



*"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"*  
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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# FALSE TEACHINGS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Jon Gary Williams

*They speak of Christ, the soul, hell, the resurrection and other fundamental Biblical ideas. But what they espouse regarding these and other Biblical terms is not what the Bible teaches.*

**H**as a Jehovah's Witness ever knocked on your door? If not, someday they will. Are you aware of what they teach? Did you know they reject most fundamental Bible doctrines? Did you know they espouse a religious philosophy completely foreign to the Bible?

The Jehovah's Witness religion, once known as *Zion's Watchtower Tract Society*, now known as *Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania*, may seem to be just another one of the many religious groups around us. After all, don't they claim to follow the Bible and believe in Christ? A closer look shows us that what we see on the surface is not at all what we discover upon further investigation.

Indeed, many unsuspecting people have been misled by the subtle, deceptive nature of "Jehovah's Witness" tactics. Yes, they speak of Christ, the soul, hell, the resurrection and other fundamental Biblical ideas. But what they espouse regarding these and other Biblical terms is not what the Bible teaches.

The Jehovah's Witness religion contains an insidious system of doctrines of which people need to be informed. What exactly do they teach? Following are some of the better-known teachings of the Jehovah's Witness religion, along with comparisons to what the Scriptures teach.

1. They teach that **man has no**

**immortal soul**, that the soul is only man's "breath" and that when man dies there is nothing which lives on.

TRUTH — The Bible teaches: a) There is something which lives after death (Matt. 10:28; 2 Cor. 5:8-9), b) The soul departs the body at death (Gen. 35:18).

2. They teach that **Christ is not eternal** and that **He is not a part of the Godhead**, but that He was created in the same way the angels were created.

TRUTH — The Bible teaches: a) Christ is eternal (Rev. 1:17; 22:13). b) Christ is God, a part of the Godhead (John 1:1,14; 20:28; Matt. 1:23; Col. 2:9).

3. They teach that **Christ's body was not actually raised**, but that He was raised only in "spirit form."

TRUTH — The Bible teaches: a) Christ expressly said He was not in a spirit form (Luke 24:39). b) To reject the resurrection of Christ creates a hopeless religion (1 Cor. 15:14-15).

4. They teach that **Christ has already returned**, but he did so secretly and unseen.

TRUTH — The Bible teaches: a) Every eye shall see him at his return (Rev. 1:7). b) He will come with sound, angels and flaming fire (1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7-8).

5. They teach **there is no real hell**, but that hell is only the grave.

TRUTH — The Bible teaches: a)

There is punishment beyond the grave (Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:4,5). b) Punishment is eternal (Matt. 25:41,46; Mark 9:44,47).

6. They teach that **the earth will never be destroyed**.

The Bible teaches: a) The earth will someday pass away (Matt. 5:18). b) The earth will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10).

7. They teach that **only 144,000 people will enter heaven**.

The Bible teaches: a) Christ will deliver his entire kingdom up to God (1 Cor. 15:24). b) All who do God's commands will enter into Heaven (Rev. 22:14). c) The water of life, flowing from God's throne, is for "whosoever will" (Rev. 22:1,17).

8. They teach that **submitting to blood transfusion is sinful**.

The Bible teaches: a) The eating of blood is condemned (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:27). b) God's word does not prohibit the transfusion of blood to save or support life.

9. They teach that **man is not saved through baptism**.

The Bible teaches: a) Baptism is for the "remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). b) Baptism saves (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). c) In baptism sins are washed away (Acts 22:16). d) In baptism people put on Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).

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## Guest Editorial THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Joe Gilmore, Jr. (1919-1997)

***This is one of the shortest parables  
and reveals the outward aspect of the kingdom.  
A grain of “mustard seed” is a fitting symbol of  
the origin of the kingdom.***

There are two species of the mustard seed in Palestine: the *Sinapis Arvensis*, L, and *Sinapis Alba*. Also, there is the black mustard. All attain a great size sufficient to fit the details of Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:32; and Luke 13:19. The term “Great tree” is to be taken as an exaggerated contrast with the “minute seed,” and to be explained by the parallel “greatest among herbs” (Matt. 13:32). The mustard seed was actually an herb and grew to be about ten feet high.

