

Home Page

Examining Your Beliefs

The Watchtower, May 1, 1934, p. 131

“The Watchtower is not the teacher of God’s people. The Watchtower merely brings to the attention of God’s people that which he has revealed, and it is the privilege of each and every one of God’s children to prove by the Word of God whether these things are from man or from the Lord.”

Riches, 1936 ed., p. 178-179

“If you find that a doctrine or teaching is a lie, you should quickly forsake it, regardless of who teaches it or how long you have believed that teaching to be true...If you find that you have been for some time in an organization called ‘the church’, and that such organization teaches that which is contrary to God’s Word of truth, then you will have to choose whether you will remain in accord with that so-called ‘church’ organization and its teachings or will forsake the same and rely upon the Word of God.”

The Watchtower, November 15, 1963, p. 688

“Can there be false religion? It is not a form of religious persecution for anyone to say and to show that another religion is false. It is not religious persecution for an informed person to expose publicly a certain religion as being false, thus allowing persons to see the difference between false religion and true religion.”

(continued)

The Watchtower, March 1, 1966, p. 132

“Therefore, how will you respond when pointed statements are made about false religious teachings and corrupt practices? Will you immediately condemn the person or organization making the expose?... Contrary to what some may think, it is not unkind and unloving to lay bare falsehood and corruption.”

The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life, 1968 ed., p. 13

“We need to examine, not only what we personally believe, but also what is taught by any religious organization with which we may be associated. Are its teachings in full harmony with God’s Word, or are they based on the traditions of men? If we are lovers of the truth, there is nothing to fear from such an examination.”

The Watchtower, April 15, 1971, p. 230

“Is it not obvious why this Book of books should be mankind’s primary textbook for study?”

Awake!, October 22, 1973, p. 6

“Reasonable persons agree that the only fair method is to examine the evidence on both sides, both for and against a disputed theory. That is how one arrives at the truth.”

The Watchtower, January 15, 1974, p. 35

“When persons are in great danger from a source that they do not suspect or are being misled by those they consider their friends, is it an unkindness to warn them? They may prefer not to believe the warning. They may even resent it. But does that free one from the moral responsibility to give that warning?”

(continued)

Is This Life All There Is?, 1974 ed., p. 46

“It is obvious that the true God, who is himself ‘the God of truth’ and who hates lies, will not look with favor on persons who cling to organizations that teach falsehood. (Psalm 31:5; Proverbs 6:16-19; Revelation 21:8) And, really, would you want to be even associated with a religion that had not been honest with you?”

The Watchtower, August 1, 1978, p. 12

“Over the years, representatives of different churches have published many books and brochures for the purpose of ‘exposing’ Jehovah’s Witnesses as heretics.”

(done)

The WATCHTOWER

AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

VOL. LV

MAY 1, 1934

No. 9

HIS COVENANTS

PART 3

"Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself."—Ps. 50: 5, 6.

JEHOVAH writes his law into the heart of those who delight to do his will. His beloved Son, always faithfully devoted to his Father, says: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation." (Ps. 40: 8-10) This Psalm expresses the heart condition of those who are in the new covenant and who are diligent in proving their faithfulness to God. It is entirely unreasonable and unscriptural to conclude that Jehovah would make a new covenant with the Jews and then bring other nations in and make them proselytes to the Jews, causing them to become Jews; and hence the conclusion should be entirely put aside that natural Israel has anything whatsoever to do with the new covenant. (Matthew 11: 24) The new covenant is made with Christ Jesus in behalf of those who agree to do the will of God, and those who are brought into that covenant, and who continue faithful, must have the law of God written in their hearts and must from the heart declare the righteousness of Jehovah; otherwise they could not be 'the people of God taken out for his name'.

