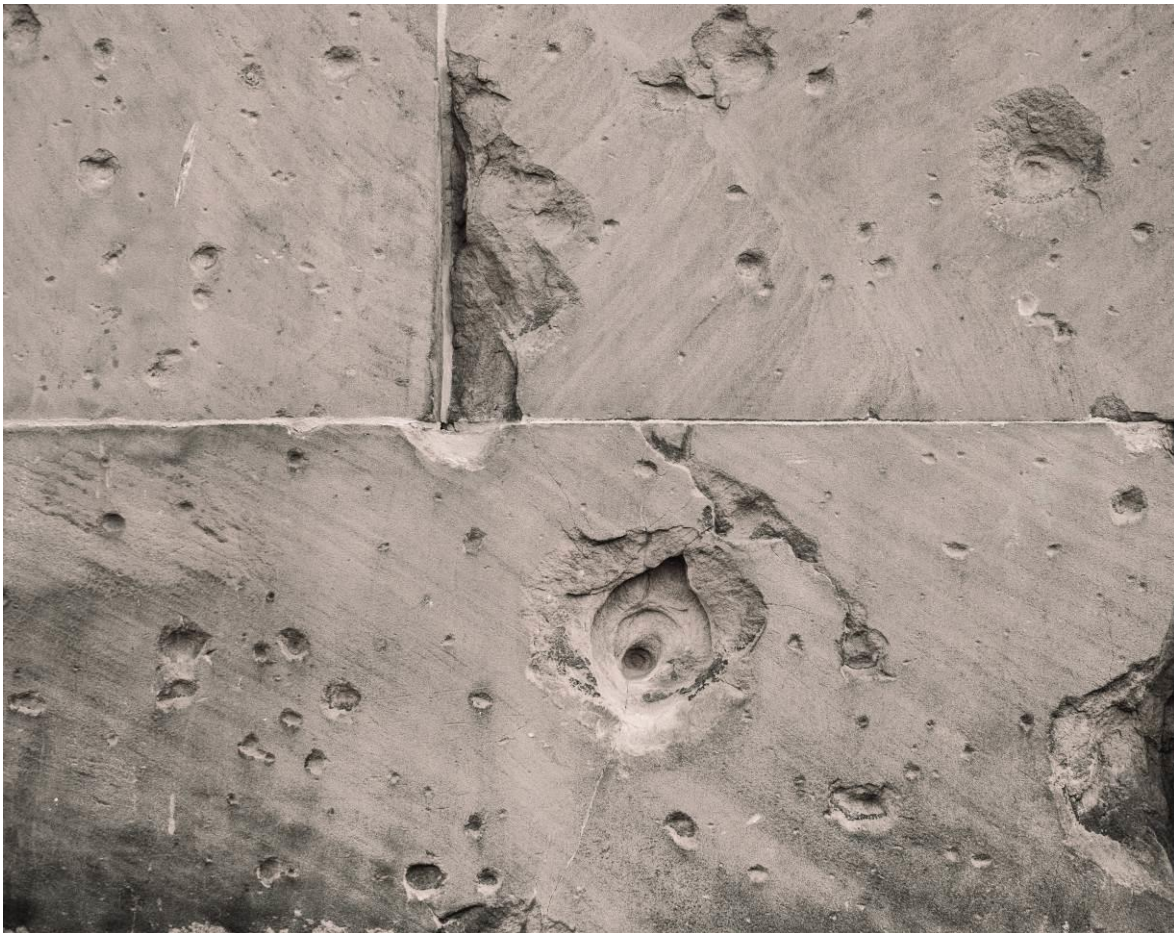


# STRONGHOLDS SHAKEN



*A Biblical critique of false  
faiths and confusing cults*

*by David Legge*

preachtheword.com



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# Chapter 1

## "The Witness Of The Watchtower"

### Deuteronomy 18:22

1. The Witness Of Their History
2. The Witness Of Their Prophecies
3. The Witness Of Their Bible
4. The Witness Of Their Theology
5. The Witness Of Their Christ

### Introduction

In Deuteronomy 18 and verse 22 Moses writes: *"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him"*.

This book is entitled 'Strongholds of Satan', and the particular cult for our contemplation in this chapter is the cult of the Jehovah's Witnesses. We will consider this cult under the heading: 'The Witness of The Watchtower'. Now if you were to mention the 'Jehovah's Witness movement' or 'Jehovah's Witnesses' to people, there's often a varied response. Usually people will think of two well-dressed individuals knocking on your door at an inconvenient time, and talking to you about the end of the world. Or perhaps it's the controversy that we often see in our media, or portrayed on Hollywood film screens, regarding blood transfusion - how little children die because their devout religious parents belonging to this particular cult won't allow them to have a blood transfusion because it's against the religious principles and philosophies of the Jehovah's Witness movement.

### Background

It would be easy with the plethora of publicity that the Jehovah's Witnesses movement gets in our modern age, to conclude that they're some kind of eccentric religious fringe, and just a cult of wackos. But the fact of the matter is, the Jehovah's Witness movement is a stronghold of Satan, it is an evil movement, and it is a movement in our modern age that is making huge strides and converting many. In fact, in the Watchtower magazine, which is their official publication, on January 1st 1995 they claim that the worldwide membership of the Watchtower movement is 4.9 million. Those 4.9 million people are active witnesses in 75,500 congregations throughout 232 countries around the globe.

If you have ever encountered Jehovah's Witnesses you will know that they are a zealous crowd. In fact, I'm led to believe by Watchtower magazine that the average Jehovah's Witness spends ten hours per month in door-to-door evangelism. They attend five hours of meetings during one week. We would do well to ask the rhetorical question: is it any wonder that the organisation is said to be growing at a rate of 4000 converts a week, due to their zealousness and their violent evangelism as far as they can see it. The Jehovah's Witness movement is building five 'Kingdom Halls' a week worldwide. The Watchtower magazine is published twice a month, and it is published in 120 languages. Each issue, on average, has 16 million plus copies printed - and 600,000 of those copies are for distribution in the United Kingdom alone.

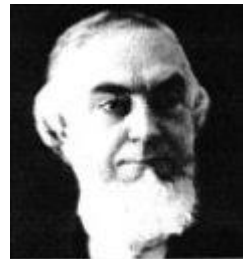
So you can see that we're not talking about a little fringe religious extremist group or

Christian sect or cult. This is a movement that is making great strides in our modern age of religious scepticism and so-called rationalism. It is an exclusive society, it does not encourage free thinking, it does not encourage their followers to look into other religions or other religious philosophies. In the January 15<sup>th</sup> 1993 issue of the Watchtower magazine - very recently - the followers of the Jehovah's Witnesses were instructed, I quote: 'to avoid independent thinking'. That really means, if I can put it into my own words, that they're to follow the teaching of the Watchtower movement and try not to imbibe anything that is, as far as they are concerned, 'false teaching' or a 'false movement'.

Now that is why they devote 85% of their personal study time to Watchtower publications - not the word of God! The Watchtower movement dedicates 85% of study time to Watchtower writings alone. A further 15% of their personal study time is dedicated to their particular version of the Bible, the New World Translation. So you can see right away where their emphasis lies, it lies not in the word of God, not even in their own interpretation of the word of God, but on the teaching of their own particular anointed prophets, as they call them. I believe we will see that far from being, as they claim, 'Jehovah's Witnesses' upon the earth, they are rather false witnesses according to the teaching of the New Testament. Maybe you're a Jehovah's Witness yourself, and you might say 'How can you prove this? How do you intend to prove that they're false witnesses?'. Well, I want to do it upon the witness of their own testimony. That's why I've entitled this chapter: 'The Witness of the Watchtower' - what does the Watchtower testify of itself, and what testimony has the Jehovah's Witness movement left on this earth for us to observe?

### ***The Witness Of Their History***

The first witness that I want us to consider is the witness of their history, the witness of their history. The first founder and President of the Watchtower movement and the Jehovah's Witnesses was a man by the name of Charles Taze Russell. That is where the movement got their original name from, which is perhaps a more correct name, 'The Russellites' - from Charles Taze Russell, their founder. He was born in Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania in 1852, and he was brought up traditionally as a Congregationalist and a Presbyterian, but it wasn't long in his life until he began to become sceptical about the views of his historical Christian forefathers in those denominations. He began to oppose Christian Orthodox religious history. He opposed organised religion of any kind, and many of the teachings that traditional historical orthodox Christians hold dear, he rejected outright.



From then he began to organise little Bible classes in Pittsburgh in 1870, and they met regularly - they claim - to study God's word. Then, from that little Bible class in 1879, there began a magazine entitled 'Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence' - which was later renamed 'The Watchtower - announcing Jehovah's Kingdom', we know it today as 'The Watchtower Magazine'. The Jehovah's Witnesses as a movement were incorporated in Pennsylvania in 1884 under the name 'Zion's Watchtower Tract Society', and in 1886 Charles Taze Russell was involved in publishing the first volume of the 'Millennial Dawn', which is now known by Jehovah's Witnesses as a series of books entitled 'Studies in Scripture'.

You might think that all that information is irrelevant, but please bear with me because it's not. I believe from my studies of the Jehovah's Witness movement that this series of books by Charles Taze Russell - at least the first four volumes save one - is more important to the Watchtower movement than the word of God. It's more valued to the Jehovah's Witness than the Bible, even their own translation of the Bible.

Now let's think about the biography of this man Charles Taze Russell for a moment. Not only were his theological views interesting as we'll see later - but as an individual, he was involved in many conflicts during his life: not least marital conflicts and legal conflicts. Historical records show that in 1913 the courts granted his wife a divorce, and later charged him with

fraud and with perjury. Walter Martin, who has written a very detailed book of the cults entitled 'The Kingdom of Cults', duplicates many of those court records in his book. Martin summed up Charles Taze Russell's life in this quip which is so telling: 'As a speaker Russell swayed many, as a theologian he impressed no one competent, as a man he failed before the true God'.

Charles Taze Russell was not only a false teacher, but the following transcript of a video clip shows that Charles Taze Russell had great question marks over his individual morality and personality in his community and in his family:

*[Begin video transcript]*

Interviewer: *"In your expert opinion Mr Mulrooney (sp?), are they in fact a cult?"*

Interviewee: *"Yes, Jehovah's Witnesses definitely fit the description of a cult, despite their denials. A cult always has a strong central figure demanding absolute authority. They even admit in the Proclaimer's Book that a cult developed around Charles Taze Russell, their founder."*

Narrator: *"Charles Taze Russell was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania in 1852. From age 11 he worked in the family clothing store and he became a successful businessman. At age 17 he came under the influence of the Early Second Adventists, who were setting dates for the end. He soon broke ties with the Adventists and launched out on his own, publishing the magazine now known as 'The Watchtower'. His following grew, but trouble was brewing on the home front"*.

Narrator: *"In 1906 after a number of marital battles, Russell was divorced from his wife Maria. Instead of sharing his personal assets with her, he transferred them to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society which he totally controlled. The Proclaimer's Book mentions this transfer in a tiny footnote, but we don't read the obvious there: Pastor Russell had cheated his wife. The Proclaimer's Book makes the repeated point that Pastor Russell was not found guilty of adultery, this was true only because his wife did not bring charges of adultery against him - instead she accused him of immorality with a young girl who was residing in their home"*.

Maria: *"It was late in the evening, about eleven o'clock, he put his arms around her and kissed her. This was in the vestibule before they entered the hall, and he called her 'his little wife' - but she said 'I am not your wife', and he said 'I will call you daughter, and a daughter has nearly all the privileges of a wife'"*.

Questioner: *"And what other terms were used?"*

Maria: *"Then he said: 'I am like a jellyfish, 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 on to others'. And she wrote that out so that I could remember it for sure when I would speak to him about it, and he confessed that he had said those things"*.

Narrator: *"Why would The Proclaimer's Book say that Maria Russell was seeking prominence for herself, when in reality the court stated: 'He says himself that she is a woman of perfect moral character, and his own testimony is a strong confirmation of her allegations'. The judgment described his behaviour as cruel and barbarous treatment, adding: 'His course of conduct toward his wife evidenced such insistent egotism and self-praise that would necessarily render the life of any sensitive Christian woman a burden, and make her condition intolerable'"*.

Speaker: *"I was surprised to find out many strange things about Pastor Russell when I did independent research on him. Here in the finished 'Mystery Book' he taught that the churches of Christendom were started by bald-headed men with smoke on their brains. He thought that if a dog's head were shaped like a man's the dog could think like a man. He gave health advice that was pure quackery - for example he taught that appendicitis was caused by fighting worms in the colon. He sold so-called 'miracle wheat' at greatly inflated prices to his gullible followers. None of these things are brought out in the Proclaimer's Book"*.

*[End video transcript]*



You can see very clearly, I think, that there are large question marks over the founder of the Jehovah's Witness movement.

Now when Charles Taze Russell died in 1916, he was succeeded by a Missouri lawyer who had actually been the attorney for the Jehovah's Witness movement at that time. His name was Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford. At that time the movement was known under the name 'The Dawn Bible Students Association', and it was Rutherford that changed the name from this to the 'Jehovah's Witness Movement'. He based this name



on Isaiah 43:10-12 which reads: *"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD"* - capital L-O-R-D, which is Jehovah, Yahweh - *"that I am God"*.

He actually claimed that it was an angel who revealed to him that the movement should have their name changed from 'The Dawn Bible Students Association' to 'The Jehovah's Witness Movement' in 1931, based upon that text. It was Rutherford who established the headquarters in Brooklyn, New York; and it was Rutherford, for the first time, who gave himself complete



authority over the whole of the Watchtower movement. What he said went, he was in a dictatorship position. Now we'll spend a little more time on these individuals, but just to say that after Rutherford there was a gentleman called Nathan Knorr who took over in 1942. He probably did more to build up the Watchtower movement than any other leader. When he became leader the Watchtower movement totalled 115,000 people, and by the time he had finished they totalled over 2 million in their population. It was during Knorr's reign that



the 'New World Translation' of the Bible was produced in 1961. After Nathan Knorr in 1977 the next president was a man who was Nathan Knorr's sidekick, Frederick William Franz - who was also the spokesperson on the committee for the New World Translation. More recent presidents of the organisation have been in 1992, Milton Henschel; and in the year 2000 a man by the name of Don Adams.



### **The Witness Of Their Prophecies**

Now the significance of these leaders is seen as we consider another main witness of the Watchtower movement. Secondly: the witness of their prophecies. We've seen the witness of their founder, the dubious theology that he has, we'll look into it in more detail later on; also the dubious moral character, even in the eyes of the law, that he had - and there were claims that he was making even about 'miracle wheat' and your physical conditions and illnesses. But what I want you to see now is the witness of the Watchtower movement concerning the prophecies that they make.

If the Watchtower is what it claims to be, the one true church (that's what it says), Christ's representatives on the earth today proclaiming God's message, the proclaimers of God kingdom - if you read their literature, this is what it says - they believe and claim that they are the only correct ones teaching Scripture on the earth today. Now if they claim that, and their claim is true, you would expect that their prophecies, which are based on their teachings from the word of God (so-called), would come true - wouldn't you?

The problem is that every prophecy that the Watchtower movement has ever made, has

failed miserably - all of them, without exception! Now the information that I'm going to give you, if you were to deliver it to a Jehovah's Witness, their probable response would be: 'Well, you're taking those statements out of context' - but I assure you that I am not. Or they may say: 'Well, those people who made those comments didn't claim to be the prophets of God'. Or they may say 'Well, the light is getting brighter for us now and we know more today than we did then, and we're understanding Bible prophecy better now than we have ever done'. Now listen: the facts of the matter are, no matter what a Jehovah's Witness says to you on your doorstep, the Jehovah's Witness movement does claim to be the only prophet of God today in the world. They claim it from their own writings, Watchtower Magazine 1st April 1972 asks the question: 'So does Jehovah have a prophet to help them, to warn them of the dangers and to declare things to come? These questions can be answered in the affirmative. Who is this prophet? This prophet was not one man, but was a body of men and women. It was the small group of footstep followers of Jesus Christ known at the time as 'International Bible Students', today they are known as 'Jehovah's Christian Witnesses'.

Now I remind you of our text that we began the chapter with, Deuteronomy 18 and verse 22: *'When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him'* - or 'do not listen to him!', for he is a false prophet and he is not from the Lord. The fact of the matter is that the Watchtower movement today still claim that our Lord Jesus Christ returned in His second advent in the year 1914. That is still their claim today! Now they claim that it was an invisible return, because they had to do that because He didn't come visibly in the year 1914, but they still purport this: that He is reigning from the heavens as King of kings and Lord of lords over His kingdom. Now from the date that they made that prophecy, from the lips of Russell in the late 1800s, for approximately 100 years they have continued to make false prophecies concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

I want to consider four of these leaders in particular. The first is Charles Russell, he made two predictions of the second coming of the Lord. The first was in 1874, he said that the Lord would come, doomsday would appear and usher in the coming of the Lord Jesus. Then he made another prophecy that in the year 1914 the Lord Jesus Christ, after some kind of Armageddon, would be reigning from the skies. That is what Jehovah's Witnesses still believe today, you can read about in 'Studies in Scripture' volume 4, page 621 - I quote: 'Our Lord, the appointed King, is now present since October 1874'.

Russell was the first to make false prophecies. Second was Rutherford, he predicted that in 1925 the Lord Jesus Christ would usher in Paradise upon the earth. Lo and behold it didn't happen, and when it failed, to keep the myth going do you know what they did? They built a house in California called 'Beth-Sarim' and this was the house that was to house the princes of God that would come at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ - i.e. characters like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There it was, as visible proof that they really believed that the Lord Jesus was going to bring in Paradise in 1925 - but guess who ended up inhabiting 'Beth-Sarim'? Judge Rutherford!

Not only did he predict in 1925 that the Lord Jesus would usher in Paradise, but when that didn't come to pass and Hitler rose to prominence in World War II, he taught that Jehovah's Witnesses should not enter into the war, they should not engage in the Armed Forces because no side would win - neither Germany nor the Allies - as Armageddon was coming, World War II was going to usher it in upon the world. Armageddon didn't come, Judge Rutherford was proved - like Russell - to be a false prophet.

Then Nathan Knorr, influenced by his predecessor Rutherford, was responsible for the prediction that the Lord Jesus Christ would return in 1975. In the magazine 'Awake', which is a Jehovah's Witness magazine not the same as the Watchtower, he purported that the year

1975 would be the year 'when the Lord Jesus would come'. Do you know what many Jehovah's Witnesses, sincere and dedicated in sacrificial living, did? They sold all their possessions, they gave their money to the poor and to the society, and they were all waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of them made life-changing decisions on the ground of Nathan Knorr's prediction. There follows a transcript of a video interview with one couple who almost made a life-changing, in fact a life-stealing decision. The man being interviewed is called Dave Riccoboni, and he and his wife were former headquarter members in the Watchtower movement. Here is his testimony:

*[Begin video transcript]*

Speaker: *"Unfortunately my wife and I left the Watchtower Society in 1974, which was the year before Armageddon was supposed to hit and demolish the world, so we never did find out how the circuit overseers dealt with 'only one month to Armageddon, brothers', or 'only one month after Armageddon, brothers'. Because we had, by this time, found out the lie of the Watchtower chronology, and we saw it for what it really was: inane, insane"*

Mr. Riccoboni: *"1974 was a very difficult time for me, I was freaking out. I had to make a decision, a critical decision, because my wife had to undergo surgery and the doctor said she needed a blood transfusion. I had to make the decision, and the brothers were encouraging me to make the right decision to please Jehovah, because after all Armageddon was only a year away, so even if she died she'd be resurrected right away"*

Mrs Riccoboni: *"You can just imagine the fear, I had so much fear, it was so frightening. I was near death, I was in hospital, and the brothers and sisters told me to take my stand for Jehovah - don't accept a blood transfusion. If I accepted the blood transfusion I would die at Armageddon, if I didn't and I died I'd be resurrected - the Great Tribulation was coming, it was 1974 and 1975 was at our doorstep. By staying loyal to Jehovah I would be resurrected, so that was the hope I was given"*

*[End video transcript]*

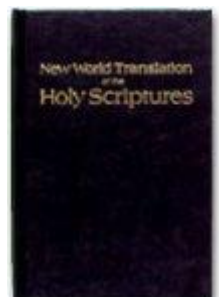
They almost gave up their marriage. I heard the testimony of another man, he and his wife ceased from having any children because they believed that Armageddon was going to come upon the world. That man decided that he wouldn't conscript in the American Army, and because of that was sent to prison, missed many years at home with his wife, missed the privilege of having a family because of these false claims of these false teachers.

You would well ask the question: have they learned from their mistake? The fact of the matter is, they haven't! They try to wash over these facts, some would even say that some of the recent publications coming up to 1999 were indicating that the Lord was probably going to come in the year 2000. All of this prophesying is put down to 'new light'. They say this is how God reveals new truth to His people! The fact of the matter is that time is the enemy to the false prophet, that's why when time passes they have to continually get 'new light' to tell more prophecies, because the old ones are proven to be wrong.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 24:24: *'There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect'*. Isaiah says in chapter 8:20: *'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to my word',* God says, *'it is because there is no light in them'!*

### **The Witness Of Their Bible**

The witness of their prophecies is clear, but thirdly I want you to note the witness of their Bible. We've seen the witness of their history - and we are really only skirting the surface here - the witness of their prophecies, and thirdly the witness of their Bible. Their Bible is what is known as the 'New World Translation'. In a recent publication of the Watchtower movement, trying to defend its indefensible positions, called 'The Proclaimers', it says that the New World Translation is a 'literal translation that faithfully presents what





is in the original writing'. It goes on to say that the entire translation committee were Spirit-anointed Christians.

Now the problem with that statement is twofold, in fact the problem is right throughout it all, because first and foremost this is not a literal translation of the original writing. In fact Fred Franz, who later became the fourth president, chairman and spokesman of the translation committee and was mainly responsible for the whole work, had not one Hebrew nor Greek qualification to his name. How could he translate the Scriptures from the original writings? Not only that, but when you ask the Watchtower Movement who are these Spirit-anointed Christians who translated the word of God, they will not tell you! I'll leave you to conclude why that is.

The fact of the matter is that this is not a translation at all, it is a botch in order to reflect their own particular doctrines, because what they teach is not in the word of God! Bruce M. Metzger is one of today's leading Bible scholars. He was asked what he thought of the New World Translation, and he says 'Rather than a version of the Bible, it is a perversion of the Bible'. In fact he is quoted as saying that you find within the New Testament of the New World Translation the word 'Jehovah' 237 times, when the word 'Jehovah' is not found in one Greek manuscript existent. He goes on to say 'That is far from responsible scholarship'. Not only that, but every opportunity the translators get they denigrate the Lord Jesus Christ in His person from being the Eternal Son of God, co-equal with God, God the Son, to be a mere creature - perhaps a superior one, but certainly not God of very God.

### ***The Witness Of Their Theology***

I would love to have time to go into this more, but save to say that the witness of their Bible testifies that they are false witnesses. There's their history, their prophecies, their Bible, and then fourthly the witness of their theology. Now you would wonder really how they got so many dates wrong if their theology was correct regarding the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason why they got the dates wrong is that their theology - particularly this aspect of their theology, but many others - is based not on Spirit-led teaching but on occultism. I want you to hear me very clearly: Charles Taze Russell got his teaching of the second coming of the Lord Jesus in 1914 from what we call 'pyramidology'.

Pyramidology is simply the teaching that in the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt there is a witness of God to the times and the seasons and all the generations of humanity. Without going into it in great detail, Charles Taze Russell believed that the Pyramid of Giza was God's stone witness corroborating the biblical time periods that we need to know in order to work out when the Lord Jesus will return.

On Russell's gravestone the engraving reads: 'Charles Russell, born February 16th 1852, died October 31st 1916 - the Laodecian Messenger'. But just beside Charles Taze Russell's grave is a monument to him which takes the form of a pyramid. There's actually an inscription on that pyramid in dedication to him, because that's where his theology came from, from a pyramid which is pagan, we could go as far as to say it's occultic in its origin - and there he is buried beside it. We move from Russell to his successor Rutherford, and we find that he actually claimed to contact the dead Taze Russell, and he believed that Russell was telling them how to go forward in the great Movement. As we noted previously, he claimed that an angel told him to change the name to 'Jehovah's Witnesses'. But he also made this statement - now mark this - that the Jehovah's Witnesses movement was not led by the Holy Spirit, 'but by a collection of spirits'!



Their theology is occultic, and it can be seen in its fruit. What do they deny? Well, first of all they deny the Trinity, that there is one God in three persons. In 'Let God Be True', page 100-

101 - and these statements are all from their own documents - they deny that God is in three persons, one substance, but God is one person. They think they're being terribly orthodox in that assertion, yet the fact of the matter is that God's word testifies to a triune Godhead even way back at the beginning of the Old Testament. Just a couple of verses are: Genesis 1:26, God said: *'Let us make man in our image'* - they will say He was talking to the angels, but man was not made in the image of an angel, man was made in the image of God. In Genesis 3:22 the plural is used for God; in Genesis 11:7 'God', even the name 'Jehovah', is used often in the plural. It can be chopped and changed with the word 'Elohim' which is a plural word for God. Also if you turn to Matthew 28:19, you find in the New Testament that we are taught by our Lord Jesus Christ to baptise in a triune name, that's why we don't baptise just in the name of the Lord Jesus, but in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The benedictions within the New Testament, for instance 2 Corinthians 13:14, and also 1 Peter 1:2 have those three names of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit - not three gods, but God in three persons.



Now I know that this is something that is very difficult to understand, even for those who believe it and espouse it - do you know why? Because we cannot understand it, we cannot understand the inconceivable - you cannot understand God! But you see, I am not called upon as a Trinitarian believer to explain the inexplicable, but what you are called to explain if you are a Jehovah's Witnesses is to explain the indefensible, and to explain the evidential that is in the word of God. Let me show you how Father, Son and Holy Spirit on separate occasions are called God. Look at John's gospel chapter 6:27, the Lord Jesus says: *'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed'*.

'God the Father', John 6:27. Now look at Hebrews 1:8: *'But unto the Son'*, and the context shows that God is the 'he' here, *'unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom'*. Who is God here? It is the Son being designated as God.

The Father is called God, the Son is called God, now if you look to the Acts of the Apostles chapter 5 you will find there the account of how Ananias and Sapphira had stolen some of what they had dedicated by their words to God. They had sold fields, they were going to give produce, they said, to the work of God - but they didn't, and God struck them dead. In verse 3 Peter said: *'Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie',* now mark this, *'to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God'*. Now in verse 3 he said that he had lied to the Holy Spirit, but who does he say he's lying to in verse 4? God!

The Holy Spirit is designated as God in the Scriptures. The Son, Jesus Christ, is designated as God - we could show you a hundred verses. The Father is designated as God. He is not what the Jehovah's Witnesses say, just Jehovah and the Son is some exalted angelic being, and the Spirit is some impersonal force that is the influence of the heavenly Father, Jehovah. They are three persons in one God.

### ***The Witness Of Their Christ***

The witness of their theology, now we take this a step further to look more specifically at the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because not only is the witness of their theology

false, but we see that the witness of their Christ is false. The Christ of the Jehovah's Witness movement is not the Christ of the word of God. In Matthew 24:24 the Lord said there would be many false Christs. Paul said that if anyone preach another Jesus unto you let it be anathema, let that gospel be anathema, accursed to you - for there is no other Christ!

The Jehovah's Witness movement - I can hardly utter the words, it is so blasphemous - claims that the Lord Jesus Christ is the archangel Michael who became a man. They claim that doctrine in the Watchtower magazine, 15th May 1963 page 307; and also in the New World on page 284. They claim that the Lord Jesus Christ is Jehovah's first ever creation, that He was made just like you and I are made. He may be more superior than you and I, but yet they believe that He is a creature and He is not God but the archangel Michael! Now there obviously are many problems with that statement, for in Jude verse 9 we read there that concerning the bones of Moses the archangel Michael dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil. That means he could not of himself and in his own power defeat the devil, or even reprimand the devil! Are we to suggest that the Lord Jesus is inept to face the evil one? We cannot make such a suggestion, do you know why? Because in Matthew 4:10, where the Lord Jesus is tempted in the wilderness by the devil himself, it says that He rebuked the devil, He sent him away!

This is no archangel, this is God the Eternal Son. Yet the Jehovah's Witnesses movement claim that He was only a perfect man, not God manifest in flesh. Yet if you look at John 1:1, we read very clearly there: *'In the beginning was the Word'*, speaking of the Logos, Christ, *'and the Word was with God, and the Word'*, mark this, *'was God'*. Now of course they've got ways of somersaulting many of the texts that we'll present from the word of God, the New World Translation changes *'and the Word was God'*, to *'the Word was a god'* - and notice that they changed the capital 'G' to lowercase, He was only *'a god'*. They will blind you with Greek grammar by saying to you: *'There's no definite article there before the word God'*. The definite article is *'the'*, there is no *'the'* before God here - and they're correct, there is no *'the'*. Where there is no *'the'*, they therefore say it must be *'a'*, if it's not *'the God'* it must be *'a god'* - and so they insert *'a'* before it to mean that the Lord Jesus was not *'the God'* Jehovah, but only *'a god'*.

Now I don't want to blind you with science, but the fact of the matter is that the Greek grammar does not necessitate you to put the indefinite article in here *'a'*. In fact, I'll tell you better than that: when the definite article in Greek has been used already, there is no necessity for it to be repeated - it is assumed within the sentence of Greek grammar. But if you don't understand that, you'll understand this, that the same expression is used in verse 6: *'There was a man sent from God'* - there is no definite article there in the Greek, but what does the New World Translation do? They don't put *'a'* in there, they say: *'There was a man sent from God'*. It wouldn't look right *'a man sent from a God'*, would it? Look further down to verse 12, the same omission of a definite article is there: *'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God'*, they don't write in the New World Translation *'a God'*, they leave it as *'God'*, as the eternal God. Verse 13 is the same: *'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God'* - they don't put *'a God'*, it's exactly the same expression as you have in verse 1. In verse 18 it's the same: *'No man has seen God'*, they don't write *'a God'*. The reason why they write *'a God'* in verse 1 where there's no call for it in Greek grammar or in the context of this text is because they have it in their hearts, satanically, to denigrate the person of Jesus Christ. There is no other explanation.

The ridiculous irony of it is this, that they are the ones who accuse Trinitarian Christians of being polytheistic, that we have more than one God because we believe the Lord Jesus Christ is God. Yet they are the ones saying He is *'a god'* - they believe in more than one God! What does *'Emmanuel'* mean? *'God With Us'*. In the Old Testament, how many times is Jehovah claimed to be the only Saviour? Yet when you get into the New Testament Christ Jesus is

claimed to be the only Saviour, *'Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins'*. Let me ask you an Irish question...well, it's really an American question from New York: are there two firsts and lasts? Can there be two firsts and lasts? Or is that not a contradiction in terms? Are there two first letters of the alphabet and two last letters of the alphabet? Are there two Alphas and two Omegas? There are not! Yet in Revelation 21 God is described there as Alpha and Omega, and in Revelation 22 the Lord Jesus is described Himself as the first and the last.

Here's an interesting one for you that you can confront those two men with on your doorstep the next time they turn up. In Luke's gospel 4:12, the Lord Jesus in His temptation, the New World Translation translates the word 'kurios' (sp?) in Greek - which is translated in our version as 'Lord', as 'Jehovah'. Remember the Lord Jesus said: 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'. Well in the New World Translation they translate it, now watch this: 'You must not put Jehovah, your God, to the test'. Now who was being tested in the temptation? Was it Jehovah? Or was it Jesus? They say Jehovah is not Jesus, yet here they translate the word 'Lord' as 'Jehovah', confusing us and confusing themselves, because they can't work it out themselves that Jehovah is Jesus! Jehovah the Son.

Is it not true in your reading of the New Testament, that the Bible on several occasions forbids the worship of angels? Is that not true? Remember John in the Apocalypse fell at the feet of an angel, and the angel lifted him up, for we are not to worship angels. If the Lord Jesus is an exalted angel, can you answer me this question: why is it in Hebrews 1:6 that God says: *'Let all the angels of God worship Him'*? His person is trodden in the dust by the Jehovah's Witness movement. His passion is trodden underfoot by the Jehovah's Witness foundation. It is not enough to get you into heaven, because they claim that you need to have good works on your side, you need to sell so many magazines, you need to go round so many doors, you need to be in the 144,000 who will eventually enter paradise. They deny the ultimate finished work of the Lord Jesus, they deny the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ - that He did not rise in body, but He rose in some kind of spiritual sense. Yet what did Paul the apostle say in 1 Corinthians 15:15? *'Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ'*, physically Paul is talking about, *'whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not'*. He's saying that 'we're false witnesses if Christ is not risen bodily from the dead', and they are false witnesses for saying such!

Regarding salvation, they deny the reality of hell, they claim that only their members will go to heaven. They claim that good works are what you will need on top of Christ's death to get there. They claim that we cannot be brought into covenant relationship with God through a mediator in Jesus Christ, rather they say that the 144,000 are in the covenant with God and they alone, and they must be the mediators to bring us to God. If we were all Jehovah's Witnesses, ordinary ones, we are in the great crowd - therefore it doesn't matter so much that you're related to Jesus, because He's not the mediator, what matters is that you're related to the 144,000 that are in covenant and can bring you to God. That's why the Movement is exalted above the Christ! Yet Ephesians 2:8-9 says: *'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast'* - it is the gift of God! 1 Timothy 2:5 says: *'There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'* - Hallelujah!

### **Conclusion**

I wonder are you mixed up in such a confusing and Christ-denigrating work and faith as the Jehovah's Witness movement? I call you, on the authority of the word of Christ, to get out, to seek a Saviour who will take away all your sins and give you peace with God. Salvation is not to be found in a society or in a movement or in a denomination. Jesus Christ came to men and said, above religion, *'I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me'*. He is God's Son, and it was Thomas that fell at His feet and cried: *'My Lord and my God!'*. He realised the reality not only of who He was, but what He had done - He had

died and He had rose again. Have you realised that? Will you acknowledge Him as the only Lord, as the only Saviour, and His work on the cross and His resurrection as the only way that you can get to heaven?

Let me finish by sharing the words of some Jehovah's Witnesses who came out of the movement and found Christ, to the glory of God and to the satisfying of their souls. If you're a Jehovah's Witness read these statements very, very carefully:

*"[I had no reason] to doubt my loving parents who raised me in the organisation. Although I was an honour student, I give college and went to Watchtower Headquarters. There I met Bill and we shared many questions and concerns about the organisation during our courtship. We questioned especially the blood issue. We ended up leaving Bethel to get married, and moved to my parent's farm. We were very happy until someone reported our doubts about blood transfusion. We were both finally dis-fellowshipped and disowned by our families. With our inheritance lost and no job-training we started our lives over. We researched the organisation and proved they were false prophets, and wrong on doctrine too. We saw that we had put the organisation where Christ should have been. We determined to serve Christ, not some organisation, and have done so with great joy ever since. Bill is home with the Lord now, and I'm carrying on our ministry with the Lord's help. Although my family still shuns me, I pray that they may one day turn from the organisation to faith in Jesus Christ".*

*"I was converted to Jehovah's Witnesses when I was 18 years old and seeking for God. I give up earning an honours degree in university to devote myself to the organisation. I'm ashamed now of the control I give to the organisation over my life. I nearly died refusing a blood transfusion. I let the elders make decisions I should have made. At an assembly in 1972 I stayed with my Christian uncle who immediately set his church to praying for my deliverance from the Jehovah's Witnesses. As they prayed, and a Christian shared his faith, I finally questioned doctrine - especially about Jesus supposedly being Michael the archangel. I took my concerns to the elders, I found out that you cannot ask honest-hearted questions, nor is there any honourable way out of the organisation. I left early in 1975 causing an uproar in the congregation, since Armageddon was expected in a few months. It was the best decision I ever made, other than receiving Christ as my Saviour. My husband, Keith, and I have served the Lord ever since".*

*"I began studying with Jehovah's Witnesses in the early forties, then after I came out of prison I continued as a Jehovah's Witness until 1970. However I had been reading forbidden Christian books, and also I was not living the life that I should have been. I confessed to the elders, and they dispensed with my 26 years of service in ten minutes. I was out. But then a loving Christian friend put his arms around me and showed me the love of Christ, and I felt more love from him in ten minutes than I felt from the organisation in 26 years. Later, while reading a Christian book, I knew for certain that Jesus Christ is God, and I fell to my knees and received Him as my Saviour".*

*"When I was six months old my parents became Jehovah's Witnesses, and I lived totally for the organisation for 50 years. But I saw so many injustices over the years, and so much unkindness, so little mercy. You know they present a facade of love, but people are really sacrificed for the sake of the organisation. Finally, after they destroyed my family, I began to research the Watchtower organisation and to read the Bible, because I wanted to know if the Watchtower was God's channel, I wanted to know how to get eternal life. Well, I found out that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life - not some organisation - and of course Jesus gives us eternal life"*

*"I was in my third year of college in 1973, and thinking about law school. At that time my Jehovah's Witness parents told me that Armageddon was due by 1975. I had 18 months to live, so I quit school and went back to the Jehovah's Witnesses - but as God would have it, some wonderful Christian showed me that I was following a false prophet. The facts were*



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*right in my own books. Now I don't like being lied to, and when I found out that the Watchtower had deceived me I knew I was in a cult - but then something wonderful happened. I accepted Jesus as my Lord, and He would never lie to me. So many people have accepted the lie by reading the Watchtower. Now I have dedicated my life to showing them the rest of the story, the real story about Jehovah's Witnesses - a non-prophet organisation! My prayer is that Jesus will open the eyes of many Jehovah's Witnesses to see the love of Christ"*

## Chapter 2

# "Christian Science And Scientology"

### Romans 1:16-25

- Is Christian Science, Science?
- Is Christian Science, Christian?
  
- Is Scientology Science or Science Fiction?
  1. *Its Founder - Fiction Author*
  2. *Its Claims - Fictitious Falsehoods*
  3. *Its Profits - Fantastic*
  4. *Its Fruit - Fatal*

### Introduction

The text we are using as a springboard for our study in this chapter is found in Romans chapter 1. We'll be looking at many other Bible texts throughout this study which deals with the 'Christian Science' movement and what is commonly known today as 'Scientology'.

Paul says in verse 16 of Romans chapter 1: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness", or who suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them".*

In other words, human beings are without excuse, they've got a conscience and they've also got nature, verse 20: *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse".* God's moral law is written upon human hearts, and God's creative power is evidenced around us in all of creation. Now look at verse 21 - this is the knowledge that all men had: *"But because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations",* that's a very important phrase, *"and their foolish heart was darkened".* Now mark this verse: *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen".*

Now the reason I have grouped together Christian Science and Scientology into one evening's study is because these two particular cults and so-called 'new-faith religions' call themselves 'mind sciences'. They come under the umbrella of those types of cults and faiths that categorise themselves as mind sciences. They are far from sciences of the mind, in fact we will see that these two particular cults are among some of the most dangerous beliefs prevalent in our world today. The second of these which we will look at later, Scientology, is

generally regarded by cult experts worldwide as probably the most harmful cult in existence, and the results of this cult are even fatal to many.

### **Christian Science**

Firstly we're going to deal with Christian Science, and we're going to ask two questions of it. First of all: is it science? It seems to be such, but is it science? And the obvious question after that is to ask secondly: is it Christian? Then we're going to look at Scientology, and ask the question of it: is it science or is it science fiction? I think we will see that it is the latter, science fiction.

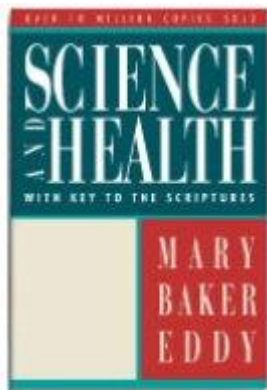
So without any further ado, let's begin and look at Christian Science. I want to look at the origins of this false cult. Mary Baker Eddy was the founder of the Christian Science movement. She was born in New Hampshire in 1821 in the United States, and she was the daughter of a member of the Congregational church. Very early on in her life she rejected the main doctrines of orthodox Christianity and the denomination in which she grew up. Physically as a child she was troubled from time to time by bad health, she had a very delicate form. We're told by biographers that she had extremely small hands and small feet. She was frequently ill as a child and she was highly strung emotionally. We read in her biographies that she endured a great deal of illness during her childhood, including at times spasmodic seizures of a hysterical nature, and many many nervous fits.



Because of this childhood of continual illness biographers have written about her - and I can only take their word for it - that because of the continual fits and being highly strung emotionally, she became highly neurotic. Then, as she grew into adulthood, her ill health continued - but the strange thing that began to evolve was that during these strange nervous emotional and physical fits, she seemed to manifest clairvoyant powers. In other words, she was able to contact the dead and spirits - at least she claimed that she could. In her adult life she dabbled in spiritualism and in the occult. It is said that when she fell into one of these trances, people would gather together and seek advice from her when she was in such a state - what should they do about this, that or the other; or perhaps even to contact the dead. Mary Baker Eddy herself claimed that during the night seasons she was able to hear mysterious tappings and rappings of spirits. She claimed, and I quote: 'to see spirits of the departed standing by her bedside, and received messages in writing from the dead'.

This is the type of spiritual entity Mary Baker Eddy was. Coming from a so-called Christian background, with grave ill health, highly strung emotionally, enduring spasmodic seizures of an hysterical nature, having neurosis, being able to contact the dead, hearing spiritual noises, and actually claiming to see spiritual entities standing by her bedside. But added to that, as a personality, just in a human sense, one biographer has said that she was a domineering woman, she was a quarrelsome woman, she was an extremely self-centred woman. We're told that at the age of 22 she married a man called George Glover. Seven months later George Glover died. Not only did Mary Baker Eddy have tragedy in her own childhood health, but in the early days of marriage she lost her first husband. Then she married again, a man by the name of Dr Daniel Patterson, and that marriage failed in divorce. In 1862 she suffered again from an illness, but this time she sought out the help of a quasi-doctor, or we could call him a witchdoctor, by the name of Phineas Quimby. Phineas Quimby was a man who believed - and it is so important that you don't miss this - that the mind had power to heal the body: mind over body. From that belief and philosophy he taught a system of healing that dealt primarily with the mind - you could cure your body by your mind.

Now this man, Phineas Quimby, influenced Mary Baker Eddy a great deal, and came to influence her teachings and her later-founded religion, Christian Science. In fact, so much so, that falling ill herself on one occasion in 1866 after a serious accident when she fell, she was not expected to recover, she was expected to die. We read the words of Matthew 9:2, where it says: *'And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee'* - and of course, he arose and was able to walk, and had full health and strength again. Apparently, from that verse, Mary Baker Eddy claimed that through mind over matter she had been cured, miraculously, by some spiritual power. That cure, apparent as it was through her claim, was what really convinced her of the truth of what we know today as Christian Science - that you can heal the body's ailments through the mind.



Now from that it wasn't long until she published her first book, and most famous book, which is entitled 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures'. It was first published in 1875, and it is still available in bookshops today in its most recent edition. The full title to that book is: 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures'...with key to the Scriptures. At the age of 54 years, Mary Baker Eddy wrote this book, because she claimed to be the final revelation of God to humankind. It is so important when we're studying cults to see this characteristic in the founder of cults and faiths. Every founder of every confusing cult and false faith has claimed to be a prophet, or to be God's final revelation to humanity. She claimed to be such in this book, that's why she calls it 'the key to the Scriptures'. She believes that this particular book is inspired of God, just like the Bible that we read. The reason why she called it 'The Key to the Scriptures' is because she considered herself to be - wait for it - the woman of Revelation chapter 12, the woman who typifies Israel! But she believed that, where we read in Revelation 3:7 that the Lord Jesus spoke to the church at Philadelphia and said: *'These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth'*, she believed that she was the key here in Revelation 3:7, that would open the great mysteries and secrets of God's word. Mary Baker Eddy described the Bible as a 'dark book', a book that apparently only she had the key to. She claimed that the Bible was full of many mistakes, and that her writings in this book 'Science and Health' had the key to it all.

In 1877 she married again to Asa Eddy, and that's where she got her name 'Mary Baker Eddy'. In 1879 four years after producing the 'Science and Health' book, she and some of her students established what is called the 'Church of Christ's Scientists' in Boston, Massachusetts. There is the grand building of the mother church of Christian Science - thriving not just in Boston but, if I was to give you the statistics, right across the whole globe. Like all cults, not only has it a figure at the very forefront and origin of it who claims to be God's revelation and God's true prophet of men, but the cult and religion itself claims to be a restoration of the New Testament church again to this present world. Beware of any movement that claims to be the New Testament church again restored as it was in the beginning!

In 1881 she opened a metaphysical college and, of course, like many cults, certainly the ones we're studying in this chapter, she began to charge for her Christian Science services. Now this is the 1800s - 1881 - and she charged



\$300 for 12 healing sessions. It is no surprise to you, I'm sure, that in 1910 Mary Baker Eddy died a millionaire!

### ***Is Christian Science, Science?***

Now let's ask those questions that we began with: is Christian Science, science? That's the first question I want to ask, and I think it's a reasonable question to ask when the title they take is 'Christian Science'. I looked up the definition of 'science' in the Oxford English Dictionary, the definition given is: 'a branch of knowledge conducted on objective principles'. Now let me stop there and explain that, 'a branch of knowledge conducted on objective principles'. So, for your benefit, I looked up 'objective' in the Oxford English Dictionary, and the definition there was: 'external to the mind, things outside the mind'. The definition is: 'actually existing, things that are real' - so not unseen things, but seen things. The definition goes on: 'science involves the systematised observation of those things' - you have to be able to prove it to be scientific - and it goes on: 'experiment with phenomena'. You've got to be able to perform an experiment to prove something scientific - especially, it goes on to say, concerned with the material and functions of the physical universe.

Now right away we see that Christian Science is not a science, because it claims to be a science of the mind, and it does not nor cannot prove the principles that it espouses. It has not tested them in any satisfactory way for psychiatrists, psychologists and doctors of the mind worldwide - and all of them claim, if they're reputable at all, that this is a false religion: it is far from scientific. In fact, if you don't know anything about Christian Science, you need to know that Christian Science asserts that pain and sickness are all illusions of the mind. Some of you have got sore teeth, maybe you have sore heads just at the minute! You have sore legs or joints, or a sore heart, and you know that pain is not an illusion - but this is what Christian Science purports. Because of that, the natural reasonable outcome is that they reject the use of medicine, vitamins, nutrition, immunisation, drugs etc. How can an organisation call itself 'Christian Science' when it says that illness is an illusion, and won't allow you to take medicine?

The remedy that they give to illness, although it's not medicine or drugs, is to correct these 'illusions in the mind' by understanding and practising Christian Science principles. Now understand: if you want to be healed, you've got to join them. You've got to start thinking the way they think, doing what they do, saying what they say. There are groups of full-time Christian, so-called, healing practitioners called 'Christian Science Practitioners' who go around the place espousing these beliefs and philosophies of Christian Science, healing of the mind, and they're claiming that people are being healed. I heard recently from a person in the fellowship at the Iron Hall Assembly of someone that they knew in hospital who was refused treatment for a very severe condition, because the Christian Science church would not allow her to take it. There was a great scandal in the media in the 1990s when it was disclosed that 18 children suffered preventable deaths from the year 1980 as their parents, who were Christian Scientists, chose Christian Science metaphysical healing techniques instead of just taking their children to the doctor or phoning an ambulance - eighteen!

In the previous chapter we touched on Jehovah's Witnesses, and we didn't have time to even deal with the blood issue, I felt that there were more important issues than that - but we can see a trend starting to evolve, that these cults are characteristic in believing that they know more than medicine, they know more than the Bible, they know more than anyone because they're claiming exclusive knowledge of God and exclusive knowledge of the mechanisms of this universe. Is Christian science, science? I don't have time to go on any further, but I'll tell you this: I think you can see right away that it is far from scientific.

### ***Is Christian Science, Christian?***

The second thing that we need to ask is: is Christian science Christian? Well, when you find out that, particularly in this book 'Science and Health', it denies all the essential doctrines of



the Christian faith, you would know right away that is not Christian. It has no right to take the name of Christ. Not only does it deny the orthodox essential doctrines and tenets of Christianity, but it completely reinterprets the whole of the Bible. If this cult didn't use the words 'Jesus', and 'Trinity', and 'love', and 'grace', and 'sin', as it sometimes does, you would never suspect for one moment that it had anything to do with the Bible or Christ at all. It uses those words and phrases that are Christian to 'Christianise' itself, to make people like you and I who come from Christian backgrounds think they're all right.

Let me show you why they're not. I want to show you a number of quotes by Mary Baker Eddy from her book 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures', all to do with the tenets of what we believe as Christians and how she denies them. The first is regarding the substitutionary atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ: Christian Science denies the substitutionary death of our Saviour. These quotations are all references from her writings: 'One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin. The atonement requires constant self-immolation...', which is another word for sacrifice. So the atonement requires you to sacrifice yourself, sacrifice '...on the sinner's part. That God's wrath should be vented upon his beloved Son, is divinely unnatural. Such a theory is man-made' (Science & Health, 23:3-7). If we go to the next quote, it's about the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, she says: 'The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon 'the accursed tree', than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about his Father's business' (Science & Health 25:6-8). Does the scripture not teach that our Lord Jesus Christ made one sacrifice for sins forever, and then sat down at the right hand of the Father on high? Does it not teach from the very beginning of the Old Testament to the end of the New that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin?

Well, obviously Mary Baker Eddy has a new revelation. Her next quote speaks of how Christian Science denies that Jesus died, and denies that He rose again. She said the reason why they thought He died and rose again was because: 'His disciples believed Jesus to be dead while he was hidden in the sepulchre, whereas he was alive...' (Science & Health 44:28-29). He was hiding all the time! Playing hide and seek, He wasn't dead at all! And because He wasn't dead, He didn't rise again.

Here are some verses if you want to argue in a sanctified gracious way with Christian Scientists. That's a thing I would encourage you to do with a view to winning them to Christ - don't be cruel with them, don't be ignorant, don't be rude - by all means try to win them for the Lord Jesus. Did Paul not say in Romans 8:34: '*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again*'. First Thessalonians 4:14 says that if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then shall He come to receive them unto Himself who have died in Christ, and we that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with the Lord - those who believe that Jesus died and rose again! First Peter 3:18 tells us categorically: '*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit*'.

Is there any power in the blood of Christ? There is in His death, Romans 8:34, 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 1 Peter 3:18 - and what does 1 John 1 verse 7 say? '*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*' - yet Christian Science denies it! Not only does it deny the substitutionary atonement of the Lord, but it denies that Jesus is God. I could give you many quotes from Mary Baker Eddy, but just to prove that she was far from a Christian, read this one. She said: 'If there had never existed such a person as the Galilean Prophet, it would make no difference to me' (The 1st Church of Christ Scientist & Miscellany, p318-319). Does that not make a shudder go up your spine? Can I ask Mary Baker Eddy and her deceased, and those who follow her today: why is it that the Lord Jesus Himself claimed to be God? Why is it that He said: 'Him that has seen me has seen the Father, I and my Father are one'? Why is it when they took up stones to stone Him, because the Pharisees and the Scribes and the Jews said: 'He being a man, maketh Himself God' - why did He not protest

and say: 'I'm not saying I'm God'? Why did He receive worship as God? Because He is God! Because Colossians 2:9, another verse to note, says: *'In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily'*. Another verse for you, 1 Timothy 3:16: *'Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh'*. Who was that God manifest in flesh? It was Jehovah, the living God. How was He manifest in flesh? In the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But Christian Science does not teach the triune Godhead as the Bible does, in fact it teaches that God is both father and mother. I don't know where they get that, it's certainly not in the Scriptures. The male personal pronoun is what is used right throughout God's word for God - 'He'. But they believe that God is a principle known as the divine mind, He's not a personality, He does not have personhood. This is their catchphrase, that they believe that God is 'all in all' - God's in you, God's in me, God's in all of creation. They believe about our lovely Lord Jesus Christ that He was a 'way-shower' to God, like many other prophets before Him and after Him, He pointed a way to God. They claim that He epitomised the true principle of what they call 'Christ-consciousness' which indwells us all. We're all Christs, we're all gods, we've all got a divine spark within us!

Salvation, to the Christian Scientist, involves denying the illusion of sin in your mind. It doesn't matter to them that Romans 3:23 says that there's no difference, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. They say that the way to get rid of that sin is not Christ dying on the cross, or repenting of your sins in the light of that and having faith in the Lord Jesus, it's denying it in your mind - how Satanic can you get! Ignoring your sin as an illusion! Why is it that God's word in 1 John 1 says: *'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'*, and we make God a liar - but if we confess, not deny, not ignore, but confess our sins *'he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'*, 1 John 1:8-10. They do not have much faith in our physical senses, and if they are right about the material world, and we read 'Science and Health' by Mary Baker Eddy - how can we trust that when we read it? How can we trust anything when we listen to it or read or imbibe anything?

Friends, listen to me: by their fruits ye shall know them. Mary Baker Eddy, in her declining years, put herself under a doctor's care - doesn't that tell you a great deal? She received, in her dying illness, regular morphine injections to ease the pain. She wore glasses, she had tooth extractions, and eventually she died - thus giving the lie to everything she professed to believe, everything that she taught, everything that people are following today. Some are going to the grave, and sending their children to the grave following these teachings - yet she denied them! I think you can see that that so-called cult faith is from the pit of hell itself. It is neither scientific nor Christian.

### **Scientology**

We must move on to the second cult for our consideration, Scientology. We're asking the question: is Scientology science or is it science fiction? You might find that a strange question, but you'll not in a moment or two. This is perhaps the most dangerous cult or new religion available today in our world. A man called Eugene Methvin, not a Christian as far I am aware, of The Reader's Digest wrote these words: 'Scientology is one of the wealthiest and most dangerous of the major new religions or cults operating today'.



Now let me say right away that Scientology does not claim to be Christian. It's not like Christian Science, although it is a mind science faith, it does not claim to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. It believes that the Bible has nothing special about it, any more than any other holy book in any religion across the globe. They don't really look up to a deity or to a god, rather it's a religion about men rather than God. They don't believe there was a Christ. They believe the man who died on the cross was just as much of Christ as you are a Christ or I am

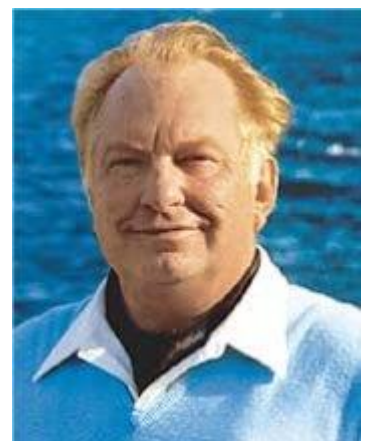
a Christ. He was a very good teacher, maybe a little bit better than most, but there was nothing special about the Lord Jesus. You could listen to the founder of Scientology saying: 'There was no Christ'. They deny all the doctrine that we hold dear from the word of God.

I'm not going to concentrate on the doctrine of Scientology, because many of the things that I've already dealt with in the previous chapter on the Jehovah's Witnesses and just now regarding Christian Science relate to Scientology as well. What I want to look at particularly is the popularity of this cult in our world today. A number of well-known celebrities adhere to the Church of Scientology. One is Priscilla Presley, the wife of the late Elvis Presley; and also Elvis and Priscilla Presley's daughter, Lisa-Marie Presley. Another is an actress called Kelly Preston; also Tom Cruise, Kirstie Alley and another famous actor, John Travolta. Now all of these celebrity individuals are followers of the Scientology cult. In fact, there is a seven storey celebrity centre in Hollywood, California dedicated to Scientologists who are celebrities. It's remarkable! In fact, John Travolta said, and I quote him: 'Scientology contains the secrets of the universe'.

Now Scientology is extremely dangerous when you consider that these are only some of the celebrities that are following the teachings of this cult today, and many young people may follow them. It's also dangerous because, and I say this advisedly, the leadership of Scientology is full of crooks, hucksters and conmen - not just in a spiritual sense. In fact, some of the members in Scientology leadership have been involved in robbery, espionage, kidnapping, blackmail and conspiracy. In October 1979 there were nine Scientology workers, including the wife of the leader, who were found guilty in a US court of conspiracy charges. A man by the name of Raymond Banoun, who was the Assistant US attorney in charge of that investigation and prosecution, remarked of these people: 'The evidence presented to the court shows brazen criminal campaigns against private and public organisations and individuals. The Scientology officials hid behind claims of religious liberty while inflicting injuries upon every element of society'.