Notice the smallness of the seed in proportion to the greatness of the tree: “small as a mustard seed”, a current expression to indicate anything that was very insignificant. So small, it was a proverb in the land of Palestine, “as small as a grain of mustard seed” (Matt. 17:20). In just two scriptures, Matthew 13:31-32, Jesus foretold the growth of the kingdom. No human power, prestige, wealth or influence belonged to it. However, small and unpromising the kingdom might first appear, it would soon go into all the earth. With this view in mind Jesus compares the kingdom to a mustard seed.

Jesus used parables to explain the unknown by the known. Thus parables were employed to: 1) **reveal the truth**, 2) **conceal the truth**, 3) **to elicit assent to the truth** and 4) **to preserve the truth**. In this parable the Lord reveals the truth. It is one of the shortest parables and reveals the outward aspect of the kingdom.

In the *parable of the sower*, due to the nature of the soil, a considerable portion of the seed is likely to be lost. Just think, only one-fourth of what a

preacher says is likely to be understood! Furthermore, we see in the *parable of the tares* the dangers even that portion is exposed to that falls on good ground. To keep His disciples from despondency, Jesus gave the *parable of the mustard seed*. Truly a grain of “mustard seed” is a fitting symbol of the origin of the kingdom.

The disciples needed to be encouraged. The kingdom shall begin small, go forward and become large. This is good news, considering there are so many enemies of the church. Christ's enemies at that time looked upon the word (the seed of the kingdom) just as something to put in the ground, as it were, to die and be forgotten. Even though our Lord knew this seed would grow, this view was not shared by many people, perhaps not even the disciples.

*In every parable of the Lord there is one main idea.* Sometimes preachers, in every phrase the Lord spoke, try to see some special lessons more than the Lord intended. When one allows his imagination to run away, he will completely lose sight of the Lord's intended message. For example, some tell us that “branches” in Matthew 13:32, refer to denominations. This is not true. Jesus said, “*I am the vine*” (John 15:1). What are the branches? Hear Jesus, “*I am the vine and ye are the branches*” (John 15:5). Who? “*He that abideth in me, and I in him.*” We do not refer to denominations as he! Individuals are the branches. “*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch*” (John 15:6). Jesus made no comment on the branches of Matthew 13:32. We ask, to what denomination(s) did the apostles belong?

They were in Jerusalem when the kingdom/church began. Soon, persecution came and the church was scattered and went everywhere preaching the word. This included the apostles. Did the apostles continue to work in the same religious body? Did they preach the same things? They certainly did, and urged others to do the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10). They did not labor to build up different churches. They knew but one church. “*There is one body*” (Eph. 4:4). The body is the church (Col. 1:18).

In the New Testament, the church is spoken of under different figures such as: “*household of God*” (Eph. 2:19), “*house of God*” (Eph. 3:14-15). These figures will admit of there being but one church. Jesus said, “*and other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd*” (John 10:16). Notice: there were to be just as many folds as there were to be shepherds — ONE! It is obvious that there are too many churches in the world today! Salvation cannot be found in human churches. The apostles understood their instructions. The only discord came when preachers preached “*another gospel*” (of a different kind) (Gal. 1:6-9).

Others tell us that “the parable of the mustard seed” refers to the Jews returning today to Canaan in fulfillment of Bible promise and prophecy (Gen. 13:14-17; 17:8). Many Jews in our day go to Canaan, but not in fulfillment to any promise made in “the parable of the mustard seed” or to any other promise made in the Bible. In Acts 7:5 and Genesis 48:4 we are told that Abraham's seed would receive it after him. This promise has been fulfilled (Josh. 21:43-45; 23:14). The Jews possessed Canaan and dwelt therein. “*There failed not ought of any good thing...all came to pass*” (Josh. 21:45). “*To give the land of the Canaanites...and hast performed thy words*” (Neh. 9:8).

We shall consider the ways in which the kingdom of Christ is like a grain of “mustard seed.”