* The preceding issue of *The Watchtower* gave consideration to the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the new covenant, and which consideration is now here continued: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31: 34) Clearly this prophecy reaches a climax after the Lord has come to the temple and gathered unto himself his faithful followers. This prophecy has no reference to teaching or delivering the truth to such as 'every man of the world', but applies entirely to those in the covenant and who continue faithful. According to another rendering of the text the apostle quotes

from this prophecy as follows: "And in nowise shall they teach every one his fellow-citizen and every one his brother, saying, Get to know the Lord! because all shall know me from the least unto the greatest of them." (Heb. 8: 11, *Roth.*) This scripture, as here rendered, definitely limits the application thereof to those in the covenant and who are fellow citizens and whose citizenship is in heaven. We have now reached the end of the world, which means not merely the end of a certain time, and which is often spoken of as 'the end of the age', but the end of the operation of Satan's organization by the sufferance of Jehovah, and hence the time when preparation is being made to completely destroy Satan's power and his organization. The time feature is not the important thing, but the wrecking of Satan's organization is the important thing, because that has to do with the vindication of Jehovah's name. At the present time the Lord has gathered his people into his organization. It is the time of the fulfilment of Psalm 50: 5. Jehovah has taken out of the nations a people for his name; hence the climax of the new covenant is reached, and now the teaching of God's people is no longer done by men, particularly by such men as "elective elders", but all in Zion are children of God by his organization and are now taught of God.—Isa. 54: 13; John 6: 45.

* The Watchtower is not the teacher of God's people. The Watchtower merely brings to the attention of God's people that which he has revealed, and it is the privilege of each and every one of God's children to prove by the Word of God whether these things are from man or are from the Lord. Christ Jesus at the temple is Jehovah's great High Priest in charge of the temple organization, and he is made the Teacher of the temple class; hence he teaches all the children of Zion. Jehovah is the great Teacher, and he and Christ Jesus are the teachers of God's people; hence the Lord says to his children: "Yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers."—Isa. 30: 20.

* All at the temple will realize that their spiritual food comes to them from their Teachers, Jehovah and Christ Jesus, and not from any man. No one of the

telling lies are the children of the Devil. For this reason Jesus said to the chief men or clergy of the Jews: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." He that is of God sees God's Word and obeys. Therefore those who repeat Satan's lies are children of the Devil.—John 8: 44, 47.

The words of Jesus make a clear distinction between truth and lies. Replying to a question propounded to Jesus, he said: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should [be a witness to] the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18: 37) "God . . . cannot lie." (Titus 1: 2; Hebrews 6: 18) He is the true and righteous One, and his Word is the truth. (John 17: 17) It follows, then, that all doctrines or teachings of men, which are contrary to the Word of God, are false teachings; and if such doctrines or teachings tend to do injury to others, then such doctrines or teachings are lies. You are now about to give consideration to doctrines or teachings about which you have heard much, and for your own welfare you must determine whether or not those doctrines or teachings are true or false. If you find that doctrines, when measured by the Word of God are contrary to the Word of God, then it is certain that such teachings are lies and that they proceed from the Devil, the originator or father of lies. If you find that a doctrine or teaching is a lie, you should quickly forsake it, regardless of who teaches it or how long you have believed that teaching to be true. Your own welfare and your duty to God demand that you abandon lies, no matter who teaches them, for the reason that the

end of the maker and supporter of lies is eternal death.—Revelation 21: 8, 27.

God hates a speaker of lies. (Proverbs 6: 16-19) "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish." (Proverbs 19: 9) The Devil lied to and deceived the perfect woman Eve. It is certain, then, that the Devil by and through his agents lies to and deceives many imperfect creatures. There is only one possible way to find safety, and that is to learn the truth of God's Word and follow that and keep away from the teachings of men which are contrary to the Word of God. If you find that you have been for some time in an organization called "the church", and that such organization teaches that which is contrary to God's Word of truth, then you will have to choose whether you will remain in accord with that so-called "church" organization and its teachings or will forsake the same and rely upon the Word of God. As you consider the following points the test will be upon you. Ask the God of all wisdom and comfort to let you see the truth.

DEATH

You have often heard some human teacher say: "There is no death; when a man is taken away in what is called death he is not in fact dead but passes on to live; his body dies, but his soul lives on forever." In brief, such is the teaching of practically all the religious organizations of "Christianity". Is that doctrine or teaching true, or is it a lie? The Scriptures emphatically answer that such teaching is Satan's lie. God said to man: "In the day that you sin, you shall surely die." (Genesis 2: 17) The liar

EXECUTION OF DIVINE JUDGMENT UPON

False Religion

EVERY-ONE has the right to practice the religion of his choice. This holds true at

present, unless a person's religion proves to be grossly immoral, licentious, shocking the public decency. Everyone should respect the right of everyone else to choose and live his own religion. We must observe religious toleration.

