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What's Wrong with Jehovah's Witnesses?

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by

Louis T. Talbot

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What's Wrong With Jehovah's Witnesses?

(Enlarged Edition)

By

LOUIS T. TALBOT, D.D.,

Chancellor of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles



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PREFACE

For more than a score of years Dr. Louis T. Talbot has been studying false systems of religion—Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism, Unity, Anglo-Israelism, Rosicrucianism, and the like, and exposing their unscriptural teachings by the use of stereoptican slides. By means of the slides he has been able to place on the screen the exact quotations from the textbooks of these cults, side by side with the Scriptures that prove them false. Thus the controversy between God's Word and these systems is clearly seen, and many have testified to the help received from these lectures, and their deliverance from these heresies.

At the urgent request of many of God's children, these lectures are being put into print, with the prayer that they may turn many from "damnable heresies" unto the Word of God which is "able to make . . . wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:15)

S. H. Sutherland, D.D.

President of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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INTRODUCTION

My texts for this message on one of the false systems of religion are found in Matthew 24:5, 11 and 24:

"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

These solemn words were a part of our Lord's discourse on the Mount of Olives, His last great prophetic utterance before He went to Calvary to die for our sins. You will recall that His disciples had come to Him with a question that was burning in their hearts: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Matt. 24:3).

In answer to this inquiry, the Lord cast His all-seeing eye down the age to its close, and He made very plain to His disciples some unmistakable signs by which it would be known that it was about to end. He mentioned wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, abounding iniquity, persecutions, things about which we read in our daily newspapers. But here is a very significant thing I do not want you to miss. Of these distresses—wars, famines, and the like—He spoke only *once*. He referred to the sins which would make hearts grow cold just *one time*. But *again* and *again* He spoke of the "false Christs," "false prophets," who should come. It was upon the religious conditions at the end time that He put the emphasis. He tells us that they will perform wonderful works in the realm of the miraculous, which will almost deceive God's own. Notice carefully the words of these texts: "*Many* shall come"; "*many* shall rise"; "shall deceive *many*."

My friends, the rise and increase of these cults is a sure and certain sign of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Along with the return of the Jews to Israel, it is one of the striking evidences that His coming may not be far off, that soon He will return *for* His Bride, the Church; and shortly thereafter *with* the Church to set up His millennial reign. Meantime let us examine every religion under the lens of Holy Writ.

Some people believe no such analysis should be made of any religion save the one they follow. I believe this to be contrary to the Scriptures which plainly state: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, *but try the spirits whether they are of God:* because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

"They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, *whether those things were so*" (Acts 17:11).

So now we come to the false religious system called *Jehovah's Witnesses,* and we will examine it, not by our opinions, but by the Word of God.

—Louis T. Talbot

What's Wrong With Jehovah's Witnesses?

The foundation of the cult now known as Jehovah's Witnesses was laid in 1876 by Charles Taze Russell, upon which subsequently Joseph Franklin Rutherford and his successors built the superstructure. In the writings of these two men are embodied the beliefs of the sect, current Jehovah's Witnesses' literature being for the most part restatements of the views of the founders. Present headquarters of the system are located in Brooklyn, New York, where live the directors and the "headquarters servants" who perform all the maintenance work for their living expenses and a mere pittance. Jehovah's Witnesses own massive printing presses from which roll thousands of tracts, pamphlets, booklets and books, which are the very lifeblood of the organization. In addition, there are apartments, radio studios, factories, farms, more than one hundred branch offices at home and abroad, and the Gilead Watch Tower Bible School, located at South Lansing, New York.

Correct statistics are difficult to obtain because this sect claims no actual membership. In 1952 they reported approximately 14,000 "kingdom halls" (by which term they designate their meeting places) in 143 countries and a half million "publishers" and "pioneers" (the names by which their part-time and full-time workers are called). Doubtless the figures are much higher now, but nothing like the two million adherents Rutherford claimed before his death in 1916. The 1957 "run" shown on the most important publication of this cult, *The Watch Tower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom,* is 3,000,000, which naturally does not indicate all paid subscriptions, but is significant none-the-less, and proves that this sect is growing rapidly.

Jehovah's Witnesses are fanatically aggressive, and follow faithfully the principle that "the ends justify the means." Ethics do not seem to enter into the picture at all. The heads of this system are dictators, the government being wholly totalitarian, and the followers utterly "brain-washed." Among the "pioneers" are hundreds who have surrendered business—and even home—to devote themselves completely to the cause. The "publishers" pledge thousands of hours to the selling of books and distribution of literature, with a minimum of sixty hours per month. There is no place in the organization for anything original; the majority of the Witnesses are not well educated; the words of the leaders are reproduced parrot-like by the adherents of the sect.

The most successful method employed by the Jehovah's Witnesses has been their door-to-door canvassing. At one time they used a "Dawnmobile" which enabled the workers to place their heavy book-laden suitcases on wheels and push them through the streets. In 1937 the phonograph record was introduced by which five-minute messages from the leaders were carried from house to house, along with the machine to reproduce them. In spite of the public indignation of householders over this annoying method, the Jehovah's Witnesses claim to have placed 300,000 records and 35,000 machines in the hands of the public! Sales of literature continue without ceasing on the corners of every city and hamlet in the United States. Supported by the Supreme Court of the United States in the distribution and sale of literature without license, this salesmanship has proved of great propaganda value. It is lucrative as well, in spite of the fact that the publications are sold at what seem ridiculously low prices for these times. Of course, it is the great quantity which makes this possible and their profits have been variously reported as from 100 to 400 per cent by various authors! In addition, this cult is able to give away vast amounts of literature without charge to propagate their devil-in-

spired doctrines, because when their message is believed—that the theocracy, the New World Society, is about to be established—their deluded followers turn over to the Society houses, lands and other possessions. This they did in Russell's day when that false prophet set the exact day for the return of Christ—of which we shall have more to say later on.

Progress of sales and other activities are proclaimed by means of news-sheets, *Kingdom News* and *The Informer.* It is sad to reflect that so much time, strength and man-power are expended in propagating the devil's lies, this time done up in a package promising a "theocracy"—an everlasting earthly paradise which one may gain by selling out to the organization. Jehovah Witnesses have no true Bible message and no Saviour to proclaim, and there is not one true witness to the true Jehovah among them.

This cult has borne various names from its beginning—the Dawnites, the Russellites, International Bible Students Association, Brooklyn Tabernacle, Metropolitan Pulpit, Zion's Watch Tower, and finally became Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931. But it is, as so well stated by Dr. William G. Moorhead a number of years ago: "If called by any other name, it would be the same. All things to all men that by all means to deceive some! It is a mixture of Unitarianism, Universalism, Second Probation, Restorationism, and the Swedenborgian method of exegesis. . . . Mr. Russell imposes on Scripture his own views and reads into it that which never entered the mind of the inspired writer. May God in His infinite mercy preserve His people from being deceived and betrayed by this counterfeit of Christianity!"

Like many another cult, Jehovah's Witnesses claimed all of God's promises to the Israelites, even to taking one of the names promised to God's chosen people, Jehovah's Witnesses, from Isaiah 43:10: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have

chosen." According to the sect, all mankind falls into four categories: the "goats" who have heard the "kingdom truth" of the Witnesses and have rejected it; the "other sheep" who, having not heard, are still able to make a decision regarding this message; the "Jonadabs" who are Jehovah's Witnesses but are not sure of the outcome, and therefore, because of the suspense, labor feverishly; and the 144,000 top Witnesses whose earthly paradise is assured.