### 1. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IS LIKE A MUSTARD SEED IN ITS EARLY INSIGNIFICANCE

Few today escape the tendency of equating *size* with *importance* or *sig-*

nificance. How many confuse *quantity* for *quality*? Bigness is not the equivalent of significance. We need to remind ourselves of the importance of “little things” in this life. Americans have been victimized by the thought of bigness. Our automobile makers, in these inflationary times (1983), continue to make big cars when the market demands small ones. Banks, builders, government, etc. have trouble in seeing that little things have significance.

Little things have importance. The breaking of a *hen egg* led to an Indian war in this country. The spinning of a *spider's web* led to a great war for victory. Bruce of Scotland had lost six battles against the English. He retired to his cabin brooding about the future of Scotland. He saw a spider trying to throw thread from one beam to another. The spider failed six times, but succeeded the seventh time: Bruce went back to battle the seventh time and was successful.

Have you heard of the parable of the “horseshoe nail?” For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, for want of a horse, the rider was lost, for want of a rider, the battle was lost, for want of a battle, the kingdom was lost, and all for the want of a horseshoe nail!

Little things often caught the attention of Jesus and caused His comments such as: the fall of a sparrow (Matt. 10:29; Luke 12:6-7), the cry of need in a noisy crowd (Matt. 20:29-34; Mark 5:24-34), and in this parable the growth of a seed. A cup of cold water given in His name wins His praise (Matt. 10:42; Mark 9:41). The widow's mite does not go unnoticed (Mark 12:42; Luke 21:2). No man has made the right approach toward God until he understands the importance of small things.

The kingdom of Christ was small in the beginning. It was established by divine power and is spiritual in nature. It was made without hands (Daniel 2:44-45). It is different from other kingdoms. When the kingdom/church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2), there was no rolling thunder, or flashing of lightning, nor angels climbing ladders to herald it. Jesus and His disciples were just a few poor men with seemingly little power. Jesus did not come as a rich powerful monarch. He appeared in the lowest state of humiliation. He

was cradled in a manger in Bethlehem (Luke 2:7,12,16). His early years were spent in Nazareth (Matt. 2:23), an obscure and despised city. “*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth*” (John 1:46)?

In Jesus' earthly ministry very few gathered around His standard. “*He came unto His own and his own received Him not*” (John 1:11). “*He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; they hid as it were their faces from Him; He was despised, and they esteemed Him not*” (Isa. 53:3). He was unjustly condemned and died a painful death upon the cross. To the world, His prospects for establishing a kingdom seemed to be forever defeated. No man has the right understanding of God until he has been fully taught the power of small things.

Who were the men who went forth under the Lord's commission to accomplish the greatest revolution upon the earth without violence or bloodshed? They were not men of wealth. For the most part they were publicans and fishermen, unlearned and ignorant men (Acts 4:13), having no fighting equipment but God's word. Yet they went forth and confounded philosophies, overturned giant systems opposed to the Lord's kingdom. In human estimation the work of the apostles was an undertaking that was not likely to be met with success. “*We must not despise the day of small things*” (Zech. 4:10).

In this parable, Jesus taught a number of things about the kingdom. It would have an *insignificant beginning*, but there would be a *phenomenal growth*. It would be a refuge for all people. This was a prophecy as well as a parable. Even though the kingdom was formed by a Galilean peasant and the first missionaries were fishermen and tax collectors, it soon conquered the mighty Roman Empire. It also subdued the northern barbarians and evangelized the western continent. Furthermore, the kingdom is still bringing life and light to the nations of the world.

## 2. NATURE OF THE SEED

Our Lord knew the kingdom would succeed because life is in the seed. It had a germinating and expansive power that could not be destroyed. The life of anything depends upon its ability

to reproduce itself. The seed has power to push its way through the crust of the earth and to become a plant. Jesus said the “seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). Paul tells us that the “Gospel is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). Jesus, knowing the power there is in the seed, expected the kingdom to grow. When the seed, the word of the kingdom, was sown during the age of the apostles, a Christian was produced. If the pure seed, the Gospel, is sown today, it will yield the same crop. It takes the Gospel (sound doctrine) to make a Christian.