² Our granting everyone his religious right, our refusing to interfere with each one's religious practice, does not signify, however, that we approve of his religion or that we approve of all other religions besides our own. Our practicing religious toleration does not mean we believe that all religions are right and beneficial and that all of them lead to an eternal happy future in endless enjoyment of the god that a person worships. Neither does it mean that we recognize that, after all is said and done, still we all worship the one and the same god only under different names or by different ways of approach to him or by means of different religious ceremonies. As one Hindu author recently wrote: "Names of gods do not make religion any more than the names of men and women make up their personality. . . . Whether it be God, Jehovah, Bhagwan, Iswar, Allah, Hari, Siva or Rama, it is the same Being that in vague manner is recalled by every devotee when he utters the

1. What right does each person have, and what is the duty of others in this regard?
2. (a) What does religious toleration not mean?
(b) How does one Hindu author view the names of many gods, raising what questions in our minds?

"Come, I will show you the judgment upon the great harlot who sits on many waters."—Rev. 17:1.

name which he has been brought up to associate with the mystery of the universe and idea of worship."* But is that true? Do all the names of the different gods have

the same history? Do they all suggest to the worshipers one and the same personality?

³ Can there be false religion? It is not a form of religious persecution for anyone to say and to show that another religion is false. It is not religious persecution for an informed person to expose publicly a certain religion as being false, thus allowing persons to see the difference between false religion and true religion. But in order to make the exposure and show the wrong religions to be false, the true worshiper will have to use an authoritative means of judgment, a rule of measurement that cannot be proved faulty. To make a public exposure of false religion is certainly of more value than exposing a news report as being untrue; it is a public service instead of a religious persecution and it has to do with the eternal life and happiness of the public. Still it leaves the public free to choose.

⁴ Why should anyone practice a religion unless he is convinced that it is true and right? It is not egotistical for a worshiper

* Quoted from page 3 of the book *Hinduism: Doctrine and Way of Life*, by C. Rajagopalachari, published at the Hindustan Times Press, New Delhi, India. (First Impression)

3. (a) Why is it not wrong to expose a false religion?
(b) What must be the basis for such exposure?
4. What should one having the true religion be able to do?

side are full of dead men's bones and of every sort of uncleanness. In that way you also, outwardly indeed, appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. . . . Serpents, offspring of vipers, how are you to flee from the judgment?"

Would such language immediately cause you to label the speaker an intolerant bigot? Many people may consider such speech entirely improper and unchristian. *Yet these are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, spoken to the respected religious leaders of his day!* The only change in this direct quotation from the Bible is the substitution of the terms "theologians and clergymen" for "scribes and Pharisees." And this is most appropriate, for those men were the clergy of the first century among the Jews, even wearing distinctive garb to draw attention to their office, as many clergymen do today.—See John 8:44 and Matthew 23:1-36.

But why did Jesus speak in this way about those men? It was because they had misrepresented God and his teachings. Their false religious traditions and practices had misdirected people from the pathway of righteousness that leads to the kingdom of God. On an earlier occasion Jesus had said to certain religious leaders:

"You have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition. You hypocrites, Isaiah aptly prophesied about you, when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines.'" And so Jesus said to his disciples: "Let them be. Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."—Matt. 15:6-14.

So, then, when religious leaders and organizations of Christendom misrepresent

God's Word by teaching traditions of men, is it wrong to expose their false doctrines? When they claim to be following Christ and yet mix in worldly politics, is it a bad thing to publicize that their actions are unchristian and condemned by God? Should the truth be suppressed because it exposes falsehood and corruption? *Never!* Jesus never hesitated to speak the truth, even though he was killed at the instigation of the angered religious leaders for doing so.—John 17:14; Jas. 4:4.

Therefore, how will you respond when pointed statements are made about false religious teachings and corrupt practices? Will you immediately condemn the person or organization making the exposé? Do you feel it is all right to teach lies and misrepresent God's Word, but wrong to expose the error? Contrary to what some may think, it is not unkind and unloving to lay bare falsehood and corruption.

