

THE CULT OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Jehovah's Witnesses energetically seek converts to their comparatively new religion. Many of their beliefs and practices are confused and some are contradictory. It is important that the truth about this cult is known.

1. Introduction

The Jehovah's Witness movement is a religion. It is not a denomination of the Christian Church. It is totally incompatible with the Christian faith and it is antagonistic to the Christian Church, regarding it as demonic. They say *"Ecclesiastical systems, Catholic and Protestant are under supervision and control of the Devil and form a part of his visible organisation, and therefore, constitute the anti-Christ"*. (J F Rutherford – 'Deliverance' p222).

They totally reject the central truths proclaimed by the Christian Church over the centuries. **They deny the divinity of Christ, the personhood of the Holy Spirit and the Trinitarian nature of God. They believe salvation is by works and not by grace.** Many are misled by their teachings and damaged by their practices.

2. The Origin of the Cult

This wealthy, highly centralised and organised movement is based in the United States of America where it originated. The Jehovah's Witnesses was founded by Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916), an American born in Pennsylvania. The manager of several clothing stores in North Pittsburgh, as a young man he began to teach Bible classes. He wrote pamphlets and books strongly influenced by Adventism. In 1879 he founded his own magazine – 'Zion's Watch Tower' and 'Herald of Christ's Presence'. Five years later he launched the 'Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society' renaming it in 1896 as the 'Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society'.

In 1908 he established the headquarters of his movement in Brooklyn, New York promoting his ideas and writings. These included a 7-volume series 'Studies in the Scriptures'. The first appeared in 1886 and the final one in 1917 shortly after his death. A man of questionable character, his wife successfully sued him for divorce on grounds of adultery in 1913. He was charged with fraudulent activities by the Brooklyn Daily Eagle and perjured himself in court. Under oath he testified that he knew the Greek alphabet but when he was unable to identify the letters of the alphabet on request he was forced to retract.

3. Later Leadership of the Cult

Following Russell's death 'Judge' Rutherford became its President for 25 years. The organisation developed into a centralised and dictatorial one in which the directors of the various local congregations were no longer elected by local assemblies, but were appointed by the governing body in Brooklyn and formally took on the name Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1942 Nathan Knorr was elected as the society's third President, putting a great emphasis on the educational work of the Jehovah's Witnesses. A new series of doctrinal books were published during his presidency. Unlike previous Watch Tower publications these were not the work of individual authors. They were considered authoritative, doctrinal guides by the Witnesses and supplemented the previous works of Russell and Rutherford. The first such publication was 'The Truth Shall Make You Free', published in 1943 followed by 'Let God Be True' in 1946. This was a doctrinal summary and was revised in 1952. It is claimed that 17

million copies were printed in 50 languages. In 1953 they produced 'Make Sure of All Things' and in 1958 they published 'From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained'. Knorr was responsible for the production of the Jehovah's Witnesses version of the Bible – 'The New World Translation'. The cult grew dramatically during his leadership.

4. The Structure of the Cult

Officially titled the 'Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society', the sect is run by a tightly knit and authoritarian leadership known as the Governing Body. The Society is known as the Organisation or Watch Tower Organisation and its leaders call themselves the 'Faithful and Discreet Slaves'.

Members of the cult are expected to give up their freedom of conscience, uncritically accepting what they are told and not giving a response to critical questions put to them. Their two main magazines are 'Awake!' and the 'Watch Tower'. The man exercising leadership and authority at local level is called the 'Overseer' and he looks after the local so-called Kingdom Hall. A Branch Committee responds to the Governing Body of each country which is divided into districts and circuits. Circuit Overseers supervise the congregations and District Overseers are responsible for a number of circuits.

5. Mind Control

For Jehovah's Witnesses the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is God's sole channel of communicating truth. There is a great fear amongst Jehovah's Witnesses of exercising free will and independent judgement. They are specifically told *"Avoid independent thinking...questioning the counsel that is provided by God's visible organisation"* (WT, 1/15/1983 p22). Jehovah's Witnesses are forbidden to read the literature of other religious organisations. They are told *"It would be foolhardy, as well as a waste of valuable time, for Jehovah's Witnesses to accept and expose themselves to false religious literature that is designed to deceive"* (WT, 5/1/1984 p31). They are even told that *"reading Apostate publications"* is "similar to reading pornographic literature" (WT, 3/15/1986, p14).