There are those today who tell us that it is necessary to find an unbroken chain of church succession from the apostles until today to have the same church as they did then. No Bible informed person would attempt to prove this view. It does not matter what people believed two hundred or even a thousand years ago. Any teaching that does not go back to Christ and the apostles has no divine sanction, no matter who started it, or where it began. However, whatever Christ and His apostles commanded is scriptural and right regardless of whether anyone has practiced it since the death of the last apostle.

Attention is called to Luke 8:11. Jesus speaks of the word of God as the “seed of the kingdom.” It is not necessary for seed to be planted every year in order to maintain its original stock. Some years ago some wheat was found in one of the pyramids of Egypt. It had been hidden there for more than three thousand years without being exposed to any of the decaying forces of nature. This same wheat was brought to our country and planted. It produced the same kind of wheat we have today.

Peter speaks of the word of God as: “*incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever*” (1 Peter 1:23). When one will receive the word of God into his heart, it will do for him what it did for the first century in the time of the apostles. It will make of him what it made them. When we teach and practice what they taught and practiced, we will bring about the same results, regardless of what men have taught and practiced since then.

If we take a grain of wheat and cross it with another seed and continue to do so for years, we would develop something entirely different. Eventually, it would be much easier to get



pure seed, and grow wheat than it would be to try to develop the original stock again from the corrupted plant. So it is in religion; we must discard all corrupted forms of religion and return to the word of God rather than try to purify the corrupted form of religion created by paganism, ritualism, and human tradition.

### 3. THE SEED MUST BE PLANTED

*“The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field”* (Matt. 13:31). Someone must teach or preach the Gospel just as the mustard seed was brought and planted in the field. There is no way to eliminate the human element (the third party) in the plan of redemption. The denominational world scoffs at the idea of divine and human elements being combined in the scheme of redemption. They teach that man can do nothing in the plan of salvation — the plan is all divine. If the human element enters into the plan, it brings in the third party and makes one man’s salvation depend upon another.

Denominations make void the plan of salvation by their traditions. The Holy Spirit (on Pentecost) used Peter, the third party, in conveying the revelation, the divine plan, to his hearers. The human element was brought into the divine plan. The Holy Spirit, through Peter, the third party, commanded these believing inquirers! *“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”* (Acts 2:38). Peter, on Pentecost, talked about man’s relationship with God, not social reforms. When men get right with God, they will live right.

The worst thief on earth is the one that steals the word of God from his neighbor. This is done by substituting the commandments and doctrines of men for the doctrine of God.

The church as it was in the beginning (Pentecost), can still be a vital force in the world. *“Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end”* (Eph. 3:21). The church is God’s missionary agency. The Gospel is God’s message, (John 4:44-45). The evangelizing of the world is God’s program (Rev. 22:17).

When the Gospel was planted in human hearts, people were converted

from their selfish desires and pleasures to the unselfish claims of the religion of Christ. The Gospel was a conquering force in those days. Nothing could stand in its way.

Paul thought in world terms: *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”* (Rom. 1:16). The Gospel in a third of a century was preached in all the world (Col. 1:23). It could be done today if we would sow the seed as they did then. If a man is going to come through the waters of baptism and sit down, he had just as well sit down on the other side of the water, so far as esteemed salvation is concerned.

### 4. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE THE MUSTARD SEED IN THE EXTENT OF ITS GROWTH

*“Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof”* (Matt. 13:32). The “mustard seed” is small in the beginning and has a great increase. The kingdom of heaven is like this. Dr. Thompson in his work, *“The Land And The Book,”* says he has seen the wild mustard on the rich plain of Akkar as tall as the horse and the rider.

In obedience to the Lord’s command, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”* (Matt. 28:19), the apostles and other disciples preached the Gospel to every creature under heaven. *“Yea, verily, their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world”* (Rom. 10:18).

The apostles and others were faithful to this commission even under fires of persecution. Never were enemies more bitter and friends more true than in the days of the early church. It seems that every failure turned out for the success of the cause of Christ. We know they were very successful because we read: *“these have turned the world upside down”* (Acts 17:6). No doubt, those who stoned Stephen to death thought they were putting an end to Christianity. But instead, there was a great ingathering of souls. This persecution turned the

Jerusalem church into personal workers (missionaries). *“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word”* (Acts 8:4). Country after country fell before them: Judea, Samaria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Babylon, Arabia and Ethiopia. It thrills my heart to read of the growth of the early church. In Acts 2:41, the number added is said to have been about three thousand. In Acts 4:4, we are informed that the number had grown to about five thousand. After that Luke seems to have lost count of the number. He simply says *“the number of the disciples was multiplying”* (Acts 6:1), and speaks of the *“multitude of disciples”* (Acts 6:2). *“And so were the churches established in the faith and increased in number daily”* (Acts 16:5).