Remember the example of Jesus Christ. He was the most loving and kind person to walk the earth. He was tender and compassionate, even with sinful harlots and tax collectors. Lovingly he forgave them their transgressions and helped them on the way to life. Rather than advertise their sins, he covered them over. Yet, at the same time, in some of the strongest language recorded in the Bible, Jesus exposed the stubborn, haughty religious leaders. This was really a loving service, for the false teachings and practices of those religionists were leading their followers to the pit of destruction. The people needed to know the truth if they were to gain God's approval.—Matt. 23:15.

Therefore, it is right and proper to speak out strongly against falsehood and corruption. A person or organization that, in imitation of Jesus Christ, has the courage to do so deserves attention and respect.

through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." (Matthew 7:13, 14) How clearly those words answer our questions! They show that many people are not worshipping God in a way that pleases him. Only a few are on the road leading to life.

³ Probably you find yourself readily agreeing with the fact that much religion is not approved by God. No doubt there are many things done in the name of religion that you do not approve. For example, if you look around in the churches and observe persons who live immoral lives but who make a pretense at being righteous, you know that something is wrong. (2 Timothy 3:4, 5) And when you read in the newspaper that some clergymen are publicly approving of sex relations between unmarried persons and that they are saying that homosexuality is all right under certain conditions, you are well aware that this is not what God says. You may remember that God destroyed the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And why? Because they practiced such things! So you know that God is not going to approve of a religion that tells people it is all right to act like that.

—Jude 7.

⁴ However, you have no doubt heard people say: "It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you lead a clean moral life and deal kindly with your neighbors." But is that all there is to worshipping God in an acceptable way? These things are necessary, but God requires more. Doctrines are

3. Are there things done in the name of religion of which you do not approve?
4. (a) Besides our being moral and kind, what else must we consider about our religion, in view of Jesus' words at John 4:23? (b) Why do we need to examine the doctrines that we have been taught?

also involved. The Bible informs us that "the true worshippers will worship the Father with spirit and truth." (John 4:23) If our worship is to be acceptable to God, it must be firmly rooted in God's Word of truth. Jesus reproved those persons who claimed to serve God but who relied heavily on the traditions of men in preference to God's Word. He applied to them God's own words from Isaiah 29:13, saying: "It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines." (Matthew 15:9) Since we do not want our worship to be in vain, it is important for each one of us to examine his religion.

⁵ We need to examine, not only what we personally believe, but also what is taught by any religious organization with which we may be associated. Are its teachings in full harmony with God's Word, or are they based on the traditions of men? If we are lovers of the truth, there is nothing to fear from such an examination. It should be the sincere desire of every one of us to learn what God's will is for us, and then to do it.—John 8:32.

⁶ The mere fact that church members may have the Bible or that it is occasionally read to them from the pulpit does not of itself prove that all the things they are taught are in the Bible. It is good to have the Bible; each and every person should. But we must also know what it says and believe it. If a religion really accepts the Bible as God's Word, it is not going to use certain parts of it and reject other parts. "All Scripture is inspired of

5. Why should we examine, not only our personal beliefs, but also the teachings of any religious organization with which we may be associated?
6. (a) Does the fact that the Bible is occasionally used in a church prove that all the church doctrines are from the Bible? (b) Why must religion approved by God agree in all details with the Bible?

suffering, generosity, perfection in knowledge, changelessness.—Ex. 34:6, 7.

Furthermore, the Bible tells us much about God's Son and the important place that he occupies in God's purpose. (Col. 1:17-20; 2:3; 2 Cor. 1:20) More than any others, the Son of God, when on earth, was able to enlarge our acquaintanceship with Jehovah. For he was able to say: "He that has seen me has seen the Father also." (John 14:9) Yet, if Jesus' teachings and sayings were not written down and made part of the Bible, we would not have this accurate information today.

A PROPHETIC AND PRACTICAL GUIDE

Details as to the development of God's purpose are revealed in the Bible. All of the foretold blessings for obedient man were centered in a promised Savior whom Jehovah would raise up. He was described prophetically in the Garden of Eden by God as the "seed" of God's woman. (Gen. 3:15) In time God promised that this Seed would come through Abraham. (Gen. 22:18) He showed that the promised Savior would be an everlasting king and priest "according to the manner of Melchizedek!" (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:1-28) He gave the Law covenant to Israel with its priesthood and sacrifices, all of which were a "shadow of the good things to come."—Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17.

