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A  
REPLY  
TO

**JEHOVAH'S  
WITNESSES**

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Among the later American sects is one that has attracted considerable attention, "Jehovah's Witnesses." Because of their stressing the immediacy of the Coming of the Kingdom of God and their door-to-door canvassing and the abundance of their American "Watch Tower" literature, as well as their attack on some of the great and vital doctrines of the Christian Church, they have challenged a reply.

In some of their teaching they preach the old Arian heresy which denies the Deity of Christ and which the Christian Church met 1,500 years ago in the great Arian Controversy (culminating in the Nicean Creed), and also the modern Unitarian Heresy of the last generation.

Further, they believe that after death the soul sleeps in unconsciousness. They do not believe in a set Clergy, yet they have leaders who fulfil the functions of Clergy. They do not believe in modern medical blood-transfusion (which has saved thousands of lives) because of a weird explanation of the laws of Leviticus: laws of blood which have nothing whatever to do with blood-transfusions.

They are descended from "The Russelites," a people who stressed 1914 as the great date for the climax of the world, with their slogan then: "Millions now living will never die." In that year by a coincidence commenced "World War One" and this was used by them as a vindication of their beliefs. They then were called "Millennial Dawnists" — now, followers of a man named Rutherford (since deceased) they are called "Jehovah's Witnesses." By a variation on the theme of "1914" they have linked together the subsequent earthshaking events with an imminence of the "Kingdom of God" — and to many hearts troubled over the state of the world, this teaching is being given o hearing.

Let us say at the outset, that we believe in the

"Coming of Christ," it is stressed in our Communion Service "Ye do show the Lord's Death until He come." We recite it in the Apostles' Creed, "From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." It is contained in one of the most ancient hymns of the Church, the "Te Deum." "We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge." So it is not an essential or unique teaching peculiar to Jehovah's Witnesses. We differ deeply from them in their time-keeping of the Second Advent, for our Lord said "Of that day and how, knoweth no man" and again we are told "Be ye also ready, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh." John Wesley was once asked: "Mr. Wesley, if Christ were coming tomorrow what would you do?" "Exactly what I have planned to do," he wisely replied, "for I try to live day by day in the light of His Presence and Teaching." "Be ye always ready."

**THE DEITY OF CHRIST.** The doctrine that is life and death to the great Churches is that Jesus was Divine, and that His Deity is implicit in the Scriptures. Jehovah's Witnesses say that He was not Divine — and continually quote a word of Jesus "My Father is greater than I" to back up their false teaching. Let us look briefly at the subject:

1. The Deity of Jesus Christ. The Great Churches of Christendom have believed that our Lord was "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16) that Jesus received Divine Worship as God, as when Thomas knelt at his feet and with tears said to Him "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28), that He was truly a man and yet nothing less than God, as proved by His Miracles and Omnipresence with His Church ever since His marvellous life on earth (Matt. 28:20). By His taking to Himself the sacred incommunicable name of "Jehovah" of the Old Testament — (compare carefully Exodus 3 verses 13, 14 and 15 with John 8 verse 58). The sacred name of "God" "I AM" given by God in

Exodus 3 verses 13-15 is our word "Jehovah." In John 8 verse 58 Jesus used that sacred name and said "Before Abraham was "I AM". The Jews took up stones to stone Him because He made this wonderful claim. And by His words: That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father (John 5:23). Further the Jews went to stone him for his words which implied that he was making Himself "Equal with God" (John 5:18).

Now "Jehovah's Witnesses" have produced a book with a great show of scholarship in which they have combed from the old Arian heretics (people of the fourth century) and modern Unitarian writers, thoughts and documents to support their teaching that Jesus was not Divine. The book is entitled "New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures," issued by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. In this so-called translation every reference to our Lord, as "God manifest in the Flesh" is "played down" or distorted and if there be an old Arian alternative it is instantly seized on. The Scholarship of our Great Translators of the Bible is ignored.

One, who has turned away from them after thirty years' faithful door-to-door service, has written a book entitled "Thirty Years a Watch Tower Slave." (W. J. Schnell — Publishers, Marshall & Scott).

In it he said concerning their "New World Translation of Greek Scriptures" — "They do not dare to name any group of scholars for the work but simply say the translation was authorised by the Creator." To exalt the word "Jehovah" (their own particular Word so stressed in their name "Jehovah's Witnesses"), they state that the Greek words "KURIOS" (Lord) and "THEOS" (God) are to be rendered "**Jehovah**" uniformly. But when it suits them they break their own rule — and here their distortions and suppressions appear. Two hundred and thirty seven times they render it "Jehovah"

but when it comes to be applied to "Jesus" they suppress it. In Philippians 2 verses 9-11 they do this. Why? Because it would then read "and every tongue should openly confess that 'Jesus' is 'JEHOVAH' to the glory of the Father." If Romans 10:13 is translated correctly by them, "Everyone that calls on the name of JEHOVAH shall be saved" then verse 9 of the same chapter should be translated, "For if you publicly declare the word in your mouth that **Jesus** is **JEHOVAH** you will be saved."

