

Jehovah's
Witnesses

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Historical Background

Jehovah's Witnesses were not known as such until 1931. Up until that time they had been called Millennial Dawnists, International Bible Students, and earlier Russellites, after Charles Taze Russell, who brought about their first formal organization in 1872 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and was appointed its "Pastor" in 1876. He also brought about their first incorporation in 1884, and was their first president. Under his direction, headquarters were moved to Brooklyn, New York, and another corporation formed under the laws of that state. In 1939 the name was changed to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Inc. --- "Watch Tower Society," in common parlance --- and sometimes simply the "Bible Society Russell."

Russell:

"Russell, a Congregational layman, was seriously troubled by the doctrine of the eternal duration of hell and subsequently by doubts about the reliability of Holy Scripture. He credited the Adventists with restoring his faith in the doctrine of inspiration and with removing his doubts. Their theories concerning the imminence of Christ's Second Coming and the total annihilation of the wicked appealed to him. Russell expanded the Adventist view and soon gained a large following by his lectures 'Photo Drama of Creation' and 'Millions Now Living Shall Never Die.' His publications are said to have reached a total of more than 13,000,000. The Divine Plan of the Ages alone had a circulation of 5,000,000. His popularity was so great that even his divorce [to be referred to again later] could not diminish it nor impede the growth of his cult." (E. E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America, Second Edition, 1956, p.459.)

Another source says: "Russell as a youth was of a religious nature and in early life seems to have been possessed of a morbid fear of hell. This extreme was followed by a period of religious doubt and uncertainty, during which he seems to have dabbled in the mysteries of Oriental religions. Then he came back to the study of the Bible and threw away the whole Christian creed, gradually substituting for the evangelical truth of the Scriptures the vagaries

on which his system of false teaching is built." (Herbert M. Wyrick, Seven Religious Isms, Second Edition, 1940, pp. 27-28.

"From at least 1895 onwards, 'Pastor Russell,' as he is called, functioned more as a prophet than a pastor. His prophetic office was given official recognition as a result of challenges to his authority by dissident members in 1895. At that time his wife, Maria Russell, answered her husband's critics by arguing he was the 'faithful and wise servant' of Matthew 24:45. This notion was later applied to Russell's successors, and to the leadership of the Witnesses collectively, to give the group a doctrinal stance almost identical to the magisterium of Roman Catholicism. Equally important for the development of authority has been the role of tradition, ascribed first to Russell, and then to his successors as the medium through which scripture is to be interpreted, thus indicating a form of apostolic succession. Similarly, the spiritual obedience demanded by the Witnesses is like the Roman Catholic understanding of the pope's ability to speak *ex cathedra*. Finally, the authority of the leadership is bound together by an understanding of progressive revelation whereby the leadership receives both direct revelation from God and an authoritative understanding of Scripture through their function as the 'faithful and discreet slave,' which is a prophetic class within the organization." (Jehovah's Witnesses, "Dictionary of Christianity in America [1990], p. 591.)

(One of said class, William J. Schnell, freed himself as it were in 1954 and in 1956 published a book entitled Thirty Years a Watch Tower Slave: The Confessions of a Converted Jehovah's Witness. It is most enlightening and has gone through numerous printings but cannot be reviewed here. My copy is from the Eighth Printing, January 1962.

The following from the pen of Russell in the September 15, 1910 issue of The Watch Tower, p. 298, relative to his six volumes of Scripture Studies (followed by a seventh, a compilation of other writings of his, published posthumously), will illustrate something of his self-proclaimed "authoritative understanding of scripture" mentioned in the second paragraph above:

"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 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 his Bible, for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he has 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 have the light of Scriptures."

When Pastor Russell, as he was still called, died in 1916 (October 31), Schnell tells that there was a behind-the-scenes tug of war for his mantle notwithstanding his will left instructions for certain men to succeed him. But through shrewd maneuvering by Joseph F. Rutherford, widely known as Judge Rutherford, he emerged as its president. He had been a Missouri lawyer who occasionally sat as a circuit court judge, had been Russell's attorney in court, and was the legal counsel of the Watch Tower Society. As president, he wrote tirelessly, as had Russell, yet even more copiously, but mostly in the same vein notwithstanding some exceptions.

Rutherford:

Under Rutherford's governmental system, three corporations came to control the society: the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Inc., of New York; the Watch Tower and Tract Society of Pennsylvania; and the International Bible Students Association of England -- with him the moving power in all of them. Also under him, at the beginning of his presidency (1916), the name Millennial Dawnists had been adopted, and then changed to Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931, as already noted. Though for a time pressure built up against him inside the society because of his

unusual election as president, he was finally able to overcome that onus and became so revered that when he died in California, January 8, 1942, his immediate friends wanted to bury him on the grounds of Beth Sarim (House of the Princes), where he had lived. That was a villa within the city limits of San Diego, California, that he had so named and was holding in trust for Abraham and David and other "princes" to take possession of upon returning to earth at the beginning of their anticipated "millennium." It was hoped thus to make it a shrine to which members of the New World Society might make pilgrimages. But the city of San Diego would not allow a zoning change to make the lot a burial plot. Eventually it was sold, as will be noted later.

(It might be mentioned here that Russell's sixth volume of Scripture Studies had been published in 1904, and that the seventh volume, entitled The Finished Mystery, compiled from his previous writings, was not published until 1917, soon after his death, when it caused a split in the organization of which Rutherford was the new president -- because it was more pacifistic than a large segment of Russellites during the national emergency of 1918, in connection with World War I. The larger group followed Rutherford, while the smaller one remained by itself and became the Dawn Bible Student Association, having in the late 1980's a membership of about 60,000. During the same period, Jehovah's Witnesses claimed a world membership of 2,842,531, with over 800,000 in North America.)

Rutherford often said "millions now living will never die" (as Russell had also done before him), meaning Armageddon was close and the Advent of Christ and his Kingdom, or Theocracy, or New World [Third World] to come, was at hand. Also (as Russell before him) he did not live to see it, but died in 1942, leaving the presidency in the hands of Nathan H. Knorr, with whom the certainty of the imminence of Armageddon and the Advent of Christ still persisted.