Why were those early preachers so much more successful than preachers of today? The divine motivation was so intense that the Gospel of Christ reached all parts of the earth in one generation.

1) **They loved the cause of Christ.** The early preachers knew the message they preached was divinely inspired. Hence, they were willing to make any sacrifice that would lead to the furtherance of this cause. Paul said we *“suffer all those things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ”* (1 Cor. 9:12). Many today cannot suffer the slightest disappointment. Neither can some bear the thought that people may not love them if they preach just the seed — the word of the kingdom.

2) **They loved each other.** *“And the multitudes of them that believed were of one heart and soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common...neither was there any among them that lacked”* (Acts 4:32-34). Each worker rejoiced as much over the success of others as he did his own.

3) **We do not work as they did.** Place ourselves by the side of the apostles in their work and see the difference. Can it be said of us: *“teaching publicly, and from house to house”* (Acts 20:20)? It is said of those preachers: *“and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”* (Acts 5:42).

4) **Do we pray as they prayed?** How many have gone out early in the morning to a quiet place to pray? How many have prayed all night for success

in the Lord's work? Our Lord did this (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). We are exhorted to pray: "*pray without ceasing...for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to youward*" (1 Thess. 5:17-18).

5) **They kept the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace** (Eph. 4:3-6). Many preachers today, instead of preaching the Gospel, are destroying each other. When they get through fighting and devouring one another, they have no strength left to fight the devil.

6) **In giving, the early preachers followed the Lord's command:** "*Give and it shall be given unto you*" (Luke 6:38). The hardest thing about a man to convert is his pocket book. A common disease in the church today is called *rheumatism of the heart caused by the contraction of the wallet*. Many who are good otherwise will "hide out" when it comes to giving. When a man learns how to give he will never be asking: "how much can I get!" It was a sad day for man when he conceived that he owned anything. The Bible makes it plain that property is a trust.

In the first century, from province to province and city to city, the kingdom of Christ was to prevail in the Roman Empire. Though the least of seeds, the Gospel sown in unfriendly soil, and under an unfavorable climate, has produced a lofty and extended tree. All classes of people: the poor, the captive, the fatherless, widows, etc. have found shelter under its branches. During the lifetime of the apostles, in spite of persecution, it lived and thrived. Like the Hebrews in Egypt, Christians increased exceedingly.

## 5. IN THE HUMAN HEART THE KINGDOM IS LIKE A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

The "mustard seed" is small in its beginning but large in the increase. One may hear the Gospel preached several times before he obeys. It may take time before there is the obedience of faith. The teaching process is gradual. No one learns the New Testament in twenty minutes. However, people in the first century learned enough by hearing one sermon to obey the Gospel.

When the word of God, as seed, is planted in the human heart it produces great results. Before a heart is filled with the word of God perhaps there was a word spoken or some action of

deed seen to arouse interest in divine things.

We have seen the power there is in the Gospel.

- 1) It has abolished slavery in our nation. As men read the golden rule (Matt. 7:12), slavery became impossible.
- 2) The Gospel has elevated women: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male nor female*" (Gal. 3:28).
- 3) It has led to the conversions of men and women alienated from God.
- 4) It has triumphed over governments. When the kingdom began, it was persecuted by human governments. Today, these governments acknowledge the kingdom and its king.
- 5) It has also triumphed over pagan religions. When the Gospel or the kingdom of Christ come in contact today with such religions, they win their way in spite of them.

**The world is benefitted by the kingdom of Christ. What would the world be like today without the kingdom of heaven?**

## 6. CONCLUSION

When the roll is called up yonder, we can thank the Lord for the parable of the "Mustard Seed." The parable has assured us that the kingdom will go forward. As we read the parable we learn not to despise the things that are small and lowly.