### **The Founder - Fiction Author**

Now I want to turn our attention to the biggest conman of all in Scientology, and that is the founder of Scientology. Its founder is a fiction author, this is important: its founder is a fiction author - and I'm not being facetious. He literally has authored more than 200 fictional novels, his name is Lafayette Ron Hubbard - what a name! The fact of the matter is, this perhaps is one of the most dangerous, if not the most dangerous man in religious life in our world today - and I'm excluding, of course, the truth of Christianity. There follows a transcript of a video about this man and some of his claims, and I believe that you will be absolutely astounded. Read it very carefully, these are some biographical details about Ron Hubbard:



*[Begin video transcript]*

Narrator: *"In new gurus and religions, none is more powerful or successful than L. Ron Hubbard and the church of Scientology. L. Ron Hubbard moved effortlessly from writing bestselling science fiction books, like 'Beyond the Black Nebula', or 'The Emperor of the Universe', to founding a new church 'Scientology', and the writing of a new spiritual guidebook 'Dianetics'. L. Ron Hubbard was a man of astounding abilities and even more astounding claims. He claimed that in earlier incarnations he visited heaven twice. His first visit allegedly took place 43 trillion years ago"*

L. Ron Hubbard: *"Heaven is not a floating island in the sky, but a high place in the mountains of another planet. Visitors arrive in a town comprising a trolley bus, some building fronts, a boarding house, a bistro in a basement, and a bank building. Although there seem to be people around - in the boarding house there was a lady in a kimono - but these were only effigies, the bank is the key point of interest. Inside was a flight of marble stairs leading to*

*the pearly gates. The gates are well done, well built, an avenue of statues of saints leads up to them. The entering grounds are well-kept, laid out like bush gardens in Pasadena so often seen in the movies".*

Narrator: *"Hubbard claims he dropped in on heaven a trillion years later and found it in a sorry state"*

L. Ron Hubbard: *"The place is shabby, the vegetation is gone, the pillars are scruffy, the saints have vanished and so have the angels. Inside the grounds one can see the excavations, like archaeological diggings with raw terraces that lead to hell. Plain wire fencing encloses the place"*

Narrator: *"Scientology is certainly not in decay. Its celebrity centre in Hollywood provides a refuge for stars like Tom Cruise. In this very Babylonian bit of the town Scientology's doctrines of survival and self-esteem, and its hostility to drugs and psychiatry carry a special appeal"*

*[End video transcript]*

Ron Hubbard Jr., that is Ron Hubbard senior's eldest son, who came to change his name because he was so ashamed of the con-tricks of his father, claimed to a Newsweek reporter in 1982: 'My father claimed that his theories relating to Scientology were based on 30 years of case histories and research. In fact they were written off the top of his head while he was under the influence of drugs'. He went on to say: 'My father is one of the biggest conmen of this century', yet celebrities are running after Scientology! You will find Scientology churches in Ireland and in some of the richest cities in the world - people are being duped! Now, below is a very revealing transcript of another video on Ron Hubbard. I believe this comes from the ITV programme 'The Big Story' a few years ago. Dermot Murnaghan is the journalist, and here we see some more claims concerning the founder of Scientology:

*[Begin video transcript]*

Dermot Murnaghan: *"Scientology was created by this man, Lafayette Ron Hubbard, or plain Ron to his followers. From within Hubbard's inner circle his PR man, Vaughn Young, worked on Ron's chief ambition for 20 years"*

Young: *"Hubbard literally had a plan for world conquest. He actually literally wanted to take over the world, but he had to put it in other terms, and the term he came up with was to clear the planet. This sounds like a very beneficent action, we're going to 'clear the planet', which means rid it of its problems. But really it was more of a case like a Hitler, that he wants to rid the planet of vermin, and the vermin are the people that are stopping him - these were basically the enemies of Scientology".*

DM: *"Scientists dismiss as propaganda all criticism of Ron Hubbard, the church or their beliefs from former members, or apostates as they call them. But there are plenty of independent sources too. Science fiction writer Hubbard created a colourful life history for himself, claiming to be a nuclear physicist, explorer and war hero. This was exposed as the myth it was by Sunday Times journalist Russell Miller".*

Miller: *"Ron Hubbard was a charlatan, a liar, a confidence trickster, a thief. He invented his whole life, he invented a career to substantiate himself as a Guru for the Church of Scientology".*

DM: *"In 1968 Hubbard was banned from Britain and took to the high seas. The crew of mostly young followers became the elite core of Scientology, the 'Sea Organisation'"*

Interviewer: *"Do you ever think that you might be quite mad?"*

Hubbard: *"Oh yes, the one man in the world who never believes he's mad is a madman"*

DM: *"Hubbard's organisation fought back against bans and adverse publicity worldwide to become a multimillion-dollar empire controlling a myriad of interlocking companies. Hubbard left 650 million dollars when he died in 1986. Scientology then passed to a new master, David Miscavige".*

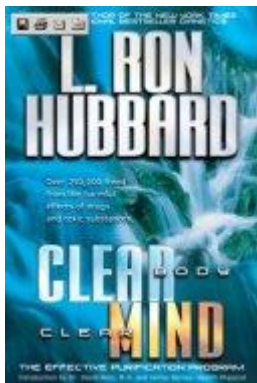
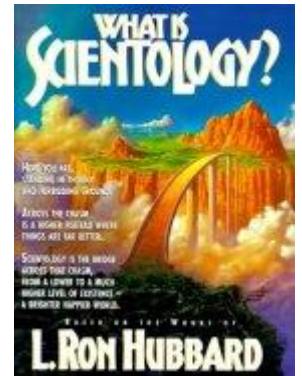
*[End video transcript]*

Now I hope you can see right away why I said its founder was a fiction author, he was

literally a fiction author. The religion that he founded and formed is almost fictional itself, except that those that follow it believe that it is absolute truth. We know from the truth of God's word that it is a lie, but from the very fact that celebrities and film stars follow it, those who to us are not real to the naked eye, we don't know them as real individuals - you can see the fictional nature of its design and the lie of the devil.

### **The Claims - Fictitious Falsehoods**

Its founder is a fiction author, but its claims, secondly, are fictitious falsehoods. There are two books which Ron Hubbard wrote, 'What Is Scientology?', and 'Clear Body and Clear Mind' - and these show that, like many of the mind sciences, he believed that the way to Utopia was to get your mind cleared. I'll not go into all the technical terms of it, but Dianetics, which he believed in, was to get rid of negative thoughts and negative emotions that have been in your life from your birth - that would be the way to real deliverance and salvation. He believed that it would take billions of years, and when you sign up to Scientology you actually sign a certificate that commits you to a billion year's service! How would you like that? They believe, of course, in reincarnation.



In 1949 Hubbard attributed an improvement in his own health to this discovery of dianetics. It was the modern science of mental health, the psychology of the subconscious mind. Now it is mind-blowing what this man believed. We have a transcript of an interview with a man called Jon Attack, who has studied this. He came out of the movement, and he has studied it in depth and tries to explain what these people believe - you'll probably not understand a word of it! It is absolutely astonishing, you've read his claims of going to heaven, seeing what it was like trillions of years ago, going back trillions of years later and it was in ill-repute - wait till you read these claims of what they believe:

*[Begin video transcript]*

Dermot Murnaghan: *"Former Scientologist Jon Attack has collected an enormous archive on the bizarre system of beliefs that Ron Ron Hubbard invented. 'Clearing the planet' means taking everyone to the secret 'OT' or Operating Thetan levels. It can cost Scientologist around £20,000 to discover these inner mysteries".*

Attack: *"Once you've paid an enormous amount of money, and signed a covenant of secrecy, and you get onto the third OT level, you're told that a galactic prince called Xenu, some 75 million years ago, rounded up the populations of 76 planets averaging 178 billion per planet, and brought them to earth and clustered them together using hydrogen bombs having dumped them in volcanoes".*

DM: *"The spirit of these exciles, or Thetans, has Hubbard called them, on release from the volcanoes attached themselves to human beings. Here's one of them on the cover of one of his many books".*

Attack: *"Scientologists who are doing OT levels come to believe that they are inhabited by thousands of little alien spirits, extraterrestrials spirits, and they're basically seeking to exorcise these spirits which are governing their behaviour and reactions".*

*[End video transcript]*

### **The Profits - Fantastic**

Well, those are the claims of Scientology, how we all got here and why we're in the problem we're in. The next thing I want you to note very briefly is its profits. We did read the narrator describing what Ron Hubbard is meant to have seen as he was taken up to heaven, and the thing of key feature, if you remember it, was the bank. Did you notice that? It was that bank from which came the pearly steps right up to heaven. The profits of the Scientology movement are fantastic in themselves, not just are their claims fictitious falsehoods, and their



founder a fiction author, but their profits are fantastic.

Lisa-Marie Presley, who we've mentioned already, is Elvis and Priscilla Presley's daughter. In August 1986 the headline of the Daily Express was: 'Scientists adopt daughter worth millions: Elvis heiress cult shock'. The reason for that headline was that Lisa-Marie Presley, on her 18th birthday, was about to inherit two million dollars from her deceased father. On her 21st birthday she was going to inherit another two million, and she was to inherit up to 30 million dollars and the Graceland estate where Elvis used to live when she was 25. Surprise, surprise that the Scientists were so interested in her! In fact a waitress at the Scientology retreat said, I quote: 'She', Lisa-Marie, 'is being handled very carefully. They know she will come into a lot of money and they expect a large chunk of it'.



The Scientists possess expensive properties in America, some also in Britain, many large buildings like the Scientology centre in Los Angeles, and also the celebrity centre in Hollywood. They own property right across the world, and also a boat which was called the 'Apollos' - in 1976 US tax officials found £1,250,000 in cash aboard it! Hubbard used to charge between £1,700 and £6,300 for consultation and for some of his more advanced courses. The

estimated gross annual income of the Scientology movement is £45 million - and you read what he had to his name when he died.

Now listen friends, this is what happens: you're walking down the street, someone comes and does a questionnaire. They enrol you in some courses to have you rid your mind of negative thoughts. Before you know it, and I have seen these testimonies, you're sitting before a man who looks at you eyeball to eyeball for an hour or over an hour until you're in a trance-like state. People have testified that you begin to hallucinate, you see scales on people's faces, they turn lizard-like, negative turns to positive, positive to negative. Right away, after that hypnotic experience, you're taken into an office and made to sign up for more courses totalling thousands upon thousands of pounds. People have testified to consciously handing over their bank book, credit card details, not of their own volition.

### ***The Fruit - Fatal***

Its profits are fantastic, its claims are fictitious falsehoods, its founder is a fiction author, but fourthly and finally: its fruit can be and often is fatal. There are people who have committed suicide because of their affiliation to Scientology. There follows the text of an interview with a woman, perhaps the only person in the whole of Ireland who has been big enough to admit that they've come out of the Scientology movement, the only one who has been courageous enough. It's not a movement to come out of easily, and they will not treat you well for doing it. This interview was broadcast on the 'Late Late Show' in 1995 - the girl is called Mary Johnson. When you watched it the fear that was in this woman's face was plain to see. Read carefully to see how a cult can get hold of a person's spirit:

Interviewer: "...Mary Johnson here on my left, and let me tell you about Mary Johnson, OK? Mary Johnson is from Dundalk, a Catholic, she went to school in St Vincent's Mercy Convent in Dundalk. She came first in the town at the Leaving Cert, and first in Ireland in Italian in the Leaving Cert. She went to Trinity, got a degree in Russian and French, she then went to study Marketing at night in the College of Commerce in Rathmines, and did a four-year course in two years. She's an inter-pro squash player for Leinster, and also has coaching qualifications. She plays guitar and sings, and has her own business here in Dublin - she runs a sports shop.

*Just over two years ago she was introduced to Scientology, the Church of Scientology, by a friend called Tom. Mary, let me just summarise the bare skeleton of what I know about you. You were introduced by Tom, the idea was that Scientology offered you a chance to further your career, your self-fulfilment, your freedom and control over your own life if you took a course; which you did and you paid for. Whether you succeeded in that or not, the idea was that you go to do a second course, and you pay for that, and so on to a third course, and you pay for that. You found yourself being drawn into this organisation, and you began to get worried about it and concerned about your place in it, and then your family brought pressure to bear upon you, or influence at least to bear upon you to get out. Because of the concern and efforts on their part, and on the part of your friends, you eventually declutched with some difficulty - with some difficulty. Is that a fair sort of summary in broad outline?"*

*Johnson: "Yes, in broad outline"*

*Interviewer: "Why are you frightened to be here tonight?"*

*Johnson: "I'm frightened to be here, Gaye, because I'm intimidated by the people who are here from the Church of Scientology. The first point I would like to make is that the reason I am here is because I'm the only Irish person who is an ex-member of the Church of Scientology who is prepared to speak out. People...ex-members don't speak out, that's the first point. The second point is that it's interesting that the Church of Scientology has seen fit to fly in two people from England today for this show, when I'm Irish, we're dealing with the Church of Scientology in Ireland - are they not happy to have their own members here to speak?"*

*Interviewer: "You got out relatively easily, did you not?"*

*Johnson: "I did, because my family worked very quickly and very thoroughly to get information on the Church of Scientology, and but for that intervention I wouldn't be here today"*

*Interviewer: "Was there pressure brought to bear upon you when you were getting out, or at any time when you were in, when you first began to voice your reservations?"*

*Johnson: "From whom, from the Church?"*

*Interviewer: "From the Church, yes"*

*Johnson: "Well, I didn't actually voice my reservations to the Church, by the time my family had intervened I had made a commitment to the Church that I was going to give up my business and move to England and work for the Church for one billion years. Because at that stage I believed in reincarnation, which I don't believe in".*

*Interviewer: "One billion years?"*

*Johnson: "Yes, one billion years"*

*Interviewer: "And their influence had got you to the point of almost selling up your business, is that so?"*

*Johnson: "Yes, their suggestion was that I would be more fulfilled in Scientology and 'would it not be good idea if I sold my business?'"*

*Interviewer: "OK, so you're frightened to be here tonight. When you finally decided to leave, was there pressure and intimidation brought to bear on you?"*

*Johnson: "When I left Scientology, the following week I had about 20 phone calls from people in Scientology to find out why I hadn't come back and reported on the intervention of my family, because I was drilled on how to deal with my family by members of the church"*

*Interviewer: "You were told what to say to your family?"*

*Johnson: "I would have a member of the Church of Scientology role-playing my mother, or my sister, or my brother-in-law, and I would answer them, defending the Church of Scientology"*

*Interviewer: "And you did pretty good at that?"*

*Johnson: "I was a good student I believe"*

*Interviewer: "Yes, and then eventually you got these phone calls - were they threatening phone calls? Intimidating phone calls? Bullying?"*

*Johnson: "Not at that stage, but the problem with them was that they were always - they were to my business, they were to my home, they were invasive. I found them very much invading my privacy. I just...the intimidation, the reason why I feel intimidation is because...I*

*am frightened because the Church of Scientology in the past has revealed personal details given by people like me in confidence to them during counselling sessions. That's why I'm frightened, because they have used details given in confidence to silence their critics"*

Interviewer: "OK"

*[End video transcript]*

### **Conclusion**

I wish I had time, but in that 'Big Story' that we had a transcript of earlier in the chapter, there was an undercover journalist who joined the Scientology movement. She was given one of these questionnaires that you heard Mary talking about, and some of the questions that were on that questionnaire touched on intimate relationships that she had had, sexual relationships, asked her to be explicit and specific. What happens is that they find all this out about you, and if you blow the whistle on that organisation, they will publish those details. That is what we're dealing with when we talk about cults, especially Scientology. They aren't stupid people that are following these cults, but do the words of the Lord Jesus Christ not come forcibly to us, when He said: *'You cannot serve two masters, you cannot serve God and money'*? Beware of any religious faith that motivates men and women to give money in order to purge their souls, in order to have salvation. Beware of any organisation that says Jesus is 'a way', for Jesus said in John 14:6: *'I am the way'*. He is not one of many truths, but He said: *'I am the truth'*. There's no other way to have life other than Him, because He is the life. He is the only way to the Father, to God. He is the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved.

Can I say to you: you have no idea, most of you, what is going on in the unseen realm of the spiritual world. You have no idea at times what you're opening your mind, and your hearts, and your ears, and your eyes to. That is why God's word says to the believer: *'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind'*. Can I leave you with this verse, 2 Corinthians 10, this is a verse that will liberate you if you're not saved, if you're involved in sinful habits, if you're involved in sinful cults, and even if you're a believer and you've been wrapped up in something that has you in bondage. Listen to these words - 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: *'(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)'* - Satan's strongholds - *'Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ'*. Hallelujah! Christ, the name high over all:

*'All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall,  
bring forth the royal diadem,  
and crown Him Lord of all'.*

## Chapter 3

# "Mormonism - The Latter Day Saints"

### 1 Timothy 2:5

1. Its Origins and Originators
2. Its Teachings and Writings

#### **Introduction**

In 1 Timothy 2 we have a vitally important verse - 1 Timothy 2:5. Paul says to Timothy: *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"*.

Now so far in our studies we have dealt with the Jehovah's Witnesses, and in our previous chapter the cult of Christian Science and also Scientology which is so popular in our world today. We're now going to look at the cult of Mormonism, or as they call themselves: 'The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints'. This cult is one of the wealthiest cults that there is in the world today, not that we deduce anything from that, but just for your information: between 25 and 30 billion dollars is theirs in assets alone. The Mormon Church controls at least 100 companies or businesses in our world, and comprising that is the Marriott chain of hotels. Also within their great hoard and treasury of wealth is included 300 million dollars a year in media conglomerates, they're heavily into media. Then also 3 million dollars a day is generated in the Mormon Church purely by the tithes and offerings of those who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. A very interesting fact is that when you join the church, it is compulsory to give a tithe of all your income.



The most up-to-date figures I could get show that there about 11 million members in the Mormon Church; and it is growing at a rate of over 1500 members a day - staggering! One baptism occurs in the Mormon Church approximately every 1 minute 55 seconds. During the past quarter of the century the Mormon Church has moved to seventh place in the 'top ten' list of American church bodies - bypassing the Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Lutherans. That's due to many factors: partly the advertising push on television and in periodicals such as the Reader's Digest, but chiefly because of their aggressive evangelism - their

missionaries all around the world who propagate the Mormon Gospel. The Brigham Young University (BYU) president, Merrill Bateman, predicted in the year 2000 that by 2025 the number of Mormon missionaries converting people will be more than doubled, rising from about 60,000 in the year 2000 to 125,000.

At the minute Mormon missionaries are in over 150 countries, and during the year 2000 alone, there were 35 Mormon temples dedicated. There is the very beautiful Cincinnati

Temple, and also here in the UK the Preston Temple, and each temple contains a sight that many Mormons never see - that is the Celestial Room, which is almost like the Holy of Holies in the temple. Very few Mormons ever actually get into it - it's a great privilege to enter such a place.

### ***The Origins And Originators Of Mormonism***

We want to consider the claims of the Mormon Church under two headings mirrored by the word of God. The first heading is: the origins and the originators of Mormonism. The second heading later on will be: the teachings and writings of Mormonism.

We'll look first at the origins and the originators of Mormonism. The originator and the founder of Mormonism was Joseph Smith, who is heralded as the Mormon prophet and God's supreme revelation to mankind today. Joseph Smith was born in Vermont in 1805. He was the fourth child of Lucy and Joseph Smith, and Joseph Smith Snr. was a man who searched for buried treasure - he was known as a 'money digger'. Now that is no reflection on Joseph Jnr., but I'm just trying to portray to you the home from which he came. His mother was also described by biographers as being a very superstitious person. From his youth Joseph Smith Jnr. was interested in religion. He was very disturbed by all the different denominations there were in so-called Christendom, and he thought that all of them could not be right, and he questioned whether any of them were true at all.



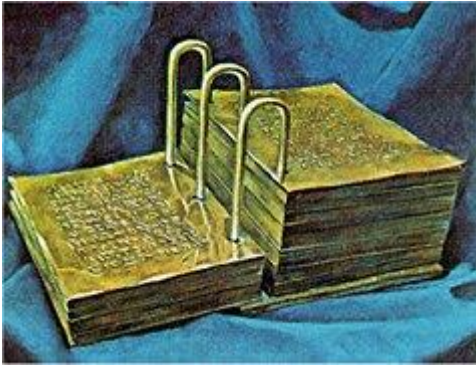
Now we may find that we can commend him in a sense, because he read the Holy Scriptures and he testifies himself that he read James 1:5 where God says: *'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not'*. So Joseph Smith decided that he would ask God if any of the present-day denominations in Christendom were true and, if there were any true, which he should join. He did that in the year 1820 at the age of approximately 14 years old. One day he went into the woods in New York State to pray concerning this very matter, that God would reveal to him the truth of which denomination had God's true revelation. The fourteen year-old Joseph Smith claimed that at that moment, when he began to pray to God upon this verse, James 1:5, that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and told him not to join any denomination. In fact he quotes the words that were used, saying that 'all the denominations were abominations in the sight of God'. As one Christian writer on Mormonism, Harold Berry, has said 'Thus Mormons', from that very inception of their religion, 'would have us believe that with one vision given to a 14-year-old boy, God wiped out eighteen centuries of historic Christianity'. That is what they claim: that God was giving to Joseph Smith a new revelation of Jesus Christ.

So, upon that revelation, Joseph did not join any of the present-day Christian denominations; but incidentally - at his own admission - he did not draw near to God from that moment in time. In fact he confessed later in his life that during the next three years he frequently, I quote: 'Fell into many foolish errors and displayed the weakness of youth and the foibles of human nature'. Actually, some of his own contemporaries would later list that treasure hunting, using divining rods, ritual magic and other occultic practices were among some of those errors of Joseph Smith's youth. It is also significant, I would have to add, that there are at least six versions of the vision that Joseph had with God at that moment when God warned him not to join any of the Christian churches. There are many discrepancies between those



six or more visions, one discrepancy being that in 1832 Joseph Smith said that 'only Christ appeared to him in the woods in New York State'. Then, between the years 1838 and 1839, the version changed and he said that 'both God the Father and the Son appeared to him there in the forest' - and there are many other discrepancies besides these.

Joseph Smith claimed that three years later in 1823, when he was 17 years of age, an angel appeared to him - an angel by the name of 'Moroni'. This angel was supposedly the son of a man called 'Mormon', who was the leader of the people called 'the Nephites' who had lived in America many many years ago. Joseph Smith claimed that Moroni appeared to him and told him that he was chosen to translate the sacred book of Mormon, which was written by Moroni over 1000 years earlier. Within that book of Mormon, the history of the people of the Nephites and the ancient American race was detailed. Also - and this is very important to note - Joseph Smith claimed that the angel told him that within the book of Mormon was the fullness of the true everlasting gospel.

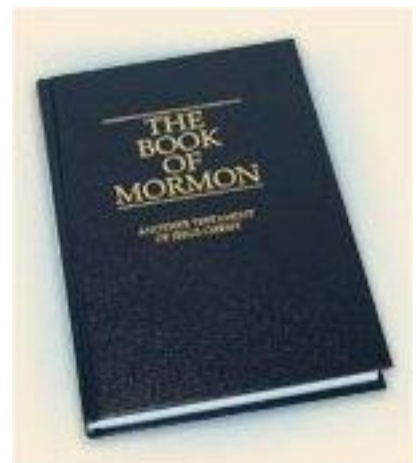


Joseph Smith claimed to begin to translate these golden tablets shown to him by the angel. He was instructed to translate them through Urim and Thummim - those of you who are familiar with the Old Testament will know what those jewels are - and he used the Urim and Thummim to translate what he called a language of 'reformed Egyptian characters'. Now most if not all of the linguistic scholars and Egyptologists will tell you that there is no such thing as reformed Egyptian characters, nevertheless this is what Joseph Smith claimed. He used this Urim and Thummim like seer-stones, or spectacles, whereby God supposedly revealed to him the English translation of these reformed Egyptian characters on the golden pages.

The book of Mormon was originally, he said, written on these golden plates. The angel told him that the book was hidden near where he was presently living in New York. Now there are many other claims that Joseph Smith makes, and I can't deal with them all because they're simply too numerous, but during the process of translating these golden plates Joseph Smith claimed that John the Baptist himself appeared to him. John the Baptist ordained Joseph Smith to accomplish, he said, the divine work of restoring the true church of Jesus Christ by the preaching of the true gospel which had allegedly been lost from the earth.

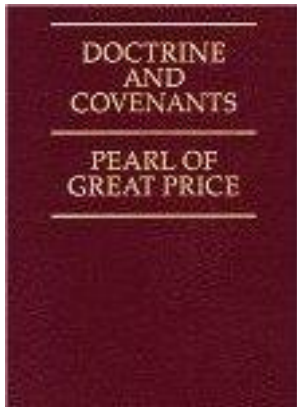
Now could we just pause for a moment, because I hope you will recall from the previous chapters that this is a chief characteristic of the cult and the false religion: they claim to be the restoration of the true gospel that has been lost in present-day Christianity. It begs the question, what did the Lord Jesus Christ mean in Matthew 16:18 when He said that He would build His church, and the gates of hell would not prevail against it? Well, Joseph Smith had a different revelation, and the Mormon Church does not hide the fact that it is different than true Christianity - although they might try to persuade you that they are as Christian as any other church. The fact of the matter is that the modern day Book of Mormon also has as a subtitle on it: 'Another Testament of Jesus' - another revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ that you will not find anywhere else but in the Book of Mormon.

Not only did John the Baptist tell him to preach the true gospel but he also, Joseph claimed, conferred upon him the Aaronic priesthood that we know of in the Old Testament Scriptures. Later Peter, James and John appeared to Joseph Smith and conferred upon him the priesthood of Melchisedec; and of course Joseph Smith himself claimed to be a human descendant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He then went on to claim that the golden



plates were taken away from him again by the angel, and they have not been seen since. So we cannot check the claims of the true Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon claims to cover a period of 600 AD through to 400 AD, and is supposedly an account of a people called the Jaredites, who apparently migrated from the Tower of Babel in the Middle East to Central America where they perished because of their own immorality. It also describes the migration of some of the Jews, who were led by a man called Nephi. This book of Mormon describes how, led by Nephi, these people fled from Palestine to America, and as a result of persecution in Jerusalem they went to the new-found land. The Book of Mormon claims that those Jewish people were divided into two groups, the Nephites and the Lamanites - and these two groups began to fight one another. The claim that, having defeated the Nephites in 428AD, the Lamanites lived on and are known today as the American Indian people. The Book of Mormon makes no secret of this. The Book of Mormon is an account of the Nephite leader, Mormon, concerning their culture, their civilisation and - wait for it - the literal bodily appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ in Central America.



In order to provide a basic introduction to what Mormons believe, I want to share with you a transcript of a video explaining Mormon doctrine in a nutshell:

*[Begin video transcript]*

Narrator: *"Mormonism teaches that trillions of planets scattered throughout the cosmos are ruled by countless gods, who once were human like us. They say that long ago on one of these planets, to an unidentified god and one of his goddess wives, a spirit child named Elohim was conceived. This spirit child was later born to human parents who gave him a physical body. Through obedience to Mormon teaching in death and resurrection, he proved himself worthy and was elevated to godhood, as his father before him. Mormons believe that Elohim is their heavenly father, and that he lives with his many goddess wives on a planet near a mysterious star called Kolob. Here the god of Mormonism and his wives, through endless celestial sex, produce billions of spirit children. To decide their destiny, the head of the Mormon gods called a great heavenly counsel meeting. Both of Elohim's eldest sons were there: Lucifer, and his brother Jesus. A plan was presented to build planet earth, where the spirit children would be sent to take on mortal bodies and learn good from evil. Lucifer stood and made his bid for becoming saviour of this new world - wanting the glory for himself, he planned to force everyone to become gods. Opposing the idea, the Mormon Jesus suggested giving man his freedom of choice as on other planets. The vote that followed approved the proposal of the Mormon Jesus, who would become saviour of the planet earth. Enraged, Lucifer cunningly convinced one-third of the spirits destined for earth to fight with him in revolt. Thus Lucifer became the devil, and his followers the demons. Sent to this world they would forever be denied bodies of flesh and bone. Those who remain neutral in the battle were cursed to be born with black skin. This is the Mormon explanation for the Negro race. The spirits that fought most valiantly against Lucifer would be born into Mormon families on planet earth. These would be the lighter skinned people, or 'white and delightsome' as the Book of Mormon describes them. Early Mormon prophets taught that Elohim and one of his goddess wives came to earth as Adam and Eve to start the human race. Thousands of years later Elohim, in human form once again, journeyed to earth from the starbase Kolob, this time to have sex with the Virgin Mary in order to provide Jesus with a physical body. The Mormon apostle, Orson Pratt, taught that after Jesus Christ grew to manhood he took at least three wives: Mary, Martha and Mary Magdalene. Through these wives the Mormon Jesus, from whom Joseph Smith claimed direct descent, supposedly fathered a number of children before he was crucified. According to the Book of Mormon, after his resurrection Jesus came to the Americas to preach to the Indians - who the Mormons believe are really Israelites. Thus the Jesus of Mormonism established his church in the Americas as he had in Palestine.*

*By the year 421 AD the dark skinned Indian Israelites, known as Lamanites, had destroyed all of the white Nephites in a number of great battles. The Nephite records were supposedly written on golden plates and buried by Moroni, the last living Nephite, on the hill Cumorah. 1400 years later a young treasure-seeker named Joseph Smith, who was known for his tall tales, claimed to have uncovered these same gold plates near his home in upstate New York. He is now honoured by Mormons as a prophet because he claimed to have had visions from the spirit world in which he was commanded to organise the Mormon Church, because all Christian creeds were an abomination. It was Joseph Smith who originated most of these peculiar doctrines which millions today believe to be true. By maintaining a rigid code of financial and moral requirements, and through performing secret temple rituals for themselves and the dead, the Latter Day Saints hope to prove their worthiness, and thus become gods. The Mormons teach that everyone must stand at the final judgment before Joseph Smith, the Mormon Jesus and Elohim. Those Mormons who are sealed in the eternal marriage ceremony expect to become polygamous gods in a celestial kingdom, and rule over other planets, and spawn new families throughout eternity. The Mormons thank God for Joseph Smith, who claimed that he had done more for us than any other man, including Jesus Christ. The Mormons believe that He died as a martyr, shed His blood for us so that we too may become gods".*

*[End video transcript]*

Now you can see that there's a great deal of doctrine, indeed false doctrine, that we could not possibly begin to deal with in this short critique. There is a plethora of what we could only say, in the light of our knowledge of the Scriptures, is absolute blasphemy. That Elohim, the Mormon god, is nothing but an exalted man who has ascended to 'god status', and therefore this idea of our salvation as 'becoming gods' is an opportunity for all? Not only that, but Satan is said to be the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ; that the Lord Jesus Christ's way of salvation was chosen over his. So this exalted man 'Elohim' went and - as Brigham Young claimed - in a natural way, just as naturally as you were conceived, Jesus was conceived through Elohim the exalted man and the Virgin Mary...no longer a virgin. They go on, claiming that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the Americas; Joseph Smith claiming to be the one sole prophet; claiming that on one day, the day of judgment, we will stand before the Mormon Jesus, Elohim, and Joseph Smith!

Now after the publication of the Book of Mormon, Mormonism began to grow - probably because of the deviant nature regarding it, as opposed to Christianity, it was so different. Anybody reading the word of God could see very clearly that it is different: there is a plurality of gods - Elohim is only one god in this particular universe; and the doctrine of polygamy made it very unique. I don't justify their persecution, but nevertheless persecution of the Mormons took place and soon forced them to move from New York State to Ohio, then to Missouri, and finally to Illinois. From the inception of the Mormon Church upon the basis of the so-called revelation of the Book of Mormon, trouble continually followed this religious organisation. There were atrocities committed upon them, but historians clearly tell us that there were also atrocities committed by them.

On one occasion Governor Lilburn Boggs of Missouri issued an order to militia stating that because of, I quote 'the attitude of open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made open war upon the people of this state, the Mormons must be treated as enemies and exterminated or driven from this state'. There followed what has been known as one of the greatest massacres, the Mountain Meadows massacre of 1859, in modern American history. In fact there was a recent article in the Daily Telegraph on Wednesday February 27th 2002 - the claim was, I quote 'A confession etched on a newly discovered lead sheet has shaken the Mormon Church by linking its revered leader, Brigham Young



with one of the worst massacres in American history'. The note claims that Brigham Young ordered the massacre, although Mormons up until then claimed that it was the American Indians who were guilty for it. Eventually John D Lee, a militia man who was Brigham Young's adopted son, having been given over by the Mormons, was tried and executed for the massacre of 120 settlers, mostly women and children, who had thrown down their weapons after being given the promise of safe passage. Now Mormons have tried to cover this up in bygone days, but the fact of the matter is that there is now a confession etched and signed by John D Lee, claiming that upon the orders of Brigham Young he carried out the massacre. To this day, schoolbooks in Utah don't mention it, it is airbrushed history because it doesn't fit in with the doctrine, they still will not face the facts.



Trouble also dogged the Mormons, not just because of civil unrest, but also rumours regarding polygamy - and not all the Mormons were even happy themselves with the polygamy that was going on. In fact we know, and the Mormons even admit, that Smith himself was definitely a polygamist. The number of wives that he had is unknown, estimates range between 28 to 84, one being as young as 14 years of age. His true first wife Emma was very hurt and angry when she found out about his polygamous relationships - but guess what happened? Joseph got a word from the Lord to the effect that the Lord would kill Emma if she would not submit and cleave to Joseph!

Now by 1842 some dissident Mormons were so unhappy with the apparent immorality that a newspaper was published by these excommunicated Mormons detailing their grievances against Joseph Smith in particular. The first edition of that newspaper happened to also be the last, because days later Joseph Smith and the city council decided to destroy the printing office of the paper. Because of that Joseph and his brother Hiram ended up in jail, and on June 27th a mob broke into the jail and killed Joseph and his brother. It would have to be added that that was not before Smith used a six-shooter to wound a few of them in a blazing gun battle on his way out.

After that the church divided into two groups. You may think that there is one Mormon Church, there is not, there are several, but there are two particularly strong influences in Mormonism. Right there at the very beginning, after Smith's death, one group was led by Joseph Smith's widow which went back to Missouri and were called 'The Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints'. They maintained that they were the true Mormon Church, and they laid claim to the legal succession of Church Presidency which was bestowed upon Joseph's son, Joseph Smith III. The other group, which we know today as 'The Church of the Latter Day Saints' was led by Brigham Young, and it went not to Missouri but to Utah and eventually ended up at Salt Lake. Of course in 1847, not long after that, it became Salt Lake City.

### ***The Teachings And Writings Of Mormonism***

So I hope you see the origins and the originator of Mormonism, and all the claims that I have made can be proven. Now we want to move on to examine a little bit more in the light of God's word the teachings and writings of Mormonism. Let me say before I go on any further: the strongest anti-Mormon literature around is their own literature! I will quote many statements that they believe in, and I can give you the references for them - but you will find, when you begin to read Mormon literature, that there are discrepancies within their own writings alone. For instance, the Book of Mormon disagrees on occasions with contemporary teaching of the Mormon Church today.

Let me give you two examples at least, I have several more, but we've only space to consider two. The first is this: if you read the Book of Mormon, you will find that in places it does teach that there is only one God, whereas the doctrine evolved to say that there are many gods and

gods many, as they falsely quote the statement from 1 Corinthians. They even claim that we can be like Elohim and exalt ourselves to the state of godhood, marry goddesses, and procreate throughout eternity populating planets forever and ever, because we can achieve god-status as well. However the Book of Mormon does teach that there is only one God, and that He is not a man, He is not flesh and blood as the Mormon Church claims, but He is unchangeable spirit. There are the quotations - 'Only one God, an unchangeable spirit' (Alma 11v26-31; II Nephi 31v21; Mormon 9v9-11,19; Moroni 7v22; 8v18) - you can read them for yourselves!

A second claim that the Book of Mormon correctly makes is that eternal glory or eternal punishment is inevitable to all men and women, and that there is no second chance after death - 'Eternal glory or punishment, no second chance' (III Nephi 27v11-17; Mosiah 3v24-27; II Nephi 28v22-23; Alma 34v32-35). Now the Mormon Church teaches us that baptism is necessary for the dead, they base that upon a verse that we will take time to look at later on in 1 Corinthians 15:29 - but they state that we can actually engage in proxy baptism for those who have already died, in order to exalt them to another layer of glory in eternity. So they become obsessed with baptism for the dead, yet the Bible teaches, and even the Book of Mormon in III Nephi 27:11-17; Mosiah 3v24-27; II Nephi 28v22-23; and Alma 34v32-35 that there is glory and punishment for men.

Now I could give you many more discrepancies, but you should at least search and see for yourself whether these things be. Other men have done detailed studies of the Book of Mormon - one, an ex-Mormon scholar by the name of H. Michael Marquart (sp?), looked at the Book of Mormon and saw that there are over 200 quotations that are literally plagiarised from the Authorised Version of the English Scriptures - that is a fact. Although some may claim it, even in Protestantism, the Authorised Version of the Scriptures was not inspired as a direct translation from God. The original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts were the only inspired pieces of literature that God gave to His Church. So how come the Mormons and Joseph Smith in particular have just lifted, it would seem, the quotations from the Authorised and put them straight into the book of Mormon? It would seem very strange, wouldn't it? In fact, the Mormon Church claims that the Book of Mormon, I quote 'is the most correct book on earth' - even more correct than the Bible! It is so correct that an angel made 15 visits from the throne of God to Joseph Smith in the process of translation to make sure that the book of Mormon was correctly printed and translated as it was.

Now the facts do not bear out the claim that it is the most correct book on the earth. You can check out what I'm saying and you will find that it is true, because from the first publication of the Book of Mormon - and the first Book of Mormon was only published about 150 years ago, that's not an awfully long time - but from that first publication there have been almost 4000 changes in it!

What about the Book of Mormon and archaeology? Well, you would think if there was an ancient people called the Nephites and the Lamanites who inhabited Central America and they had the way of life that the Book of Mormon portrays - and coins are even mentioned within the Book of Mormon - you would think that by now American archaeologists, even Mormon archaeologists, would have excavated some of the evidence. But to date there is no evidence for the people in the Book of Mormon, there is no evidence for the places mentioned by the Book of Mormon, there is no evidence for any of the events claimed by the Book of Mormon. Chiefly, there is no evidence to say that the Red Indians descended from the Israelites, that they belong in the genetic sense to the Jewish nation. In fact, on the contrary there is evidence to prove categorically today that they do not descend from the Jew.

Now this is very technical stuff, but it's important that we understand the facts not only of history and the Bible, but of science proven today. In the transcript below you will see how DNA technological advances have disproved the claims of the book of Mormon - so much so



that even Mormon scientists are admitting that the claims of the Book of Mormon cannot be substantiated in the light of modern evidence.

*[Begin video transcript]*

Narrator: "Recently new inroads into research on human DNA has allowed scientists to determine the relatedness of different populations around the world. Children inherit a mixture of their parent's DNA, which is a mixture of their grandparents DNA, and so forth. With each subsequent generation that DNA becomes increasingly mixed and blended with DNA from other ancestors. However, small or isolated amounts of DNA exist in the cells of both fathers and mothers that do not mix when passed to their children. The father's Y-chromosome DNA remains intact as it is passed down to his son, and to his son's son, and so on through multiple generations. In the same way the mother's mitochondrial DNA also remains intact as it is passed down to both her sons and daughters from one generation to the next. Scientists are then able to trace these intact DNA markers back through hundreds of generations to determine ancestry. When the Y-chromosomes or mitochondrial DNA are tested in hundreds or even thousands of individuals from two different populations of people, the results can be compared to see how similar or dissimilar these intact DNA markers are between people groups. Dr David Glen-Smith has spent more than 30 years studying Native American genes. He has dozens of publications to his name, his lab at the University of California Davis is one of the country's leading test-labs of Native American DNA".

Dr. Glen-Smith: "If you look at genes in Native Americans, they came from the ancestors, they had to come from their ancestral populations - those ancestors lived somewhere. You can look for those genes in Jewish populations, but you don't find them. If you look at genes that are commonly, most commonly, found in Native American populations, and those that are most commonly found in Jewish populations, they don't coincide at all".

Researcher 1: "Recently I've been involved in a number of research projects that have examined DNA variation in ancient populations in the Americas. I don't know of any data that suggests particular similarity of Native American populations to any population of the Middle East".

Archaeologist: "Archaeologists and physical anthropologists have not found any evidence of Hebrew origins for the people of North, South and Central America".

Researcher 2: "Currently on the available evidence there is nothing to suggest any relationship whatsoever with Israelites".

Researcher 3: "The overwhelming evidence negates the Book of Mormon claim that the American Indian represents a genealogical descendant from Israel".

Narrator: "Thomas Murphy is a Mormon scholar and the chair of the Anthropology Department at Edmonds Community College in Linwood, Washington. He is working on his doctorate at the University of Washington on the DNA issue that faces his religion".

Murphy: "We are in a dilemma now. The genetic evidence shows clearly the American Indians are not Hebrews, they're not the Israelites".

*[End video transcript]*

That clip is from a video entitled 'DNA vs The Book of Mormon', and we could show you many other claims and follow on through to show you that categorically it has been proven that the American ancient indigenous people do not come from Israelites, rather they come from a gene pool which was spawned somewhere in the eastern part of North Asia somewhere near Siberia. A friend of mine was talking to a couple of Mormons recently in the centre of Belfast, and he pointed out to them that the original American people came from somewhere near Siberia up in North Asia. They said 'Oh yes, Jerusalem comes from Asia' - but it is North Asia, Asia is a big continent! It's North Asia near Siberia. The Mormon Church, in some parts, is trying to discredit this gentleman Thomas Murphy because he, as a Mormon, is now proving the Book of Mormon wrong. Many other Mormons are staying in the church and trying to reinterpret the Book of Mormon, because of the categorical evidence that they face.

We go on to look at the book of the Doctrine and Covenants - how Mormon Scriptures change

and writings are transformed to suit the present-day. When the 137th section of the Doctrine and Covenants book was canonised - that means it became Holy Writ for the Mormon Church - there were over 200 words of the original revelation, claimed by Joseph Smith to be given to him by God, that were omitted from it. The reason why? It contained three blatant lies, one of which was that men live on the moon. You can research it for yourself.

The difference between Christianity and the Church of the Latter Day Saints is that the Church of the Latter Day Saints reworks, rewrites, covers up and deletes its scriptures; but the church of Jesus Christ founded on the word of God goes back to the most ancient manuscripts it can find in order to show that God's word is still here! There is a great difference, because one stinks of cover-up, and the other testifies of seeking after the truth.

Now the best thing I can do for anyone reading this who is a Mormon, rather than argue all night, I would encourage you to read the word of God. Read the Holy Scriptures and you will find first of all that God is described in Deuteronomy 4:35 as being the only one and true God, it reads: *'Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him'*. Now I know that Elohim is a Hebrew word that is in the plural, but that is because within the Old and New Testament Scriptures there is the Triune Godhead. It is not three separate gods as the Church of the Latter Day Saints teaches, but it is one God in three persons, one essence. John 4:24 states very clearly that God is not a man, He is not flesh and blood, God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

At the beginning of the chapter we read 1 Timothy 2:5: *'There is one God'* - why does the church of the Mormons teach us that there are many gods? *'There is one mediator between God and man'* - not Joseph Smith, not Brigham Young, not any other prophet, not any other twelve apostles, but there is one mediator: the man Christ Jesus. In Malachi 3:6 in the Old Testament, God says: *'For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed'*. God never changes, He does not become exalted to a heavenly status from a man. That's what the word of God testifies of God Himself, but a cult can be detected a mile off by one question - and all of them are the same. If asked the scriptural question: *'What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?'*, they deny the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He is God manifest in flesh. You read the words of the prophet Pratt, who claimed that the Lord Jesus Himself was a polygamist married to Mary and Martha at the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee. Yet the Scriptures teach in John 1:1 that our Lord was much more than a man: in the beginning was the Word, the logos, He was with God and He was God. We read on in verse 14 of John 1: *'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth'*. *'For the law'*, John 1:18, *'was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ'* - not by Joseph Smith. *'No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him'*. In Matthew 1:18, the angel was heard to speak: *'Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost'* - and the angel said that He would be called, *'Emmanuel, God With Us, the Son of the Highest'*, not the son of some Adam that had been exalted to God, or Elohim that was in flesh and slept with the Virgin Mary. In Isaiah 7:14 God's word said prophetically: *'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel'* - a virgin.

The Bible speaks about the atonement, that it is complete and it has got nothing to do with either you or me. Yet the mantra of the Mormon Church is, as one of its prophets taught: *'As God once was, man is; and as God is, man may become'*. In other words, just as Elohim used to be a man, you can be a god just like him, you can achieve your own salvation by following the laws and the ordinances of the Mormon Church. Yet the fact of the matter is in Hebrews 9:22 it says that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. Brigham Young said that the blood of Christ was not enough to cleanse our sins, there are some sins that

need the shedding of our own blood! In John 1:29, John the Baptist said of Jesus, not Joseph Smith: *'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'*. First Peter 2:24 testifies that Christ Himself *'bore our sins on his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed'*.

We do not get to heaven or to salvation by our own works. Paul's epistle to the Romans 3:20 and following says: *'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace'*, unmerited favour, *'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God'*. Hebrews 10:12 clearly states: *'This man'*, Jesus Christ, *'after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God'* - it was finished completely!

Hebrews 7 testifies very clearly: *'this man, because he continueth ever'*, that means He is risen again, *'hath an unchangeable priesthood'* - He is in the order of the priesthood of Melchisedec. Do you see that word 'unchangeable' in the Greek language in the New Testament? It is translated also as 'untransferable' priesthood - there is only one priest after the order of Melchisedec, and it is the man that died and rose again, and Joseph Smith never rose again! Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, has the only claim to that.

What does the Bible have to say about salvation? Well, Brigham Young said: 'He that confesses not that Jesus has come in the flesh, and sent Joseph Smith with the fullness of the Gospel to this generation, is not of God but is antichrist' (Journal of Discourses, Volume 9, page 312). But God's word says in Romans 10:9 that if we confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in our heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, we shall be saved! But Brigham Young still says in Journal of Discourses, Volume 3, page 266: 'If any of you will deny the plurality of wives' - that is polygamy - 'and continue to do so, I promise that you will be damned'. Now perhaps there are some Mormons reading this, and I would ask you the question: I know that your Church has changed its teaching of polygamy, but does that mean you're all damned according to one of your revered prophets?

Friends, weigh up with the Scriptures what it teaches on salvation, that it is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone - Ephesians 2:8-9: *'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast'*. Romans 4:5: *'But to him that works salvation is not given, but to him that believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness'*.

What about the future state of the soul? Well, the Mormon Church teaches that by continual baptism by proxy for the dead, that we in some way can redeem those that are lost. But the Bible teaches in Hebrews 9:27: *'it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment'*. There is no second opportunity, the Lord Jesus told in Luke 16 - I know that the Mormons will say it is a parable, but nevertheless what does it teach if it even is a parable, when it says that there is a great gulf fixed so that they which would pass from hell to heaven could not? Revelation 20:15 says that: *'whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire'* - not given a second opportunity, not baptised and given another chance.

First Corinthians 15:29 poses a problem for many: baptism for the dead. I could spend a long time even espousing some of the Christian beliefs in this which are many and varied - it is a difficult verse, I'll give you that, I'll admit it freely right away. But I'll tell you this: one of the principal rules of hermeneutics, which is the interpretation of the word of God, is this is: you

do not interpret the clear passages of God's word by the obscure ones. There is nowhere else in Scripture that talks about baptism for the dead. There was a Greek practice not far from Corinth, a pagan practice of baptising dead people - and Paul, could it be, was illustrating by this: 'If they're even doing that in paganism, how can you Christians not believe in the resurrection from the dead?'. What he certainly was not claiming was that, in contradistinction to everything else in the Scriptures, you get a second chance after death.

The claims of Joseph Smith are astounding. Use your God-given conscience, if you still have one, and ask yourself what kind of a man this sounds like. This is a direct quote from History of the Church, volume 6, page 408-409, he says: 'God is in the still small voice. In all these indictments', affidavits that were put against him, 'it is all of the devil - all corruption. Come on! ye prosecutors! ye false swearers! All hell, boil over! Ye burning mountains, roll down your lava! For I will come out on the top at last. I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter Day Saints never ran away from me yet...'

That man is the nearest I've ever come to a devil incarnate. Revelation 22 tells me that if anyone takes away or adds to God's revelation, God will take away his name from ever being in the book of life. That is anti-Christ if ever there was! That is anathema that Paul speaks of! The Christ of Mormonism is not the Christ of the Bible, and Paul says if any man - or an angel! - preach another Christ unto you, let him be damned! That can only come from Satan. It's not my intent to offend anyone, if you only knew the love that is in my heart for you, and the prayers that have been prayed by me for you - but I must tell the truth.

I don't advise you to do this, but if you were to take down Anton LaVey's Satanic Bible, and under the lists within it of infernal names, you will see a god named there called the 'King of the Gods'. His name is 'Mormo, the god of the living dead', whose followers are Mormons - people obsessed with genealogies, with temple rites, with proxy baptism for the dead visiting the living, converting dead even in the grave. Do you know that Mormons in China have had to change their name, because in Chinese it means 'the gates of hell'?

### **Conclusion**

When I meet Mormons at times, I face them with some of these facts, and the answers that come back break the heart. They say: 'I have prayed to God over the book of Mormon, and He has given me a burning in my bosom that it is true'. They invite me to read the Book of Mormon, and ask God to reveal it and He will give me that burning in the bosom as well. Can I say to you: examine the evidence! Don't rely on a subjective burning in the bosom, but look at the objective facts of the word of God, the evidence that is there - and you will be convinced. Remember that the Holy Spirit does not lead us just into abstract truth - *'He will testify of me'*, Jesus said!

Let me finish with some comments from those who found that salvation is not in a church - and it's not in any church, I'll tell you that - but it's found in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone:

*"The motivation for many of them is that Mormonism is a nice place to raise your family, it's the easy road. If you're already here and you're already in it, then why upset things?"*

*"The biggest danger was that they took me in, and I was thinking it was a Christian church - and it wasn't a Christian church, it was a cult".*

*"Instead of going back to one of the standard works of the church, I went to the Bible. I started reading and made up my mind that I was going to go from cover to cover, and in the*

*second chapter of Genesis I studied how Eve was convinced by Satan to eat the fruit, that she could become a god. Then in the 14th chapter of Isaiah, Lucifer was cast out of heaven because he too wanted to be equal to or greater than God".*

*"I began studying the Bible, I became aware of the real Jesus, the real God, and began to understand that the god of Mormonism was not the God of the Bible".*

*"We lived the word of wisdom, we attended meetings, we paid our tithing, we had family home evening, we did all the things we were supposed to do. When I became a Christian I suddenly was not the good person I thought I was, because God revealed to us our inner pride, our inner problems, the things that had not been in focus before because we were so concerned in the outward things, we were so happy with the outward things we were doing that that made us rest, thinking we were OK".*

*"I was lonely as a child in the church, I was lonely as a married person in the church, I was lonely as a single person in the church - but when I met the Lord, I knew that there was someone that would be with all the time".*

*"I remembered that I should ask Jesus into my heart, I remembered hearing my Christian friends say that. So I got down on my knees one day when I was all alone, and asked Jesus to come into my heart. I didn't know what I was doing, but when I got up I had been born again, I found out that Jesus was the way, the truth and the life - and not an organisation".*

*"I had been looking all my life for something in the Mormon Church, and I couldn't put my finger on what I was looking for. Then when my mom accepted Christ into her life, she shared it with me, and I saw a joy in her life that I had never seen before in all of her activity in the Mormon Church. This is what I needed!"*

*"I feel very grateful to God that our whole family, my wife and myself and seven lovely children, have come out of the Mormon Church and know Jesus Christ in a very personal way".*

Let me conclude by saying: Beware of false doctrine, and if you belong to the Mormon Church we love you in the Saviour. We would ask you to search the Scriptures and see if these things are so, and may you find the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible as your Saviour and your Lord.



## Chapter 4

# "Unitarianism"

### Introduction

Our introductory Scripture reading for our study of 'Unitarianism' is from chapter 1 of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. Unitarianism is commonly known in our province as the denomination titled 'The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland'. Maybe you have seen that name, or that sign outside buildings, and you've wondered what it is - well, you'll know by the end of this chapter what they believe, but they are also described as 'Unitarians'.

In verses 20-21 of 1 Corinthians 1, Paul asks rhetorically: *"Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of the thing preached", the Gospel, "to save them that believe".*



Maybe you approach this chapter asking the question: who are the Unitarians? Well, you may not know this, but there are many prestigious names of history that are among those who class themselves as Unitarians. There are five past presidents of the United States of America who classed themselves as Unitarians: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, the famous Thomas Jefferson, Millard Fillmore, and William Taft - all of them Unitarians. Then when we turn from politics to the literary world we find that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson and the famous Charles Dickens all classed themselves as Unitarians.

There have been no less than eight US Supreme Court Justices who classed themselves as Unitarians; and some famous women have also been Unitarians, including the lady of the lamp, Florence Nightingale. There are also several famous scientists, not to name any less famous than Charles Darwin and Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, who were Unitarians as well. Under the umbrella title of 'Unitarian Universalists', the members of Unitarianism comprise approximately 25% of those who are listed in America's Hall of Fame. Not just famous politicians, famous literary writers, famous scientists, famous Justices in the courts, but also 25% of America's Hall of Fame classed themselves as Unitarians.

Now let me give you a definition of what a Unitarian is by the words of two Unitarians whose statement is found on the Unitarian web site of St Stephen's Green Church in Dublin. Unitarianism is defined by Paul Murray and Andy Pollock, and they write this: 'Unitarians are people of liberal religious outlook' - now please remember that - 'who are united by a common search for meaning and truth. Although of Christian origin, and still following the teaching of Christ as a great and godly leader, Unitarianism today also seeks insight from other religions and philosophies. Individual beliefs within our religious community are quite diverse, and personal religious development is seen as a continuing process. Unitarianism has no set doctrines or dogmas'.

The broad beliefs of the Irish Unitarians are summed up in the introductory statement in the Dublin Church's monthly calendar under the three central Unitarian principles of 1) Freedom; 2) Reason; and 3) Tolerance. The statement reads like this, I quote: 'Love is the doctrine of this church, the quest for truth is its sacrament, and service is its prayer. To dwell together in peace, to seek knowledge in freedom, to serve mankind in fellowship, to the end that all souls shall grow in harmony with the Divine; thus do we covenant with each other and with God'.

This is a little form of so-called Christianity in our world today, we'll see later on that it's far from Christianity, but that it is the epitome of all Christian liberalism. Practically it is meted

out in their belief in no absolutes in the moral realm. In fact, not only is it morality relative, but all truth is relative in Unitarianism. This means that there is a tolerance of various alternative lifestyles that we see in the modern contemporary culture of our world today. Lifestyles such as homosexuality; views such as radical feminism; practices such as abortion on demand are all condoned under the umbrella of the religious so-called Christian organisation 'Unitarianism'. Not only are these practices condoned and justified, but all religious beliefs are allowed as legitimate under the umbrella of Unitarianism.

Now that they should believe such things, and condone such immoral and unbiblical practices in our modern age, may come as a shock to many of you who have passed doors with signs above them 'Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland'. Perhaps one of the reasons why we have so easily been duped here in Ulster is because we're so familiar with denominations, not just here but also in Scotland, that call themselves 'Presbyterian' - there is a plethora of them. Here in Northern Ireland alone there's the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, there's the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, there is the Reformed Presbyterian Church, there's the Free Presbyterian Church. Then if you go over to Scotland there are many more, and there's the 'Wee-Frees' and others that we could name. So whenever we see a sign over a door entitled the 'Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland', we assume that it's just another of the same. But then we are really surprised when we hear what they believe, and what they propound as the beliefs and tenets of their faith.

### ***The Roots Of Unitarianism***

So let's look in more detail at Unitarianism, and specifically in our context of Northern Ireland the 'Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church'. Let's look first of all at their history. If I can give you a short history lesson, during the plantation of the North of Ireland a great number of Scots came to settle in this province of Ulster. Among those Scottish Presbyterians during the first half of the 18th century there began to be a reluctance to accept the doctrine of the Trinity - that God is one, but that God is in three persons, one God but three persons. This rise of doubt and scepticism regarding the doctrine of the Trinity expressed itself in religious thought writing among the Presbyterian denomination. Now this viewpoint was not yet called 'Unitarianism', but that's what Unitarianism believes - it's not 'Trinitarianism', it's 'Unitarianism', in other words that God is one person and one person alone, that being the Father.



This doctrine that had arisen in the church was not a new one. If you care to read church history you will find that it found its embryo way back in the early church from a church father called Arius. Arius taught, along with other fathers such as Origen, that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself was not God, did not claim to be God, and we should not believe that He is God. He taught that the Lord Jesus was not one substance with Divinity. Now we would have to say that that doctrine did not get much air outside, because right away the church at large rejected outright as heresy the Arian doctrine that our Lord Jesus Christ is not God. If you attend the Church of Ireland or even a Presbyterian church, you will probably be more familiar than some people with the Nicene Creed. It was at the Council of Nicea in AD325 that Arius' teaching on the non-deity of the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected outright by the church of the Lord.

So that movement that propounded that the Lord Jesus Christ was not God did not gain any real impetus until the time of the Reformation. Then along came a man called Servetus, he was a Spaniard and was also an Arian in his belief. He lived from 1511-1553, and he is considered by many as the founder of Unitarianism in continental Europe. He denied that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and he wrote a strong polemic against the doctrine of the Trinity entitled 'On the Errors of the Trinity in Seven Books' - seven books trying to prove that

God is not three in one, which were published in 1531. He asserted, I quote 'Your Trinity is the product of subtlety and madness, the Gospel knows nothing of it'.



Now, as you can imagine, during the time of the Reformation such statements and writings brought swift condemnation from the religious authorities of the day. This man, Servetus, had to flee to France and stay there in exile, and even had to change his name. For several decades he escaped inquisition, only to be later executed by the Reformer John Calvin in 1553 - perhaps you didn't know that Protestant Reformers also executed people as martyrs, as well as Catholics putting Protestants martyrs to death!

That is a part of our history that is less to be desired, but nevertheless it is accurate. Another who contributed to this early Unitarian doctrine was Faustus Socinus 1539-1604. He believed that the Holy Scriptures should be interpreted rationally, not so much a need for faith, but a need to understand and reason and rationalise the Scriptures - and therefore he believed that God, in essence, was one, only God the Father.



### **The History Of Unitarianism In Ireland**

Now those are the roots of Unitarianism. They would look back to Arius in the early church, who believed that Jesus was not God, but really the embryo of their beginnings can be found in these two individuals just after the Reformation or during the Reformation period. We come now to look at the history of Unitarianism in Ireland. You will see that this is a more modern

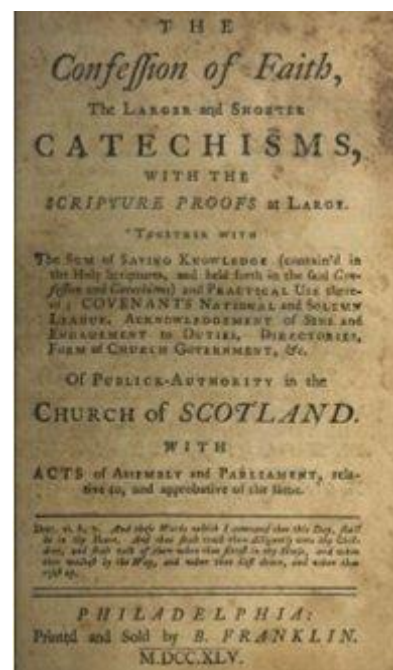


concern in relation to church history, for the actual word 'Unitarianism' did not come into common usage until 1770 when a former Anglican minister named Theophilus Lindsey again began to teach that there was no Trinity, and that the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ was some doctrine enforced upon the church in later years and was not the true belief of the Christian church. He started again to openly espouse Unitarian doctrine, and he founded a Unitarian chapel in central London. One of the earliest members of that church was the scientist Joseph Priestley, who actually was the discoverer of oxygen.

Now when we move from London to Ulster, we find that Ulster Presbyterians, just like all orthodox Christians, were absolutely astounded and alarmed at these heretical views concerning the person of the Lord Jesus and the authority of the Holy Scriptures. They were even more alarmed when they found that these doctrines were gaining root in some Presbyterian churches, some of the oldest churches in County Antrim and County Down - incidentally, where many of the Unitarian churches still reside.

Their leaders didn't know what to do. They came together, they deliberated over this matter of false doctrine, and they decided that the only response that was really necessary was a new subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith, from which the Longer and Shorter Catechism with scriptural proofs has come, was authored at Westminster Abbey. This took place in 1643 when the English Parliament decided that, I quote 'Learned and godly judicious divines should meet together in Westminster Abbey in order to provide advice on issues of worship, doctrine, government and church discipline'.