Their "Worlds" were as follows: First World, creation till the flood, when angels ruled the world but the good angels could not

subdue the evil angels under the leadership of Satan, and God destroyed it with the flood; Second World, from the flood till the second personal coming of Christ, believed to be about to occur, first calculated to be 1914 but recalculated from time to time due to lack of fulfillment at any targeted date, Satan ruling till then with unchallenged power over all political governments and all religious bodies except the Witnesses and their Watch Tower Society, which after 1919 was described as "God's Organization," versus all others combined, religious and political alike, being the Devil's organization -- never calling their own assemblies churches, but congregations, and their meeting places Kingdom Halls; Third World, the world to come, a "New World" order following the second personal coming of Christ to last a thousand years, first conceived, but later as never ending -- at the beginning of which the Devil and his organization will be annihilated, with "God's Organization" surviving and constituting the Kingdom of Christ, whom they identify as the archangel Michael -- their claim being that Christ "bore another name in heaven, which name is Michael." [Compare Revelation 12:7-12].

That identity claim, however, is very inconsistent. For, as we shall see later, the Witnesses correctly identify Christ with the "Word" of John 1:1-3, whom they falsely claim was "begotten" by God, and was therefore not himself "God," but "a god, " by whom all else was created -- which would, of course, include angels -- even "Michael the archangel" (Jude 9). So, Christ could hardly have issued forth from God the Father and then created himself! — just one of their many inconsistencies and distortions of scripture, as viewed by much of the religious world.

Knorr:

Nathan H. Knorr, Rutherford's successor in 1942, while not as prolific a writer as his predecessors had been (but followed "diligently in the footsteps of Russell and Rutherford"), had begun working in the Watch Tower's publishing office upon graduation from high school in 1923, had become its director in 1934 because of considerable administrative skills, and in 1940 had become vice-president of the Pennsylvania branch of the Watch Tower Society.

At the time of becoming president of the Society in its entirety, one of his major concerns was to improve its training program.

Soon in 1943, he established the Gilead Missionary Training School in South Lansing, New York. An important next step was the organization of the "theocratic ministry schools" in every Jehovah's Witness congregation. And in order to aid the congregations in their local training programs three text books containing information about Bible contents, witnessing methods, and history, were published over a ten-year period. They were: Theocratic Aid to Kingdom Publishers (1945), Equipped for Every Good Work (1946), and Qualified to be Ministers (1955).

In addition to the above, a new series of doctrinal books was published during Knorr's presidency (basically following the lines of Russell and Rutherford, while replacing them in popular usage). None was by a single author, however, and they were published anonymously, though it is surmised that Knorr was their primary author, according to his Press Secretary in an interview on June 6, 1962, with Anthony A. Hoekema, author of The Four Major Cults (1963) -- as stated on its page 232, in its text and footnote 36.

One of the first of said books, The Truth Shall Make You Free, was published in 1943. In 1946 came Let God Be True, a summary of the main doctrines taught by Jehovah's Witnesses (principally by Russell and Rutherford), revised in 1952, more than 17,000,000 copies of which are said to have been printed, in 50 languages. Make Sure of All Things, a compilation of scripture passages on 70 topics for handy reference by Jehovah's Witnesses when making calls, appeared in 1953 and was revised in 1957. By means of these publications and many others, which have been sold by the millions, the Society now spreads its teaching far and wide.

Another important project carried out during Knorr's presidency was a translation of the Bible in modern English. In 1950 the first of these translations appeared: The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, that is, the New Testament. The Old Testament was released by portions in 1953, 1955, 1957, 1958, and 1960. And in 1961 the entire Bible in the New World Translation

was published in one volume, considered as a revised edition of the New World Translation. For some reason, its translators preferred to remain anonymous, even after their death. And Hoekema, cited above, expressed a widespread evaluation of their work as follows: "This translation is by no means an objective rendering into English; it incorporates many features which support Jehovah-Witness doctrine" -- that is, it does so at the expense of "objective rendering" -- as "the Word was a god" instead of "was God" in John 1:1, and in Colossians 1:16-17 the word "other" is supplied four times to make Christ, God's Son, to be creator of "all other things" instead of creator of "all things," as it reads in the Greek text.

The above-mentioned translation was prepared especially for and in anticipation of what the Witnesses call the New World, or Third World, which they anticipate following the second personal advent of Christ, when they believe all his enemies will be annihilated and their own organization alone will be left to constitute the Kingdom of Christ on earth, as mentioned already on the preceding page. The translators, in their "Forward," stated: "We count ourselves privileged to present this New World translation in the interest of Bible education, at a time when that righteous world is dawning [emphasis added], where the name of the Author of the Holy Scriptures will be honored by all who live."

Another achievement by Knorr was a tremendous expansion of work in foreign countries. Whereas in 1942, witnessing was carried on in 54 countries, in 1961 it was done in 165. That also involved enlarging the group's program of international conferences, and in August 1958 he addressed 252,000 persons at the International Convention in Yankee Stadium and the Polo Grounds of New York City.

But, dying in 1977, Knorr's final years are said to have been "marked by the expectation and disappointment surrounding the prediction that the Second Advent of Christ would take place in 1975." (I am not aware of any precise date now set, but it is still

confidently expected to be soon, within the lifetime of the present generation.)

Franz:

Knorr was succeeded as president by Frederick W. Franz, about whom I have no information except "(1893-)," the year of his birth. That made him 84 years of age, without many more years of life expectancy unless their anticipated New World should arrive sooner -- which it has not done yet.

However, since the passing of Knorr, the affairs of Jehovah's Witnesses have been managed by a board rather than principally by a president, who under Russell and Rutherford, and particularly under the latter had become completely totalitarian and dictatorial, complete with spying apparatus throughout the entire organization to keep tab on every individual in it for the president. But the basic theology of the Witnesses is practically unchanged from that worked out by Pastor Russell himself, though his personal character (his methods and morals) was so unsavory that his successors and their followers have disclaimed being "Russellites." The following selected examples will indicate something of why by the rank and file, in addition to an overweening ambition of Rutherford himself for pre-eminence and power.