6. Authoritarian Power

The organisation of the Jehovah's Witnesses is completely authoritarian. Differences of opinion are not tolerated. The leaders claim to be infallible interpreters of scripture. The right of individual members of the cult to private judgement is virtually abolished. The leadership consider themselves beyond all criticism. Their belief is that their Organisation is under the direct management of Almighty God and that they alone have the right to interpret scripture and lay down belief globally.

They even claim *"The Bible cannot be properly understood without Jehovah's visible organisation in mind"* (WT 1 October 1996-7 p.587). They also claim that *"in all the earth"* their organisation *"is directed by God's holy spirit or active force...to it alone God's Sacred Word the Bible is not a sealed book"* (WT 1 July 1973 p.402). They make the extraordinary statement – *"Would we know the way of the truth if it had*

not been for guidance from the organisation. Really, can we get along without the direction of God's organisation? No, we cannot" (WT 15 January 1983 p. 27).

7. Obedience to the Cult

The leaders are very specific about obedience and stipulate "respond to the directions of the organisation as you would the voice of God" (WT 6/15/1957 p370). They claim "The governing body is appointed by Jehovah's God... Its purpose is to issue directions on spiritual provisions to all God's people" (WT 11/1/1944 p330) and that their organisation is the "Lord's representative on earth" (WT 6/15/1938 p182). They are emphatic that their leadership is "The only organisation on earth that understands the deep things of God" (WT 7/1/1973 p402). Jehovah's Witnesses are prohibited from reading Christian material and making their own personal exploration of the Bible. The leadership specifically discourages questioning or criticism – "Meekly go along with the Lord's theocratic organization and wait for further clarification, rather than balk at the first mention of a thought unpalatable to us and proceed to quibble and mouth our criticisms and opinions as though they were worth more than the slave's provision of spiritual food. Theocratic ones will appreciate the Lord's visible organization Jehovah's Witnesses and not be so foolish as to put against Jehovah's channel their own human reasoning and sentiment and personal feelings." (WT February 1, 1952, pp. 79-80).

8. Ruthless Authority

The cult believes that the Jehovah's Witnesses are right and all others are wrong - "Is not the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society the one and only channel which the Lord has used in dispensing his truth continually since the beginning of the harvest period?" (WT, 4/1/1919 p6414) Total obedience is demanded with the threat – "Failure to respond to the direction of the organisation indicates a rejection of divine rulership" (WT 2/15/1976 p1824). Members are under the total authority of the leaders – "Jehovah's organisation...should influence our every decision" (WT 3/15/1969 p172). They staggeringly claim to be "An organisation to direct the minds of God's people" (WT 3/1/1983 p25).

Those who decide to leave the Jehovah's Witnesses are cut off and severely ostracised at the command of their leaders.

9. A Religion of Withdrawal & Fear

Although they engage in intensive door-to-door visitation, Jehovah's Witnesses, in effect, withdraw from the world, not voting in elections, not participating in civic activities, not engaging in charitable acts for those in need.

Jehovah's Witnesses live under threat of being 'dis-fellowshipped'. They can be dis-fellowshipped for working for military establishments, for other religious organisations, for voting in elections, for accepting blood transfusion and for celebrating birthdays and holidays such as Easter and Christmas. Ex-members are not to be greeted (WT 15.7.85).

10. Truth & Lies, Love & Hatred

Jesus declares that the truth sets us free but advice given by leaders to Jehovah's Witnesses raises many doubts. For example "lying to God's enemies is not really lying but war strategy" (WT, 6/1/1960 p352). Similarly, "while malicious lying is definitely condemned in the Bible, this does not mean that a person is under obligation to divulge truthful information to people who are not entitled to it". (Aid to Bible Understanding – 1969 and Insight on the Scriptures Vol II 1988).

Jesus teaches us to love, even our enemies, but Jehovah's Witnesses are taught the reverse. "Enlightened Christians rightly hate those who are confirmed enemies of God..." (WT 15.11.70). They are specifically encouraged to hate those who have left the cult. "A Christian must hate the person with whom the badness is inseparably linked" (WT 15.7.61). They even say – "In order to hate what is bad a Christian must hate the person" (WT, 7/15/1961 p420).

12. Denial of Biblical Teaching

Jehovah's Witnesses deny the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus, the immediate loving Fatherhood of God and the personhood of the Holy

Spirit. In this they stand against the established teachings of the Christian Church over the centuries.

