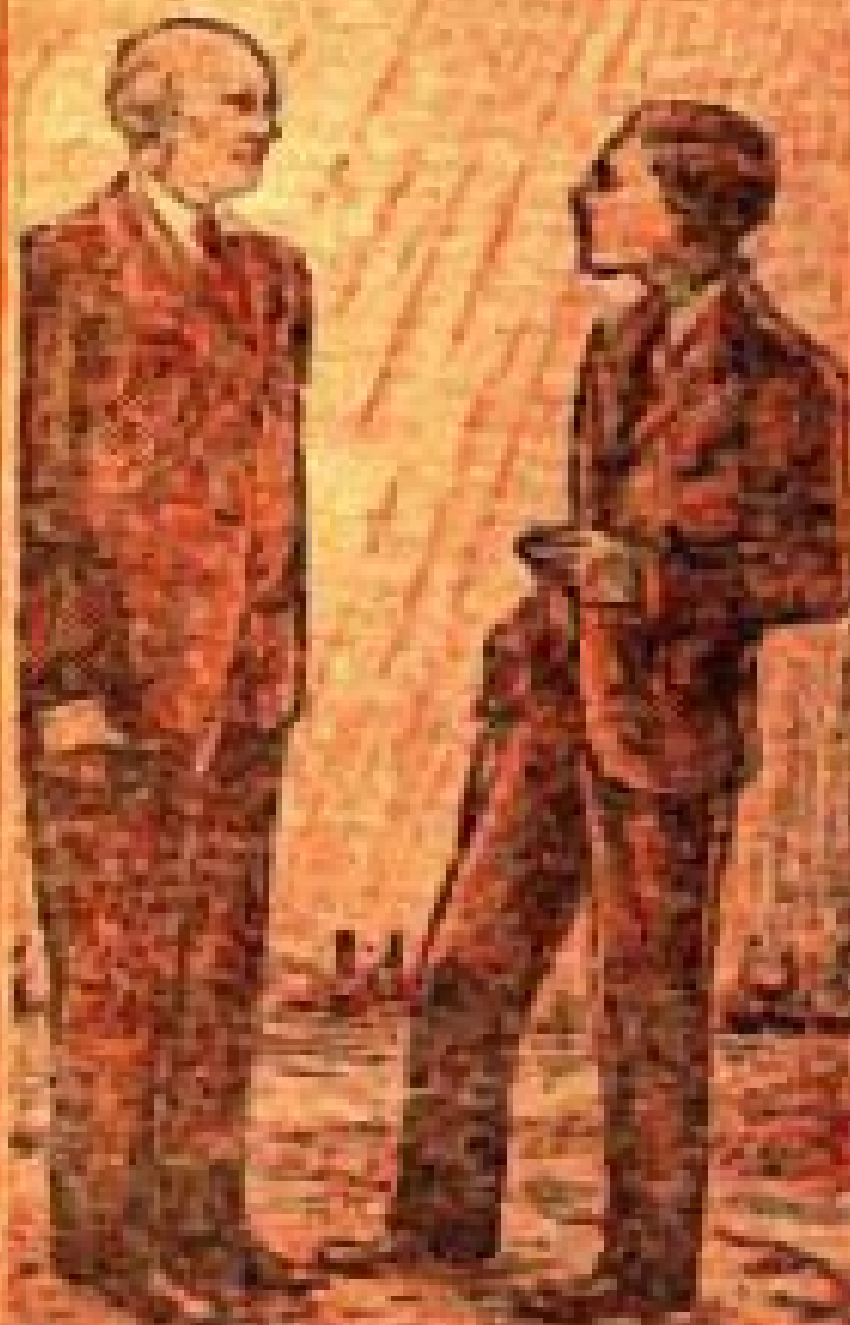


PROTECTION

from those who seek
to hurt or destroy me



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Protection

TO DWELL IN PEACE and safety, free from injury to or destruction of life and property, is the desire of every honest person. All persons realize that these days are filled with great danger. This is a time of peril in every part of the earth. Men are exceedingly selfish and act in utter disregard of the rights and liberties of others. In every nation devastating war is expected, and each nation is preparing for war. Men's hearts are failing them for fear of what they see approaching, and the people in general are in distress and perplexity concerning the future for themselves and their children. Such a condition is not imaginary, but is real. No matter how good and honest a man is, he knows that he is surrounded by enemies, who seek his injury or destruction. Many persons silently breathe a prayer: "Keep me . . . from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies who compass me about." —Psalm 17:8,9.

We are well along in the twentieth century, when the people of the world should have grown better; but they continue to grow worse. What is the cause of the increased wickedness? Is there a possible

remedy? Can I find protection from those who seek to injure or to destroy me?

You may find full protection from all your foes, but it is of first importance to learn who are your enemies and the means employed by those enemies to do you hurt. If you see a man that is trying to do you injury you may avoid him or defend yourself in some manner; but if that enemy comes to you in secret and employs fraud and deceit to take advantage of you, and to take you unawares and thereby do you great harm, you have no means of protecting yourself. It is absolutely necessary for you to have the aid of a power greater than you are. Know, then, your chief enemies and how they operate and whence your protection may come.

What follows herein will enable you to ascertain the correct answer to each of the foregoing questions and to find the only place of safety. Your worst enemy is Satan the Devil. He is a subtle and wily foe. Because human eyes cannot see him, Satan easily deceives and defrauds mankind to their great injury. He employs wicked men and wicked organizations and false speech to work injury to men. He is known as the prince of darkness, and he at all times attempts to keep men in ignorance of the real truth. Only by ascertaining the real truth can man avoid these enemies and find protection.

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How about the churches and the religion they practice? To what extent does religion serve as a protection to us against our enemies? To appreciate the answer to these latter questions the indisputable facts must be carefully considered, and that without prejudice. Often that which appears on the surface to be helpful and friendly is in fact an enemy and injurious. Satan and his worldly agents who are ministers of religion pose as ministers of the gospel and claim to be friends, while at the same time they are deadly enemies. Concerning this it is written: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) Instead of being a protection, religion is the chief means employed by Satan to lead men into destruction.

RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

To aid those persons of good will toward God. to have a better understanding and appreciation of Jehovah God and his purpose toward his creatures, attention is here called specifically to religion and Christianity. It is generally understood amongst the people that religion and Christianity are one and the same, but such is a very erroneous conclusion.

Recognized worldly lexicographers define these terms as follows:

RELIGION: The "conformity in faith and life to the precepts inculcated in the Bible, respecting the conduct of life and duty toward God and man; the Christian faith and practice". — Webster.