Russell's Personal Character:

In 1897, after 17 years of marriage, Russell and his wife separated, due partially to a growing divergence of theological views, and six years later, in 1903, she sued for legal separation and alimony because of his unmanly conduct and gross familiarity with other women. The decree was finally granted in 1906, following sensational testimony and his being scored by the courts. The record of open court testimony in regard to his ultimate admission is said to be: "I am like a jelly-fish; I float around here and there; I touch this one and that one, and if she responds, I take her to me, and if not, I float to others."

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, of his headquarters town in New York, also exposed various fraudulent schemes and scams of his. One pertained to "Miracle Wheat" he was selling for \$1.00 per pound and advertising as growing five times as much as any other brand. For said exposures, he sued the paper for \$100,000.00 in damages. And before going to court, the paper stated: "The Eagle goes even further and declares that at the trial it will show that 'Pastor' Russell's religious cult is nothing more than a money-making scheme." The court's decision vindicated the Eagle's charge and established the paper's reliability in regard to him.

In another libel suit (many of which he initiated) -- this time against a critic in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, who had published a tract entitled, "Some Facts About the Self-Styled 'Pastor' Charles T. Russell," challenging his qualifications as a minister, or his moral example as a 'Pastor' -- Russell proved to be a thoroughgoing perjurer. Starting out denying all the charges his critic had made, which were many and embarrassing, under persistent cross-examination he had to admit to all of them.

One of said charges was that he was a pseudo-scholar and philosopher who "never attended the higher schools of learning; knows comparatively nothing of philosophy, systematic or historical theology; and is totally ignorant of dead languages." Another was that his wife had divorced him [it was a decree of separation, actually, not absolute divorce] and the Court had awarded her alimony. As a result of these charges among many others all vindicated in court, the High Court of Ontario, in session March, 1913, ruled that there were no grounds for libel; and the case was thrown out of Court "by the evidence furnished by 'Pastor' Russell himself."

Of specific examples of perjury, published from transcripts of the trial, we mention two. One referred to Russell's boasted scholarship. Asked on the witness stand whether he knew the Greek alphabet, he replied, "Oh, yes," but when further asked to identify the Greek letters at the top of a page of the Greek New Testament that was handed him, he was unable to do so, and

finally admitted under direct "yes" or "no" questioning that he was not "familiar with the Greek language." The other referred to his having previously claimed "ordination" by a recognized religious body, and a status equal or superior to other ordained and accredited ministers, and that after a long pause he answered, "I never was," when pressed by the point-blank question, "Now, you never were ordained by a bishop, clergyman, presbytery, council, or any body of men living.

Soon afterward, in the early stages of World War I, he was deported from Canada because he hindered mobilization, according to The Daily Standard Union, November 1, 1916 -- which is mentioned here as an example of his militant activism against civil governments, characteristic of Jehovah's Witnesses to this day, beginning with him -- not because of being pacifists as a matter of principle, but because of insisting that civil governments are all of the Devil -- as they also insist that all organized religion is, except their own.

Anti-Civil Government and Anti-Organized Religion Tactics of Jehovah's Witnesses:

Through the years they have even often deliberately maneuvered to get themselves arrested and jailed, or imprisoned, or in spectacular court trials, to get publicity and public sympathy and also acclaim among their own for heroism -- according to Schnell, who has already been introduced, and who tells of his final assignment as the "patsy" or fall guy on such a mission in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1938.

He states that upon receiving that assignment he had all sorts of "troublous thoughts," yet adding: "But I had been arrested many times before in the Watch Tower cause, about sixteen times to be exact, both in Germany and in the United States. I had faced mobs before, too, and had been stoned twice and one time practically brained with a heavy oak chair. So, while I did not like the prospect, I felt that this was a price I had to pay." (Chapter 16 of his book, Thirty Years a Watch Tower Slave.)

Answers to Questions

1. Do they believe in Christ?

Yes, after a fashion, but not as we believe the Bible to teach. They recognize him to be referred to as "the Word" in John 1:1, which reads as follows in the American Standard Version, in harmony with most all others: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe he was God, or "in the beginning with God," but "had a beginning," and God the Father "was older." They call him "a god," and have him begotten in a literal sense as a spirit being by God the Father, which makes him "a god," but not "God".

They also acknowledge that later he was "made flesh" and dwelt among men as God's Son (John 1:14), but not as "God with us" (Matthew 1:23), "manifested in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). Instead, they say: "God took the perfect life of his only begotten Son and transferred it from heaven to ... the womb of the unmarried girl Mary. ... Thus God's Son was conceived or given a start as a human creature. ... [and] grew in Mary's womb to the point of birth." The life that Jesus as a man laid down in order to ransom mankind from sin was "a perfect human life, no more, no less." But what was "raised from the grave, [was] not a human creature, but a spirit" -- the life that had been "transferred down to the womb of the Jewish virgin." "So to make himself visible and appear to his disciples for forty days after his resurrection that they might be his witnesses, Jesus materialized different bodies on various occasions [resembling on one or two occasions the body in which he died] to show he was alive but no longer a human creature" --even if he did look like one!

In other words, the Witnesses do not believe in a Godhead consisting of three personalities, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as is made clear in the New Testament, with a plurality also implied in the Old Testament. They declare that "such a doctrine is not of God" -- "that Satan is the originator of the trinity doctrine" -- and that, "Sincere persons who want to know the true God and serve Him find it a bit difficult to love and worship a complicated,

freakish-looking, three-headed God," as they caricature the concept of a triune God, Trinity.

(Because this is basic to understanding some other things Jehovah's Witnesses make much ado about, we shall discuss it at some length -- and may sometimes duplicate rather than referring back to something already said somewhat earlier. Also, some of it will be rather technical, which the Witnesses themselves are in their claims, but which we think need refuting. Unless stated otherwise, our quotations of scripture will be taken from the American Standard Version, mentioned in the first paragraph above.)