13. Denial of Christ

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus was the first creation of God – "was actually a creature of God" (see WT 22 August 1976 pp25, 26 and Aid to Bible Understanding p918). They do not believe that Jesus is God. With no supporting evidence they believe Jesus was known as Michael the Archangel before he came to earth and after he went back to heaven. They insist on denying the clear Biblical teaching that Christ is fully man and fully God (Jn. 1.1, 5.18, 20.27, Col. 2.9, Phil. 2.6-8). Specifically, they deny the oneness of Jesus and God the Father (Jn. 10.30, Jn. 14.7-11) and deny that Jesus is the only way through which we can know God as our Father (Jn. 14.6).

Russell dogmatically asserted "the man Jesus is dead, for ever dead" ('Studies in the Scriptures' C.T. Russell Vol.5 p.454). Their strange definitions of Jesus clearly reject the Biblical teaching that Jesus is "the same yesterday, and today and for ever" (Heb. 13.8).

14. Denial of the Father's Love

Jesus leads us to an understanding of God as a loving, caring Father with whom we can have a close personal relationship. He specifically addressed God as 'Abba' – daddy. This close bond is central to the Christian experience, but is absent from the experience of Jehovah's Witnesses. The people of God are a loving family into which we have been adopted as brothers and sisters.

15. Denial of the Holy Spirit

Jehovah's Witnesses present the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force contradicting the presentation of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament as a living person. The Holy Spirit is a 'helper' (John 14.26). The Holy Spirit speaks (Acts. 8.29, 13.2, Heb. 3.7). He fulfils many roles - a guide, a comforter, a teacher. He can be offended. The gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit are difficult to find among Jehovah's Witnesses, because they do not have any personal relationship with Him. For the Jehovah's Witnesses the Holy Spirit is 'it'.

16. False Prophecies 1874 - 1914

From its beginning the Watch Tower Society was a date-setting cult. Throughout the years of its existence specific and timed prophecies have been made. These have all been proved false and have thus brought discredit on the organisation. The obsession with precise times of God's intervention is a denial of the teachings of Jesus about end times. Jesus said "Of that day and hour no one knows..." (Matt. 24.36) and "You do not know on what day your Lord is coming" (Matt. 14.42) and "You do not know when the time will come" (Mk. 13.33). The warning "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority" (Acts 1.7) is completely ignored.

Russell himself was deeply involved in date-setting. He identified 1874 as being the date marking the end of 6,000 so-called years of human history and expected Christ's return that year. It passed and the followers were disillusioned, but they then asserted that Christ had returned in 1874, but invisibly.

Curiously, Russell looked to the measurements of the Great Pyramid at Giza for guidance in his prophecies. In the 1901 edition of Volume 3 of his 'Studies in the Scriptures' he gave great significance to the length of the entrance passage at the Pyramid which he believed symbolised years. His calculation showed 1874's as "the period of trouble". In the 1923 edition of the same book the length of the passage was changed and the date was changed from 1875 to 1915. Significantly, when Russell died in 1916 he was buried beneath a pyramid gravestone.

In 1877 it was predicted that the end of the world was nearer than most had supposed and in 1886 they declared "The time is come for Messiah to take the dominion of the earth" (Zion's Watch Tower & Herald of Christ's Presence January 1886 p1). In 1889 they said "we present truths that the setting up of the kingdom of God has already begun...and that 'the battle of the great day of God Almighty' (Rev. 16.14), which will end in AD 1914 with the complete overthrow of the earth's present rulership, is already commenced" (C.T. Russell 'The Time is at Hand' WBTS 1989). In 1904 they said "The stress of the great times of trouble

will be on us soon, somewhere between 1910 and 1912 culminating with the end of the 'Times of the Gentiles' October 1914. (C.T. Russell 'The New Creation' WBTS 1904). Significantly, in 1915 the date was changed from AD1914 to AD1915.

The crucial date in 1914 was arrived at through a contrived interpretation of Daniel 4. It was believed that 1914 would be the conclusion of the system of things and that this was the date when Christ's active rulership began. Jehovah's Witnesses believe, without any supporting evidence, that God selected the Watch Tower as his one and only official channel, giving ultimate authority to its ruling body. In May 1914 they asserted "There is absolutely no ground for Bible students to question that the confirmation of this Gospel age is now even at the door...the Great crisis...that will consume the Ecclesiastical heavens and the social earth is very near" (The WT 1 May 1914 p.134).