Apart from all this, in the Scriptures implicitly the word "**JEHOVAH**" of the Old Testament is applied to "**Jesus**" of the New Testament. In Isaiah 6:1, 3, 5 Isaiah saw the glory of **Jehovah**. This very one (Jehovah) is the **JESUS** of the New Testament in John 12: verses 37-41. In Isaiah 40 verses 3 and 4 in the famous words ::Prepare ye the way of **Jehovah**" we have it directly applied to **Jesus**. Read carefully these texts, Matthew 3:3 and 11, and Luke 1:76. In Isaiah 8:13, 14 "**Jehovah**" is the stone of stumbling, etc. Now compare it with 1st Peter 2:7 and 8 and see it applied to "**Jesus**" — and many other places.

Jehovah's Witnesses are in difficulty over the subordination of Jesus as "Son of Man" to "God the Father" when Jesus said "My Father is greater than I" and take the short and terrible way out of the difficulty by denying the Deity of Christ.

When human reason comes up against the revealed will of God, it is wise to trust for the "ultimate" to that Revealed will in God's wonderful Word rather than to the limitations of our own reason. And millions have found joy of heart and peace of conscience in letting that revealed will of God in His Word do its work in the heart and conscience — where reason is baffled. Let us turn to that Word to help us here. The reconciliation of the **subordination** of Jesus the "Son of Man" to the Father and yet the **equality** of Jesus with God is found in Philippians 2: verses 5-10.

"Christ Jesus, who being in the **form of God** thought it not a prize to be grasped at to be **EQUAL WITH GOD** but **MADE HIMSELF** of no reputation and took on Him the **FORM** of a servant and **WAS MADE** in the **LIKE-NESS OF MAN** and being found in fashion as a man, he **HUMBLED** Himself and became obedient unto death, etc."

Here we see, in a flash, that the manhood of Christ and His Coming into human flesh was only **ONE PHASE** in **TIME** of that amazing **ETERNAL** life.

Here Christ was, before his earthly life "equal with God" and "in the form of God." But in the great doctrine of the "**KENOSIS**" (Greek word translated "humbled") He limited Himself that he might come down and stand by man in his misery and sin and call Himself that lovely name "Son of Man." It was in that period of limitation he uttered the words **as** "Son of Man" (and as standing by and with man), "My Father is greater than I." Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became **poor** that we through His Poverty might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9). In deep love and identity with Man in the mystery of the Incarnation, God, the Son, took this step. I cannot explain it but it brings joy to my heart, when I accept it from God's word as a Revelation in the wondrous Grace of God and for our Salvation "the Son of God became the Son of Man that He might make the Sons of Men, the Sons of God."

Amazing pity, Grace unknown,  
And love beyond degree.

If we accept the Word of God as the Word of God the great doctrines of the Deity and the Humanity of Christ are reconciled.

2. **SOUL SLEEP.** Then again on isolated and unrelated texts they build up a strange teaching called "Soul sleep after death."

In this weird doctrine of "soul-sleep" Jehovah's Witnesses deny the immortality of the Soul and teach a "Soul-sleep" after death. When asked for their proof they quote Ecclesiastes 3:20 "All go to one place, all are of the dust and return to the dust again," and further Ecclesiastes 6:4 "For man cometh in with vanity and departeth in darkness" and again Psalm 115:17 "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down in silence."

In their treatment of these texts we have glaring examples of their great error and falseness. Constantly they take a text from out of its **context** and give it a distorted meaning. The writer of Ecclesiastes represents a man in the weary search for the meaning of life. What is its "Summum Bonum"? What is the meaning and purpose of it all? He starts from the present material life. It is from the standpoint of "under the sun" 4:7. In such a weary search he passes through agnosticism 3:21 but at last comes through to the deep belief of the Immortality of the Soul 12:7. At death, "then shall the dust return to the earth **BUT THE SPIRIT SHALL RETURN TO GOD WHO GAVE IT.**" Thus Ecclesiastes instead of teaching "Soul-sleep" teaches, in its climax the **directly opposite**.

Further with reference to Psalm 115:17 "The dead praise not the Lord neither any that go down unto silence." — Here the teaching would be terrible if taken **by itself**, for **by itself** it would mean **annihilation**, not **Soul-sleep**. But again Jehovah's Witnesses show their incompetency to interpret the Scripture, for they ignore the context. We turn to the context which is found in the next verse Psalm 115:118. Reading back we rear, "The dead praise not the Lord," and then go on "But we will bless the **LORD FROM THIS TIME FORTH AND FOR EVERMORE.**" The simple explanation is that "the dead" are the dead spiritually and the "WE" of verse 18 means "those that fear the Lord." They will not be like the dead, but will praise God

from **now** and for **evermore**, which is the contrary teaching from what Jehovah's Witnesses deduce from the text.