Jehovah's Witnesses express a bitter animosity toward all organized religion, one of their favorite watchwords being: "Religion is a racket!" Consequently, Sunday Schools and Young People's organizations are despised by them since they rightly claim that these groups are "feeders" for the churches. One of the most reprehensible aspects of this Christ-denying cult is its lack of interest in the spiritual welfare of children. Little children are exploited and forced into "serving time" for the organization by selling books and "witnessing" in other ways. Women and the home are not given an honored place among the Witnesses. In fact, "Kingdom interests" come first even when it means neglect of home responsibilities. Witnesses take delight in strife arising from the proclamation of their teachings and even the animosity of relatives is welcomed. They have courted "persecution" from their inception. There is no real knowledge of the Word of God among them, and no spiritual food in their services, where they slavishly follow the "Watch Tower" lessons and tell of their experiences in selling books and "witnessing" house to house. Lack of education is a source of pride to them. They refuse to bear arms in the defense of this country and their children are taught to refuse to salute the flag of the United States, Rutherford stating in his book *God and the State,* "The saluting of the flag is a religious ceremony which gives reverence and worship contrary to God's law" (p. 17). The cult is anti-Christ, anti-church and anti-government,

and is doing untold harm in this "land of the free and the home of the brave," where religious freedom is made a travesty by such organizations. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe themselves to be called to "spoil" those who will not fall into line with their theocracy. Christians should feel the responsibility to witness to the Witnesses and to point them to the Saviour.

"Pastor" Russell

Charles Taze Russell, founder of this cult, was born February 16, 1852 at Pittsburg, Pa., son of simple Congregational people. Like Mary Baker Eddy, at an early age he began to dispute with his elders about salvation, the atonement, and especially the deity of Christ and the Trinity. At 18, he was already claiming to be a "Bible teacher." One of his classes gratuitously bestowed upon him the title of "pastor" although he never was ordained to the ministry. Indeed, he had no higher education—in fact, not beyond the seventh grade—and he made his living, as a haberdasher. Controversial, egotistical, ambitious and imaginative, he early learned the value of the printed page, encouraged no doubt by a brief term of employment with an editor of a minor Rochester, New York publication. In 1872 he gathered about him a small group of followers and by 1876 had organized them into a Bible Students association. In 1879 he began his own magazine which he entitled *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* and which survives as *The Watch Tower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom.* (The Dawnites, a split from Jehovah's Witnesses, call their publication *The Dawn—A Herald of Christ's Presence*, thus preserving Russell's ideas, as they claim to be the "orthodox" Russellites.) In 1884 Russell secured a charter from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania to operate the Watch Tower and Tract Society which also survives as the center of their work, located in Brooklyn, New York since 1908. Russell began to grind out literature setting forth his creed. However, his particular heretical

teachings did not catch on until in 1886 he published his first set of books called *The Helping Hand of Millennial Dawn,* so named because of his strange teachings with regard to the "second presence" of Christ. Later these books were renamed, *Studies in the Scriptures, the Divine Plan of the Ages.* They were supposed to proclaim the seven trumpets of Revelation—a book for a trumpet—but before the seventh trumpet could "sound," Russell died and the last volume was written by C. J. Woodworth, probably assisted by Rutherford. Russell's series sold fifteen million copies, if their own records are to be believed.

"Pastor" Russell built his system of teaching on the Arian heresy that Christ was not of the same substance of the Father, and not equal with Him, and he denied all the fundamentals of the faith. Someone expressed it well: "Russell exploited the old Arian heresy into a million-dollar propaganda machine." He believed himself to be the channel for revelation later than that contained in the Scriptures, calling this the "light now due." He called himself the man in the white linen suit of Ezekiel 12:2-4 whom the Lord bade to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for the abominations," the abominations being Babylon, or the organized churches. He was not averse to being acclaimed the seventh of the great messengers of the church—the previous six being Paul, John, Arius, Waldo, Wycliffe and Luther! As a speaker, Russell was fairly interesting, but as a writer extremely repetitious and boring. Nevertheless, his was a definitely planned system of theology. He dealt in paraphrasing of the Scriptures which earned for him the title of "The Great Paraphraser." So egotistical was he that when his wife sued him for divorce she listed that among her grounds for divorce!

Russell ran afoul of the law a number of times: for not paying alimony to his divorced wife and for attempting to defraud her; for selling "miracle wheat" for as

much as sixty dollars a bushel (claiming that it would produce two hundred bushels to the acre); for hindering mobilization in Canada during World War I for which he was deported. He promoted a magic "millennial bean" and a pill that claimed to cure almost any ill.

One of the best-documented stories about Russell (recorded in the files of the Canadian Ontario High Court at Hamilton) is to the effect that he was unable to read the Greek alphabet from the Westcott and Hort grammar furnished him in court. Yet he based many of his "Scriptural" teachings on his "correct" translations of the original languages! Russell lost all libel suits he instituted for defamation of his character! When he died on November 9, 1916, his followers numbered in the thousands, but the organization was not well-knit and there was not the strong central power which now exists. He had instituted the door-to-door "witnessing," the voluminous book sales, the kingdom halls at home and abroad. All that was needed was a powerful leader to take over and bring into line all the independent groups in order to make the organization function as a religious dictatorship. While there were several aspirants for the headship of the Society at Russell's death, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, who had been legal counsel for the "Pastor" and who was already a member of the Board of Directors of the International Bible School Students' Association, succeeded to the presidency without much of a struggle.

"Judge" Rutherford

Born in Missouri in 1870, Joseph Franklin Rutherford studied law but was never a judge, having picked up this title after a few weeks' service on the bench of a minor court. Although he began his rule over the Witnesses by diplomatically declaring that "Pastor" Russell, next to the Apostle Paul, was the greatest man who ever lived, he soon made such sweeping changes that Russell and his "trumpets" volumes were soon pushed into the

background. For the most part, he retained the old Arian-Russellite views, with the exception of the Pyramid theory of determining the past, present and future of mankind and the charts to which the "Pastor" had been so devoted. He altered some of Russell's predictions to conform with current events, but the "old line" of pouring out wrath upon the churches and human government was more vehement than ever. Of impressive bearing and possessed of an oratorical delivery, he was a genuine "rabble-rouser."

While he lost some dissenters, as the Elijah Voice group, the Eagle Society, the Pastoral Bible Institute of Brooklyn, the Standfasters, and the Dawnites (the stiffest competition of the Arian split), by becoming a virtual tyrant, he strengthened what remained, and built a rigid organization.

During World War I, Rutherford spoke boldly against U. S. participation in the conflict and with other Russellites was tried in the U. S. District Court of Brooklyn for conspiracy to incite insubordination in the armed forces, hinder mobilization, and other crimes. Sent to Federal prison, he served only a year or so and came out a great hero and martyr to the Society.

In 1922 Rutherford began to put out his own books, beginning with *The Harp of God* (to match the trumpets of Russell). Someone has facetiously stated that this book has only one string on which he plays monotonously —and that is *the theocracy*. For this was the new term to replace "millennial dawn," and Rutherford's three-fold plan was complete indoctrination; complete subordination; and complete employment of all the adherents in the sale of literature announcing "Jehovah's kingdom," the New World Society. Quotas were demanded; records of attendance and time and sales were obligatory. Brainwashing was the order of the day. No criticism or insubordination of any nature were permitted. Rutherford turned out a new book for every phase of the history of

the movement. He kept his own private life very much to himself so that no scandal reached the public although it was rumored that neither his wife nor his son had any interest in the cult. It was he who gave the sect its new name of Jehovah's Witnesses at the international convention in Columbus, Ohio, in 1931. These conventions have great propaganda value for the cult, focusing world attention upon them and their ever-present books.

Some well-meaning but uniformed people have gone so far as to sympathize with the Witnesses and to believe they have made a great fight for freedom. The fact of the matter is that persecution and martyrdom have ever been their stock in trade. During Rutherford's regime, the test case of Lovell vs. Griffin was settled in favor of the Witnesses and sale and distribution of their literature upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States. How they maintained their "neutrality" during World War II without contributing any of their sons for their country is an unsolved mystery. When Rutherford died on Jan. 8, 1942, he left a well-organized, flourishing concern dedicated to the proposition that an earthly paradise was for the Witnesses just around the corner. While Messrs. Knorr, Covington and Suiter who succeeded the "Judge" do not appear to possess the colorful personalities of the "founding fathers," they do possess administrative gifts and the work grows steadily.