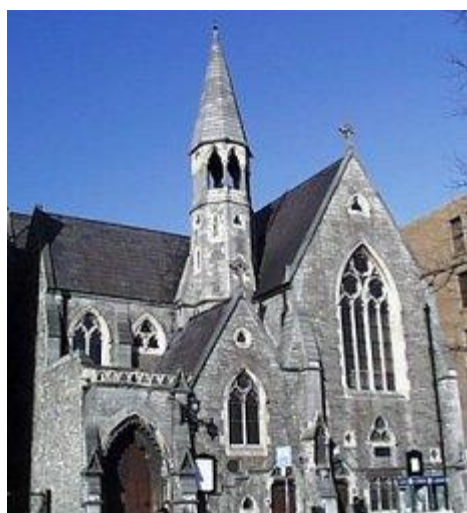
Now the Church of England did not adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith, although it was authored by many Church of England divines; but many of what became known as the



Dissenting Reformed Protestant congregations, Presbyterian and other Reformed Free churches, adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith as their confession of doctrine and belief. Now as soon as these ministers and godly men in Ulster decided that there needed to be a subscription once again to the Westminster Confession, the liberal ministers that were beginning to espouse Arian doctrine were in an uproar. They were unhappy with these views of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, in the year 1726, John Abernethy, who was also the leader of the so-called 'New Light Movement', along with sixteen other ministers, refused to sign the Westminster Confession of Faith. They refused, in other words, to subscribe to the doctrine; and they and their congregations were subsequently expelled from the Presbytery of the Synod of Ulster. Now that was the birthplace of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.



Irish Unitarianism was also strengthened by the influence of a great American Unitarian, William Ellery Channing. He was a preacher and a writer in Boston, Massachusetts; and the reason I refer to him is that he has had one of the greatest impacts on American Unitarianism - the country where it thrives more than anywhere else in the whole world. In fact, in his day he had a great influence on Harvard Divinity School and other US Protestant seminaries - he turned them to liberal thinking. Now here we come to a great Protestant Reformer in our modern age here in Ulster, for the battle against Arianism was not lost in Ulster Presbyterianism. In the 1820s and 1830s the Conservative Northern Ireland Presbyterian leader, the Rev. Henry Cook, came to the fore. Henry Cook took it upon himself to fight Arianism in Irish Presbyterianism. He said himself that he wanted to rescue Irish Presbyterianism from, I quote 'The bog of indifference and moral laxity' - and Irish Presbyterians could be doing with some men like that today! Under the influence of those Arian views, he wanted to save those churches from orthodox Christian extinction.



Cook's energies weren't just limited to the North, but he also went into the South of Ireland, he did not confine himself to Ulster. Because of his work, which I believe was anointed by the Holy Spirit of God, there were and still are only two Unitarian churches in the South of Ireland today - one in Dublin at St Stephen's Green, and the other in Cork. Let me just update you on the situation of that one church in Dublin at the time of writing. The congregation of the Unitarian church in St Stephen's Green in the city of Dublin currently testifies to having somewhat of a revival on their hands in recent days. Their Sunday morning congregations have risen from 15-20 to 60-80, and they testify that many young Roman Catholics and other people from nonreligious backgrounds 'are searching' - this is what they say - 'for a new form of spirituality in Ireland, the Ireland of the Celtic

Tiger'. In other words, they are searching for a modern Christianity that will fit with and conform to their reasonable rational mind.

There are currently 32 Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Unitarian churches in Northern Ireland. One of the churches here in Ulster is the Crumlin Church, there is also the Moira Church, Killinchy Church, and the Rosemary Street Church which was established in the 1644 and I think is the oldest Presbyterian Church in the whole of Ireland - the current building was erected in 1783. Just around the corner from the Iron Hall Assembly is the Mountpottinger



Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church on Castlereagh Street. Altogether in Northern Ireland and the South of Ireland there are about 4000 members, 20 ministers, both male and female clergy. It will probably astound you to know that the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a member of the Irish Council of Churches. You will be dumbfounded as to how they could be a member of the Irish Council of Churches, when you read on to find out what they believe. I hasten to add that other members of the Irish Council of Churches are the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland along with others.



### ***Unitarianism Worldwide***

Now let's broaden it out for a moment to talk about Unitarianism worldwide, because although individual Unitarian churches are autonomous - that means they rule themselves - they are linked together by a General Assembly, a united group called 'The Unitarian Universalist Association'. They are linked together, and in 1995 there were approximately 195 of these congregations in Britain. In the Commonwealth countries, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, there were estimated to be 15,000 Unitarians. There are estimated to be as many as half a million Unitarians in America today. Unitarianism also can be found in Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, West Germany, and even in India. I am told that they are growing at a 4% rate annually. The church in Britain is a member also of the British Council of Churches, and Unitarianism worldwide is a member of the World Congress of Faiths.

### ***The Beliefs Of Unitarianism***

Now we're going to come to look at what they believe, and if the statement that I gave you from the St Stephen's Green church in Dublin is not enough to take the breath from your lungs, here is another one that is an official publication of the General Assembly of Unitarianism. They're trying to define for us - not my words, their own words - what Unitarianism is. Read it carefully: 'Unitarianism is a liberal religious movement arising out of Christianity'. Many Unitarians today will no longer claim to be Christians in the traditional sense. The statement goes on: 'expressing itself largely, but not wholly, in Christian forms and terms' - they're not restricting themselves to the definitions and doctrines of Christianity. It goes further: 'and in the spirit of the man Jesus' - the man Jesus. 'It is a liberal belief in rejecting the ideas of a unique and final revelation of truth, and it trusts men to discover and believe as much as they can for themselves. It is a religious movement inasmuch as it has churches, and a ministry, and ways of worship; and it is glad to remain Christian where it can, but glad also to discover other truths and beauty and goodness in other faiths and other lives. Unitarians know of no better man in religion than Jesus of Nazareth, but they believe that there have been others like him in the past, and that there will be others like him again in the future'.

I think that you can see right away that the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland is far from Presbyterian, let alone far from Christian. So I want to take a deeper look at this, and spend some time studying what Unitarianism teaches. Although it does not have a set group of doctrines and a taught dogma, they do have beliefs and general tenets of faith that the whole umbrella of Unitarianism worldwide adheres to.

Let's look first of all at their belief concerning deity, God. What do they say about God? Well, in their name they confess right away that they believe in one God - we agree with them there - but they believe that that one God has only one personality, and that personality is



expressed in the Father. Do you know something? Modern Unitarianism today has reached such a stage that several people in it believe that no human language is adequate to define God at all. Of course, we believe that too in one sense, we can't define God otherwise He wouldn't be God - but some Unitarians have found it even helpful not to use the word 'God' at all. They're not sure what God is, who God is, so they say you're better to leave God out of this religion. Seems very strange, doesn't it?

Why do we believe in a triune Godhead? Briefly let's look for a moment to Genesis chapter 1 to just make a few remarks on the Scriptures regarding this doctrine of the Trinity that we believe in, and that the church historically has propounded. Genesis chapter 1:26, and of course these verses can also be used with the Mormons and other groups that we will encounter: *'And God said, Let us', notice the plural, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image'*. Some people say: 'Well, this is the angels talking with God, and God to the angels' - but it says in verse 27: *'So God created man'*. We are not created in the likeness of angels, we are made in the likeness of God.

When we turn to another scene in chapter 11, we see that the plural is also used of God. Here is the Tower of Babel - and man, a bit akin to Unitarianism and other confusing cults and false faiths in our world today, is trying to get to God on their own terms. It says in verse 7: *'Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech'*. Verse 8: *'So the LORD scattered them abroad'* - not angels, not seraphim or cherubim, or any other supernatural being - God said: *'let us'*, in the plural. 'Elohim', in the Old Testament Scriptures is a plural name for God.

Now let us come to the New Testament for a moment, if we look at Matthew 28 we come to what has been commonly called the baptismal formula of the Christian church. Some other false cults and also certain sects of pentecostalism, such as Oneness Pentecostalism found in the Church of God which we will look at in a later chapter (not the Brethren form, but the Pentecostal form of the Church of God, the 'Oneness Movement' here in Ulster) teach that we should baptise in the name of Jesus. But here we find the Lord's instruction clearly taught in Matthew 28:19: *'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'*. Now I want you to note that it says 'baptising them in the name' - singular, one name, but that name is expressed in three personalities: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. That is the essence of the Trinity: one substance, all God, very God, but expressed in three persons.

There are many other Scriptures I could show you, but we don't have space to do it. Let me give you something that helps me in remembering some verses that shed light on the doctrine of the Trinity. They're all found in three first chapters in the New Testament. The first is John 1:1: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'* - the Word being Christ, the logos, the expression of God. In verse 14: *'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us'*, the Word was with Him and the Word was God. In Hebrews 1, God says: *'unto the Son, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever'*. In Revelation 1, God is described as Alpha and Omega, and as you go down that chapter and later on in that book, you find that the Lord Jesus is also described as the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last - and can there be two firsts and two lasts? There cannot be! Those are Scriptures that allocate divinity to the Lord Jesus Christ, none other greater than Thomas' confession as he falls at the feet of the risen glorious Lord Jesus Christ, and he says: *'My Lord, and my God!'*. *'Great is the mystery of godliness'*, Paul says to Timothy, *'God manifest in the flesh'* - I could go on and on. *'The fullness'*, Colossians 1, *'of the Godhead bodily dwells in Christ'*.

But what of the other Scriptures that point to the Lord Jesus Christ, referring to the Holy

Spirit? What of His baptism in Matthew's gospel chapter 4? When He is in the water a dove-like creature comes down from the sky and the voice of the Father is heard from glory saying: *'This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'*. Three persons, but there is one God. As Moses taught the people to say, inspired of God, *'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one God'* - we believe in one God, but we believe in the scriptural doctrine of the Trinity, and if God pleases I'll expound it in more detail in days that are yet to be.

Let's look at what they teach as Unitarians concerning the Bible. Well, they teach that man is to be guided by his individual conscience - isn't that a very dangerous teaching? When we consider that Jeremiah says that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and we know everything that the fall of man has wrought upon the old human nature - but Unitarians teach that man is to be guided by his own human reason, that is the source which is to be believed - you! Now, they will admit that the Bible is a helpful guide, and it does contain religious insights and wisdom, yet they reject the Holy Scriptures as God's Word inspired and God-breathed. In fact, they go as far as to say that this is only one of many divine books, it's not the only holy book in the world. The writings of Buddha are holy, and Mohammed, and Confucius, and many others - they say that God is continuing to reveal His truth today to pure people and good people. There is this idea of universal inspiration in life in some kind of abstract way, in the order and beauty of nature, in moral standards and neighbourliness and charitableness all around. Those good spiritual desires that you have, those human aspirations in love for what is good and pure, that is how God speaks today.

Is that what God's word testifies to? Turn with me for a moment to Isaiah chapter 8 - and again, all of these have reference to other cults and religions that we'll touch upon - Isaiah 8:20, God says: *'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word'*, not 'my word in nature, or human conscience, or rationale, or aspiration', but 'this word, the law and the testimony'. If they speak not according to it, it is 'because there is no light in them'. It doesn't matter if they call themselves the organisation of 'New Light' or not, it makes no difference, God's word is clear.

Now come to John 17 and look at the words of the Lord Jesus in verse 17 as He prays to His father, speaking of His people, praying for His church, He says: *'Sanctify them through thy truth'* - what is His truth? *'Thy word is truth'*. God's word is the only truth. We read 1 Corinthians 1:20-21 at the beginning of this chapter, which testifies that the wisdom of this world, the wisdom of reason and human rationale and intellectual aptitude, is not how God reveals His truth to men - but God reveals His truth through the foolishness of the message preached: that is, Christ and Him crucified. It is foolishness to the Greek, a stumbling block to the Jew, that's why they couldn't grasp it in all their religious wisdom and intellectual rationale. If we were to turn to 1 Corinthians 2:14, this is in absolute contradiction to what Unitarianism teaches: *'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned'*. If there was ever a proof that those who espouse Unitarian doctrine are not saved and cannot be such, it is this: because they have rejected the true gospel, and they have chosen man's wisdom over God. That is what they believe concerning the Bible, yet the ironic thing about it is that they actually use the Bible on many occasions to prove some of their doctrines. Yet in the next breath they tell us that the Bible really can't be relied upon and it is just another holy book!

Let's look thirdly at what they teach concerning the person of Christ. I have tried to teach you that one of the chief marks of a cult is when you ask them: *'What think ye of Christ?'*, they have a blasphemous, sacrilegious, denigrating view of our blessed Saviour. Unitarianism does not fail on that count either. They teach, as you have seen, that the Lord Jesus Christ was and is only a man. They teach that He should not be worshipped, in fact they say He is an example - a good one at that - and He has even shown us what man can be if he listens to God and follows God's Spirit; but they say that the Lord Jesus Christ is only one of many

great leaders in the world.

John Mendelsohn, a respected Unitarian minister, has stated these words - I quote them verbatim: 'I am willing to call myself Christian only if in the next breath I am permitted to say that in varying degrees I am also a Jew, a Hindu, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Stoic, an admirer of Zoroaster, Confucius and Socrates'. Dr Carl Jowarski (sp?), another Unitarian minister, has put it like this: 'Unitarians do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah either of Jewish hope or Christian fantasy' - they state it from their own mouths! They're not ashamed of it! Yet there are Christian churches and denominations in our land that are fellowshiping with such Satanic darkness!

What does God's word say about the Lord Jesus? Turn to Matthew 16:16 - this is the truth on which the church of Jesus Christ was built, Jesus said: *'Whom do men say that I am? Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias'* - and He says to Peter: *'Who do you say that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'*. Jesus retorted: *'Simon: flesh and blood'*, human wisdom, *'has not revealed this unto you, but my Father which is in heaven'* - 'I am the Son of God!'. In John 5:18 we read: *'Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God'* - the Jews understood that He was claiming to be God's Son. If He was claiming to be God's Son, He was claiming to be in essence God! When we turn to John 10 we see it again in verse 30, He says: *'I and my Father are one'*. In John 14:6 He claims that He is the way, the truth, and the life - and the Greek is in fact, not 'a way', not 'a truth', not 'a life'; but 'the way, the truth, the only life' - for no man can come to the Father but by Him.

When we move from the person of Christ to the work of Christ, His death, we see that Unitarianism does not believe that man needs a mediator. They claim that man does not need a Saviour, because man is intrinsically good. They believe in the innocence of the little child, therefore they don't need to believe in some kind of sacrificial death or substitutionary atonement - that's why many Unitarian congregations don't observe communion. Those that do observe communion, all it is for them is a mere remembrance of the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet what does Romans 3:20 tell us? Man does need a Saviour, man does need a Redeemer, it tells us *'for by the works of the law shall no man be justified'*. Look to Ephesians 2:13 and you will read: *'But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Jesus'*. Now in His life He fulfilled all the law, praise His holy name, and He had to do such if He was going to be our Saviour, but the atoning work was at Calvary, not Gethsemane but Calvary where He shed His precious blood for us. Look at verse 18: *'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father'*. First Peter 3:18 tells how He as the just, justified the unjust, and brought us to God by His precious blood - but they denigrate the blood, they don't believe in the blood! Yet without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, the Scripture is clear on that one.

Then we move from the death of Christ to the resurrection of Christ and, wait for it, they interpret the resurrection of Christ as the resurrection of Christ's deeds and Christ's thoughts and teachings living on in the lives of other people all throughout history. Just us thinking about Him, and talking about Him, and teaching about Him - in fact, there's no physical or spiritual resurrection of the body of the Lord, or of ourselves. Yet in Luke 24:5-6 the angel said: *'Why seek ye the living amongst the dead? He is not here, He is risen as He said!'*. What about 1 Corinthians 15, we can't not include this chapter, verse 4: *'he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures'* - can you get any clearer than that? When you move to verses 17-20, we're told the outcome if He didn't rise: *'And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins'*. Unitarian, if you're reading this, you're still in your sins and you'll never get out of them unless you believe in the crucified and risen Saviour! *'Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished'* - our dead loved ones are gone, they're lost if there's no resurrection. *'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we*

*are of all men most miserable' - you're miserable! - 'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept'.*

My friends, I think you can see clearly that Scripture contradicts what Unitarianism teaches. What about the Holy Spirit? Well, they believe the Holy Spirit is the influence of Christ's teaching today in our world upon people, or another belief is that the Holy Spirit is the way of revealing Himself in our lives - if our lives take a change, well, that's the Holy Spirit. He reveals Himself through the joys and through the sorrows of life in some strange abstract way, or alternatively the Holy Spirit is the power beyond us, that source of divinity that is moving behind everything in the universe - but He is not a person. Why would He need to be there as a person if man doesn't need to be saved? If man is essentially good, he doesn't need to be regenerated and changed, and be made a new creature in Christ, he doesn't need to be sanctified! Yet Psalm 51:5 says that we were born in iniquity, we were shapen in sin: *'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me'*. What did the Lord say in Matthew 15:19? *'Out of the heart of mankind proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies'*, on and on and on. Romans 3:10 testifies the same, that there is no difference, Romans 3:23, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. John 16:7 tells us the Lord Jesus said: *'I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him'* - a personality - *'unto you'*. Acts 5:3-4 that I've referred to before, Ananias and Sapphira, it says they lied to the Holy Ghost, and it also says that they lied to God - because the Holy Ghost is God, and He is a person and He can be lied to.

What about when we come to salvation? What do they teach concerning this? Well, they are called 'Unitarian Universalists', and they believe ultimately that everybody will be alright in the end. They believe that all faiths are equally valid schemes and systems to bring us to God, and Jesus belongs to a class of great saviours of mankind. Yet what does John 10:9 say? Jesus said: *'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture'*. What does the apostle say in Acts 4:12? *'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved'*. What did Paul say to the desperate Philippian jailer? *'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'*.

Now I want you to witness the arrogant commentary of Unitarian man in all of his rationale and intellectual aptitude in response to Acts 16:31: *'Believe on the Lord Jesus'*. This is what Mendelssohn, John Mendelsohn, said in response to Paul's answer: 'Here was the trap of authoritarianism on which the orthodox Christianity would run from Paul's day to our own. It did not occur to Paul' - mark this - 'that the jailer might have some thoughts and insights of his own worth probing and nurturing. Paul saw no reason whatsoever for encouraging the man to think, to use his own mind, to exercise his reason, to ponder the experiences of heart and conscience for satisfying religious answers. Paul said none of the words that might have moved Christianity in the direction of freedom and personal responsibility, instead he uttered a dogma. He said, in effect, this is not something to discuss, to weigh, to test by the experience, no, this is something you simply accept' - praise God! It wasn't to be doubted, it wasn't to be discussed, it wasn't to have human wisdom to augment it - it was to be accepted! Well, this is his finishing retort: 'Unitarian Universalists will have none of it!'. Well, if you have none of it, you will have none of Christ's salvation!

What about the future? Well, some of them believe in personal immortality, some of them believe we live on in the deeds and thoughts that we have left behind in the memories of others, some just don't know. Ultimately they don't believe in heaven, they don't believe in hell, even though it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment - Hebrews 9:27. There are many other Scriptures, I will leave some of them with you: Job 19:25-26; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, telling in verse 29 as well about the resurrection of the just unto life, and the resurrection of the damned unto eternal perdition. What did Job say? That on

that day, his flesh that had been eaten by worms would stand and see God, his Redeemer who he knew was alive.

Even when it comes to prayer and the supernatural; they believe prayer is just something that affects ourselves. It changes ourselves so that we become better people, so that we become an example to others and in turn change others. Let me say that it is worrying to me, although I agree that probably prayer changes us, maybe more at times than it changes things, there is a worrying trend in sceptic evangelicalism today that suggests some kind of fatalism that God does not answer prayer and change things! Scripture says it does, yet Unitarians don't like praying in Jesus' name, because they say we don't need a Mediator. Yet Scripture says we ought to pray in Jesus' name - the Lord Jesus in John 16:23 said whatever you ask in His name according to the Father's will, He would give it. First John 5:14 says that our confidence is that because we pray through the Lord Jesus, He - the Father - hears us.

Can I say, just like many of the cults we will consider, they are full of good works at times. There were some lovely gentleman that we were discussing matters with in the Mormon faith, polite, full of good works, seemingly gracious in their approach. Unitarianism is extremely charitable, it's full of kindness, it fights for the freedom of others at times, even against the doctrines that we would believe and the practical morality that we would espouse - yet they are fighters for freedom and justice, and peace and tolerance, but whatever they are they are far from Christian! In fact, they are a non-Christian cult with liberal humanistic attitudes, liberal humanistic beliefs and practices. I declare on the authority of God's word that 'Unitarianism' as a term, and the term 'Christian', are mutually exclusive by their definition. Christianity is Trinitarian by its history, Christianity is historically rooted in the orthodox faith and the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, His person and work and the apostles' doctrine. It is mutually exclusive in its theology that we have studied here.

W. P. Nicholson, that great evangelist and revivalist of a bygone age here in Ulster, was preaching in the Assembly Buildings down in the centre of Belfast. He came in his sermon to touch upon the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. As he preached on the subject, he remembered that there was a bookshop below him, and of course in his own imitable and even slightly ignorant way, he said: 'And as for that accursed bookshop down the stairs, you couldn't even buy a book on the blood!'. From that came the evangelical bookshop that we have today on College Square, but he ended the meeting that particular evening by saying 'Now we're going to sing 'There's Power in the Blood''. He told the deacons to open all the doors and all the windows of that building, and he said 'Sing it at the top of your voice, and let those unbloody Unitarians on Rosemary Street hear you sing it!'. There's another hymn that goes like this - if you're not saved you need to know this. If you're a Unitarian, if you belong to any other religion or cult that does not tell us that salvation is found in Christ and in Christ alone, you need to hear it:

'I need no other argument,  
I need no other plea:  
It is enough that Jesus died,  
And Jesus died for me'.

Hallelujah! The blood will never lose its power! I might lose my power, and this church might lose its power, your denomination might lose its power, but Jesus never - glory to His name!



## Chapter 5

# "Spiritism"

### Spiritism - Deuteronomy 18:9-12

1. Passing Through Fire
2. Divination
3. Observer Of Times
4. Enchanter
5. Witch
6. Charmer
7. Consulter With Familiar Spirits
8. Wizard
9. Necromancer

### Introduction

There are two passages of Scripture I want to use as an introduction to our subject in this chapter. Both are from Ephesians, chapter 2 first of all, and just a couple of verses - Paul is looking back to what we, as believers, were before we were converted, before we became Christians. Sometimes it's good not to drag up the dirt and dig up old memories that we're meant to forget, and press on towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ; but sometimes it is good to remember where we come from, where the Lord has brought us from and where He has brought us to in His marvellous grace.

That's what Paul was doing for the Ephesians here as he reminds them in verse 1: *'You hath God quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins'* - now mark this verse please - *'Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world'*, and all of us can identify with that, can't we? We did not walk in the light, as Christ is in the light, but we walked in darkness. He goes on to define it more specifically: *'according to the prince of the power of the air'*. Now, in case you don't know this, the prince of the power of the air is Satan. Now Satan was Lucifer, of course, that angel, perhaps the greatest angel that was ever created. But his pride caused him to want to usurp God, and God cast him from glory down to the outer parts of this earth, and he still inhabits the air. Of course, he inhabits the earth as well, but the air is chiefly his domain. Satan is the god of this world - small 'g' - not Jehovah. Jehovah is the God of the universe in the sovereign sense, but the god who is worshipped by man on earth is the god of this world, Satan. It says in the word of God that this world lies in the lap of the wicked one.

Paul goes on: *'the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience'*. Now some translations translate the word 'spirit' as 'spirits', the Amplified Version puts it like this: *'the demonic spirit power that now works in the children of disobedience'*. Now this is profound, we don't have time to look into it, but you may or may not know that before you were saved demonic powers had their sway over you in this world system. I'm not saying that you were demon possessed, every one of you, of course that couldn't be the truth - but that is where we have come from. Now I want you to remember that text as we go through this chapter.

Let's turn secondly to Ephesians 6. Now that we are in Christ there's a great transformation that has taken place, because on Calvary's cross the Lord Jesus has defeated sin, death, hell and the devil. Although the devil has not finally been put down yet in a practical sense, his

doom is sealed - and because of that we Christians in Christ have the victory - isn't that marvellous?

In verse 10 we read this: *'Finally, my brethren, be strong'* - not in yourself, there's nothing in ourselves that can defeat the devil. In fact in the book of Jude we find that the great archangel Michael dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil over the matter of the bones of Moses, but he simply said: *'The Lord rebuke thee'*. He had no power himself over Satan at that time face-to-face in combat, the only power that the archangel Michael had was in the strength of the Lord, and that's the only power that we have as believers. *'And in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand'*.

Now let me say that in this study of 'Strongholds of Satan', my goal is far from bringing glory or in any way shedding light on evil things for your titillation, or just to satisfy your curiosity. The fact of the matter is: I have to deal with certain things, but I would ask every believer who reads this that, if you've never done it before, you'll do it now - by faith that you will allow the Holy Spirit to put on you the whole armour of God. Take by faith the helmet of salvation to cover your mind; take by faith the breastplate of righteousness to cover your vitals, your emotions, and the seat of your affections. Take the girdle of truth and make sure that as you read you are believing the truth and not the lie of the devil. Put on your feet the gospel of peace - that is why we must preach this message, so that if you don't know Christ you should be saved by the gospel - but believers, make sure that after reading this you are more than ever firmly grounded on the victory ground that Christ has bought with His own blood. Take unto you the shield of faith that you may quench the fiery darts of the evil one - God is round about us, why should we be afraid? Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, let that be our defence as it was for Christ, as He said, face-to-face with Satan: 'It is written, it is written, it is written'. Finally, don't forget 'all-prayer' - all-prayer is so important.

That is just a warning shot that I send out to you believers. Be careful, as we look at this subject, to make sure that at the forefront of all your adoration and your attention there is Christ and Christ alone. So we're looking at this subject of 'Spiritism', or as it is commonly called today 'Spiritualism'. There's not a great difference between the two now, although there may have been on one occasion. They all stem from the one source, and the reason why I gave that warning to you is that all men, as well as redeemed men, have a desire after supernatural things - and it isn't always the supernatural things of the kingdom of light. If we're honest, at times as believers, we get curious with evil things. We know and believe, at least intellectually, that there is an unseen world of spirits out there. Sometimes we would long to peek, as it were, past the supernatural curtain and see things as we believe they really are. But Spiritism, or Spiritualism, is when that curiosity goes too far and crosses a line of transgression whereby it desires to communicate with the dead - spirits that have gone into the spirit world. We transgress the line that is laid down in Holy Scripture when we desire to obtain hidden information that God has not declared in revelation to humanity. In other words, when we desire to have knowledge of the future, knowledge that God has not given to us.

### **Spiritism In Modern Times**

Walter Martin, who has written on many of the cults that we've dealt with already, in his book 'Kingdom of the Cults' calls Spiritism or Spiritualism 'The Cult of Antiquity'. In other words, it is an ancient religion. In fact he says it is by far the oldest religious cult extant today, and certainly one of the deadliest. If you were to trace its origins - which we're not going to take time over - you would find that probably one of the first places we see it coming to the fore is

in ancient Babylon. From that day in ancient Babylon right to now, it has been found in every culture, ancient and modern. We see it in the book of Exodus in the magicians of Pharaoh there in ancient Egypt, their false gods; but we see it today in modern society even in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom in the 21st century - Spiritism is alive and well.

Now the revival of Spiritism in modern times as an 'organised religion' began in 1848. It started in a place called Hydesville in New York, with the Fox family. The mother and father and the three girls moved into a new house in Hydesville, New York, and the two girls Margaret and Kate claimed that during the night they heard rappings around the home. They believed that those rappings were supernatural phenomenon. Later, when they moved from Hydesville to Rochester, they testified to the same thing in their new home. They believed that these noises were communications and sounds from the unseen spirit world, and they decided that they would devise a method of communication in order to converse with the dead.



Now news of this phenomenon in Hydesville, New York, and later in Rochester, spread rapidly right throughout the United States. Soon séances were being held, and there was a great interest in Spiritism that was spreading like a wildfire right throughout America, England, and the whole of the continent of Europe. The Fox sisters, unlike many of the founders of other religious cults that we have mentioned, did not die with great riches in their will. In fact both of them died as paupers, and their lives were extremely painful, they went through a great deal of suffering. One biographer put it like this: 'In time they became victims of the drink menace, nothing could satisfy their craving for alcohol, and they lost all sense of moral responsibility'. Later on in Margaret's life, at an anti-spiritualist gathering in 1888 in the presence of her sister Kate, she allegedly testified: 'I am here tonight as one of the founders of Spiritualism to denounce it as absolute falsehood, the most wicked blasphemy the world has ever known'.

Whatever Margaret Fox has said, there may be some reading these pages who believe in it, who believe in Spiritism and the ability to contact the dead in the spirit world, and other things. Then there is another camp, not that there are only two, but they're completely sceptical about the matter. They've written it off as pure fantasy and fairytale - to a large extent many are justified in that conclusion. A couple of weeks ago I was reading the Daily Mail, it was Thursday September 23rd 2004, and the headline on one particular article was 'Is There Anybody There?'. There's a picture of a séance in the article, and the answer comes back in bold capital letters 'NO!'. The subtitle is: 'Messages From The Spirit World Are Based on Guesswork Says Professor'. It was Professor Richard Wiseman of the University of Herefordshire. He had done many tests and concluded that people are not particularly deceitful as Spiritists, but to a large extent, as far as he could find with experimentation, much of what passes as Spiritism today is hoax and has been exposed by many competent professionals as being fraudulent.

Walter Martin, in his book mentioned previously, cites some classic exposés of Spiritism in our modern age. One by Houdini and Dunninger, called 'Magic and Mystery' in 1967; another by a former psychic M. Lamar Keene called 'The Psychic Mafia' in 1976; and a joint investigation in 1980 by two Christians - a Christian physician called Paul Meier, and a so-called Christian magician called Danny Korem - it's called 'Fakers'. All three of these exposés concluded that today there is a large amount of what passes as Spiritualism that is a hoax. Now I want to say that the vast majority of what we see today on our television screens, at the back of your women's magazines and so on, the adverts that you see, is hoax and deceit. However, let me say categorically that all spiritistic phenomenon is not fraudulent - far from it. Although a lot of what goes on today is simply making a fast buck at the expense of some very simple souls, there is a spiritual realm. And perhaps one of the greatest deceits of the

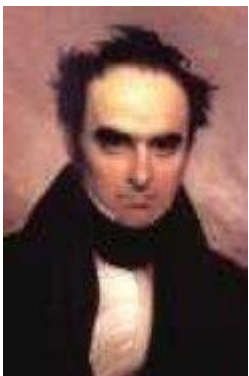
devil is this: that behind the facade of what can often be false, there is a very real spiritual world.



Walter Martin gives some independently verified instances of spiritistic phenomenon which have been proven. In fact, universities all around our world are setting up faculties to study things like ESP, Extra-Sensory Perception, supernatural phenomenon that cannot be rationally and scientifically explained. But apart from all that, we as believers must believe in the spiritistic phenomenon and existence that is a reality in our world today - why? Because the Bible tells us so! We've read enough passages already to prove that we wrestle not and our struggle as believers is not with people in other nationalities or political ideologies; but our wrestling, our struggle is with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places.

### ***Spiritism In General***

What I want to do is first of all look at Spiritism in a general sense, then I want us to broaden our scope to consider other related occultic subjects. The same Scriptures that we apply to Spiritism will also conclude in doom upon these other subjects. Among some of the most famous spiritists that you may know are people like Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of Sherlock Holmes. William E. Gladstone, once Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ireland, was also a spiritist. Then there is Daniel Webster, who was a writer and US statesman, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, who authored the novel 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'. There are many others apart from these four famous people who classed themselves as 'Spiritists'. It is astounding when you begin to read up on the subject to find that people consider themselves at times both Christian and Spiritist. Numbered among some well-known Spiritists are not just clergymen, but Bishops in the Church of England - men who feel that on one hand they can hold their Christianity, and on the other they can dabble in this secret spirit world.



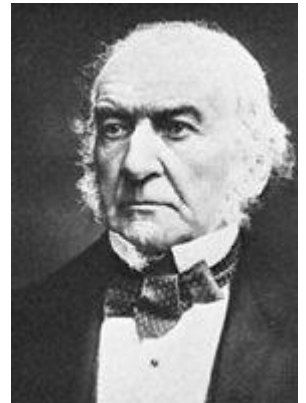
As we study the Spiritist movement and the Spiritist church, you will see that they're almost Christian-esque (if I can use that expression) in the way that they do things. In fact someone shared a recent article from the Belfast Telegraph with me, testifying of the first ordained female minister in the Spiritist church here in Ulster, she comes from Newtownards. If you

look down the announcements in the Belfast Telegraph and in other newspapers, you'll find the Spiritualist Church announcing their meetings and get-togethers on the Churches page. Some of them have their services in homes, some in halls, some in churches that look just like any church building - no different, only the sign says 'The Spiritualist Church'. They have their own hymnbook, and it's fascinating to flick through it. They use many of the tunes that you and I would use around the Lord's Table and in our Sunday morning and Sunday evening services. Here is a hymn that you'll recognise right away, but as you look closely you'll find that it is very different - we know the hymn so well:

*'Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come'.*

Well, this is the Spiritist version:

*'Just as I am, without one plea,*



*But that, O God, Thou madest me' - notice the difference,  
 'And that my life is found in Thee  
 O God of Love, I come, I come'.*

The idea of this transcendent 'God of Love', this power in the whole universe that wouldn't damn anyone but eventually will save everyone. The second verse goes like this, quite different:

*'Just as I am, nor poor, nor blind' - in other words, you can see something that no one else can see,  
 'Nor bound by chains in soul or mind;  
 For all of Thee within I find  
 O God of Love, I come, I come'.*

And the third verse:

*'Just as I am, Thou wilt receive' - mark this,  
 'Tho' dogmas I may ne'er believe' - doctrine is not important! ...apart from theirs...,  
 'Nor heights of holiness achieve' - you don't have to be holy, even though the scripture says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord - not in this church!  
 'O God of Love, I come, I come'.*

They have a pulpit just like our churches, and they'll stand and pray to God. They'll lecture in a religious sense, there will be healing messages that will come from so-called deceased persons, there will be other psychic phenomenon that will be displayed in these meetings. But the fact of the matter is: with all the Christian-esque facade of acceptability, this Spiritism is from the occult! It is occultic in its origins, and it is occultic in its practices.

Now you've probably heard the word 'occult' a lot in Christian circles, but you may not know what it means. 'Occult' simply means 'something that is hidden', something that is secret knowledge that you or I may not have, but a select few have been party to, and they've received it through special ways. It's the opposite of 'overt', 'occult' is something that is hidden, 'overt' is something that is open to all. This Spiritistic Church is an occult movement that believes that they have the secret to eternal realities, and that you can only get it by tapping into the hidden spiritual world. So they do it through occultic means: séances, communication with the dead; telepathy, which is simply communicating thoughts and ideas and pictures from one mind to another without verbal communication; astrology, the study of the stars; clairvoyance, which is perceiving the future by a sight that is a sixth sense, if you like. Then there is audiovoyance, which is simply listening and being able to hear spirits speaking to you. You're familiar, I'm sure, with fortune-telling, looking into a crystal ball. There's automatic writing, table rapping that the Fox's believed they heard; there's the use of the Ouiji board, which is simply a kind of alphabet or circle of symbols, and when you contact the spirit world the dead spell things out for you and communicate whatever you need to know. There's also the pendulum, another thing used within the Spiritist church, and they divine the future through the pendulum - they'll maybe tell whether you're going to have a baby boy or a baby girl, or they find something that you've lost by the use of this pendulum.

### ***Spiritist Practices In Scripture***

Now all of these things, all of them, are condemned in Holy Scripture. God does not use them, God does not even condone them by silence, but God says - now mark this please - that they are all an abomination in His sight. No stronger words could be used by Almighty God than that - an abomination! Now let me show you this, and I want to spend some time as we look at Deuteronomy 18. The children of Israel were about to enter into the promised land, and of course they had to drive out all the false nations with their cultures and religions, so that they would not be contaminated with the religions of idolatry and devil worship that

these people adhered to. So in order that the Jews were not tainted by it, in Deuteronomy 18:9 God says to the prophet Moses: *'When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations'* - there's the word abomination. These are the abominations, nine in all, that are mentioned: *'There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee'*.

Now let me say this very clearly, if you don't understand what an abomination is: it is something that the Lord God of heaven hates, He detests! It is something that to a child of God, in fact I would go as far as to say to every creature, is forbidden. You're not to look into these things, these hidden things - God hates them, and He doesn't want His children to have anything to do with them! Don't think that God is some kind of party-popper and spoilsport, and He wants to keep all the secrets to Himself. God is not trying to hinder our intelligence, God is not wanting us to be harmed by these things, because ultimately that is what this hidden knowledge does to men and women. In the Garden of Eden, we go back further even than Babylon, I believe this is where Spiritism really began. Satan said to Eve: 'God hath not said that ye shall surely die - you will live on!'. That's what the spiritists believe, that death is nothing, that you just go to another world, another realm - 'We don't die, you need not fear death, we will be as gods and have a knowledge that God would not have you have, but Spiritism and the devil will give you'.

### **Nine Abominations**

Well, let's look at these abominations individually - I want to take time over this, for I believe that we will learn a great deal for our help. The first abomination is 'passing through the fire'. *'There shall not be found'*, verse 10, *'among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire'*. Now this has been traditionally known as the worship of many gods, one of whom is the god 'Molech'. This was the human sacrifice of feeding your little boy or your little girl to the fires as a pecuniary sacrifice to an angry god. Now you may not believe that that still goes on in our world today, but it's a fact that it does - even this is real in our present day. But if you think of this in a metaphorical sense, putting your son or daughter in the fire is trying to earn your own salvation with God. It is strange fire before God, it is a strange sacrifice and a strange offering that the Lord our God has not prescribed. It is like every cult, every false faith that is not found within the word of God, that tries to achieve godhood or salvation on their own. If we take it even more literally today, the millions upon millions of abortions that have been performed in our world, little children being slaughtered by the knife of the surgeons who should be saving them - that is a way to see how our children are being fed to the fire, and sacrificed for self and for sin.

But more applicable to our subject is the second abomination: *'or that useth divination'*. Now 'divination', to give you a simple definition, is the practice (or the art, as some see it) of discovering hidden knowledge. Remember that hidden knowledge that I was talking about? Occult, hidden things - well, you divine that knowledge, you get that knowledge, you're able to foretell that knowledge in the future, by divination. Applying that principle to us today in the 21st century, means that as believers we need to say categorically that we should be avoiding psychic phenomenon. Psychics; fortunetellers; the ouiji board; discerning the future through a crystal ball or through various crystals; tarot cards, setting them out and discerning the future. Let me also say that the cutting of cards is another way of foretelling and discerning the future, and it's not using tarot cards, it's using playing cards. They will cut the cards in a certain way, and ordinary playing cards that you might play poker with or whatever else, those cards have symbolism of the devil and are used in order to foretell things and divine - that's one of the reasons why a believer should have nothing to do with playing cards.



Others believe they can divine the future through reading your tea leaves. Others believe that through the pendulum that we mentioned, you can find lost things, or you can maybe even find water and a well. If you live in the countryside you will probably know that there are folk who believe they have the gift of water divination. They can take a 'Y'-shaped hazel twig, put it in their hands and walk, and whenever they come to a place where there is water, all of a sudden that twig begins to turn upwards. Those who know what this is like testify that at times the force would almost break your arm. Many a farmer has found it hard to get water on his farm, and he has brought in the man who can divine the water - this is divination in the biblical sense. Whether you divine for water or you divine for minerals, it's all the same! Incidentally, Joseph Smith of the Mormons, he was a crystal-gazer. You will find that many of the founders of these other cults were into this occult, secret hidden knowledge.

The third abomination after divination is: 'observer of times', still in verse 10. Now an observer of times is someone who is interested in astrology (not astronomy, astrology!) and is a star-gazer. They use the signs of horoscopes; they divine knowledge of the future from how the planets relate to one another. They have the stars of the sky as their guide to the future. Now do I need to say (I feel that I do!) that a Christian should not be reading the horoscopes? I don't care if it's for a laugh or not! It's divination, so beware of horoscopes! Beware of any attempt to tell the future. It doesn't matter what kind of trouble you're in, or what predicament you may face, you're not to go to a diviner or to a star-gazer or to an observer of times. I was thinking of other ways you could be an observer of times, not in the chronological sense, but superstition I believe comes under this abomination. You might think this is very simplistic, or even innocent, but we all know the rhyme about the magpie. Some people believe that if you see two magpies, that's going to be good luck. Maybe you're one of these people who don't like to walk underneath a ladder - I'm one of those pains-in-the-neck that likes to walk under a ladder, just to defy all this stuff! You might be one of these people who says 'Don't put the umbrella up in the house, you know that's bad luck!'. I even heard someone recently say: 'Don't buy a man socks or shoes' - have you heard that one? 'Because he might walk away in them!'.

The fact of the matter is: these superstitions, although they are laughable at times, they can bring you into mental and even spiritual bondage and slavery. I know people who have reached that extent, where they can hardly move for fear of superstition. With some people it's Friday the 13th, they won't take a flight on that day. Others won't travel with red and white pyjamas in case they die on the flight or something like that. There are other people and they believe in luck, they believe in fatalism. Really all of this is simply a belief and faith that other things, apart from God's divine sovereignty and providence, are determining our lives - forces, and rules, and principles that are foreign to our God. We take it out of His hands and put it into the hands of these 'times'. You see, God doesn't want us looking into occult things, hidden things - do you know why? Because God wants us to trust Him, the One who knows the end from the beginning. You cannot know that, no matter how much of a diviner or an observer of times you may be, you can never know all that there is to know about everything. God is the only one who has that knowledge, and He wants you to put your life in His hands.

We must move on, fourthly, to those abominators who are called 'enchanters'. Now more specifically, an enchanter is a magician or a sorcerer. This is a person who casts spells, who bewitches people. Basically it's someone who works magic, literal magic. What we have to say on God's word is this: a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ should avoid anything that has to do with magic, anything! Now the problem today is this: our young people and our children are being spoon-fed magic every day in school, out of school, at home, through magazines. Harry Potter is a case in point, but not just through film, through computer games and video games, role-playing games that are sold and require players to get involved with witchcraft, sorcery, casting spells and conjuring up spirits - like Dungeons & Dragons and many more. All

of them are opening up hidden things to our children!

Even consider, as someone has called it, the 'Hollywoodisation of the occult'. Think of the films that have been brought out, apart from the horror flicks that are intended to be humorous (and I'm not condoning them by saying that), there are more serious films like 'The Exorcist', 'Carrie', 'Devil's Advocate', 'The Craft', 'The Sixth Sense', 'The Blair Witch Project', 'Halloween', 'Friday The Thirteenth', and 'Nightmare on Elm Street'. It has moved from the film screen in the cinema to our own TV screens at home: 'Buffy The Vampire Slayer', 'Angel', 'Dark Angel', 'Charmed', 'The X-Files', 'The Dead Zone', 'Millennium', 'The Witchblade'. Now listen carefully: it doesn't matter whether you think that this is all innocent fun. You may say, regarding children reading Harry Potter, 'As long as they're reading a book, well, I'm encouraged' - but this is opening up hidden things to children! I heard of a ministry recently that looks into these things and exposes them. After reading Harry Potter, a child telephoned them thinking that they were actually propounding witchcraft, and asked them if they could teach her how to ride a broomstick! You can laugh that off if you want, but magic - God's word says - is something that God detests, and that's why we ought to beware of it.



I believe that under 'enchanting' comes another two things: yoga and reiki, which is an awful phenomenon. Yoga encourages you to empty your mind of everything, but open your mind to anything. Reiki is, I think, perhaps more sinister. I have heard of cases that may be possible demon possession escalating from this practice. It comes from Japan, I believe, but it encourages you not just to empty your mind but to contact the great force outside of you that pervades all of humanity, and allow it to come into your being. Meditation is another enchantment; mantras, quoting them over and over again in vain repetition, as the Saviour says the heathen do;

hypnotism - things like subliminal tapes, which are actually encouraging you to empty your mind when you are unconscious to self, but be conscious to other things and open to other phenomena. These are not of God, these are enchantments. In fact, I remember hearing about a programme not so long ago by Paul McKenna - you may have heard of him, he's an entertainer and a hypnotist. He actually reproduced much of the phenomena that you see in the charismatic movement today, and he did it through hypnosis. I'm not condoning that, it proves a lot about the charismatic movement, but nevertheless this is what he said at the end of that programme: 'The purpose of me doing this is to caution you and encourage you to be careful what you open your mind to'. He said that!

Martial arts is something that is probably practiced in every Leisure Centre in our land, but the fact of the matter is: some of the techniques in martial arts regarding the mind and the heart, I believe, are enchantment. There are many other things that I wish I had time and space to deal with, and I'm sure you'd be interested in them: new-age medicine - now mark what I'm saying here - the origins of some practices of aromatherapy, homeopathy and feng shui are enchantment. God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge! You reach out onto a shelf and you buy anything, and you don't ask where it comes from, who made it, what they believe and what philosophy is behind it!

Fifthly the abomination that is mentioned is 'the witch'. This again is obviously a person that practices magic - but she deals with demonic spirits. You've heard of black and white magic, they're both from the devil, one is not any better than the other. We hear of witches called 'wicca' today, 'white witchcraft' that's meant to be acceptable. Paganism is a religion now, it seems, they use spells and they have séances themselves.

Then the next abomination is the 'charmer', that's what the verse says. This is a person who puts a spell on someone. In other words, they put a spell to change things, and they may chant magical mantras and verses or formulae in order to get things done. Now this is very

popular here in Ireland. Charms: 'There's a wee woman down the road in that cottage, and if you've got a big wart on your toe or on your hand, she has a charm, something that she'll say over it, and your wart will be gone in a couple of days, or maybe even in the morning'. The child has got whooping cough, there's a charm - there's a charm for this, that, and the other. Believe it or not, there are even charms that use the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and people think that it's alright because they're using the Trinity. People say: 'Well, if it heals you does it really matter? If my crop is good this year, what does it matter? Surely God wouldn't refuse to do something good, if this is not from Himself?'. But you need to realise, especially if you're a believer, that the devil is an angel of light. He transforms himself into something that is appealing, something that is acceptable, he's a master masquerader! Just because something works doesn't mean it's right. Objects that are often used by charmers are crystals, pieces of jewellery that are used for magical purposes, and that's why we as believers need to beware of occult symbols, talismans, amulets, crystals and all these things.

Seventhly, the next abomination is 'a consuler with familiar spirits'. This is a person who actually asks the assistance of an evil spirit, desires a demon or a spirit - we can hardly imagine this. They're called, those of them that are genuine today, 'mediums' - people who contact the dead. Now in reality, and I'll prove this to you later on, they're not contacting the dead. Just put your mind at ease. Many poor, mourning bereaved people are drawn into this cult because they believe there's hope of hearing from a loved one and finding out that they're OK. Really what is happening is that this medium is in cahoots with the devil and an evil spirit, which is counterfeiting and impersonating the person that they love. We'll look at that in more detail later on. You might say: 'Well, how do they do it?'. Well, they're corroborating with what I believe Paul in 1 Timothy 4:1 calls 'seducing spirits'. Beware, therefore, of channelling, of mediums, of ouiji boards, of automatic writing, séances and all such like - we must have nothing to do with them.

The next abomination is the wizard, you could say that this is the male version of the witch. This is someone, again, who knows a great deal about these hidden things, and he's in touch with the demonic spirit realm. He uses magic to control other persons, and you can go on the Internet (not that I'm encouraging you to do this, I'm just making you aware) and get potions and spells for this, that and the other. They encourage visualisation, sorcery, mantras, astral travel and projection, levitation, clairvoyance, audiovoyance - seeing and hearing the things in the unseen realm.

Then finally, ninth, there is necromancy, a necromancer - this again is a person who has claimed to speak with the dead mainly for the purpose of fortune-telling, telling you something that's going to happen in the future. Again they're in league, not with the dead, but with evil spirits who pretend to be that deceased person. We need to beware of these things!

You know God's people were dabbling in this in the Old Testament, and God said through Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 8:19: *'When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God?'*. Now God's word condemns you, even if you're a believer, if you've dabbled in these things - there's a God in heaven whom you ought to seek! God hates Spiritism, surely I've made that clear to you - the secret things belong unto our God, the things that are revealed are for us and our children's children. Jesus said that those spirits from that spirit realm are like their father the devil, a liar from the beginning, a murderer who obeyed not the truth.

Now, you're maybe saying: 'What about Saul? What about Saul in the Old Testament?'. First Samuel chapter 28 - what about him? Didn't he contact a medium? Didn't that medium, on his request, contact Samuel in the dead spirit world? Did Samuel not appear, and did Samuel

not give him a message from the Lord? Now some may not agree with what I'm going to say, but the fact that this happened in Scripture is by no means a condoning of this practice. What you have to realise is that Saul is in disobedience at this moment in time. He did not slay all the Amalekites as God told him to, he kept the King and some of the cattle and he disobeyed God, so God took away His blessing and anointing from him as king, and Samuel pronounced doom upon him. Where we find him here in 1 Samuel 28, the Philistines are coming, Saul is cut off from God, in the interim Samuel has died. There's no prophet of the Lord speaking into Saul's life, and he doesn't know what to do. So in desperation he decides: 'I'm going to try and contact the dead Samuel' - so he goes to the Witch of Endor, or the Medium of Endor.

Now there are two views about this Scripture, the first is this: that this was a hoax, like many hoaxes today; and that Saul didn't contact the dead Samuel, and the woman was bluffing him - because how could God allow Saul to do something that His word forbade? That would seem to be contradictory, and I can understand that in a way. I personally believe that God allowed this, this was not medium-ship, no it was not. I'll show you why it wasn't - but I believe that God allowed this incident to put further judgment and condemnation on Saul. If you read this passage you will see that Samuel came to the fore here not by the conjuring or in response to the witch - if you look at these verses you will see that clearly. *'Then', verse 11 of 1 Samuel 28, 'said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice'.* There's no room, in the Scripture at least, between verse 11 and verse 12 for any of the incantations of this witch, for any of her medium's séance to be used properly. It seems immediately that Samuel appeared to her, and in verse 12 you see that she is obviously shocked, this is not something that often happened: *'And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul'.* Later she talks about seeing gods and spirits coming out of the earth and going into the earth, obviously she never really went into this realm in her everyday existence - but there's something real happening here! It's before she has even used her chants and incantations, and what I believe is this: God allowed Samuel to appear for Saul's judgment. Of course, Samuel carried a message from the Lord, more condemnation - you read of Samuel, not an impostor spirit but Samuel, six times in this passage. But what I want you to see is that God's response to Saul was to curse him for being involved in such an activity! Doom was upon his head!

What I do want to say is this: the hidden things, these occultic things are not to be looked into by Christians. In fact, my friend, if you're not a Christian, you ought not to be looking into them either. But the child of God ought especially to stay clear of such things, because God's word says that we are children of light! We have been delivered from the darkness! Can I make it more applicable? I'll maybe die at the stake metaphorically, or maybe literally for saying this! The Christian ought not to be involved in hidden things at all, secret things. I don't care whether that secret thing is masonic, or that secret thing is orange, purple, black - it's wrong if you're a Christian and you're looking into hidden things! If some of you knew what some of the symbols that you wear around your breast mean, you would have a fit! I know of men who have come out of these movements, and they have experienced a liberation in the spirit that they previously did not have! Take it or leave it, you can't have your cake and eat it, you can't apply all this to all these other things and not apply it to these institutions. God's word says that the gospel was for the purpose to open the eyes of the blind, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God! Why would you dabble in dark things when you've seen the light?

### **Light Or Darkness?**

Which path will you choose? Which? God's way, or Satan's? I want to ask you: are you bound in this sin? Are you? Have you dabbled in this thing, and it has been brought into every area of your life? It's almost like there's a curse upon your whole environment, your whole life and home and existence? You're maybe sitting there, realising: 'I have gone into these things, they're an abomination in the eyes of God, and I'm bound in them - but I don't know how to

get out of them! Is there an answer?'. Praise God, there is an answer! Christ is the answer! First Peter 1:18-19 says: *'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers'* - the past darkness, maybe the darkness that you're in, do you know what can buy you back and save you from it? The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot! The blood of Christ that He shed for you to defeat sin, hell, death and Satan at Calvary can deliver you now! Oh, my dear friend, He is able to deliver thee! What you must do is come to Jesus. You see, there's a power in Jesus, the Lord and Christ, that there is not in any other realm, in any other solar system, in any other place to be found - for He has all power in heaven and on earth, for He is God!

Satan is very powerful, and in and of myself I fear his power a great deal - but Jesus is stronger than Satan, and Satan to Jesus must bow. When the name of Jesus Christ the Lord is spoken, he must bow. You can see the great power in Mark's gospel chapter 5, the story of the demoniac possessed with perhaps up to 6000 demons. He came and fell at the feet of Christ, and Christ had the power to cast them all away! There he was, sitting clothed and in his right mind because he came to Jesus. My friend, if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.

Do you need to be free? You need to come to Christ, it's as simple as that. I don't care who you go to, if you don't come to Christ you might end up in a worse state than you are now. The Lord Jesus said that if you cast devils out of a man, and Christ does not come in to reside in the man, those devils will go out and metaphorically get some of their pals and bring them all back to have a new home in that swept out house. Is that what you want? My friend, you need Christ, you need to come to Christ - if you want to be delivered, that's what you need to do.

Here's a second thing you need to do: you need to confess those sins that you have been dabbling in, like every believer, you must confess your sin. But if you want to get rid of these things, you've got to bring these things of darkness into the light. That's why a Christian shouldn't be involved in anything dark and hidden and secret, for we walk in the light as He is in the light. When the light shows up our faults and our sins, hallelujah, the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin. You need to know that no matter what your deepest, darkest transgression is: if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

You need to come to Jesus, you need to confess your sin - but there's a third thing, and this is added on to confession: it is renunciation. You might confess a thing as wrong with your mouth, but some day when you're in a fix, caught between a rock and a hard place, and you don't know what to do or where to turn to - you might think of going back to your old ways and getting your guidance from there. But renunciation is simply this: that you cut it all off, 'I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back'.

Can I show you this from Scripture? Turn with me to Acts 19:13, Paul the apostle is preaching: *'Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus'*. My friend, do you see this? They were trying to cast out demons in their own power, Christ wasn't in their life. Now this is what I want you to see: *'the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds'*. Notice that they believed first, then confessed, thirdly showed their deeds - how did they show their deeds? They brought the curious things

that they used in the arts of occult, they brought their books together, *'and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed'*. That's what renunciation is: taking it all and burning it - and do you know what will happen? If you burn your bridges for Christ, you will prevail! But if you don't, you will be hindered.



## Chapter 6

# **"Church Of Christ"**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter we're looking at the 'Church of Christ', or as it is sometimes called the 'International Church of Christ'. It has many other names, but we're going to try to define who they are, and understand something about their doctrine and practice. Later on we will refer to 1 Corinthians 1:12 when we look specifically at the theology and doctrine of this particular movement. But I want us to note carefully what the apostle Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has to say in this verse. He is speaking to the believers at the church in Corinth, who were splitting up into different factions according to which individual they followed. *'Now this I say that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas',* or Peter, *'and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?'* Now mark these words please, Paul says: *'I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God'*. We will come back to this passage of Scripture later, and we'll also be looking at many others in this chapter.

Steve Wookey has written a book entitled 'As Angels of Light' on the subject of the London Church of Christ. He characterises the London Church of Christ, which is a particular parochial branch of the International Church of Christ, in this way: 'You might meet them in the underground, or outside a station, or on the street. They will ask you if you would like to join a Bible study or come to a meeting, they will be friendly but a little insistent. You may already be a member of a church, but somehow their church has so much more to offer, so you really ought to try their church. They will get hold of your telephone number and then call you often, sometimes everyday, to encourage you to come along to their meetings. Before you know it, you are caught up with them - you have questions, but somehow you never get the chance to ask them. Your timetable is just too full, and the commitment expected of you is simply too demanding. You find yourself with a discipler, who begins to make all your decisions for you - what job you should do, what course you should take, where you should live. All of a sudden your parents and your friends appear to be worried by the amount of time that you're spending with the church, so your discipler points out that they are a bad influence on you, and you ought not to see them too much'. So Steve Wookey in his book, 'As Angels of Light', described the characteristics of the International Church of Christ, specifically in London.

But you know, the definition and list of characteristics that he gives of the International Church of Christ is very akin to a caricature of any classic cult, whatever that cult may be, whatever name they take for themselves. There's a great debate going on at the moment as to whether the International Church of Christ is a cult, or whether it is a genuine Christian church purely with cultic characteristics and tendencies. In fact, I have to be careful (though not too careful!) in what I say, because the International Church of Christ in Singapore actually took a newspaper to court who called them a cult, and they won the court case to prove that, as far as they were concerned, according to the law of the land in Singapore they were not a cult.

### **The Characteristics Of A Cult**

As we've gone through previous studies in this book, we have not yet actually defined what a

cult is. Maybe you've been curious as to what the definitions of a 'cult' are. How do you recognise a cult, as opposed to the Christian church? A man called Matt Slick, who is the founder of the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry, abbreviated 'CARM' ([www.carm.org](http://www.carm.org)) has made some helpful definitions. I have taken a few of his definitions as to how we can recognise a cult in our day and age, the particular distinctives that are found in a cult as opposed to what is the true Christian church in a Biblical sense.

Often the first characteristic in a cult is that there is a new teaching that has been brought to light. In other words, whether it's a prophet, or just a particular organisation, it is purporting to have a new light on the gospel, a new prophetic revelation that God has given only to them, and they need to reveal it to the world - a new teaching, a new inspiration of God. We've found in previous chapters that in the Jehovah's Witnesses movement it's revealed in the New World Translation and by their prophet Russell. In the Mormons you have it through Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, and many other so-called 'inspired writings' that they aspire to. You have it right throughout the world of the cults: men with new ideas of how to come to God, new revelations that they claim God's Spirit has revealed to them.

The second distinctive that flows out of that is that they claim exclusivity to that revelation. They believe that they are the only true church, and they have the only true teaching on this new way to God. As far as they are concerned everybody else, particularly the rest of Christendom, are apostates. They have left the true gospel, whether it has been since the Reformation or since the fifth century or something like that, but they believe that they alone have the truth.

The third distinctive that you'll have noticed going through these studies is that in these cults there is a strong leadership. Whether it's one individual who has founded the cult, or a group of individuals who lead the church, all of them seem to have this leadership base that exerts strict control over the religious group, almost in a dictator-like fashion. What they say goes, and their word is almost taken as the word of God, being a prophet of God - strong leadership.

Fourthly, another characteristic is overt financial emphasis. You will find within many cults, if not all of them, compulsory tithing - you have to give a tenth of your income. Even worse than that, some cults even acquire your assets, whether it be your inheritance or even your own assets after you die. Whether it be in the bank or in property, they seem to be able to get their hands on it one way or another. Often in cults we see this characteristic of overt financial emphasis.

Fifthly, there is what we could call isolationism. Cults are isolationist - now what do I mean by that? Well, they try to sever you from real-life, whether that real-life be the world in general, or whether it be your church background or your family love and dependence on those around you - they try in some way to gain more control over you than those other aspects of your life have. They do it physically, they try to cut you off physically from family and friends and other religious influences. They try to do it mentally, by mind control techniques - that's why you hear many people talking about cults as 'brainwashing people'. They do it financially, they try to prevent you giving your finance to other things, and persuade you to give it to the church, whereby you feel you are obliged to them because your assets have been poured into their organisation. And they certainly do it emotionally, where they seek to make you dependent on that particular group of people.