CHRISTIANITY: "The religion of Christians; the system of doctrine and precepts taught by [Jesus] Christ; practical conformity of one's inward and outward life in the spirit of the Christian religion." — Webster.

Those definitions are entirely wrong and in full conflict with the Word of God. Without a doubt in Webster's day the terms *religion* and *Christianity* were used interchangeably, and it may be said that he was excusable for so defining those terms. Religion and Christianity, as defined in the Bible, are diametrically opposed one to the other. There is not in existence, nor ever was there in existence, such a thing as "the Christian religion". The Bible, which is the Word of God, is the supreme authority in this matter, and our definitions should conform strictly to the Bible. These two terms, as shown by the Bible, are correctly defined as follows:

RELIGION is any form of worship practiced or indulged in by creatures in recognition of some higher power, and which formalism and practice finds support or "authority" only in tradition. Such

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authority consists of the teachings of men, handed down by tradition from one generation to another. The transmission of any knowledge, doctrine, custom, practice or form of worship from fathers to descendants is *tradition*. Religion, as shown by the Scriptures, finds no support in the Word of God.

CHRISTIANITY: According to the Bible *Christianity* means full obedience to the commandments of God, even as Christ Jesus obeyed and taught those commandments to others. A person is a Christian only when he has fully devoted himself to God by consecration, and then is diligent to obey God's commandments, as set forth in the Bible.

In the earth today there are divers and numerous religions practiced by human creatures. There is just one Christianity, and that is not a religion, nor does it have any similarity to religion.

ORIGIN

It seems quite proper here to call attention to the beginning of religion following the Flood, and that information should be enlightening, and particularly pleasing to all who wish to know the right way and follow in the way of righteousness. Every sincere and honest person desires the truth, and the truth concerning Jehovah and his purpose and his relationship to his creatures is found only in the Bible.

Concerning it the Lord Jesus, when on earth, said: "Thy word is truth." — John 17:17.

The order of Jehovah God's creation, as set forth in the Bible, is this: First, the Logos, who thereafter and now is known as Jesus and Christ Jesus. (John 1:1, 2, Emphatic Diaglott, interlinear reading) "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." (Colossians 1:15) The Logos was at all times thereafter the active agent of Jehovah in the creation of everything that was created. (Colossians 1:16) God created heavenly creatures known as seraphim, cherubim and angels. One mighty angel of great light and power created by the Lord God was first named Lucifer.

In his due time God created the earth, and he created the creature man to live on the earth. (Isaiah 45:12,18) It is recorded in the prophecy of Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job, 38:4,7) It reasonably follows that when the great Creator informed his creatures of heaven concerning his purpose to create the earth and to create and place on the earth an intelligent creature to the praise of the Most High, then the heavenly sons sang songs of praise to the Almighty God and all the angels of heaven shouted in praise of his holy name. Then in due time God created man and made him in his own

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image and likeness. He placed man in a beautiful part of the earth, which was then finished, called Eden, and his mighty angel creature Lucifer was installed as man's overlord. Lucifer had marked the praise that all creatures gave Jehovah God, and he coveted that praise for himself. (Jeremiah 51:13) He had an insatiable desire for that which belonged exclusively to Jehovah God. He set about to gratify that unholy desire, and concerning the same it is written: "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13,14) Jehovah, being fully aware of Lucifer's desire to exalt himself, said this: "How art thou fallen from heaven, o Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." — Isaiah 14:12,15.

Adam and the woman Eve were in Eden, having been placed there by the great Creator, with specific instructions as to their course of action, and had received at the mouth of Jehovah God his law, which informed them that in the day that they committed a willfully wrongful act, that would mean their death. (Genesis 2:17) Lucifer, knowing this fact, set about to

accomplish his wrongful purpose by turning Eve and Adam against the great Creator. Lucifer deceived Eve and caused her to violate the law of Almighty God, and Adam, by reason of his selfish desire to have Eve, joined her in the transgression, and thus both were turned away from God. (1 Timothy 2:14) For their violation of God's law they were sentenced to death. (Genesis 2:17; 3:15-19) Before being put to death their children were born, and the result of the death sentence upon Adam and Eve was that all the human race inherited sin and death. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." — Romans 5:12.

Lucifer also was sentenced to death, but the execution of his death sentence was deferred for the reasons as hereinafter set forth. (Ezekiel 28:19) Jehovah God now changed the name of Lucifer, calling him by four separate and distinct names, which names portrayed the wickedness of that creature. From then till now he is known as *Satan*, which means adversary or the one who opposes Jehovah God; *Devil*, meaning slanderer; *Serpent*, meaning deceiver; and *Dragon*, meaning devourer. (Revelation 12: 9; 20: 2) That creature, as his names indicate, is the very embodiment of wickedness and is known in the Scriptures, as well as by experience of

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other creatures, as the chief wicked one of the universe.

The Devil, having succeeded in turning Adam and Eve away from God, proceeded upon the theory that he could turn all creatures away from Jehovah God; therefore he challenged God to put on earth any man who would maintain his integrity toward God when put to the test. The Devil declared that he could induce all men to curse God to His face. (Job 2:5) That challenge raised the question of supremacy, that is to say, Is God, whose name is Jehovah and who is all-powerful, is he supreme and is his word true or can Satan the Devil thwart the purposes of Jehovah? To be sure, God could have executed the Devil immediately; but had he done so, that question of supremacy would have been left unsettled in the mind of other creatures. It pleased Jehovah God to accept the challenge of the wicked one and give the Devil full opportunity to make proof of his boastful challenge. Jehovah knew full well that in due time Satan would fail and that all creatures would have an opportunity to determine each one for himself which is the right way and who is right, and that therefore each creature would have to do with his own eternal destiny. Therefore Jehovah God said to the Devil: *"For this cause have I allowed thee to remain, in order to show thee my power; and in order that they [my*

witnesses] may proclaim my name throughout all the earth." — Exodus 9:16, Leeser translation.

This is a plain statement by Jehovah that he was giving Satan a suspended sentence and that He would permit Satan to exercise all the power at his command in his effort to thwart Jehovah God and His purpose, and that then Jehovah would show Satan the supremacy of the almighty God by the exercise of His own power, and that He would have His own great name proclaimed throughout the earth. It is essentially important to keep in mind at all times the issue raised by Satan's challenge and God's purpose as expressed in connection therewith. By doing so, the reason for the existence of so many religions in the earth will be understood. Also the reason will be very apparent that religion and following in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, called "Christianity", are exactly opposed one to the other.

