister, I entered Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, a university supported by the American Lutheran Church. The seminary was an integral unit of the university and I expected, without question, to find God's spirit there.

"However, what I found was immoral conduct as prevalent as that in any of the secular universities that my high school classmates were attending. Cheating and stealing were notorious. And the most flagrant cheating I observed occurred in religion classes. One of my roommates had keys to most of the offices on campus, and the evening before the exams he would steal answers from the professor's office.

"Scriptures were generally used as a springboard into worldly philosophy and politics. All my life I had assumed that my home-town minister and his assistant had been given a special insight into God's Word because of the educa-

tion they received at this place. But now I wondered.

"By the end of my sophomore year I was sickened by the church's hypocritical practices and confused by its teachings. But, on the other hand, I wanted to serve God as a minister. I remember praying for an understanding of his purposes no matter what changes were necessary.

"A short time later I received some unusual letters from home. My family had been studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses, and they urged me to look into the matter. I was very skeptical. But I was searching for the truth, so I agreed to a Bible study. I was amazed! With the Witnesses' aid many truths which had remained unanswered for so long were plainly pointed out from God's Word.

"The deepest impressions were made when I began to attend the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses. Ironically, the spirit that I expected to find at one of Christendom's prominent universities was found here at the Kingdom Hall. The discussions were rich with Scriptural understanding. The meetings were practical. For example, I had always found it difficult to speak publicly, even though my university training included public speaking. But through the training at the weekly Ministry School of Jehovah's witnesses I learned for the first time to speak with any degree of confidence.

"Also, the people, unlike those at the university, reflected the rich spiritual food they were receiving. Their genuine love for one another was manifested as Jesus said it would be. I knew that Jehovah's spirit was among them and I wanted to be there also. I never returned to the Lutheran Church. The contrast between the religion I knew and the patterns I was observing in this organization were so striking I would have had to be blind not to see and lame not to act."

A once active member of the Presbyterian Church also draws attention to the tremendous contrast between her church and true religion:

"After having oversight of a Presbyterian mission here in Peoria, Illinois, for some time, my husband and I returned to serve in the

Arcadia Presbyterian Church when the church sold the mission building.

"Although I was again put in charge of a Bible class, this was considered of little importance in comparison to the bazaars and the social life of the church. I wanted to discuss this with the church's two ministers, but from previous experience with Presbyterian ministers I knew that any attempts to increase emphasis on Bible study would be useless.

"Then, in 1967, a large assembly of Jehovah's witnesses was held in Peoria, and we opened our home to a traveling representative of Jehovah's witnesses and his wife. Immediately we began to see the difference between people whose lives are dedicated to the doing of God's will, and ministers of the churches who have no real interest in the Word of God.

"We attended the assembly and at once noticed the contrast in the attitude of the people there with those in the Presbyterian Church. Their main interest was in spiritual instruction.

We could see at once that Jehovah's witnesses were organized for one purpose, to worship God. This made a big impression upon us. There was no collection taken and no mention of money. This was very revealing because money is a very important factor in the Arcadia Presbyterian Church.

"We decided to start studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. Right away our eyes began to open, not only to the unchristian practices of the Presbyterian Church, but now we could see that the church was teaching unscriptural doctrines as well. With haste we took steps to sever all relations with the church, for we could now see clearly which was God's organization."

Actually it is not difficult for a person to identify the true organization of God. Today it stands out in ever clearer contrast with the churches of Christendom. Its faithful adherence to God's Word distinguishes it.

Attitude Toward the Word of God

HOW does your church view the Word of God? Does it really accept it and teach it? Or does it take an attitude similar to that of the churches spoken about in the following experiences?

"We were ready to send our son to take his first Sunday School course in the fall of 1967. But then we learned that new Sunday School publications of our church were teaching that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are not true history. Also, Bible miracles were labeled in these publications as fiction.

"We inquired of a Sunday School teacher to see if the United Church of Canada was actually teaching these things. She confirmed that it was, and even said that she was pleased with this. She asserted that the Bible is not

something that God had inspired men to write.

"In the meantime Jehovah's witnesses called on us. They showed us from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ accepted the Bible account of man's creation. (Gen. 2:21-24; Matt. 19:4-6) We also were shown that Jesus and his disciples considered the flood in Noah's day historical, as well as other early Bible events. (Matt. 24:37-39; 1 Tim. 2:13, 14; Jude 14) Therefore, how could we agree with the teaching of the United Church of Canada that parts of the Bible are myth?