To David promise was made that the kingship would everlastingly remain in his family. (2 Sam. 7:11-16) And the heir of that promise, as well as the one to whom all the other prophecies pointed as the Deliverer, is shown to be Jesus Christ. Yes, throughout its pages the Bible focuses on the theme of the inspired writings—the kingdom of God in the hands of Jesus Christ as the means that Jehovah has provided for carrying out his purpose.

As a book of prophecy, the Bible is outstanding. Thus it gives significance to events of history and shows why they turned out as they did. (Luke 19:41-44) It shows the future of all present worldly governments—that they will all be crushed by God's heavenly kingdom, and that kingdom will stand forever. (Dan. 2:44) It explains events of our days, showing that we live in the foretold "time of the end" of this old system and that soon God will clear out all the wicked.

Without the Bible we would not know the real purpose of a dedicated person's life: "Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man." (Eccl. 12:13) It makes clear that man is not a product of blind chance, but a creation of God, who has a loving purpose for mankind. And it explains what God's will is for us now and how we can find real satisfaction in life.—Rev. 4:11; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4; Ps. 16:11.

Human history demonstrates that man, apart from God, cannot successfully direct his steps. (Jer. 10:23) Only the Bible provides the guidance that he needs. It gives guidance regarding morals, showing what God condemns and what he approves. (Gal. 5:19-23) It proves to be a most practical help amid a world that has thrown off moral restraint. It helps us to get the viewpoint of God and to be pleasing to him.

Is it not obvious why this Book of books should be mankind's primary textbook for study? Christians, above all, are keenly concerned about investigating this Book that is authored by the One to whom God's Son said: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) The more you become familiar with the sixty-six books of the Bible the more you will be convinced that it is indeed the Creator's Guide for all mankind.

time Professor Mayr, addressing himself to serious students, says: 'The basic theory is in many instances hardly more than a postulate.'

"Such an enormous discrepancy between two leaders . . . is bad for the standing of

the profession. The public may rightly feel that it has been paltered with."

A dictionary defines "palter" as to "deal crookedly." And this is exactly what more and more persons have come to feel about the explanations given for evolution.

EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE

IF YOU were on trial in a court of law, would it be fair if only your opponent was allowed to present evidence? No, you would surely want the court to hear your side of the matter.

For many years, only evolution's side has been heard in colleges, high schools, even grade schools, and in nearly all scientific literature published throughout most of the world. But now there is a rising demand to hear the other side.

The Reasonable Choice

Reasonable persons agree that the only fair method is to examine the evidence on both sides, both for and against a disputed theory. That is how one arrives at the truth.

Many scientists now admit that this is what should be done with the evolution theory. This was even noted in the foreword of a special edition of Darwin's famous book *Origin of Species*. The magazine *The American Biology Teacher* offered this comment about it:

"W. H. Thompson, who was selected to write the foreword to a centennial edition of Darwin's *Origin of Species* had this to say: 'As we know, there is a great divergence of opinion among biologists, not

only about the causes of evolution but even about the actual process.

" 'This divergence exists because the evidence is unsatisfactory and does not permit any certain conclusion. It is therefore right and proper to draw the attention of the non-scientific public to the disagreements about evolution.' "

The biology publication goes on to note another observation by Thompson, a highly respected scientist. He said:

"But some recent remarks of evolutionists show that they think this unreasonable. This situation, where [scientific] men rally to the defense of a doctrine they are unable to define scientifically, much less demonstrate with scientific rigor, attempting to maintain its credit with the public by the suppression of criticism and the elimination of difficulties, is abnormal and undesirable in science."