Our Lord Jesus cut across all this Soul-Sleep teaching in his repudiation of the Sadducees. They did not believe in the immortality of the soul and the Resurrection. If we study carefully Matthew 22, verses 23-32, Mark 12 verses 18:27 and Luke 20 verses 27:38 we will see how Christ dealt with this question. Jesus took up the Old Testament and showed how "Immortality" is implicit in its pages. "Have ye not read in the Book of Moses in "the Bush" (that is the Section called "The Bush" in the first 5 books of the Bible by Moses) God spake to him saying "I **am** the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Some may say Where in is Immortality taught here. Let us look closely at the argument of Jesus. He said: "God spake to **Moses** at the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:2) and God said "I **am** (not "I was") the God of **Abraham**" — (but **Abraham** was dead over 300 years). He went on, "I **am** (not "I was") the God of Isaac" (but Isaac was dead over 200 years). He went on, "I **am** (not "I was") the God of Jacob" (but Jacob was dead over 150 years). Therefore **at that very moment each of those great men was living** — not in "soul-sleep" — but alive and with God. "Ye do greatly err" said Jesus to those Sadducees "not knowing the scriptures or the power of God." "For God is not the God of the dead but of the living for all live unto Him." Luke 20:38. Further in Psalm 23 we have the beautiful climax "Surely goodness and mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the House of the Lord **FOR EVER.**"

Jehovah's Witnesses take the Eupheism "sleep" for "death" literally — but it says "them that sleep in Jesus will God bring **with Him**," at the second coming, 1 Thessalonians 4:14 (the words "and the dead in Christ shall rise first" seem a parenthetic clause). It is all

set out by Colossians 3:1, 4 "If ye then be risen **with** Christ — ye are **dead** and your **life** is hid **with** Christ in God," also "When Christ who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear **with** Him in glory." Further the definition of "sleep" is clear in 1 Thessalonians 5:10 "Our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us that whether we **WAKE OR SLEEP** we should **LIVE TOGETHER** with Him." Here "**Sleep**" is equated with "**Live**."

"Jehovah's Witnesses" twist the Scripture also in the words of Christ to the dying thief on the Cross. When Jesus said to him, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise. Jehovah's Witnesses say that "today" should be joined to "I say unto you." Dean Alford — one of the greatest Greek New Testament Scholars and the Author of a Standard Greek Testament Commentary, said: "The attempt to join 'This day' with 'I say unto you' not only violates common sense but is somewhat worse than silly." On that very day Paradise was regained for Man by the death of Christ.

3. **AN ORDERED CLERGY.** Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in an Ordered Clergy — and they are very bitter about clergy.

In all organisations for its due order there is of necessity a gradation of authority — else there would be chaos. The word "Reverend" is not a title, but is only a courtesy of distinction as was shown by the highest English Court of Law dealing with such matters long ago. Women have it in the Roman Church and also in some denominations. It is a courtesy of distinction which misleads nobody. That there are gradations of gifts and authority in the Christian Church we are told in Ephesians 4:10-13, 1 Corinthians 12:27-28, Philippians 1, 1 Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5, Hebrews 13:7. There has been abuse of these positions because of the immensity of the Church and evil men have sometimes used them for their own aggrandisement — but

the great rank and file of the clergy are kindly sincere men eager to do God's will. Christ gave the standard for his Servants in the words "Let him that is greatest among you be as him that serveth" — and the very word "Minister" means "Servant". A servant of Christ. But "Jehovah's Witnesses" themselves have gradations of authority — it is needed for the very organisation, and "unrecognised" authorities among them are quickly dealt with.

4. **BLOOD TRANSFUSION.** Jehovah's Witnesses have issued a booklet to doctors entitled "Blood Transfusion and the Facts." In a law case recently in Melbourne involving a father and mother of the sect, the father was committed for manslaughter because he would not permit his dying child to have a blood transfusion. The father produced certain Bible texts which he said prohibited blood transfusions. The judge remarked that the Commandment "Thou shalt not kill" was greater than the interpretation Jehovah's Witnesses put on certain texts.

On examining the texts given from the Bible by Jehovah's Witnesses (viz. Genesis 9 verses 3-4, Leviticus 17 verses 11-13, Deut. 12 verses 23-25, Acts 15 verses 20-29 and Acts 21 verse 25) we find that not one text is on blood transfusion but on an **entirely different matter**, namely the disgusting eating and drinking of blood, mainly connected with heathen worship, belief and practices — see Psalm 16:4. It has nothing to do with the modern marvellous discovery of the saving of thousands of lives by blood transfusions. Thus again we find Jehovah's Witnesses guilty of mis-application of Bible texts and the ignoring of the general sense of Bible passages.

There are other wrong teachings of this sect, but space forbids dealing with them. We need to remember the words of Paul, "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou has heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Timothy 1 verse 13.

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