"My wife and I have therefore cut off all relations with the church. How happy we are that our son will not receive the type of instruction that has ruined millions of persons' faith in God and in his Word the Bible!"

A dental surgeon from England also writes:

"When the 'New English Bible' was published in 1961 I read it right through. My first surprise was to discover no reference to Christ being God. We had always been taught in the Congregational Church that Christ was God himself.

"The second surprise was the obvious indication in the Bible that there would be a definite end to the present wicked system of things, followed by a thousand-year reign of Christ. There was never any mention of these things within the church. Soon after this my wife and I began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. I immediately recognized that what we were learning had the ring of truth. I was also relieved to hear that I was not alone in believing the Bible to be true.

"After about a year of Bible study with the Witnesses we made an appointment with the minister of the Richmond Hill Congregational Church, Bournemouth, Hants. During this meeting the minister said that he believed in evolution. He also said that he did not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus or in other miraculous events mentioned in the Bible.

"About this point in our discussion the telephone rang. It was the press. They wanted a comment from the minister on a Church Commission report which had not made a clear statement as to whether extramarital relations were wrong or not. The minister would not commit himself, for, he said, he would be wrong in some people's eyes whichever side he supported.

"It became clear to me which religion really believed God's Word and lived by it, and which one did not. Thus I have broken off all connections with the Congregational Church, and on May 11, 1968, I underwent water baptism to symbolize my dedication to serve Jehovah God."

How empty of spirituality are the churches! A Canadian woman also notes:

"I'd often wondered about life after death, and was not sure if there was one, although that was what my church taught. I was a member of St. Clare's Roman Catholic Church here in Toronto, Canada.

"When my father suddenly died, I wondered all the more, Where is my father? What is death like? Then in January 1967 a policeman appeared at the door to inform me that my six-year-old daughter had been killed by a truck at a crosswalk.

After the last rites were given, I inquired of the priest as to where my daughter was. He answered: 'She is in a limbo for children.' When I wanted more information as to what this was, he replied: 'She's happy, but she won't see God.'

"I asked why my child was killed. The priest, 'Father' Polito, told me: 'God wanted her.'

"I could only wonder how that could be. If the child had died peacefully in her sleep I might have believed him. But to be killed by a truck—that was too much to accept as something God had done.

"One day one of Jehovah's witnesses called. I asked him where my child was, if she was aware of anything. He turned right to the Bible for an answer. The first text he used was Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 to show me that the dead know nothing at all. I was amazed. It was so simple to understand, and so reasonable as well. Next he showed me John 5:28, 29 to give me the hope of a resurrection for my child.

"Here was the comfort that I had been seeking! Assurance was given by these scriptures that my child was simply asleep in death and that there was hope for life in the future. I must say that no such comfort came from the Catholic Church in my time of need. No texts from the Bible were read to aid me. How obvious it became which religion was the true one! Since then I have studied the Bible diligently, and I now share regularly comforting still others with the hope of life in God's new system."

ARTICLES IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Popular Customs—Do They Please God?
- Wealth of Color from a Bulb.
- Noise Pollution and Your Hearing.
- Journey into Sight.

Leaving the Churches to Take Up True Worship

IT IS happening all over the world. Each year tens of thousands of persons are leaving the Catholic and Protestant churches as well as other religious organizations and taking up true worship with Jehovah's Christian organization. They are recognizing the churches' unchristian practices and teachings, and so in large numbers are coming out of those organizations. Observe the following examples:

"After finishing grade school, I went to the Seventh Day Adventist Academy at Cedar Lake, Michigan. My wife also attended a Seventh Day Adventist school—Emmanuel Missionary College at Berrien Springs, Michigan. Our religious training as Adventists was complete.

"However, when we moved to California my wife asked one of Jehovah's witnesses to study with her, since we did not have such arrangements for Bible study in the church. I, too, consented to a study with the idea that I could show the Witness the necessity of sabbath keeping in order to please God.

"However, he showed me, in the Bible at Exodus 31:13 and Ezekiel 20:12, that the sabbath law was given only to the Israelites. Then he pointed out at Romans 7:4-6 and Colossians 2:14-17 that Christians are not under the Law of Moses and its sabbath-keeping regulations. In time it became clear that other Adventist doctrines were incorrect, including the Trinity and the teaching that ten-percent giving is obligatory for Christians. Needless to say, my wife and I, and also our five children, are now Jehovah's witnesses."