RELIGION ORGANIZED

The first man and woman, being expelled from Eden, exercised their God-given functions to bring children into the earth. The flood destroyed all people, save "Noah, the eighth person", and his family. (2 Peter 2: 5) After the flood human creatures multiplied and increased and within a period of time there were in the earth many men, and among them was a man whose name was Nimrod. (Genesis 10:8)

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Satan now began his operations to organize mankind in open defiance of the Almighty God and he employed religion for that purpose. Nimrod was selected as the visible or earthly leader, and he stood before the other people as one pretending to be even greater than Jehovah God himself. It is written in the Scriptures concerning Nimrod: "He began to be a mighty one in the earth: he was a mighty hunter before the Lord; wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, ... in the land of Shinar." (Genesis 10:8-10) He became a slayer of animals in violation of God's law (Genesis 9:4-6), and his prowess and audacity and boastfulness made him an object of worship by others of mankind. Nimrod was an agent of the Devil, and Nimrod became the chief one whom the Devil used after the flood to organize religion in the earth. By inducing men to worship and praise a creature the Devil knew he would effectually turn away the people from the Creator. The Devil then induced the people to believe that they should build a tower by which they could enter heaven and, as it is written, "they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4) That was the beginning of the practice of religion following the deluge. That tower and city of Babel was built in

defiance of Jehovah God and for the purpose of carrying out the wicked challenge of Satan. The names "Babel", or "Bab-il", and "Babylon" mean "The gate of God"; therefore in derision. Babylon was built as a defiance to God, and the people were led to believe that through Babylon was the way to their salvation. Nimrod was the head of Babylon, and his name means "Rebellious; or he that rules as a rebel". Babylon symbolically stands for Satan's organization. Babylon was therefore a religious organization, directing the people to worship creatures in defiance of the Creator, and was Satan's adopted method of carrying out his wicked challenge. Religion was the binding tie that held the people together. The people ignored God, the Creator, and gave their allegiance and praise to a creature. (Romans 1:20-25) The proof is conclusive, therefore, that Satan the Devil originated religion in defiance of Jehovah God for the purpose of deceiving the people and to accomplish his threat to turn them away from God.

Thereafter other nations were organized, the peoples of which likewise adopted a devil religion and indulged in the forms and practices of worship based upon the teachings of men, which had been induced by Satan and handed down from one generation to another; and thus the religions that followed thereafter were based upon or found authority only in tradition. All religious worship was

and ever has been contrary to the commandments of Almighty God.

From the day of Abel till now, at all times there have been a few men on the earth who have remained loyal and faithful to Jehovah. Among such men was one known as Abram, afterwards called Abraham, and whom God used to make prophetic pictures foreshadowing His purposes. Jehovah made promise to Abraham, and bound it with His oath, that in due time he would have on earth a righteous rule and that such righteous government would rest upon the shoulder of God's beloved One, whom Abraham's son Isaac foreshadowed, and that such government would bring boundless blessings to all peoples of earth who would obey God and maintain their integrity toward him. (Genesis 22:17,18) The issue was clearly made now, and two pathways lay before the creatures of earth: the one marked out by Satan, which leads into unrighteousness and into destruction; the other marked out by Jehovah as recorded in his Word, which leads to endless life and happiness.

Jehovah God caused the descendants of Abraham to sojourn for a term of years in the land of Egypt that those people there might perform certain acts and make prophetic pictures foretelling how Jehovah would develop and bring to pass his purpose to bless the obedient ones of mankind. There in Egypt God's chosen people were severely persecuted and ill-

treated by those who practiced the devil religion. Jehovah God heard their cries, made a covenant with them, and caused Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, and then when they reached Mount Sinai Jehovah God confirmed his covenant and inaugurated it toward his chosen people. At that time Jehovah said to them: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." — Exodus 20:1-5.

The chief purpose of that covenant was to safeguard the Israelites from religion, which the Devil was using to turn men away from God. That such was the chief purpose is clearly shown by the testimony of the apostle Paul, who was once a practitioner of religion but who became a Christian and wrote under inspiration authoritatively given him by the Almighty God through Christ Jesus. Concerning that covenant which God made with the Israelites he wrote: "What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the

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promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." — Galatians 3:19, 24, Revised Version.

The apostle there explains that the seed of promise is Christ Jesus and that the purpose of the law covenant was to hold the Israelites away from the Devil's religious influence until the coming of Christ Jesus, the seed of promise. The history of the people of Israel, as set forth in the Bible, from Exodus to Malachi's prophecy, discloses the fact that that people was constantly influenced by the Devil to embrace and practice the religion which was used and practiced by the nations round about them. One of the striking instances recorded in the Bible, which proves this point, is this: "Baal-peor" was a religion practiced by the heathen nation of Moab. Of course, it was a devil religion and the Devil induced the Israelites to embrace it; concerning which it is written: "And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor." (Numbers 25: 3-5) "Your eyes have seen what

the Lord did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day." — Deuteronomy 4:3,4; Psalm 106:28; Hosea 9:10.

It has ever been the practice of Satan to employ fraud and deception to mislead the people and cause them to practice religion in defiance of God's law. Many centuries passed between the time of the giving of the law covenant and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Within that time almost all the Israelites fell away from God, disobeying their covenant, and, under the deceptive influence of the Devil, turned to the practice of religion. The leaders in Israel claimed to represent God, and yet they had substituted the teachings of men for God's commandments. They then named their formal practices "*the Jews' religion*". (Galatians 1:13,14) The scribes and Pharisees, who were the clergy and the leaders of that time, and who dominated and controlled the people, induced the people to believe that it was their bounden duty to obey whatsoever the Pharisees taught them. They exercised an influence over the people then similar to that exercised in these latter days by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. The Roman Catholic Hierarchy is composed of a few men, who rule and control vast numbers whom they call the "Catholic population",

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which population is commanded to yield to the influence and teachings of the Hierarchy, that is, the clergymen of modern times. These follow exactly in the same course as that pursued by the scribes and Pharisees. The scribes and Pharisees taught certain forms and practices, which had been transmitted to them by men who lived in the earlier days of the Jews. Those Jewish clergy exalted themselves and sought the praise and service of the people for themselves, posing as great and mighty ones representing Jehovah God on earth. They laid great burdens upon the people, while for themselves they sought ease, comfort and honor amongst men. To them Jesus Christ, when he was on earth, said: "For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth." (Matthew 23:4-9) Compare this language of Jesus with the present-day practices of clergymen who practice what they call "Christian religion" but

which in fact is a religious formalism, wrongfully named "Christian".