Jehovah's Witnesses have divided the United States into six areas with 154 zones, for their operations. At the top of the organization are the president, vice-president, and board of directors under whom serve regional servants, zone servants, co-chairmen, service committees, secretary-treasurers (called storekeepers) and the numerous individual Witnesses.* In each echelon absolute power is exercised by the higher strata upon those below them in authority.

*As described in Jehovah's Witnesses, H. H. Stroup, Columbia University Press, New York.

Russell's books are not now advertised by Jehovah's Witnesses, but are being vigorously pushed by the Dawnites, who claim to be the "orthodox Russellites." One remembers the hypocritical introduction in these books, dedicated to the Lord Himself: "To the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the interest of His consecrated saints, waiting for the adoption and of 'all that in every place call upon the Lord,' 'the household of faith' and of the groaning creation, travailing and waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, this work is dedicated." Years ago when these books were selling so rapidly, many of the purchasers were sincere Christians deceived by just such pious sentiments as these, and unaware of the poison that lurked in their pages, such as blatant denials of the deity of Christ, the atonement through the shed blood of the Redeemer, and the bodily, literal resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is a matter of great concern to Christians that these old volumes of Russell's are being revived by the Dawnites and again making their way into Christian homes.

No one ever made a greater claim for the inspiration of his own utterances than Russell did for this set of books. On Page 298, of the September 15, 1910 issue of *The Watchtower,* appeared this blasphemous statement:

"If the six volumes of 'Scripture Studies' are practically the Bible, topically arranged with Bible proof texts given, we might not improperly name the volumes, 'The Bible in an Arranged Form.' That is to say, they are not mere comments on the Bible, but they are practically the Bible itself. Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the 'Scripture Studies' aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years—*if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood the*

Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. (ital. mine). On the other hand, if he had merely read the 'Scripture Studies' with their references and had not read a page of the Bible as such, he would be in the light at the end of two years, because he would then have the light of the Scriptures."

Any cult can be judged at the very outset by its appraisal of the Word of God; and by this standard Russellism—Jehovah's Witnesses—is shown to be false at the heart. Nevertheless, the Witnesses claim great respect for the Bible, especially their own particular "translations," which are made to fit their doctrines.

These include the NEW WORLD TRANSLATION OF THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES which is a translation of the Westcott and Hort Greek text into vernacular English, with footnotes which are a conglomeration of variant readings in ancient manuscripts and versions even from the New Testament renderings into Hebrew in the sixteenth century. The EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT which the most unlearned Witness seems to know at least by name was published in 1864 by Benjamin Wilson, who ran a newspaper in Geneva, Illinois. It is a strange translation of J. J. Griesbach's Greek text of the New Testament including an interlinear translation which does not enjoy the respect of Greek authorities, among them Dr. Isaac H. Hall who called it "notorious."

In addition to these books, the Jehovah's Witnesses rely upon the writings of Rutherford and their present-day leaders. We will examine these for evidences that Jehovah's Witnesses are one of the false religious systems that are leading men and women into darkness and destruction and giving them no lasting hope for eternity.

The Dawnites

Of the groups that split from the Jehovah's Witnesses when Rutherford came into power the most aggressive is the Dawnites to whom previous reference has been made. Their official title is Dawn Bible Students Associ-

ation and their headquarters are in East Rutherford, New Jersey. This organization has received impetus from the lively radio broadcast "Frank and Ernest," who carry on a question and answer discussion of the heresies that have characterized the Russellites from the beginning—denial of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the reality of hell, etc. In a recent publication the Dawnites declared themselves, in "A Clarification," as differing from Jehovah's Witnesses on a number of points, but the most significant sentence of this statement for Christians is this: "We hold the same views with respect to the 'wages of sin' insisting that death, not eternal torment, is the penalty. With them, we believe that there is only one God. Aside from these two points, however, our viewpoints are widely at variance with those of Jehovah's Witnesses."

Actually, the difference between them is that of tweedledum and tweedledee. The Dawnites are of Russell; the Jehovah's Witnesses, of Russell and Rutherford. Both are far removed from the true Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ whose deity and eternal Godhead both deny.

Russell ignored every accepted principle of Scripture interpretation, dealing in allegory, claiming as other cultists have done that the Bible was written in symbolic language and needed an interpreter, and naturally that *he* was that interpreter. Later Rutherford declared in his book, *Creation:* "Without doubt the time has come when the Bible is to be understood. . . . These great and deep truths, long kept a secret from man, are now due to be understood" (pp. 122-23). Russell claimed "the light" was concealed from man 6,000 years!

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Deity of Christ

As I have indicated, all the heresies of Jehovah's Witnesses center about the Arian slander against the person of the Lord Jesus Christ—the blasphemous teaching that Christ was not the eternal Son of God, nor of the same substance with the Father.

The view of this sect as originally stated by Russell

has not been altered in the slightest degree. I quote but one passage from Russell's *Studies in the Scriptures:*

"(1) Our Redeemer existed as a spirit being before he was made flesh and dwelt amongst men.

"(2) At that time, as well as subsequently, he was properly known as 'a god'—a mighty one. As chief of the angels and next to the Father, he was known as the Archangel (highest angel or messenger), whose name Michael signifies, 'Who as God,' or God's representative.

"(3) As he was the highest of all Jehovah's creation, so also he was the first, the direct creation of God, the 'Only Begotten' and then he, as Jehovah's representative, and in the exercise of Jehovah's power, and in his name, created all things,—angels, principalities, and powers, as well as the earthly creation" (Vol. 5, p. 84).

Rutherford, in his book *The Harp of God,* and also throughout all of his writings, echoed Russell's views. Here are several sentences: "The *work* of Jehovah, however, had a beginning, and his creative work is clearly what is here meant. The Logos was the first and only direct creation of Jehovah; and thereafter God's creation was performed through his Logos. . . . Some have earnestly believed that Jesus was God Himself. But such a conclusion is not warranted by the Scriptures. . . . Some insist that Jesus when on earth was both God and man in completeness. This theory is wrong, however. . . . The record concerning Jesus' prehuman existence, his being begotten and his birth entirely disproves the theory that he was incarnated. The Scriptures . . . show that he was begotten in the womb of a woman, Mary, by the holy spirit, the power, energy, or influence of Jehovah; that therefore he was born in the same general manner that other children are born" (Harp of God, pp. 100, 101, 102).

In the book, *The Truth Shall Make You Free* (published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in 1943) we read: "In begetting this Son or bringing him

forth to life, Jehovah was the only Producer or Creator, unassisted. His first living creature was therefore 'the only begotten Son of God.' He was a spirit like Jehovah his Father and could see Him and be with Him. Being a spirit and in the image of God, this only begotten Son was in the 'form of God.' He was perfectly subject to his Father and Creator. Not once did he meditate upon a usurpation to be equal with his Father; such equality he knew wisely is an impossibility. . . . Did the firstborn Son possess immortality, that is, deathlessness? That he did not have this quality, and was not immortal at that time is proved by later facts. . . . [John 1:1-3 is quoted, followed by this comment]: . . . Does this mean that Jehovah God (Elohim) and the only begotten Son are two persons but at the same time one God and members of a so-called 'trinity' or 'triune god'? When religion so teaches it violates the Word of God" (pp. 42-45).

The language of these writers is so plain that it is not necessary to point out that Jehovah's Witnesses deny the basic doctrines of the Word of God. In their teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ is reduced to the status of an angel, "a god," a created being. While claiming to believe what the Bible teaches, this sect denies the obvious meaning of the very words their leaders quote from the Scriptures.

One needs only to turn to Hebrews, first chapter, to see that Christ is not an angel, but the creator of the angels, better and greater than any angel. In this chapter, too, He is acknowledged by God the Father to be Himself God.

I quote portions of verses 1-13: "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels. . . . But unto

the Son he (God the Father) saith, Thy throne, O God (Jesus Christ) is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. . . . And Thou, Lord (Jesus Christ), in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands . . . . But to which of the angels said he (God the Father) at any time, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

Had Christ been merely an angel, He would be Jehovah's greatest enemy for He received worship as God saying, "I and my Father are one"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." For Christ was not only equal with God—He was crucified for this claim. The Pharisees told Him plainly: ". . . For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; that because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:32).