What outflows from that is that they are controlling. Sixthly, they seek to get control through isolating you, through teaching you their doctrine that you could lose your salvation - not if you lose faith in Christ, but if you leave their group. They are the sole inheritors of salvation because of their new teaching and revelation, so if you leave them, you leave Christ and any hope of heaven. So they create an emotional dependency, and they put it into practice

through their doctrine and also through other things such as meditation, the repetition of words. You will find that cults often have their own language, clichés and phrases. By using this language they're able to identify whether you are in the group or not, and if you don't know how to use the language then you're not in the group; but if you can use it then you're one of them. There is a sense of belonging that comes with the special jargon and phraseology that's adopted.

Seventhly, they exercise control over you through deprivation. Often what will happen, and specifically regarding the International Church of Christ, you will find some of the disciples testifying that all the hours of sleep that they have are four and a half to five hours a night. They spend so much time praying, reading the Bible, studying the Scriptures, reading together in their fellowship, that they can only get that amount of sleep. They go in quite a lot for fasting, and of course the Bible teaches fasting, but they go into it fanatically. Not in the sense of chronologically, the time that they fast, or the way that they fast, but they allow and even encourage their disciples to fast so that they become weak through sleep deprivation and food deprivation. Then their wills also become limp and they're very prone to any suggestion that will be given to them by their strong strict leadership. Through deprivation they weaken the will.

An eighth characteristic of a cult is indoctrination, and of course this is the obvious one. We need to realise that, particularly in a cult, continually and constantly their belief is reinforced - but what is chiefly characteristic is that all other opposing views or critiques of their views are voluntarily misunderstood, and most of the time completely prohibited. You're not allowed to look into anything else that could contradict your beliefs.

Ninthly, and finally as far as we will go, one particular characteristic of a cult is that they believe they're being persecuted all the time. They're persecuted because they have the truth and nobody else has the truth. But they actually instruct their followers that any challenge to their beliefs, any argument, any questioning, any trying to reason with your rationale that God has given to you, is persecution. Therefore you're to avoid it.

### ***The Characters Who Join A Cult***

So I hope you can see how to recognise a cult. There are many other definitions and characteristics that I could give to you, but those are some that may help you to discern what a cult is. Now before we look at the International Church of Christ specifically, the second question I want to ask is: what type of people join a cult? I believe this will shed light on the International Church of Christ itself, when we say that those that join a cult (not in any way to be patronising to them) are often vulnerable people. They may be vulnerable emotionally, in other words they may have had a loss in their life - they may not have many family members or friends. They may be vulnerable spiritually, in other words they are searching, they're looking for the truth, they want a religious community to join and feel a part of and at home in. They may be financially vulnerable, they don't know how to deal or handle their finances, and all of a sudden this cult comes along and says: 'We'll take full control of your finances, we'll get you into financial shape, and show you how God can bless you financially'.

A second mark of the type of people that join a cult is that not only are they vulnerable, but they're supernaturally curious. I mean that they're interested in the supernatural, they want to know more about eternity, salvation, heaven, hell and God. Thirdly, often they are intellectually confused. Maybe they have gone to university, maybe they have searched the Scriptures, maybe they have studied theology, and maybe cults and religions of all kinds from around the world. They really do desire to know the way to God, and what true reason and truth may be, and so they search. Maybe like Solomon of old they go into every cult or belief possible to find out what is the real truth.

### ***The Characteristics Of Cult Members***

A third question I want to look at is not just what type of people join cults, but the general profile of members in a cult. Once a person joins a cult, what happens to them? Knowing these characteristics is often how you will recognise that a person has joined a cult. Many of you who have known anybody in a cult will be able to see these right away. Generally speaking there is a change of character in a person who joins a cult. Now that change of character could be summarised as follows: firstly, a loss of humour. Now that makes me suspect that some Christians must have joined a cult when we weren't looking at them! Nevertheless, there is often a loss of humour. In other words, they fail to be able to laugh at themselves, and laugh at other people particularly among their group. Then we find also that a characteristic of them is a childlike behaviour, and what I mean by that is that they become excessively dependent on other people. They're always seeking the approval of their leaders, of their prophets and their elders. They bow and scrape to them like little children to parents. What outflows from that is an indecisiveness that is characteristic in people who join a cult. They're always consulting the leaders over this decision, or that decision, they want to know God's divine will, and they seem not to be able to make a decision for themselves even before God.

Here's a characteristic that we find particularly in the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses: there is tunnel vision. They can't see beyond what they have imbibed as truth, and no matter how much evidence that you give them that seems to categorically expose the beliefs and practices behind their cult, they just won't believe it. They have tunnel vision. Something related to that is an inability to reason. I spoke of this particularly in the cult of the Mormons, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It doesn't matter what evidence you have to prove to them that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were the greatest crooks that ever walked across the face of the earth, it doesn't matter to them because they're not depending on facts. Mormons have actually admitted this to me in conversation: they're not depending on facts, they're depending on an inner light! This is where we have to be careful as Christians: there's a danger that we run around singing 'I'll tell you why I know He lives, He lives within my heart' - now that doesn't mean anything! We know He lives because there's an empty tomb, and it can be proven that there's an empty tomb - sure, who knows what's in your heart? Who knows what's in my heart? It is not chiefly the testimony of our own subjective experience, it is the facts and experience of truth that can be proven evidentially.

### ***The International Church Of Christ***

Now why do I tell you how to recognise a cult, what type of people join a cult, and what is the general profile of cult members? It's simply this: because there is a dispute as to whether the International Church of Christ is a cult or not. I'll leave you to decide on that, but I think it's very clear. The difficulty here when we consider the International Church of Christ is that it does seem, at first glance, in the theological sense, to be an orthodox Christian church - with the exception of a couple of tenets of doctrine. This is why I believe it's so dangerous, and perhaps this is the most dangerous aspect of the International Church of Christ. It is so like biblical Christianity, it appears to be just like any other Christian church or denomination, even if it is a little bit overzealous in how it propounds its doctrine. It appears to have many, many similarities with Bible Christianity.

Let me show you a couple of them. We have discussed in previous chapters from scripture how the Trinity, the triune Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is taught within the word of God - three separate persons, one God, one substance. Well, the International Church of Christ believes in the Trinity. It believes in the deity of Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit. It believes in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus. It believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God and ought to be the final source and ultimate authority of the church. It believes in a literal hell, it believes in a literal heaven. It believes in the personality of Satan as a literal fallen angel. So it is very easy for people to think: 'Oh, this is just another fundamental Bible-believing organisation and movement'.

When we consider the backdrop that there is in a religious sense, ecclesiastically in our world today, with the backslidden nature of the mainstream church of Jesus Christ regarding the truth of God's word, it can be refreshing to realise that there actually is a group that is zealous and full of conviction. What a pleasant change it is to find a group of people who actually believe what they say and stand by it! This is why the International Church of Christ can be so attractive to people today. There is a great deal of commitment among them. Their devotion to the word of God and the study of it is second to none, even though they are in error in many of the interpretations that they take. Their emphasis on obedience, their friendliness, their vigorousness in evangelism and soul-winning (as they see it) - I would have to say that in this regard they show most Christians up right away!

Now I know that can be said of other cults that we've considered, but this is where the danger lies! This is why Steve Wookey entitled his book on the London Church of Christ 'The Angels of Light', because they appear so plausible, they appear so orthodox. But when we will look at their methods, their techniques, their practices and their beliefs, we will see that they are far from the true church of Jesus Christ.

It's very hard to give you a total resume of everything that they believe in such a short space. Instead I will share the text of a recent Breakfast News story from the BBC. Jill Dando is the presenter of this six minute cameo, which gives you a summary of the beliefs and practices of the Church of Christ, and also how the outer world perceives them:

*[Begin video transcript]*

Dando: *"There has been increasing criticism of the teaching methods used by one group, and that is the London Church of Christ. Anastasia Cook reports"*

Cook: *"It's one of the fastest-growing religious cults in the country. The London Church of Christ came over from America 11 years ago, and now it has over 2000 members across Britain. They're encouraged by the church to go out every day of the week recruiting and evangelising in universities and public places. Their targets: the young and vulnerable. Whilst filming in Leicester Square our crew were approached no less than three times in the space of an hour"*

COC Member: *"Do you have a number, so that I can get in contact with you and give you a ring?"*

Cook: *"This church believes they provide the only true route to salvation, in return they command total obedience. The leaders make your decisions, and can even dictate who you marry - but many members say this commitment has changed their lives for the better"*

COC Member: *"Well, we give our lives basically, not only just our money, but our lives as well"*

Cook: *"And how have you benefited from it?"*

COC Member: *"Well, basically, I would say we all were lost, and I've gained - you know - the truth. That's the main thing I've gained, the truth, I would say"*

Cook: *"Do you like it? Why, tell us why?"*

COC Members: *"It's the only way to live, it's the only way to live - come along and find out!"*

Cook: *"Why is that, tell us why?"*

Cook: *"So, we went along to one of their Sunday meetings to investigate allegations that this church is splitting up families and brainwashing members. However we were told to leave the hall, and leaders instructed followers not to talk to us"*

COC Leader: *"We're going to have to ask you to leave now, I'm sorry"*

Cook: *"You're kidding? <Name> said he was going to allow us to..."*

COC Leader: *"Excuse me Sir, this way is the door. It has been discussed, and the leadership have come to a decision, it's final"*

Cook: *"An ex-member told us how her parents kidnapped her from the group because they felt she was being brainwashed. Two years on, she's still trying to come to terms with her experiences"*

Ex-Member: *"Whilst you're with the group you have no...you're not encouraged to be responsible, you have no independence basically. You've lost the ability to think for yourself, because whatever you do you always have to seek help, seek advice"*

Cook: *"You say you've met a lot of friends in the Church, do you know what has happened to them now?"*

Ex-Member: *"One young lady comes to mind, she has only been with the group for a short while, but she became very, very disturbed and confused about the teachings and what she had learned before joining the group, to the point of being psychologically disturbed - in fact, very suicidal"*

Cook: *"We asked the country's leading cult psychiatrist if she had come across any similar cases during her many dealings with ex-members"*

Psychiatrist: *"The phone calls I've had...I've had a lot of phonecalls about the London Church of Christ, and I haven't recorded them all - but they've been from psychiatric hospitals in the London area, and they've been about the fact that somebody who was admitted on section with an acute psychosis, talking unintelligibly and very distressed - either very high or very withdrawn. The relatives have told the psychiatrist concerned that the breakdown had something to do with the London Church of Christ"*

Cook: *"Now a growing number of established clergy are questioning the methods of the London Church of Christ, and the affects on its members"*

Clergyman: *"Whilst you're with the church everything seems fine, they're very loving, very friendly - but the moment you begin to ask questions, or disagree, or try to leave the church it's very, very different. They put all sorts of pressure on you, and if you leave them they tell you that you're inevitably going to go to hell - you've got no chance. That leaves people very scarred and very battered"*

Cook: *"Eighteen-year-old Samantha was recruited three months ago at her college, but she left last weekend because she became disturbed by their methods"*

Cook: *"Do you think you were brainwashed by the cult?"*

Samantha: *"Yea, I do, I do think I was brainwashed - even in three months, because people have been there three months, six months, a year, twelve months, and they're brainwashed. You know...the memory...they're always asking questions, you're always reading the Bible"*

Cook: *"In another case, Ian and Sally are going through agony as they try to persuade their eldest daughter to leave the cult before they lose her altogether"*

Ian: *"She will very likely suffer severe psychological damage when she does eventually leave, however she leaves, and she will need extensive psychiatric counselling for a long period of time"*

Sally: *"Even the amount of time she's been in it now, if she comes out relatively soon we've still got at least another year of counselling and getting her over the experiences that she's felt in the cult"*

Cook: *"We also discovered members of the cult offer 10 percent of their earnings. We tracked down the leader of the church, Fred Scott, to find out where this money is going, and to ask him about these allegations of brainwashing"*

Cook: *"Hi, is Fred Scott here? Hi Fred!"*

Person at door: *"He isn't prepared to talk to you, thanks very much"* [Closes door]

Cook: *"So we tried to talk to some members who live in one of the church's communes in Putney...they also refused to talk to us"*

Cook: *"How many people live here?"*

COC Member: *"I'm not going to answer that question"*

Cook: *"Do you not feel that they're coercing you, at all, as a church?"*

COC Member: [Laughter] *"I'm not going to answer that kind of question, I'm sorry"*

Cook: *"Just say 'no'"* [COC Member closes door]

Hayworth [Ex-Member]: *"The other thing I want to stress is that I was a victim of mind control and psychological coercion in a matter of four days, in fact they had me by Saturday mid-day, just after two..."*

Cook: *"Breaking down these walls of secrecy has become a life-long mission for Ian Hayworth, an ex-cult member himself. He is determined that others don't get involved"*



Hayworth: *"Cults grow exponentially, each person that becomes a victim becomes a victimiser; each person that's recruited becomes a recruiter - and so they can grow rather rapidly unless people are warned"*

Cook: *"For every one person who heeds the warnings, dozens more are recruited every week from the streets of Britain - new disciples to a growing cult, seemingly run on secrecy and fear"*

[End video transcript]



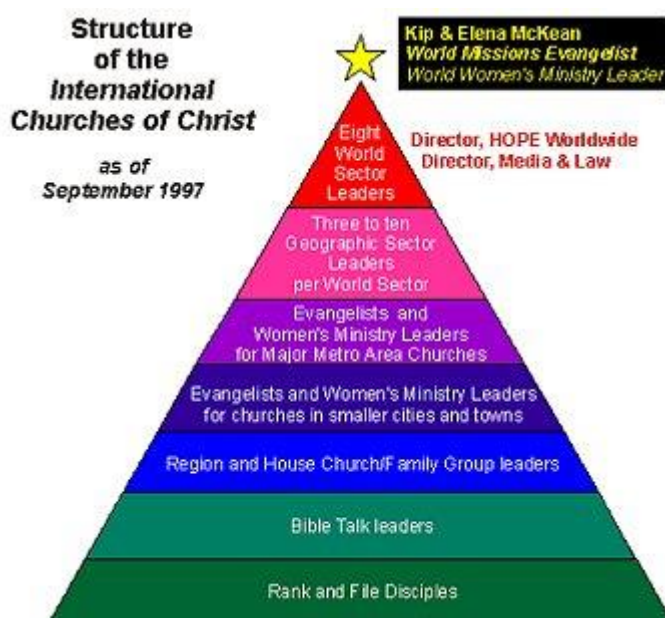
Now you may ask the question: where did such a church as the International Church of Christ come from? I'm sure it's no surprise to most of you that, like most of these cults, it hails from America originally. It is a break-off of a more mainstream denomination the 'Church of Christ', although some of their beliefs are heretical. However, in the 1950s the International Church of Christ came under the influence of the 'discipling movement'. The discipling movement is something akin to what went on in charismatic circles during the days of the shepherding movement. Since that influence, its roots can be traced to the 'Crossroads Church of Christ' in 1967 in Florida, out of which came a man called Kip McKean. McKean received his start at the Crossroads Movement. He was actually fired from the Houston, Texas Church of Christ, and then founded his own church in Boston, Massachusetts. Boston is where the International Church of Christ hails from, even those that are in London and here in Ireland, all come from the church in Boston, Massachusetts in the United States. I don't know the circumstances of it, but I understand that Kip McKean has recently resigned as the leader - somewhat shaking the foundation of the church's authority, as we'll see in a moment.

The Central London Church of Christ was founded in 1982, and there are others across the United Kingdom and Ireland. They consider all other denominations as sinful and apostate. There are many doctrines that we'll not have time to look into, but they cite biblical passages that show the apostles establishing one church per city - and therefore they believe that there ought to be only one church per city, and of course they claim that that true church is always theirs.

Now in the year 2001 it was estimated that there were over 400 Churches of Christ across the globe, with a membership of 130,000 worldwide in 150 countries. Now although they are orthodox in many of the tenants of their doctrine, I want to show you and prove to you from the word of God the concerns that a Bible-believing Christian and church ought to have about the International Church of Christ.

### Discipling

Here's the first: discipling, their discipling processes. Now this diagram shows the church structure for the International Church of Christ. You'll probably not be able to understand it at a glance, but let me just take you through it. The previous leader and founder of the International Church of Christ is represented by the star at the top, Kip McKean. He was the director and, it would have to be said, the unquestioned leader of the group. In fact, one member of the church said of him: 'He is the greatest living treasure that God has ever given the kingdom on the face of the earth today'. Whatever he says goes, and you can understand why the movement has been shaken now that he has



resigned - whatever his reasons may be. Underneath him you will see that there are elders who serve under his authority and wisdom. Then underneath the elders there are evangelists and women's ministry leaders for major city churches. Underneath those evangelists there are zone leaders, and then there are house church leaders, and then there are assistant Bible-talk leaders. That is the hierarchy of government within the church that keeps a rein on everything that goes on in such an authoritarian way.

Now the reason why I'm telling you this is to illustrate what a hold they have on people. The leader, Kip McKean, said these words: 'I'm the one who gives them direction'. He's the one at the head who gives the movement direction. Al Baird, who's an important Boston Church of Christ elder, said these words: 'It's not a dictatorship, it's a theocracy with God on top'. He also said: 'In questions of spiritual leaders abusing their authority, it is not an option to rebel against their authority' - so you can't rebel against a leader, what the leader says goes. Later in that article he says: 'When we are under authority we are to submit to and obey our leaders', mark these words, 'even when they are not very Christlike'. You have to obey us even when we're not Christlike! The question I would ask of that is: does that mean even when the commands that you're being given are not Christlike, that you are obliged to submit and obey?



Many who have left the Boston International Church of Christ have testified, I quote: 'The advice which members are expected to obey may include such details as where to live, whom and when to date, what courses to take in school, even how often to have sexual relations with a spouse' - and that was published in Time magazine.

Now what is the reason for me addressing the International Church of Christ in a study of the cults? The reason is this: that they prey upon the vulnerable. As we speak, in the university area of Belfast around Queen's University, young people who are vulnerable whilst away from home, away from family, away from church influences, are being recruited and brainwashed into this organisation which shows cultic characteristics.

What happens after recruitment is that they join this hierarchy, they are discipled and are allocated a discipler. This discipler is someone who goes alongside you and chaperones you, you discuss every decision with them. Now I know that the Bible tells us to disciple one another, but it does not teach us to disciple one over another. In other words, we're not to lord it over another, there's not a control that we ought to have over people that we are discipling, we're to bring them along. But what this group is actually doing through these disciplers is often creating friction in the home and among the family, and among the connections that the individual has had. So much so that that person becomes more dependent on the cult and the church. It may not be the intention, but nevertheless the result of these various processes of mind control is that they wean the people away from every other dependency, association and relationship to the church alone.

Some families have gone as far as attempting to abduct and reprogram individuals to get them away from this group. This next interview is from the news programme 'UTV Insight'. This shows just how applicable this is to our particular country and city as we speak. The first person who speaks is a young man who studied at Queen's University, he came from the South of Ireland I believe, and after three weeks away from home he was recruited by the International Church of Christ. The next person is a man called Eamon Akshar (sp?), who was a former senior member of the International Church Of Christ, and he talks about how they sought to control the members of this particular church.

*[Begin video transcript]*

QUB Student: *"I was baptised by full immersion in Belfast Lough in November, so as you can*

*imagine it was very cold! But it was a very good experience, I enjoyed it, and this was the moment that I was inducted, this is the moment that I was brought in, this is the moment that I was saved to receive the Holy Spirit"*

News Reader: *"Eamon Akshar was once a senior member of the church in London. His job was to oversee the lives of married couples under his command, and his control was absolute"*

Akshar: *"The level of influence is almost every aspect of their lives, for example in their finances they have to know each and every detail, how they spend, where they spend their money. I will tell them when and when not to spend their money, I will have to make sure that I get the maximum amount of money into the cult. When it comes to their marital relationship I will have to tell them when and when not to have sex, when and when not to have kids - what position they should have, the frequency, we used to give them weekly goals - again to know if there is any weakness in the relationship. The purpose of all that, if you ask, to use sex as means to control people. If you know the weakness of people, you will be able to control them".*

QUB Student: *"There was a strong sense of 'This is what the church should be doing', and that includes each individual sort of participating fully in the life of the church, which basically has a very busy schedule. There's not really much free time to go to do something, if you want to be on your own for a couple of hours - you know - it's really out of the question"*

*[End video transcript]*

## **Teaching**

Very telling, isn't it? If you ask anybody about the downfall of modern man today, you'll find it's threefold: sex, money, and power. Absolute power corrupts absolutely - and that is how this group controls individuals. Now I want to look at what is perhaps for us the more important issue, not just at their discipling methods, but their teaching. They are orthodox in many tenets of their belief, but perhaps one of the greatest characteristic doctrines that the International Church of Christ adheres to is baptismal regeneration. In other words, that you're saved, regenerated and converted, at the moment of baptism - that is, baptism by total immersion. It teaches that when you receive Christ that is not the moment of your salvation. You can have faith in Christ, you can repent, you can then confess, but it's not until the point of water baptism that you receive the Holy Spirit - and apart from water baptism, your sins are not forgiven you.

Now, it's worse than that, because it's not just about being baptised - you have to be baptised in the International Church of Christ. If you were baptised after having faith in Christ in another church, and you then join them, you have to be re-baptised. More than that, your baptism must be performed by someone in authority in the International Church of Christ. Added further even to that, and this is the astounding thing to me, you must understand and believe that at the moment of your baptism you are regenerated, given the gift of the Holy Spirit, and converted at that moment. If you don't understand that, even being baptised in the church by a church authoritarian, you are not truly saved nor truly baptised. Therefore, salvation is not in Jesus' death, but in Jesus' death on the cross, subsequent resurrection, and the baptism that this church gives you when you understand what it means.

Now this is the reason why we reject this false faith as a cult, because the issue at stake is justification by faith alone. They believe in justification by faith, that is not what we believe in. We do not believe in justification by faith, we believe in justification by faith alone, the cry of the Reformation: sola fide, faith alone. Now what does the Bible have to say about this matter? The Bible teaches us that justification is the legal act whereby God declares the sinner innocent - no sin attributed to you! Your sins are cleansed away, even though there's still sin that you're committing day by day, God has declared you legally, before His eyes, innocent.

Now what does the word of God say about this? Romans chapter 5:1 says: *'Therefore being*

*justified by faith'*, by faith, *'we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'*. Now if you were to go down to verses 8 and 9 of Romans 5, you would read: *'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him'*. We are justified by faith on the merits of Christ's blood. I think that text is quite clear, and baptism isn't mentioned at all. If we were to go back a little to Romans 3:28 Paul says, in relation to how a man is justified, that it's not through the law: *'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith'*, he didn't leave it there, *'without the deeds of the law'*, apart from the deeds of the law. Faith without works, whatever that work may be...even if it is baptism.

Romans 4, coming forward a chapter to verse 5, Paul says: *'But to him that worketh not'*, not to him that worketh, *'but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness'*. This is the word of God. Romans 11:6 reads: *'And if by grace'*, if this salvation is by grace, *'then is it no more of works'*. You can't have grace and works, it's one or the other: *'otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work'*. God's word testifies clearly that salvation is by faith in Christ alone, not of ourselves, it is the gift of God lest any of us should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9). Incidentally, in the hierarchy of the Church of Christ, one of the things they do after they get you hooked-up is that they bring a study group to your house, or you come to theirs, and they study the book of the Galatians - but the book of the Galatians is all about this very fact! The Galatian controversy was a group of false teachers, Judaisers, who came to the Christians in Galatia and told them: *'You believe Jesus died for you, and you put faith in Him, but that's not enough - you've to be circumcised as well, you've got to adhere to the ceremonial, ritualistic and moral law of God on top of Christ's death'*. Paul said that that is not the Gospel, that is not the Jesus that I preach, that gospel is anathema!

The gospel that adds baptism is anathema, and in fact the book of Galatians proves this fact in chapter 2:16: *'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified'*. Verse 21: *'I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain'*. Can I paraphrase that? *'If I can get to God through my own righteousness, through my own acts, through an act of baptism or whatever it may be, Christ's dying was a waste of time. If water can wash away my sin, why did Christ need to die?'*

Galatians teaches the opposite, in fact let me tell you that there are approximately 150 passages in the New Testament that state clearly, without reference to baptism, that salvation is by faith and faith alone in Christ. It doesn't matter what obscure verse you turn up that may suggest that baptism is necessary for salvation, it does not explain away all that which is clear within the word of God, the overwhelming evidence of textual verse is that salvation is by faith in Christ and nothing more. But yet, you might say: *'Does the Bible not teach baptismal regeneration?'* - and maybe you could turn up a lot of verses for me. Let me say first of all, before we look at them individually, that regarding all interpretation of Scripture: context is the key. The cults are characteristic in taking verses out of their textual context, and making them a pretext.

Now let's look at the first verse that they always throw at you, Mark 16:16: *'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned'*. *'He that believeth and is baptised'* - there you are! You have to be baptised to be saved! - *'and he that believeth not shall be damned'*. Well, do you not see that this verse is saying clearly that condemnation comes through not believing? *'He that believeth not shall be damned'* - so the issue of salvation is belief, not because baptism is rejected. It doesn't say *'He that believeth and is baptised is saved; and he that does not believe and is not baptised...'* - surely if baptism is the very moment of regeneration, that is what would be said here? In fact, in verse 15 the

Lord is giving the Great Commission, and He's telling the disciples what will happen: 'People will believe and be baptised and saved; and people will believe not and be damned'.

I hope that explains that, it'll be explained more when we go through some of these other texts. John 3:5, the Lord Jesus Christ talking of the new birth says that the one that is saved is that one which is *'born of water and of the Spirit'*. Turn to it with me, John 3:5: *'Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God'*. Now there are many interpretations of what 'the water' is here, of course the Church of Christ says it's baptism - that you have to be baptised before you can be born of the Spirit. Due to the context some believe that the Lord is talking about physical birth, because He goes on in verse 6 to say *'that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit'* - and I have some sympathy with that view. There's another interpretation that sees it as the word of God, the word of God is typified in Scripture as water. In other words, the word of God has to come to you, and then the birth of the Spirit comes - and I think you can see that interpretation here as well. Others believe, and this is perhaps the more weighty one, that the word 'and' here where Jesus says *'except a man be born of water and of the Spirit'*, can be translated as 'even'. In other words, *'except a man is born of water even of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'* - the water representing the Spirit, and the water often does represent the Spirit in the Scriptures. There's one thing for sure, it doesn't mean baptism, because baptism isn't found in the whole passage - the new birth is the subject, that is the context! I hope that explains that verse for you, baptism isn't near it.

Then there's Acts 2:38, turn with me to this one. This is one they like to shout about: *'Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission'*, or forgiveness, *'of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost'*. Now if you were to take that out of context, you would say that you need to be baptised in order to be saved. But if you look at what else Peter said in verse 21, you'll read this: *'And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved'* - not whoever is baptised, baptism is not mentioned. The intrinsic thing for salvation is faith. If you turn to chapter 3:19 you read these words: *'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord'*. Conversion, repentance, is the point at which forgiveness of sins is given...yet it would appear in chapter 2:38 that baptism is mentioned. Well, there's no mention of baptism in the two other exhortations, but if you look at verse 38: *'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ'* - the word 'for' in the Greek is also the word 'because'. It can be translated 'because', as it is in Matthew 12:42 talking about the conversion of the Ninevites, not 'for the preaching of Jonah', but 'because of the preaching of Jonah'. It's clear that that can be the translation of this word, that you're baptised 'because of the remission of sins that has been given to you through faith in Jesus Christ'. It certainly does not mean that baptism washes your sins away, that's clear.

Then another verse that they use is in chapter 22 of Acts - I know there are others, but time doesn't permit us to look at them all. Can I just say a word of warning: it's always a bit dangerous building doctrine upon the Acts of the Apostles, for it's not a book of doctrine as such, it's a book of the experience and historical record of the early church. Acts 22:16: *'And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord'*. Paul is instructed here to be baptised, this is his testimony, to wash away his sins. Now you would think right away: 'How can you argue against this? It's clear that baptism is washing away his sins'. Well, is it clear? Can I suggest to you, and I believe I have grounds in doing it, that the only time this is said to anyone in Scripture in relation to baptism, about washing away sins, it's always to a Jew - always to a Jew. Was it not the Jews that cried at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus: 'Let His blood be upon us and our children's children'. That was an outward sign that they were prepared to be counted guilty for the crucifixion of the Lord. The baptism is an outward sign that we have been saved, that's

showing to others - and I believe in relation to the Jew it was showing that the sin of crucifying Christ was being washed from off them publicly, a testimony that they were not guilty of it any more.

Apart from that, if you look at Paul's testimony in chapter 9 where he gives his testimony again - verse 17: *'Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit'*. How could he call him 'brother' if he wasn't saved? He was saved, he just wasn't baptised.

Can I show you one final one? First Peter chapter 3:21, we'll read verse 20 first: *'Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water'*, saved by water - incidentally, the Greek word 'by' can also be translated 'through', *'saved through water'*. *'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us'* - there you have it! Baptism saves us! - *'(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ'*. Can I give it to you in the New King James version, which is a far better translation: *'There is also an antitype which now saves us'*, that's what the figure means here, like-figure, there is an antitype which now saves us. Now an antitype is the fulfilment of a type, now what is the type being spoken of here? Is it the water? It's not being saved by water, it's being saved through water. How were Noah and his family saved through water? Did the water save them? What was the water? The water spoke of judgment! What saved them? The ark! What saves us? Water? No! Christ, the ark! We went through the judgment in Christ on Calvary, and that judgment is not ours any longer. It speaks of the waters that Jesus went through, that's how we are saved through baptism, identifying with Christ as He went under the waters of God's wrath, and came out - and we, if we are in Him, are saved! We don't trust in the waters, we trust in Christ.

Those are the problem texts - but can I leave with you the proof that there's no problem at all? The problems are solved, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:17: *'I did not come to baptise, I came to preach the gospel'*. Paul was not sent to baptise people - wouldn't it be strange if you were saved through baptism, yet the great apostle Paul didn't want to baptise anybody? In fact, he argued that he hardly baptised anybody, and he thanked God that he hadn't. That would be very strange, wouldn't it, if baptism saved your soul? In Acts 16:31, the Philippian jailer said: *'What must I do to be saved?'*. What did Paul say? *'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and, quick, get a basin of water till we baptise you!'*? No, *'Believe on the Lord'*, and then he was baptised after conversion, and his house after their conversion too. If you read 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 you will hear there the gospel that Paul preached, and baptism isn't mentioned once - only Jesus!

Philippians 2:12 tells us, yes we're to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but it is God that worketh in you to do His good pleasure - you've already received God's work. Now here is one I want to finish on that I think is categorical, Acts 10:44-48: *'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus'*. They received the word, they believed, they received the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues - which is only a gift given to a believer in the New Testament - yet they weren't baptised!

Scripture is clear, I'll tell you better than that, the Lord Jesus Christ didn't baptise anybody - John 4:1-2. If He was the Saviour of the world, do you not think He would have baptised



somebody if that's what saves you? The thief on the cross hadn't time to get baptised. Oh, there are many other things they don't believe in, like original sin. They believe you can fall from grace, even though John 10:28 tells us that Christ's sheep are given eternal life, *'and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand or my Father's hand'*. My friend, it's wonderful, Peter tells us: *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved'* - reserved, booked by faith! - *'in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time'*.

If you're depending on yourself, or your baptism, or in a church, I exhort you, listen to me: you will be lost, and lost for all eternity! On Christ the solid rock we ought to stand, for all other ground is sinking sand! God's word makes that clear - will you not trust in Him? What are you trusting in? Throw it to the wind, and take Christ and His cross alone for salvation.

Someone has said 'Baptism will make you wetter, but no better' - it's true you know. It's an outward sign, and it saves you in the eyes of men in the sense that it shows you've come from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light - and it is very important. Incidentally, whenever the Gospel was preached, baptism was the confession. The Gospel was preached by the waterside, and as soon as you believed you were baptised. Maybe that would sort out some false professions, but it doesn't save you, my friend. Whether it was done to you as a baby, or as an adult, I don't care what it is: Christ must save you, His precious blood must be your plea.

## Chapter 7

# **"Christadelphianism"**

### Christadelphianism

**1. Is Christadelphian History CHRISTIAN History?**

**2. Is Christadelphian Doctrine CHRISTIAN Doctrine?**

**Christian Essentials:**

- **The Deity of Christ.**
- **Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone.**
- **The Resurrection of Christ.**

### **Introduction**

Our text for this chapter is 2 Timothy 4:1-5 - we're looking at the cult of 'Christadelphianism'. Paul says to Timothy: *"I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts", or desires, "shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry".*

Within the New Testament Scriptures, the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed to us as the truth. You will know that, of course, from John 14:6, where Jesus said: *'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes unto the Father but by me'*. But you will note in 2 Timothy 4:4 that Paul prophesied that the time would come when men would turn away their ears from the truth, and by implication from the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, His teaching and His work, and they shall be turned unto fables. According to any good dictionary, a fable is a falsehood, a fairytale, a fiction, or a myth, especially in a religious sense. The cult that we are dealing with now is based upon fables, based upon falsehood, fiction and myth - just like all the rest of the cults and false religions that we are dealing with in this book. Where these cults have erred primarily is in the person and character and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's so important: no matter what they may believe from the Scriptures, we have to say that if they err concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, they have turned away from the truth and have turned themselves unto fables!

I often listen in to what people are saying about such religious sects and cults like the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, the Christadelphians and the Church of Christ. People are often heard to say: 'Well, how can they be wrong? They're so zealous, they're so sincere, they're so moral! Surely their morality and their sincerity and their zealousness is proof in and of itself that they must have the truth?'. As Christians at times we would have to say that we are put to shame when we look at the zealousness of those who are propagating these so-called 'gospels'. So is this not proof in and of itself that these people must have the truth? They haven't turned from the truth to fables, but maybe they have found the truth that we haven't found as yet?

Now if you're thinking like that, I want to dispel that illusion from your mind right away. I want to remind you that we're told in Matthew 23 that zealousness and sincerity are no

guides or evidence of truth. The Lord Jesus proved this when He was talking to the Pharisees and scribes, pronouncing all these woes. In chapter 23 verse 13 He said: *'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in'*. He goes on to say in verse 15: *'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves'*. The Lord Jesus castigated them, even though outwardly religious, and as touching the law perhaps externally blameless, He said that they were blind leaders of the blind, and both they and their followers would fall into the pit alike. He accuses them of crossing sea and land to make one proselyte. They had great zealousness in their attempt to convert people to their particular message. They were false, Jesus said to them: *'Ye are of your father the devil'*! So zealousness is no evidence of having the truth.

Now we're asking the question: 'Who are the Christadelphians?', and I want to answer that question from their own mouth. As we have sought to do in previous chapters, let's ask: what are the claims that they make of themselves? Here is just one way, not exactly a doctrinal statement, but certainly one way that they have described themselves. They say: 'We Christadelphians repudiate the popular churches, and affirm that there is no salvation within the pale of any of them'. Now one thing I'm sure you've learned is that one of the characteristics of any cult is that they believe they have rediscovered the true gospel on earth. Somewhere down through all the years from Christ, they believe that in the established church of Christendom the Gospel has been lost or perverted. All of a sudden, through their prophet, or through their system or denomination, they believe that God has revealed to them that salvation has been given exclusively to their members.

Now we need to ask the question, specifically in light of the Christadelphian movement: what happened to the Gospel down through all those years, if the Gospel was lost? Indeed we address that to any cult or any religion: if the Gospel did not stay with this world after Jesus died and rose again, what did He mean when He pronounced, *'I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it'*? Well, He must have been a liar, He must have been a lunatic, self-deluded, to think that if the gospel was lost until the Christadelphian movement or any other movement - whether it's the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses or Christian science or Scientology, whatever one you like to name - was founded.

### ***Is Christadelphian History, Christian History?***

We want to look specifically at Christadelphianism, which also claims to have rediscovered for us the Gospel of Christ. They claim, like any cult, that you will be saved only if you are a member of their ranks - and even at that, you can't be sure! Now I want to look at it under two headings, two questions. The first is this: is the history of Christadelphianism the history of Christianity? This is important because, like many of the cults, they do claim to be mainstream Christian and have the Christian gospel, and be the true followers of Christ today. Then the second question we want to ask is: is the doctrine and teaching of Christadelphianism, the true teaching of biblical Christianity historically and scripturally as it is laid down for us in God's revelation?

First of all, let's look at their history. Christadelphianism began with its author, a man called Dr John Thomas. Dr John Thomas was born in London on the 12th April 1805. Incidentally, like several other founders of false cults and religions, he was the son of a Christian minister, a Congregational minister as it happens. In 1832 he decided to emigrate to the United States after qualifying as a Doctor, and he went out there to study further in the medical field. On his way overseas to New York, all of a sudden his ship experienced terrible storms. Everyone on board thought that the ship was going to be shipwrecked, and they were going to die. There and then Dr Thomas lifted his heart to God, and supposedly told God that he would promise to serve Him and to follow Him if his life was preserved. Lo and behold, his life along with the others on the ship was preserved, and he decided that he would study religion. So,

when he got off the ship, he kept his promise and joined himself to a group of people called the 'Campbellites' who claimed to be studying the Bible, they were also known as 'the Disciples'.

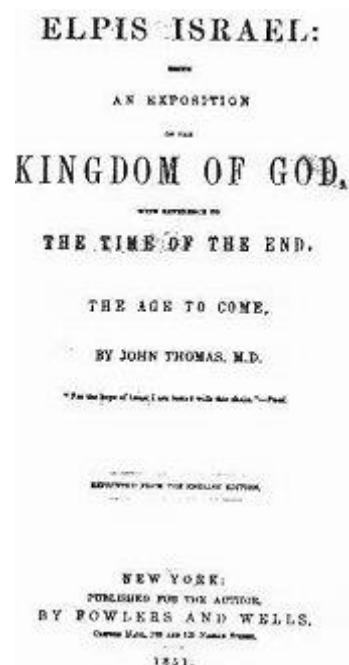


He wasn't long studying with the 'Campbellites' or the 'Disciples' until he was at odds with them in his interpretation of the Scriptures. Now they were in error as well, but he perhaps was leading into more error. He left that group, and with him he took many of the Campbellite followers. Now this is the beginning of the Christadelphian movement as we know it. It wasn't called 'Christadelphianism' at this point, but this is the seed of it. He began to espouse his false doctrinal views in 1834 in a magazine that was called 'The Apostolic Advocate', then he published another magazine called 'The Herald of the Future Age'. Within this magazine he particularly concentrated on the subject of eschatology - that is, the study of the end times and the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course we enjoy these prophetic truths, and I believe the Bible is full of prophecy on the second coming of our Lord Jesus. But another characteristic of

many of the cults is this: they overemphasise, to the point of going beyond scriptural prophecies, the second coming of the Lord Jesus and eschatology. We would do well to be warned over that particular issue ourselves, that we do not ever say more than the Scriptures tell us, or infer more and read between the lines when it's not revealed in Holy Writ.

This magazine on the second coming, 'The Herald of the Future Age', later became known as 'The Christadelphian', and subsequently has become the official mouthpiece of the cult. In 1848 Christadelphianism was founded as a religious movement in the United States, but Thomas decided that he would visit his homeland of England again. So he returned to England to preach and teach his doctrine. When he arrived in England he found that, through his writings, a number of people were beginning to consider his teachings. So there was, as it were, fertile soil for what he was going to teach them. For that reason, to this day, England has the largest number of Christadelphians in the world. The central hub of its power is in Birmingham in the Midlands, and although each congregation is independent and autonomous in and of itself, nevertheless that is the central power source and motivating guidance for those little assemblies. It's quite a small religious movement, there are less than 19,000 people among 282 congregations who call themselves Christadelphians in the United Kingdom. You may not have heard much about them, you may even wonder why I'm taking time to deal with them - but if you open your Belfast Telegraph at the churches page any Saturday night, you will see an advertisement for the Christadelphian church. Often the subject that is being taken up is an eschatological one concerning the second coming. Although they are small in number, they're quite active. The reason why many preachers and many cult writers have ignored Christadelphianism is firstly because it is a small movement; but secondly because it is not so much an American movement. Most of the anti-cult material comes from the United States today, and to a large extent they have overlooked it and ignored it. Although its founder came from England and moved to America, Christadelphianism can chiefly be found in the United Kingdom today.

Now while Dr Thomas was in the UK, he wrote a very important book - it was called 'Elpis Israel'. The meaning of 'Elpis Israel' is 'The Hope



of Israel', speaking of the future prophetic Scriptures on the nation of Israel. But it was more than that: it was a thorough work on all of Dr John Thomas' beliefs regarding his interpretations of the word of God. He comments on creation, he comments on the giving of God's law, he comments on the recurring influence of sin in man, he comments on the issues of death, immortality, and religion in general, the coming kingdom of God upon the earth and the reign of the Lord Jesus, and many other subjects are dealt with in that book. It has become one of the most important books for the Christadelphian movement. After he wrote that book in the United Kingdom, he returned home to America.

Now you may be asking the question: 'What does 'Christadelphian' mean? How did they get their name?'. In the early years that was not their name, their original name was the 'Thomasites', or the movement 'Thomasism' after Dr John Thomas. Like many cults, one of their convictions was that they didn't believe in participating in war. When civil war broke out in North America they were called upon to conscript and to join the fight (whatever side they may be on), but because of their conscientious objection they did not want to enlist. They refused to enlist, but the only way that you could refuse to enlist was if you were a recognised religious group...therefore they needed a name. So Dr John Thomas named them 'The Christadelphians'. If you know even a smattering of Greek you will know that 'Christ' means 'the anointed one', speaking of our Saviour and Messiah, and 'delphos' means brother - 'Philadelphians', 'brothers' - 'Christ's Brothers', 'Christ's Brethren'. We will see later in their Christology, in their understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ, how they see Christ - yes, as an exalted man in one sense, but they do not believe that He is God of very God...'Brothers of Christ'.

'The Belfast Ecclesia', that's what they call themselves (the Greek word 'ecclesia' simply means 'church') meets in Victoria Square, but I have also heard that they have a meeting under the annex of Avoniel Leisure Centre. That little gathering (whether it's the same one or not I'm not sure) is moving to premises in Ladas Drive near where some of you live. So they are our neighbours!

Having dealt with the history of the Christadelphian movement, I hope that you can see right away that their history is far from the history of the Christian church. But I want to say this: Dr John Thomas was a tireless worker who sought, with the knowledge that he had, to study God's word. As far as he was concerned, he was attempting to come to the true meaning and interpretation of the doctrines of Holy Scripture. He was sincere, this is what is striking about these cults. He studied the word of God to such an extent that would put some of you and me to shame.

So you might say: 'Well, where did he go wrong, if he went wrong at all?'. Unfortunately this is where he went wrong: he despised the counsel and wisdom of those who were more learned than him. He ignored the whole of Christian history, and how down through the years church fathers, reformers and revivalists had critiqued the word of God in relation to false doctrines and heresies to prove the truths of God's word. He ignored it, believing that he now was the man. He had what many call 'the Messiah complex', in other words he believed that he had single-handedly rediscovered the true gospel that had been lost from the earth. Like every cult, Christadelphianism's development was the development of one personal man in his interpretation of Holy Scripture, one man's personal beliefs and interpretations of the Scripture.

Whether it's Joseph Smith or Brigham Young, whether it's Charles Taze Russell of the Jehovah's Witness movement, whether it's Ron Hubbard of Scientology, whether it's Mary Baker Eddy of Christian Science, we could go through them all - they all claim to restore the true gospel to the earth that was lost. But read 2 Peter 1:19 in the light of what I've just said: *'We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your*

*hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation'*. Now that does not specifically mean that you as an individual cannot interpret God's word, of course you can, because the Spirit has promised to lead us into all truth. This does not mean, as the Catholic Church teaches, that only they can interpret the Scriptures for us. Don't misunderstand what I'm saying, what it does mean is this: no one particular man can tell you what God's revealed will is. God's revealed will has been known to men as men were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the apostle's doctrine that we have in the New Testament, a more sure word of prophecy. Verse 21: *'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man' - not by one man, but by several apostles!* Those apostles wrote down the teaching that God gave them, that they received at the very feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it was passed down to faithful men all through the years - *'but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost'*.

Verse 20 is all about origins, the origins of God's truth and God's true gospel is not to be found in man, it is given by God's Spirit. It wasn't just given to one apostle or one prophet, it was given to several. That's why we need to beware, whether it be the Christadelphians, or the Mormons, or the Jehovah's Witnesses, or Christian Science, we need to realise that if any one man claims to be God's sole revelatory medium to men today, that is none other than another stronghold of Satan, a false gospel, and it certainly is not Christianity. When someone rises up and claims to know more about the Bible than anybody else, alarm bells ought to be ringing in your head! I don't care whether they call themselves an evangelical or not. Christadelphianism is no exception, it is a non-Christian cult, and it does not have the same history as Christianity as we know it.

Can I also cause you to note another very interesting fact that I have gleaned as I have studied these various groups? Almost all of the cults that I have honed in on have been founded by people who at one time were influenced by orthodox Christianity. How many of them have we seen that were born into a Christian home, or even into a manse, whose father was a minister or who were born into some kind of evangelical conservative background, and they turned their back on all that they knew of orthodox Christianity? That ought to be no surprise to us, why? Well, 1 John 2:19 tells us of false prophets, John says: *'They went out from us, but they were not of us' - they were among us as if they were one of us, but they were not of us - 'for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us'*.

Now can I just conclude this little introduction by saying this: we live in an age today when men will not endure sound doctrine, and there is a tendency and an itch to bring all sorts of nonsense into the church to tantalise, to entertain, to titillate, to make people interested in God's word, to scratch people's ears. We need to realise more than ever today that we are to preach the word, in season and out of season, because it's the word that people need! We have a responsibility today, more than ever, to fearlessly preach the truth. I say to you that if the shepherds don't feed the flock with the word of God, the flock will get hungry, and the flock will go out into the wilderness - specifically the lambs - and the cults and false religions love to prey upon the lambs. As they go into the wilderness to find food they will be preyed on as food by wolves in sheep's clothing! That is why we must maintain the faith, once and for all delivered to the saints. That is our Christian history, and there is a move in Modernism today to forget about our history, but if we forget about our history we forget who we are! Our history is the apostle's doctrine, the church of Jesus Christ down through all the ages. I think you can firmly see that our history as Christianity did not start in the 1800s by a Dr John Thomas. It started by the Lord Jesus Christ and twelve that followed Him, and those that followed them, and those that heard the clarion cry of the gospel down through all the years and followed Christ.

### ***Is Christadelphian Doctrine, Christian Doctrine?***

Let's move on, and take the greater amount of our time looking at the doctrine, for this is so



important: what they teach. Looking at an advertisement for a Christadelphian meeting, often they're speaking on subjects that you would hear spoken on from the pulpit in a Christian church - but do they believe what we believe? Are they Christian? Is Christadelphian doctrine Christian doctrine? The answer is categorically 'No', it is not, it is far from it. You might retort: 'But do they not believe in Christ? Is that not what defines you as a Christian, to believe in Christ?'. What is a Christian? I'm not talking about your individual personal faith and conversion to Christ. I'm not speaking of your testimony or your experience, but what must you believe to class yourself as a Christian in an organisational sense? What is a Christian church?

Well, like all the cults, Christadelphianism denies one or more of the essentials of the Christian faith. That's how you know if a movement is not Christian: they will deny one or more of the essential doctrines of Christianity. You might say: 'Well, what are the essential doctrines of Christianity?'. It's very difficult to summarise it all, but in the space we have I will try to summarise it into three particular points of doctrine whereby we can define if a movement is Christian or not, or whether they are a confusing cult or false religion.

The first doctrine that is an essential in Christianity is the deity of Christ, the deity of our Lord Jesus - that He was, is, and ever shall be not only God's Son but God the Son. A second essential doctrine is that salvation is by grace through faith alone in Christ - not through your church, not through sacraments, not through your works or religious rites or practices, but by grace, undeserved favour from God, imparted to you by faith and faith alone in Christ and no one else. The third main tenet of Christianity is the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 15 we read that we are of all men most miserable if Christ is still rotting in the grave. If He did not rise again our faith is vain, our message that we preach is nonsense, it'll do you no good if there's no resurrection from the dead, if Christ rise not.

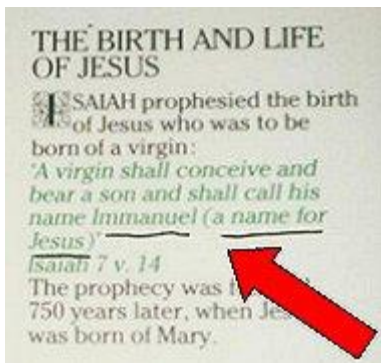
Now Christadelphianism contradicts the first two of those essential doctrines of Christianity. It denies the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it denies the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ. Now let's deal with the first, the deity of our Lord Jesus. You might think: 'What's the relevance of these things? I don't come into contact with these people'. But I want to reiterate these points because these studies have availed me an opportunity to share with you systematic theology from the Bible concerning what we believe about our Lord Jesus and salvation. That is so important! I fear in this day and age in which we live that if we singled out many young believers in Christ, and maybe some old believers, and asked them: what makes you different from a Roman Catholic? What makes you different from a Mormon or Jehovah's Witnesses, or from a pagan nominal Protestant? They couldn't tell you! All you hear today is: 'Oh, I have a relationship with Jesus', or 'I had an experience with Jesus', or 'I encountered something with God and I know God'. Oh, it's more than that, because all groups and all individuals will stand or fall on one thing, and it is this first thing: it is the deity of Christ.

Our appraisal of Jesus is the fundamental fact that we must believe if we are to class ourselves as Christians. In other words, who He was, where He came from, how He was born, where He is now, what He is doing now. Now friends, we need to be sure that we know the Bible teaches that Jesus existed before creation - we believe in the pre-existence of Christ. Let me direct you to a few Scriptures that we have looked at before, but it's worthy of reminding ourselves. John 1:1, *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'*. Now 'the Word' in Greek is 'logos', it's the expression of God to men and it speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. He says that Jesus was with God, but He was God, and if you move down to verse 14: *'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth'*. Colossians 2:9 is another verse that proves that Jesus was God: *'For in him', in Jesus the Lord, 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily'*. All the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelt in the Lord Jesus, how could you not believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ? What

about Philippians 2:5: *'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God' - 'morphae' (sp?), 'by very nature God' it means - 'thought it not robbery', something to be grasped at, 'to be equal with God'. He was equal with God, but in His lifetime He didn't grasp after the divine attributes that He could have used when men were against Him on the earth, 'But made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, and humbled himself even unto the death of the cross'. Then in Hebrews 1:8: 'But unto the Son God saith, Thy throne, O God' - unto the Son - 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom'.*

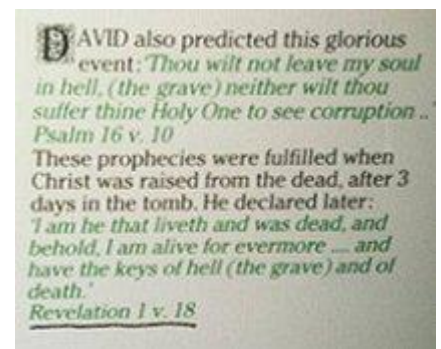
We cannot emphasise too much this fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is God of very God, and He is begotten, not created - there is a difference! We're losing our theological language today. Sometimes through some of the plethora of modern translations they're dropping this word 'begotten', but this is a proper biblical Greek word that means more than just the Lord Jesus coming. He is eternally begotten of the Father, not created. The Christadelphians accept the virgin birth as we do, but they will not accept that Jesus is God the Son, that He is the pre-existent One. They teach that at Jesus' baptism He became the Christ, that He was in some way divine, but there is only one God and that is the Father, and none other.

Let me give you some astounding blasphemous quotations concerning the deity of our Lord Jesus from a book called 'The Christadelphians: What They Believe and Preach' by Harry Pennant. Here's the first one: 'There is no hint in the Old Testament that the Son of God was already existent or in any way active at that time' - no hint! They mustn't have read the Old Testament, that's for sure! Moving on to another quote: 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was first promised, and came into being only when He was born of the virgin Mary' - in other words He began His existence in His birth at Bethlehem!



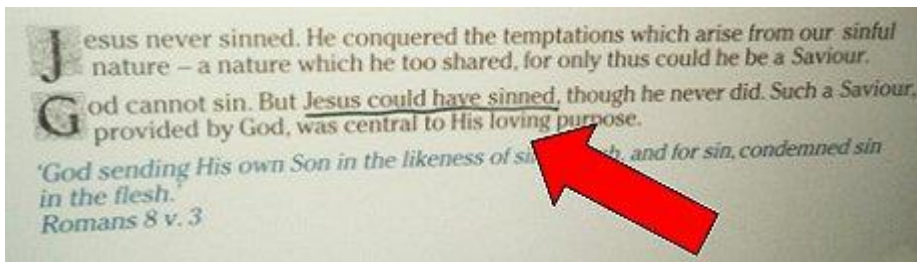
At a Bible Exhibition in the Ulster Hall in Belfast in July 1989 Cecil Andrews of 'Take Heed Ministries' took some photographs of the Christadelphian exhibition stands. The quotations on these stands show what the Christadelphians really believe. Speaking of the birth of Jesus, one statement says: *'a virgin shall conceive'*, quoting from Isaiah 7:14, *'bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel'* - and they put in brackets *'a name for Jesus'*. Now is that the best definition that you could give of Immanuel? What does Immanuel mean? 'God with us'! They're trying to cover over the fact of what this word 'Immanuel' means, just 'a name for Jesus'.

Another quote, this time referencing Revelation 1:18: 'These prophecies were fulfilled when Christ was raised from the dead, after three days in the tomb, He declared later: 'I am He that liveth and was dead' - Revelation 1 - 'and behold, I am alive for evermore...and have the keys of hell (the grave) and of death'. Yet they failed to quote what the resurrected Christ said in His full statement, for verse 17 says: *'Fear not; I am the first and the last'*. That is a direct quotation from Isaiah chapter 44 verse 6, where God says: *'I am the first and the last'*, but they conveniently drop that.



Concerning the life that Jesus offered, they state: 'Jesus never sinned. He conquered the temptations which arise from our sinful nature - a nature which he too shared, for only thus could he be a Saviour. God cannot sin. But Jesus could have sinned, though he never did. Such a Saviour, provided by God, was central to His loving purpose'. Now look at the first line - He had a sinful nature: 'a nature which he too shared', our sinful nature! Jesus could have

sinned? 'God cannot sin. But Jesus could have sinned'. Notice what they say 'God cannot sin', therefore what is the inference? 'Jesus is not God'!



Now it gets worse than that, if you could ever believe it, because here's a statement from the book previously mentioned - this time from page 74. Harry Pennant says: 'Therefore, we conclude that it is not only that Jesus was

called a sinner at his trial by his enemies or that he was' - quoting Isaiah - 'numbered with the transgressors' when he was crucified between two thieves, but more particularly that he shared the very nature which had made a sinner out of every other man who had borne it' - that is blasphemy of the highest order! We, as human beings, fallen in Adam's race, are peccable. We have a fallen nature that is liable and tempted internally by sin externally. Although the Lord Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh, He was subject to some of the restrictions that came upon humanity and flesh because of Adam's fall, yet He had no sinful nature in and of Himself. He was not vulnerable to sin, He did not lust after sin. In fact the Lord Jesus said in John 14:30 that *'the prince of this world'*, speaking of the devil, *'cometh, and he hath nothing in me'*.

When the virgin Mary conceived she was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and the angel said to her: *'That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God'*. Now if you take these doctrines and heresies to their logical conclusions, not only do you conclude that Jesus - because He was a man - had a sinful nature, but therefore, if Jesus had a sinful nature, then He needed to be saved. That's exactly what Christadelphianism does: they say that the Lord Jesus needed salvation. This next quote shows you, again from this same book of Harry Pennant: 'He', the Lord Jesus, 'saved himself in order to save us' - staggering isn't it? Another quotation in this light: 'It was for that very reason' - being a member of a sinful race - 'that the Lord Jesus himself needed salvation'.

Now listen, in the plan of Satan, all that he needs to get people to do to damn them is to believe in a false Jesus! That's his plan throughout all these confusing cults and false religions, to make them think that they're believing in the truth, the true Christ, but they're believing in a false Christ and they're going to be lost because of it! The Lord Jesus made that no secret, because He told us in Matthew 24:24 that this would happen: *'For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect'* - false Christs!

Only the true Jesus can reveal to us the true God, and if you've got a false Jesus you've got a false god! The Lord Jesus claimed that He would reveal the Father, that He and the Father were one, and those that had seen Him had seen the Father. Did He not say in our opening quotation, John 14:6, *'I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me'*? But if you've got a false Jesus, you'll not get to the Father - and it follows that if you deny the divine nature of Christ, if you ascribe a sinful nature to the spotless Son of God, if you believe that He needed to be saved, you are serving a false god and following a false Christ. My friend, I have to tell, if that's the case your soul will be eternally damned. I take no pleasure in saying it, but Paul the apostle says to the Galatians that if any man preach another Jesus unto you let him be damned, let him be anathema!

The second essential doctrine of Christianity they deny that outflows from this first one is that they deny the substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus. First of all they deny His deity, and then they edge into this realm of salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ, and they start to tamper with God's provided way of Calvary's precious blood. They say He did not

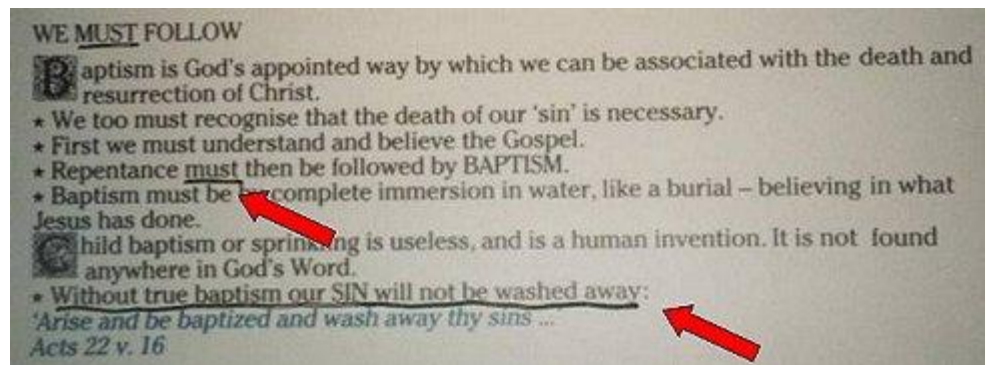
bear our sins, no, He just represented us as sinful fallen humanity. Yet what does 1 Peter 2:24 say? *'He himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree'*. I don't care how avidly they study Scripture, they're missing out an awful lot, aren't they? He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. Yet when 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that *'He was made sin for us'*, this is what they say: "He himself required a sin offering", that's what that means! He needed a sin offering to be saved himself'. Now friends, that is the doctrine of devils!