CHRISTIANITY

Jesus, when on earth, taught only the commandments of Jehovah God. He was God's duly appointed, anointed and commissioned Son to carry out Jehovah's purposes. *Christ* means the anointed One, and therefore Christ Jesus was the beginner of Christianity. Christ Jesus, although born a Jew, was not a religionist. On the contrary, he pointed out that religion is of the Devil. The Jewish clergy hated Jesus and repeatedly sought to entrap him, to persecute him, and to kill him. On one occasion when they came to Jesus for the purpose of entrapping him, Jesus clearly defined the difference between religion and Christianity. He pointed out distinctly that religion originates with God's adversary, the Devil, and that the religion then being practiced by the Pharisees was contrary to the Word of God. The Bible record is: "Then there come to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? . . . And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me

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with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." — Matthew 15:1-3, 6-9, American Revised Version.

This testimony of Christ Jesus shows beyond any question of doubt that religion is an open defiance of Jehovah God's law, that it originated with the Devil, and that a religious practice is an abomination in the sight of God; and that those who practice the same make void the Word of God.

Those same Jewish clergymen, that is, the scribes and Pharisees who came to Jesus, claimed to be the representatives of God on earth. They were duty-bound to know the terms of the everlasting covenant which God had given to his people, and yet in defiance of that covenant they repeatedly sought to kill Jesus, the beloved Son of God, because he told them the truth. Claiming to represent God, they were in fact the chief representatives of the Devil on earth at that time, and their chief method of representing him was in the religion they taught and the influence thereby exercised over the people. At this point it is important to read the Scriptural record spoken by Jesus and found at John 8: 37-44: "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you. I speak the things which I have seen with my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father. They

answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham: Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof." (A.R.V.) Here Jesus pointed out definitely that those clergymen represented the Devil. It was that same class of men, the practitioners' of religion, that caused the wrongful execution of Jesus on the charge of sedition and treason. (Luke 23:2-5) The religionists follow the same course at the present time with reference to those who truly and in fact serve God and Christ Jesus.

As further proof that religion is of the Devil, the case of Saul of Tarsus, who afterwards was called Paul, is here cited. Saul was a Pharisee himself and

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practiced the Jewish religion. The weight of authority is that he was a member of the high court at Jerusalem, presided over by the high priest, and which corresponds to the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of the present time, to which a few men belong and which Hierarchy is presided over by the pope. After the crucifixion of Jesus Saul continued a vigorous persecution of the true followers of Christ Jesus. It is manifest from the record that Saul was woefully deceived by the Devil and yet was acting sincerely in persecuting Christians, and that -because of Paul's sincerity God revealed the truth to him. The case of Paul is proof that a clergyman who honestly and sincerely practices religion, if he is honest and true, may become a Christian.

Saul was bitter against Christians and in his heat vigorously sought them out that he might persecute them. As the Biblical record shows, he called upon the high priest and obtained letters of authority that he might go to Damascus and search out the Christians and persecute them there. Likewise today priests obtain authority from the pope to carry on their persecution against Jehovah's witnesses in the earth. When Paul obtained this authority and started to Damascus for the purpose of carrying out his mission of persecution against Christians the Lord revealed to him the truth; and concerning this matter the Bible

record reads: "But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. But Ananias answered,

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Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the holy spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened." — Acts 9:1-19, A.R.V.

Up to this time Saul of Tarsus had been a religionist. Now he immediately faced about and became a Christian, that is, a true follower of Christ Jesus, and the Lord caused his name to be changed to Paul. He became the faithful and true apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and wrote under inspiration from the Lord. Thereafter he spurned religion because it is from the wicked one, and he taught only the commandments of God, even as Christ Jesus had said and done. Mark now the testimony of Paul himself upon this point: "For am I now seeking

the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ. For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it: and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus." — Galatians 1:10-17, A.R.V. This, together with the testimony of Jesus, is proof conclusive that religion is the means employed by the Devil to deceive men and to alienate them from Jehovah God, and that the Devil follows this course for the express purpose of making good his wicked challenge to Jehovah. These scriptures also show that the Christian must avoid

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religion, because it is a deadly enemy, and faithfully obey the commandments of Jehovah God, man's true Friend, as written in the Scriptures.

What was true in Paul's day is likewise true in this day. When Paul was a religionist he sought the pleasures of men, that he might have their praise and approval. While doing so he persecuted Christians, because it was popular amongst the religionists. Today the clergy who practice religion seek the pleasure and approval of men, and this they do by persecuting those true Christian men and women who tell the truth to the people as contained in the Bible. Religion is a means of oppression. Christianity is the teaching of Jehovah God's Word, setting forth his great and righteous purpose. Those who seek the pleasure of men and the approval and plaudits of men are an abomination in God's sight. Upon this point Jesus plainly stated: "For that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16:15, A.R.V.) Following the lead of his Master, Christ Jesus, the apostle Paul said that servants of God who please God cannot be men-pleasers. — Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 3: 22.

DENOMINATIONS ORGANIZED

Satan then induced men to form organizations called "church denominations", to the great injury of

men. Even while the apostles yet lived on the earth the Devil attempted to plant religious practices amongst Christians. Said the apostle: "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour." (1 John 2:18, A.R.V.) "And every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already." — 1 John4:3, A.R.V.

Within a short time after the apostles died there arose in the congregations of the Christian people certain ambitious men, who desired to become leaders and to have the approval and to receive the praise of men, even as the Devil desired when he defied Jehovah. Not many years thereafter passed until there was recognized in these congregations the distinction between "clergy" and the common people called "laity". Those bodies or congregations of people called "Christians" soon adopted and practiced formalism based upon the *teachings of men*. They became religionists. Into the organizations there were introduced and practiced many forms and ceremonies that found no support whatsoever in the Bible. Those organizations then began to call themselves "the church", and these congregations were formed into an organization improperly called "the church of God". Their doctrines and formalism thereafter practiced

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they named and called "the Christian religion", which name was wrongfully applied to the organization. The clear distinction which Jesus Christ and his faithful apostle had made between religion and Christianity, as set forth in the scriptures above cited, was soon ignored and forgotten.

The Roman Catholic organization was the first to introduce and practice man-made doctrines and formalism, which they practice to this day. Then came into existence the "Protestant" organizations, so called, and which organizations after a time also adopted formalism and practiced that formalism, which they call "worship"; and they too called themselves and their formal practice the "Christian religion". Hundreds of sects or denominations came into existence, and still exist. All of them practice what they call the "Christian religion", and all of them differ in some respects as to doctrines and forms of practice.