The Scriptures abound in unmistakable evidences that Christ was the Son of God, co-equal, co-eternal with the Father, and of the same substance with Him. The book of John was written for this purpose as explained in 20:31: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." If we could get into the hands of every Jehovah's Witness a copy of the book of John, and if they would read it without reference to the textbooks of the sect, God by His Spirit would reveal the truth concerning His holy, blessed, eternal Son to their hearts. Their eyes are blinded by Satan through their false shepherds, as are all of those who follow the cunningly-devised fables of men instead of the simple, plain, understandable truths of the Bible.

Among the other writings of the Apostle John who dealt so thoroughly with the subject of the deity of Christ is I John 5:20-21: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. THIS is the *true God*

(meaning of course, Jesus Christ Himself) and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

The worship of any deity except the One who may be known through the Saviour, the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, is idolatry, and the Russellites' Jehovah is but an idol.

That Christ was the eternal Son is plainly stated in Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (marginal reading "from the days of eternity"). Here the One born to a virgin mother on that first Christmas day over nineteen hundred years ago is clearly identified as the pre-incarnate Son of God.

One of the verses most frequently quoted by Jehovah's Witnesses to attempt to "prove" that Christ was but a creature of God's hand, and not His co-equal, co-eternal Son, is John 1:1. As so frequently happens, however, in this case the devil has overstepped himself and the very passage so misused by this sect may be turned upon their heresies to prove the deity of the Saviour. As previously mentioned, the *New World Translation* and the *Emphatic Diaglott* are the translations upon which the Jehovah's Witnesses rely for their teachings. There are many flagrant errors in these translations, some of which have been ably explained by Dr. Bruce M. Metzger, in his booklet, *The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ,* which may be obtained from the Theological Book Agency, Princeton, New Jersey for fifteen cents. This article first appeared in the quarterly journal of Princeton Theological Seminary, *Theology Today,* and it will be found invaluable to those who seek to refute the arguments of the Jehovah's Witnesses. It has been my experience that the most illiterate Witness prates of "what the Greek says." By Dr. Metzger's kind permission, I wish to quote what he, an eminent Greek scholar, has to say

about "what the Greek says" in regard to John 1:1:

"Jehovah's Witnesses have incorporated in their translation of the New Testament several quite erroneous renderings of the Greek.

"1. In the New World Translation the opening verse of the Gospel according to John is mistranslated as follows: 'Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.' A footnote which is added to the first word 'Originally' reads 'Literally, In (At) a beginning.' By using here the indefinite article 'a' the translators have overlooked the well-known fact that in Greek grammar nouns may be definite for various reasons, whether or not the Greek definite article is present. A prepositional phrase, for example, where the definite article is not expressed, can be quite definite in Greek, as in fact it is in John 1:1. The customary translation, 'In the beginning was the Word,' is therefore to be preferred to either alternative suggested by the New World translators.

"Far more pernicious in this same verse is the rendering, '. . . and the Word was a god,' with the following footnote: 'A god.' In contrast with 'the God.' It must be stated quite frankly that, if the Jehovah's Witnesses take this translation seriously, they are polytheists. In view of the additional light which is available during this age of grace, such a representation is even more reprehensible than were the heathenish, polytheistic errors into which ancient Israel was so prone to fall.

"As a matter of solid fact, however, such a rendering is a frightful mistranslation. It overlooks entirely an established rule of Greek grammar which necessitates the rendering '. . . and the Word was God.' Some years ago, Dr. Ernest Cadman Colwell of the University of Chicago pointed out in a study of the Greek definite article that, 'A definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb. . . . The opening verse of John's Gospel

contains one of the many passages where this rule suggests the translation of a predicate as a definite noun. The absence of the article [before *theos*] does *not* make the predicate indefinite or qualitative when it precedes the verb; it is indefinite in this position only when the context demands it. The context makes no such demand in the Gospel of John, for this statement cannot be regarded as strange in the prologue of the gospel which reaches its climax in the confession of Thomas [John 20:28—"My Lord and my God"].

"In a lengthy Appendix in the Jehovah's Witnesses translation, which was added to support the mistranslation of John 1:1, there are quoted thirty-five other passages in John where the predicate noun has the definite article in Greek. These are intended to prove that the absence of the article in John 1:1 requires that *theos* must be translated 'a god.' None of the thirty-five instances is parallel, however, for in every case the predicate noun stands *after* the verb, and so, according to Colwell's rule, properly has the article. So far, therefore, from being evidence against the usual translation of John 1:1, these instances add confirmation to the full enunciation of the rule of the Greek definite article.

"Futhermore, the additional references quoted in the New World Translation from the Greek of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, in order to give further support to the erroneous rendering in the opening verse of John, are exactly in conformity with Colwell's rule, and therefore are added proof of the accuracy of the rule. The other passages adduced in the Appendix are, for one reason or another, not applicable to the question at issue. One must conclude, therefore, that no sound reason has been advanced for altering the traditional rendering of the opening verse of John's Gospel, . . . and the Word was God.'

"2. In Col. 1:15-17 the Jehovah's Witnesses' translation falsifies what Paul originally wrote, rendering it:

'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth. . . . All other things have been created through him and for him. Also he is before all other things and by means of him all other things were made to exist.' Here the word 'other' has been unwarrantably inserted four times. It is not present in the original Greek, and was obviously used by the translators in order to make the passage refer to Jesus as being on a par with other created things. As a matter of fact, the ancient Colossian heresy which Paul had to combat resembled the opinion of the modern Jehovah's Witnesses, for some of the Colossians advocated the Gnostic notion that Jesus was the first of many other created intermediaries between God and men. For the true meaning of Paul's exalted description of the Son of God, therefore, the above translation must be read without the fourfold addition of the word 'other.'

"Frequently Jehovah's Witnesses make the assertion that this passage teaches that God created the Son.* Actually the verb 'to create' in reference to the relation of the Son of God to the Father appears neither here nor anywhere else in the New Testament. Here he is spoken of as 'the first begotten of all creation' which is something quite different from saying that he was made or created. If Paul had wished to express the latter idea, he had available a Greek word to do so, the word *protoktistos,* meaning 'first created.' Actually, however, Paul uses the word *prototokos,* meaning 'first begotten' which signifies something quite different." (End of quotation from Dr. Metzger's booklet.)

The Only Begotten— First Begotten— Firstborn Son of God

Not only the Prologue to John's Gospel, containing

*See, for example, *"The Truth Shall Make You Free"* (Brooklyn, 1943), pp. 48-50; *Let God Be True* (Brooklyn, 1946), p. 35; and *What Has Religion Done for Mankind?* (Brooklyn, 1951), pp. 36-37.

the first eighteen verses of chapter one, but at least ten other verses in the Word of God are violated in the savage attempt of the Jehovah's Witnesses to teach their "one God" doctrine. These passages are John 1:14, John 1:18, John 3:16, John 3:18 and I John 4:9 where Christ is called "the Only Begotten Son of God"; Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:15, Col. 1:18 where He is described as "the firstborn among many brethren," "the firstborn of every creature (or the whole creation)," "the firstborn from the dead"; and Heb. 1:6 and Rev. 1:5 where He is referred to as "the first begotten of the dead."