In Genesis 1:1, where it is said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the word for "God" is the Hebrew word *elohim*, plural, the singular of which is *el*; and the verb "created" is singular, indicating that the plurality acted together as if one entity -- no dissension or opposition as among the mythological "gods" of the pagans. Genesis 1:26 states: "And God [*elohim*] said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," with verse 27 saying that "God" (plural) created man in "his" (singular) own image -- again the plurality, working together as one and having a common image or likeness, described by even a singular pronoun. And Genesis 3:21 states that after man had sinned, "Jehovah God [*elohim*, plural] said, behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." Also, Deuteronomy 6:4 says: Hear, O Israel: Jehovah (singular) our God [*elohim*, plural] is one Jehovah" -- much as we might say, "The army (singular), our soldiers (plural), is one army." That is to say again and in another way that the Godhead (or Godhood) consists of a plurality of entities, each of which is God -- indicated in the New Testament scriptures as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit -- a Triune God, or Trinity.

But the Father is never called "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:3) till after the birth of Jesus of the virgin Mary (see Luke 1:26-35), except prophetically, as in Isaiah 9:6-7 -- which is an exceedingly significant consideration. For it was in the womb of Mary that "the Word was made flesh," and [after his birth] that he "dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only

begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14) -- being both "seen" and "handled" (1 John 1:1-3). And to Joseph, the husband-to-be of Mary, when he became aware of her pregnancy and was on the verge of breaking their engagement, it was divinely revealed that "all this is come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us" (Matthew 1:18-23) -- which means he would be God "manifested in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). Hence, it is said that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9) -- meaning that he was fully God though dwelling in a body of flesh. He said of himself, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9) -- that is, had seen the character of the Father in him. And the Father is described as saying of him, "the son," "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," etc. (Hebrews 1:8-13) -- and saying in v. 10, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands," in harmony with John 1:3, saying, "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made," who had been spoken of as the "Word" in verses 1-2.

John 1:1-2, cited and quoted at the beginning of this discussion, we repeat as follows: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Yet Jehovah's Witnesses say that was not at all true -- that the Father was first, and afterward the Word was begotten or issued forth from the Father as "a god," but was not "God," there was only one personality who was and is "God." Hence, according to them, when Jesus was born of the virgin Mary he was not God incarnate, but only a spirit begotten of God having been made into a fleshly being -- that he was not both God and man -- not Son of God AND Son of man -- though they do not challenge his being "Son of man" in the generic sense of mankind (Greek *anthropos*), for Jesus called himself that -- not "son of *aner*," the adult male of mankind as "woman" (*gune*) is the adult female of mankind -- for he had no human father.

In the latter sense, both the male and female are specimens of "man" (*anthropos*), and so are their children -- each (father, mother, child) being *anthropos* and therefore of the same nature, in contrast with cow, horse, elephant, etc. And so it is with the personalities of the Godhead (or Godhood, the state of being God) -- each (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as distinguished in the New Testament), being of the same nature -- Deity, or God. It was in this sense that the Jews, who sought to kill Jesus for blasphemy, understood him to mean when he "called God his own Father, making himself [they said] equal with God" (John 5:18). And so he did, not in the sense of rank, but of nature (cf. Philippians 2:5-11; also 1 Corinthians 11:3).

If the Word, instead of being coexistent with the Father from the "beginning" (as per John 1:1-2), had been literally begotten of, and issued forth from the Father after the "beginning," as the Witnesses insist, he still would have been God in the sense of Deity, not "a god," less than Deity, just as a son begotten of a human father is human (*anthropos*, man in the generic sense), not something less than human.

In Genesis 5:1-3, we read: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

This means that "Adam" became both a generic name for the species as distinguished from other species of creation, and a proper name for the man he created. "And the man called his wife's name Eve" (Genesis 3:20). But when she had first been presented to him, as having been taken from himself, he said that "she shall be called Woman [*ishah*], because she was taken out of Man [*ish*]" (Genesis 2:23) -- *ish* and *ishah* being adult male and female, respectively, of the species Adam. "And Adam [the first of the species, also so named as an individual] lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (Genesis 5:3). He was of the species

Adam, but named Seth as an individual to distinguish him from his father named Adam, and from his mother named Eve.

In like manner, in regard to the Godhead, the Father alone is often referred to as "God" when the other two members are distinguished some other way, as in 2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Of the same three personalities we read in connection with the baptism of Jesus, as follows: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This [namely, Jesus] is my beloved Son, in whom I [the Father] am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17). And, in giving his world-wide commission to his apostles, Jesus commanded: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

However, because Jehovah's Witnesses not only reject the Deity but also even the personality of the Holy Spirit, saying that it is simply divine energy proceeding from the one divine person (the Father), we shall give attention to that also before proceeding to the next question. But the very nature of the Witnesses' argument makes the discussion have to be even more technical and tedious than the preceding, which we regret but cannot avoid.

It is true that the word "spirit" itself is neuter gender in the Greek, as the Witnesses say. But that provides no valid argument for them. For even in referring to God the Father, as in John 4:24, Jesus said that "God is a Spirit," or rather "God is Spirit," just as it is said that "man ... is flesh" (Genesis 6:3). But that does not mean that God is not a person or persons (whether only one entity or a trinity of entities is meant). We sometimes speak of a child as "it," though it is a person and literally has gender -- is either male or female, "he" or "she." And, in like manner, the Holy Spirit, being Spirit, is sometimes but not always referred to by neuter pronouns, without meaning it is not a person.

In John 14:16-17, we read that Jesus said to his apostles: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

In this instance, we have the Holy Spirit

(1) spoken of as "Comforter," masculine gender in the Greek text, appropriately followed by the masculine pronoun "he," and likewise

(2) spoken of as the Spirit of truth," with "Spirit" being neuter gender in Greek, and appropriately followed in the Greek text by neuter gender pronouns, but rendered in the above English translation as masculine gender in harmony with "Comforter," which they also represent, as is done also in the Greek itself of the next passage in the same chapter.