People should not stay out of the church because it is small in some places.

Let us pray and work that we will be of greater use in the Lord's cause than ever before, that more Gospel preaching will be done in destitute fields, and a greater number of congregations be established **this year** than in any year of the first century!

God's way will win!

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." (James 1:5-7)

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Robert & Beverly Pitts (in honor of Garland & Angelita Robinson's 50th anniversary).....		\$20
Virginia Dean .....		\$100
Shirley Dean Hopper .....		\$50
Douglas & Priscilla Pace .....		\$100
Harold & Jean Bridges .....		\$50
Anonymous .....		\$150
Jean Ware .....		\$25
Mary Lois Moore .....		\$50
Ed Waggoner.....		\$100
Vida Hodges (mem of my dad, Ector R. Watson).....		\$1,000
Anonymous .....		\$50
Jim & Linda Foshee .....		\$100
Baker C/C, Baker, FL.....		\$25
Midway C/C,		
Murfreesboro, TN .....		\$100
Michael & Krysta Ernstbeger .....		\$100
Shirley Mae Blair .....		\$25
Chuck & Nancy Verkist .....		\$50
Anonymous .....		\$500
Sue Wilson .....		\$20
Carl O. Cooper .....		\$100
Neelys Bend C/C,		
Madison, TN .....		\$100
Bradford C/C, Bradford, TN .....		\$150
Church of Christ,		
Fort Gibson, OK.....		\$750
Eldon & Ruth Davis .....		\$300
Tracy L. Clymer.....		\$30
Anonymous .....		\$50
Alen & Irene Tate.....		\$100
James R. Jackson, Jr. ....		\$100
Glade Spring C/C,		
Glade Spring, VA .....		\$300
Oneida F. Humphries.....		\$200
Jack & Sarah Webb.....		\$200
Charles & Joann Clauson.....		\$50
Baker C/C, Baker, FL.....		\$25
Harold & Jean Bridges .....		\$50
Anonymous .....		\$400
Cubb Creek C/C,		
Whitleville, TN.....		\$500
Ed Waggoner.....		\$100
Gary Stanton .....		\$75
Donald & Canita Campbell.....		\$100
Mattie A Owens (memory of Foster C. Owens) .....		\$25
Neelys Bend C/C, Madison, TN .....		\$100
Del Brantley .....		\$50
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN .....		\$50
Grandiflora C/C, Baileyton, AL .....		\$100
Anonymous .....		\$25
Refund.....		\$107.99
Beginning Balance .....		\$22,187.55
Contributions .....		\$10,797.99
Debits		
Postage .....		\$2,425.94
Supplies.....		\$55.74
Paper .....		\$3,454.48
Repairs .....		\$707.75
Exchange Rate.....		\$97.83
Ending Balance .....		\$26,243.80

# THE SIN OF DENOMINATIONALISM

Marvin L. Weir

**I**t is a noble and unifying concept to “speak where the Bible speaks” (what the Bible authorizes) and “remain silent where the Bible is silent” (what the Bible does not authorize). This principle recognizes God’s authority in sacred matters and leaves no authority for human wisdom and man-made creeds.

Enemies of the Lord’s church and those who have been misinformed about the Lord’s church are determined to credit **Alexander Campbell** as the founder of the church of Christ. This claim demonstrates outright ignorance of the goal of the restoration movement. Neither Campbell nor Stone sought to build or establish a church — both men turned to the Word of God to recognize and restore New Testament Christianity!

The following information, until otherwise noted, comes from Leroy Brownlow’s book entitled *Why I Am A Member Of The Church of Christ* (Reason #11, pp. 75-77):

It is evident from history that Alexander Campbell was not the founder of any church. The movement to restore primitive Christianity to the world was under way before he ever came to America. He severed his connections with creed-bound, human churches to be a Christian only. He supported the restoration movement by preaching, writing and debating. With his extraordinary ability, he put the plea before the people as no other restorer had done. This was all that was needed for it to grow. Members of human churches walked out by the scores to be undenominational Christians. Some sectarian preachers, however, more interested in partyism than truth, stigmatized the movement as “Campbellism” and called it the “Campbellite Church,” hoping to arouse prejudice against the plea.