Last year over 82,000 persons were baptized as Jehovah's witnesses. Many of these had been searching for true religion. One such person writes:

"I wanted to be a minister, so I enrolled at the Northwest Baptist Theological College

in Vancouver, British Columbia. At the college I expected to learn how to present the Bible message to others effectively. But instead we were taught, among other things, Freudian psychology. Especially did I become frustrated at the apathy and lack of interest in the preaching work. I could see that the Baptists were not obeying Jesus' command at Matthew 28:19, 20 to go and make disciples.

"Finally, on Friday, November 4, 1966, I left the college. I was not sure where I was going, but I knew that I wanted to preach as Jesus said Christians should. As I walked I started to pray earnestly to God that he would provide me with a partner who would share with me in the preaching work.

"Eventually I met a young fellow and asked him if he 'knew the Lord Jesus Christ.' He did. So I presented to him my proposition of going preaching. He was one of Jehovah's witnesses, and after many hours of discussion I became convinced that Jehovah's witnesses must be the true religion for which I had been searching.

"The next day we went back to the college for the rest of my belongings, and that same afternoon I fulfilled my desire and began sharing in the preaching work with Jehovah's witnesses."

Among those who are leaving the churches to take up true worship are ministers themselves. One writes:

"After graduation from Duke Divinity School in 1942 I entered the full-time ministry. However, I soon realized that things were not as I had been promised. I noted the indifference of the church toward the lack of spirituality among its members. And I watched the political maneuvering for better churches and higher salaries at church conferences. All of this made me sick at heart and disgusted.

"Furthermore, certain church doctrines bothered me. For example, the teaching that death

affects the body only and is a cessation of neither life nor consciousness. The doctrine of eternal torment was equally confusing. I often wondered how a just and loving God could torment persons endlessly in a hell of fire. Of course, I preached these things, since I was a Methodist minister and these are Methodist teachings.

"I was convinced that Jehovah God had a people somewhere on earth who really loved and served Him. But where? I began to investigate other religions. However, I found similar conditions existing in them. Then one day in 1965 it happened—two of Jehovah's witnesses called on me.

"I was deeply impressed by the simplicity and sincerity of their witnessing. I recognized in them something for which I had been

searching—joy and peace. After several interesting discussions, they suggested a regular weekly study of the Bible with the local overseer of Jehovah's witnesses. I agreed to this and soon my eyes began to be opened as I beheld the wondrous prophecies of Jehovah's Word being fulfilled before my very eyes. I saw a group of people living strictly by the principles of the Holy Bible and displaying a genuine love for one another.

"Early in 1966 I completely severed all relations with the church. I submitted my ordination credentials as a Methodist minister. Now I am happy to be serving with over a million true Christian brothers and sisters in 200 lands preaching the good news of Jehovah's kingdom by his Son Jesus Christ."

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS

—What Will You Do?

IF YOU saw a building with a sign on it, "THIS COMPANY GOING OUT OF BUSINESS," would you seek employment there? No, not if you were interested in a lasting position. And if you worked for such a company, you wisely would look for employment elsewhere.

The signs are posted on the churches. The evidence is as apparent as if they had a literal inscription on them reading, "GOING OUT OF BUSINESS—END NEAR!" It is not that their abandonment by growing numbers of people is the great danger to the churches. No, but it is their rejection by God that makes their destruction certain.

This is not said in a spirit of ridicule, but out of love for all who still may be clinging to a religion that is displeasing to Almighty God. We are in a time of

judgment. We have reached the time of the end of this entire wicked system. "The world is passing away," the Bible assures us. (1 John 2:17) And God's judgment also is against the churches, which are an integral part of this system. But why?

Well, consider what the clergy have been doing and saying. Have you noted how they ridicule the Bible and proclaim God to be dead? Instruction about God and his purposes simply cannot be obtained in the churches. This fact is becoming ever more apparent.

A United Church of Canada minister reported: "I, for one, admit that I can't think of a church that I would bother crossing the street to enter if I were a layman." And just last month the *Ladies' Home Journal* carried the feature on its cover: 1,000 WOMEN REPORT: "YOU

CAN'T FIND GOD IN CHURCH ANYMORE!"

This does make a person think. Since the clergy are not teaching people the Bible, why should you continue to go to church? If you cannot find God in the churches, really of what value are they? Certainly they are of no value to Jehovah God, and that is why his condemnatory judgment is against them. They have failed to do God's will. Therefore, Jesus' words aptly apply to them: "Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matt. 7:21-23.

What Should You Do?

The churches could be compared to a sinking ship. For those aboard to save themselves, it is vital that they abandon ship immediately. "Get out of her, my people," God's Word says. Why is this urgent appeal given to flee false religion? "For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind." Yes, the execution of God's judgment against false religion is near. That is why urgent action is vital.—Rev. 18:4, 5.