As in the case of John 1, however, thoughtful study of these texts disclose that the teaching is the very reverse of what the Jehovah's Witnesses declare. In every case where "only begotten" is employed, the pre-incarnate Son is definitely identified with the One who "became flesh and dwelt among us." The incarnation of the eternal Son who came from the bosom of the Father and returned to the bosom of the Father is clearly set forth. These other references deal with His resurrection, as the One who was the "firstfruits of them that sleep," not the first one to be raised from the dead, but the first One to rise to die no more, to bring with Him the hope of the resurrection of all of those who sleep in Christ. "Because He lives, we shall live also." His resurrection proved His deity beyond question as stated in Romans 1:4: "And declared to the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

Dr. Harry Ironside in his book, *Lectures on Colossians,** explains this clearly: "Isaac is called in Hebrews 11:17, Abraham's only begotten son—yet Ishmael was also his son. But the link between Abraham and Isaac was of a unique character. And so, as the Only Begotten, our Lord is the unique Son, eternally that, for if He be not the Eternal Son then we lose the Eternal Father too. God existed from all eternity as Three Persons, Father, Son,

*Loizeaux Brothers, New York, N. Y.

and Holy Spirit, but never became visible to created eyes, whether of angels or men, until the Holy Babe was born in Bethlehem. The Son was as truly the invisible God as the Father or the Spirit until the incarnation. Then He was seen of angels, and later on by men. . . . As Man He is owned of God the Father as the 'First Born.' And how right it is that such a title should be conferred upon Him, for 'by Him were all things created.' Coming into the world as Man, He takes that place in virtue of the dignity of His person. His is the glory of the Firstborn because He is the Creator. The firstborn is the heir and pre-eminent one. It is important to remember that in Scripture the firstborn is not necessarily the one born first. . . . The first man is set aside and the second man is acknowledged as the firstborn. And so Adam and all his race are set to one side as unfit to retain authority over the world in order that Christ, the Second, the Lord from Heaven, may be acknowledged as the Firstborn.

"It will be seen how tremendously all this would weigh against the Gnostic," [or Jehovah Witnesses] conception of a created Jesus to whom the Christ, a divine emanation, came, upon His enlightenment following His baptism, and who left Him again at the cross. It was the Eternal Son who stooped in grace to become the Son of God as born of a virgin. It should never be lost sight of that His Sonship is spoken of in these two distinct ways in Scripture. As the Eternal Son, pre-incarnate, He is called 'the Son,' 'the Son of the Father,' and also the 'Son of God,' but the latter term generally refers to what He became when He took humanity into relation with deity and became God and Man in one Person with two natures, in accordance with the word of the angel, addressed to His virgin mother, 'That Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.'

"It was He who brought all things into being. . . . The Gnostics"—Jehovah Witnesses "place varied ranks of exalted beings between Him and God; but He is shown

to be superior to them all, for He brought them into being. He is Himself the uncreated Son who became Man to accomplish the work of redemption. . . . His priority is insisted upon in another way. . . . 'He is before all things' . . . all that has been created, whether personal or impersonal. . . . Full Deity is ascribed to Him, and yet distinct personality. Morever, it is He who sustains the universe, for 'by Him all things consist.' It is His hand that holds the stars in their courses, directs the planets in their orbits, and controls the laws of the universe. How great is His dignity, and yet how low did He stoop for our salvation!

"But He is firstborn in another sense. . . . He accomplished (on the cross) the great work of redemption for which He came. . . . But having been delivered on account of our offenses, He was raised again on account of our justification. As brought again from the dead, He became the Firstborn in a new sense, the Head of the new creation. As Man on earth in incarnation, there was no union with Him. Union is in the resurrection. He was alone as the Incarnate Son here in the world. . . . It is in resurrection that He is hailed as the Firstborn from among the dead. As such He becomes the Head of the Body, the Church; the Beginning of the creation of God; Firstborn among many brethren; the Resurrection King-Priest; the One who is yet to rule the world in manifested glory; the Melchizedek (King and Priest) of the ages to come." (End of quotation from Dr. Ironside.)

"The Ransom" of Jehovah's Witnesses and the Atonement of Christ

It is but a step from the denial of the deity of Christ to the rejection of His redemptive and mediatorial work on the cross. Russell stated plainly in *Studies in the Scriptures:* "The 'ransom for all' given by Christ Jesus does not give or guarantee everlasting life or blessing to any man; but it does guarantee to every man another opportunity or trial for life everlasting" (Vol. 1; p. 140).

The use of the term "ransom" which Jehovah's Witnesses have taken from 2 Tim. 2:6 has misled many into thinking that this cult believes in the atonement of Christ. The fact of the matter is that the ransom teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses bears not the slightest resemblance to the substitutionary atonement doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, the "scarlet thread" of which runs throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, and which is the very heart of the Gospel. Just as the "Jehovah" of the Witnesses is a counterfeit God, and the "Michael-Man-Redeemer" of the Witnesses a false Christ, so the "Ransom" of this sect is a spurious atonement.

Never able to "rightly divide the Word of Truth," Russell built one heresy on top of another. He based his teaching with regard to the death of Christ upon the false premise that the penalty which God imposed upon the race for the disobedience of Adam was death in the absolute sense—end of existence, cessation of being, like the occult Nirvana. The Word of God makes it plain that physical death (never annihilation of either saved or lost) is but a by-product of the fall of man. Adam's sin resulted in instantaneous spiritual death—separation from fellowship with God—to eventuate in permanent separation from Him for those who should reject Christ, the Redeemer, "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world" who was provided to "catch" man when he fell, according to the promise of Genesis 3:15. ". . . We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son . . ." (Rom. 5:10) and He "was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

In the ransom teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses the atoning blood is disregarded altogether. Wrote Russell: "The necessary thing was surrender of His innocent soul (being) as an offset or in exchange for a guilty soul (being) whose existence was forfeited through transgression. Neither was it necessary, so far as the ransom feature is concerned, that our Lord's person should be wounded,

and his blood literally shed or spilled on the ground. The penalty for sin was death, the cessation of being, and when that was accomplished, the penalty was met" *(Studies in the Scriptures,* Vol. 5, p. 443).

The ransom price that was required, according to Jehovah's Witnesses, was not only the death of the perfect man, Christ Jesus, but the eternal blotting out of His existence. This is one of the most gruesome and terrifying views of the Lord Jesus Christ ever conceived by man under the control of Satan. The resurrection of Christ is utterly repudiated by Russell. Here are his blasphemous words:

"Nor could our Lord have been raised from the dead a man, and yet have left with Justice our ransom-price: in order to the release of Adam (and his condemned race) from the sentence and prison-house of death, it was necessary, not only that the *man* Christ Jesus should die, but just as necessary that the *man* Christ Jesus should never live again, should remain dead, should remain our ransom-price to all eternity.

"For our Lord Jesus to have been raised a man would have implied two evils: (1) It would have implied the taking back of our ransom, which would have left us as much under sentence of death as before. (2) It would have implied to him an everlasting loss of the higher nature which he had left in order to become a man, and to be our Redeemer; and thus it would have implied that faithfulness to God on his part had resulted in his everlasting degradation to a lower nature. But no such absurdities and inconsistencies are involved in the divine arrangement. Our Lord humbled himself, and became a man, and as a man he gave up his life, the ransom-price for the fallen man; and as a reward for this faithfulness, the Heavenly Father not only restored him to conscious being, but gave him a nature not only higher than the human, but higher also than his own previous nature, making him partaker of the divine nature, with its super-

lative qualities and honors. In his present exalted condition death would be impossible,—he is now immortal.

"Since the man Jesus was the ransom-price, given for the purchase of Adam and his race, it could not be that the man Jesus is the Second Adam, the new father of the race instead of Adam; FOR THE MAN JESUS IS DEAD, FOREVER DEAD, and could not be a father or life-giver to the world" *(Studies in the Scriptures,* Vol. 5, p. 454).

Briefly, the Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine concerning Christ, then, is this: "Jehovah" created Christ the highest order of angel, Michael; this Michael-Christ became man and in dying passed completely out of existence to purchase immortality for man; Jesus the man has ceased to be; there was no bodily resurrection; as a reward "Jehovah" has made this Michael-Christ—apparently only an emanation of some type—a partaker of the divine nature, with a higher position than he had as Michael—but still never called an equal with God!

Russell was quite repetitious about the matter of Christ Jesus' being forever dead for in the volume mentioned above, on pages 465 and 466, we read:

"Had the penalty against sin been merely dying—had the Lord said to Adam, Because of your sin, you must experience the trying ordeal of dying, then, indeed, the penalty would be met by Adam and others in dying. But such is not the penalty; the penalty is death, not dying; and death is the absence of life, destruction. Hence for man to pay the penalty would mean that he must stay dead, devoid of life forever. Had it not been for the redemption, Adamic death would have been—everlasting destruction. And—when our Lord Jesus did become our Reedemer, when he did give himself as our ransom-price, it meant to him what the original penalty would have meant for us, viz., that the man Christ Jesus suffered for us death in the most absolute sense of everlasting destruction. Hence we know Christ no more after the flesh."