Among the early doctrines introduced into the Roman Catholic organization was that of "purgatory" and the offering of prayers in behalf of the dead. That doctrine and practice has been a source of great revenue to the Hierarchy, because it has induced many sincere and noble people to give up their hard-earned money to the Hierarchy on the pretext that men of the Hierarchy can utter prayers in behalf of the dead and shorten the duration of their punishment in "purgatory". That doctrine is wholly unsupported by

the Scriptures, but is founded only on the traditions of men, and therefore makes void the Word of God. Concerning the dead God's Word says: "For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9: 5,10) "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." — Psalm 115:17.

It will be noted that every one of the so-called "Christian religious organizations", which indulge in the practice and teaching of what they called the "Christian religion", rely upon the teachings of the early fathers or men who have preceded them in the organization. Such self-wise men have advanced their own philosophy concerning the salvation of mankind. Many persons have been deceived by such teachings handed down to them by tradition and have thus believed themselves to be Christians, even though they were in no wise following Christ. Paul, the true and faithful follower of Christ Jesus, and therefore a Christian, warned Christians against such philosophy and deceit, when he wrote to them: "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the

world, and not after Christ." — Colossians 2:8, A.R.V.

At all times since the beginning of religion at Babylon the Devil has been diligent in putting forth doctrines and practices which have deceived sincere persons. By means of fraud and deceit the Devil has contaminated what at the beginning was a company of sincere persons desiring to serve God, and his contamination has been accomplished by substituting for the commandments of God the philosophy and traditions of men called "religion". Thereby the Devil's representatives in the congregations have made the Word of God void by their traditions, and to the great injury of men. Such action on the Devil's part is exactly in accord with his wicked challenge to turn men away from God. His method of fraud and deceit thus employed is in full accord with his name "Serpent", which means deceiver. It is to be expected that the Devil would do all things within his power to keep the people in the darkness concerning the truth of God's Word, For this very purpose he has caused the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and other organizations to withhold the Bible from the people and to substitute therefor prayer books and other teachings of men. Among these congregations have been and are many sincere persons who have been blinded to the truth by reason of Satan's influence. There has been a little of the Word of the Lord mixed

with the traditions of men, and this has afforded a more subtle and complete means of deceiving the people. The result has been and is, down at this period of time, exactly what God's prophet foretold long centuries ago, that 'darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people'. (Isaiah 60: 2) Without a question of doubt the darkness amongst the peoples of earth today, in the lands called "Christendom", is greater than it has ever been at any time previous. Millions of persons, who are called the "Catholic population", blindly follow the leadings of sinful men. Amongst those millions are some sincere persons who sigh and cry because of the wickedness done in that Roman organization and who are feeling after God and His truth.

GREATER LIGHT

The second coming of Christ Jesus in power and glory is the teaching of the Scriptures emphasized by the faithful apostles. Christ Jesus instructed his disciples that he would come again, at which time Satan's world should end. Jehovah's promise is that greater light would come upon the sincere people of the world at the second coming of Christ, and that this would be at the end of the world; that at that time the true followers of Christ Jesus would be greatly enlightened and, if continuing in obedience unto God's commandments, would be led in the right way. (Proverbs 4:18; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 10:11;

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Ephesians 5: 8,14) True to the promise of Jehovah, and strictly according to the prophecies and the chronology of the Bible, the second coming of Christ Jesus and the end of Satan's world was due in 1914 and the evidence was there brought forward showing his second coming. Jesus had declared to his disciples that the first evidence of the end of Satan's world and his coming would be a world war between the nations. Exactly on time, in 1914, the proof thereof began to be made manifest, and the physical facts show a fulfillment of the prophecy; and the chronology as well as the prophecies discloses the presence of the Lord. Immediately following the World War other prophecies uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ were fulfilled, and the proof was and is overwhelming and conclusive that it was in the year 1914 that Jehovah's prophetic words to Christ Jesus were fulfilled, to wit: "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." (Psalm 110: 2) Clearly this means that the reign or rule of Christ Jesus was due and there began, even while the enemy Satan was still actively carrying forward his nefarious work in his attempt to make good his challenge. For many centuries Satan had exercised his power without interruption, but with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in 1914 his rule began to be interrupted, and from that time onward Satan began his preparation for the final battle,

which conflict is called "Armageddon". Since 1914 have been particularly "perilous times" (2 Timothy 3:1), and the woes upon the peoples of the nations of earth have continued to increase. These woes are not, as the clergy would make the people believe, the result of infidelity of the people to the so-called "church" organizations. On the contrary, the Devil himself has brought these woes upon the people to cause them, as he had sworn he could, 'to curse God to his face.' On this point it is written: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." —Revelation 12:12.

JEHOVAH'S TEMPLE

The capital organization of Jehovah God is designated by the word "Zion". Christ Jesus is the head of that organization. Together with the apostles, and the other faithful followers of Christ Jesus, these constitute the royal house of Jehovah, which is designated by his Word under the term "the temple of the living God". True Christians must be and are wholly devoted to God; and concerning the same it is written: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye

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separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." — 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.

According to the prophecy and chronology of the Bible Christ Jesus was due in A.D. 1918 to gather together his faithful ones and separate them specifically from the world, and this is spoken of in the Scriptures as the coming of the Lord Jesus to the temple of Jehovah. (Malachi 3:1-3) The physical facts of prophecy prove beyond any doubt that Christ Jesus came to the temple in 1918 and there began the gathering unto himself of his faithful followers. Then, true to God's promise, greater light began to shine upon God's Word and to shine into the mind of each faithful Christian, and since that time Jehovah has unfolded and revealed to these faithful ones the meaning of his prophecies; and his glorious light, shining into the face of Christ Jesus at the temple, has been and is reflected to the members of the temple company, the faithful Christians, and these have been made to understand and to appreciate the Scriptures as never before. This enlightenment God gives not merely for the benefit of the faithful followers of Christ Jesus, but also that they might use the same to make the truth known to others who are seeking the way of righteousness. What they have learned they must tell to others

according to God's commandment.

FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESSES

One of the titles which Jehovah has given to Christ Jesus is that of "the faithful and true witness". (Revelation 1:5; 3:14; 19:11) This title God gives to Jesus because Jesus is always true to Jehovah, always speaking and acting in obedience to Jehovah's commandment. When on earth Jesus said: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." (John 7:16, A.R.V.) "For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak." (John 12:49, 50, A.R.V.) Jesus again showed the clear distinction between the teachings of men and that of God. Men seek honor and glory for themselves. The true witness of Jehovah honors the Most High. "He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." — John 7:18, A.R.V.