It is only fair and just that we note the words of Alexander Campbell in reply to the question, “*What is Campbellism?*” Hear his answer:

“It is a nickname of reproach invented and adopted by those whose views, feelings, and desires are all sectarian; who cannot conceive of Christianity in any other light than an ism. These isms are now the real reproaches

of those who adopt them, as they are the intended reproaches of those who originate and apply them. He that gives them when they are disclaimed, violates the express law of Christ. He speaks evil against his brother, and is accounted as a railer or reviler, and placed along with haters of God and those who have no lot in the kingdom of heaven. They who adopt them out of choice disown the Christ and insult him; for they give the honor which is due to him alone to the creature of the Devil; for all slander and detractions are of the creation of the Devil. If Christians were wholly cast into the mould of the Apostles’ doctrine, they would feel themselves as much aggrieved and slandered in being called by any man’s name, as they would in being called a thief, a fornicator, or a drunkard... I have always disclaimed everything sectarian; and if the people of the different sects slander me or any of those who prefer the scriptures to any human creed, and the kingdom of Jesus the Messiah, to any sect; I say, if they slander us with the names and epithets which we disavow, they must answer to him who judges righteously. But for ourselves we protest against the name, the precepts, and the feelings of any sect or schism in Christendom.” (*Christian Baptist*, pages 451, 452)

It is evident that the church of Christ is not “just another denomination.” It is the church that existed nearly twenty centuries ago. Every member has been added to it by the Lord himself (Acts 2:47) and has stopped there so far as church affiliation is concerned. It is undenominational with an unsectarian plea, a plea for the world to return to the ancient gospel. This ends the quote from Brownlow’s book.

Alexander Campbell was born in Ireland and possessed a brilliant mind. He was fluent in Greek, Latin, and French. He became a Presbyterian preacher who finally questioned the validity of sprinkling. Stone and Campbell finally met in 1824 and became friends. Campbell’s followers were called “Disciples of Christ,” and Stone’s followers were called “Christians.” In 1832 in Lexington, Kentucky these

two men’s efforts were united for the **purpose** of restoring New Testament Christianity.

Other men were also involved in the restoration movement: Benjamin Franklin, W. K. Pendleton, Jacob Creath, “Raccoon” John Smith, William Hayden, D. S. Burnet, John T. Johnson, Tolbert Fanning, Moses E. Lard, Dr. T. W. Brents, J. A. Harding, John F. Rowe, J. W. McGarvey, E. G. Sewell, David Lipscomb (just to name a few). The point to note is that none of these men built a church or had a church named after them!

The sole purpose of the restoration movement was to reproduce the church of Christ as it is revealed in the New Testament. It has been said many times and in different ways that the restoration movement was based upon three propositions:

1) God designed a perfect plan and pattern for the church.

2) Christ, through the Holy Spirit, revealed such a plan and pattern to His chosen apostles.

3) The New Testament contains an accurate and complete revelation of this pattern as given to the apostles.

Human creeds by their very nature **change** the government of the church, the name of the church, the mode of immersion, the plan of salvation, and the way of worship. All these changes come about because of yielding to human authority. If one is honest and sincere, he will accept **only** the authority of Christ and doing such will make useless every religious human creed!

It was indeed good for men to purpose to “speak where the Bible speaks, and to remain silent where the Bible is silent.” It was also wise to declare and agree that if creeds contain more or less than the Bible they must be rejected and condemned (cf. Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19). It surely is an “un-get-overable” truth that if a creed contains **only** what is in the Bible — it is not needed!

Christ has been given all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). He has revealed to us “*all things that pertain unto life and godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3). All inspired Scripture is



for the purpose of the man of God being “complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Denominational creeds are not

needed and are sinful. May we resolve to follow God’s Word as it “*is a lamp unto our feet, and light unto our path*” (Psa. 119:105)!