My Christian friends, as you read these horrible conclusions of this deluded man—which are accepted by all Jehovah's Witnesses and Dawnites of this day—I urge you to make yourself completely familiar with the Gospel as so clearly made known in the Word of God—"How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3-4), and thousands of related texts in the Gospels and Epistles in order that you may not be afraid to meet these purveyors of Satan's lies—and with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, put them to silence.

The benefits of the "ransom" of Jehovah's Witnesses are not forgiveness of sins, peace with God, victorious living by the power of the Holy Spirit, and heaven at last in the presence of the Saviour, but as Rutherford stated in *The Harp of God:* "Immortality will be given as a great reward to faithful Christians and to none other of the human race. . . . No one of the human race will be immortal except the faithful Christians" (p. 44). From Jehovah's Witnesses' literature it is clear that these "faithful Christians" can be none other than Jehovah's Witnesses.

Russell had an explanation for the empty tomb on that first Easter:

"Our Lord's human body was, however, supernaturally removed from the tomb; because had it remained there, it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to the faith of the disciples. . . . We know nothing about what became of it. Whether it was dissolved into gases or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love . . . no one knows" (Vol. IV, p. 129). And again on page 131 of the same volume he repeats: "Our Lord Jesus . . . is no longer a man but a spirit being, whom no man hath seen nor can see."

Thus in building his false system of doctrine, Russell adds lie on top of lie, and this is one of the most out-

rageous of all, for we know from the Scriptures (which Russellites claim to believe!) exactly what became of the body of our blessed Lord.

It is certainly not preserved in some heavenly museum. It was resurrected, clothed with immortality, and in it the Lord Jesus Christ was perfectly recognizable. One of the most reassuring passages in the entire Word of God is Luke 24, and particularly the words of Jesus to His disciples when in one of His post-resurrection appearances He stood in their midst, "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (vv. 38-43). We read also in I Cor. 15:5-8: ". . . He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once . . . After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all" says Paul, "he was seen of me also."

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most fully authenticated fact of history and has exerted more influence upon the world than any other event that ever took place. Christ assured us: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). His resurrection is the guarantee of ours.

The last sight of the Saviour in His resurrection body before the ascension was recorded by Luke in Acts 1:9: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

The angels who stood by said to the wondering disciples: "This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like man-

ner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (v. 11).

Thank God, He will return in that glorified resurrection body in which He left, and we shall know Him, "by the print of the nails in His hand"!

THE "SOUL SLEEP" OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-day Adventists hold the theory of soul-sleep in common. Russell stated categorically: "The dead are dead, utterly destroyed" (*Studies in the Scriptures,* Vol. V, p. 347) and Rutherford declared: "Another of Satan's deceptions by which he has blinded the people is the teaching that the dead are still conscious after death. . . . Those who died are never conscious again. . . . Man was made out of the dust. He was sentenced to return to the dust."

John 5:28, 29 refutes this abominable untruth: "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

For the Christian, death means that his spirit goes to be with Christ, and his body is to await the resurrection at Christ's coming. Paul said, "I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better" (Phil. 1:23, A.S.V.); "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. . . . We . . . are willing to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6, 8, ASV). There is no state of unconsciousness after death. For the Christian, he is in the presence of the Lord; the unsaved awaits judgment.

The account in Luke 23:43 of the thief on the cross is embarrassing to the Jehovah's Witnesses. If the entire being of man—spirit, soul, and body—descends into the sleep of the grave at death, how could Jesus in His dying moments not only give pardon to a repentant sinner, but promise him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"?

Rutherford's explanation is a good example of his dissembling to prove his point and also of the extent of his scholarship; in *Riches* he wrote:

"The thief will never be in heaven because of the promise to him that if he is on the side of Christ he will be in paradise. It is certain that the thief did not go to heaven or paradise that day that he died. If he did, then he got there long before Jesus did. . . . The thief died and was put in the grave and is still in the grave . . . the words of Jesus to the thief were these: 'Today I say unto thee (that is, I am saying it now, this day), Shalt thou be with me in paradise?' " (p. 183).

Not only is this double-dealing with the language—a practice freely indulged in by Jehovah's Witnesses—but it makes no sense whatever. It is a travesty upon our blessed Lord who in His dying agony as the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world had only compassion in His heart for the lost. Is it likely at such a time—or any time—He would indulge in useless questions such as Rutherford has put into His mouth? This illustrates the lengths to which Satan drives men who reject God's eternal Son.

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Trinity

One cannot come into contact with Jehovah's Witnesses without being aware of their bitter hatred of the doctrine of the Trinity. Often they lash out with the accusation that the word "trinity" is not in the Scriptures; someone has suggested that in reply to this Jehovah's Witnesses should be informed that "theocracy" does not appear in the Bible, either. The teaching of the Trinity is in the Word of God from the first plural proper noun "Elohim" in Genesis to the mention of God, the Lamb, and the Spirit in the last chapter of the book of Revelation.

Russell blamed the trinitarian doctrine on the Catholics: "This doctrine of three Gods in one God . . . is a strongly entrenched doctrine among Christians. . . . Why is this? . . . It is one of the dark mysteries by which Sa-

tan, through the Papacy, has beclouded the Word and character and plan of God" *(Studies in the Scriptures,* Vol. 1, p. 60).

On page 166 of this same volume he states: "This view suited well the Dark Ages it helped to produce. . . . This theory is as unscriptural as it is unreasonable . . . If it were not for the fact that this trinitarian nonsense was drilled into us from earliest infancy . . . nobody would give it a moment's serious consideration."

Rutherford echoes: "The doctrine of the 'trinity' finds no support whatsoever in the Bible" *(Riches,* p. 88). Likewise in the *Watch Tower* publication of 1943, *The Truth Shall Make You Free* occurs this statement: "There are no three persons Jehovah; only one"; and from *Theocratic Aids to Kingdom Publishers* (1945) I quote: "One might show that the doctrines of the 'trinity,' 'immortality of the soul,' etc., are the devil's lies; that these doctrines are the snare of the devil, and since religion teaches them, it is a snare. Thus by inductive reasoning it is proved that 'religion is a snare.' " (p. 206).

In a tract entitled *The Trinity, Divine Mystery or Pagan Myth?* circulated on all street corners by the Witnesses, the Triune God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is likened to triads of vile heathen gods of Persia, Egypt, Rome, Japan, India, Greece, etc., in a most blasphemous fashion.

The Bible abounds in proofs of the Godhead revealed in three persons, but for lack of space I include but two Scriptures which mention the Trinity in an unmistakable manner: John 14:16: "And I [Jesus] will pray the Father, and he [the Father] shall give you another Comforter [the Holy Spirit] that he may abide with you forever." Mark 1:10, 11: "And straightway coming up out of the water, he [Jesus] saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him [Jesus]: And there came a voice from heaven [the Father's] say-

ing, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Jehovah's Witnesses and Hell

Jehovah's Witnesses claim that an everlasting place of torment is the invention of the clergy. Russell had a semi-humorous lecture which he delighted to deliver, the title of which was "To Hell and Back Again." Rutherford in *The Harp of God* declared: "The doctrine of eternal torment cannot be true for at least four and distinct reasons: (1) because it is unreasonable (2) because it is repugnant to justice (3) because it is contrary to the principle of love and (4) because it is entirely unscriptural." In *Creation* he wrote: "God is not a fiend, as the clergy would have him appear . . . It is an invention of the devil promulgated for the purpose of supporting his original lie: namely, that there is no death (Gen. 3:4). The Devil saw that if man should believe the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the soul he likewise must believe that the wicked are somewhere in torment. If he could induce men to believe that God had provided a place for the eternal torture of that soul, then he would succeed in turning men away from God and causing him to hate Jehovah. The doctrines of eternal torture and inherent immortality are intended to support each other, and both being false both must fall. . . . Jehovah declares that he will punish the wicked, and that punishment shall be eternal. The clergy try to make it appear that eternal punishment and eternal torture are one and the same thing. They are not. Death is the highest penalty known to the law of any land. No punishment could be greater than complete destruction. Such is the punishment that God will inflict upon the wilfully wicked" (pp. 256, 262).