Peter said in 1 Peter 2:22 that: *'He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth'*. He knew no sin, and I believe He was the impeccable Christ, He could not sin! Yet this is what Christadelphianism says, 'The second secret of the cross' - I didn't know there were any secrets to do with the cross! - 'The second secret of the cross is that it is the source of the forgiveness of sins. It is not a debt settled by due payment. It is not a substitutionary offering whereby someone has paid a price so that others might then go free'. It's an awful pity that you can't sing:

*'Bearing shame, and scoffing rude;  
In my place, condemned, He stood.  
Sealed my pardon with His blood,  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!'*

You don't have a Saviour if you don't have a substitutionary atonement! The next quote from this same book says: 'The Bible approach is much simpler [than the substitutionary atonement] and much more satisfying. Forgiveness comes to the man who believes the Gospel, repents, and is baptized in the name of Christ' (page 71). Therefore, just like the Church of Christ that we studied in the last chapter, baptism again is essential to salvation.

Another quotation from the Christadelphian display at the Ulster Hall in 1989 says, on the subject of baptism being essential to salvation, Christ was baptised but, 'Repentance must then be followed by baptism'. It goes on to say that: 'Without true baptism our sin will not be washed away'.



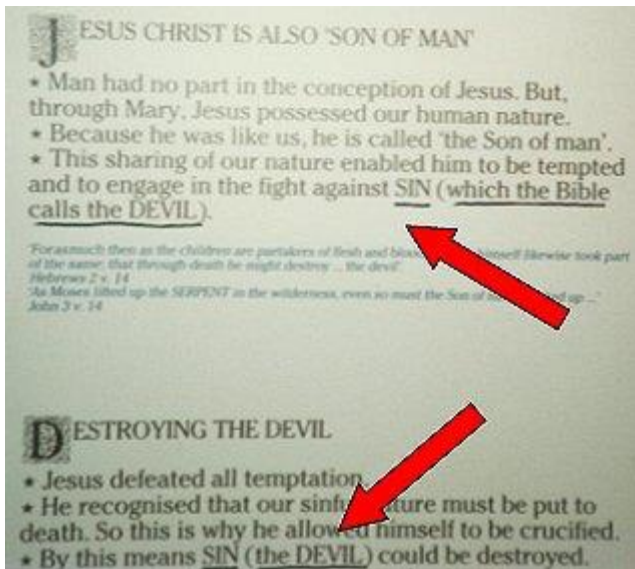
Now, is that what the Bible teaches? It is certainly not! Paul, the great apostle, said: *'I came not to baptise, but to preach the Gospel'*. In John 4:2 it says that Jesus did not baptise anyone - if He was the Saviour of the world, do you not think He would have baptised men, if that was the way men's sins are washed away?

I don't know if you are mixed up in this false cult, but you need to know that only the blood of Jesus, and that being the blood of the real Jesus, can cleanse you from sin! Not baptism! Lest I be misunderstood in these deliberations in this and the preceding chapter: baptism is important. Baptism for believers by total immersion is outlined for us in scripture as a command of the Lord Jesus Christ and ought to be obeyed, and should be obeyed by every believer. But mark this: it will not wash one of your sins away. You're only to be baptised if your sins have been washed away through the washing of regeneration through the Word.

What about Satan? Well, this exhibition shows that they believe that sin equals Satan. In other words, Satan isn't a literal person: '[The Lord Jesus] was tempted and to engage in the fight against sin (which the Bible calls the Devil)'. A further statement which talks about Him



destroying the Devil: 'By this means sin (the Devil) could be destroyed'. Now I would rather have the words of the Lord Jesus Christ than Dr John Thomas or the Christadelphian movement, when He said these words: *'I beheld Satan', 'I beheld Satan!', 'as lightning cast from heaven'*. I choose to believe Him.



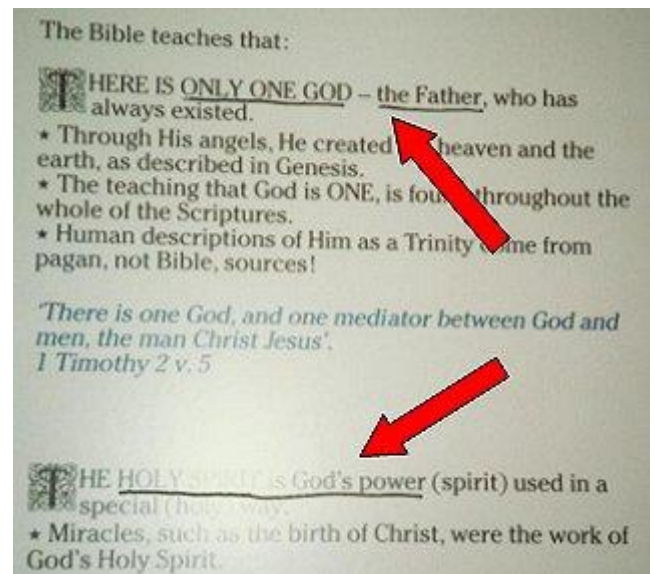
The next board in this exhibition was talking about how there's only one God, but they define that 'only one God' as being the Father. It's very similar to Mormonism, because Robert Roberts who was the successor of Dr John Thomas in Christadelphian movement said: 'the Father is a tangible person' - He is tangible, you can touch Him, the Father! The reason for this is that they believe that if the Lord Jesus is the express image of God as Hebrews 1 says, then God must have a body, God must have a form - yet John 4 tells us that God is spirit.

They believe concerning the Holy Spirit: 'The Holy Spirit is God's power'. He is not a personality, He is God the Father's influence in

our lives. But you can see the personal pronouns right throughout the Scriptures, how you could lie to the Holy Spirit - Ananias and Sapphira - how the Holy Spirit is called God. Robert Roberts goes as far to say in his false doctrine: 'there is no manifestation of the Spirit in these days'. We are living in the days of the manifestation of the Spirit! What lies!

What does the Bible say in 1 John 2:22? This applies to many of these cults that we are dealing with, but specifically Christadelphianism which denies the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ. John, the apostle who was dealing with many of these similar heresies in his day, said this: *'Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son'*.

Friend, I long for your salvation, but if you're mixed up with Christadelphianism or any cult that denigrates the personality and the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ and His essential work on Calvary, you are anti-Christ!



Further to all this, they believe that if you're not a believer, if you're unfaithful, your soul will just be blown out like a candle, you'll be annihilated because you're unfaithful. They believe if you are faithful, salvation by works, you'll be saved - yet the Lord Jesus clearly says in Matthew 25:46: *'And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal'*.

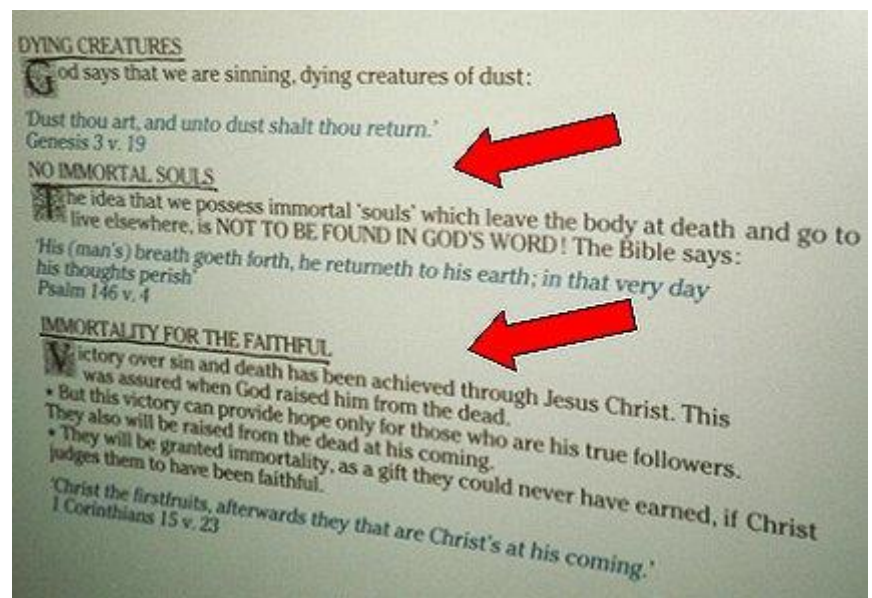
## Conclusion

What will you take? Will you take God's word, or the word of a modern day so-called prophet? Will you take the word of an organisation, a system, a philosophy, a teaching, a cult? Like so many other cults and false religions in our world today, in Christadelphianism the sinner is left with no hope or assurance of salvation! I'm asking them, if what you've got is so good and so much better than what the Bible teaches and what I preach, here's my question: do

you know you're saved? Do you know you're on your way to heaven? If you died tonight, would it be absent from the body and present with the Lord? None of them can say that! None of them!

What does God's word say, because of our lovely Lord and His perfect life, and His peerless character as God's Son, and His purging work there on Calvary's cross where He shed His blood, and His powerful resurrection? First John 5:13: *'These things are written that ye might know that ye have eternal life'* - Hallelujah! Friend, do you know? Not 'Do you hope so', or 'You'd like to think so', or 'You're trying your best to get there' - do you know? The only way to know is to come to Calvary, to admit that the One

hanging there is in your place, and He is none other than God the Son, and that it's your sin upon Him, your sin that you deserve to go to eternal hell for. You take that gift of sacrifice that was on your behalf as your own by faith, and embrace it - and the power of His resurrection will flood your soul! Then you will know that you're saved.





## Chapter 8

# "Buddhism"

### Buddhism

- **The Four Noble Truths**

1. The Fact of Suffering.
2. The Cause of Suffering is Craving, Desire.
3. The Suffering Stops with the Cessation of Desire.
4. One Learns to Stop Craving by Following 'The Eightfold Path'.

- **The Eightfold Path**

1. The Right View Point
2. Right Aspirations
3. Right Speech
4. Right Behaviour
5. Right Occupation
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Meditation

### Introduction

Romans chapter 6:23 is a well-known verse to many Bible-believing Christians, but there may be one or two that don't know it. *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God"*, or 'the free gift of God', *"is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"*. In another verse from 2 Corinthians 5:17 - remembering that our subject is the religion of 'Buddhism' - Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, speaks of the great salvation that we have now entered into: *"Therefore if any man be in Christ"*, in other words, if he is converted, he has been a partaker of salvation *"he is a new creature"*, a new creation, *"the old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"*.

We're turning our attention away from cults that could be covered under the umbrella term of 'Christendom' (a term which does not mean the believing church of Jesus Christ that are truly saved, but is an umbrella term that incorporates all those who call themselves 'Christian', whether they're liberal or nominal or evangelical). From that foundation body of Christendom there have sprung up many cults and false faiths, but we now turn our attention away from cults that have evolved out of Christendom to false faiths that do not class themselves as Christian, and maybe don't even worship the same God that we do.



Firstly we turn our attention to 'Buddhism'. Of course, as the name implies, the founder of Buddhism was Buddha. You will have seen the many pictures, and this is often how we perceive Buddha in our minds: this large, fat man who sits in this posture, in the lotus position with his legs crossed, and often his arms held out in a meditative fashion. What many people do not know is that Buddha's real name is Siddhartha Gautama. He is not some kind of figment of the imagination, but he is and was a literal man. Now when we look at Buddhism it's very difficult to distinguish between history and legend - what people believe and teach, and what are historical facts regarding the life of Buddha. In fact, the scholars themselves can't even agree on the dates for his life, but it's probable that Buddha was born around 560 BC and died about the age of 80 years.



The interesting thing about Buddha is that he was born a Hindu, obviously he couldn't have been born a Buddhist, but he grew up in a Hindu land, in a Hindu village near Benares in India. His father was a wealthy Hindu Raja. If you're familiar with Indian culture, you will know that a raja is a ruler. Therefore, because his father was a ruler, he was born a prince. So he had a wealthy, and indeed a regal birth and upbringing. His father, like many fathers, wanted to protect his son from the evil things and the suffering that was in the world. He wanted Buddha to have a life full of happiness and joy and pleasure, and to be protected from suffering and wickedness. As a result of that his father kept him isolated in palaces most of his young life, to protect him from evil and

unhappiness in the world outside. One day, like every child, he decided to venture into the external world. By this time he was a young married man with a son of his own. Gautama went riding, and testified to seeing four things that changed his life completely, and eventually gave birth to the religion of Buddhism.

These four things stayed with him throughout his whole life. The first thing that he saw on his travels was an old man, and he was struck by how frail the old man was and the affects of age on the human being. The second thing that he saw was a sick and diseased man, he saw how illness and disease affected the human form. The third thing that he witnessed was a dead man, he saw what death could do to humanity and to one particular body in that funeral cortege that he witnessed. Now you can imagine this, a young man who had been protected by his father from all suffering and external wickedness in the world, and the first time he ventures out of his homely palace, these are the first three things that he sees: an elderly man, a sick and diseased man, and a dead man. His reaction was to ask the question in and of himself: why is all this to be? What is meant by suffering, by old age, by sickness and death? Why does it have to be in the universe?

He testified that after asking that question, the answer was given to him that all suffering was merely the common fate of mankind. This is our lot down here on earth, and basically there's not an awful lot we can do about it. Now there was a fourth thing he witnessed on this journey, and that fourth thing was a religious man. This was a positive experience for Buddha, because although this religious man was a monk who was begging, he seemed to have a joyful aura about him. He was convinced that this man was happy; his life was full of pleasures, not external ones; his life was not worthless. He saw meaning in religion in some kind of oblique nebulous form, but nevertheless he was won by it. As a result he decided to leave the palace, all the palatial pleasures he had known were worthless as far as he was concerned, and he even left his wife and his child for good, and decided to give up his life to be a monk.

Now his history tells us that during the next night he sat in the lotus posture, as we are accustomed to seeing him, with his legs crossed. He fought an inner battle - there are sacred writings of Buddhism that describe it to be the 'temptation of Mara', which simply was the personification of change, death and evil. So after seeing this evil in his world, Buddha wrestled in meditation, he says, with the evil - and we suspect that he overcame it. For the next six years he became a Hindu holy man. He had very little in his possession by way of material goods, he even had very little food. One day, ill from having no food at all, he collapsed and realised that there was no good at all in what he was doing in his Hindu religion

up to this point. We are told from his testimony that on the day of his 35th birthday, he was meditating under a fig tree - what they call 'the tree of wisdom' - and he came to learn new truths that would revolutionise not only his world, but what would come to be known as the Buddhist world.

Now before we go on any further, let me just say: isn't that something that we've noticed in these studies? All these confusing cults that have come out of Christendom, all the false faiths in our world, claim to have new truth that the world has never known hitherto. Their founder is usually the prophet that is bringing and imparting that new revelation to man. The truths that he had been given, he was now going to teach to others - not under the name of Gautama, but as the Buddha, which simply means 'the enlightened one'. He had been given knowledge that no one else had been given.

Now let's just recap, because in that story concerning the origins of Buddha and Buddhism, we have the core beliefs of the Buddhist faith - and it is simply this: everybody in our world is suffering. Now we would have to say 'Amen' to that, wouldn't we? They believe that everyone is trapped in a life of physical or emotional turmoil and pain, but they go a step further to say that the reason for our pain and suffering is because of material goods and being consumed by desires and unimportant appetites, whatever they may be: entertainment, food etc. That's why Buddhists, certainly Buddhist monks, abstain from killing, abstain from stealing, abstain from forbidden sex, from lying and the use of illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages. They believe these things will cause you to suffer, and there's a measure of truth in that - but they have this belief that material things, and the things associated with our human senses are intrinsically evil.

Now according to the Buddha, suffering is unavoidable but (as new revelators usually conclude) the only way to salvation is to follow what had been revealed to him as the enlightened one. The first thing that was revealed to him were 'the four noble truths', the four noble truths of Buddhism. We'll look at them in a little bit of detail in a moment, but basically these were the four reasons why Buddha said there was suffering in the world. He thought that he could give the reason why all the suffering existed. Now if you wanted to get out of all the suffering, he then had revealed to him what he called 'the eightfold path'. These were practical guidelines on how to live your life to avoid suffering. Now if you could understand why you were suffering, and you followed the eightfold path to avoid suffering, you may then get to a position called 'Nirvana'. Now 'Nirvana' was a rock group during the 1990's, I think, but they took their name from Buddhism. 'Nirvana' is literally 'blowing out', the idea of blowing out a candle until it is in non-existence. What Buddha was teaching was that there is a level of transcendent permanent oblivion to suffering - you can get to a position, down this eightfold path, whereby you can get to a state of almost non-existence where you cease to suffer.

### ***The Four Noble Truths***

Now let's look in more detail at 'The Four Noble Truths', these four noble truths, or why people suffer in the world. The first is obvious, and it is simply the fact of suffering. It is there, and you have to acknowledge that, that suffering is in our world in many shapes and forms. The second gives us a little bit more insight into the noble truths of Buddhism, because it tells us that the cause of suffering is craving and desire. So the reason why you suffer is because you want things that are bad for you, and when you get those things they harm you. The third noble truth is that suffering can only stop with the cessation of your desire. Your suffering will only stop when you stop wanting things that are material or sensual. Therefore, the way you do it is to learn to stop craving by following the eightfold path of Buddhism - the fourth noble truth.

### ***The Eightfold Path***

Those are the four noble truths, but what is 'The Eightfold Path' of Buddhism? Let's go

through it quickly: first of all you have to have the right viewpoint. Now some of you have a head start already where that one is concerned, but nevertheless you have to know everything that is right - and their particular viewpoint is claimed to be the right one of course. The second path is that you have to have right aspiration, right ambitions, right desires - and that therefore necessitates that your ambitions and desires will not be physical or material or sensual, because those are inherently evil. The third is that you must have right speech; fourth, right behaviour; five, right occupation; six, right effort; seven, right mindfulness; and eight, right meditation. So the emphasis in this eightfold path is that you have to be right, you have to do everything right, say everything right, think everything right, and then and only then will you possibly get to that position of 'nirvana' where suffering will be something that is foreign to you.

Now Buddhism, of course, came out of Hinduism in the sense that Buddha was a Hindu originally. In fact, some call Buddhism a reformation of Hinduism - and the Dali Lama, who we'll look at in a moment or two, actually calls Buddhism and Hinduism 'natural twins'. There are some similarities between Buddhism and Hinduism, one of the major ones is the doctrine of reincarnation. This has been made popular in the New Age movement today, which promotes this belief that we live in the cycle of life. No one goes into eternity as such, but when you die you are reincarnated into another existence, and that other existence is determined by something called 'karma' - that means basically how good you have been, specifically in Buddhism, at following this eightfold path. So you get credit, as it were, and if you're a really good person you may be reincarnated as another person, but if you're a really bad person, you might be reincarnated as a cow, or as a flea and get squashed! I came across this one and couldn't resist it: 'The good news is that you'll be reincarnated as a cow, the bad news is that it will be a cow in Texas'.



The fact of the matter is, it borrows a number of its doctrines from Hinduism: reincarnation, the idea of karma and so on. It also took from Hinduism some of the disciplines, particularly the discipline of yoga to help in meditation. Yoga is not the only form of meditation, but we looked previously at Reiki, also martial arts has inherent within it a meditation that is not foreign to these disciplines. We need to beware about things like this, and sending our young people to them. So we can see that Hinduism and Buddhism aren't a million miles away from each other. But the most important thing to Buddhism is 'nirvana', this idea that you can get to a stage where suffering is excluded from your life, a state where you have no longer any craving, any desires, any want or ambition. Therefore, because you don't have any desire, there is no longer any suffering. When you reach that place there's no more reincarnations for you. You will continue in this transcendent permanence.

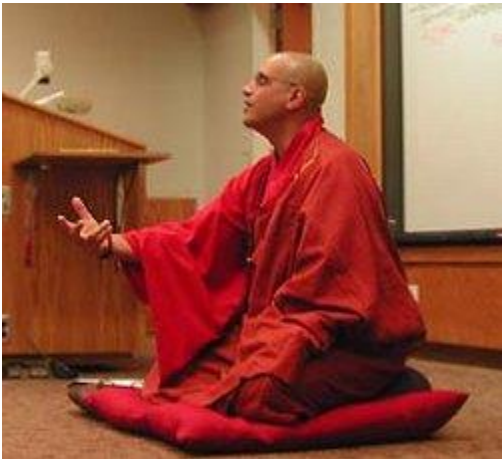
The interesting thing about Buddhism is this: not even Buddha could say what nirvana really was. This is an obscure religion, there is no definite certainty or foundation on which it is built. We'll see this as we go through our study, but I want to turn your attention away from the origins of Buddhism just for a moment to its development. Of course, it spread in India where it originated through Buddha, but it went beyond that even in Buddha's lifetime, and spread after his death. Now it was unable to hold ground in India after his death, and that's why the majority of Buddhists are found today in countries like Sri Lanka, and beyond India in Burma and Thailand. There are estimated to be around 500-600 million Buddhists in our world today. There have evolved different branches of Buddhism over the years, one of the most famous is Zen Buddhism that originated in China but today is practised in Japan.



Maybe you think: 'What is the relevance of all this today in East Belfast?'. Well, certainly in the city of Belfast there's a lot of relevance. Whilst we welcome people of any nationality into our nation and into our City - and I think that has to be said - Buddhism has found root within our city through the Meditation Centre in Donegal Street and in Blackmountain Zen Centre in Kansas Avenue off the Antrim Road. There's also a place in Donegal Pass, Queen's University has a Buddhist Society in the Students Union - which should be no surprise - and there's also a group of Buddhists who worship in Newry as well. Some of you may remember it in the news a couple of years ago, 'His holiness' the Dali Lama came to Northern Ireland. There was a great furore surrounding his visit because in 1989 he was the Nobel Peace Prize winner because he fought for independence and self-government in his own Himalayan homeland, which China had annexed in 1950, and of course he was thrown out of China in 1959. While he was here, you may be interested to know, he met Gerry Adams and he prayed with him.



In our world today Buddhism has been popularised through many different forms of media. There was a film recently released entitled 'Seven Years in Tibet', and the two stars of it are a Bollywood star (that is a film star from India) and Hollywood 'hunk' Brad Pitt. This film is about 'the Lord Buddha', the Dali Lama of the day, and the film traces his life. Brad Pitt claims to have been greatly affected by the film, another interesting fact is that Richard Gere (who is a devout Buddhist) wanted to produce the film himself. You can see how it popularises the Buddhist belief - just a bit like 'The Passion of Christ' regarding Christianity. Gaynor Faye, who is a British actress on our television screens, is also a Buddhist - and Buddhism is popularised through these personalities. I read an article just today in the New York Times that was written on the 3rd of June 2001 by Gustav Niebuhr, who said that Buddhist meditation was going on in the prisons of America, and it was having great results. It was flourishing in popularity because they're all sitting around meditating, and when they were all meditating they were causing no problems for the prison guards! The idea of clearing your mind from things that would suppress, things that would cause you to suffer and be violent is very popular - how could it not be popular? Its teaching of 'karma' would encourage you to do good, its teaching of 'reincarnation' would inspire you to do the best you could in your life so that you come back as some kind of exalted being other than an animal.



Buddhist understanding is not similar to other reincarnation religions in this respect: Buddha didn't believe in the soul as such, that it would be reborn, he believed that the elements of a person's personality would be brought together again and would live on in some other life form. He called this 'the self', the self. Now if I could sum up Buddhism for you in one statement it would be this: Buddhism is the self-centred religion, the self-centred religion! It might surprise you that up until now I have deliberately not mentioned God, because God does not figure in Buddhism. Buddhists do not believe in God or a god, in fact they go as far as to say that to believe in God is ignorance. A belief in God gets in the way of an individual progressing to get suffering out of their mind, and the only reason why people believe in God is because it's some kind of utopia or opium to escape from the suffering that we have, but it actually suppresses us in fear and makes us suffer more.

Below is an interview with the 'Most Venerable Dr M. Vajiragnana', from the London Buddhist Vihara, and he expresses in very clear dogmatic terms how the Buddhists do not believe in God:

*[Begin video transcript]*

Interviewer: *"You can be certain that whoever thought up these programmes wasn't a Buddhist, for no Buddhist would put God first - no Buddhist would put God anywhere. Speculation about eternity is discouraged in the most basic forms of Buddhism, concentration is on the here and now, the need to penetrate who we are, what tight corner we find ourselves in, and how we escape the wall-to-wall craving that equals human life. The one who woke up to an understanding of these things is the Buddha, the path of the Buddha bypasses God as one of the 1001 distractions that serious wayfarers do without"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"According to Buddhism there's nothing created, everything comes as cause and effect"*

Interviewer: *"How is it that the idea of God has arisen in the world?"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"As we Buddhists believe, purely due to the fear and also due to ignorance"*

Interviewer: *"Fear and ignorance?"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"Yes, fear and ignorance. Ignorance means the not understanding things as they really are, because when natural things happened they didn't know how to tackle it, and how to handle it, and how to realise it; and they thought that there was a powerful being who does these things, or there was a powerful being behind of all those things. To prevent any danger from that powerful being they started venerating or praising or praying to that unseen being whom they have created by themselves as a god"*

Interviewer: *"How did we emerge?"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"Absolute first cause is not to be found, because it was in the dim past"*

Interviewer: *"And there's no point spending energy trying to go back to the first cause?"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"No point at all, because it doesn't help us to solve the problems in the modern, in the present-day life"*

Interviewer: *"Does anything come to our rescue when things go rough in Buddhism?"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"Nothing from outside. Again we have to go back to say cause and effect, and we have to think about what is in the popular language 'karma and results'"*

Interviewer: *"Sorry, I didn't get that..."*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"Actions and results"*

Interviewer: *"Actions and results - and you have to look into that to explain the position you are in"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"Yes, and our position will be explained by karmic theory"*

Interviewer: *"Karmic theory?"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"Yes, karmic theory, and those who have done good things are happy, and they are enjoying; and those who have done bad deeds in the past, they are not happy, or they are unhappy, or sometimes we can say they are suffering"*

Interviewer: *"We sometimes need, as human beings, a parental hug or a shoulder to cry on - now where does a Buddhist find that sort of comfort?"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"We don't have anybody to hug for comfort, as man has created God to have that comfort. In Buddhism we don't have something of that nature, and we are born of our karma or actions, and we are dependent on our actions, and it is our own actions that will do everything for us"*

Interviewer: *"Where does compassion come in? There's no God to give compassion, where does compassion come from?"*

Dr Vajiragnana: *"Compassion is not coming from outside, it is a human feeling. It is like not only compassion, love, compassion, kindness, sympathetic joy, equanimity - these are human feelings and human emotions, they're not coming from outside. We can create them, and we can be comforted by ourselves thinking about our own lifestyle or way of living. When we do good things we can be comforted by ourselves: 'Oh, I have done good things. Oh, I have done something good' - and that gives comfort"*

*[End video transcript]*

He is asked 'What then is the source of compassion that you have in your life? Where do you get hugs from?'. His reply is: 'Well, we do not need hugs from God, we find our compassion in and of ourselves'. So this is a religion that is a self-centred religion - God is not in any of their



thoughts.

### ***Buddhism Versus The Bible***

Now what I want us to consider just now is Buddhism versus the Bible. We read a couple of verses in our introduction regarding the issue of sin, and regarding the issue of salvation, but we want to look at it in a bit more detail. What is the Christian message, and how does the Christian message compare with what the Buddha taught? Well, first of all, the Christian message is found in the Bible and we believe the Bible is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The Bible's supreme message is first and foremost about God, and then secondly telling us about man, ourselves. Now when we ask the question: what does the Bible tell us about God? We find out that God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is nothing like the epitome of spirituality found within Buddhism. Buddhism says that God, if He is there at all, cannot be known, and the most likely thing is that He is not there. Whereas the Bible tells us that there is a God, and that God is not some kind of cosmic force or life that is reincarnated through various cycles and through generations, but that He is a personal God who can be known. He is a knowable God, and in fact the whole reason for human life is that we might come to know God.

If you're a Christian I hope you know that the Bible is the revelation of God. The Book of the Apocalypse at the end of the New Testament is called the book of the Revelation; but the whole Bible has been classified as the 'revelation', because it is the revealing of God Himself to mankind. So the revelation of God is found in the Bible, but as we come into the New Testament we find that the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures were pointing forth to the day when there would be a Messiah born to declare God to the human race as a human being Himself, so that men could know God in an intimate sense. Now if you were to turn in your Bible to the book of Hebrews 1:2-3, you would find out there that the apostle writing says that: *'In these last days', these New Testament days, 'God has spoken to us by His Son'. He goes on to define who His Son is: 'whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, upholds all things by the word of his power'.*

God is personal, the Bible says, and God is knowable through His Son, Jesus Christ, who made the worlds and upholds all things by the word of His power - because He is not only God's Son, He is God the Son. John 1 says that He is the Word of God, which means 'logos', 'the expression of God's mind'. So if you want to know what God is like, and who God is, you look to the Lord Jesus and you see Him fully declared. My friend, that is how God is known. He is personal, He is knowable, and He is knowable through Jesus Christ the Son - but the Bible also tells us that God is the Creator. The Buddhist gentleman who was speaking in that interview said that it is futile to think about the origins of life because they are in some mysterious secret era that is dim to the imagination. You cannot really know it, and even knowing it doesn't help you in the here and now, and that's all that's important to a Buddhist: the here and now, for there is no eternity.

But the Bible's revelation of God is different, for at the very first verse of the Bible - Genesis 1:1 - it says *'In the beginning God'*. God created, God pre-existed all of creation, the universe and that which is material. Not only does it tell us that God is our Creator who made us, but it also tells us that we are answerable to God because He created us. It's not 'Do your best, and even if you don't do your best you'll come back as some kind of life form, even if it's some degenerate one', but the Bible teaches us in Hebrews 9:27 that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment. Revelation 21 tells us of the judgment, that one day men and women without Christ will stand before that Great White Throne, and God will open the books and judge them for the works that they have committed in their life. You see, because God created us, that means we are answerable to God and to God alone, we are responsible beings.

The Bible also tells us that we depend, our very lives depend on God. You might not like that fact, but Job could say in the Old Testament Scriptures that his very breath was held in hand of God. Paul the apostle, when he was preaching, spoke to the Greeks about their own poets who stated (and he was taking the truth and owning it as scriptural) that in God we live, we move, we have our being. The very fact of our existence, the next breath that we take, comes from God and we ought to be thankful to Him for it. That is what the Bible reveals about God, and you can see that not only does it tell us there is a God, but that God is foreign to anything that Buddhism portrays.

The Bible also tells us about man, and it doesn't paint a pretty picture, because it tells us that man, by nature, is a sinner. You know, sometimes I think that Christians don't even believe this - that we as human beings are totally depraved. That does not mean that we are as evil and wicked as we can be, but it means that everything in our lives is tainted by the stain of sin. Even our good works, the Bible says, are like filthy rags in the eyes of God. The Psalmist David, in Psalm 51:5, said: *'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me'*. When life came to me in my mother's womb, I was a sinner. Not only do we know from that verse that that's where life begins, but we know that that's where life as a sinner begins!

Romans 3:23 is very clear, Paul said in the New Testament there is no difference: *'For all of us have sinned, and come short of the glory of God'*. We are lawbreakers - God has given us His good laws: thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt have no other gods before me, and so on and so on in the ten commandments. We have broken God's laws that He has given us - and the reason why we have broken God's law is that we want to please ourselves, not please our God! John 3:19 says: *'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil'*. We are sinners and there's nothing we can do about that. We please ourselves intrinsically, and because we are sinners our sins against God deserve to be judged. Because of our self-pleasing we are guilty in the eyes of God, we are condemned before God, and God told man in the Old Testament that *'the soul that sinneth, it shall die'*. The verse that we read in Romans 6:23: *'the wages of sin is death'*, our sins and our iniquities have separated us from our God, and our sins have hid His face from us. We deserve punishment, the Bible says that we deserve hell, and that there is a hell in eternity where men and women will suffer for their sins.

We are guilty, and the fact of the matter is we are hopeless - do you know this? Do you, even as a Christian, believe this? The human race, in and of itself, is hopeless - and it doesn't matter how many pop singers sing 'Search for the hero inside yourself', there is no hero inside yourself! There is nothing in you that can commend you to God, we cannot change our nature! Our nature is fallen, our nature is cut off and separated from God. Jeremiah said: *'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard change his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil'*. We as sinners cannot do good in and of ourselves.

The Buddha taught that evil comes from without, evil comes from suffering, but if you look at Matthew 15 you will see that the Lord Jesus Christ (who I would believe any day rather than Buddha) taught that evil does not come from without, evil comes from within. Verse 18: *'But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart'*, out of the heart, *'and they defile the man'*. It's what's in the heart, for in verse 19 He says: *'For out of the heart comes forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man'*. The things that you do externally may be sinful things, but the motivations for those things are not external, they are internal. We sin after we follow the lust that is in our heart. The Lord Jesus Christ told us that we have a sinful nature, and John says that the Lord Jesus knew what was in man.

Even though the Buddhists - like this gentleman that was interviewed - and other religious systems, when asked the question: 'If you need deliverance and you need help, can you get it from any external source?', give the answer 'No, we cannot, any help is from within'. Do you know what the New Testament teaches? The wonderful message of the gospel is that not only is humanity hopeless, but humanity has been loved by God! God so loved the world that He did something about its hopeless, lost state. The Bible says that He sent His Son, His only begotten Son, into the world. He came as a man in human flesh, and He went to the cross, and this is the message of good news: the cross! He took the punishment for all the wrong that you have done.

The answer to 'bad karma' is not 'good karma', the answer to 'bad karma' is Calvary, the cross, the blood of Jesus Christ! There is so much suffering in the world, but let's not forget that if anybody knows about suffering it's Christ, for 1 Peter 3:18 says: '*Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God*'. First Peter 2:24: '*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*' - do you realise this? I don't know who's reading this, whether you're a Christian or not, but even for the Christians this is a great thought: who can get sin away from them? Who can get rid of evil in themselves? Who can get away from its symptoms? Who can get rid of its cravings and its desires, its selfishness, its pride, its envy, its jealousy, its covetousness, and its anger? You can't get away from it, it's in you, it's in your heart, it's in your nature, because we live in a fallen world - that's why there's suffering! Because God told Adam and Eve not to take of that tree, and they took of the tree, and from that moment death and sin came upon the world.

How do you get rid of it? Well, Buddhism says that the suffering that's in the world is because of craving, the craving causes the sufferings - people who say: 'I have to have it'. So you become a monk, and you sit in a monastery away from external things, you deprive yourself of much food, of sexual relations, of material pleasures, and you become somebody who is transcendent above these things. You decide: 'I don't want it, I don't want it, I don't want it' - the cure for suffering is to eliminate craving, to eliminate your desires. You follow this eightfold pathway: 'I'll not covet, I'll not steal, I'll not be unkind or gossip', and so on. By following this path, supposedly, you'll eliminate suffering because you eliminate your desires.

Do you know what the sad news is? You can't eliminate those desires: the sinful behaviour that comes out of your being is because there is a sinner's heart in your breast. It is impossible for you to stop those things, you can't - but even if you could (and you can't), think about it for a moment: what about everybody else in the world? What about the man who runs into your car, and crashes into you, or the man who takes your wife? You haven't desired that craving, but you're suffering from it because of someone else. What about yourself? You might be hammering a nail in and, as often is the case, you hammer your thumb - you didn't desire it, but you're still suffering!

Buddhism is not the answer, the problem with Buddhism is that it's false. The problem with the premise of Buddhism is that it is impossible, it cannot be done! A cartoon I came across had the caption: 'That's right Kenji, everything happens for a reason, but no-one has a clue what it is' - that's Buddhism. We're suffering, we're suffering for reasons, but we don't know what it is. We're content not to know, we just want all the suffering to stop. Well, praise God, God has given us the Bible, God has told us that suffering is because of sin, not the specific sins in our life that cause the specific sufferings, but the sufferings in this world today are a direct result not of bad karma but of sin. It's impossible for us to change what we are inside, however hard we might try - and do you know what Buddhism is? It's just like every false religion and cult in this world, it is the attempt of man to pull himself up by his own bootlaces, and you can't do it! Religion's definition is man trying to get to God, it is impossible! But the definition of the Gospel is God coming to man, as man, to bring him to God.

Therefore Buddhism is sure to fail, do you know why? It suppresses the symptoms of sin, but it does not solve the problem of its source. Do you know what Jesus Christ does for a man? Because He took our sin on Himself, as if it were His own and was cursed for it by God on the cross, He gives us in return, through the act of faith, His own goodness! He gives us a new



heart, a new nature - old things pass away, behold all things become new. Peter says we are given the divine nature, the very life of God in us by the Holy Spirit. What could be better than that? That deals with the source!

You see, the issue is not so much Buddhism versus the Bible, the issue is Buddhism versus the truth. Christian friends, we have got the truth, God tells us that we're suffering because we've decided we know better than He does, we know what's right, we know what's best. We have not obeyed God, we have done the bad things, and the only result of

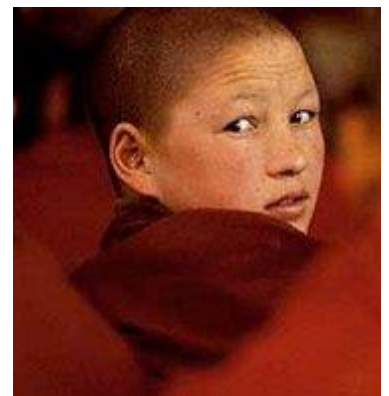
that is that we can suffer and we do suffer for it. It doesn't matter how sincere a religion like Buddhism is, how it is tolerant, how it does good works all around the world. It doesn't matter that Christians at times have done wrong, and have gone on crusades around the world and so on. What matters is this, and you'll not hear this often in this age of post-modernism and relativism: what matters is the truth! Jesus said in John 14:6: *'I am the truth, no man cometh unto the Father but by me'*.

Now maybe there's a doubter reading this. Can I give you four reasons why He is the truth, and why you should believe in Him? The first is that His biography was written before His birth - you read the Old Testament, my friend. In the book of Micah it tells you that He will be born in Bethlehem Ephratah, the very town that Jesus would be born in. It tells us in Isaiah 7:9, that His birth would be to a virgin - who could have known that? In Isaiah 9 it tells us that He would be called Immanuel, the same name that the angel gave to Mary for Him to be called. We could go on concerning His birth, but when we turn to His life we see that it's unique, the miracles that He performed. Nicodemus, who was a sceptic at one time, could say: 'No man can do these things except God be with Him'. Look at His miracles, look at His wonderful words! Who could teach like Christ? Buddha couldn't, that's for sure! Then there is His unique death. He lived a perfect life, no one at His crucifixion could point the finger and say: 'This is a sin that I saw Him do, this is a word that I heard Him speak' - yet they crucified Him! But friend, did you know that He said that no man could take His life from Him? He laid it down of Himself. He Himself, in His ministry, had prophesied His death and told that He would go into Jerusalem, He would die at the hands of wicked sinners, and He would rise again the third day - and what happened? He died, and He died for sinners, and the third day He rose again - and it has been proven evidentially in historical fact that He is risen, and He is alive! Buddha is dead, but Christ lives, and He is coming again.

### **Conclusion**

Now can I end on a twofold challenge? A challenge first of all to the Christian: there are 500-600 million Buddhists in our world - how shall they hear without a preacher? Will you go and tell them? Right across the Asiatic world there are people who know no other truth but this lie. The Truth who can bring them to God is unknown to them - have they ever heard the name of Jesus?

What about the individual? What about you? Are you a Buddhist? Have you been imbibing Buddhist teaching? It doesn't matter if you're a Buddhist or not, because most Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland are trying to get to God themselves. It's



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characteristic of every religion that is false: self-salvation. Whereas the message to you now is: relinquish your sin, relinquish yourself and embrace the Saviour! Will you do that now? Will you come to Christ?

## Chapter 9

# **"The Baha'i Faith"**

### The Baha'i Faith

#### • Baha'i Beliefs

1. There is One God.
2. All major faiths come from God and are One Religion.
3. All Humanity is One Family.
4. All Prejudice is Destructive.
5. Everyone must Receive an Education.
6. World Peace upheld by a World Government is needed.
7. Science and Religion must Agree.
8. An International Auxiliary Language.
9. God's Creation is Essentially Good.
10. The Faith of God is Progressive in Nature.

#### **Introduction**

We come next to the 'Baha'i Faith'. As our Scripture text for the commencement of this study we take Genesis 11, the account of Babel, the confusion of tongues among them because they sought to follow God their own way, and they sought to unite the world and the nations of the world in a false religion. Verse 1 says: *"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven",* or as some render that, 'whose top may be like unto heaven', *"and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down",* and incidentally, there is one proof in the Old Testament of the triune Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - three personalities, one substance - *"let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth".*



Another relevant text for our study is found in Micah 4. This passage is speaking of a future day, a day that is yet to be on this earth. Micah 4:1: *"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more".*



We're now considering 'The Baha'i Faith'. Statistics led us to believe that the total membership of the Baha'i Faith is estimated worldwide today at somewhere around 5 million adherents. Of course there are those who adhere to this faith in our own city of Belfast, and right across the province there are groups of people who meet in a Spiritual Assembly and worship in the Baha'i Faith. The Baha'i Faith has traditionally been active on university campuses, because it desires to reach the under 25 age group - and, of course, we can't fault them for that. That's why there is a Baha'i Society in Queens University of Belfast. Most of you probably will not know that 'Baha'i' as a faith grew out of the religion of Islam that we will consider in our next chapter. Baha'i is, if you like, the despised stepchild of the Islamic Muslim Faith - the reason being, most Muslims, if not all Muslims, consider Baha'i to be an apostate faith. The followers of Baha'i are seen to be apostates, because they have a doctrine that the Baha'u'llah (who is their founder really) is a greater prophet than Mohammed, the founder and prophet so highly esteemed by Islam. Because of that, the Islamic religion believes that Baha'i are 'apostate Muslims', if I can use the term.

Baha'i originated in the nation of Iran, and as we speak the Baha'i Faith suffers a reign of terror and persecution from its Muslim brothers. In fact, today hundreds are imprisoned for their Baha'i faith, thousands lose their possessions and their homes and are under continuous persecution. We don't in any way condone that, and we believe that even in our own land here people should be free, whatever race they are or whatever religion they adhere to, to worship their god with the conscience that they have. But what we want to consider firstly is how this religion of Baha'i began.

### **The Origins of the Baha'i Faith**

The following summary of the origins of the Baha'I religion is taken from a short video on the subject. Remember that it really evolved out of Islam from Iran, and we'll see from this how it has spread.

*[Begin video transcript]*

*"How exactly did the Baha'i Faith begin? The Baha'i Faith first appeared in Persia over 100 years ago. At the time, many Persian Muslims felt their religion had become corrupted. Some awaited the promised one, who would appear to purify the faith. In the 1840s, a young Persian merchant calling himself 'The Bab' announced that he was the promised one. He said Islam and the whole of society must be reformed by new spiritual and social teachings. His message was radical, even militant. Followers must prepare to shed their blood in order to convert the whole world to their cause. The 'Babi' movement was, not surprisingly, seen as a threat by the authorities. Three thousand followers of the Bab were put to death, often after violent clashes with government troops. The Bab himself was imprisoned, charged with heresy and, in July 1850, shot. The 'Babi' movement began to fade, with most of its leaders dead or sent into exile; but the Bab had said he was the herald of a greater one yet to come. In a Persian prison one of his followers, Baha'u'llah had a vision that he was the new messenger of God. He said he was the promised one of all religions: the second coming of Christ, the Jewish Lord of hosts, the Mahdi awaited by the Muslims. He preached that all the great religions of the world are true, their prophets brought different teachings to different ages. Now he, as the latest messenger from God, had a new message: peace and unity in the one faith, the Baha'i Faith. As Baha'u'llah's message spread, the authorities exiled him further and further away from Persia. He and his family were shunted around the Ottoman Empire, arriving finally in 1868 at the prison city of Akká on the West Coast of Palestine. The prison still stands today, it is said Baha'u'llah's followers camped underneath these windows waiting for a glimpse of their messiah. Inside his cell, despite the harsh and cramped conditions, Baha'u'llah developed the principles of his new Baha'i religion. He sat down a new code of laws and social teachings, which he said would transform mankind: racial equality, the abolition of poverty, the creation of a universal language, and for the future a Baha'i world*



**The Bab**

*government under one god. He sent letters to the kings and rulers of the earth, calling on them to set up an international tribunal to stop all wars. It's rumoured that Queen Victoria looked kindly on his message, but no one replied. Baha'u'llah spent the last 20 years of his life in a mansion on the outskirts of Akká, having convinced his jailers that he and his teachings weren't a threat. Here he completed his writings, nearly a hundred volumes of spiritual and social teachings, providing a foundation for the growth of the religion. He appointed his eldest son Abdul Baha to lead the faith. Pilgrims from the West began to visit, attracted by this gentle mystical religion, and by this kindly man with his flowing white beard. Many thought he was Christ returned to earth. The interest was mutual, the West came to Abdul Baha, and in 1911 Abdul Baha decided to go to the West".*

[End video transcript]



**Baha'u'llah**

Really the summary of that is that the founder of the Baha'i religion was a Muslim called 'the Bab'. 'The Bab' really means 'the gate'. If you like, you could think of him as a 'John the Baptist' character. He was a man who was going to prepare the way of the great prophet, the Baha'u'llah, who would be the promised one and the fulfilment of everything that every religious system and belief has aspired after.

So in 1863, Husayn Ali proclaimed that he was that prophet, he was the prophet, the coming one, the Baha'u'llah. It simply means 'the glory of God' - and the Baha'i are the followers of that 'glory of God'. The Baha'u'llah claimed to be the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ - now that's astounding for us as Christians. He believed he not only was the second coming of Jesus, but he also was following in the footsteps of such spiritual luminaries as Moses, Buddha, Mohammed and many other founders of religious systems. He also viewed himself as the 'Day of God' that is spoken of in the Muslim Koran. He believed that he was the promised one of all the prophecies in all of the religions across the whole face of the globe. He is the epitome of all faith, the greatest prophet that has ever been promised and has ever lived.

### **What Is Baha'ism?**

Now when you ask the Baha'i Faith what it really is, the answer comes back, for example, in the words of Abdul Baha, a Baha'i leader: 'To be a Baha'i simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood'. So the Baha'i believe in one God, they believe in a unity of all the prophets, of all religions, pointing to that one God. They ultimately prophesy that the Baha'u'llah would come one day and be the epitome of all those promises of the different religions; believing that the universe, and the population of this planet, is one and ought to operate in wholeness as an entire human race. Another quotation from the religion uses the imagery of a tree: 'If you imagine all people as the leaves on one tree, though we are of different size, shape, and hue, the same sun warms us and the same rain nourishes us. Imagine us all as drops in one ocean or waves of the one sea. Your souls are as waves on the sea of the spirit; although each individual is a distinct wave, the ocean is one, all are united in God'. This unity is at the very heart of the Baha'i Faith, the idea that every race, every religion, every division that has existed in history should be eradicated, and all people should become one in religion, race, in economic state and every imaginable fashion you can conceive of.

Now we are not against people dwelling together of different races, and we are certainly not to be classed as racist - even though, for addressing this subject, I have been accused of inciting racial hatred. The fact of the matter is, we are critiquing the religion and not any race or any particular nationality. This is a religion that not only says there ought not to be any divisions between races, but there ought not to be any divisions in humanity - whether they are religious, or ethnic, or whatever. All humanity should be united, including religion. The Baha'i Scriptures teach: 'Love ye all religions and races with a love that is true and sincere,

and show that love through deeds'. Now we want to love all people, and as Christians that is the command that the Lord Jesus Christ gave us - not just to love our neighbour, but to love our enemies, whoever our enemies may be. But to love other religions and all religions is really a bit of a leap of conjecture, in a rational sense, when we consider that all religions do not agree - so how can you love them all in equal measure? Yet the Baha'i Faith teaches us that religions are not to be viewed as contradictory or competitive, but are successive updated versions of the true religion of God that is one religion, and one alone, and includes every religion on the face of the globe.

From one of the writings of the Baha'i faith, 'Gleanings from the Writings of the Baha'u'llah' page 217, you get this quotation: 'There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide', their practices, 'should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age', that means the necessities and the trends of the age, 'in which they were revealed'. But this is the point: 'All of them...were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His will and purpose'. So all religions are really one religion, and that is the religion that God has given to men. You might worship differently, depending on the particular place that you've been born, and the historical period in which you have lived, but ultimately there is one God, we're all worshipping the one God, as one humanity, and therefore we are all the one religion.

Now some of the beliefs flow out of this undergirding principle of unity, but here they are to summarise them briefly for you: there is one God, and all faiths, all major faiths, come from that God and therefore are one religion. That is the undergirding principle of Baha'ism. All humanity, therefore, is one family, there ought not to be any divisions among the nations. All prejudice is destructive, so if you disagree with any other particular religion, or you have any sectarian bias at all, well that is destructive, and that is the true evil in the Baha'i Faith. Everyone must receive an education - and we agree with that one of course. A world government is needed to uphold world peace, there needs to be world governance on our planet today. Seventhly, science and religion must agree. Eighth, there ought to be an international auxiliary language, something that all people speak and all people understand, if the nations are to be one. God's creation, they believe, is essentially good - we believe that in the original state, but of course the Bible teaches us that there was a fall. Then finally, and this is perhaps the most important principle in all of Baha'ism, from which arises all their other doctrines: the faith of God is progressive in nature.

Now what I want to do is crystallise for you some of the Baha'i teachings that the Holy Scriptures throw light upon. Let's firstly take the teaching that the faith of God is progressive in nature. Now this is the belief that revelation from God comes through various manifestations of God, and that's how they legitimise this belief that all religions come from God - because God has revealed Himself in every conceivable religion. If you want to apply a scientific illustration to it, what they are really doing is applying evolutionary principles to revelation. In other words, God is revealing in stages to mankind, through various religions, down through all time, the truth that man is able to bear. But that truth is continually evolving, and the present-day Baha'i Faith is the pinnacle of that evolution, and their prophet the Baha'u'llah is the pinnacle prophet of it all. In fact, present-day Baha'i believe that there are a total of between 9 and 12 manifestations in all of history. The first was an unknown prophet (I can't tell you who he was, because he was unknown!) then there was Krishna, then Abraham the patriarch Hud, Salih, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, the Bab and Baha'u'llah.

Now the Baha'u'llah himself wrote these words concerning the various manifestations of God through these religions, and he said this: 'If thou wilt observe with discriminating eyes, thou wilt behold them all', all religions, all founders of religions, 'abiding in the same tabernacle, soaring in the same heaven, seated upon the same throne, uttering the same speech, and

proclaiming the same faith'. You see, this undergirding principle of progressive revelation, where God is manifesting himself through various religions, allows the Baha'i faith to legitimise all religions as from God. You might hear people say in casual conversation today: 'All roads lead to God' - well, this is exactly what Baha'i teaches. It legitimises religious unity under the principle that all religions are a little bit of light from God.



You may have seen a Baha'i temple - you may have seen one and not known what it was - but the temples of the Baha'i Faith are very distinctive. They're very affluent for a start, but they are nonagon temples, which means they have nine sides. The nine sides of a Baha'i temple represent the nine major international religions in our world, living religions. Therefore, a Baha'i temple, like the Baha'i faith, is bringing them all together to recognise them as one faith, one nation, one population towards one God. If

you look very closely, the architecture is a combination of three types of buildings. There is a synagogue, there's a mosque, and there is a cathedral - and so you have three major religious buildings put into one, and nine sides representing the nine living religions of our time. The Baha'i faith has no living prophet today, but they have a council, a ruling body of nine individuals who rule from the 'temple of justice'. These nine, incidentally each representing from their background the nine international religions of the world, rule over the Baha'i Faith today. Although it's not a religious system in kind, having a hierarchy and particular churches as a movement and a system, yet we believe they ought to be classed as a religion.



### ***The Baha'i Versus The Bible***

So you see right away the spirit of this Baha'i Faith: it is attempting to tell us there is one God, and that one God has inspired one religion that may find its manifestation in many religions, particularly nine internationally in existence today in our world, but ultimately we should all come together under the one umbrella of humanity and of one deity. The question for us is: what does the Bible have to say about this? The Baha'i versus the Bible - well, the Bible shows us, I believe from the first book of the Bible right to the very last book of the Bible, that God says it is foolishness to try and unite the world's religions. It is foolishness!

We read the account of Babel from Genesis chapter 11. Then the nations of the world decided to come together, and they wanted to worship God their own way, they wanted to be seen as one people, and God said that there was going to be no end to what they would do with one another in their imaginations if they were not confounded in this plan. Now here was the chief problem with their goal: they wanted to get to God in an alternative way to what God had revealed. They wanted to get to God by their own way, not His revealed way. Now when you go to the last book in the Bible, the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, you find out there that in a future day Babylon is to be revived, both economically and religiously. There will be political and religious Babylon, and what it will seek to do among many things is unite the nations of the world, unite the religions of the world into an apostate religious, economic, political system. It will try in itself to form a new way to Deity, and it will be that Babylonish religious and political system that the Lord Jesus Christ will smash, Revelation says, when He comes again in His second return.

Now friends, can you see right away that God has pronounced in His revealed will in the Scriptures, that to try to unite world religions on a human level is utterly futile - it will fail, it is sure to fail! Do you know why? Because unity, if it is to be true unity in God's eyes, must be unity based on truth. Any fool today will be able to tell you that the religions of the world



do not agree. In fact, before even looking at this from a theological or a Biblical aspect, we have to say that the Baha'i faith is utterly irrational and unreasonable! To just sweep under the carpet the obvious differences between all world faiths and say that there are no differences at all, and that we can in some way bridge the differences by just saying there is one religion, and one God, and one humanity - this is an irrational and unreasonable faith.

When you think about it, before we go into the Christian Scriptures and look at it from our Christian Biblical standpoint, there are religions in this world that believe in an impersonal God. We looked at Buddhism in the last chapter, they don't believe in a personal, knowable God. If there's a God at all, and most of them don't believe in a God, He cannot be known and there's no need for personal salvation. All you have to try and get in this life is some kind of tranquil nirvana, where you can get away from all the pain and suffering in our world. But there are other religions, like Christianity, like Judaism, like Islam, that believe in a personal knowable God - now they may have different ways to get to God, but they believe in a personal knowable God. Now, how can those two religions be the same?

There are some religions in our world that are polytheistic, that means that they believe in many gods. Hinduism has millions of gods, yet Judaism, Islam and Christianity are monotheistic religions, that means they believe in one God. Now Baha'ism, incidentally, is a monotheistic religion - yet it claims to have the same faith as the polytheistic religions who worship many gods. If you argue and debate with them, you will find out that they don't believe there are many gods, and one of their tenets of faith is one God. Yet they just take all these problems away, and ignore them in ignorance as if they didn't exist.

We could go on: some believe that God is able to beget, and others do not believe that God has begotten a Son. Others believe that their God is irrelevant - 'from a distance God is watching us' - but He isn't really concerned about us. Others believe in a relevant God, and we could go on and on looking at different religions - I don't have space to analyse them all - just to show that it is completely unreasonable and irrational to say that all religions stem from the one faith, when they all blatantly disagree with one another!

Now let's examine our chief consideration: is Christianity compatible with Baha'i? The reason why I'm asking that is because the Baha'i tell us that Christianity is compatible with Baha'ism. Christianity is a world faith, just like the rest, and therefore it stems from the one God, and ultimately it is the one religion. Therefore the Baha'i actually claim that they're just as Christian as you or me, they're following Jesus Christ today with the light that has been given. In fact, here's a quotation from one of their writings: 'Today, Christians make the same mistake the Jews made 2,000 years ago. They are so concerned with their own ideas of what Christ is that they cannot see the spirit of Christ in Baha'u'llah'. Do you understand? 'The Baha'u'llah is just another revelation of God today, just in the same vein as Christ or Mohammed - and do you see you as a Christian? You've got all this biblical stuff in your head that you can't see past the historical Christ to see that the spirit of Christ is with us today in the Baha'u'llah and in the Baha'i faith'. They're terribly narrow-minded, you see.

Below is a quotation from a man called Dr Keith Munro, who is a medical doctor from Londonderry who belongs to the Baha'i faith. He says exactly this, he claims that he could be classed as a Christian because he is following in Christ's steps by believing the Baha'i faith and following the Baha'u'llah in the world today.

*[Begin video transcript]*

*"I believe that mine is the same as Christianity, which is the same as the others. In other words, there has always been one religion, it happens to have had a different name in each age. I am now obeying Jesus Christ by turning to Baha'u'llah. One could say that it's like the days of the week, in other words: the sun rises on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, we know it's the same sun - but we can also say that it's the sun of*

*Monday, it's the sun of Tuesday. It's coming up on the horizon at a slightly different spot each day as the year goes through. So you could say that the sun - s-u-n - of Christ arose in Judea, the sun of Mohammed arose in Arabia, and so on and so on. So that, to us - and Baha'u'llah makes this very categorical - he says 'Make no difference between any of the manifestations of God', he calls them manifestations, the prophets of God. Now beyond that, Baha'u'llah says that, 'Every fixed star out there in the universe hath its planets, and every planet its forms of life whose number no man can compute' - interesting word he used 100 years ago, 'compute', for they had no computers then, but it's very apt today. Now that, you see, has broadened my consciousness to realise that, my goodness, this almighty loving God who has created the human race here on this little piece of dust in this little part of the galaxy, in one galaxy amongst millions, also has made human beings on other planets, in other systems, in other galaxies, and they're all unique".*  
*[End video transcript]*

Dr Munro goes on to explain how the author and producer of Star Trek was of the Baha'i faith, and it expresses the Baha'i faith that there are these other galaxies out there with lifeforms. These worlds are teeming with lifeforms, and they have their own Christs, and they have their own Mohammeds, and they have their own prophets. Many of the people in the Baha'i faith use this illustration that Dr Munro used of the days of the week. They speak of how we have one sun in the sky, and when you go out on Monday morning, if you're out late enough, you'll see the sun. You'll say: 'That's Monday's sun'. Then you'll go out on Tuesday morning and you'll say: 'Well, that's Tuesday's sun, and Wednesday's sun, and Thursday's sun' - but it's all the same sun. 'When you lived in the day of Mohammed, well, the mirror that was reflecting the glory of the sun, the sun being God, was Mohammed; but when you come to New Testament times, the mirror that's reflecting the glory of the sun - God - is Jesus. Then you come to the 1800s, and the mirror that's reflecting the glory of God is the Baha'u'llah'.

Now that's all well and good, and it sounds very nice, doesn't it? Very plausible? Especially in this politically correct world in which we live, and it certainly falls in line with the spirit of the age today. But the fact of the matter is: when you examine the Scriptures you find that this is far from the case, as far as Christianity is concerned. In fact, one statement from Dr Munro has him saying how 'these Christians have got into their head that Christ is going to come physically, He's going to come in the clouds, He's going to bring in the kingdom, when He has already come!'. He actually says this, 'Christ has come in the Baha'u'llah!' He challenges Christians to examine the evidence.