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# THOUGHTS ABOUT GOD’S PROVIDENCE

Jason Patrick Hilburn

**M**ake sure you are faithful to God if you want His favor and greatest blessings. This involves repenting of all sins, doing what He commanded for forgiveness, living a life of obedience, and prioritizing spiritual things over material things every day. Take time to read all these passages: Prov. 28:9; Isa. 59:1-2; Matt. 6:19-21,33; 6:25-34; 7:21-27; 10:32-39; Luke 9:23; John 4:24; 9:31; Acts 2:36-42; 20:7; 22:16; Rom. 3:23; 6:3-6; 12:1-2, 9-21; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Eph. 1:3; Phil. 2:12; Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 5:9; 10:23-31; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 3:12,20-21; 1 John 1:6-2:6, 15-17).

Don’t stop trusting God in the middle of one of life’s storms! Patiently trust God until the end, even if it takes years, or even to the point of death. He will bless you in the way He chooses when He chooses (Psalm 27:10-14; Job 13:15; Luke 18:26-30; Rev. 2:10).

What you THINK should have happened, may not actually be what was best. Our heavenly Father knows best. Trust Him with all your heart instead of assuming you always know what is best. He knows the potential outcome of every possible scenario. Let Him direct your paths via His Word as you trust in His providential care (Prov. 3:5-6; Psa. 119:105; 147:5; Isa. 55:8-9).

Just when everything looks bad, God may surprise you with something even better than what you wanted or expected! Our Heavenly Father is “*able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*” (Eph. 3:20).

If we are faithful Christians, remember that God is on our side and has a great desire to bless us, just as an earthly father wants his children to be blessed. Our Heavenly Father can give far greater gifts than any earthly father (Psa. 46:1; Matt. 7:7-11; 1 Cor. 15:55-57; 2 Cor. 9:15; 1 Peter 3:12)! Jesus taught that if God takes care of the birds and flowers, how

much more will He take care of His children (Matt. 6:25-34)? If God can create and uphold the universe, can He not take care of us (Neh. 9:6; Heb. 1:3; Acts 17:28)? If God did not spare His only begotten Son because of His love for us, will He not take care of us (Rom. 8:32)?

It seems many Christians do not believe God is answering prayers today, however, people of faith believe everything God said, including what He said about answering prayers (Rom. 10:17). “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him*” (1 John 5:14-15). We must ask according to God’s will, but we do not always know what God’s will is. We must simply make our requests and let God’s will be done as we completely trust Him (Prov. 3:5-6; Mark 14:36). When Jesus taught about God’s providential care, Jesus scolded his hearers for their lack of faith in their Father’s providence: “*O ye of little faith*” (Matt. 6:30). How much faith do we have in God’s providence? If you are a faithful Christian but praying to God without faith that He is listening or willing to help, don’t expect Him to grant your request! James said Christians must ask “in faith” without wavering, or they will receive nothing (James 1:6-7). Why should Christians believe everything in the Bible except what God said about answering prayers?

If you have some selfish, sinful motivation behind your request, don’t expect God to grant your request (James 4:3), and if you don’t ask for help, don’t expect to get help: “*...ye have not, because ye ask not*” (James 4:2). Asking God for what we need honors Him and acknowledges our dependence on Him as the Giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17; cf. Deut. 8:18). We also acknowl-

edge His providence by giving Him thanks “in everything,” “always for all things” (1 Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20).

Nothing bothering you is too small or great to give to God. He wants us to cast “all” our cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7), and to “*Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 4:6-7). “*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened*” (Matt. 7:7-8; cf. 7:9-11).

Christians must understand the difference between the miraculous and the providential. Christians may pray for safety during a storm (providential care, Phil. 4:6-7), but Jesus rebuked a storm and it immediately disappeared (miraculous, Mark 4:39). God rained down bread from heaven for the Israelites (miraculous, Exodus 16), but Jesus taught His followers to pray for their daily bread (non miraculous, providential blessings, Matt. 6:11, 25-34). God said that miracles would cease, but He never implied that prayers for providential blessings would become ineffective after the miraculous age (Zech. 13:1-3; 1 Cor. 13:8-12; Eph. 4:7-13; 5:20).

Regarding the details and inner workings of God’s providence, we could say what Mordecai said: “Who knows?” (Est. 4:14; Rom. 11:33; 13:1; Philemon 15). Man cannot always know how and when God works in His providential care, but this writer has seen it countless times and plans to trust in the Great Provider until the end.

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## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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