In John 14:26, we read as follows: "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

"Comforter" is masculine gender, and "Spirit" is neuter gender, with "whom" translating the Greek pronoun *ho*, which grammatically is neuter gender in agreement with its antecedent, "Spirit"; but it is followed in the Greek text by the masculine pronoun *eikeinos*, translated "he," just as in the English translation of the preceding passage discussed above, in agreement with the masculine noun "Comforter" -- and therefore validating the English translation of pronouns in both passages.

In other passages, in the American Standard Version (ASV) we have the apostle Paul in Romans 8:16, 26 saying as follows: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God" (v. 16); and "the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us" (v. 26); whereas the King James Version (KJV) has "the Spirit itself" in both passages. The Greek text says literally "itself,"

making the pronoun neuter gender to conform to the Greek gender of "Spirit," its antecedent. But we have already observed that this does not rule out the fact of being a person, for God is said to be "Spirit," as already noted in John 4:24, which does not prevent his being called Father and referred to as "him" (masculine gender in the Greek text itself) in the preceding verse, John 4:23. In recognition of this, the ASV can hardly be faulted for using the pronoun "himself" instead of "itself" for the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:16,26. And in the most widely used interlinear translation in our day of Greek into English by Alfred Marshall, renown Greek scholar of England, renders the Greek pronoun under consideration as "it(him)self" to indicate it as being neuter in form but to be understood as masculine in meaning.

That leaves us with two more verses having pronouns referring to the Holy Spirit. One is John 15:26, as follows: "But when the Comforter [masculine gender] is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit [neuter gender] of truth, which [neuter gender in agreement with its antecedent, 'Spirit' of truth], he shall bear witness of me." The other is John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself [personal pronoun, *heatou*]: but whatsoever things he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

In both the above passages, the Greek pronoun translated "he" by both the KJV and the ASV (which we have underscored) is *ekeinos*, an emphatic masculine demonstrative pronoun, and rendered by Marshall's interlinear as "that one," which may be understood as that, this, he, etc., depending on context, according to Harper's Analytical Greek Lexicon. In 15:26, *ekeinos* follows "Spirit of truth" (neuter gender) in apposition to "Comforter" (masculine gender). And in 16:13, it precedes "Spirit of truth," which had already been identified as the "Comforter." And the remainder of the pronouns "he" in the latter passages occur as part of the verbs of the passage, in harmony with *ekeinos*.

The bottom line is that the Holy Spirit, with the word "Spirit" being neuter gender grammatically in New Testament Greek text, by no means proves it to be simply divine energy proceeding from God instead of being a distinct entity and member of the Godhead, whether spoken of as "he" or "it." That is made further evident by two other facts.

One is that in Acts 5:3-4 we read as follows: "But Peter said unto Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" -- evidently because the Holy Spirit is God -- a member of the Godhead -- not just divine energy.

And the other is that the Holy Spirit possesses the characteristics of personality: hearing and speaking (John 16:13-14); having a mind (Romans 8:27); having character -- being holy* -- the "Holy Spirit" (Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10-11; Luke 11:13; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:8; etc., etc., etc.); loving (Romans 15:30); grieving (Ephesians 4:30); making intercession (Romans 8:26-27) -- which would not be characteristic of energy alone, such as gravity or magnetism or electricity -- and has to be more than mere personification, or figuratively attributing personal qualities to that which is not a person.

*The word "holy" can be used of ceremonial holiness of things or persons set apart for sacred purposes, but the holiness of the "Holy Spirit" seems to be that of nature or character, in the sense that God is holy, the Spirit himself being a member of the Godhead -- and because of serving both the Father and the Son, he is sometimes called the "Spirit of Christ," though being a separate entity.

2. Do the Jehovah's Witnesses believe in the second coming of Christ?

Yes, but not in the sense we believe the Bible teaches -- not of Jesus, called Christ, born of the virgin Mary, "Son of God" and "Son of man," crucified on Calvary, raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven in his resurrection body -- his earthly body

made immortal and incorruptible and glorious -- in which he will come again at the end of time on earth, to raise the dead and judge the world, and assign everlasting rewards, whether eternal punishment in hell with the devil and his angels for the wicked, or eternal life in heaven with Christ and the Father and the holy angels for the righteous.

The Witnesses believe that

- (a) what appeared to be Jesus Christ risen from the dead was such in appearance only; that he, as Logos (Word), was and is a spirit only, invisible except as he might materialize and take on human appearance, which he did at times for forty days on different occasions until his ascension; but
- (b) the body that had been born of the virgin Mary and crucified for the sins of the world, and then buried, never rose to life.

This is seen in the following quotations. "It was necessary that the man Christ Jesus should never live again, should remain dead, should remain our ransom-price for all eternity." Also: "We know nothing of what became of it [the body of 'the man Christ Jesus'], except that it did not decay or corrupt. Whether it was dissolved into gases, or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial ... no one knows; nor is such knowledge necessary."

But, in effect, the scriptures do say that when he comes again, he will come bodily and visibly -- for they tell of his apostles being informed after his ascension and "a cloud [had] received him out of their sight," that "this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come again in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven" (Acts 2:9-11) -- which was bodily and visibly, and with clouds.

In harmony therewith, Revelation 1:7 also says, "Behold he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him [pierced the body of him now come again]; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him" -- for at that time there will be a resurrection of the wicked as well as the righteous dead and a universal judgment (Matthew 25:1-46; Revelation 20:11-15);

"and then [at the time he is seen coming] shall all the tribes mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man ['the man Christ Jesus,' if you please, who had been 'pierced' bodily], coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). For the "Son of man ... come in his glory," would conduct universal judgment (Matthew 25:1 ff.)

And, in John 5:27, we are told that Jesus himself said the Father "gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man" (because of his humanity as well as deity)! -- to be noted again later.

Not so, however, Jehovah's Witnesses say:

(a) that he "was not raised out of the grave a human creature ['Son of man'], but raised a spirit"; that "Jehovah God raised him from the dead, not as a human son ['Son of man'], but as a mighty immortal spirit son ... So the King Christ Jesus was put to death in the flesh, and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature"; also, (b) that, "Since no earthly men have ever seen the Father ... neither will they see the glorified Son"; and, "It is a settled scriptural truth, therefore, that human eyes will not see him at his second coming, neither will he come in a fleshly body."