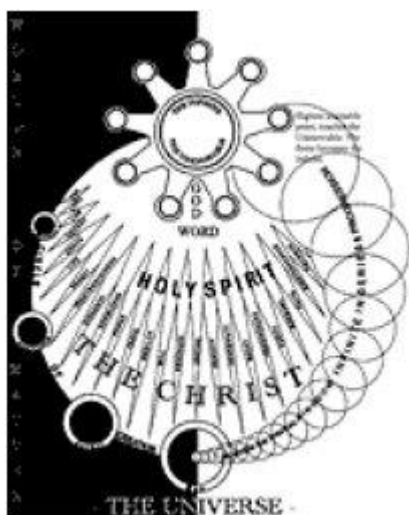
Now let's examine the evidence, because it's great until you actually look at what the Scriptures teach. Let's look at the Bible versus the Baha'i. This is astounding for a Baha'i person: the Bible does not once speak of the Baha'u'llah - isn't that remarkable? If he is the epitome of all faiths, and particularly the Christian faith, and he is the actual second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, you would think that the Bible would mention his name somewhere, Baha'u'llah. Well, in an indirect way there is one exception, or maybe two that I'm going to show you. If you look at Matthew 24 you will find an indirect mention of the Baha'u'llah, Matthew 24:4: '*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many*'. This is what the Baha'u'llah says: 'I am Christ who has come; I am the Matraiya of Buddhism; I am the 'Day of God' for Muslims; I am the same spirit that was in Mohammed for the Islamic religion; I am the epitome of every religion that has ever lived, and every prophet that has ever prophesied'.

Then in 2 Corinthians 11, Paul said: '*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And do not marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works*'.



The Lord Jesus and the apostle said that others would come and claim to be Christ, even Christ in His second return - but do not believe them, for they're anti-Christ!

The Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i faith claim that many of the prophecies in the Old Testament, and prophecies in the New Testament concerning the coming of Messiah, have been fulfilled by the Baha'u'llah. The fact of the matter is that that is blatantly impossible. First of all, the Baha'u'llah was of Iranian descent, where the Messiah was to be of the descent of the line of Judaism - and I could give you umpteen Scriptures, Matthew 1, Genesis 12, 2 Samuel 7 to prove that. More importantly, the New Testament Scriptures tell us that the fulfilment of all Old Testament prophecies are to be found in Jesus, in the Lord Jesus Christ that was born in Bethlehem's manger. How many prophecies do you want from the Old Testament? Isaiah 7, saying that He would be born of a virgin; Isaiah 9, telling us that His name would be Immanuel. We can go into Isaiah 11, Isaiah 40, other passages that talk about His government, how it would be without end, Wonderful Counsellor, He would be the Mighty God. He is the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace - then Isaiah 53, describing His death and His propitiation for the sins of His people. The Baha'u'llah doesn't fit any of those: he wasn't born in Bethlehem, he wasn't called Immanuel, he didn't die on a cross, and he never ruled in Jerusalem.



Do you know what the Baha'i practice? They practice what many, all, false religions and confusing cults practice, and that is isogesis. Exegesis is correctly dissecting the Scriptures, dividing the word of truth to find out what the word of God is. Isogesis is putting on to the Scripture, as conjecture, your own thoughts - something from outside of Scripture that you'll not find within the Bible, and imposing it on it. It's not there in Scripture! Baha'u'llah is not named in scripture, he is not alluded to in Scripture. Yet they are claiming today - and maybe some Christians are believing them - that the Baha'u'llah is the second advent of Christ.

What about His second coming for a moment? Read Acts chapter 1: *'And when he had spoken these things', the Lord Jesus at His ascension, 'while they', the disciples, 'beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven'.* They didn't say 'This same Christ' - the Baha'is believe in this 'Christ principle', that all religions have the 'logos', the Christ, some kind of light. They believe that this spirit of Christ is in all nine world religions, and this revelation of God is there - and that it has come, Christ has come in His epitome in the Baha'u'llah. But it doesn't say 'This same Christ', His word says *'This same Jesus will come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven'.*

That's His second coming. Zechariah 14:4 says that His feet will touch on the Mount of Olives, and there will be great sights that everyone will see. In fact Revelation 1:7 says: *'Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him'.* Can you tell me: did the Baha'u'llah come on a cloud? Was the Baha'u'llah crucified? Did he have nail-prints in his hands and on his feet, and a scar in his side? Did the nations of the world wail when he came? Of course they didn't! Most of you didn't even know he existed until you read this! He is not the second coming, that's for sure, he is a false Jesus.

In 2 Corinthians 11 that we read earlier, Paul talked about these ministers of Satan, those who were claiming to be Christs, and he says that they preach another Jesus! Not another

Christ, another Jesus! As far as Paul was concerned, Jesus was God's final revelation to man. That's why the apostle said: *'There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved', 'There is one mediator between God and men',* not this Christ spiritual principle, but *'the man Christ Jesus'*. They preach a false Jesus, because Jesus claimed to be God and claimed to be God's unique Son. John 3 tells us that: *'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son',* not *'His one and only Son', 'His only begotten Son'*. Jesus Christ is the only Son that God begot in that nature, in that unique way - and the Greek carries the idea of 'one-of-a-kind'. Jesus, now, is one-of-a-kind, and always will be. He had the same nature as His Father divine, and whenever He claimed to be the Son of God people in His day understood what He meant. Remember in John 5:18, the issue was the sabbath, but that quickly went out of their mind when they realised He was claiming to be God, and they were going to lift up stones to stone Him to death because they said: *'He being a man, maketh himself equal to God'*. Jesus claimed to be God's unique Son, Jesus claimed to be the Creator of the world.

What does the Baha'i faith do with verses like Colossians 1:16, or for that matter anyone who does not believe Christ is God? Colossians 1:16 says: *'For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him'*. John 1:3: *'All things were made by him'* - and there is nothing made that has been made that wasn't made by Him! He is the Creator because He is God, the second person, the Son.

Not only was He the Creator, but He was the incarnation of God. You see, the Baha'i faith believes that Christ was just one of these Christ spirits. Jesus had this Christ spirit within Him revealing something from God; and Mohammed had the Christ spirit within him; and the Baha'u'llah had the Christ spirit within him - that's not what the Scriptures teach. The Scriptures teach that the Word, the Christ, John 1:18, became flesh. He was incarnated, not *'He came to reside in a man or on a man'*, but He became a man! In John 12:45 the Lord Jesus plainly taught the truth: *'He that seeth me seeth him that sent me'*. John 13:20: *'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me'*. Hebrews 1:1-2: *'God, who at sundry times and in different manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son'*. God has spoken in the incarnation of His Son, and to deny that is heresy! To deny Christ's humanity is heresy; to deny Christ's deity is heresy. He had two natures in one person: the nature of God, and the nature of man. To deny either of those, and both of those together in one personality, puts you beyond the pale of not only Christianity but of salvation.

Isn't that what Christmas is all about? Immanuel, God with us. Do you know what the Bible says about the Lord Jesus? Not only that He claimed to be God's Son, and His unique Son at that, and He was the Creator of the world, and He was the incarnation of the Word of God; but the Bible says that He was and is the greatest and the only revelation that God has given to men. John 1:14: *'We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'*. He is the only one that has revealed God, and that God has chosen to reveal Himself through. That's why He opened the heavens on several occasions and said to men: *'This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him'*. Do you know what the Bible does? This is what I revel in: the Bible exalts Jesus from beginning to end. I know there are people that get hung up with just using the name 'Jesus' for the Lord Jesus Christ, and I understand that. We have to be careful about being irreverent, but I'm deliberately using the name 'Jesus', because that was the human name of the Messiah, the Son of God. We ought to realise that His humanity is as important as His deity. If He wasn't human, He couldn't die for us, and if He couldn't die for us He couldn't save us!

From beginning to end His name is lifted high, so much so that Philippians 2:9 tells us: *'God', after His death and His resurrection, 'has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is*

*above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* In keeping with this, the Bible indicates that the Father raised Jesus from the dead. We read of that power which was wrought in Christ, Ephesians 1, *'when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come'*. God has given Jesus Christ centre stage of heaven and earth above all, for evermore - Hallelujah!

Now the Baha'u'llah lived a mere 75 years and died in 1892, and his corpse (if there's any flesh on it now) is still rotting in the grave. I don't think that fulfils the prophecies concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It hardly constitutes 'forever', does it? That's why he cannot legitimately be considered a manifestation of God in our time. If you think about it, we live in a day of motor cars and aeroplanes, space travel and atomic bombs and weapons of mass destruction. The Baha'i faith is telling us that God's last revelation to man was in 1892, where is the revelation for people today? You say, 'Well, Jesus died before 1892!', but this is the difference: Jesus lives in 2004! For Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever - He's a living Saviour, He's revealing Himself to people in this world as we speak!

Incidentally, the Baha'i faith claims to be a very tolerant faith because of its belief in the assimilation of all the world's religions, it brings everyone together. But as a matter of fact, it's a very hollow tolerance, because it's a tolerance concerning fictional caricatures of world religions. It's only tolerant of Christians because it believes Christians are the same as they are. However, the moment you say 'No! We're not the same! Our Christ isn't the same!', they're not very tolerant! They report you to the DPP, and the Human Rights Commissioner for Northern Ireland, and the Advertising Standards Authority and all the rest!

Friends, the fact of the matter is: the only common ground we have with any religion, any faith, any cult is the common ground of the Bible, whatever the Bible says. The truth is the only basis for fellowship that we can have, because Christ is the truth and Christ is God's revelation. He said in John 14:6: *'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me'*. How do we know truth today? John 17:17, Jesus said in His prayer to His Father: *'Thy word is truth'* - the written word! Do you know what the written word teaches us? That God is knowable - that's not what the Baha'i faith teaches us. God is knowable through the intimate revelation of the incarnate Son, and the written word of God that testifies of a Saviour who lived as God among men, who died on the cross for men's sins, and rose again victorious, ascended and is coming again! Through personal faith He can be known in an intimate way through redemption and salvation. The Bible teaches that man is fallen, man is a sinner, man is not perfect. He needs to be saved therefore, and it teaches - contrary to Baha'ism - that there is a literal hell, where people will go who reject Christ; and there is a literal heaven that will be gained by those who put faith and faith alone in Christ.

Baha'i, like all the other religions and cults, is a faith full of rules and regulations and formulas - and there's no assurance at the end of it all. But the Bible tells us that Christ's death and resurrection is able to give us the certainty and the security of heaven and salvation.

### **Conclusion**

In the past, man has tried his own Baha'ism in Babel in Genesis 11. In the future he will try it again in Babylon. Man has tried to unite races into one race, one language, one faith, and it has failed. Don't get me wrong: it's not a bad aspiration to have, but it has failed because they have sought to achieve it in a way that God had not legislated. They wanted to do it their way rather than God's way.



Now listen: unity cannot be achieved by ignoring the problems and the things that cause division, do you know why? Because it is truth that divides, truth uncovers sin. One day Jesus Christ, the truth, is going to separate the sheep from the goats, and put the goats in hell, and send the sheep to heaven. There is separation between the saved and the lost today. What the truth does is uncover sin, but - hallelujah - the Truth died for sin, and can save you from sin today! But you've got to admit your sin! You've got to take God's provision for your sin - the Saviour - I wonder have you ever done that? The Baha'i faith claims to bring all nations together, Ephesians 2:14 says: *'Christ is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female'* - Christ has done it! Baha'ism has failed, Christ has done it! We read from Micah 4 of a day on this earth in the millennium, when there will be a temple in Jerusalem and all of the nations of the earth will come to worship - not one God who hasn't a name and can't be known, but Jehovah the God of Jacob!

Revelation says that from every people, tribe, tongue and nation they will come - God will achieve what Baha'ism has failed to do, because He finally will unite humanity together in truth. He will unite them together in Christ. Can I exhort you: don't settle for a poor substitute! Take the Saviour that God has provided.

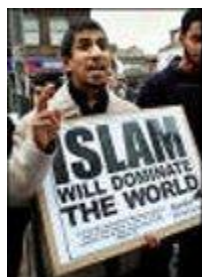
## Chapter 10

# "Islam"

Islam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Doctrines</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One God</li> <li>2. Angels</li> <li>3. Scripture</li> <li>4. Mohammed</li> <li>5. End Times</li> <li>6. Predetermination</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>The Five Pillars</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Faith</li> <li>2. Prayer</li> <li>3. Fasting</li> <li>4. Alms</li> <li>5. Mecca</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Let's start our study of Islam by reading a couple of verses from the Acts of the Apostles chapter 4. The apostle Peter is preaching a sermon here, filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking to the rulers and the people and elders of Israel. He says in verse 9: *"If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole",* that is the man who had been healed there by the power of God through the apostles, and you remember he went walking and leaping and praising God. *"If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner",* or the chief cornerstone. *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved".*

The Islamic faith has a familiar presence in most Western countries today, and that's why there is a particular interest in your heart and mine concerning what this faith espouses, preaches, and believes. You may not be aware that the Muslim Islamic faith is an evangelistic faith - not in the purest sense of preaching the good news of the evangel, but it is a faith that seeks to proselytise, it seeks to win people to its belief. In that sense, it is evangelistic. We see this in a quotation from Salem Azzam, who is the Secretary General of the Islamic Council of Europe, he says this: 'The first objective of the Islamic council is to assist, support and supplement the activities...of da'wah'. 'Da'wah' is 'mission', Islamic mission, the attempt to convert people to the Islamic faith right across the globe. That is the first objective of the Islamic council, and he belongs to the General Islamic Council of Europe.



Now if you can remember back to the 1990s, you may recall that nominal Christians - both in the Anglican Church and also in the Roman Catholic Church - were told that this would be the decade of Christian evangelism. But as we look back on the 1990s with the gift of hindsight,

we would do well to ask the question: who was evangelising during the 1990s? Indeed: who is evangelising in our present day and age in which we live? Across the United Kingdom buildings that were once used in Christian worship are now inhabited by Muslims, and have been turned into mosques in which people are worshipping the god 'Allah' under the Muslim banner. There is a great influx of the Muslim faith in the United Kingdom. Regents Park mosque in London is now the home of one of the largest mosques in Europe. It is estimated that there are now 2 million Muslims in the United Kingdom. There are probably just over 200 mosques in the UK also. On a daily basis there are 22 million copies of Muslim newspapers that are published. Two million Muslims, 22 million copies of their writings in newspaper form, and that in anybody's estimation is a sign of very good health.



Of course, they are in good health because we now live in what is commonly called a pluralistic or multicultural society. Although we welcome anyone to our shores, and that has to be said, because we don't want to be misconstrued in any way as inciting racial hatred - that is not what we're doing, we are analysing and critiquing a faith in relation to what the Bible has to say. But we have to be alarmed and astounded at the inroads that this religious philosophy and Muslim faith is making on the institutions of our life here in the United Kingdom that many years ago were founded upon the word of God.

Recently shown on the news was the first Muslim Baroness admitted to the House of Lords, Baroness Uddin, the first Muslim woman sworn into the second house, the House of Lords. She swore in under the name of Allah, rather than under the name of God, and you will see her explanation of it and her swearing in...

*[Begin video transcript]*

Uddin: *"As the first Muslim to enter the House of Lords, it was very important that I was able to say 'in the name of Allah'"*

Uddin swearing in: *"I, Pola Manzila, Baroness Uddin, do swear by Almighty Allah that I will be faithful, and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, her heirs and successors, according to law - so help me God".*

*[End video transcript]*

Now the Muslim Council of Britain has now co-opted a man called Joe Ahmed-Dobson, who incidentally is the son of Frank Dobson, a former Health Secretary in the Labour government. He is now a converted Muslim, and he has been elected to chair the regeneration committee for the British Council of Muslims. In other words, to forward this evangelism thrust, to regenerate Islam in the United Kingdom. A new study was done by a man called 'Yahya' (formerly Jonathan) Birt, who is the son of Lord Birt, the former Director-General of the BBC. In his study he uses a breakdown of the latest census figures to conclude that apart from the immigrants that are Muslim in the United Kingdom, 14,200 white indigenous British people have converted to Islam in the last while - 14,000 indigenous British people converting to Islam. So it's not just Muslims flying in from Arab countries that are bringing this faith to our shores, but people are actually being converted in the United Kingdom, and at times some celebrities and very high-profile people in the world of politics.

There are approximately 1.2 billion Muslims in our world today. Now to understand that, you need to compare it to those who are called Christians - and of course, we mean nominal Christians, those who name the name of Christ, whether they're born-again or not. There are approximately 1.9 billion Christians in the world today, broadly speaking - 1.2 billion Muslims, beside 1.9 billion Christians. Now it has to be said that although the Muslim faith purports to be one united religion, there are certain sects in it, just like many other faiths in the world. You may have heard of the Sunnis, the Shi'ites, even the Sufis and there are many more -



and these are sections of splits within the Muslim faith. Incidentally the Koran actually condemns such divisions, yet nevertheless they are there for all to see.



But the Muslim faith in general as a religion is moving on in massive strides in our world and in our land, so much so that it has been predicted and projected that by the year 2025 a third of the world's population will belong to the Muslim faith. In fact, by the year 2010 it will be the second-largest religion in the United States, and currently it is the second-largest religion in the whole of Europe. It is the fastest growing religion in our world today.

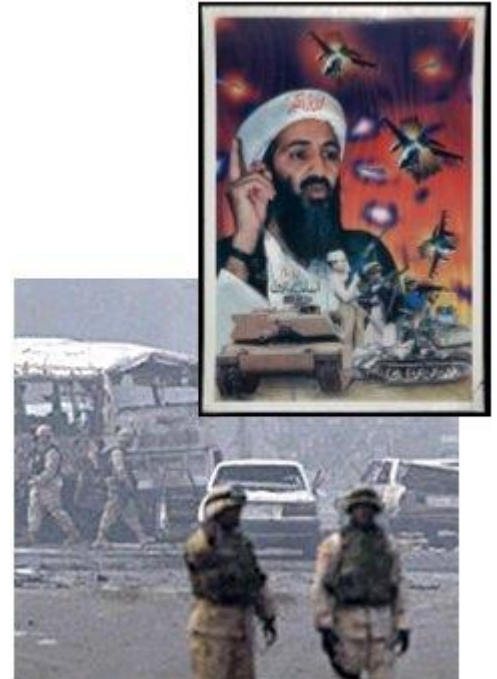
Can I just say, before I go on any further, that that should be a tremendous challenge to us as Christians. Those who we believe do not have the truth, but have error, are taking their false message and spreading it right across our continent, right across our nation, across the whole world at a staggering rate. We need to ask ourselves, we who have the truth: what are we doing with it? What are we doing in relation to missionary efforts, and giving to the mission field, and going to the mission field? What about our lives? We need to examine our lives in the light of the word of God, and ask ourselves why we're not making the impact on our nation that Muslims are making in this very day and age in which we live! I wish I had longer to spend on that.

But what comes out of such a challenge to us is the question: why is there such an explosion of the Islamic faith in our nation and across Europe? I'll tell you why, and part of it is our fault I believe: when Muslims look at Christians and the Christian religion as a whole in the United Kingdom, do you know what they see? They see an institution which they regard as being filled with homosexual depravity in the priesthood, filled with misconduct, hypocrisy, division of all sorts of sects and denominations - and they conclude that there is no truth, there is no power or merit in Christianity in the West. Do you know what they see when they look at us? They see a mission field, they see a country that is ripe for conversion to Islam, conversion to a faith that will stand up for what it believes, a faith that is black and white. That's why there are supposedly 1000 missionaries trained every year that are thrust out of Islam right across the world to evangelise people for Allah.

Can you remember the excitement when the Berlin Wall fell down, and the Iron Curtain was dropped? Communism was defeated - what were the Christian missionary organisations

doing? They were all excited: 'Let's get the Bibles in, we've been prohibited for years, let's get in there and preach the gospel - no one knows how long it will be until the Iron Curtain comes down again and the walls are rebuilt'. Friends, we need to waken up in our own land and realise that we're living in a similar situation! There are people out there, and they have no thought of God, but they're crying out for meaning in their life. One of these days somebody's going to come along and knock their door from a confusing cult or false religion, maybe it'll be a Muslim, and show them their way, and they'll believe it.

What a challenge to us as Christian believers! What are we doing with the truth of the Gospel? These Islamic countries are becoming increasingly zealous. Of course, what we are most familiar with just at the moment, which is perhaps not so characteristic of the general religion as a whole, is the troubling growth in extreme militant strains of fundamentalist Islam. Osama Bin Laden, suicide bombers in Jerusalem and right across the Arab world, and even infiltrating now our world here in the United Kingdom it would seem. There are more countries in the Middle East now that are run by Islamic regimes, most of them wanting to reintroduce what is called 'Shari'a law', which is simply Islamic law in its most extreme forms. Among other things Islamic law demands that a person caught in adultery should be killed, executed. If you're found to be a thief, they take your hand and they chop it off - that is Shari'a law. But there are other Muslims who believe that Shari'a law should be universally imposed upon the nations of our world. They think all countries should have a complete rule of Shari'a Muslim law, and that's why Muslims are moving in and infiltrating into every nation as we speak, and seeking political power wherever they can. Now not all Muslims are of that strain, but particularly the fundamentalist type wants to infiltrate nations with Shari'a law and the Muslim fist of iron.



Now of course, one of the major catalysts for fundamentalist Islamic faith today is the zeal against the re-emergence of the modern state of Israel in the 1940s. Now I don't have space to go into all of this, but save to say that the word of God clearly says that Israel were God's chosen national people, that Abraham's son Isaac was the son of promise. But the Islamic faith believes that it wasn't Isaac that went up with Abraham to Mount Moriah and was almost sacrificed, but it was his other son born of Hagar who was called Ishmael, the father of the Arab race. They believe he was the one who had the promise, he is the rightful inheritor of the land, and so there is the struggle over what they falsely call 'Palestine', which is the land of Israel. They believe they inherit all the promises that are rightfully Israel's in the word of God.

That is a major aspect that contributes to fundamentalist Muslim thought today in our world. But another is the backlash against Western secularisation. You see, Arab lands are getting a lot of dollars because we're buying oil off them, and because we're trading with them sometimes Western influence can infiltrate their society and their culture. Fundamentalism is a backlash against that to get back to Muslim basics and away from Western secularisation. Now those are two things, only minor things, that can contribute to the major strides and the forward surge of the Muslim faith in our world today.

Now, the Muslim faith has a universal appeal in message, and it is refreshing to many to hear

certainty coming from religious preachers in our day and age. We have to say that as we analyse it: the Muslim faith has a very simple credal statement, and the tenets of their doctrines are simple for anyone to understand. It is not a racial religion, in other words you're not born a Muslim like you're born a Jew. Anyone can join what is called the 'Ummah', the community of the faithful. There are no racial barriers, and therefore that's the reason why it has spread so quickly - it's very easy becoming a Muslim. It has spread particularly in our modern age through African countries, and more recently in the United States of America through preachers like Louis Farrakhan, who is of the Nation of Islam. Now many Muslims would not associate with Louis Farrakhan, but nevertheless it shows how accessible the Muslim faith can be to anyone of any race, whatever colour, whatever credal background or religion they may come from.

The fact of the matter is this, and we must maintain this, and there needs to be a voice, a political voice today to articulate this: whilst we welcome anyone of any faith to our shores, and we defend their right to worship their god in their own way, we have to say that many of these faiths do not grant the same liberty to Christians in their lands. Today, in Muslim countries, there are Christians laying down their lives because of the faith of the gospel that they will not deny. Christians are being killed, preaching is outlawed, missionaries are being expelled on a continual basis from countries. Meanwhile Muslims are intent in other lands of freedom to spread the message of their gospel by Jihad - the sword, if necessary.

### ***The Origins Of Islam***

Now let's look at the origins and the beliefs of this faith of Islam. I'm sure you will already know that the founder of Islam was Mohammed. He was born in 570AD and lived in Mecca, his home. He later lived in Medina because he was driven out of Mecca, but nevertheless Mecca is now the centre of that religious faith. It is known as 'the Mecca', and that has become a euphemism for the centre of any faith or any religious belief. Mohammed was akin to going out into the wilderness, and particularly going to one cave. He believed that on one of his visits as he meditated and as he contemplated religious thought, that the angel Gabriel appeared to him. This was the initial appearing that would continue for 23 years after that. The angel Gabriel - no less - gave this command to Mohammed: 'Recite in the name of the Lord who has created, Created man from clots of blood, Recite, seeing that the Lord is the most generous, Who has taught by the pen, Taught man what he did not know'. Now the Arabic word for 'recite' is the word 'Qur'an', we spell it in English 'Koran', but the transliteration is 'Qur'an' - that is 'the noble book', 'the holy book', the 'bible', if you like, of Islam.

So Mohammed was told to write down what God was reciting, word for word, to him. Muslims believe that the Koran was written down by God on tablets in heaven, and came down and then was recited to Mohammed and he wrote it all down, but his interpretation was not in it - human agency was not involved. So Mohammed was given these revelations of God that were never given before to men. Now the astounding thing was that the original growth of the Islamic faith was akin to its growth even today. Within a century of Mohammed being given these revelations, allegedly from God, Islam conquered an area that was greater than the Roman Empire in its heyday - within 100 years! Today Islam is almost right across globe, it's going into countries and places in the major continents of our world, particularly at this moment into some dark communities in Africa. It is the sole religion, really, of the Arab nations of our world today.

### ***The Doctrines Of Islam***

Now let's look at the doctrines of Islam. Some say there are five - there really are six, I suppose, and we'll look at them very briefly. Very simple: first of all, there is one God, and that one God's name is Allah. One true God, and his name is Allah. There is not a triune Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; one God, all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful. Then a second doctrine is that of angels, angels are particularly important to the Muslim faith, and



you can see that when you realise that the chief angel Gabriel was the one who imparted this knowledge, appearing to Mohammed and giving him the rules and regulations of this faith. There is also a fallen angel in the Muslim religion called 'Shaitan', which is very similar to 'Satan', as you can see in the pronunciation. The third doctrine is that of Scripture. You might think the Koran is the only holy book in the Islamic faith, but it is not. They believe in four inspired writings: first is the Torah, that is the first five books of your Old Testament - the Hebrew Bible from Genesis through to Deuteronomy. The second is the Zabur, which for us is the Psalms of David - they believe that God inspired those writings. The third is the Injil, which is basically the gospel entitling the whole works of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, our Saviour. Then the fourth book is the Koran, Allah's final word, his final revelation that was given to Mohammed via Gabriel - for 23 years in that cave Gabriel dictated the Koran to Mohammed.

The fourth doctrine that underlines the Muslim faith is the doctrine of Mohammed. The Koran lists 28 prophets of Allah, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, and even our Lord Jesus Christ - but of course, Mohammed is the last of the prophets, and he is seen to be the greatest of them all. Then the fifth tenet of belief is the end times: they believe that the dead will be judged, they will be resurrected and Allah will judge them. Those who are righteous will be sent to heaven, and heaven is a place of sensual pleasure where there will be supernatural virgins. You know, and you have heard, why some of these young men blow themselves up in suicide bombings - because they believe they're going to inherit some kind of world with 70 supernatural virgins, that just continue on in virginity, and they'll have this sensual, sexual pleasure for all eternity because they're serving Allah. That's their heaven, and those who are unrighteous - and that simply means those who oppose Allah and Mohammed - they will go to hell to be tortured forever. The sixth tenet of the Muslim faith is predetermination, or predestination. They believe Allah has predetermined everything by unchangeable decrees - 'que sera sera, whatever will be will be'.

Now the word 'Islam' gives us a little insight into the practices of the Islamic faith. The word 'Islam' means 'submission to the will of God'. The word 'Muslim' comes from that, and it means 'one who submits to the revealed will of God'. So to be a holy person, and to follow God in His revealed way is to submit to God's will. Now in Islam, you submit to God's will through the 'five pillars of Islam'. These are important to remember: if you fulfil these, and if you remain in the Muslim faith, and if you sincerely repent of your sins, you will gain - perhaps - 'Jannah', which is heaven. It is a salvation of works.

What are these 'five pillars', these five religious practices that you have to be involved in to possibly be saved? The first is this: the declaration of the faith, the 'Shahada' they call it. The declaration of the faith is simply the proclamation, a verbal confession: 'There is no true God except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'. You may have heard Muslims saying that: 'There is one true God and that is Allah, and his true prophet is the prophet Muhammad and there is none other'. That is the declaration of the faith, the confession of the faith - and you need to practise this everyday, and say it over and over again.

The second pillar of Islam is simply prayer, 'Salat' they call it. You will have seen pictures of many Muslims praying and kneeling on the ground, and praying devoutly to their God. The Muslim prayer involves confession of sins, which begins first of all with the purification of the body. They ritually wash themselves, and it ends eventually with the purification of the soul. They have strict religious rituals laid down on how to purify the place where one prays, how to



perform one's ritual, the washing of the body, and so on - even the exact movements and the exact words of the prayers themselves. The final act, you will remember seeing it perhaps in the media, is to bow down with your head in prostration of prayer, and to symbolically bend in submission to Allah with your forehead touching the ground. Now that is to be performed, as the second pillar of Islamic practise, five times a day - morning, noon and night.

Below is a transcript of a video showing a young Muslim boy praying, which is tremendously touching:

*[Begin video transcript]*

Narrator: *"This is Rizwan"* [Boy praying in Arabic in the background] *"Rizwan is 10 years old, and every day he says his prayers. He prays in a language called Arabic. He always uses exactly the same words, and exactly the same movements, and he always faces in exactly the same direction. Rizwan isn't the only one who prays like this, there are hundreds of millions of others. They are known as Muslims, and they follow the religion of Islam. There are Muslims in almost every corner of the world".*

*[End video transcript]*

Now the third pillar of Islam is that of fasting, 'Saum' - and that is done in the month of Ramadan, you may have heard it or seen it written in your diary. That is the month of fasting, the month of Ramadan, and there's no drinking, eating, or sexual relations during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan. Now you can eat as much as you like and drink as much as you like when the sun goes down, but during the daylight hours they observe this fast. The fourth pillar of Islam is that of alms, charity to the poor. This is very important, because Mohammed was an orphan himself and valued charity greatly. Then the fifth pillar is that of pilgrimage, 'Hajj' as they call it, to Mecca. Some of you may have seen Mecca in photographs, but it's absolutely astounding. There is this black cube in the centre, it is called a 'Ka'aba', and that reputedly was the temple of idols in which Mohammed went and found Allah to be the chief god of the idols. The Meccan people believed and worshipped many many idols, and the chief of the idols was Allah. Mohammed decided, through this revelation by God, that there were no other gods - these idols were all false, except for one, and that is Allah, and so he founded the religion of Mohammedism or the Muslim faith, Islam.

Now each Muslim is encouraged to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their life if they're able, physically. If they're sick, they don't have to do it, but nevertheless if they can afford it, and if they're able to do it, they're meant to do it in the first half of the last month of the lunar year. There follows the narration from a video clip which shows you the extent of what people do, how they get to Mecca, and what they do when they do get to Mecca.



*[Begin video transcript]*

*"A person who visits a holy place is called a Pilgrim, and every year Muslim pilgrims come to Mecca from all over the world. The pilgrimage is known as the 'Hajj'. Some of the pilgrims come by boat, some of them fly into Mecca by plane, these people have travelled over land by bus - they've come from Jordan. Some are rich, some are poor, some are young, some are old, but all are bound for Mecca. For most of them it is a long hard journey, and they're only expected to go on it if they can afford it. Many of these people will have spent their life savings to come here. At last they arrive at the Ka'aba, still the centre of Mecca just as it was in the time of Mohammed. Each of the pilgrims will walk seven times around the Ka'aba. Those who are too old are carried on stretchers. Mecca is the heart of Islam, Muslims turn to Mecca every day when they're alive, and they even turn to it when they're dead. These are*

*Muslim tombs, and as you can see they're all facing in the same direction - towards Mecca".*  
[End video transcript]

You got the gist of that, didn't you? The multitudes of people flocking to Mecca, and worshipping their god in this way. Now it might appear at a casual glance that the Muslim faith has quite a lot in common with Christianity. The fact of the matter is, many people believe that the Muslim faith worship the one God that we worship as Christians and as Jews - Allah. They say that 'Allah' is just an Arabic name for God. But the fact of the matter is, on closer inspection you will see very clearly that that is not the case - the Muslim god is not the Christian God, or the Jewish God. Now if you were to compare two ten pound notes, one a genuine and one a counterfeit, how would you decide which was genuine and which was counterfeit? How would you locate the difference, which was genuine and which was false? Well, you would not concentrate on the similarities. You wouldn't look for the similarities, because obviously they would be the same and you could not tell that which is false from the similarities. They look alike when you concentrate on the similarities, so you concentrate on the differences, because it is the difference that will show which is genuine. Two genuine notes will have no differences. So when you home in on those things which are counterfeit, those things which are different, you see that those things are difficult to counterfeit in the genuine sense - to take what is true and to make a counterfeit of it, when it is not found in that particular religion.

### ***What Is Missing From Islam?***

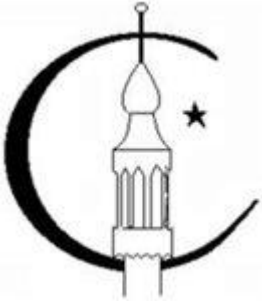
So what we're asking is: what is missing from Islam that proves that it is a false faith? What is missing from the Islamic faith? Why do we say that it is not truth, that it's different from Christianity and it's different from what the Bible teaches? Well, here's the first and most obvious thing: the God of the Bible is missing from Islam. The God of the Bible is not found in the Koran.

I alluded to the black box, the Ka'aba, in the middle of the stadium in Mecca. Of course, I told you a moment or two ago that the Ka'aba was full of idols, and Mohammed came along one day, rejected all the other idols and chose Allah as the chief god. He named Allah as the one true living god. But what most Muslims do not know, or at least will not admit, is that the name of 'Allah' existed before the Muslim faith was founded by Mohammed. Now this is very controversial, but nevertheless I feel it's very important. The name 'Allah' is found in its origin in polytheistic paganism. Now one of the chief tenets, the first one of the Muslim faith, is that there is one God and only one God and his name is Allah, and his prophet is Mohammed. But the fact of the matter is, if you go back far enough, historians and archaeologists proved this: you will find that the name 'Allah' was found as one of many many gods, even in this Meccan temple.

In fact, according to the Encyclopaedia of Religion, I quote: 'Allah is a pre-Islamic name corresponding to the Babylonian god Bel'. In fact, much ancient worship included the worship of the sun god, the moon god, and the stars. The worship of Baal that we read of in the Old Testament was a worship of the heavens like this. But many scholars have now pointed out that in the Arabian world the sun god was female, and the moon god was male, and he was called by various names - but one of the names by which he is called is 'Allah'.

Allah was married to the sun god, and they had three daughters, and these three daughters were viewed as high deities above all other deities - so you can see what's happening here. Mohammed took away the other gods and chose Allah, but Allah was not the true and living God, he was the chief of many gods. In fact, the Encyclopaedia of World Mythology and Legends says this, I quote: 'Along with Allah...they worshipped a host of lesser gods and the daughters of Allah'. In fact, archaeologists have dug up numerous statues and hieroglyphic inscriptions in which a crescent moon was seated on the top of the head of a deity symbolising that they were the moon god. Do you know that the religion of the Crescent





today is the religion of Islam? You see it on top of their mosques, you see it on some of their flags - the crescent and the star. Now I believe that that is the origin of that symbol. If you want to read more about that, there is a very interesting book entitled 'The Islamic Invasion' by a man called Robert Morey.

Apart from this, the God of the Bible is not the god of Islam simply because the God of the Bible is a God of love! You will not find the God of love in the scriptures of the Muslim faith. Allah, as we find him revealed, cannot love the sinner. You will not find in the Koran a love for the sinner, or a love for the ungodly - it is missing! In fact what god does in the Koran with sinners, is he cuts their hands off, he stones them to death - it is a religion of law, and not a religion of grace. Although in Islam Allah is called 'the forgiving, the merciful, the all-compassionate', you will not find one instance in the Koran where he exercises that power to have compassion over, for instance, one who is caught stealing, or one who is caught in the act of adultery. Yet we find in John's gospel that the Lord Jesus had such compassion on one caught in the very act, who the Pharisees, the legalists, were going to stone.

Our Saviour is a Saviour who demonstrated the love of God in that while we were yet sinners, Romans 5:8, Christ died for us, Christ died for the ungodly. That is a gospel of grace, unmerited favour, and you will not find that in Islam. In fact, you will not find it in any other religion but the Bible, Christianity. We know from John 3:16: *'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life'*, and also verse 17, *'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved'*, that the heart of God is a heart of love. God is love - but a God of love is missing from Islam! That's why we would have to say that the caricature that is often painted of Islam is a hateful religion, it is a religion of the sword. We have to be careful of general caricatures, but nevertheless that is the aura that emits from that religion in the West, because the God of love is missing.

The second thing that is missing from Islam is the Christ of the Bible. They do not believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. They do not believe He is the incarnate Son of God, as John 1 verse 1 says; as John 1 verse 14 says, that He was God manifest in flesh; as John 10 and verse 30 says, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself speaking, *'I and my Father are one'*. Of course, the Pharisees and religious Scribes were going to stone Him because He, being a man, was trying to make Himself God. Now the Muslim faith will go as far as to say He was a prophet, and He was a sinless prophet at that, but He is not the Son of God and He is not the Saviour of the world. In fact they say that anyone who calls themselves God or equates their prophet to be God is committing blasphemy, indeed committing the unpardonable sin. But the Bible clearly says, and it's written on every page of the New Testament, that Jesus Christ is God's Son and God the Son, God manifest in flesh, the Word of God incarnate.

They have a measure of respect for Christians, not so much Jews today, but Mohammed did originally. But this is what the Koran says in Surah 4:171-172, speaking of people of the book - that simply means Christians or Jews: *'People of the book, Go not beyond the bounds of your religion...the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and His word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Allah. So believe in Allah and His Messengers, and say not, 'Three' - in other words a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost - 'God is only One God!'*

Now not only does the Koran deny the triune godhead, but it actually seems in places to deny that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross. Surah 4:156-158 says: *'it was made to appear so', that He died on the cross. Some Muslims believe that God caught Him up before He went to the cross, or God caught Him up on the cross. Others believe that someone else was crucified in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ by mistake, some actually believe that Judas*

Iscariot was crucified in place of the Saviour! Others believe that yes, He was on the cross, but He did not die.

Can I turn your attention to 1 Corinthians 15, and here we have the revelation of the apostle Paul, the revelation of God to the apostle in verse 3. This is the message the Corinthians were saved by: *'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins',* He died for our sins, *'according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep'.* Verse 17: *'And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins'* - this is the message that God revealed to men, and that was preached by the early church. It is the message that Christ died for our sins, rose again - and if He didn't die for our sins and rise again, we are still in our sins, Christ is still in the grave, and we are all lost and damned for all eternity. But praise God, it is an historical fact that He died, He rose again, and we are saved - and it is Mohammed that is in the grave!

The Christ of the Bible is not the Christ of Islam. Mohammed also believed that Jesus Christ foretold his coming, that is Mohammed's coming. He called himself the 'Ahmad', and it is believed that when the Saviour talked about a Paraclete in John's gospel that He was talking about Mohammed and not the Holy Spirit. In fact, some Muslim traditions even add that Christ is to come again, but this time He is going to marry, and He's going to have children, and He's going to break the symbol of the cross and acknowledge Islam to the world.

The third thing that is missing from Islam is the salvation of the Bible, or we could call it the grace of the Bible. For a Muslim, sin is lack of obedience to God's law, lack of obedience to Allah is sin. But they do not have a sense of sin as having a need to be forgiven because we have an inherent sinful nature. You see, a Muslim is sinful only by an act, or by the lack of that act, but he does not see himself as a fallen creature, as a sinner by nature as Romans 3:23 in the Bible says, that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Now, take this on to its logical conclusion: if they don't see themselves as inherently sinful by nature, then they conclude that they do not need a Saviour. That's why they don't recognise Christ as a Saviour, because they don't need redemption. Redemption from an external source is not needed - why? *'Because I can get salvation through following the five pillars of Islam, and believing the faith and the doctrines and tenets of it'.* So salvation in the Islamic faith is earned by a legalistic system of obedience, and one day Allah will hopefully weigh your bad deeds with your good, and you'll get into 'Jannah', into heaven - whatever that may be - hopefully. But who of us can outweigh the good over the bad? Especially when the Bible reveals that that is not what God requires, what God requires of us is to believe in the Son of God who was sent from heaven - the Gospel of grace that He delivered to us through His death and resurrection. We are to believe that gospel that Paul preached in Ephesians 2:8-10, where he said: *'It is by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast'* - it is a gift undeserved!

Let us never lose this: you don't hear it preached too often these days - even from evangelical, so-called reformed Protestant pulpits. There on the cross, our sin, by imputation, was laid on Christ; and by faith His righteousness is exchanged for our sin; and He imputes, by grace in the act of faith, His righteousness in us. That is the Gospel! But it's missing from Islam...



**Conclusion**

Can I ask you a couple of thought-provoking questions at the end of this chapter? It's applicable to a Muslim if he or she is reading these words. It's applicable to a member of the Baha'i faith, or a Buddhist. It's applicable to a Jehovah's Witness, a Mormon, in fact any of these particular labels that we've used in this book. Do you know why? It's applicable to anyone who is not a Christian. The first question is this: who is Christ? The Bible clearly teaches that Christ is the Son of God, He is God the Son, He is the Saviour of the world who died, rose again, and is returning to judge the world and will reign on the earth for a thousand years, and then commit those to hell who have disobeyed Him, and take those to the eternal state who are in obedience to Him in the gospel. Is that the Christ you believe in? Not a prophet, not a good teacher, not a good man, but the Saviour of the world and the Son of God.

Here's another question: do you expect to go to heaven? Most people say: 'I don't know, I hope so'. Listen, the gospel of God's word is simply: you can know that you're on your way to heaven! That's why Jesus came, and died, and rose. That's why the word of God was given: that men might be sure, and the only way to be sure is through Jesus. Do you have the assurance that He will accept you? Don't make the mistake of thinking that He will accept you because of something that you are, or something that you have. The only way that God accepts a sinner is when a sinner pleads by faith His own Son. You need to identify with the work that Christ accomplished on the cross, you need to identify yourself as a sinner, and put your hands up and confess - say 'Lord, I'm guilty of everything that You've charged me with. Jesus wasn't guilty of it, yet He suffered for it. I thank You for that, and I trust that as sufficient to save me, and I ask that You'll give me His righteousness through His death. Save me now!'.

Do you have a low view of yourself and a high view of Jesus Christ and His grace? Because if you don't, my friend, you can't be saved - and there's no other way. There is no other way! If there has been a motto verse for our studies so far, surely it has been this one from the very words and lips of our Lord Jesus - John 14:6, Jesus said '*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*'. Will you not take Him and the work that He has accomplished for you on the cross? Christian, can I end with a challenge to you: look at the millions - yes, billions - that are in darkness today. I end with the question I began with: what are you doing about it?

## Chapter 11

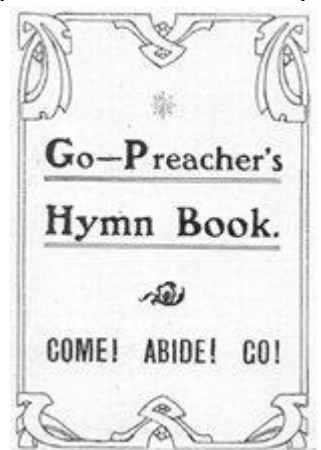
# "Cooneyites"

### Introduction

There are two passages of Scripture that I want us to turn to, just for an introductory reading. The first is in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, Paul has been instructing the church of Corinth about false apostles and to beware of them. He is warning the Corinthians that just because a man calls himself a Christian, or an apostle, or a teacher, or a prophet of Jesus Christ, it does not mean that they are authentic. In fact, he points out to them that this is one of Satan's most popular devices and plans and wiles, to transform himself as a so-called minister of the gospel. Paul says in verse 14 of 2 Corinthians 11, do not marvel: *"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers", or his servants, "also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works"*.

Then, if you would turn to 1 Timothy chapter 4, the apostle warns this young pastor of how, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith. We looked at Roman Catholicism in the previous chapter, and we saw from Jude verse 3 that this faith was once and for all delivered to the saints. It is not evolving from the time of the apostles, there are no new revelations to be added to it, it has been once and for all delivered to the saints. We are not to hone it or enhance it, we are to keep it, to keep it pure - that is the charge that we have. But Paul warns in 1 Timothy 4:1: *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry",* that is particularly applicable to our subject for this study, if you would remember that, *"Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth"*, and we end our reading at verse 3.

For our next consideration is the cult, and I say that advisedly, the cult of 'The Cooneyites'. Officially the Cooneyites don't have a name, they have never taken a name unto themselves and any names that they have been given have been given to them by outsiders. Yet they have been named as the 'Cooneyites' after one of their leading teachers, Edward Cooney. They have also been named as the 'Go-Preachers', and here you will see the cover of one of their old hymn books, which they themselves call 'The Go-Preacher's Hymnbook - Come - Abide - Go'. They take the title 'Go-Preachers' based on Matthew chapter 10:7, where the Lord Jesus Christ instructed His disciples in His day: *'And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand'*. But they take this statement 'as ye go, preach', and therefore they have been called the 'Go-Preachers'. In some parts of the world they have also been called 'The Two-by-Twos', based on Mark's Gospel chapter 6:7, where it says: *'And he called unto him the twelve', the disciples, 'and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits'*. We read the same account not only in Mark 6:7, but in Luke 10:1. Now, in fact, 'The Two-by-Twos' and 'The Cooneyites' have now become two separate groups, and we'll learn how that happened in the history of their origins. Nevertheless they hold many of the same beliefs, and we'll be looking at them in detail in this chapter.



Other names that they have are 'The Dippers' - some people thought that that was just for the Baptists, but no, the Cooneyites are called 'The Dippers' for their immersion baptism of adults. They are also called 'The Nameless House Church', because they meet not in buildings

like we do, but they meet in homes. Indeed they believe meeting in church buildings is unbiblical, and anyone who meets in a building like this proves to others around them that they, in fact, are not the church of Jesus Christ. They have also been called 'Pilgrims', 'Tramp Preachers', because although they worship in people's houses, they don't allow their preachers, their workers and evangelists to have houses themselves, and so they have been nicknamed 'Tramp Preachers' - and we'll see why they don't live in homes a little later in our study. They've also been called 'The Jesus-Way', and we'll see that this is the gospel that they preach: not a Gospel of salvation as such, the Gospel whereby God delivers you, but a gospel of good works whereby you follow Christ as your example, and effectively, if it is possible, you deliver yourself. They've also been called the 'Irvinites', after their founder William Irvine - and there are other names given to them right around the globe - but nevertheless they claim that they are the 'nameless ones'. Because they are the 'true descendants' of the church of Jesus Christ they take no name and they abhor denominational tags.

Now although they claim to have taken no name, they have used names in the past because they have been forced by the law of certain lands to register themselves as religious groups with the government. In the United Kingdom in 1914, when the First World War had broken out, all organisations were forced to register. The Cooneyites registered as 'The Testimony of Jesus', they took that name upon themselves. Then in the United States in 1942, around a similar time of war, they called themselves 'Christian Conventions'; and in Australia and New Zealand they called themselves 'The Christian Assemblies'. So they have broken their own rule, really, in calling themselves with these names, even though they have had to.

So the 'Two-by-Twos', this larger group, is found in many countries. It is estimated that there are between a quarter to three quarters of a million of these 'Two-by-Twos' worldwide. The smaller group, who more correctly could be called the Cooneyites, those who followed Edward Cooney in particular, are mostly found in Northern Ireland, in Scotland, in Norway, Australia and some of them in the United States. The way most people will encounter the Cooneyites, if they encounter them at all, is when they take up one of their meetings in a particular locality. They perhaps start what they call a Gospel Mission, and you may see a tent, or it may be held in a barn in a farmyard, and there will be a sign put up advertising 'Gospel Meetings', but there will be no particular name that's attached to it. Or you may come across them through an invitation that comes through your door, and the invitation usually betrays who it's from because it's very plain. It just gives the time, it doesn't give any name of a group or even the name of the preacher, and usually it will have splattered in large letters across it: 'Nondenominational' - so you know right away that that's also a pseudonym, if you like, for the Cooneyites.



This photograph is an example from many many years ago of one of their tent meetings, and you see the sign is just 'Gospel Meetings Nightly at 8:00, All Are Welcome'. In the run-up to these meetings it's been testified, right up to accounts that I have read from the year 2000, that the preachers during these missions might visit local churches in the vicinity where they're holding their evangelistic crusade. When they arrive in that place, they will sit in the church right throughout the church service, and then afterwards they will actually give out leaflets and invitations to the meeting. Usually they will refuse hospitality if there's a cup of tea afterwards, and when people try to engage them in conversation they are reluctant to do

so. They don't want to give any information about who they are, or what they believe, or even what they're doing. They want to try and attract people away from the 'mainstream' churches.

So that's probably how you will encounter the Cooneyites: in a tent or in a barn, they don't believe in church buildings - they quote Acts 7 and Acts 17, where it clearly says that God does not dwell in temples made with hands. They believe that the New Testament teaches that the church should be met in the home. Now, just like the other cults underneath the umbrella of 'Christendom', the Cooneyites believe that they are the true and sole descendants of New Testament Christianity. They claim exclusivity, that is something that over these studies we have found is peculiar to cults and false faiths that call themselves 'Christian'. In their preaching this can be detected, because they strongly condemn Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy and churches and denominations. Some of their other distinctive practices and beliefs, as you would suspect from what I've just said, are that they believe that their workers, their preachers and evangelists are the only genuine servants of the Lord around today. Their itinerant preachers, workers, Tramp Preachers, whatever you want to call them, are the only servants of the Lord around today.

They require, on the basis of Matthew chapter 10 and a couple of portions in Luke, that their preachers must forsake all possessions, give up everything that they have, sell it, and go out in poverty to serve the Lord. Though it is not practised in some instances, they mainly require their preachers and workers to be celibate. So they not only claim exclusivity as the sole descendants of the New Testament church from the apostles, they also claim that their preachers are the only ones who are genuine and preaching the true gospel. What has evolved from that doctrine or teaching is what they have called 'The Living Witness Doctrine'. It was developed between 1905 and 1907, and they went a step further by saying that people can only believe savingly through the preaching of their preachers, their workers, preaching their Gospel.

Now that, admittedly, later caused division within the group. We'll look at other beliefs that the Cooneyites or the Two-by-Twos have - but let me say before I go on any further that it's very difficult to assess this particular cult, because of their secretive nature. They never document anything, they don't publish their beliefs or their activities, and so it is very difficult to really get to grips with any dogmatic form of what they're teaching or what they're actually believing. But I hope that you will see that we can come to conclusions in relation to what the word of God teaches as to the falsehood of what their religion believes.

### **Origins**

Let's start by looking at the origins of the Cooneyites - or whatever name you want to call them. This has the sole claim, although I stand to be corrected, of being the only cult in the world that has found its origins in Ulster. That's almost unbelievable, and some might disagree with that - but we'll not name any names of other organisations that might be classed as 'cults' in Northern Ireland today! Although it began here in Northern Ireland, it began through a Scotsman by the name of William Irvine who was converted in 1893 in the city of Motherwell. William Irvine



is the gentleman in the middle of this picture with the Jack Russell; and on his left is William Gill who later became the overseer of the whole movement in Great Britain; and on his right is George Walker who became the overseer in the United States movement. Well, the middle man, William Irvine, joined the Faith Mission - that's right, the Faith Mission that you and I know. He was converted and then he joined the Faith Mission in 1895 to serve the Lord, and he became a Pilgrim, an evangelist. Then in 1896 he was sent to this green sod, to County Antrim, and later on he was sent to County Clare in the South.



To all intents and purposes, the records about his ministry are that he was a very strong believer, he was a strong preacher of the Gospel. The records show that he had considerable success in his evangelistic crusades and missions with the Faith Mission. Often in his crusades in these various towns in Ireland, he was helped by the mainstream churches and denominations - they held him in good faith and vice versa. Usually he would end up, whenever people were converted to faith in Christ, gathering a number of believers around him and seeking to disciple them, for he felt that the discipling in the main denominations left a lot to be desired. So, without realising it, William Irvine was actually setting himself up as a special leader, and gathering a group of people around him. It wasn't long before, in his preaching, he began denouncing not just some denominations in Christianity, but all denominations as being averse to the truth. So much so, that by the year 1901 the Faith Mission severed its ties with Irvine, and indeed he subsequently severed his own ties with all other denominations and ministry therein.



Now we move from William Irvine to another gentleman from whom the Cooneyites derive their name, Edward Cooney. In 1884 Edward Cooney was converted, as you can see from this photograph taken a little bit later in his life. After he professed conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ the testimony is that he won many people to the Saviour. He seemed to be used in his gospel ministry. But in the year 1897 Edward Cooney met William Irvine, and Cooney became a co-worker of Irvine's. In 1901 Cooney withdrew himself from his father's growing business in Enniskillen and became a full-time worker along with Irvine - one of these 'tramp preachers'. He, like Irvine, was particularly scathing in his attacks on the churches and the Christian denominations. He frequently directed his hearers to leave them all, to have nothing to do with Christianity as it's known in our day.



May I say, just in passing, that that is another chief characteristic of a cult. Although we believe that many of the denominations in the world today leave a lot to be desired, nevertheless one of the chief claims of a cult is that all Christian churches are defective - and they themselves are the one true and living church descended from the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ. So, by the year 1904 there were over 150 Go-Preachers - it is astounding when you consider the growth of this movement. This is not just members of the congregations, these are full-time evangelists, pilgrims and workers. In their first annual convention that they held in

Crocknacrieve, there were a great number of people gathered. I think that the above is a photograph of that conference or convention in 1904, and below is a later photograph of a convention in 1913. So, from that, the movement spread right throughout Great Britain and then later, as people emigrated, over to the United States and Canada. So those are the origins of the Cooneyites or the Two-by-Two preachers - but that is not where their origins end, because the story of their origins is also a story of their divisions. That's so important to know, because this is something that is somewhat covered up by the Cooneyites. They don't want anybody to know that, right from the beginning of the movement, there were divisions in the camp.

### Divisions

Through various teachings tensions began to arise within the group. Like many false prophets in false cults and faiths, Irvine's teachings began to develop. If you didn't think his doctrines were strange in the first place, they got even stranger - partly, I feel from my reading at least, through the influence of the Seventh Day Adventists. During one stage Irvine actually believed that he himself was one of the two witnesses that are written and prophesied of in the book of the Revelation chapter 11:3! That's right, if you know anything about prophetic Scripture and the book of the Apocalypse, you will know that Revelation 11 tells that these two witnesses are destined to be killed, and after their death three and a half days later they are to rise again. Irvine actually believed that he was one of these witnesses. I think it was through this doctrine that the greater number of the congregations wanted to discipline Irvine, but he refused that discipline and withdrew from the group. Believing that he was one of the witnesses of Revelation 11:3, he moved then to the city of Jerusalem in 1920 and lived there, deluded, actually thinking that he was a special servant of the Lord.



This photo is of William Irvine, I don't know whether you recognise where he's standing, but any of you who have been to the Holy Land will recognise that it's the entrance to the garden tomb. I don't know whether it's the real tomb or not, but nevertheless it shows and portrays that Irvine was in Jerusalem, and indeed he believed that he was one of those witnesses in Revelation. What the photograph doesn't show us is that he died in 1947, and three and a half days later he was still dead! Deuteronomy 18:22 tells us that the mark of a false prophet is one who prophesies something and it doesn't come to pass. Now I'm not wishing to be unkind, and if you're a Cooneyite or one of these no-name people, I don't want to offend you unnecessarily, but these are the facts. Admittedly this was after Irvine had split from the main movement, but

nevertheless what we have to recognise is that he is still the man who gave birth to this movement. He was the man who set its sails both doctrinally and in its practice. The Lord Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:17: *'Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit'*. He's either a false prophet or he's not - that is William Irvine.



If we turn our attention for a moment now to the divisions that involved Edward Cooney. Edward Cooney decided he didn't like the 'Living Witness Doctrine', that is that it was only through the Cooneyite preachers that people could be saved. He didn't like its teaching and its implications, and because of that Cooney was excommunicated as well in 1928. That marked the formation of the difference between the Two-by-Twos and the Cooneyites - so the greater number whom Cooney was excommunicated from became the Two-by-Twos, and a small minority group here in Ulster described themselves as the

remnant, or the outcasts, and they followed Edward Cooney and his particular teachings. That's the type of people that we have in this group here in Ulster. Cooney received their support and gained new converts among them, but his teaching finally led to conflict and confusion even among the remnant and the outcasts here in Ulster. 'Why is that?', you say. Well, another false teaching: he began to teach that souls could have a second chance of salvation after death. That was too much even for them, and so Edward Cooney sailed to Australia, and then in 1960 he died there and was buried - this is a picture of his grave in Victoria, Australia.

Now I'm pointing all this out simply to show you that the origins of this movement tell a story of divisions. There's a great cover-up within this group of how things started. Today followers of Edward Cooney or William Irvine are discouraged from investigating the early history of the movement, because the history of how it began as a schism from the main church of Jesus Christ tells a story of continual perpetual schism as they splinter into various groups within themselves. So we see the origins, and the fact that the story of the origins is a story of divisions. But what I really want to concentrate on now are the teachings of this group that we are calling 'The Cooneyites' just for convenience.

### **Teachings**

The teachings of this group mainly come from Matthew chapter 10, which is the Scripture that William Irvine based his teaching upon. These are the words spoken by the Lord Jesus first to His disciples, he also based it on the text of Luke 9 and 10 but for the sake of time we'll concentrate on Matthew chapter 10. We read there in verse 9 that Jesus said: *'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat'*. Now the Lord Jesus Christ spoke this to His first followers, and Irvine took these two verses of Scripture out of Matthew chapter 10 and the context that they are found in (which we'll deal with in a few moments) and developed a band of men around him, a band of followers who went preaching two-by-two. That's why they're called the 'Two-by-Twos'. They preached the gospel that you ought to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is our example, and therefore their gospel became known as 'The Jesus Way'. These tramp preachers lived in poverty, they had only one change of clothes, they took no money with them, they lived in people's homes. They followed to a tee, it would seem, the injunction that the Lord Jesus gave to the twelve, and indeed the seventy disciples.

Now if you are ignorant of the rest of the Scriptures, and if you casually read and study the word of God, you might think that this is tremendously commendable. We're going right back to the Bible, right back to the way that the Lord Jesus Christ did things! But let me show you again, if you doubt that the Cooneyites are a cult, that this is a classic way that cults use and abuse the Holy Scriptures. For instance, if you look at verse 5 of chapter 10, it reads: *'These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'*. The Lord Jesus at this particular time in His ministry actually claims that He was not there to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, but rather He was going and sending His own disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now here is a case in point at the very beginning of their interpretation of these verses, we see how they transgress it themselves - because the Two-by-Twos and the Cooneyites go to the Gentiles and preach the gospel! You can't cherry-pick Scriptures contextually! In the same context where we have verse 9 and 10 telling us to go two-by-two and so on, is the same place where Jesus told them not to go the way of the Gentiles but to go to the lost house of the people of Israel. Yet the Cooneyites are to be found in Ulster! Now, as we will see in Oneness Pentecostal teaching, we are not the lost tribe of Israel, neither are the Americans, but we are Europeans (or at least most of us) and we are Gentiles, yet they have come to us to preach the gospel. They're transgressing their own terms, if you like.