The continued attempt to suppress criticism has become unacceptable to more persons. This can be seen by the requests being made in recent times by many scientists, educators and parents that opposing views be given equal treatment in schools. Their feeling is typified by a comment offered in the Washington, D.C., *Evening Star and Daily News*, in an article by W. Willoughby:

"The Bible and a large segment of competent scientists indicate to me that it all

AWAKE! — OCTOBER 22, 1973

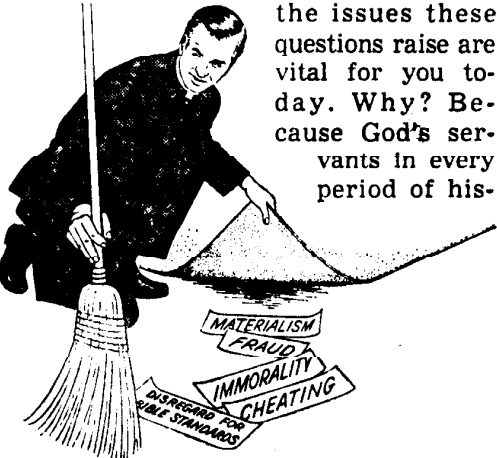
Can You Be True to God,
YET HIDE THE FACTS?

WHAT results when a lie is let go unchallenged? Does not silence help the lie to pass as truth, to have freer sway to influence many, perhaps to their serious harm?

What happens when misconduct and immorality are allowed to go unexposed and uncondemned? Is this not like covering over an infection without any effort to cure it and keep it from spreading?

When persons are in great danger from a source that they do not suspect or are being misled by those they consider their friends, is it an unkindness to warn them? They may prefer not to believe the warning. They may even resent it. But does that free one from the moral responsibility to give that warning?

If you are among those seeking to be faithful to God, the issues these questions raise are vital for you today. Why? Because God's servants in every period of his-



WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE THE TRUTH COVERED OVER . . . ?

THE WATCHTOWER — JANUARY 15, 1974

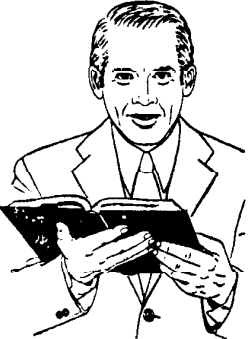
tory have had to face up to the challenge these issues present. They have had to expose falsehood and wrongdoing and warn people of dangers and deception—not just in a general way, but in a specific way, in the interest of pure worship. It would have been far easier to keep silent or say only what people wanted to hear. But faithfulness to God and love of neighbor moved them to speak. They realized that “better is a revealed reproof than a concealed love.”—Prov. 27:5.

THE CONTINUING PATTERN

Consider the situation in ancient Israel and the example that God's prophets then set. Wrongdoing became rampant in that nation. Dishonesty, violence, immorality and hypocrisy disgraced the name of the God whom the Israelites claimed to worship. Did the people welcome divine correction? To the contrary, the Bible shows that they said this to God's prophets:

“‘You must not see,’ and to the ones having [inspired] visions, ‘You must not envision for us any straightforward things. Speak to us smooth things; envision deceptive things. Turn aside from the way; deviate from the path.’”—Isa. 30:9-11.

The majority of the religious leaders sought popularity by doing just that, condoning and “white-washing” the wrongdoing and violation of God's righteous standards and ways. But God's instructions to his true prophets are exemplified by what he said to the prophet Ezekiel:



“Now as regards you, O son of man, a watchman is what I have made you to

. . . OR DO YOU WANT TO KNOW THE FACTS?

of the ground. Nothing about death even hints at there being an immortal soul that lives on.

EFFECT OF THE DOCTRINE ABOUT

THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY

What a person believes about the soul is of no little consequence.

The teaching of the immortality of the human soul has been used to override the conscience of people in times of war. Religious leaders have made it appear that taking life is not so bad, as those slain do not really die after all. And those who die in battle against the enemy are promised bliss. Typical are remarks such as those reported on in the *New York Times* of September 11, 1950: "Sorrowing parents whose sons have been drafted or recalled for combat duty were told yesterday in St. Patrick's Cathedral that death in battle was part of God's plan for populating 'the kingdom of Heaven.'" The idea here expressed differs little from the ancient Babylonian teaching that the war dead gained special favors. Misrepresentations of what the Bible says about the soul have thus contributed toward the placing of a cheapened value on human life and have made people feel dependent on the great religious systems that have falsely claimed to care for their souls.