In carrying out his expressed purpose to have his name testified in all the earth Jehovah sent Jesus to earth to be his witness, and concerning this Jesus said: "To this end was I born, and for this cause

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came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18:37) Thus is Christ Jesus clearly identified in the Scriptures as the beginner of Christianity, that is to say, the Head and Chief One of those who speak the truth of God's Word in obedience to Jehovah's commandments. Every person who is a true Christian, therefore, must likewise speak the truth of God's Word and refuse to be guided by tradition of men. Those who become Christians must follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ; as it is written: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." (1 Peter 2:21) These followers in the footsteps of Jesus Christ are subjected to persecution and suffer at the hands of religionists, even as Christ Jesus suffered. After the coming of the Lord Jesus to the temple faithful Christians then began to see and appreciate these truths, and they saw their obligation to be governed thereby find that they must be witnesses to the name and kingdom of Jehovah God amidst persecution inflicted upon them by religionists.

"JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES"

Persons who are not informed speak of the company of Jehovah's witnesses in such terms as these, "A religious sect or cult"; "another religious

body." In this they are entirely wrong. The company of Christian people in the earth known and designated as "Jehovah's witnesses" are those who are entirely devoted to Jehovah God and who faithfully endeavor to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ in obedience to God's commandments. They are not religionists. They are Christians. They are not a sect or cult. They must obey Jehovah's commandments and not the ordinances or teachings or the traditions of men. They become Jehovah's witnesses in obedience to His commandments. — Isaiah 61:1,2.

Again attention is called to the truth that Jehovah said to the Devil, in answer to his wicked challenge, that in due time Jehovah would show forth his power and that he would have his name declared throughout all the earth. (Exodus 9:16) To this end Jehovah began with Christ Jesus to bring forth his witnesses, who must declare his name throughout all the earth. For some time after the persecution of Jesus and his crucifixion even his apostles did not understand God's purpose in this regard; but after they had received the holy spirit, and while in a conference at Jerusalem, the Lord enlightened them and they understood God's purpose, and one of their number stood forth as a witness of the Lord and declared that "God . . . did visit the [nations], to take out of them a people for his name". (Acts 15:14) With the apostles God began the bringing forth of

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other witnesses to follow in the footsteps of his faithful and true witness, Christ Jesus. Thus over a period of time Jehovah has been taking out of the world a people for a purpose, which people must become his witnesses and show forth the praises of Jehovah. (1 Peter 2: 9,10) These are and must be wholly devoted to Jehovah God, and these thus taken out and devoted to Jehovah God are the ones whom the Lord Jesus gathers to the temple at his coming. It is to those thus taken out that Jehovah addresses himself, and says: "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour. I have declared, and I have saved, and I have showed; and there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and I am God." — Isaiah 43:10-12, A.R.V.

The name "Jehovah's witnesses" is the name which Jehovah himself gives to those who are the faithful and true followers of Christ Jesus. (Isaiah 62:2) It is not the name of a sect or cult or denomination, but the name of true Christians, by which they are identified. The same commission and ordination that Jehovah gave to Christ Jesus, the Head and Lord of Zion, is given to those who are his faithful and true followers;

and which ordination and commission to preach the gospel is in the following words: "The spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." — Isaiah 61:1, 2, A.R.V.

Such anointed ones, therefore, God himself ordains as his ministers to declare his Word. The ordination of men or man-made organizations amounts to nothing. The only truly ordained ministers of God on earth are the ones who are ordained of God and become his witnesses. To them Jehovah further says: "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." (Isaiah 62: 2, A.R.V.) Such faithful Christians must obey the commandments of Jehovah God; otherwise they cease to be Jehovah's witnesses. Christ Jesus is their Head and Commander and Leader, and he is Jehovah's great and mighty Prophet, of whom Moses was a type. To these followers of Christ Jesus, who are Jehovah's witnesses, the Lord says: "And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." — Acts 3:23, A.R.V.

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Jehovah's witnesses have no alternative; they must obey God's commandments as uttered by Christ Jesus, and a failure to do so means their destruction. When the law of men, made by the legislative bodies of the world, is in conflict with God's law, then a Christian must obey the law of God, even though by so doing he is brought into jeopardy by the laws of the land. The apostles of Jesus Christ announced this rule when they said before the high court of Jerusalem: "We ought to obey God rather than men." — Acts 5:29.

With the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and particularly with his coming to the temple, the time is marked and due when the name of Jehovah God must be declared throughout all the earth. This work of declaring the name of God must be done by the people whom he has taken out for his name, that is to say, Jehovah's witnesses, Christians, the true followers of Christ Jesus. These Christians have been brought unto the knowledge of the fact that Jehovah is the great and almighty God, that he is above all, and that his name he will now vindicate; that Christ Jesus is his chief agent and vindicator, and that the time is at hand for him to for ever settle the issue raised by the Devil's challenge, and that He will settle it by the vindication of his name. To this end Jehovah God has sent Christ Jesus, placing him upon his throne of authority, where he presides in power and

great glory. Jehovah's kingdom has come, and Christ, the Head of that kingdom, is now acting in carrying forward the witness work in, the earth, and this he will complete, and at the completion thereof will manifest Jehovah's power in the full vindication of Jehovah's name; that his kingdom will work deliverance to the obedient ones of God and will establish everlasting peace in earth upon those of good will toward God. This is good news, or "gospel", and all who love righteousness delight to hear the same. Therefore the Lord God gives to all of the faithful followers of Christ Jesus this commandment: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." — Matthew 24:14.

Jehovah's witnesses must obey this commandment, and in obedience thereto they go forth preaching or declaring "this gospel of the kingdom" to the people as a witness to the name of Jehovah. That witness work soon must be completed; and, when it is completed, what shall follow? The answer is given by Jesus in these words: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matthew 24: 21) That great tribulation will be upon the entire world, and this marks the end and complete destruction of Satan's organization and his power. Such is the battle of the

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great day of God Almighty and is otherwise called "Armageddon". That marks the time when Jehovah will destroy all the enemies and make the earth a safe and desirable place to live.