But such is an enormously major fallacy. While it is true that he was "put to death in the flesh," and that he will not come again "in a fleshly body," that does not mean he will not come in a "glorified" human body [a 'Son of man ... come in his glory'] -- in the same body that was put to death and underwent transformation in his resurrection -- not a spirit without a body!!!

For God "raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification" (Romans 4:24-25) -- the same person ['the man Jesus Christ'] being both delivered up to death and raised from the dead -- hence, in his resurrection he was not a spirit without a body!!!

NOTES ON THE FOREGOING:

- a. Christ's resurrection body was his human body ("Son of man") transformed (before and therefore without corruption or decay)

- no longer mortal (subject to death), and no longer corruptible (subject to disease, decay, or dissolution) -- but still a human body ("Son of man"), in which he will come again and judge the world.
- b. If in death the bodies of his saints decay (which his did not), in the resurrection they will be restored in the likeness of his glorious resurrection body (1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:42-49) -- no longer mortal or corruptible -- and will be inhabited by the same spirit that inhabited them before they died -- the spirit (or soul) without the body being dead (James 1:26), but the soul without the body not being dead, or non-existent, according to Jesus (Matthew 10:28; cf. Matthew 22:31; Luke 20:37-38).
 - c. And the bodies of saints living at that time will experience a similar change, without undergoing death – changed from being mortal to immortal, and from being corruptible to incorruptible – hence, a change, but not an exchange, of bodies (1 Corinthians 15:50-55) -- and certainly not spirits without bodies!
 - d. Moreover, the bodies of saints, whether restored in the resurrection, or changed without experiencing death and resurrection, are referred to as "spiritual" versus "natural" bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44-49).
 - e. Yet, just as a "natural body" is not nature without a body, so a "spiritual body" is not a spirit without a body -- but it is a body superior to the "natural body" -- one being mortal and corruptible, the other immortal and incorruptible. But, just because they are no longer "flesh and blood" (or "fleshly") bodies, it does not mean they are no longer bodies. They are human bodies in their eternally glorified state -- not angels, yet equal to them in regard to immortality (Luke 20:36).
 - f. And our Lord did himself rise from the dead and ascend to heaven in his human body made immortal and incorruptible. Also, for his apostles alone to be witnesses of his ascension, he took them apart; and his return will be the same as his going away, except for being visible to all – but in the same body in which he had gone away — his human body raised from the dead.

g. Finally, as we have already noted that the Father "gave him authority to execute judgment because he is a son of man" (John 5:27) — because he is a human as well as a divine being — a representative of humanity as well as Deity — we now read in Acts 17:31 that "inasmuch as he [the Father] hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" — that is, raised "the man he hath ordained" as his agent to do the judging — a thorough refutation of the major fallacy of Jehovah Witnesses cited above.

End of notes.

3. What do they believe will happen at the end of time?

That cannot be answered by a simple itemizing of events they anticipate. For we think of time on earth as occupying a segment in the midst of eternity (between eternity past and eternity future), and ending when this earth no longer exists. But the Witnesses do not accept that as true.

On page 4, we mentioned that to them there have already been two Worlds (that is, two world orders) on earth -- the first being from creation to the flood; the second, from the flood to the Battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ, which period is still in existence, though they first thought it would have already been terminated, and still believe its termination to be imminent; and so with the beginning of the Third World to follow on earth -- which earth and world order they now think will have no end -- so no "end of time" as we think of it, since to them it is to be co-extensive with eternity yet to be in heaven.

a. As cited above on page 4, the "Third World," the world yet to come, is a "New World" order, a "Theocracy" or rule of God, following the second coming of Christ to last a thousand years, as first conceived, but later as never ending -- at the beginning of which the devil and his organization will be annihilated, with "God's Organization" (Jehovah's Witnesses) surviving and

constituting the Kingdom of Christ, who by them is identified as the archangel Michael -- their claim being that Christ "bore another name in heaven, which name is Michael" -- now resumed in heaven "to tie him with his pre-human existence."

b. The Witnesses worked out a considerable agenda for the establishment of the Third World order or Theocracy, involving different segments of humanity, and even a meticulous timetable. The latter was as follows:

1914: Satan was expelled from heaven and started World War I. Jehovah established the invisible part of his organization in heaven.

1918: The year of persecution following the "quiet years" (1916-1918) was typified by the dumbness of Ezekiel (24:27). (Russell had died in 1916, and his followers were imprisoned as "conscientious objectors.")

1919: The beginning of the "Lord's strange work" (Isaiah 28:21) of fearlessly condemning the "religionists."

1925 Rutherford sounded the trumpet to end the prophetic seventy jubilee years.

1926: Rutherford sounded the fifth trumpet of Rev. 9:1.

1927: Rutherford sounded the trumpet of the sixth angel, Revelation 9:13.

1935: Rutherford identified the 144,000 of Revelation 14:1-5 as those Witnesses who were found worthy to establish God's rule.

????: Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16) and establishment of Jehovah's reign on earth.

This was originally set by Russell for 1914, and World War I was believed to be the start of the Battle of Armageddon. but Christ did not appear that year, and Russell revised his calculation to 1918, when Christ's kingdom still did not appear and Russell was now dead. That was a matter of considerable disappointment and embarrassment to Jehovah's Witnesses, and necessitated further adjustments. Precise date settings were revised from time to time till for 1975, and when fulfillment did not occur then they still believed it to be "imminent" in the

sense of being within the lifetime of that generation, many of whom are still living.

As described by Rutherford, the Witnesses expected the following (and still do): Satan will marshal all his visible forces, the commercial, political, and ecclesiastical powers, against Jehovah. They will come with tanks, planes, cannons; priests, politicians, capitalists, from every nation will go forth into the "Valley of Threshing." The faithful Witnesses will occupy the mountainsides to watch Christ, the invisible field marshal of Jehovah, strike down Satan's armies with the flail of destruction. All the weapons of war will be consumed, all organizations of a political, ecclesiastical, or commercial nature, being Satan's instruments, will be destroyed. Christ Jesus will bind Satan, who, by introducing "religion" and the doctrines of the Trinity and immortality, had deceived the nations for a long time. And then, with the honor of Jehovah vindicated, God can establish his Theocracy, and mankind will be able to become obedient to Jehovah and serve him and his King, Christ Jesus.