17. False Prophecies 1917 - 1975

In 1917 Charles Russell said "The present Great War in Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the Scriptures". (Pastor Russell's Sermons 1917 p676). After Russell's death, the new leader Rutherford, continued the pattern of false prophecy claiming that 1925 marked the year of Christ's Kingdom. "Millions now living will never die" (Rutherford WBTS 1920 pp97 & 105, 140).

Following the failed prophecies spurious predictions continued in the 1930's. In 1930 they claimed "the great climax is at hand" ('Light' J.F. Rutherford WBTS 1930 p327). In 1931 they claimed "Armageddon is at hand" ('Vindication' J.F. Rutherford WBTS 1931 Vol.1 p147). In 1933 they claimed "The incontrovertible proof that the time of deliverance is at hand" ('Preparation' J. F. Rutherford p11). The flow of false predictions continued into the 1940's. In 1940 they claimed "the Kingdom is here, the King is enthroned. Armageddon is just ahead...the great climax has been reached" ('The Messenger' September 1940 p6). In 1941 they spoke of the remaining months before Armageddon "the final end is very near" (Watch Tower Society 15 September 1941 p288). In 1942 they claimed "now with Armageddon immediately before us". In 1943 they said "the final end of all things...is at hand". They repeated this claim in 1944 saying "Armageddon is near at hand". In 1946 they stated that "the disaster of Armageddon...is at the door" ('Let God be True' WBTS 1946 p194). They persisted in these claims in 1950 and in 1953 claimed "Armageddon is so near at hand it will strike the generation now living" ('You may Survive Armageddon into God's New World' p11). By 1958 they were still persisting "When will Armageddon be fulfilled?...It will be very soon." ('Tickets from Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained' WBTS 1958 p205). By this time it became apparent that the warnings of Jesus were highly relevant to what was happening. He said "False prophets will appear and deceive many people" (Matt. 24.11).

By 1968 even the Watch Tower leadership were obliged to admit errors in prophecy - "There have been those in times past who predicted an 'end to the world' even announcing a specific date. The 'end' did not come. They were guilty of false prophesying...missing from such people were God's truths and the evidence that he was guiding and using them". However, they continued "But what about today? Today we have the evidence required, all of it and it is overwhelming!" ('Awake' magazine 8 October 1968 p.23).

Surprisingly, they persisted in making even more dubious prophecies and in 1973 they declared "The great tribulation is very near" ('True Peace and Security' WBTS 1973 p83). In 1974 because the world's end was claimed to be "so very near" Jehovah's Witnesses were encouraged to sell their homes and property and to devote themselves to fulltime service "in the short time remaining before the wicked world's end" ('Kingdom Ministry' May 1974 p3). In 1975 they said "Very short must be the time that remains" ('Man's Salvation Out of World Distress at Hand').

18. Admissions of Errors

In 1980 the leadership admitted they were responsible for "the building of hopes centred on 1976". (WT March 15 1980 pp17-18).

As late as 1993 the leaders had to admit "time calculations and the expectations that they associated with these gave rise to serious disappointments" (WTB & TS 1993 p633).

19. Confusion & Contradiction

There is much inconsistency in the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses over the years. In 1898 it was stated "Yes, we believe our Lord Jesus Christ while on earth was really worshipped and properly so" (WT 7/15/1898 p2337). In 1954 they said "No distinct worship is to be rendered to Jesus Christ, now glorified in heaven" (WT 1.1.1954 pg 31) and in 1959 they said "Do not erroneously conclude that Christians are to worship Christ. That is not what the Bible taught" (WT 7.15.1959 p.41). In 1964 they said "It is unscriptural for worshippers of the living and true God to render worship to the Son of God, Jesus Christ" (WT 11.1.1964 p671). Originally, they taught that Christ could be worshipped, then they said he could not.

Disillusioned by false prophecies and changes of doctrine, the confidence in a leadership which claims to speak with the authority of God, has been steadily eroded. The New Testament contains considerable evidence of the worship of Christ but Jehovah's Witnesses reject this. Their NWT translation of Hebrews 1.6. in 1970 stated "Let all God's angels worship Him". In 1971 they altered this to "Let all God's angels do obeisance to Him", but they gave a footnote - or "worship Him". Twenty years later Jehovah's Witnesses condemned translations that rendered this verse as worship (WT 15 Jan 1992 p23).