Added to that fact is that the message that the Lord Jesus gave them to preach in verse 7: *'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'*, was a preparatory message. It is not the Gospel that we preach today, it was the gospel that the kingdom of God was near, it was at hand in the very person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, as we go through Matthew's Gospel we find out that through their unbelief the Jewish people forfeited the right to the kingdom at this particular time. So the gospel that they preached is not the same gospel, indeed the only way you can preach this gospel is if the Lord Jesus Christ was with us in bodily form, right back at this particular time in Jewish history.

Well, add to that the fact that Matthew and Luke's commission also included the healing of the sick, the casting out of demons, and the raising of the dead - not figuratively but literally. Why is it that we do not see this happening among the Cooneyites or the Two-by-Twos today? In fact, as far as I know, Irvine or his successors never ever claimed to perform such great miracles and signs - therefore they themselves show that they have not fulfilled these injunctions that were given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His early disciples. We know that it was literal, the disciples said: *'Even the demons and the devils are made subject to us'*. Yet we don't see this happening among the cult of the Cooneyites today.

Add to all these facts in the context of Matthew chapter 10 the fact that this commission was a temporary one, the commission that we read of in verse 9 to *'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his hire'*. Not only was the message temporary and proprietary, but these injunctions practically were also temporary. If you turn to Luke's Gospel chapter 22, you will see in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself how He gives a contrary commandment to the same disciples - in fact, a commandment that undoes the commandment in Matthew chapter 10. Luke 22:35: *'And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one'*. Is the Lord Jesus contradicting Himself? Of course He's not! This is a different stage in the revelation of His ministry upon the earth, but William Irvine failed to see this, and showed himself as being ignorant not knowing the Holy Scriptures. Yet the Two-by-Twos or the Cooneyites continue to apply what our Lord Jesus has revoked and replaced.

You remember in our last study looking at Roman Catholicism, we saw that men have turned the word of God into the commandments of men, to observe the traditions of men they have made the word of God null and void. This is exactly what we find here. They're carrying over a temporary command, and they actually enforce it upon their pilgrims, their workers, as law. All you have to do, if you look to the Acts of the Apostles, the historical book in the Bible of the church of Jesus Christ, you see there that these injunctions were not obeyed by the apostles and by the early evangelists and prophets. In fact, to the contrary, when Peter was at Joppa he was there alone, and when he was sent for by Cornelius in Acts chapter 10 he went to Cornelius alone. Philip himself, the evangelist, was alone when he went to preach to the Samaritans. Incidentally, the seventy disciples of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 10 were told specifically not to go to the Samaritans, but Philip went, and he went alone! Then the Spirit, you remember, miraculously caught him away into the desert to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch, and he spoke to that man alone. Then he returned and he preached the Gospel of the Lord Jesus in many towns and villages, and he did it all alone. We see it also in the life of the apostle Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. When he preached in Damascus he preached alone, later when he was sent to Tarsus in Acts chapter 9 he preached alone. The Acts of the Apostles is full of different accounts of men going alone - they also go in twos, yes, but they go in threes, they go in fours, they even go in sevens and eights! In the Lord Jesus' last commission that He gave in Matthew 28 to *'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'*, teaching all nations what He had taught the disciples: there are no rules, injunctions

or principles laid down as to the number of people that ought to go in evangelisation of this world.

So I think you can see that the very basis of the Cooneyites or the Two-by-Twos is a dubious one, in fact it is a false one in the interpretation of the Scriptures that they use as their proof texts. As I said earlier, there is no statement of faith, and that's why it's so difficult: you can't go down and say 'They believe in number one category of faith, and declaration of doctrine, this, that or the other' - it's not clear. In fact, they will even claim that they don't have doctrine - and that's staggering to me. Nevertheless, we can observe certain obvious trends of beliefs from their practices and from what they preach, which we can clearly see are doctrines in this faith. As I've already said, they believe that they are the only one true church, they are a direct historical continuation of New Testament Christianity. Now I ask you: you be the jury, what is your verdict? You have heard about their origins: William Irvine, Edward Cooney, William Reid that we haven't mentioned yet. Do their origins sound as if they are the origins of the church right back in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost? Or did they begin in the 1800s? In fact, when you look through the whole of church history, you find that there is no record of any group like the Cooneyites until the 1800s. Right away that is a false claim.

They also claim, as we have said, that their preachers are the only true witnesses. Later on this 'Living Witness Doctrine' arose that told that it was only through their preachers that people could believe. Witnesses in the meetings of the Cooneyites testify how they actually preach that the Bible is a dead book. That's right! That God's word is dead, and it does not come alive until their preachers - and their preachers only - take it up and preach it forth. Let's look at 1 Corinthians 3, because God's word clearly testifies the opposite, 1 Corinthians 3:5 - Paul writing to this church says: *'Who then is Paul'*. Remember that there were factions there, they weren't Cooneyites and Irvinites and Reidites, but they were Paulites, Cephasites, Apollosites, and Christites. So Paul has to address these factions in what should be a unified church: *'Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase'*.

Now it's very clear that as ministers of the Gospel we must be holy, and we must become the gospel of Christ and be worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. Nevertheless the power is not in us, the power is in the Gospel, and the Gospel is in the word of God. James tells us in James 1:18: *'Of God's own will begat he us with the word of truth'*, God's word! We are begotten, we are born-again through the word of God. Doesn't Hebrews 4:12 say that the word of God is a two-edged sword, to the dividing of the spirit and the soul, to the dividing of the marrow and joints, it is the discernor of men's hearts. He is the God who gives that word, the God with whom we have to do - but here's the phrase that I want to give to you: it's said that God's word is 'quick'. That is an old-fashioned word for 'living', this is a living book! The living word, it is not dead!

In fact, how many men, right down to the Reformation and before have come to the knowledge of salvation by grace through faith when a preacher hasn't been within a thousand miles! They've just read the Scriptures, sola scriptura. Indeed, I was reading today that Charles Wesley came to a knowledge of salvation through reading Luther's commentary on Galatians 2:20. John Wesley, his brother, came to Christ through reading the preface of Luther's commentary on the book of Romans. The Gideons will tell you of how people in a hotel room, or in a taxi, or on holiday have just read God's word, and God's word has brought life. Peter said in 1 Peter 1:23: *'We are born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God'*. I think that's quite clear, don't you? Some of these people are very good people, very charitable and moral and ethical people, and I commend them in many respects for their mannerliness and their neighbourliness and their friendliness - but that does not dilute the

word of God. God's word testifies contrary to their teaching.

I could spend time on how these tramp preachers are taking the word of God to an excess which cannot be found within scripture, where Paul talked in 2 Corinthians 11:8 of taking wages off the church of Jesus Christ. Frequently he mentions the support that they gave him, and in Philippians chapter 4 he talks very directly about how the Philippians were so liberal in their support of the servants of God. From their preaching it is clear also that they're confused, or at least unclear, about whether the Lord Jesus Christ is God or not. Some will say He is the Son of God, but He is not God the Son. It's also clear from their preaching that they hold Him up as a perfect example, He is someone to build the pattern of your life after. Now in these studies many times we have looked at verses that prove the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, but I remind you of two in particular again: John 1:1, *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'*. Now the Cooneyites will twist that to make it look as if the Word is the preaching, but the Word is not the preaching, the Word is the incarnate Christ. The Word became flesh, verse 14 of John chapter 1, and dwelt among us, it was manifest, He was manifest. Then in Hebrews 1 it shows how the Lord Jesus has a greater name than angels, He is greater than the prophets, He is greater than Moses and Aaron. In fact, God says to Him, the Father saying to the Son: *'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever'*. He is God alright.

Then from their preaching you find out that they preach a salvation that is not through grace alone. They believe it is through grace, but added to that grace is self-effort. You see, that's the danger. The Catholic Church, as we saw previously, believe in grace - although their definition is a lot different than ours - and there are many others who believe in grace. But it's not believing in grace that makes the difference, it's grace alone. In fact, there's a whole book in the Bible that is written about this subject, and that is the book of Galatians. The Galatian controversy was about people who said: 'Yes, we believe the death of Christ saves you, but you've got to add to that circumcision, you've got to add to that the keeping of the law and certain rites and rituals'. You might say: 'Well, they've got the Gospel alright, they've just got a few other things on top of it' - but Paul did not say that. He said that their gospel is not a gospel! A gospel that adds to grace is not a gospel, just as a gospel that takes from grace is not a gospel.

The Cooneyite gospel will never give any soul certainty, for their salvation, if decided at all, will be decided at death - and outside their community there is no hope of salvation whatsoever. Those who have been to their meetings, even those who have been converted out of their numbers to the Lord Jesus, will testify to you that there is little or no attention paid to the shed blood, the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. In fact, to the contrary, they actually claim that we are continuing the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that He began on the earth. Do you know what they do? A classic cult characteristic: they pluck Acts 1:1 and misinterpret it, where it says *'of all that Jesus began both to do and teach'*. Luke was writing for Theophilus a record of all that Jesus began to do and teach, and they say 'Jesus began it, we carry it on'. But Luke is not writing about salvation, he's not writing about the efficacy of a sacrifice, of a propitiation, of a redemption that Christ purchased on Calvary. For when the Scripture speaks of that, we see very clearly in John 19:30, from His own mouth Jesus said 'Tetelestai, It is finished!'. The whole book of Hebrews is to show that there has been one sacrifice for sins forever, and Christ has sat down, He has finished the work. Did He not say in John 17 before His death, knowing He was going to Calvary: *'I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do'*?

Membership of this group is not through an inward receiving of a relationship with Christ by grace, but it's all like any other cult or religion: an outward conformity to their lifestyle. Though it even be the lifestyle of Jesus, it is not enough - why? Because you cannot live up to the standard of His lifestyle! It lends itself to extreme legalism. That's what people who have come out of this cult will testify to - it's all rules and regulations, it's not about grace.



## Conclusion

Now we need to ask in closing, very quickly: what is this gospel then? What is the gospel of the Bible? Well, the good news, 'gos-pel', is of the finished work of redemption that our Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross unto God. Paul testifies in 1 Corinthians 15, the first five verses, that he delivered to the Corinthians what was delivered unto him: *'that Jesus Christ died according to the scriptures; and rose again the third day'*. He shed His precious blood in order that in Him, and in Him alone, we might have redemption. Ephesians 1:7 says: *'redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins'*.

How do we benefit from that gospel? Well, the Bible is equally as clear, Romans 5:1: *'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'*. Ephesians 2:8-9: *'For by grace',* unmerited gift of favour, *'are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves',* it is faith that embraces grace, it is your faith and faith alone in Christ that will save your eternal soul. You are justified by an act of God, Paul said in Romans 8: *'It is God that justifieth'* - God justifies the guilty sinner who believes in Jesus. Righteousness is not within our gift, it is not within our ability, Isaiah says that our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the sight of God. If we are to be in the presence of God one day we need to have the righteousness of God, and the righteousness of God is found in Christ. Here is how the Bible teaches that we are justified: God, on the cross, imputed, gave to Christ the punishment of our sins, so that by faith in His death there can be imputed unto us the righteousness of God in Him.

That's the Gospel, Romans chapter 4 says: *'Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace',* to the end that the promise might be sure to all, *'But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead'*. God's righteousness is imputed to us by faith, Galatians 3:2: *'This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?'*. In fact, in chapter 2:21 he said: *'I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain'*. In other words, what was the point of Christ dying and suffering the wrath of God, and having your sin imputed to Him, if you could get there by the works of the law? Paul said in Romans 11: *'And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work'*. It's either grace or it's work, and praise God it's grace - amazing grace!

Jesus was asked by legalistic people in His day: *'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?'*. Jesus answered and said unto them: *'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent'*. Jesus did say: *'I am the way'*, but it wasn't the way to follow His example, for when Jesus said *'I am the way'*, He was going to the cross. He was going to heaven to prepare a place for us, and He did not say: *'My example is the way',* or *'My teaching is the way',* but *'I am the way, and to be with God you must be in me',* through the work of the cross and the power of His resurrection. No apparent holiness of life, whatever that may be, can compensate for the preaching of a different gospel.

These are nice people, they're good people, but they preach another Christ, they preach another message, and Paul said in Galatians that anyone who preaches another Jesus to you, though they be an angel from heaven, let them be anathema. This movement bears the marks of a cult it's sure: the authoritarian leadership, secondary matters that are elevated to positions of primary importance, an exclusive self-centredness, that they alone are the people. How they have distorted the Gospel and the great commission, this is characteristic of cults, but can I shoot an arrow of warning across everyone's bow? All of us are in danger of this. Walter Martin, who wrote that great book *'The Kingdom of the Cults'*, said this - and I think this is a tremendous statement - a cult is: *'A group of people gathered around someone's misinterpretation of the Bible'*. Did you hear that? A cult is a group of people gathered around someone's misinterpretation of the Bible.

Friends, Paul said: *'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness'*, and as the end of the age comes they will increase the more. Need I say, therefore, how important these studies are? Could I challenge you afresh to be where God's word is expounded, and to read the word yourself, and to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so.

## Chapter 12

# "Hinduism"

### Introduction

We will be using a portion of Scripture from Romans 1 in the course of this study, so do keep Romans 1 open before you as we look at this great world faith of Hinduism. Writing to the church at Rome in verse 20 of Romans 1, Paul says: *"For the invisible things of him", God that is, "from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them".*

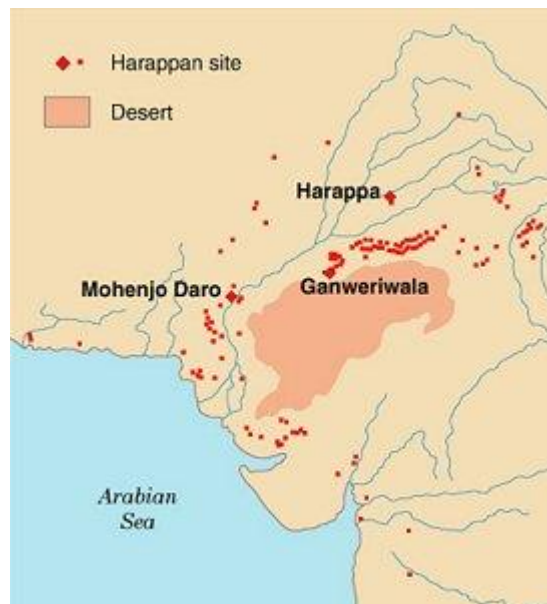


I suppose it could be said of many of the faiths and cults that we've been looking at that they are extremely complex, but I think out of them all Hinduism is one of the most complex and complicated religious systems on the face of the globe. I'm sure that you will agree with me and say a hearty 'Amen' to that at the end of this chapter, but do bear with our deliberations as we consider what Hindus believe, and indeed how their beliefs measure up to what the Scriptures teach. A scholar called Bruce J. Nicholls agrees with me on the complexity of this religion, in that he says: 'Of all the world's great religions, Hinduism is the most difficult to define. It did not have any one founder. It has many Scriptures which are authoritative but none that is exclusively so. Hinduism is more like a tree that has grown gradually than like a building that has been erected by some great architect at some definite point in time'.

### Origins

Hinduism is a religion that really has evolved through various stages. We first hear of it when the Aryan people, conquered the people of the Indus Valley in India. Essentially the designation of the name 'Hinduism' to a religion is a geographical one, rather than a theological one. It is first found in these people of the Indus Valley, around the area of the Indus River, and you can see a close-up of it in this picture. These Aryan people who invaded the Indus Valley, in their conquest of the people who lived there, brought their religion. It

was a very simple religion, simply a religion of hymns and prayers that were known as the 'Vedas'. 'Vedas' simply means 'wisdom' or 'knowledge', and they believed that they had wisdom or knowledge that would bring them to God. This teaching, this 'Vedas', this wisdom and knowledge, had many different gods and goddesses in its theology. But right there in the Indus Valley, many many years ago, the embryo was formed that would begin the religion of Hinduism, which would later spread right to the whole of India.



Now a comprehensive study of Hinduism would really have to be a comprehensive study of Indian history. You'll be glad to know that neither am I able, nor am I compelled to give you a complete history of India! But nevertheless, the development of this religion comes in tandem with the development of the Indian race. Historians have narrowed it down to four basic periods of the development of Hinduism within Indian history. The fourth period, which is round about 200BC through to 200AD, is where the beliefs that we would recognise today as modern-day Hinduism started to evolve. That is when Hinduism, as we understand it, was defined, in the fourth period of their history, 200BC to 200AD. As we saw earlier in the quote from Bruce Nicholls, there is no founder to this religion. It's unique in many of the religions and cults in the world in the fact that there's no one person that we can see its origins coming from. In fact the name 'Hinduism' was not one that it took to itself, but rather it was named 'Hinduism' in the 13th century by the invading Muslim Persians who wanted to differentiate between their religion and the religion of the Indians, Hinduism - the religion of the people of the Indus Valley.

Estimates vary regarding how many Hindus there are in the world today. Some scholars believe that there are 700 million Hindus, most of them restricted to the continent of India, but others who are right over the globe. That is a staggering figure: 700 million. However when we consider that Hinduism is one of the oldest religions in existence today, its precepts and principles dating back perhaps 4000-5000 years ago, it is not so staggering to think that it has taken over so much of our world, even if it's focused mainly in the Indian continent.

Hinduism has been described more as a way of living than a theological ideal or philosophy. In fact a former Indian President, Radha-krish-nan, said these words: 'Hinduism is more a culture than a creed'. That statement is important for our consideration, because there's a great significance in our study to those of us who are in the West. 'Why is that?', you say. Well, Hinduism, and certainly many of the philosophies and theologies of Hinduism, are starting to impact us in our Western culture and society. Because of its cultural rather than theological nature, Hinduism lends itself to making strides into other cultures. Hinduism, because it is culturally based, can embrace a wide variety of beliefs in this world.

### ***The Impact Of Hinduism On The West***

In fact once you start to study Hinduism, you find that it's always seeking to accept other beliefs, to embrace other faiths. It seeks to leave no god or no belief outside its religious umbrella, and it often will adapt, evolve and mutate its own doctrines for the sake of the interpretations and beliefs of others. It will assimilate and syncretise other beliefs into its own mindset. Now you might say: 'Well, so what?'. Well, the reason why I'm sharing that with you right at the introduction of our study is because I want to warn us all that we should never underestimate the cultural impact of Hinduism in our modern Western society. Whilst we welcome Hindus as ordinary people, and we don't want to be misconstrued as being racist - we are far from that - we want to be on our guard for the inroads of Hinduistic philosophy

and religious thought, entering not only into our society but actually into some of the beliefs and mindsets of Christendom at large. Now maybe you think that is ridiculous or even near to hysterical, but hopefully I'll make this clear as we go through our study in this chapter.

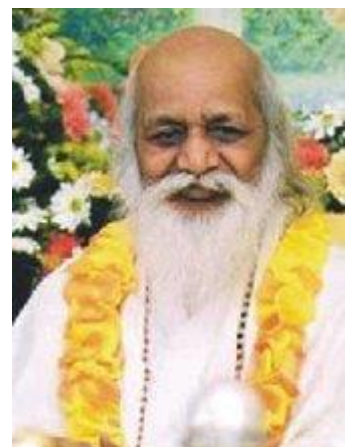
The inroads that Hinduism has made in Western society can be traced back to the year 1893 when, in the city of Chicago in the United States, there was a World Parliament of Religions. One of the individuals who attended that World Parliament of Religions was a man by the name of 'Vive-kan-anda', and this is a photograph of him. Vive-kan-anda so impressed the gathering of many religions with his own spirituality, with his view of Hinduism as a great universal faith, that afterwards - believe it or not - many of the Westerners, the so-called Christians in that gathering of the Parliament of Religions, were beginning to question the wisdom of continuing to send missionaries to the continent of India. They thought that this was such a great spiritual leader, who had a great concept of who God is, what spirituality is in its essence, that they actually questioned heralding the Christian evangel to the Indian nation.



Now from that Parliament of Religion, the influence of Hinduism in the West grew greatly, more so of late in our own generation. One prominent Christian leader is quoted as giving this remarkable and very piercing insight: 'The East is still the East, but the West is no longer the West. Western answers no longer seem to fit the questions. With Christian culture disintegrating and humanism failing to provide an alternative, many are searching the ancient East'. Can I quote that last statement again, because it is remarkable in what it says of our own day and generation: 'With Christian culture disintegrating', and we recognise that in our own society here, 'and humanism failing to provide an alternative', most people now are not atheists, 'many are searching the ancient East' for the answers to life's deepest questions.

This can be seen not just in the inroads that actual Hinduism is making in and of itself as a religious system, but also in many of the cults and New Age groups - many of which derive their ideas, their principles and beliefs from Hinduism. Some of them you're familiar with: Hare Krishna derives its origins from Hinduism; Transcendental Meditation, or 'TM', that involves yoga and meditation of various kinds; Osho, which is another religious cultic belief; 'The Divine Light Mission', another group or cult - all of them are a variety of beliefs that derive their origin from Hinduism, and many of these can be found in what we call 'the New Age movement' today. Now although this impact of Hinduism on Western society really began in 1893, the real inroads and revival that took place in Hinduistic belief in our society can be dated back primarily to the counterculture of the 1960s. I don't know whether you were ever a hippy or not, maybe there are some readers who still look like one! Nevertheless in the 1960s they had a key role in the growing influence of Eastern religions in the West. Really the counterculture in society in America and Europe during the 1960s was a reaction against traditional Western values. The hippies reacted radically against technology, against intellectual reason and rationalism. They reacted against materialism and economics, and they saw in the East an uncomplicated philosophy, a lifestyle that was much more simplistic and attractive, a radically different framework of belief. So they shifted towards this.

Now maybe you don't recognise this, but here's one example of how Hinduism and Hinduistic philosophy and belief has made inroads into our own thought processes. Forty years ago a 'guru' probably would have been thought of as some kind of exotic jungle animal, but today the word 'guru' is a household term. Most people know what a guru is: an enlightened master, a spiritual teacher. This word 'guru' comes directly from Hinduistic belief. Now another individual, you may have





heard of is the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. This man was more prominent than anyone in the 1960s as a guru popularising Hinduism through Transcendental Meditation. This is the father and the founder of Transcendental Meditation. During the 1960s his affiliation with celebrities helped to popularise Transcendental Meditation - for instance the Beatles practised it, the Beach Boys, the Rolling Stones, Mia Farrow and other top celebrities gained Transcendental Meditation a worldwide press and coverage that it perhaps would never have had if they had not embraced it. In fact one writer says that 'Transcendental Meditation did for Eastern mysticism what MacDonalds did for the hamburger'. That's a very good illustration: it popularised Eastern mystical belief.



This is those who are Yogic Flying, which is a part of Transcendental Meditation - I believe it's a supernatural phenomenon, even a demonic phenomena. But what TM did was it made Eastern mysticism, effectively Hinduism, more accessible to average people in our world. Americans embraced it even more when the instructors of Transcendental Meditation made the claim (note this carefully) that one could practise this meditation technique without violating or going against one's own personal faith or belief. 'You can do it to help you holistically in body, mind, even spirit, and not transgress what you believe'. Now many people argue

this way with me about some alternative medicines, some meditative practices, and even the practice of yoga, and they say 'Well, I'm just using it for my body, and maybe for my mind, but it doesn't transgress my Christian principles and beliefs'. There is a great warning here, I don't have time to go into all the details regarding this, but the spiritual health warning that must go over any meditation outside of Biblical Christian meditation is that ultimately the chief goal of meditation is to bring you into contact with a spirit world. If you're involved with any of these things, even yoga, you're opening yourself up potentially to spirits - contacting them, and even becoming a habitation for them.

Well, the Maharishi became so popular in America that there is the Maharishi International University in Ohio, which was founded by him in 1971 and continues to flourish. Young American boys and girls go there to study these theories of Transcendental Meditation and the like. Annually there are around 100,000 young Americans who go, year after year, to the coast of India in search of spiritual enlightenment. You might say: why is it all so appealing and so attractive? We see the reason why as we consider the beliefs of Hinduism and Eastern mysticism: they all comply with the spirit of the age, which is the spirit of New Ageism today in our world.

### ***Hindu Scriptures And Beliefs***

We'll see this as we look at the doctrines of Hinduism. Regarding Hindu Scriptures, there's not one 'bible' that we can point to and say 'That is the Hindu Scripture'. There are several 'Vedic Scriptures', filled with this wisdom or 'Vedas', 'Vedic Scriptures' they are called. There is one volume in particular that has come to be known as the 'bible' of Hinduism, and it is the 'Bhag-a-vad Gita'. You might hear Hindus talking about it, it's the best loved storybook of all, and it was written round about the first century AD. It is made popular in our day by the Hare Krishnas - you may see these group of people walking through the towns in our nation, with shaved heads and saffron robes, beating their drums and singing 'Hare Krishna'. These are a group of Scriptures, and added to them are many other varied Scriptures. There is not one single authoritative book or writing that we can look at and say 'There is Hindu doctrine'. That





is significant, because along with having varied Scriptures, Hinduism also has a great variation regarding their understanding of God.

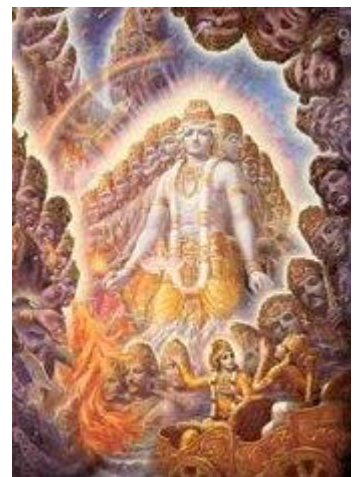


Really the most specific thing that I could say about their understanding of God is that God is an impersonal force. He is the impersonal force of the universe. Eerdmans' Handbook to The World's Religions, on page 172, defines their understanding of God like this: 'The individual Hindu may reverence one god, a few gods, or many gods, or none at all'. You can't get more of a variation than that! It goes on: 'He may also believe in one god and in several gods as manifestations of that one god. He may express the ultimate in a personal way or in an impersonal way'. So right away, I think the best way we can define Hindu theology is that it is a hodgepodge of all sorts of beliefs regarding God. It is a hodgepodge of polytheism - polytheism is 'poly' meaning many, 'theism' meaning 'god'. You will know that we have 'atheist' meaning no God, a 'theist' meaning believing in God, and then 'polytheist' believing in many gods. Proverbially Hindus believe in 33 million gods - now that's not literal, it's used as a metaphor to speak of the fact that their belief in gods

is limitless, they have many many gods. So they are polytheistic, but they are also pantheistic - 'pan' meaning earth, 'theism' meaning God. They believe that God is in all of nature. Hence they worship many of the animals of nature.

But not only is it polytheistic and pantheistic, but it is also a mixture of monism. Monism simply states that all the universe has one unitary principle that governs everything. That means that God is in you, God is in everything, and the one force of God is united in this whole universe - whatever religion you are, whatever culture or creed you come from. Let me try and simplify it for you - I must say that it's very difficult to simplify! They do believe in one creator god in a sense, they believe in what is called the 'Brahma'. Brahma is the creator god, he is the creative force of the universe, and all of these other gods in Hinduism are expressions of that one force. Therefore some Hindus claim to be monotheistic, they believe in one god - of course they don't, but yet there is this one force, the Brahma. So Hindus can worship several gods and believe that they're worshipping the one god. Some of them worship Shiva, which is the destroyer god; others worship Vishnu, who is the preserver god - and Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu form the trinity, if you like, of Hinduism. Vishnu's incarnations, which they call 'avatars', are manifestations of God that can come in many different forms. You've heard of Hare Krishnas? Well, Krishna is one of these manifestations or incarnations of the god Vishnu.

Then there are other Hindus that worship goddesses - we don't have time to even start to go into that. These manifestations of the Hindu gods, whether it be Brahma or Vishnu, are very rarely in human form, rather they're in the form of nature, of animals, in the form of the creatures of this world. In fact the god Vishnu is believed to draw near to man in ten different manifestations, ten different avatars. Among them is the fish, a fish god, a tortoise god, a boar. Other gods: one is like a half-man, half-lion, the man-lion god; there is a dwarf god. Krishna is a god in his own right, another Hindu god is Buddha - yes, that is the 'enlightened one', the founder of Buddhism, he is also a god within Hinduism. Then there is Kalhi, which is the tenth manifestation of the god Vishnu, and he is yet to come - the world is still waiting on this particular god.



Now maybe this is all double-Dutch to you in many respects, but one thing that you will be able to identify with is the cow. The cow is sacred in the Hindu religion, also the monkey and

the snake are revered - even rats are revered within Hinduism. In fact, there are some villages in India, and the temples care for and feed the rats at a cost of £2500 per annum. Vermin! I'm led to believe that 15% of India's grain actually goes to feeding these rats in the temples! The cobra is also worshipped, and annually kills 20,000 Indians because they seek to worship him. The sacred cow gets most publicity. There are 159 million cows in India, that is 20% of the world's total population of cows. The cow is believed to be the Mother Goddess of life, so much so that many Indians will actually drink the urine of the cow to purify the soul. Staggering, isn't it?



Many rivers in India are holy, particularly the Ganges. They believe that by bathing in the Ganges that they wash away, effectively, bad karma, and they improve good karma, if you like, washing away sins. In fact, one of these great festivals, the greatest ever was held in the year 2000, 'Kumbh' they call it - and there was expected 75 million pilgrims. In fact Channel 4 ran a series of programmes over that week called 'The Greatest Show on Earth'. It was claimed to be the greatest gathering of humanity ever in the history of mankind.



So we've looked at their Scriptures, we've looked at their understanding of God, and let's look just for a moment at what they believe regarding salvation. It should come as no surprise that there is no salvation in Hinduism as far as we as Christians understand it. In fact the Hindu believes in reincarnation, like the Buddhist. Salvation for the Hindu is to get out of this cycle of continual birth, life, death, rebirth, life, death, rebirth. Salvation is to escape into a kind of oblivion where you will be away from all this suffering, and you'll be in this nirvana of non-existence - submerged, as it were, in the Brahma, the force of nature and creation.

During the second period of India's history and evolution there came into vogue what we know as the caste system - you may have heard of it. This system simply states that there are four main castes in Hindu society. There are the Brahmins who are at the top, they are the priests or the scholars. Then there are the Shudra at the bottom, they are the slaves. There's no salvation for the Shudra at the bottom. It's said that a Brahman at the top, if he was dying of thirst, would not even take a drop of water from a Shudra lest he would be polluted and contaminated. During all those years of societal evolution there eventually arose 3000 subcastes in Hindu society. At the very bottom there are what are called 'the untouchables' - human beings who are seen to be inhuman, the dregs of society, not worth anything. They're just fit for living among the rubbish and the excrement of society.



Now I don't wish to offend you ladies, but the females don't figure at all in the caste system - so much so that many Indian mothers, when they give birth to a female baby, kill their child. The reason why I'm referring to this here regarding salvation is that the caste system has become a justification for the belief in karma and reincarnation. If you have bad karma you come back as a low caste, and you can see that this philosophy of society actually adds to the belief in karma and reincarnation. This shackles the whole of Indian society, I've seen it: people living at the side of roads in absolute abject poverty that you could not imagine. Some aren't even eligible for salvation, and if you are eligible for salvation the way to reaching that goal is through the four paths of yoga. The four paths of yoga are simply paths of knowledge,

paths of asceticism and working out your own salvation, and yoga is involved in it. You can see here a picture of a Hindu Sadhu, who is a holy man, practising yoga; and here we have the modern-day counterpart in the West that many so-called Christians even partake of.

These Sadhus, these religious holy men, believe that they can win their salvation - or at least they hope to win their salvation - by relinquishing all pleasure. They take, as it were, a vow of poverty, chastity and obedience. These Sadhu holy men relinquish all comforts, and they go away wandering around society. I can tell you it's a sight to behold: some attempt unbelievable feats in their efforts to kill the self nature within them. Some have been known to lie on beds of nails, others don't speak for years, others grow their hair to seven feet long braids, others stand on one leg like a stork for months on end. There are others who have been known to hold out their arm for months and even years until it has atrophied. The quote below is from a video clip of one Sadhu, and it shows you the type of awful situation people get into when they believe in a religion like Hinduism:



*[Begin video transcript]*

Narrator: *'Sadhus, Hinduism's holy men, find their own particular ways of devoting themselves to God'*

Sadhu: *'I have no idea how long I will hold my hand up in the air. This is the most difficult austerity of all to do. I hope that it will continue for the rest of my life. This is the hardest austerity in the world'.*

Narrator: *'Bhola Giri has been holding his hand in the air for 12 years. He believes by pushing himself to do this he is killing his ego to find a greater truth'*

*[End video transcript]*

### **Hinduism And The Bible**

There are variations of these Sadhus, but this man in particular is holding up his hand for 12 years. He believes he is killing the inner self. What we want to ask, as we've looked at Hindu Scriptures and their view of God and salvation, is: do our Scriptures fit into this system? People claim they do, even those in Christendom are starting to believe these things, and thinking that the Hindu god, the Brahma, can find its manifestation in our Lord Jesus Christ and in our God Jehovah. Some have even likened the Hindu 'trinity' to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit of Christianity. Does the Bible fit into the Hindu mould?

Well let's look at the passage of Scripture we started with in Romans chapter 1. We read in verse 20: *'the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse'*. Paul cites the fact that God is Creator of all men and all peoples as the reason why we are without excuse. He has already said in this portion that God has written His law on the heart of every man. He can be seen in creation, He can be seen in conscience, later he talks about the revelation of the Gospel through Jesus Christ - but in creation and conscience God's word says man is without excuse. Now if men get into such an awful state as Hinduism, the reason is that they have suppressed the knowledge of God in their hearts and in their society to such an extent that they don't even know who the true and the living God is. Verse 21 testifies to that: *'Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened'*. Verse 22: *'Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools'*.

Now this portion has nothing to do with Hinduism, but in a general sense this verse could be specifically speaking of this 'Vidas', this 'wisdom', this 'knowledge'. Men, taking upon themselves a way to God, have become fools. We see that the outcome is universal in



whatever religion you go to, verse 23: *'They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things'*. We see this in Hinduism perhaps more than in any other religion: worshipping animals as gods, it matters not whether they be manifestations of the one god or not. Here is the consequence in verse 24: *'Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves'*. I couldn't mention the sexual immorality and perversions that took place and still take place in the worship of Hinduism - but it is there. God gives people like this up - now I'm not saying that they're beyond redemption, I'm not saying we shouldn't send missionaries and preach the gospel to them, and I'm not saying Hindus cannot be saved, far from it! I'm saying that there's a progression here: to an extent, God allows individuals and civilisations to be given up when they give God up.

*'They changed the truth of God'*, verse 25: *'into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever'*. The Bible teaches us, not only in Romans 1 but right throughout Old and New Testament, that the one true and living God is the Creator God of Genesis 1:1, who existed before anything else existed. That rules out pantheism: before there was a world, before there was a universe, before there was another principality or power - that rules out polytheism and monism - there was God and God alone. He is always presented in Holy Scripture as distinct from His creation, the book of Numbers tells us that God is not a man that He should lie. Oh, what serious consequences there are when we reject the knowledge of the true Creator God, verse 28: *'Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient'*.

They broke the first commandment and the second commandment. They put other gods before Jehovah and along beside Him, and they fell down in idolatry and worshipped idols, figures and forms of created things. Our Bible tells us that behind every idol, whatever that idol be, is a demon. I say it very tenderly, as much as it's possible to say it tenderly: Hinduism in its essence is demon worship. In fact in their own book, the Bhag-a-vad Gita, in chapter 10 Krishna actually declares of himself, I quote: 'I am the prince of demons'. There it is in their own Scriptures! Whereas the Bible testifies that there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. He is God's Son - and the Greek word is unique that is used of Him, let's not drop it from any of our translations: He is the only begotten Son of God, God of God. He is not, as Hindus say, an enlightened holy man like one of these Sadhus wandering through India. He is God's very word, the expression of His person. He is God's way, He is God's truth and life.

'How can you be so certain?', a Hindu will say, or maybe someone from the New Age philosophy, 'It's only your word against the Hindus, it's your book against the Hindus'. Well, the fact of the matter is: we can be sure because the so-called Hindu truth is relativistic. It is relative - that means it changes under circumstances. But the Bible truth, the Christian truth, is absolute. The clarion cry of our age today is: 'All truth is relative, your truth is not my truth, and truth is different as you go from one civilisation and religion to another'. Yet they don't even realise that the very statement that they make, 'All truth is relative', is an absolute statement in and of itself. It's a nonsense statement, a self-defeating, meaningless statement; for if there is no absolute truth, you can't say all truth is relative. The fact of the matter is: relativism is logically unsatisfactory, it doesn't make sense in other words! It doesn't satisfy the intellect, you have to shut down your mind and leave it at the door of a Hindu temple when you go in. But that is not the case with Christ, John 1:17: *'For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ'*. He is the truth of God, He is the word of God manifest, the only manifestation of God's truth. In John 17:17 He said that His, God's, word was truth - that is the true and living God, the God of the Bible.

The second way in which our Bible doesn't fit into Hinduism is that sin is not an illusion.

Hinduism claims that sin is an illusion. In fact the man that spoke at the Parliament of Religions in 1893, Vive-kan-anda, is actually quoted as saying: 'It is a sin to call a person a sinner'. Did you ever hear a contradiction in terms like that one? 'It is a sin to call a person a sinner'. They believe that part of God is actually in you; man's greatest problem, they say, is that he doesn't believe or know that he is divine in and of himself. Is that man's greatest problem? Man's greatest problem is that he is far from being a god, as the Bible says: '*None is righteous, no not one*'. All of us, no matter what caste we may belong to, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. In fact Jesus in John 8:44 spoke to the Pharisees, religious men of the day, and said: '*Ye are of your father, the devil; and the deeds of your father you will do*'. My friend, Hinduism, like all false religions and confusing cults of the world, has no answer for sin. They might call it 'bad karma', but they haven't an answer for it either. How can anyone, in this day and age, reasonably deny the existence of sin?

Thirdly, salvation according to the Bible is available as a free gift upon a finished work. That's why the Bible cannot assimilate and syncretise with a religion like Hinduism. Salvation is available freely by grace upon a finished work, Christ on the cross. If you are even eligible for salvation in Hinduism - if you belong to the right caste - all you can ever hope for is an unending cycle of reincarnation that will perhaps, only perhaps, end up in nirvana one day for those of you with good karma. You'll just be puffed out of existence and all this suffering. Now friends, reincarnation is a very common belief in our day and age. It is supremely problematic. Let me give you two reasons why it is: one, if the purpose of karma and reincarnation is to rid humanity of its selfish desires (and that's what it claims to do), why has there not been a noticeable improvement in human nature after millennia of reincarnation? Why is it that we're all as bad as we've ever been? In fact, arguably, we're worse. If karma and reincarnation is to make us better, what's going on?

The second reason is an offshoot of that: if reincarnation and karma are so beneficial on a practical level, as Hindus claim they are, how do they explain the immense and ever worsening social and economic problems widespread in the continent of India, where this has been taught almost from India's inception as a nation? I've seen it: widespread poverty, starvation, disease, horrible suffering. Reincarnation and karma has been taught systematically in the nation of India, but it doesn't work because it's not true! Hinduism is false, but the Bible teaches that once you're on earth you have one life, and you will die once, and then you will face judgment. Hebrews 9:27: '*it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment*', there are no second chances, there's no reincarnating into another body to have another shot. 'How do you know?', you say. Christ has risen from the dead! That is not a theological theory or philosophical ideal, that is a historical fact. It can be proven historically. Acts 1:3 tells us: '*To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs*'. That same Lord Jesus Christ promises in His word that those who believe in Him and die, as He lives, they shall live also. To die as a Christian is to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord - but to die without Christ...Christ is so distinct, so specific when He tells us in Luke 16 that there is a hell. There is a heaven, but there's also a hell, and Jesus taught that the time and place that any man or woman - whoever they are, wherever they come from - will decide their eternal destiny is in the single lifetime that God has given them. That's why Paul emphasises: 'Today is the day of salvation'.

### **Conclusion**

I think you can see very clearly that Hinduism is false when we align it with God's word. But the fact of the matter is, most Hindus are still working for their salvation by one means or another. I do have to interject here though, and say that although their religion is very different from many Western faiths and cults, are they really that different? Most people in our world, one way or another, are still working for their salvation. Most Hindus have no reality of forgiveness of sins in their life, they're striving towards a goal rather than realising that something has already been accomplished in order to save them. The one major

difference of Bible Christianity with any other religion or cult in the world is that Christianity is the only faith that begins at the end. *'It is finished!'*, Christ said on the cross. We begin where Christ finished the work, and what a message to share with a world that is lost! Here's the answer to Hinduism and Buddhism: Christ, the sinless Son of God, took the suffering of the world, He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. Through faith we can be delivered from all those sufferings. The true enlightenment that God, the living God, gives is through His Son Jesus Christ, the One who said: *'I am the light of the world, he that followeth shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life'*.

My friend, you mightn't admit it as sin, but if you have the Hindu struggle with self, whatever creed or culture you have, the fact of the matter is: the only way to get rid of sin and self is the Saviour of Calvary's cross. Remember what Paul said, who was a religious Jew but he struggled with sin and self? In Galatians 2:20, realising that the Christ of God on Calvary died for him and was a substitute, and that his sin died with Him on the cross, he said *'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me'*. What a challenge to all our hearts!

Mahatma Gandhi once said: 'I shall say to the Hindus that your lives will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teachings of Jesus'. The fact of the matter is: all men's lives are incomplete until they put their faith in He who is the only Saviour. Have you done that? Child of God, what about the 700 million Hindus who don't even know there is a Saviour? May God bless His truth to our hearts.



## Chapter 13

# **"Oneness Pentecostalism"**

### **Introduction**

In John chapter 17 we have a prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ to His Father. If we read from verse 21 we get the context and the flow, the Lord Jesus prays for His people and asks: *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them"*.

I'm going to cover an awful lot of ground in this chapter, but to do justice to this study I feel it is necessary. The title for our consideration is really an umbrella term, 'Oneness Pentecostalism'. Those who come under the category of this definition could be the churches which call themselves 'Jesus-Only Churches', some of them title themselves 'The Apostolic Pentecostals', others acknowledge that they are belonging to the 'Oneness Movement'. There are others who call themselves 'The Jesus' Name Movement', and of course in our own province here in Ulster and indeed in Ireland the Oneness Pentecostal movement is found in the 'Church of God in Ulster'. Now, don't misunderstand who those folk are, they are not the Church of God that belong to the general Brethren movement, which sometimes are called 'The Needed Truth Organisation'. It is not them, although they call themselves the 'Church of God'. Neither is it 'Armstrongism', founded by Herbert Armstrong, which did believe the oneness doctrine but I am led to believe that they have recanted that doctrine, and many of their other heretical doctrines - I'm not too sure of the validity of all that, I haven't had time to verify it, but nevertheless that is what they claim.

What we're considering in our own context of Ulster is the 'Church of God', the most local one to us would be the Church of God at Glenmachen - but there are several right across the province. Now let me say before I go on any further: it is not my desire to offend anyone. In fact, many of you may have friends and families that belong to these Churches of God. I certainly have some very dear and good friends belonging to this movement. But as I preach the word of God - as I hope that you would expect of me always - I must preach the truth irrespective of persons, whoever those persons may be.

In reaction to the announcement of this study in the local press, I received messages which really asked the question: 'How can you lump Oneness Pentecostalism in among all the other subjects that you're considering in this Strongholds of Satan series, confusing cults and false faiths?'. The reason why people ask that question is because often they view the Church of God in Ulster and Oneness Pentecostalism in general as an orthodox group of people, because they do appear at a casual glance to be orthodox in their beliefs, particularly because of their strict monotheism. They believe in one true and living God, and that is the foundation of the Oneness faith and the Oneness teaching.

Unlike many of the other cults and false faiths, they do very strenuously defend the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in flesh. There is no doubt to them of the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, right away, in the eyes of many Christians, they don't see anything

wrong with the theology - on the contrary, many are even attracted by the theology of the Oneness movement. But the fact of the matter is, we must look at the claims of the Oneness movement itself, and the Church of God at Glenmachen styles itself in its advertisements and even on its website as: 'A friendly, evangelical, Pentecostal Church'. A friendly, evangelical, Pentecostal Church - now whilst it certainly is friendly, and I have no issue with them on that, and it caters tremendously for family and children and so on: is the rest of the claim, to be both Pentecostal and evangelical, an authentic claim?

### **Origins and History**

Well, certainly in their understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit they could be classed, in a sense, as Pentecostal. But if you study church history, you find that the Oneness movement and the Church of God differ significantly from classic Pentecostalism; on account, particularly, of their belief on the Godhead, this Oneness doctrine regarding the nature of God. Now, most people look back in time to the modern Pentecostal movement having its beginning in the year 1901 in a chapel prayer meeting in Topeka, Kansas led by this man, Charles Parham, who was a teacher at Bethel Bible College. Later, in 1906, there was the Pentecostal experience that burst onto the scene during what has been referred to as a revival meeting in an African-American Baptist Church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California - the speaking in tongues and baptism of the Spirit, as they claim. These were said to be the beginnings of the Pentecostal movement, and Pentecostal preachers and doctrines spread from that moment very rapidly.



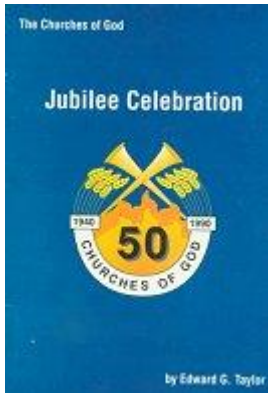
The Azusa Street Mission, Los Angeles, California.

Now the history of the Oneness Movement comes out of Pentecostalism, for in 1913 one very popular Pentecostal teacher by the name of R.E. McAlister of Toronto, Ontario, began teaching that the doctrine of the Trinity was untrue. He began to teach that Jesus was the only God, and the three manifestations, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, were just manifestations of the Lord Jesus. He also taught that, to be done correctly, baptism should be in the name of Jesus only. He went as far as to claim that through Acts 2:38, where it says: *'Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be*

*baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost'* - he claimed that through that text God gave him a revelation, a new revelation that people should be baptised in the name of Jesus only and not in the formula of the Trinity given in Matthew 28, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Well, from that teaching other preachers joined McAlister, and by 1916 Oneness views were being expounded by some of the ministers in the Assemblies of God movement - which is one of the largest, if not the largest Pentecostal denomination in America. Now, to the compliment of the AOG movement, they strongly rejected the doctrine of the Oneness. In fact, their Denominational Council that year, 1916, adopted a very Trinitarian stance in its statement of faith. More than 160 of those ministers among the Assemblies of God who confessed the Oneness doctrine were expelled. Those 160 expelled ministers formed alliances in order to propagate this Oneness doctrine, and one of the major alliances was the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

So, in a strict sense, they couldn't lump themselves among the Pentecostal denomination, although they are somewhat Pentecostal in their doctrine. But let's come now to assess the historical situation of how the church of God movement came into being here in Ulster. According to the Jubilee Booklet, published to celebrate 50 years of the Church of God movement here in Ulster, from 1940 to 1990 - the roots of the movement here are to be found in those men who attended what is called in the book 'The Belfast Tabernacle and Bible College' in the 1930s. Among them were two names which people in the Church of God will know well, James Forsythe and Gordon Magee - below is a photograph of Gordon Magee.



After the demise of this Bible College due to the difficult financial situation in the 30s, the men wanted to continue fellowship with one another, and eventually they rented a hall in Carnforth Street, off the Albert Bridge Road in East Belfast. To cut a long story short, the first leaders of that particular fellowship were Forsythe and Magee. Now, I hasten to add that at this time the movement was Trinitarian - it was Pentecostal but it was also Trinitarian. It was moving among Elim circles, Pentecostal churches, taking missions around our province. Eventually it started other works around the province in Ballymoney and Armagh, and of course in Devon Parade which later would become the Glenmachen church.

You might ask the question: if they began as Trinitarian and Pentecostal, what happened in their doctrine? How did this Oneness doctrine, 'Jesus Only' teaching, enter? Well the divergence begins in the 1950s. Gordon Magee travelled to the United States, I think it was for work purposes, and whilst he was away the denomination started to thrive here in Ulster in Craven Street off the Shankhill, on the Lisburn Road and in Whitewell. During the mid-50s Magee returned from the United States to help to develop and disciple these new congregations. But he brought with him from the States this new Oneness doctrine, which was foreign to the people in the province - not just the Pentecostals, but Christianity at large.

### ***What is Oneness Doctrine?***

The sad story is that all the churches, as far as I'm aware, embraced it - and that is the reason why it is in the churches to this day: they have Gordon Magee to thank for it. So we're going to ask the question: what is this doctrine of Oneness? Perhaps even more importantly to us: why should every Christian have a problem with it? Now there are several doctrines for us to consider in the Church of God and Oneness movement, I believe all exposing their claim to be evangelical as a dubious one. We're going to take the most time looking at this particular teaching of the Oneness doctrine.



What is the 'Oneness Doctrine'? The Oneness doctrine is simply the belief that there are no distinctions in the Godhead. That though the Bible speaks of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, they say those are just designations for representations of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, Jesus is the Father, Jesus is the Son, Jesus is the Holy Spirit, Jesus is all three. The belief espouses that in eternity past Christ was a uni-personal God. In other words, there was no Father as such or Spirit, there was just the Lord Jesus Christ. In time Christ begot a human Son, the human Jesus who was born in Bethlehem.

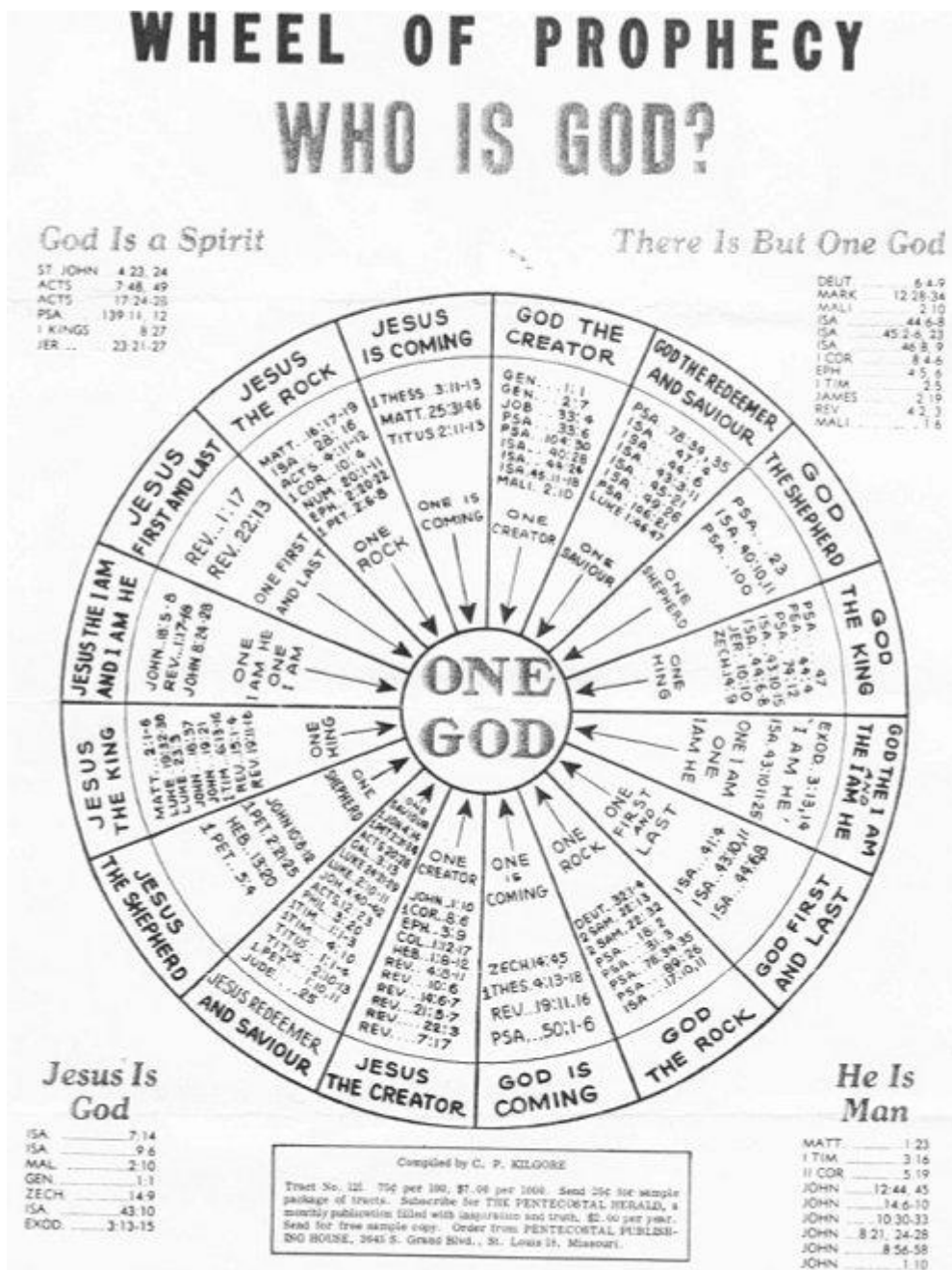
Let me break it down a little bit for you to help you to understand. They differentiate in this way: in time the divine nature of Christ became known as God the Father. That part of Jesus that was God became known as God the Father, but the human nature of Jesus, His flesh, is designated as the Son of God. So His divine nature is God the Father, His bodily human nature is God the Son. And 'Who is the Holy Spirit?', you may ask, well that is simply Jesus in a spiritual form dwelling in the midst of His people. They explain it this way: in the same way

as Jesus is Prophet, and Priest, and King; so the Lord Jesus Christ is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are different offices of the one person, Jesus: Jesus is the Father, Jesus is the Son, Jesus is the Holy Spirit.

Now because of this they actually deny the eternal sonship, which is a doctrine taught in the New Testament. They tell us that the concept of sonship only relates to the human nature. You can only have a son if you're in humanity, and therefore because this is a human term it speaks as a figure of time, it also speaks of inferiority. The Lord Jesus Christ could not have had this before He came into humanity - it was, in other words, part of His humiliation, coming to live among men as a man. I believe that that is very contrary to the teaching of the word of God, as we shall see later. But can I just fire a warning shot across everyone's bow? I believe the downfall of the Oneness Pentecostal movement is simply first and foremost this: they have tried to explain the inexplicable. They have tried to explain the inexplicable, that is God Himself, and they have tried to explain God to the satisfaction of man's intellect. Right away therein they fall down.

Now I make no apology for being a Trinitarian, but Trinitarians would not claim that their understanding of the Godhead is complete or exhaustive, because it can never be - because

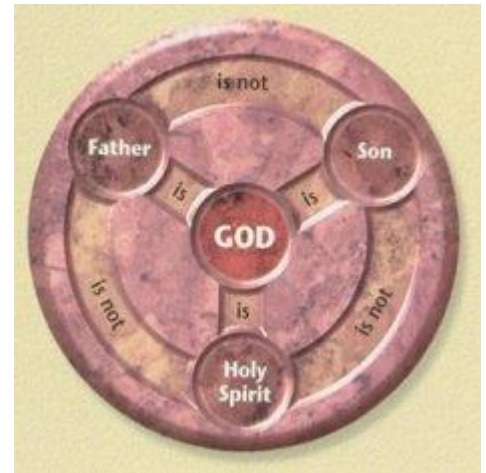
the first man to understand God has made himself God! The first fault, if I could lay any (and I'll lay plenty) at the door of Oneness Pentecostalism, is that in order to achieve a clearer and simpler understanding of the Godhead, they have adopted an imbalanced view. It is a simpler understanding of the Godhead, but I would say it has become a simplistic view of it because it does not deal with all the facts. Indeed, it omits and contradicts scriptural facts regarding the Godhead in order to create an argument.



'Wheel of Prophecy - Who Is God?', shows that the Lord Jesus is described in these many ways throughout the whole of Scripture. However this tract is only showing you the one aspect of the Deity and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if I had the opportunity I could produce a similar tract which was actually a sign that was used by the early church which is a more complete understanding of the Godhead - just to show you not only what the Godhead is, but what the Godhead is not. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father...and so on.

### **Misrepresentations of Trinitarianism**

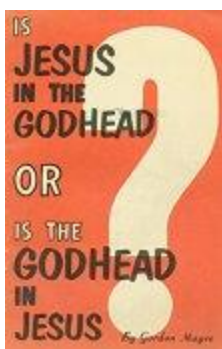
You see, if you only show half the picture, you will only have half the understanding. Not only do Oneness teachers misrepresent what the clear issues are, but from our perspective they also misrepresent what Trinitarianism is and what Trinitarians believe. In fact, I could only say that in their teachings they emit anti-Trinitarian propaganda that is nothing more than straw-doll argumentation. You know what that is: you set up an argument that you're going to oppose, which isn't the real argument at all, and you set about knocking it down.



Let me begin on that note, and let me dispose of some of these misrepresentations of Trinitarianism. The first is: the Oneness movement and the Church of God say that the Trinity is, I quote Mr Magee, 'The Rome Three-God Theory' - it is the 'Rome Three-God theory'. Now it is true that Roman Catholics believe in the Trinity, but as you study church history you will not find that it was the Roman Catholic Church that added the doctrine of the Trinity to Christianity. It has added many things, but that is one thing that it is not guilty of. In fact, the doctrine of the Trinity can be traced back to the apostles' doctrine, which is the teaching of the word of God - so that is a fallacy.

Then of course there is this idea that it's the 'Three-God Theory', but Trinitarianism does not believe in three Gods - that is a myth of the Church of God movement. The belief in three Gods is not Trinitarianism, the belief in three Gods is Tritheism, which believes that there are three separate Gods. But Trinitarians are monotheists, they believe in one true and living God, as Deuteronomy 6 says that *'There is one God'*. Though we believe in one God, we also believe that He has been revealed to us in Holy Scripture in the unity of that Godhead in three distinct Persons, yet one substance being God. Now I acknowledge that that is baffling, it's mind-boggling, we cannot understand it - but the fact of the matter is: we're not asked completely to understand it, it is revealed in God's word and we are asked to accept it and believe it.

The second straw-doll argument that they use is that the word 'Trinity' is not found in the Bible. Of course they're right - but does it matter that the word 'Trinity' is not found in the Bible, if the teaching of the triune Godhead is found therein? Incidentally Oneness Pentecostals use the word 'millennium', they use the word 'theocracy', they use the word 'incarnation', like we do - and none of those are found in the Bible, but we believe in them nevertheless. The truths of them are found in the scripture, what the name is does not really matter, because the teaching is in the word of God. So that's another false argument: that you should reject the Trinity because the word is not in the Bible.



Here is a third straw-doll argument that they use: they say Trinitarians teach that you will see three Gods in heaven. Now that is a lie! Trinitarians do not teach that. Gordon Magee - and I will be showing you plenty of quotations from him - actually says on page 16 of his book 'Is Jesus in the Godhead, or is the Godhead in Jesus?': 'Do Trinitarians imagine that there are two Spirits



in the Godhead, namely, the Father, the so-called 'First Person' Who is termed a Spirit (John 4:24) and the Holy Spirit, the so-called 'Third Person'? There are not two Spirits in the Godhead because 'There is one Spirit' (Ephesians 4:4)'. Does that confuse you? Do we believe in two Spirits?