Knowing these things, what will you do? It is obvious that the true God, who is himself "the God of truth" and who hates lies, will not look with favor on persons who cling to organizations that teach falsehood. (Psalm 31:5; Proverbs 6:16-19; Revelation 21:8) And, really, would you want to be even associated with a religion that had not been honest with you?

CHAPTER 6

The Spirit That Returns to God

THERE should be no question in the mind of any sincere investigator that what the Bible speaks of as "soul" is not some immortal part of man that continues conscious existence after death. Yet when shown the overwhelming evidence about the true nature of the soul, some persons present other arguments in an effort to support their belief that *something* within man has continued existence after death.

One Biblical text that is often used is Ecclesiastes 12:7, which reads: "The dust returns to the earth just as it happened to be and the spirit itself returns to the true God who gave it." In his *Commentary*, Wesleyan Methodist theologian Adam Clarke writes concerning this verse: "Here the wise man makes a most evident distinction between the body and the soul: they are not the same; they are not both matter. The body, which is matter, returns to dust, its original; but the spirit, which is *immaterial*, returns to God." Similarly, *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* says: "The soul goes back to God." Thus both commentaries imply that the soul and the spirit are the same.

Interestingly, though, other Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars present an entirely different view. In the 'Glossary of Biblical Theology Terms' appearing in the *Catholic New American Bible* (published by P. J. Kennedy & Sons, New

prisons in the country use Witnesses for responsible tasks.

As the Kingdom-preaching activity increased in Sweden, more and more Witnesses were put in prison. Finally, the Correctional Administration informed the government that Jehovah's Witnesses "are not affected by being punished." According to the Administration, this circumstance, "together with the fact that their breaking of the law is explained by a strongly convinced conscience and that they are in other respects orderly citizens, motivates that a system be tried that makes it possible for them to dispense with prison sentences." After detailed consideration, the government asked Parliament for permission, following individual investigation, to free Jehovah's Witnesses from any sort of conscription. This was approved by Parliament on May 25, 1966, and since that year Swedish Witnesses have enjoyed freedom from all kinds of conscription.

EFFORTS TO HINDER THE WORK

Generally, Swedes are indifferent toward religion and especially the established churches within the country. Most religious organizations are declining, and one after another now is being passed in numbers by Jehovah's Witnesses. This increase has caused much surprise. Again and again, representatives of the Lutheran State Church and the so-called free churches in Sweden have stood up and protested: 'No. It has gone too far now. We must do something to stop them.' For example, early in 1976, 30 priests and laymen from the Uppsala diocese of the Swedish State Church met to "declare war on Jehovah's Witnesses," as a newspaper put it. Among other things, they agreed to prepare and publicly distribute an informative brochure about the Witnesses.

Over the years, representatives of different churches have published many books

and brochures for the purpose of "exposing" Jehovah's Witnesses as heretics. These publications have been examined by a researcher, who summarizes his impressions as follows: "As a researcher in religion, I have over the years more and more found evidence to support my views that those who are quickest in calling another a 'heretic' or 'false prophet' are themselves most deserving of such a remark. I feel that it is time to blacklist this type of books which, with a Christian cover, gives a false picture of, for example, Jehovah's Witnesses." (*Religion och Kultur*, No. 4, 1976) Naturally, we are not afraid of this kind of publicity, because we know that it serves to awaken the curiosity of many honest persons.

The same thing happened with a series of three radio programs broadcast in October 1976. Although we ourselves are not allowed to produce religious radio programs in this country, a Radio Sweden official took the initiative for three programs about us. At first, it appeared that he was not attached to any religious organization and would therefore produce impartial programs. Later, it was discovered that he was a priest in the Liberal Catholic Church, which has 400 members in Sweden. The programs were to be based on recorded parts of our congregational meetings and on interviews with different Witnesses. But, when the recordings were made, it became obvious that the programs would be an attack on us. The brothers interviewed were showered with provocative questions. However, they did not let themselves be provoked. Instead, they answered calmly and factually. After the recordings were made, the tapes were cut and edited by the official so that the programs would give the worst possible impression of us and of our Scriptural views.

What was the result? Personnel at the Watch Tower Society's branch office received many letters and telephone calls