Originally, it was taught that the second coming of Christ would be an earthly and visible return, then they changed it to a heavenly and invisible return.

Initially, the gathered Abaddon Army in Revelation 11 was seen to be satan. Later, they said it was Jesus Christ. In their early years they accepted blood transfusion. Now they reject it.

There are many inconsistencies within what they call the 'Organisation'. In its formative years the teaching about the Organisation was very clear - "A visible organisation is out of harm and in God's divine plan" (WT 12/1/1894 p1743) and also "Beware of 'organisation', it is wholly unnecessary" (WT 9/15/1895 p1866). Many years later they were being taught "Jehovah's organisation has a visible part on earth which represents the Lord and is under his direct supervision" (WT 5/1/1938).

The Watch Tower changed its position on the resurrection of the dead - initially all were to be raised, then only some. It changed its doctrine about life-saving vaccination, from rejecting it to accepting it.

Until the 1930's Jehovah's Witnesses taught that Jesus died on a Cross, but in 1936 they changed this and insisted He died on a stake.

20. Embarrassment

The history of the Jehovah's Witnesses is one of great embarrassment. In 1917 their 'Finished Mystery' book identified the fallen angel of Revelation (9.1) as satan. Since 1969 they have totally reversed their view and see him as Jesus ('Then is Finished the Mystery of God' p232). In 1879 they said the Archangel Michael was "the anti-Christ" but in 1883 they said he was the Lord of glory. In 1917 he was labelled 'the pope' and then in 1927 he was called 'the great and beloved son of God'. Between 1879 and 1989 the leadership reversed its teaching on the men of Sodom no fewer than six times. People have been confused and deceived.

21. Salvation by Human Effort

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that salvation depends upon works rather than grace and faith. They state "To get one's name written in that Book of Life will depend upon one's works" (WT 4/1.1947 p204). They also refer to the importance of "working hard for the reward of eternal life" (WT 8/15/1972 p491). In contrast with this, Christians believe that we are saved by the grace of God. Christians put their faith in a personal, loving, living Saviour with whom they can have a close and intimate relationship. Contrary to this the cult declares "Put faith in a victorious organisation" (WT 3/1/1979 p1).

22. A Dubious Translation

Having used Christian translations of the Bible for decades, they then rejected them. An anonymous group of Jehovah's Witnesses produced their own version of the Bible in 1950 entitled 'The New World Translation'. Many Bible scholars are strongly critical of it because of fundamental mis-translations.

Of the NWT, the eminent Bible scholar Professor HH Rowley said "From beginning to end this volume is a shining example of how the Bible should not be translated...". He called it "an insult to the Word of God". Dr. Brut Metzger, Professor of New Testament language and literature at Princeton Theological Seminary stated "The Jehovah's Witnesses have incorporated in their translations of the New Testament several quite erroneous renderings of the Greek". One of the leading Greek scholars of the world, Dr. Julius Mantey said "I have never read any New Testament so badly translated as 'The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures'. In fact, it is not a translation at all. Rather, it is a distortion of the New Testament".

23. Biblical Distortions

The great teaching of the Apostle John about the divinity of Christ – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1.1 RSV) is rendered by Jehovah's Witnesses as "originally the word was and the word was with God and the word was a god" (NWT). The translation "a god" makes a nonsense of basic Biblical teaching. Significantly, the NWT translates the original Greek word 'theos' as God elsewhere. The Bible clearly states "For in him [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2.9 RSV). In their translation the Jehovah's Witnesses render this as "for in him (Christ) the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily" (NWT). The original word in the Greek text was Theotes meaning deity or divinity whereas the Jehovah's Witnesses use another Greek word Theiotes, which means divineness or divine quality.

In Titus 2.13 "awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," (RSV) is rendered by the Jehovah's Witnesses "awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the great God and of (the) Saviour of us Jesus Christ" they thus seek to separate Christ from God, to fit in with their beliefs. The truth is that "God and Saviour" is a joint title as is confirmed in "The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 2.20; 3.18) and "Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1.1).