From the textbook for Jehovah's Witnesses, *Theocratic Aids to Kingdom Publishers,* we quote an example of type of "instruction" for service that is given to the door-to-door book peddlers; the parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus is being discussed:

"It [another of their publications] shows how absurd it is to argue that a man is eternally tormented merely because he is rich, that another is carried away to heaven merely because he is poor and a beggar. It also ridicules the idea of a dead man's lifting his eyes. Then, after showing the impossibility of anyone's getting a bucket of water, much less a drop to one in a place as hot as the clergymen claim hell is, the statement appears 'The literal interpretation of this Scripture text is shocking to reason and justice and is worse than absurd.'" (p. 213).

Thus the Jehovah's Witnesses set themselves up as judges of the Lord Jesus Christ who Himself delivered this account of a rich man and the beggar. No place is it implied that their respective wealth or poverty had anything whatsoever to do with their fate. The key to the understanding of this passage in Luke 16 is found in the words of Abraham in verse 31: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." The rejection of God's message of salvation then as now is the way to hell. When the Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-day Adventists, too—and all individuals and organizations, who reject the doctrine of an everlasting hell for Christ-rejectors, claim that they do so because the conception is "unreasonable, unloving, unjust and unscriptural," they are accusing the Lord Jesus Christ Himself of these things. It was from His lips that there fell the greatest number of references to hell. Anyone who accuses Him of failure in love or in justice has no understanding of the nature of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit or of God's perfect plan of salvation provided through Christ. No one must go to hell. In order to do so, he is obliged to by-pass Calvary, to reject the love of the One who gave Himself on the cross for the deliverance from hell of all who would receive Him as Saviour and Lord.

It was this One of whom it was written "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his

friends," Who also said: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:41, 46). The thought of hell is terrible to all Christians, spurring them on to tell lost men and women that God has provided for them through His Son a way of escape, but we must accept *what God's Word says*—not what men's minds may contrive. "Shall not the Judge of the whole earth do right?" Thousands of people who live in rebellion against God, refusing the pardon and cleansing that He has provided through the blood of His blessed Son, find the doctrine of "no hell" very comforting. If they may live in wicked wantonness, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind in this existence, the thought of utterly ceasing to exist when they die is reassuring. What sinner would object to a quiet, eternal sleep after a life of disobedience? But God has said, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after that* the judgment"—and that is the teaching that troubles the sinner. How plainly Paul wrote: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

The Jehovah's Witnesses have no case whatsoever in trying to prove that "everlasting" and "eternal" do not mean *without end;* and neither can they present any evidence to refute the fact that the same Greek word used to describe the everlasting life of the believer is the same word "everlasting"—or eternal—used to describe the state of the unsaved. One will last as long as the other—and that is forever and forevermore. Hell is as lasting as Heaven is, and a place where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

Characteristically, Jehovah's Witnesses unsuccessfully appeal to the Greek and Hebrew in their attempt to eliminate the literal, everlasting hell of the Bible. Rutherford, who had no acquaintance with the original languages, blatantly declared: "All the prophets of God taught that *sheol,* the grave and hell, are one and the same condition, referring to the condition of death" (p. 206, *Life.)*

The prophets taught nothing of the kind. The absurdity of this statement can be readily proven by an examination of the Scriptures in the original languages. Indeed, one does not require a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, for he may consult a good concordance, and the American Standard Version which retains the words in the original. It is as Dr. Van Baalen states in *Chaos of Cults:* "Had the King James Version left the words 'Sheol' and 'Hades' untranslated, instead of rendering by 'hell,' there would probably not have been so much haziness on this point, and Russellites would not have been able to improve this confusion for their nefarious doctrine."

Briefly, the facts are these: Three distinct places are referred to in the Word of God: the grave, translated from Hebrew *geburah* and Greek *mnemion;* the abode of departed spirits, for which the Hebrew is *sheol* and the Greek *hades;* and hell, *gehenna* the place of eternal punishment for the devil, his angels, antichrist, the false prophet, and "whosoever" will not be "found written in the book of life" (Rev. 20:10-15), to be "tormented day and night for ever and ever." The bodies of believers lie in the grave until the coming of Christ; the bodies of the unregenerate "until the thousand years" are "finished" (Rev. 20:5). Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists teach that the total personality goes into the grave but there is no Scripture to support this "soul sleep" doctrine. It is as false as their denial of an everlasting hell.

However, it is about the words *sheol* and *hades* that

the controversy rages. It is clear from Luke 16:22-31 that before the resurrection of Christ the spirits of Old Testament saints remained in one compartment of *hades* called *paradise,* a place of bliss; and that the spirits of the unregenerate *then* as *now* were confined in the prison realm of *hades,* a place of torment. The unsaved are still there and will remain there until the great assize, the great white throne judgment. They are incarcerated as prisoners awaiting trial, under indictment but not sentenced. When the judgment takes place, *hades* itself with all of its occupants will be cast into *gehenna,* the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Meantime the spirits of the saved go directly into the presence of Christ who when He ascended took paradise and all its occupants with Him into Heaven. That is why Paul speaks of "paradise" as "the third heaven" into which he was "caught *up.*" We read of that great exodus in Eph. 4:8-10 where Christ led "a multitude of captives" (margin) . . . "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." Since that blessed time of release from the "upper *sheol*" to paradise which is now in the "third heaven," the spirits of believers go immediately into the presence of the Lord when their earthly pilgrimage is over. The spirits of the lost remain in *hades,* or lower *sheol* (whichever language is preferred). The Christian's very body rests in hope, for though it is laid in the grave, it will be raised, to be reunited with the spirit when Christ comes; but "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," we read in Revelation 20:5. The fate of those who reject the redemption freely and fully provided in Christ have an unspeakable fate awaiting them: the body in the grave, the spirit in torment in *sheol,* and the final, permanent confinement in *gehenna,* with the devil, the beast and the false prophet. This is described in the book of Revelation as "the

second death." The Jehovah's Witnesses insist that physical death—separation of body and spirit—annihilation—is the final penalty for sin, but this completely contradicts the Scriptures. They may deny hell, but alas, they will know its reality if they continue to reject "the blood of the everlasting covenant," the way of salvation provided by the Lord Jesus Christ whom they have slanderously called but "a man" and "an angel."

Jehovah's Witnesses and Prophecy

Russell was never more at sea than when he tried to deal with prophecy. There his wicked imagination ran wild. For the plain prophetic utterances of the Word of God he substituted his fables. We read in *Studies in the Scriptures,* Vol. I: "This coming judgment will be on exactly the same principles as the first . . . the second trial will be more favorable than the first, because of the experience gained under the results of the first trial . . . mankind will be gradually educated, trained and disciplined until they reach perfection. And when they have reached perfection, perfect harmony with God will be required and any who then fall short of perfect obedience will be cut off, being judged unworthy of life. The sin which brought death to the race through Adam was simply one disobedient act; but by that act he fell from his perfection. God had a right to demand perfect obedience of him since he was created perfect; and he will demand the same of all men when the great work of restoring them is complete. . . . And should anyone during that age of trial, under its full blaze of light, spurn the offered favors, and make no progress toward perfection for a hundred years, he will be reckoned unworthy of life and will be 'cut off' . . . All must have at least one hundred years of trial; and, if not so obstinate as to refuse to make progress, their trial will continue throughout the entire day of Christ" pp. 143-144); "Man did not lose a heavenly, but an earthly, paradise. . . . Under the death penalty, he did not lose a spiritual, but a human exist-

ence" (p. 177); "The great mass of mankind, saved from the fall, as well as the angels of heaven, will always be mortal; though in a condition of perfection and bliss, they will always be of that mortal nature which could suffer death, the wages of sin, if they would commit sin. The security of their existence will be conditioned, as it was with Adam, upon obedience to the all-wise God" (p. 186). This millennial state, then, is but a second probation, an invention to destroy men's souls.