- c. In accord with the Witnesses' central idea of the Theocracy, they divided mankind of the Third World, or New World, into four distinct groups.
 1. The first group consists of the 144,000, the "great mystery class," or the "bride of Christ," who by their obedience have earned immortality, with heaven as their place of abode. They alone constitute the "body of Christ," or the Church. Not all of them have already become immortal, however -- or had not in 1981, when, according to the society's statistics, there were 9,601 of these "blessed" individuals still alive on earth -- a holy "remnant."

While all Jehovah's Witnesses must have undergone water baptism, total immersion, as a "witness" to God, there is also a Holy Spirit baptism into Christ -- which consecrates them as part of the 144,000. Likewise, to Jehovah's

Witnesses the Lord's supper is an annual feast which can only be fully participated in by those who know themselves to be among the 144,000. (Although the "other sheep," the great majority of the Witnesses, may not themselves partake of the elements of the supper, they are nevertheless expected to attend annually and observe its celebration by the remnant.)

This "remnant" on earth of the 144,000 is commissioned by Jehovah to proclaim the good news of the kingdom. But it has yet to receive the "divine nature," that is, "immortality" -- which they will do only if they "demonstrate their dependability by carrying out their dedication faithfully until death." But if they break their dedication it marks them as "worthy of death, annihilation."

In the Theocracy, Christ (that is, Jesus and the 144,000) will form the invisible, the spiritual, the heavenly part of God's organization. But God has a different reward for others who are obedient to him.

2. This class comprises the Old Testament believers. These indeed gained God's approval, but because Christ had not yet deposited his ransom in heaven, they could not obtain an incorruptible inheritance, or immortality. Their reward will be the "looked for city" (Hebrews 11:40), the government of Jehovah, in which they will form the visible part of God's theocracy (on earth), even as Christ and the 144,000 constitute the invisible part (in heaven).
3. The Jonadab class, also called the "multitude," or the "other sheep," or "people of good will," who defend, protect, and assist Jehovah's Witnesses, and identify with them -- the class to which the vast majority, the rank and file, of Jehovah's Witnesses belong today. "Anyone may become one of the great crowd of sheep like people who will gain everlasting life on a paradise earth" -- by hearing the voice of the Right Shepherd and coming into the New

World Society. It is the "great crowd which no man was able to number" of Revelation 7:9-10 as distinct from the 144,000 of 7:4-8 and 14:1-5.

(This is somewhat different from what Russell had taught, which was that at the end of the "time of harvest" in 1918 the door of immortality would be closed since every place in the bride class (the 144,000) would be taken. But, since Russell's 1918 prediction did not materialize, and because large numbers came into the movement after that date, in 1931 the Witnesses began to gather another group, "other sheep," and in 1936 it is claimed that the Watch Tower Society received clear scriptural evidence that these "other sheep" were destined to live on earth after Armageddon. Also, since Armageddon has not yet materialized, even the 144,000 class has not yet been completely filled.)

4. The fourth class will not come into being until the Theocracy has been fully established, after Armageddon -- whenever that is. It will consist of those who will have opportunity to prove their integrity in Jehovah's theocracy.
- d. Corresponding to the above division of mankind into four classes, there are said to be four resurrections.
1. In the "first resurrection" (seemingly in the sense of being the best) the 144,000 are made members of the royal house of Jehovah in heaven -- having become immortal and invisible to mortals. They have been or will be "resurrected" as spirits -- with bodies that are spiritual (spirit only) -- not in any sense physical or visible to mortals.

When Russell died in 1916, Rutherford's funeral oration is quoted as saying: "Our dear brother sleeps not in death but was instantly changed from the human to the divine nature and is now forever with the Lord" (J. Porter Wilhite,

Modern Churches and the Church, 1956, p. 140) – meaning he had been made one of the 144,000.

2. The "better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35), is for the Old Testament faithful, in the hands of whose princes (Abel, Noah, Abraham, David, and many others) the visible government of the Theocracy will be, near San Diego, California. (However, the residence erected by Rutherford, which he named Beth Sarim [House of Princes], is said to have been sold in 1948.)
3. The "third resurrection" is for the great multitude who die before Armageddon -- the Jonadab class mentioned above - - none of whom can become members of the invisible part of the Theocracy (the first class), or be earthly rulers (the second class). But, though raised with physical bodies, they will not again experience death -- if they prove their integrity. And they will have the important task of "finishing the earth" according to God's system of laws and the "new covenant." Yet, not being immortal, they can die again -- and will if they fail to prove their integrity.
4. The fourth resurrection is the "resurrection of the unjust." It is a general resurrection for all who had no opportunity to obey God's theocracy during their first life, and will occur progressively during the "millennium."

Not all will be raised, however. Adam had his chance and failed. Men like Judas and the Pharisees will not be raised from their graves, since the word "grave" means "God's remembrance," and it is not reasonable to assume that God would remember Judas. Only such as were ignorant of God's theocratic law will be raised for a second chance. If they fail to prove their integrity, it will mean "death, annihilation" -- that is, again!

"In summary, we may say that, according to Watchtower* teaching, one of four possible destinies awaits a person when he dies:

1. he may remain in the condition of non-existence into which death has plunged him;
2. he may be 'raised' with a 'spirit body,' thus receiving immortality, after which he will go directly to heaven to reign there with Christ;
3. he may be raised with a physical body and then, after having passed the millennial tests, receive everlasting life on the renewed earth; or,
4. he may, after having been raised with a physical body, still fail to pass the millennial tests, and thus eventually be annihilated." (Anthony A. Hokema, The Four Major Cults, 1965, p.295.)

*The spelling "Watchtower" instead of "Watch Tower," is not incorrect, having already come into use in 1950, and was employed both ways on the copyright page of the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures.