Well, herein is the ignorance (and I say that politely), the ignorance of the Church of God and Oneness Pentecostal movement regarding not only the English translation of the word of God, but the original languages. Many will know that the Authorised Version is wrong in its translation of John 4:24, because it should read as it does in the Greek: 'God is spirit', not 'is a spirit', 'God is spirit'. It is speaking not essentially of a person being God as a spirit, but it's talking about the nature of God - that He is not material, that He is not physical like us. Colossians 1:15 tells us: '*God is invisible*', so does 1 Timothy 1:17. John 1:18 says: '*No man has ever seen God*', 1 John 4:12 says the same. First Timothy 6:16: '*Nor shall any man ever see God*'. It is an invention of the Church of God to say that Trinitarians believe you'll see three Gods in heaven. God is spirit!

Now we want to take time to look at Gordon Magee's book. The reason why we're going to look at it in depth is because I don't want to misrepresent the argument of the Church of God or Oneness Pentecostalism, and in order not to do that I'm going to use his book extensively. But let's start with the Scriptures, I want us to turn to Genesis chapter 1. I want to start with the Old Testament, and I hope you'll give me the time and the liberty to really explore this subject. I'll not be able to give you an exhaustive teaching on the doctrine of the Trinity, although that will be inferred in everything that we say - but I want to show you the fallacy of the doctrine of the Oneness that the Church of God teaches.

Genesis chapter 1:26, and right away we're going to see here that the Old Testament does not present a uni-personal God as the Oneness Pentecostal movement says. Chapter 1:26: '*And God said, Let us*', plural, '*make man in our image*', plural, '*after our likeness*', plural, '*and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*'. Now right away the Church of God will say: 'Well, that's the angels. God is saying to the angels, 'Let us make man in our image''. But I ask you: did the angels and God make man? Did the angels help God out in the creation? I ask you again: did the angels and God make man in the image of God and in the image of the angels? He did not. In fact in verse 27 clearly: '*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them*'. It is very clear that God made man in His own image, and the plural 'us' and 'our' is signifying the plurality in the personality of the Godhead right back at the very beginning of creation.

Now maybe you think this is an isolated proof text, but let's turn to Genesis 11 to the Tower of Babel. Verse 7: '*Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech*' - let us go down, and let us confound their language that they may not understand their speech. Now throughout this whole story of the Tower of Babel, though the Oneness Pentecostal movement again say God is speaking to the angels, there are no mentions of angels at all in this portion. In fact, contextually it says that the LORD came down - further on in verse 8 and verse 9: '*The LORD came down*'.

So right away we see that the plural is used of the Godhead, and the angels don't come into it at all. Now if we were to go back to Genesis 1:1 we see that the triune Godhead is also reflected in the literary structure of the creation narrative: '*In the beginning God*', there is God, '*And the Spirit of God hovered above the waters*', verse 2, and then it is the Word of God throughout this chapter that is bringing creation into being. You would almost think that this was a replica, which I believe it is in the mind of John, of John chapter 1 - where Christ is portrayed as being God, the Word who is God, but He is also the Word that is with God. He is the One who has brought creation into being, He is God's Word, He is God's Light, He is God's



creative instrument.

We also see the triune Godhead in literature in the Old Testament in the Aaronic blessing. Turn with me to Numbers chapter 6:24, you're familiar with this: *'The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace'*. These three verses outline a triune blessing.

Then we come to Isaiah 6:3 where you have the angelic hosts who cry: *'Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory'*, which is also echoed in Revelation 4:8. *'Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD God Almighty: the whole earth is full of his glory'* - a triune literary usage.

I want us to turn to Isaiah chapter 9, for here is one of the chief proof texts of the Oneness moment. Isaiah 9:6, speaking prophetically of the Lord Jesus: *'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace'*. Right away they say: *'There it is, Christ prophetically is designated as being the everlasting Father'*. Now if you have a good marginal reference Bible, you will see that that *'everlasting Father'* can be translated *'Father of eternity'*. It literally means in the Hebrew *'one over eternity'*, or *'the eternal one'*. I ask the question: in an Old Testament context does that mean *'God the Father'*? Clearly it doesn't, clearly it's speaking of the eternity of God and it has nothing to do with the Son's relationship with the Father and vice versa. It's speaking again of the eternal nature of God. It's not speaking of His designation of Jesus being God the Father.

This is the same mistake that the Oneness movement make with John 10:30, where Jesus says: *'I and the Father are one'*. They say: *'There you are, the Lord Jesus is calling Himself the Father'*, but note that He does not say *'I am the Father'*. He says *'I and the Father are one in nature and in substance, we are God'*. In fact He uses the neuter in this word *'one'*, in other words He's saying that we are substance with one another, *'I and the Father are one in substance'*. He would have used the masculine if He meant that He was the Father, but He's talking about the nature of being God. Whilst He says He is one with the Father, He distinguishes Himself from the Father - *'I and the Father are one'*.

Now of course the Old Testament is only a partial revelation, and the persons of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - are made more distinct and clearly distinguished in the New Testament. In fact, over 200 times in the New Testament Jesus speaks of the Father other than Himself, as another person. Over 50 times in the New Testament the Father and the Son are distinguished in the same verse. Let me show you some of these verses, turn with me to Matthew 3:16. Here we see the three persons of the Godhead distinguished: *'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'*.

Now the explanation that the Oneness movement gives of this is embarrassing, because some even go as far as saying that the Spirit did not come upon the Lord Jesus Christ, it was only a symbol of the Spirit. But here we have the Son in the water being baptised, the Father speaking from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descending as a dove upon the Lord Jesus - and all the Gospel writers say that the Spirit descended on the Lord Jesus Christ. It says Jesus saw the Holy Spirit descending as a dove. The question I must ask the Oneness movement is: is the voice that spoke from heaven the divine nature of Christ? Was Christ, as it were, throwing His voice into heaven and out again to speak these words?

### **Other Contradictions Of Scripture**

There are other examples of how the Oneness movement contradicts Scripture. Another example is in regard to the sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's spend a bit of time on their teaching in regard to His eternal sonship. They believe that the sonship is the human part of the Lord Jesus, the flesh. I'll give you a quotation from Magee's book, 'The Son Is The Flesh': 'What part of Him was the Son? The angel told Mary, 'Mary that holy thing which shall be born of thee is the Son'. Paul told the Galatians, 'God sent forth a Son made of a woman'. The Son is the flesh or humanity'. They're very clear on that belief, 'The Son is the flesh', yet the book of Hebrews abounds with evidence against this.

Look at the book of Hebrews 1:1: *'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds'*. When did the Son make the worlds? You don't mean to tell me that the Son made the worlds before Bethlehem do you, before He was born into humanity? Because it says clearly that the Son made the worlds, God made the worlds through the Son - was it after Bethlehem? Then they will say in retort to that question: 'Well, He made them through the One who would become the Son'. But if you look at verse 8 it clearly says: *'But unto the Son God saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom'*. He said it clearly to the Son.

Maybe that's not enough for you? Turn with me to Hebrews 5, for here we have this text in Hebrews 5:7: *'Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered'*. Now you might say: 'What does that prove?'. 'Though he was Son', literally, 'Though he was Son, yet learned he obedience'. Well, in the Greek that is what is called the concessive clause, which simply means 'in spite of him being Son he learned obedience'. In spite of Him being the Son of God, divine, He learned obedience.

Now if Sonship just means 'humanity', what does this verse mean? Because it simply doesn't just mean 'because He was the Son', or 'as the Son he learned obedience'. Here it is clearly referring to His deity, and concessively showing that even though He was the Son of God, yet learned He obedience. It's proving the opposite, that sonship signifies Deity.

Now if you turn to verse 3 of chapter 7 we have it in another figure, this Old Testament figure of Melchisedec, who is a type of Christ. He is a type simply because his priesthood would seem to never cease - verse 3: *'Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually'*. How was Melchisedec made like unto the Son of God? He did not have beginning of days nor end of days, the Son of God is without beginning or ending. Yet the Church of God teaches that He had a beginning as a Son in Bethlehem. It even goes as far to teach from 1 Corinthians 15:27-28 that His Sonship will have an end when He offers up to God the kingdom - even though the very verse tells us that He Himself, the Son, will again be subjected to the Father. In Hebrews 7:28 we see that the Lord's priesthood is an unchangeable one: *'For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore'*. He has an unchangeable priesthood.

Let me illustrate for you the devious argumentation of the Church of God on this very issue. On page 17 of Magee's book, it says that Trinitarians teach that Christ had two fathers: 'A classic example of the confusion of thought implicit in Trinitarian belief is seen when, under questioning, they are obliged to confess that Christ must have had two Fathers, namely, the First Person of the Trinity, to Whom He prayed (they say), and the Holy Spirit, Who performed the miracle act of paternity in the virgin womb'. Maybe you're sitting there

thinking: 'Well, is that not right?'. This is how they convince people, with this false argumentation, but what they're doing is they are confusing the divine sonship of Christ with the human sonship of Christ. They are not one and the same thing. The divine sonship of Christ is begotten of God eternally, but the human sonship of Christ was begotten in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit in time - it is not one and the same thing, no matter what Gordon Magee may say. Do not confuse the divine sonship and His human sonship.

Then not only do they contradict the Scriptures in regard to the sonship, but they contradict the Scriptures in regard to the cross. On page 28 of Magee's book we read this, 'My, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?': 'Would to God Trinitarians would carefully consider the logical conclusions of their objections before making them. Think of it, if Jesus was actually forsaken by God then He is not God. The Trinitarian explanation of this verse, namely, that here we see one Divine Person forsaking another, compels us to ask where then is their professed belief in the unity of the Godhead'. He goes on to say, if Jesus was actually forsaken of God, then He is not God, but God did not forsake Him - Jesus only felt forsaken! They quote John 16:32: *'Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me'*. Very conveniently, they forget to admit that that was said before Calvary.

Yet Magee states: 'He meant to be sin-bearer, He had to feel God-forsaken'. He's saying that when Christ said: 'My, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?', what He meant was, as our sin-bearer He had to feel forsaken. But mark that in Matthew 27:46 Christ is recorded not as saying 'I feel forsaken', but *'My, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'*. Now I urge you to think about this just for a moment or two: if Jesus Christ said 'My, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?', that means that His feeling to be forsaken was a mistaken feeling, because He wasn't really forsaken. If He was only meant to feel forsaken, that means He wasn't forsaken on the cross, and that means Christ entertained wrong ideas on the cross. They're implying that in the midst of man's redemption Christ had mistaken feelings about what was going on. He felt forsaken, yet He wasn't forsaken! I say to you: do you know what the implications of that are for us? If He only felt forsaken, you can only feel saved! You can't really be saved.

Isaiah 53, of course, tells us that the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all, the Lord was pleased to bruise Him. I ask the question: was this one divine part of Jesus laying punishment on another divine part, on His human part? Do you know what it also means? It means that the part of Christ that actually bore our sins was not God. We are agreed that God cannot die, and this is the mystery of Calvary - as one has said: 'The man that died was God, but yet God did not die'. As Luther said: 'God forsaking God, who can understand it?'. But please do not deny what the Scriptures do teach in trying to explain it! Was your sin only put on half of Jesus? Was it only laid on His human nature, on His human part?

They deny the Scriptures in regard to the cross, and then in regard to Christ's prayers they also contradict the Scriptures. We ask the question: when Christ was praying, was He praying to Himself? Magee answers the question: 'No, He wasn't', but then in fact he goes on to teach in his book that He was. On page 11 he recites this conversation with a Trinitarian. The Trinitarian says, as you see:

*'The Trinitarian brother asked, 'Then did not He pray to Himself?'*

*'No! He did not pray to Himself!'*

*'What did He do?'*

*I replied, 'In His human nature He prayed to His Divine nature'.*

*'Well', he said, 'that is praying to Himself!'*

*'You can have it that way, if Jesus were an ordinary person I would agree with you that it is praying to Himself. But, Jesus was not ordinary - Jesus was extraordinary - Jesus was God and man!' If Jesus Christ had a dual nature why then should we think it incredible that he should perform a dual role?'*

He even contradicts himself. He is saying that Christ's human nature prayed to His divine nature. However, from the reading in John 17 that we read, if you read the rest of the chapter, as He prays the human nature of Christ calls Himself 'I' - yet when He addresses His Father, 'My Father' as He says, He addresses the Father as 'Thou'. He implies in both that these are two personalities, that He is not praying to Himself or a divine part in Himself, He is praying to another.

We see this in regard not only to Christ's prayers, but Christ's commission - because Christ is sent, and He declared that He was sent from the Father. He left the Father, and He was going back to the Father. In John 16:28 He said: *'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father'*. Two personalities are implied in saying: 'I am going to the Father'. I ask the question: if the divine part of Christ is the Father, why is it that He never uses the word 'I' when He refers to the Father? Why does He always use the word 'You'? Why does He never speak as the Father, and say 'I sent the Son'? Because He didn't send the Son.

In fact in Gethsemane you see it again, two personalities - He says 'Not my will, but Thine be done'. The existence of two wills, therefore there must be two personalities. To leave someone, to talk to another, to have a different will from another, insinuates two personalities. Some of the particularly troublesome texts to Oneness believers are those that speak of the love, that we were reading of in John 17, the love that existed between the two persons, the Father and Son. How can two natures love one another? Natures cannot love one another, natures cannot speak to one another, only persons can love one another, and people can speak to one another, and people can leave one another and go towards one another.

Here's a text for you if you ever want one to present to a Oneness believer - John 6:38: *'I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me'*. Now here He is not speaking as a mere man, because the Oneness people believe that it's only His humanity that is the man part. He's speaking of coming down from heaven, but His human nature did not come down from heaven. So even when he's speaking of God, He distinguishes Himself from the Father: 'I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will', distinguishing from the Father, 'but the will of him that sent me'.

John 8, here's a classic one, see how the Lord designates between the Father and the Son here. In verse 17 He says: *'It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me'*. Now either He's being dishonest with the Old Testament, or He doesn't understand the Godhead Himself. He is designating Himself and the Father as two witnesses, two people whose witness is true. All you need to do is look at John 1:1-2 to show that Christ was God by nature, yet He was also distinct from God in the sense that the Word was with God and the Word was God. John reiterates the same fact in 1 John 1:2: *'For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us'*. The eternal life that was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

Now what does the Church of God have to say about that? John 1:1, Magee says: 'I can well remember a dear brother quoting this verse to me to prove that Jesus, the Word, was a distinct Divine Person from the Father. I asked him, 'Who is your God?'. He answered, 'The Trinity'. Now here we see the devious argumentation of the church of God: 'I said, 'Let us read the verse in the light of your answer - in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the Trinity and the Word was the Trinity''. But the Trinity is not God, the Trinity is an understanding of the nature of God. What this verse is talking about, when it talks about the Word being God, is the nature of God and the substance of God - not the personalities of

God. In his devious argumentation he goes on and says: 'The meaning of the verse became clear to him, and it is this - the Word was God'. Now mark this: 'Any idea that the Word was a distinct personality from God is destroyed by John when he emphatically declares, 'and the Word was God'. I know of no stronger Oneness verse in the whole Bible. How can we make a difference of person between God and His Word?'. Now that is utter nonsense! You could equally say that the statement 'And the Word was God' was destroyed by John's statement 'the Word was with God', but they are the two sides of the coin that the Oneness belief denies.

In fact Philippians 2:6 says Christ was in the form of God in eternity past: *'He thought it not robbery to be equal with God'*. He claimed to be God, and we know that, for the Pharisees were going to stone Him for claiming to be such - but never did He claim to be the Father. He may have claimed that the Father was revealed in Him, in the essence of His divinity and deity, but He never claimed to be the Father. The scripture always distinguishes Him from the Father. Many years ago a well-known Church of God Pastor said that he had never heard a Oneness advocate explain John 14:23 satisfactorily, maybe that's why he has converted to Trinitarianism himself. John 14:23 says: *'Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him' - we will come unto him - 'and make our abode with him'*.

In regard to His commission they contradict the Scriptures, in regard to the Spirit they do the same. In John 14:16, Jesus said: *'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever'*. Jesus is not the Spirit, in fact the Spirit is sent by Jesus and sent by the Father. If you want a verse for that, John 16:7, 8, 13 and 14.

In fact, do you know what this Oneness teaching is? It is an ancient heresy known in the early church as Sabellianism. It was also known as Modalism, it was found in the late first and early second century in the church. Not, as the Church of God claims, was it introduced in the year 325AD at the Council of Nicea by Constantine - that is a lie. In fact many of the early Christian apologists and fathers quoted their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, and indeed in apologetics defended the doctrine of the Trinity against some of these selfsame errors.

The doctrine of the Trinity is a profound mystery, but if it was a human invention, man who invented it would be able to explain it - but man can't explain it, because it is the Godhead!

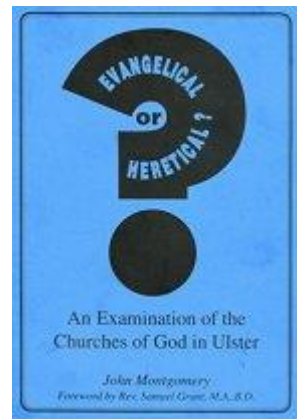
### **Salvation And Baptism**

Very quickly, let's briefly look at the salvation and baptism teaching of the Church of God, which is also erroneous. Their claim to be evangelical falls flat when we consider this, because they teach us that we must be baptised in the name of Jesus, according to Acts 2:38, and not the formula commanded by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 28.

Now I believe their aversion to the Trinitarian baptismal formula is only due to their aversion to the doctrine of the Trinity itself. They are failing to recognise that in the historical book of the Acts of the Apostles (I emphasise that it is an historical book) when baptism 'in the name of Jesus' is mentioned, that phrase 'in the name of' in scripture often means 'in the authority', or 'by the authority of'. It's nothing to do with the baptismal formula, it's to do with the authority of the One who is giving the command to baptise in the Gospel's name.

In fact evidence from the Didache, which was the teaching of the twelve apostles that was passed down into this writing of the late first and early second century, it is clear that baptism was in the triune name of the Godhead. Justin Martyr in AD 153 declares the same, yet the Church of God to this day will re-baptise you if you were baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. In J.A. Connolly's book, he is the pastor of Glenmachen Church of God, 'Water Baptism - Obligatory or Optional?', he says on page 10: 'Baptism is essential to a full and complete New Testament gospel experience'. On page 20 he

says 'Faith and baptism are inseparables'. On page 23, rhetorically he asks the question: 'Is baptism essential to salvation? The only answer is that baptism is essential to a full gospel experience as any other relevant Bible experience is essential to salvation'. I recommend John Montgomery's book to you. In his critique of the Church of God he says: 'All these statements come perilously close to baptismal regeneration'.



Whilst we do agree on the importance of baptism in the New Testament, and indeed how intrinsic it was to Gospel preaching in the early church, we must maintain that salvation is by grace through faith and not of works - that's what Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches.

### ***Soul Sleep, Annihilationism and British Israelism***

Oneness Pentecostalism also has erroneous teaching on soul sleep and annihilation - do you know this? They misuse and misquote certain obscure passages from the Old Testament, and they believe from it - mainly the book of Ecclesiastes - that the soul sleeps until the resurrection. Some of them seem to also believe that the impenitent, those who die without Christ, will be annihilated. Conditional immortality is taught - yet what did Paul teach? *'We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord'* - at home with the Lord! The dying thief was told: *'Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise'*. I don't know what they do with Luke chapter 16, a man in hell and a man in Paradise. That disproves right away any doctrine of soul sleep and annihilationism.

I don't have room to deal with this one, but there are the doctrines of British Israelism and food laws. Suffice to say that Oswald Saunders said in his book 'Heresies Ancient and Modern', I quote: 'The theory of British Israelism is not supported by any scientist, historian or linguist of repute'. It is nowhere to be found in the Bible. Regarding the food laws, I give you a warning - 1 Timothy 4:3-4 tells us that false teachers will be characterised by these traits: *'Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving'. 'But meat commendeth us not', 1 Corinthians 8:8, 'to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse'.*

### ***Conclusion***

Can I remind you of a statement I give you from Walter Martin's book 'The Kingdom of the Cults' two chapters ago when we looked at the Cooneyites? He said: 'A cult', or a false faith, 'starts with a group of people gathered around someone's misinterpretation of the Bible'. A group of people gathered around someone's misinterpretation of the Bible, whether it's Gordon Magee's, whether it's Joseph Smith's, whether it's Brigham Young's - whatever the man's name may be matters not to me. If they plainly deny Scripture in order to comply with their scheme, they are a false prophet. I say to you now, and to the evangelical church at large: no matter how attractive their services may be, how crowded their churches are, and how seemingly successful their preaching is - Isaiah 8:20 says: *'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them'*. There I rest my case.



## Chapter 14

# "Freemasonry"

### Introduction

We'll be looking at a number of Scriptures throughout this chapter - but we'll take 2 Corinthians 6:14 as an introductory portion, and light will be shed on it as we go through our study. Paul the apostle is writing to believers in Corinth many of whom had, after their conversion, a dilemma regarding their association in their previous life with paganism. Here we have Paul's instruction and injunction to them as new-found believers in faith in Jesus Christ, verse 14: *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people"*.

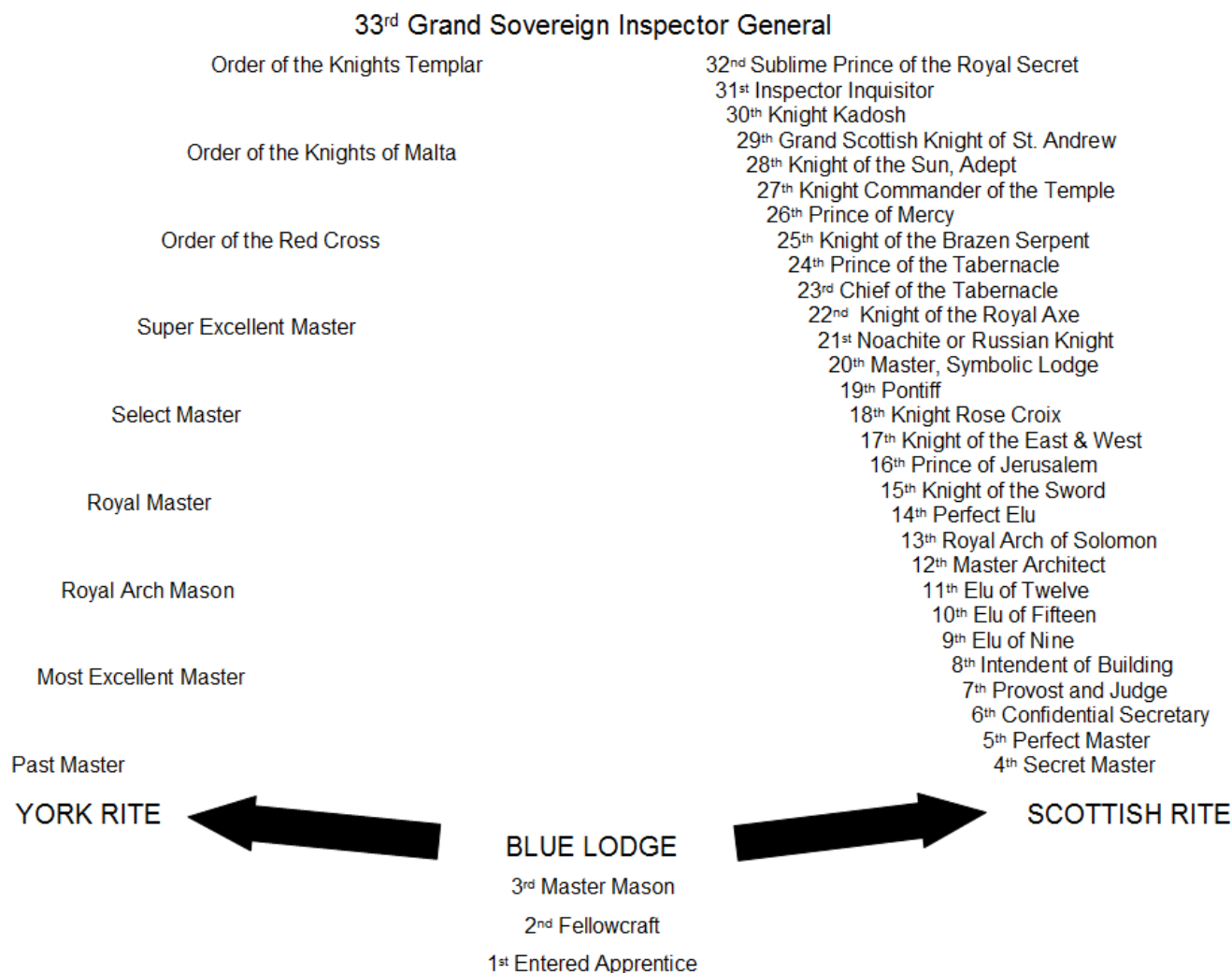
One writer has defined Freemasonry as being, generally speaking, 'a centuries-old fraternal and secret society deeply entrenched in symbolism, secret oaths and secret rituals'. Its key themes being the universal fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man. Of course, most of us are familiar, at least in a jocular sense, with some of the symbolism and secret oaths and rituals that we know as caricatures of Freemasonry. People join Freemasonry for a variety of reasons. I think as you talk to Freemasons, you'll find a variety of reasons why they belong to this particular fraternal. Some like the idea of belonging to a secret society, and the privilege of learning some secret mysteries therein. Some other people are simply fascinated with the symbolism and the representation and the mysticism of Freemasonry. Some join it because they appreciate the emphasis that there is on the brotherhood of man, and the humanitarian philosophy that is behind Freemasonry attracts them. Other people simply join it to make business contacts, and I think we're familiar with those who do that as well.

What you may not know is that there are many famous Masons in our world in history, and even presently in our contemporary environment. You may or may not know that three kings in our last century were all Masons, including our present Queen Elizabeth II's father, George VI. In fact, today the Queen's cousin, the Duke of Kent, presently is the Worshipful Grand Master of Freemasonry in the United Kingdom. Added to these famous names in royalty there is Amadeus Mozart, Voltaire, Hayden, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Oscar Wilde and even Sir Winston Churchill. If we were to cross the Atlantic, we would find that no less than fourteen United States Presidents, including the great George Washington, were all Freemasons, indeed eighteen Vice Presidents were Masons also. Among Masons in America were Benjamin Franklin, General MacArthur, J. Edgar Hoover, Mark Twain, Henry Ford, Harry Houdini, Cecil B. DeMille, John Wayne, Clark Gable, Roy Rogers and Norman Vincent Peele. So there is an illustrious list of personalities from our history, and indeed the history of many nations, that count themselves among this fraternal called Freemasonry.

I think it must be acknowledged, before I go on any further, how much Masons have added in general to our society and the societies in which they are found. They are characteristically a very generous group of people, and before we critique them in the mirror of God's word, we have to say that they have made a commendable contribution to charity and the care of orphans and widows of their own fellow Masons. I know even folk in our own Assembly in the Iron Hall that can testify of the benevolence of the Freemasons. I would have to also add, as a preface to my remarks, that for many Masons who are in the first three Degrees of Freemasonry (and I'll explain what that is a little bit later) it is no more than a moral and charitable fraternal. In fact, many of them resent the accusation of it being anything else,

especially when Christians of the evangelical type accuse them of being another religion or another spiritual organisation or faith. This can be seen in the many churchgoers that are members of Freemasonry, even to the extent of office bearers in churches and denominations in our land, and even Protestant clergy both in Presbyterianism, in the Methodist church, in the Church of Ireland, and most recently in the Roman Catholic system.

## The Structure Of American Freemasonry

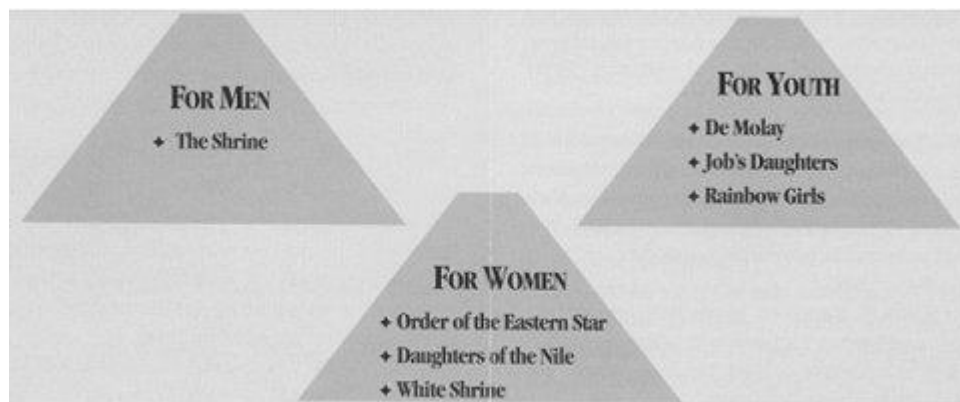


### What Is Freemasonry?

In the light of the word of God many considerations will be ours, but our chief question must be: are the principles of Freemasonry compatible with the claims of Christianity and what is revealed within the word of God? Is it compatible with historic Biblical Christianity? So to find out, we need to ask the question: what is Freemasonry? Now, again I give you a warning, because if you talk to different Freemasons you'll probably get different answers and different understandings of what it really is - especially if they themselves are found in different Degrees of Freemasonry. If you get past the first three Degrees, which we'll look at a little bit later, in the more advanced degrees the Masons will admit that the symbolism, and the philosophies behind the symbolism, take a greater significance than they have within the first three Degrees. In fact some Masons believe that you cannot really understand Freemasonry outside of the higher orders, over and above the first three Degrees. If you like, an illustration would be that the first three Degrees are like the cover of the book of Freemasonry, and in order to understand the mysteries, the depths of the philosophy and the theology of it, you have to go higher - and that is like opening the book, as you move on into the fourth Degree right up to the 33<sup>rd</sup>.

So this is the progression of light of the Masons supposedly: you're in darkness before you become a Mason, and then you're moving towards the light in stages until you get to the 33 Degree and you know everything that there is to be revealed as a Mason. Now let me explain this through this slide - it's based on American Freemasonry but there's not an awful lot of difference, and if you're familiar with Freemasonry you'll notice that as you look at that. It just shows you simply what the first three stages and Degrees are: first, Entered Apprentice; second, Fellow Craft; third, Master Mason. Then you either take the York Rite route or the Scottish Rite. The top Scottish Rite is the 33rd Degree Grand Sovereign Inspector General, and the equivalent of that really in the York Rite is the Order of the Knights of Templar. So basically those are the different Degrees of Freemasonry, and as you climb them you get revealed to you mysteries that had not been revealed hitherto.

Now although only men can be Freemasons in the strictest sense, men of course over the age of 21, although if your father is one you can be a Mason at the age of 18; there are other related organisations available for family and relatives. There is the Order of the Eastern Star which can include both men



and women, then there is DeMolay for young men, and Rainbow Girls and Job's Daughters for young girls. So you can see that this is quite a fraternal, and it does not exclude women except in the strict sense of being a Mason, but it can affect whole families - and we have seen even its effect on nations such as our own, with royalty and government and so on involved in it.

### ***The Origins Of Freemasonry***

So I want to ask the question: what are the origins of Freemasonry? Again this is not completely clear, and you may get several answers depending who you speak to, but really the origins of Freemasonry are shrouded in deep mystery and legend. The Masons themselves claim that Freemasonry dates back to the time of King Solomon, and indeed they claim that Solomon utilised the skills of stonemasons in building the Temple in Jerusalem, Solomon's Temple in his day. In fact, the legend of Freemasonry goes like this: that their Grand Master Mason was a man called Hiram Abif, and he alone had the knowledge of the true name of God, but sadly some of his Mason friends ganged up on him and killed him - and so the name of God was lost. So Masonry claims to be the seeking after the rediscovering of the lost name of God.

So that's the legend behind Freemasonry, but even Masonic historians themselves admit that the origins of Freemasonry, as we know it to be historically speaking, are found in London, England in 1717. Now it may have originally begun as the Masons claim, as a group of Gothic mediaeval English stonemasons who built churches and cathedrals in their day, and in order to safeguard the trade secrets of their craft they met together in Lodges and had secret ways of communicating the skills that they passed down from generations to one another. But Freemasonism today, that we have existing with us in the 21st century, is much more than just a simple craft fraternal of stone tradesmen. In fact, what we have today, that has been the final evolution of Freemasonry, is effectively a philosophical belief system, spiritually speaking. Now maybe right away you're a Mason and you're objecting in your heart to such an accusation, and you're saying: 'No, that's not what it is, and certainly that's not what it is for me'. Well, I ask you the question: if that is not what it is, why is it that the Masons sing at times when they get together? Why is it that they pray? Why do they swear oaths on the

sacred law, upon the Old Testament, God's word? Why is it that Masons have Temples, and why is it that they have altars, if all that it is is a social charitable fraternal? It is clearly more than that.

Ultimately we find its origins in a group of men who were appalled, and I believe rightly so, by the corruption in the government and church of their day in the 1500s. They were essentially humanists who had read Plato's Republic and believed that the only answer to the decline and degeneration of society in church and state was to create a New World Order that would change the political and religious scene completely. So if you think of the Masons originally as this group of stonemasons together, protecting their own craft, and then in the 1500s these philosophical humanistic thinkers start to think of a New World Order that needs to be put in place. We read in history that some of those thinkers infiltrated the Trade Union Craft of the stonemasons, and historically speaking they became known as 'Speculative Masons'. They weren't the practical Masons using the tools to craft the stone, they were speculative Masons philosophically and theologically. What they did was, the tools that the practical Masons used for their stonemasonry, they took them and used them as symbols, and upon those symbols they taught moral and philosophical lessons.

Now some present Freemasons today still find this difficult to accept, though it is historically documented. More so in the fact that Freemasonry, though it is a secret society, as an historical movement has produced a large body of its own literature. There are acknowledged leaders among Freemasons whose writings are recognised as representative and authoritative of what the movement believes, and I intend to show you from their writings - not my caricature or my invention, but their writings - to prove that Freemasonry is indeed an anti-Christian religion. Now if you're a Mason, don't let me lose you there - bear with me and follow me through every statement, every verse of Scripture, and let the weight of the evidence bring your conclusion.

### ***What Are The Foundations Of Freemasonry?***

Now if you're 'on the square', as the saying goes, and you're in the Masons, the first question I want to ask you is: what are the foundations of Freemasonry? What are the foundations of being on the square? Christianity, along with Judaism and Islam, are monotheistic religions. Hinduism that we looked at a couple of chapters ago is a polytheistic religion. Monotheism means that you believe in one God, polytheism means that you believe in many gods, but of course we believe that the true and living God is one God, Jehovah, revealed in three Persons as we studied in chapter 14 - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - but it is the pagans who claim to have the most ancient religion of all. Paganism, traditionally, was the worship of the moon god and the sun god, and they were given various different names in cultures in our global society. Ultimately the moon god and sun god worship emerged from ancient Babylon, and later we see in the history of the world that the ideas of this paganistic worship found great expression in Egyptian paganism.

Let me take you back to the history of Freemasonry: these speculative Freemasons essentially were what are called 'Rosicrucians'. A 'Rosicrucian' is simply a person who has doctrine that believes that religion, ultimately and in its perfect form, is a mixture of pagan philosophy, mysticism, mythology of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism all combined - a pantheistic religion, a syncretism that brings together many world religions and worships nature in a paganistic fashion. Now we can actually see this very clearly within Freemasonry, and I'll show you how. Indeed the ritual blood oaths that are sworn in initiation (I'm not going to go into all the details of it, but if you're involved you'll know what I'm talking about: swearing that you'll lose your life if you reveal the secrets of the society), the ritual blood oath is a pagan thing. That is very clear, and as we go through and look into Freemasonry we'll see that many of their other secrets are pagan also. In fact, it has been said by ex-Freemasons, and I believe it's documented to prove it, that as you go through the 33 Degrees the Masons give various worship to different pagan deities that are in existence in

our world today. Now that is concealed, it is not revealed to those Masons who are worshipping in that way, they don't know what they're doing. Don't just take my word for it, but take it from a man who was a 32nd Degree Freemason. In this video interview he testifies that that is the case:

*[Begin Video Transcript]*

Narrator: "...Greek gods, and they go through a series of rituals. Now much of this is covered up by symbols and allegories, so that Masons, as they go through it, don't fully understand what they're doing".

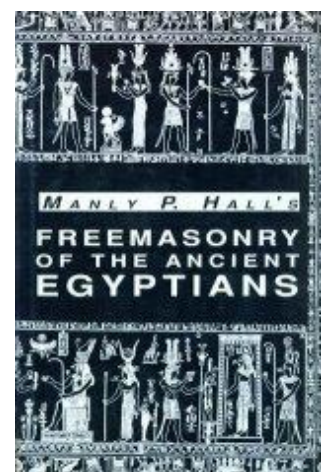
Ex-Mason: "In the Blue Degrees an initiate is initiated into the Egyptian Trinity of the ancient mysteries of Egypt. This Egyptian Trinity is hidden from the initiate, he does not know at all what he is being initiated into, it's not even mentioned".

Narrator: "But if they would read their authoritative books which explain the symbols and the allegories, it becomes very obvious what they're involved in: there involved in pagan idolatrous worship, much of it based upon the Kabbalah, which is the ancient Jewish book of the occult".

Ex-Mason: "It is based on Egyptian paganism and the worship of nature, that's really what it is: it is based on the worship of the male regenerative power, the female regenerative power...ok... and the product".

*[End Video Transcript]*

This 32nd Degree ex-Mason claims that it is based on paganism. It is based, he says, on ancient Egyptian worship. It is based on something called the Qabalah, which is basically the Jewish book of the occult. As I was browsing on the Internet myself, I found a book entitled 'Freemasonry of the Ancient Egyptians' - so this is obviously something in practice and symbolism that goes back a lot further than 1717. You can also see here 'The Mystical Qabalah', a book of Jewish mythology and mysticism. This is also graphically seen in the famous Freemasonry symbol, the square and compasses with the 'G' in the middle. I don't know whether you understand what this actually means, maybe Masons don't even understand themselves, but often the question is asked: what does the 'G' stand for? The answer can be



given 'It means God', or 'It simply means geometry, which was used by the stonemasons', but actually what it does mean is the 'generating principle of life'. In total parallel with their paganistic roots, it is the generating principle of life, because paganism worships the regenerative powers - and you heard that 32nd Degree Mason claiming that. That, in fact, is why women can't be fully fledged Masons, because they do not have that regenerating, fertilising power.

Indeed, the square and compasses represent the male upon the female in the act of copulation. That is why Masons wear an apron around their loins, over the sexual organs, the reproductive organs, in honour of them because they worship the regenerative power. Many of them don't even know this, and we'll see why that is as we go on. Another well-known Masonic symbol is the obelisk which is simply a phallic symbol, a symbol of the male regenerative organ - because this is a pagan based faith, although it is concealed and often veiled in Christian clothes. Now I did say at the beginning that I'm not going to expect you to take my word for this, I want to first of all quote a man called Albert Mackey in regard to the paganistic roots of Freemasonry. He was a past Grand Master of the movement, and in his book 'The Manual of the Lodge', on page 56 he says: 'The phallus was an imitation of the male regenerative organ. It was represented usually



by a column, which was surrounded by a circle at the base. The point with a circle was intended by the ancients as a type of prolific powers of nature which they worshipped under the united forms of the active or the male principle, and the passive or the female principle'. So he quite clearly states the paganistic origins of the worship of the regenerative power.

Then another quote by a man called Albert Pike in his book 'Morals and Dogma', pages 13-14. He was a Grand Master, of course, and Commander of the Scottish Rite in the 1800s, he says: 'The sun and moon represent the two grand principles of all generations; the active and passive, the male and female. Both shed their light upon their offspring, the Blazing Star or Horus'. Now from the mouth of the Masons, and Masons held in high esteem, there you have the declaration that Masonic Freemasonry is based originally on this ancient paganistic worship that goes right back to Egypt and even before in Babylon. It is derived in its origins from paganism.

I want you to note something else which you will perhaps find very shocking, but nevertheless I have to weigh up what is truth and where the evidence lies. The fact of the matter is, the more I read about White Witchcraft, in a modern sense today it also claims to be no longer a black, dark thing, but White Witchcraft claims to be the religion of paganism. This is the way they are repackaging it today on daytime television, it is the religion of nature and worshipping and using the forces that are spiritual round about us in nature - pantheism. This form of paganism, White Witchcraft, is the worship of the sun god and the moon god in various forms. What is staggering, if you know anything about the initiation rites of Masonry, are the similarities between the initiatory rites of the Masonic movement and that of White Witchcraft. You might think that's a bit of a tall order, but this video interview compares Masons who have gone through the initiation rite with ex-White Witches who have gone through a similar thing. I think that you'll be dumbfounded:

*[Begin Video Transcript]*

Narrator: *"...religion of paganism. It's the worship of the sun god and the moon goddess in various forms".*

Steve Warr: *"I was involved in the occult for about 12 years..."*

Narrator: *"Steve Warr was a practising member of a coven of witches"*

Steve Warr: *"...that is, I was constantly on a day-to-day basis reading, searching, as well as practising arts such as divination, getting in contact with the dead through mediums, tarot cards, crystal balls. Everything that we would consider occult, I was involved in".*

Speaker: *"There's a great deal of symbolism in witchcraft itself, many of the implements used have significance in terms of natural elements such as the wand representing air; the Athame, a sword representing fire; a chalice with water; and a pentagram representing earth. These would be combined in various manners in order to take advantage of the spiritual forces that were felt to be in operation at that particular time".*

Steve Warr: *"It was heavily ritualistic, with the wearing of robes, the drawing of magic circles, the invoking of gods to aid the practitioner, as well as...just anything you would do, even if it was not in a formal ritual, always had something to do with ritual - even if it was casting a spell, you would always light the candles, bring out the elements, set up your altar".*

Narrator: *"Some of the parallels between Freemasonry and Witchcraft show such a similarity that it cannot possibly be coincidental. Similarities in ritual, wording and symbolism are so close in several instances that it clearly suggests a common origin. To examine this possibility I spoke with a number of former Masons and compared their Blue Lodge initiations with the experiences of former occultists".*

Ex-Freemason: *"In the initiation in Freemasonry we had to be recommended by another Mason".*

Steve Warr: *"Well, in order to join witchcraft you have to be first screened, you have to be recommended by somebody currently in witchcraft".*

Ex-Freemason: *"When I was initiated I was blindfolded and bound by a rope, and on your bare chest was thrust the point of a spear".*



Steve Warr: *"In witchcraft we were initiated through a very involved ritual, an initiation ceremony, wherein the candidate was led blindfolded, bound by a rope, to the edge of the magic circle".*

Ex-Freemason: *"The rope is around your neck, and you're led forward. Up front, in the eastern end of the building, is a person who is the Worshipful Master. You kneel down before him as if he were a god".*

Steve Warr: *"You were met by the high priest or high priestess at that time, usually with a sword to your chest".*

Ex-Freemason: *"When I went to enter the Lodge, a sharp object was put to my left breast. I was warned that should I reveal any of the secrets of Freemasonry, to know what to expect".*

Steve Warr: *"When you're presented before the high priest, a sword is held against your chest and you actually take a blood oath, promising to remain faithful to the secrets of witchcraft".*

Ex-Freemason: *"When you're in the room this blindfold is taken away from you, and this is a time when they say that you're coming from darkness into light".*

Steve Warr: *"During the initiation ceremony, the initiate is led by the Lieutenant of the high priest, and is challenged at the edge of the circle by someone saying: 'Who goes there?'. The answer is: 'One from the world of darkness'".*

Ex-Freemason: *"In Masonry the prayers are ended with 'So Mote it Be'".*

Steve Warr: *"Oh and one of the other distinctives of the craft was that we would always end any spell or ritual, where we release the power, this is where the power was released, with the words 'So Mote it Be'".*

*[End Video Transcript]*

Now perhaps you're sitting there thinking: 'Well, that's fairytale stuff, that's not the way I have known Masonry'. But I tell you: if you're only in the first three Degrees of Freemasonry, that's why you don't know any of this. Many don't find it out until they climb the Degrees. In fact, one of the differences that there are with White Witchcraft and Freemasonry, is that white witchcraft actually dismisses the idea of a personal devil called 'Lucifer'. But Freemasonry goes as far, in its high echelons, as actually calling Lucifer 'God'. Let me prove it to you. Here is Albert Pike again, and he says in his writing 'Instructions in the 23rd Supreme Council of the World', July 14th 1889: 'Yes, Lucifer is God, and unfortunately Adonai', which is a Hebrew name for God, 'is also God. The true and pure philosophical religion is the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonai. But Lucifer, god of light and god of good, is struggling for humanity against Adonai, the god of darkness and evil'. Manly Hall who himself was a 33rd Degree Freemason up there at the top, says in his book 'The Lost Keys of Freemasonry': 'When the Mason learns that the key to the warrior on the block is the proper application of the dynamo of living power, he has learned the mystery of his craft. The seething energies of Lucifer are in his hands, and before he may step onward and upward he must prove his ability to properly apply this energy'.



*The Lost Keys  
of Freemasonry  
Manly P. Hall 33°*

Now if you never venture any higher than the third Degree of Freemasonry, you'll never find out the significance of much of the symbolism. Maybe there's even a Christian veneer that is put upon it. I believe, for no other reason than that the likes of Pike and Hall and others claim themselves, that Freemasons in these early first three Degrees are deliberately deceived regarding the symbolism and the significance of it. Here's Pike again in his book 'Morals and Dogma', page 819: 'The Blue Degrees', that's the first three Degrees, 'are but the outer court or portico of the temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he should understand them, but it is intended that he shall imagine he understands them'. That is why many Masons feel that they are in a Christian organisation. Now if you don't believe what I'm saying, read this chapter over, pay

particular attention to the references and the books, search the Masonic libraries that you can get to, turn the pages, and see for yourself. The foundation of Freemasonry is paganism, and ultimately the higher you go you uncover the mystery that it actually follows Lucifer himself.

### ***Where Is Christ In Freemasonry?***

The second question I want to ask is: where is the Christ in Freemasonry? This is a staggering thing for anyone who counts themselves a Christian, when you realise that Christ is nowhere to be found - at least the Christ of the Bible, the Saviour, the Lord. Manly Hall, whose book I referred to 'The Lost Keys of Freemasonry', on pages 64 and 65 says: 'The true Mason is not creed-bound. He realises with the divine illumination of his Lodge that, as a Mason, his religion must be universal. Christ, Buddha or Mohammed, the name means little; for he recognises only the light and not the bearer. He worships at every shrine, bows before every altar whether in temple, mosque, pagoda, cathedral - and realises with his true understanding the oneness of all spiritual truths. No true Mason can be narrow, for his Lodge is the divine expression of all broadness'. Now can I remind you, if you need reminding, of what our Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 7:13-14, He said: *'Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it'*. Yet Manly Hall says no true Mason can be narrow, for his Lodge is the divine expression of all broadness.

It's alright adhering to the name of Christ, but you must also follow the teaching of Christ, and the teaching of Christ as the way to be saved is the narrow way, it is an exclusive way, and in John 14:6 Jesus says: *'I am the only way, no man cometh unto the Father but by me'*. The Christ of the Bible is nowhere to be found in Freemasonry. In John 5:23 the Lord Jesus said: *'He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him'*. Though you claim you worship the true and living God, as the Jews and Christians do, if you do not worship that God through Jesus Christ His Son you fail to acknowledge, and you fail to honour God by honouring His Son. First Timothy 2:5 says very clearly: *'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'*. Where is the Christ of the Bible in Freemasonry? He is not there!

### ***Who Is The God Of Freemasonry?***

Out of that comes the question: who is the God of Freemasonry? If the Christ of the Bible isn't found in this movement, who is the God of Freemasonry? A Church of England minister called the Rev Peter Moore, the Dean of St Albans, in the Times newspaper dated 25/10/84, was quoted as saying this: 'The God we worship in the Lodge is the same God that Jews and Muslims worship'. Now maybe he hasn't watched the news for a while, but in Palestine they might disagree with that a little bit, that they worship the same God. But nevertheless: if this is the god of Freemasonry, the god that is the god of every religion, as if all roads lead to God from every faith - that is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, worshipped as God, Jehovah, in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one substance, three persons. You might say: 'Well, I know Freemasonry, and the Bible is there, it's used, it's quoted from'. But friend, what I want you to realise is that the Bible in Freemasonry is only a symbol, and in fact it's not unique. It is seen not as sufficient as a revelation to man from God, and although Christian Lodges in our land of course only use the Bible, the Koran or the Vedas or any holy book of any other religion is legitimate in Masonic use if a person of that religion wishes to be initiated.

Here it is from Pike, not from me, 'Morals and Dogma' page 11: 'The Bible is an indispensable part of the furniture of a Christian Lodge only because it is the sacred book of the Christian religion. The Hebrew Pentateuch, that's the first five books from Genesis to Deuteronomy, 'in a Hebrew Lodge, and the Koran in a Mohammedan one, belong on the altar. One of these and the square and compass, properly understood, are the great lights by which a Mason must walk and work'. Whereas Jesus said to Simon Peter to follow Him, and would he leave Him to

go and follow and serve another? Simon Peter's reply was: *'Lord, to whom shall we go, for Thou hast the words of eternal life'*. There was no one else to go to in any religion, whoever the founder may have been: Christ alone had the words of the eternal life. Of course, in His great prayer, He said to His Father: *'Thy word is truth'*, exclusively.

Well, in the initiation into the first Degree of Freemasonry, the Freemason is introduced to the name of God, as they understand it first of all, as the Grand Architect of the universe. That may be an explanation that some of them will give for the letter 'G' in between the compasses and the square. That is how they understand Him, as the Grand Architect of the universe - but a little bit later they will also learn the divine name as being the letters 'JHVH', which is just a representation of 'Yahweh', the name Jehovah, the Hebrew name for God. But remember the legend behind all of Freemasonry? Hiram Abif was murdered as he was building Solomon's Temple, and he was the only one who knew God's name, and so with him the name of God was lost, and legend has it that Freemasonry is trying to rediscover that name of God that was lost. That name of God is eventually discovered at the Royal Arch, written across it at that Degree, it is said to be the sacred and mysterious name of the true and living God most high, and it is revealed by three Masons to the one who has reached the Degree as a threefold name: 'Jah-Bul-On'.

Now of course you probably don't recognise that if you're not a Mason at that Degree, but that is a composition of three names of three gods. First of all the name of Yahweh, Jehovah, our Old Testament and New Testament God. Then put together with it is the Assyrian deity 'Baal', that we find mentioned in the Old Testament and indeed the Old Testament Israelites were cursed and punished by God severely for following the worship of that particular god. Then the 'On' at the end is used in ancient Egyptian mysticism and mystery religion, in offering prayers to the Egyptian god 'Osiris'. So 'Jah-Bul-On' is put together to be declared as the missing name of God that died with Hiram Abif. Therefore Freemasonry actually claims to have the secrets concerning the lost name of God. You'll not find that name in any other religion or any other philosophical or theological spiritual system than Freemasonry.

Now this is staggering, because our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 11:27 said: *'All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him'*. All things were delivered onto Christ, except this name that was lost with Hiram Abif - can that be? In John 1:18 the writer is recorded as saying: *'No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him'*. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, and He has declared the knowledge of God. We have the record of it in His word, and we don't need anyone else to reveal God to us, His name was not lost!

### ***Is Salvation Found In Freemasonry?***

But the fourth question that I want to answer is: how is salvation found in Freemasonry? Well, the reason why Christ does not figure in Freemasonry is because you are your own saviour in this system. They acknowledge Christ as a great reformer, along with the other leaders and founders of faiths in our world, but the reason why they don't need Him as supreme Saviour and Lord is because they're saving themselves by their own moral deeds. As you read the literature, sin is hardly mentioned - it is mentioned at times in comparison, but it's not thought of as something that we as humans suffer from, that we are depraved and we need to be saved if we are to live in eternity with a holy God. In fact, when you go to the 19th Degree of Scottish Masonry, those Masons are told, I quote: 'Masons who have given proof of their attachment to the statutes and rules of the Order, which in the end will make them deserving of entering the celestial Jerusalem', heaven. Can I repeat that? 'Deserving to enter the celestial Jerusalem'. It's something that you deserve through your morality. In the 28th Degree of the Scottish Rite it states, I quote: 'The true Mason raises himself by degrees until he reaches heaven'.

Salvation in Freemasonry is if God's all-seeing eye looks upon you and sees enough morality and charity in your life to reward you according to your merits and to give you heaven. You're not saved by grace, which is God's unmerited favour because we are sinners, that's the Christian gospel. You're saved by merits - yet the Bible teaches the opposite, Ephesians 2:8-9: *'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: lest any man should boast'*. God has given it freely by His grace, we must embrace it by faith! Titus 3:4-5 bears out the same truth: *'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit'*.

My friends, I don't know what your circumstances are, but surely in a land like Ulster this is not a revelation to you: that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross and shed His blood, and bore your shame and your punishment and the judgment that you deserved, because you have fallen short of God's glory, that you might be delivered from sin, and that you might go to heaven - not by your works, but by the grace of God that allowed Christ to be your sacrifice, rose Him again to be your Saviour and Lord, and offers Him to you in the Gospel if you will only embrace Him by faith. What was the point of Him dying on Calvary's tree if you could earn your salvation by Freemasonry, or any religion, whatever you care to call it?

### **A Secret Society**

These are fundamental problems in the light of the Bible that Freemasonry has, and add to this the fact that it is a secret society. You say: 'Well, what's the problem with that?'. Well, the Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 10:26-27: *'Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops'*. God's word says that if God has revealed something to you, and He has revealed to the Christian the Gospel, it is not our job to keep it secret. It is our job to declare it unto all men! So right away we see that this characteristic of being secretive - and I don't care whether it's Freemasonry, whether it's Orange, whether it is Black or Purple - secret societies by their very nature are not Christian. John 18:20, listen to what the Saviour says: *'I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing'*. That is the example of our Lord, should we not follow it?

Added to this is the fact that a candidate being initiated must make rash promises to this secrecy, as one writer has said: 'To secrecy and faithfulness in matters of which nothing is revealed to him previously. The man has got to sell his conscience to the Worshipful Master before he can proceed - but what right has any man to make another the custodian of his conscience?'. I know that none believe that the blood oath will be taken seriously, or your life will be in danger or anything like that (maybe you'll tell me to the contrary), and I know that much of it is only legendary and symbolism - but nevertheless, for the Christian this is a problem, or at least it ought to be.

### **Conclusion**

For that reason one of the great preachers two centuries ago in the 1800s, D. L. Moody, made this pronouncement against Freemasonry - and I believe every Christian minister should do likewise. He said, I quote: 'I do not see how any Christian, most of all a Christian minister, can go into these secret lodges with unbelievers. They are', as our text said at the very beginning, 'unequally yoked with unbelievers'. You see it was obvious to him, not through prejudice - and I know that the Freemasons have been persecuted in the past and I do not desire to persecute any - but the facts spoke for themselves to that man of God, and should to every Christian child of God. Freemasonry has more in common with paganism,

witchcraft and even Mormonism, and I haven't got the space to go into that, than it has with Biblical Christianity historically and theologically.

If you've gone through it you'll know that in the initiation ceremony the candidate rolls up his left trouser leg up to his knee, and then he removes his jacket and tie and opens his shirt. He replaces his right shoe with a slipper, he empties his pockets of money as a symbol of his poverty, and all of this is to symbolise that he, coming in, is in the state of darkness. To symbolise that very graphically he is blindfolded, and he acknowledges that while he is in that darkness he needs to be moved towards the light, which is found in degrees, supremely and only through Freemasonry. Now that is a lie of the devil! For Jesus Himself said in John 8:12: *'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life'*. He is that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He is not to be set alongside Buddha, or Mohammed, or any other leader. Acts 4:12 says there is one name that we can be saved by: *'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved'*.

How can you be saved through Freemasonry if Christ isn't in it? Do you know how to be saved? Do you know where the light is? First John 1 tells us: *'This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'*.

Are you on the square? Do you know the foundation of what you're standing on? Where is the Christ of the Bible in Freemasonry? Where is the God of the Bible? Where is the salvation of grace that is revealed in Christ and His word in the Bible? *'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ'*. On Christ the solid Rock we stand, all other ground is sinking sand. What are you standing on? Will you come out of the darkness, be delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son? May God bless His word to all our hearts.

## ***Appendix – Further resources:***

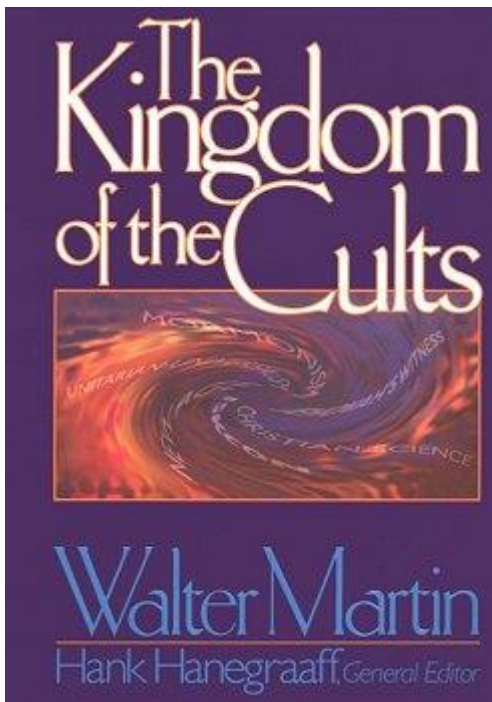
### *Recommended websites:*

The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry (CARM):

<http://www.carm.org>

Reach Out Trust: <http://www.reachouttrust.org>

### *Recommended Reading:*

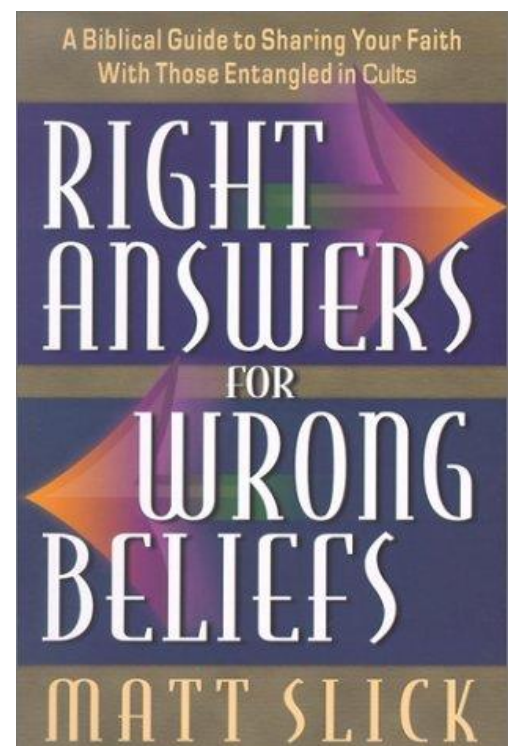


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by *Walter Martin*

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