The Jehovah's Witnesses' Plan of the Ages (not God's) is somewhat on this order: At the present time it is difficult for man to live as a member of God's theocracy (the Jehovah's Witnesses' earthly kingdom) because Satan has established his powerful empire in opposition to it—a combination of organized church and government. God had originally planned that his Logos (the Michael-Christ) was to have charge of the invisible kingdom while Lucifer, an equal of Christ, was to rule on earth. But Lucifer tried to usurp the throne of Jehovah and tempted Adam to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Adam fell and so was sentenced to physical death. The angel Michael, or the Logos, or Christ, became a man and died as a ransom, and in order to make the ransome effective, He as the man Jesus suffered utter extinction of being. The ransom will not go into effect until men are raised up for their "millennial probation." Meantime the Witnesses work without ceasing for their own salvation, for in every respect the Jehovah's Witnesses system is a "do-it-yourself" system of religion, in which book-selling predominates.

In his fine book, "Why I Reject the 'Helping Hand' of Millennial Dawn" written in 1915 by W. C. Stevens, he says: "In all this conglomerate doctrine, of being, life, death, resurrection, it is evidently impossible to establish any identity of being and personality between man's first and second existences; . . . But an extinct memory, an extinct conscience, an extinct personality, no kind of

resurrection, not even a re-creation, can restore. The very term resurrection pre-supposes unbroken identity, an unsuspended intelligence, conscience and personality. All ordinary meaning of 'judgment' as a moral settlement of accountable acts Russell entirely expunges and replaces with the idea of a mere disciplinary training in this coming probation by which the way to self-perfecting by gradual degrees during the thousand years will be made easy. So bewitched is the heart of many that this mess of heresy finds welcome, encouraging men carelessly to say, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (become extinct, to be given another and a better chance later on to mend our way and inherit everlasting life)." These "Second Chance"—Probation—bloodless cults appeal to the unregenerate. The tract, "Millions Now Living Will Never Die," had a tremendous circulation some years ago.

In a booklet published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, entitled, "Can you Live Forever in Happiness on the earth?" the present-day aspirations of the Jehovah's Witnesses are set forth quite clearly. This address is described as having been delivered by the president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society on Sunday, August 6, 1950, at the public meeting of the Theocracy's Increase Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses at Yankee Stadium in New York and broadcast over WBBR, and "carried by private telephone line to the trailer encampment of this international convention. The total visible audience was 123,707," ... thus stated in the preface.

While there is in this address some counsel to do good, there is no mention of the necessity for the new birth, no reference to the necessity for a Saviour from sin, no warning that without faith in His shed blood there is no salvation. To a startling degree the material paradise for which the Jehovah's Witnesses are laboring resembles the very earthly "heaven" of the Mormons. Present-day Witnesses do not set exact dates for events as did Russell.

Yes, in spite of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ stated clearly, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36), "Pastor" Russell actually set the date for the Lord's coming.

He said it a number of times. I will quote several passages from Series II, *Studies in the Scriptures:* "Sometime before the end of A.D. 1914 the last member of the divinely-organized Church of Christ 'the royal priesthood,' 'the body of Christ,' will be glorified with the Head" (p. 77).

"Their reign (the heirs of the heavenly kingdom) over the world can only date from A.D. 1914—when the Times of the Gentiles have expired" (p. 81).

"We consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, will be accomplished at the end of 1915" (p. 99).

"The 'Times of the Gentiles' will fully run out with the year A.D. 1914 . . . and Christ's Kingdom fully established" (p. 170).

"The present governments must all be overturned about the close of A.D. 1914" (p. 242).

Then he got it down to the actual month: "The Gospel age harvest will end October 1914 . . . and likewise the overthrow of 'Christendom' so-called must be expected to immediately follow" (p. 245).

Now stop and consider what he has predicted: Christ will come, set up His kingdom, the Gentile kingdoms will be destroyed, the governments overturned, and the organized churches overthrown—all in the month of October, 1914!

My friends, the Devil often over-reaches himself, and he certainly did in this case. Not only did Russell repeat himself again and again in making these predictions, but

he went a step farther.

This amazing statement appeared in *The Watch Tower* of October 1, 1917: "But let us suppose a case far from our expectations. Suppose that A.D. 1914 should pass with the world's affairs all serene, and with evidence that the 'very elect' had not been 'changed' and without the restoration of natural Israel to favor under the New Covenant. What then? Would that prove our chronology wrong? *Yes, assuredly*" [the ital. are his].

Well, Father Time marched on and Russell was proved a false prophet. The founder of Jehovah's Witnesses stood self-convicted out of his own mouth. No one has much use for a prophet whose predictions fail of fulfillment.

You know what happened in 1914! The first great World War raged over the earth. Instead of Christ's kingdom being established, as "Pastor" Russell had stated, anything but that occurred in the earth! Fifty millions of people came to an untimely end as a result of that conflict.

Well, the Jehovah's Witnesses were in a dilemma, and pretty shaken in their faith in the prophet Russell. They could scarcely gather up all the books that they had peddled from door to door or even secure them from secondhand bookstores. Then Russell died, and Rutherford came into power. He had a wide-open field for his writings and his coast-to-coast radio broadcasts. He had to do something about 1914. He could not claim that the governments were no longer in power or that Christ was visibly sitting on the "theocratic" throne, with the 144,000 Jehovah's Witnesses. Actually, the moral conditions following World War I were about as bad as any we have ever known in this country. Crime wave after crime wave swept the land. It did not look like the millennial kingdom.

So what were they to do? Well, Rutherford fixed it up like this: "In 1914 Jehovah set His anointed One upon his throne; therefore at that time Christ Jesus took his authority as King. Three and one-half years thereafter, to

wit, in 1918, the Lord came to his temple, which is the temple of God" (p. 73, *Prophecy).* I don't know exactly how 1914 became 1918!

Well, if Christ were sitting on the throne, why did not men see Him? What were the evidences of His "Second Presence"? Look out for that term: it is a coined expression peculiar to this cult alone, and whenever you see it in a publication, you may suspicion it to be Jehovah's Witnesses' literature.

In the first place, they claimed that Christ was hiding somewhere. My friends, the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives predicted this very thing:

"Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (Matt. 24:26).

This is the only religion I know that has fulfilled this prophecy in their teaching that Christ is already here in "secret chambers." It is another evidence that the close of this age is fast approaching.

But Rutherford was not finished. On page 235 of his book *The Harp of God* he gives a list of "evidences" that Christ has already come. These discoveries, inventions and accomplishments of men for the last one hundred years or more are proofs to him of the presence of Christ on earth since 1914. This is so utterly absurd I would not take the space to include it except that it may open the eyes of some to see to what lengths men who do not believe the Gospel will go to rationalize their heresies. "A long list of inventions appear in Rutherford's *Harp of God,* page 235, including Russell's set of books, thus adding absurdity to absurdity." The leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses must think their followers have a very low I.Q. to take any stock in such nonsense as this.

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns in person, the world, and Jehovah's Witnesses, too, will know it very well. He will first take away the Church, His bride, before letting loose upon this earth the great tribulation.

This blessed hope of believers is described in I Thessalonians 4:13-18:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

This great event, which will certainly have a terrific impact upon this earth (greater than barbed wire, I would say!), will be followed by seven years of "Jacob's trouble" at the end of which time, Christ will return with His Church to judge the earth and to set up His millennial kingdom. He will certainly not be in "secret chambers." "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27). "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7). "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Meanwhile may we who are truly born again not only seek to show these deluded people the way of salvation and true spiritual life in Christ, but may we also be on the alert to warn others against the Satanic devices of this organization that seeks to enfold the unwary in its

tentacles. Particularly, let us beware of the insidious first approach and the "back call" by which the names of Christians and others fall into the hands of the Jehovah's Witnesses and remain permanently in their files. The earthly kingdom-theocracy this sect is building is not owned of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor of the true Jehovah God of the Bible, and there is nothing in it for any Christian—or for any lost sinner—except darkness and the condemnation of God.

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