When Jesus was on the earth he did not erect buildings, which he called "churches". He did not install therein images of anything. To have done so would have been in violation of God's commandments. He did not wear lace pants or long flowing robes and have the boys walk behind him and carry it. He did not carry a vessel with fire in it and upon this fire cause incense to be sprinkled that others might see him performing some ceremony. He denounced the clergy for doing the things that call attention to themselves. Jesus was 'meek and lowly of heart' (Matthew 11:29); by that meaning he was taught of Jehovah God and spoke only Jehovah's words and did not attempt to exalt himself and receive the honors of men. Jesus went about from place to place teaching the people and preaching the truth as Jehovah had commanded him to do. Jesus sent forth his disciples from house to house to instruct the people and preach to them the gospel of the kingdom of God, which was in obedience to Jehovah's commandments. His disciples in obedience to such commandments did that very thing. (Matthew 10: 7-14) They went from house to house preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Concerning this the apostle

Paul wrote: "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." — Acts 20: 20.

Following the example of Christ Jesus and his apostles Jehovah's witnesses today faithfully go about from house to house preaching to the people this gospel of the kingdom by speaking to the people and calling their attention to the kingdom message in printed form. They do this not for the purpose of receiving the plaudits of men, but they do it because they are commanded to do so by Jehovah God and Christ Jesus and they love to do as commanded. This detailed statement is here made for the purpose of clearly identifying Jehovah's witnesses, to the end that those who desire to know the truth may see that Jehovah's witnesses are not a sect or cult introducing another form of religion, but, on the contrary, they are the true and faithful followers of Christ Jesus, obeying the Lord's commandments to make known the name of Jehovah and his kingdom. These faithful men and women have heretofore been designated as members of the "Catholic population", or of "Protestant" organizations, or outside of all of them. Becoming the true followers of Christ Jesus, they are no longer so identified, but are identified under the "new name", which God has given them, namely, Jehovah's witnesses — Isaiah 62:2.

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From the viewpoint of the lawmakers of the land, religious corporations, charitable corporations, and those incorporated for the purpose of preaching the gospel, are all alike and all come in the same category. The law of the land makes no distinction between religion and Christianity. The law of God makes the clear distinction.

When a person consecrates himself or herself to God and is baptized into Christ as commanded by the Scriptures (Romans 6: 3,4), then he is in a covenant to do the will of God, and it is the express will of God that he must be a witness for Jehovah; consequently he is properly designated "Jehovah's witness". Those now on the earth who are witnesses for Jehovah may at some time have been connected with religious organizations, some of them designated as "the Catholic population", others as "Protestants", others as "Jews", and still others who have been designated as "heathen". Each one of these, consecrating and devoting himself wholly to Jehovah and his service, and accepted and received by the Lord into his temple, becomes a part of God's organization and is properly designated a Jehovah's witness. Thus it is seen that men do not bestow this name upon others, but it is the name which the Lord himself names. It is not for men to determine who is and who is not a Jehovah's witness. By the "fruits" that

they bear before others they enable others to identify them. — Matthew 7:16.

FIGHTING AGAINST GOD

From the very beginning of the human race Satan the Devil has fought against God in his effort to sustain his side of the challenge and to oppose Jehovah God. Jehovah has permitted the Devil to proceed unrestrained until His due time to end the controversy, and that the Almighty will do at the "battle of that great day of God Almighty", in which Satan and all his supporters will be completely eliminated from the world. (Revelation 16:14,16) Because the day of that great and final battle is nigh, the Devil is desperately trying to drive all nations into destruction. The destruction of all mankind would be a victory for the Devil and would sustain his challenge; but Jehovah has provided for the preservation and salvation of all those of mankind that remain true and faithful to him, and thus the victory for Jehovah will be complete. Protection from enemies comes only from Jehovah.

A brief reference is made here to Satan's fight against those who have faithfully served God from the day of Eden till now. The Lord caused the apostle Paul to make a record thereof, which record is set forth in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. That record began with Abel, and names

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faithful men who resisted the Devil and served Jehovah faithfully thereafter until the coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth. Those faithful men of old were not interested in the politics of Satan's world, but they were seeking a better government, that is, God's kingdom, having full faith that in his due time Jehovah God would set up a righteous government according to his promise. (Hebrews 11:14-16) Those faithful prophets of old were witnesses for Jehovah; and because they stood firmly for Jehovah, maintaining their integrity toward him, they were objects of malicious hatred expressed by Satan through his worldly religious agents. Those faithful men were firm and steadfast, looking with complete confidence to the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom of righteousness. Further describing them and their faithfulness in enduring persecution heaped upon them, the apostle wrote: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they

were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." — Hebrews 11:33-38.

Consider now who were the men and the means employed by the Devil to persecute and kill the prophets of Jehovah God. Satan used the religious men, who hypocritically posed before the people as good and law-abiding citizens. The persecutors are almost always hypocritical, assuming a high standard for themselves and at the same time resorting to the most fiendish, and devilish things. When the leaders in the nation of Israel fell away to the Devil's religion, they became the vicious persecutors of men who remained true and faithful to Jehovah God. When Jesus was on the earth, as the Scriptures describe, the Pharisees and scribes were the clergy who took the lead in the Jews' religion. Jesus told them that they were agents of the Devil. (John 8:13,42-44) It was the religious class that had persecuted to death the faithful prophets of old and that thereafter continued to persecute faithful men. Note the words of Jesus addressed to those religionists: "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of

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vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." — Matthew 23: 31-35.

When reading these scriptures concerning the persecution of the prophets, have in mind the record of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and the skirts of the men of that organization that are stained with human blood unrighteously shed. For more than 1500 years that religious organization has persecuted the faithful witnesses who serve Jehovah, and they continue to do so.

It was the clergy of the Jews' religion, the men who presided at the synagogues and pretended to be the servants of Jehovah, that carried on a vigorous and malicious persecution of the Lord Jesus himself, and they did so in obedience to the Devil. Jesus told those religious persecutors to their face that they were acting at the behest of the Devil. (John 8:44) Jesus then spoke a prophetic parable to those religionists and applied it to the Jewish clergymen. He told them that Jehovah God had sent his servants to proclaim

his name in the earth and that the religionists had persecuted them and killed them. He told them then that the Almighty had sent his Son (meaning himself) and that the religionists sought his lifeblood. Jesus showed those leaders of the Jews that they had been charged with the obligation of teaching Jewish people the commandments of Jehovah; that not only had they failed to do so but they had persecuted every faithful man who had come to them. Then Jesus added: "But, last of all, he [Jehovah God] sent unto them his son [Jesus, the beloved One], saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." (Matthew 21:37-39) The religionists fulfilled that prophetic parable in persecuting Jesus unto an ignominious death, and when they had succeeded, they cried out: 'Let his blood be upon us.' (Matthew 27: 25) Only a fiendish agent of the Devil could thus act.