- e. It needs to be explained, however, that none of these so-called resurrections is really such in the biblical sense, but (except for the "first resurrection" described above), is rather a completely duplicate creation. For Jehovah Witness doctrine is that death is "annihilation" of the soul -- that man does not actually have a soul, but is a soul, and when he dies there is no part of him still consciously existing, to be raised later, re-clothed with a body. Instead, God has in "remembrance" (see the expression "God's remembrance" in connection with the fourth resurrection mentioned above) the exact likeness of those destined for eternal life on earth, and creates exact duplicates of them which he treats as if they were the same persons still living. As for the 144,000 destined for immortality, and therefore for eternal life, they are said to be changed from human nature to divine nature, and therefore to spirit bodies, at the moment of death, and immediately are "forever with the Lord" in heaven.

It also needs to be explained that all such is palpably false, according to the Bible. It is partially like the doctrine of the Sadducees of New Testament times, whom the historian

Josephus said was "that souls die with the bodies" (Antiquities, XVIII, I, 4); and the New Testament states that they said "there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" (Acts 23:8). Yet they claimed to believe, not the entire Old Testament scriptures, but the first five books (the Books of Moses). So, from those Jesus refuted the Sadducees, saying: "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the place concerning the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him" (Luke 20:38). Though the bodies of those patriarchs were then dead, their souls lived on and there would be a resurrection of their reconstituted bodies animated by their still living souls. Jesus also said: "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28). So man is both soul and body, but "the body apart from the spirit [or soul] is dead" (James 2:26). Yet the spirit, or soul, apart from the body is not dead in the sense of no longer existing as a conscious entity, as is true of the body without the spirit.

4. Do they believe Christ was born of a virgin?

Yes.

5. Do they believe in the soul of man?

Not in the sense the Bible teaches, as already noted above.

6. Do they believe in hell?

Not in the sense the Bible teaches. They believe it to be the grave.

7. What do they believe on divorce and remarriage?

I have never read or heard of their belief in that regard.

8. Why do they believe it's wrong to have Thanksgiving and Christmas at home and help me explain ... why we do?

They think of Thanksgiving as a holiday promoted by our civil government, which they consider to be of Satan, and of

Christmas as a holiday promoted by religions other than their own and therefore by Satan. They also object to Christmas trees on the basis of Jeremiah 10:3 -- which, with verses 4 and 5, and a more expanded parallel passage in Isaiah 44:6-17, speaks with reference to fashioning idols from trees and worshipping them as gods.

Of course, neither of the above holidays, as such, is designated in scripture. On the other hand, any and every day ought to be a thanksgiving day. It is likewise highly commendable to be mindful of and grateful for the birth of Christ any and every day of the year, which Christmas is popularly though of as celebrating -- though nobody knows the date of it, but which almost certainly was not December 25. And it would not be wrong on any day to have religious worship, private or public, and engage in study and prayer in regard to either or both of the above. But the scriptures provide no ritual for celebrating either, as they do for commemorating the Lord's death, by observing the Lord's supper, weekly on the first day of the week, or Lord's day, on which he rose from the dead.

Probably most of "us" make use of both Thanksgiving and Christmas days primarily as social rather than religious holidays, especially in our homes, though not forgetful to express thanks for all our blessings and especially for the coming of our Lord into the world, as at other times also.

9. Why can you only get their bibles from them and nowhere else and are they different from ours?

We have already noted that they are different from "ours" in various ways in order to support their theology, which "ours" do not. And one reason they cannot be gotten from other sources is that they can sell more cheaply by donated labor of the Witnesses themselves, and therefore sell in greater numbers, than by sharing the profit with other outlets. Another is said to be, "that posing as agents of the Bible Society, which many think to be the American or other reputable Bible

Society, they succeed in deceiving many Christian people not on their guard" (Herbert M. Wyrick, Seven Religious Isms, 1940, p.26).

10 Is it wrong to marry someone of another faith?

One who has become a Christian since marrying, but his or her companion has not, is not to forsake or put away the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:12-16). But this is not to be taken as divine approval for one who is already a Christian to marry someone of another faith or of no faith at all. For examples: (a) Christian widows, if they remarry, are admonished to marry "only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39); and (b) the apostle Paul, who was not married but claimed the right to be, put it this way: "Have we no right to lead about a wife, that is a believer [literally, 'a sister,' that is, a sister in Christ], even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (1 Corinthians 9:5).

Inter-faith marriages, even when both "faiths" claim to be Christian, are statistically weaker and less satisfactory than same-faith marriages. And, notwithstanding the name "Christian" does occur in the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures of the Jehovah's Witnesses (in Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16), they seldom refer to themselves as "Christians" – because not believing Christ to be Deity, which is a basic element of Christian faith as taught in the scriptures.

And there is in the foregoing a further ironical situation for the Witnesses, in that their own New Testament translation of Matthew 3:1-3 contradicts their denial of the deity of Christ. It reads as follows: "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying: 'REPENT, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near. This [that is, John], in fact, is the one spoken of through Isaiah the prophet in these words: 'a voice of a man crying in the wilderness, PREPARE the way of JEHOVAH [referring here to Christ], make his roads straight" (CAPITALS added for emphasis.)

That is a reference to Isaiah 40:3-5, which reads in part: "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God [Elohim]" (American Standard Version).

John being the forerunner of Christ (as indicated in John 1:4-34 and other passages also), and sent to prepare the way for the reception of Christ in the hearts of the people, Matthew 3:1-3 is an explicit identification of Christ with "Jehovah," and of "Jehovah" with "God" *Elohim*, plural), in Isaiah 40:3-5!!!

That is to say, the Godhead includes Christ and that the name "Jehovah" therefore applies to him also -- and would seem likewise to include the Holy Spirit, since, as already noted, he also is "God."

The Lord bless us all as we endeavor to understand his will and way for ourselves and to share it with others. Searching the Scriptures
Cecil N. Wright

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3. A number of other sources with much briefer treatments that add little or nothing, so that they need not be cited.

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