But it is not simply enough to get off a sinking ship. In order to be saved one must get away, reaching a place of safety. Similarly, it is not enough merely to leave the churches by cutting off all relations with them. You must also reach the place of God's protection. It is God's Word the Bible that shows where this place is. Therefore, you need to search the Bible. You must take the initiative.

In these climactic "last days" God has made his truth readily available. (2 Tim. 3:1) God has his witnesses on earth who will be happy to assist you to learn the truth concerning his purposes and requirements. You will be surprised how much you can learn in just a few short months by means of a once-a-week Bible study in your own home. Well over one million

persons are now taking advantage of this free home Bible-study service of Jehovah's witnesses. Will you?

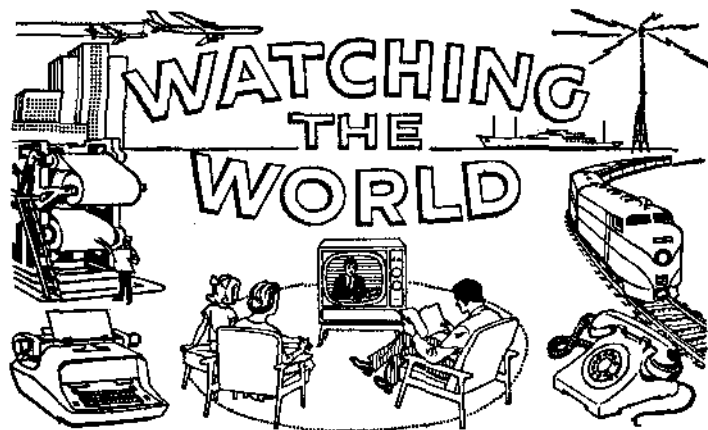
What God's Truth Will Do for You

By means of such a study of God's Word you will learn the answers to questions that you probably have wondered about all your life. You will come to understand why God has permitted wickedness. You will learn why man dies, where the dead are, and what hope there is for them.

Then, too, by means of a regular Bible study with Jehovah's witnesses you will discover what God requires of you. We noted earlier that God's Word says "the world is passing away." But the rest of that scripture goes on to say: "He that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:17) What exactly is the will of God? This you will learn in your Bible study.

Thus, by means of a study of God's Word you will obtain the knowledge that will qualify you to remain forever when this world passes away. The marvelous hope of living endlessly in God's new system will grow in your heart. You will come to trust in the reliability of such promises of God's Word as this: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Ps. 37:29.

So the decision is up to you. God says: "I have put life and death before you." Which will you choose? God urges that you choose life, and explains how to do so: "By loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him." (Deut. 30:19, 20) Do you *really* want life? Then choose it! Begin immediately a serious study of God's Word. "This means everlasting life," Jesus Christ said, "their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.



'Close or Burn Down Churches'

◆ Even religious ministers today recognize the worthlessness of the churches. Thus the *Toronto Daily Star* of February 21, 1969, reported: "Half of Toronto's churches should be closed or burned down, a United Church minister said last night. . . . His own church has seats for 1,400 but only 200 attend on Sundays, he said. 'If it burned, I'd stand across the street singing "Praise God from whom all blessing flow," with my hand out for the insurance money,' [Rupert] Evans added."

'Church Program for 1968'

◆ With each passing year church activities reflect less the Christianity of the Bible and more the bad influence of the world. The *Ladies' Home Journal* of last month observes: "Many participants in the *Journal* survey expressed resentment—even fear—of the clergy's new, militant activism. 'Our local Congregational church,' writes a mother from Claremont, Calif., 'is pushing an *agape* (love) program for hippies. Smoking, drinking and sex are encouraged among the 14- to 16-year-olds who congregate there. GOD IS DEAD posters are displayed in our Senior Married Group's meeting lounge. Our high school group is taken to San Fran-

cisco to interview drug addicts and homosexuals. This is the "uplifting" program of our church, 1968!"

Dilemma of Priests

◆ In predominately Catholic countries even the casual observer readily notes the poverty of the people in contrast with the wealth of the church. Thus, Don Enzo Mazzi, Roman Catholic priest in Florence, Italy, spoke of a dilemma. "To obey the hierarchy is to ignore the deepest needs of the poor," he said. "But to satisfy these needs is to encounter the opposition of the hierarchy. So we have to become either Pharisees or rebels. And we don't want to become either."