24. The Names of God

Most Bible scholars dispute the use of the name Jehovah's by this cult. The pronunciation Jehovah's comes from imposing the vowels of Adonai on the consonants Y H W H with Y shifting to J, W shifting to V and the initial (unvoiced) A of Adonai becoming an E. The Jews had such a high view of the majesty of God that they were extremely reluctant to speak the divine name YHWH (the sacred four-letter word called the Tetragrammaton). This was spoken by the High Priest once a year on the day of atonement. The problem was resolved by Jews instead saying the word Adonai – the Hebrew for Lord. At the time of Jesus, the word Jehovah did not exist. When Jesus taught us how to pray he said "Our Father" not "Father Jehovah". The second leader of the Jehovah's Witnesses, who gave the movement their name was not familiar with Hebrew – the language of the oldest parts of scripture.

The story of Moses meeting God records his question to Him about his name. It is recorded "God said to Moses I AM WHO I AM". He also said "say this to the people of Israel I AM has sent me to you" (Ex. 3.14). He is also reported to have said "Say this to the people of Israel, 'the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.'" (Ex. 3.15 RSV).

25. Salvation: Three Curious Groups

Jehovah's Witnesses suggest there are three groups of people who will be saved by good works, but curiously, each group is working to gain a different salvation. The first group is a small one comprising 144,000 who were supposedly elected by God for special spiritual privileges. The second group includes all other Jehovah's Witnesses, but the third group includes non-Jehovah's Witnesses who have lived good enough lives to have an opportunity to earn salvation after death. By inventing these three groups, the Jehovah's Witnesses are in denial of fundamental Biblical teaching: Salvation can be found only through Jesus and His

atonement sacrifice on the Cross (Jn. 3.16; Heb. 9.27, Acts 4.12, Acts 16.31). Jehovah's Witnesses' understanding of grace is the opportunity for people to earn their own salvation. The Bible teaches that it is a gift of God unearned and undeserved (Eph. 2.8-9).

26. The Consequences

Many Jehovah's Witness have died because of being deprived of lifesaving blood transfusions. This is because the leaders banned it on the grounds of their misinterpretation of rules laid down in the Old Testament. The Hebraic law (Lev. 17.10-14) bans the consuming of blood and the eating of meat which has not first had the blood drained from it. Jews, to whom the law was given, agree that this does not preclude the use of blood for medical purposes.

27. God's Warnings and Promises

Jesus promised that the gates of hell will not prevail against His Church (Matt. 16.18). Jesus warned "Watch out for false prophets" (Matt. 7.15). Jesus clearly stated "watch out that no-one deceives you. For many will come in my name claiming 'I am the Christ' and will deceive many" (Matt. 24.4). He forewarned "many will turn away from the faith" (Matt. 24.10) and "many false prophets will appear" (Matt. 24.11). He warned against 'false Christs' who would deceive even Christians. The Bible speaks of people who "will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (2 Tim. 4.4).

28. The Damage

Many sincere people have been misled by the spurious teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses. They have been indoctrinated to rely primarily upon the Watch Tower Society and its publications – above the Bible. The Jehovah's Witnesses hierarchy falsely claim to be the only organisation of God's people in the world, styling themselves His appointed overseers, the 'faithful and discreet slave'. Along with other cults and new religions, such as Mormonism, their major doctrines are opposed to apostolic Christian teaching. Their rules have split families and have caused deaths by the refusal of blood transfusions, on spurious Biblical grounds. Many have been misled and separated from the people of God. The obedience of Christians is to the living Lord – not blind obedience to the human leadership of a cult. The declaration of the Church in all the centuries is Jesus Christ is Lord.

The command of Jesus is, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He promised 'Surely I am with you always to the very end of the age'". (Matt. 28.18-20)

The biblical, Trinitarian blessing of the Church of Christ remains: "The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13.14).

28. Former Jehovah's Witnesses

"I was a fully 'paid up', baptised member of the Jehovah's Witnesses. I had little idea then of their history of endless false prophecies, grave theological errors and complete turn arounds. One of their gravest errors is the denial of Jesus' eternal divinity. The WT Society deny His seminal command in John 3 "You must be born again...to see the Kingdom of God". Philip Snow, now a committed Christian

"I view my former friends in the Jehovah's Witnesses as people who, while looking for God, have been misled and lost their way. The zeal of the Witness that called on me diverted me from my earlier commitment to Jesus and all my understanding of the word of God was exchanged for the mind-set of the Watch Tower. I was a Jehovah's Witness for 25 years being drawn into an exclusive legalistic organisation. When in hospital following a life-threatening haemorrhage I made the biggest decision of my life and accepted a blood transfusion. It was the organisation or my own freedom of conscience. I turned to Jesus and broke free". Audrey Hogan, now a committed Christian