Before his death Jesus spoke to his disciples concerning the religionists in the world, which words apply to all his true followers from that day to this: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but

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I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." — John 15:18-21.

Almost immediately following the crucifixion of Jesus upon the tree the religious clergy began a vicious persecution of the faithful followers of Christ Jesus. Stephen was the first one to meet a violent death by stones hurled at him by the clergy who practiced religion; and mark this, before his death Stephen was arrested, charged with speaking seditious words, and witnesses against him were hired by the religionists to swear lies against Stephen in order to obtain an apparently legal conviction. He was given a mock trial, similar to that which is today given to Jehovah's witnesses in Germany, and in Hoboken, New Jersey, where cruel religious dictators rule. Convicted upon perjured testimony, Stephen was foully murdered by religionists. (Acts 6:8-7:58) Saul, the religionist who afterwards became Paul the Christian, participated in that crime, because he was blinded by the influence of the Devil.

The apostles of Jesus Christ and faithful witnesses of Jehovah were time and again arrested and brought

into the courts charged with perverting the people by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The high court of Jerusalem, conducted by religionists, commanded the apostles to cease their preaching, and to that command the apostles replied: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. . . . We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 4:19; 5: 29) The apostles not only suffered much persecution at the hands of religionists, but almost all of them were put to a violent death by the religionists. All that wicked work was done at the behest of the Devil in his fight against God; and thus the religionists continue to fight against God. At least one member of the high court at Jerusalem, before whom the apostles were brought, saw that the persecution of those faithful men was fighting against God, and he warned his fellow judges of that court to that effect. "And [he] said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man, rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you,

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Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." — Acts 5:35-39.

Later the Devil, by means of subtlety and fraud exercised by and through ambitious men, gained control of the congregations of professed followers of Christ Jesus. The Roman Catholic Hierarchy was then brought into action, and from that day to this the Hierarchy is in control and dictates to the multitudes of people who have supported and still support the Catholic organization. In order to compel honest persons to become Catholics and to support the Hierarchy the cruel and wicked Inquisition was organized and operated for years by the Catholic clergy, who at the same time posed before the people as the representatives of God, just as the Jewish clergy had done in their day. That devilish Inquisition, carried on by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, subjected men and women to all manner of cruel torture, many being put to death by burning at the stake. Not only were the people forbidden to have the Bible, but if they were found in possession of the Bible or any books explaining the Bible, these were seized and burned and the ones possessing them subjected to cruel and unusual punishment: The pages of worldly history are smeared with the blood of men

and women who refused to obey the commandments of the religious priests and suffered death because of maintaining their integrity toward God. That bloody record of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy stands out now, loudly proclaiming the wickedness of devilish religions, the enemy of mankind.

Jehovah God foreknew that such would be their record, and he wrote in his prophecy these words, which apply to the Devil's agents of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, to wit: "In thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these." (Jeremiah 2:34) The priests of the Hierarchy are the only men who wear skirts, and so Jehovah God specifically identifies that religious crowd as the murderers of the innocents.

The Roman Catholic Hierarchy, in the early days of that religious organization, brought forward the doctrine of "purgatory", which finds no support whatsoever in the Bible, but which is truly a product of the Devil taught by men and handed down by tradition, and the very object and purpose of the same is to turn people away from God and his Word. That doctrine, in substance, says that when a man dies he is in fact still alive in a place the clergy call "purgatory". They then instruct the people that the priests of the Hierarchy on earth can utter prayers in behalf of the dead and relieve them of suffering. With this false

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doctrine they go to the bereaved friends of the dead and induce them to believe that by giving up their hard-earned money to the priests they can do good unto their dead friends; and by this means millions of good, sincere persons have been deceived, caused to give their money to the priests in great sums, for which the people have received absolutely nothing. That of itself would be bad enough, but, above all, those credulous people have been made to believe that a just and loving God would permit men to suffer in the 'fires of purgatory' and at the same time permit selfish men on earth to make money out of that suffering. Thus the Devil further defames the name of Almighty God and causes honest and credulous men to curse Him to his face. This doctrine originated with the Devil and is taught for the purpose of mocking God and deceiving the people. This is further proof that religion is the product of Satan, and is to the great injury of man.

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The evidence is conclusive that Satan is the adversary of Jehovah God and the worst enemy of man; that Satan has always used religion to deceive men and to turn them away from Jehovah God and Christ Jesus, and that those who teach and follow religion are enemies of all who desire righteousness. All worldly rulers practice some kind of religion, and, whether they know it or not,

they are against God and his kingdom. The religious clergymen form a part of the ruling factors of the world and are friends of the world, and the Scriptures declare that such are the enemies of God. (James 4:4) Jehovah God commands that all must now be warned of his purpose to destroy Satan and all the wicked organizations, and this he will do at Armageddon. All who are against God and his kingdom under Christ are wicked; and says Jehovah concerning all persons, including the good and the bad: "The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy." — Psalm 145: 20.

All earthly rulers are imperfect men, and from them you can receive no protection whatsoever. God, through his Word, warns you: "Put not your trust in princes [rulers], nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." (Psalm 146: 3) Those who have had the opportunity to serve God and Christ by obeying the commandments of the Lord, but who have preferred to practice religion, are certain to come to woe within a very short time. To all such Jehovah says: "Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge? . . . Let them rise up and help you, let them be your protection. . . . If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine adversaries, and will recompense them that hate me." (Deuteronomy 32:37-41, R.V.) Thus Jehovah

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declares that the ministers of religion can render no help or protection.

This is the time of peril, because we are now in the "last days"; as it is written: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, . . . traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." — 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Where, then, may I find protection? Only by putting yourself wholly on the side of God and Christ Jesus. To you who are sincere and of good will toward God he now says: "Before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, . . . Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, . . . seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." — Zephaniah 2: 2, 3.

Your enemies can and may destroy your good name and your property and even kill you, but God has the power to raise up again to life, and his promise is that he will give such resurrection to all who love and obey him. Whosoever Jehovah destroys will never live again. Therefore Jesus says: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." — Matthew 10:28.

Those who trust in and serve God and Christ Jesus will be protected and will be granted life everlasting. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3) For your own welfare immediately forsake all religion. Lay hold upon and hold fast to Christ and follow in his steps and therefore follow Christianity, which means to obey the commandments of Jehovah God as Christ Jesus always does. There is no other means of protection and salvation: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." — Acts 4:12.