What Goes On in Church

◆ In January a theater group staged the production "Paradise Now" at suburban Shorewood Hills First Unitarian Church in Madison, Wisconsin. A capacity audience of 500 watched a cast, who were clad only in loincloths and halters. However, seven members from the audience upstaged the cast by stripping naked. Then there was a "flesh pile," as the cast and members of the audience piled atop one another in a heap amid chants for sexual revolution. Later a committee of the First Unitarian Society defended its decision to allow

the performance, and said it regretted that a few persons were disturbed.

Churches Rapidly Disintegrating

◆ "Alarming few young people are interested these days in entering the field of religious work. Few care about a future as a priest, a minister, a nun."—*The Reporter*, Belize, British Honduras, January 3, 1969.

"In another development, more ominous to those who want to see the institutions of the churches preserved, steadily growing numbers of churchmen, both clergy and laity, appeared to be abandoning adherence to formally organized religion entirely."—*Daily Times*, Victoria, British Columbia, January 4, 1969.

"In the past many German churches had to schedule three or four or even more services to accommodate the people attending services on Christmas Eve. In 1968 attendance in East Germany declined appreciably from that in former years. In one city parish with 7,000 members only about 1,000 people in all attended any of the services held on the three days of Christmas observance."—*The Christian Century*, March 5, 1969.

According to Episcopal priest Richard Gary: "There are widespread indications of confusion and disaffection among the membership and the leadership of the church. The magnitude of the crisis is so enormous and pervasive that it requires a total reordering of our life as a church."—*New York Times*, December 15, 1968.

'Last Years of the Church'

◆ Of what is the tremendous decline of religion a portent? David Poling observes in his new book *The Last Years of the Church*: "These are the last years of the church when you can live in New York City for four years and never have a visitor or caller or luncheon

guest or commuter mention or quote or praise or criticize a preacher. When pastors or congregations or religious societies are mentioned only on the church page—in paid advertisements—you know that something has set in."

Hymn Blasphemes God

◆ The spiritual famine within the churches is mirrored in a hymn included in a publication of the World Council of Churches entitled "New Hymns for a New Day" published in 1966. Here are its words: "It was on a Friday morning that they took me from the cell, and I saw they had a carpenter to crucify as well. You can blame it on to Pilate, you can blame it on the Jews. You can blame it on the devil. It's God I accuse. . . . Now Barrabas was a killer, and they let Barrabas go. But you are being crucified for nothing here below. But God is up in heaven and he

doesn't do a thing, with a million angels watching, and they never move a wing. [Jehovah is cursed. Then . . .] It's God they ought to crucify, instead of you and me." Is it any wonder that Almighty God should bring to their end churches that have so blasphemed Him?

Priest in Mayoral Race

◆ Catholic priest Leo L. Henkel narrowly lost in his bid to become mayor of Peru, Illinois, a city of about 11,000 situated 75 miles west of Chicago. He reportedly came within 25 votes of becoming the first priest to serve as mayor of a United States city. Henkel said he saw nothing wrong with a priest's entering the worldly field of politics. Yet Jesus Christ turned down a draft to become a political ruler, and told his followers: "You are no part of the world." —John 15:19; 6:15.

Clergymen on "Soul"

◆ Recently three Australian Presbyterian clergymen publicly expressed their disbelief in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. They were asked if there were other teachings with which they differed. Clergyman Ian Steer replied: "The problem is that to some extent there is a double standard. This is not confined to the Presbyterian Church. Ministers are taught one thing and sometimes teach another. I don't mean that they try to hoodwink people, but that it is a lot easier to allow people to believe the things that they have grown up believing, even if they have been partly erroneous, than it is to go to the lengths that need to be gone to to correct this belief, because often it means a lot of emotional disturbance for the person concerned." Is it any wonder that lovers of truth are leaving the churches?

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Something that touches your life

There used to be a saying quite commonly heard: "I never discuss religion or politics." Presumably this was an effort to avoid heated arguments. But lately this comment is being heard with less and less frequency, no doubt because of the controversial issues that have now become so much a part of both religion and politics, issues that are no longer just a matter of opinion but vital matters that affect your life. What is your view?

The fact that you have received this issue of *Awake!* is an indication you are willing to discuss so serious a question as the survival of religion. You should be. It affects your own future existence.

Maintain an active interest in what lies ahead for you in the light of Bible prophecy. Read both *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* regularly. The material they contain in each issue will strengthen you and prepare you for the critical times ahead. Each issue contains material that touches your own life. Send now. Both for one year, only 18/- (for Australia, \$2; for South Africa, R1.40).

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