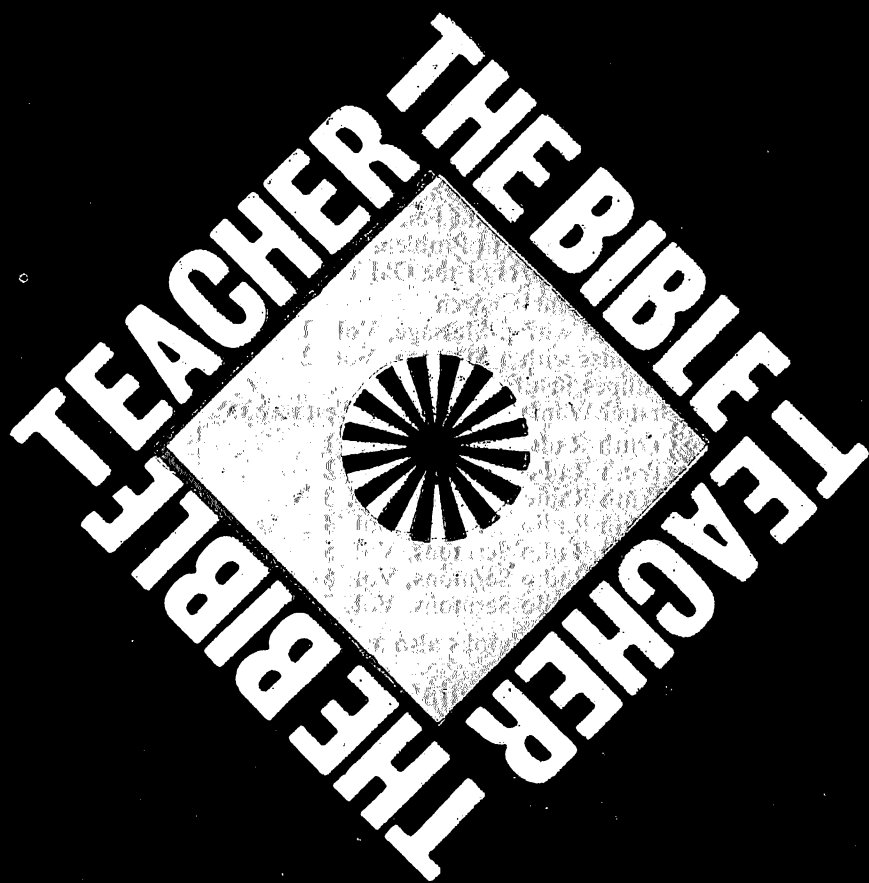


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## EDITORIAL



### Withdrawing Fellowship

What does the Lord's church do when one of its members publicly sins but refuses to repent? Do the other members just ignore it, decide to kick the unfaithful out, or perhaps resort to some other action? Does the Bible give any plan on how to deal with the erring or ungodly?

Before we go further, a number of observations need to be made. First, what about the individual under consideration? What has he done? Is he guilty of denying the faith? Has he become unsound doctrinally? Is he immoral? Has he quit attending the assemblies of the church? In some of these categories, he may even continue to attend the various meetings of the church, but if he is guilty of any of these things then some action needs to be taken in relation to the fellowship that shall be extended to him. Second, in considering the grounds for withdrawing from a member, a sharp distinction must be made between one being guilty of the foregoing sins, and in one being guilty of no more than having a disagreement with a fellow member, of a clash of

personalities, taking too much initiative, or just being disliked for one reason or another. Such things as just mentioned do not generally constitute a scriptural reason for withdrawing fellowship. Third, there is no scriptural basis for "kicking one out of the church," for "voting" members out of the church, or for ignoring the unfaithful. The Bible teaches rather that there is a scriptural way to deal with the ungodly and we will be taking a close look at this as we continue our study.

The ideal thing is for the unfaithful member to see the error of his way and for him to voluntarily return to the Lord by repenting of his sins, confessing his faults, and asking forgiveness of his sins as taught in Luke 15:11-32. Although this is the desirable thing, it does not always follow. As a matter of fact, we no doubt lose many souls through waiting too long on them to act on their own. Christ taught: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (Matthew 18:15-17). Now, let us notice very carefully the steps that are involved in dealing with an unfaithful brother or sister in Christ:

1. If one has sinned against a Christian, then the one that has been wronged should go to that erring brother and confront him with it. That is, his wrong or error should be pointed out, with the hope that he will make the necessary corrections. If it is, of course, between two parties only and it can be settled without involving others, then it should be so done. Naturally, if it is a sin against the church and the general public, then the guilty party should be confronted, with the prayer that he or she or the ones involved, will correct the problem at this point. If this can be done then the guilty party can be saved and fellowship retained.

2. In the event that the guilty person or persons will not

repent and return to the Lord then the next step is for the one who made the original contact to return at a later date but to carry along one or two others that they might serve as witnesses. Again, their motive should be to try to convince the guilty party of the seriousness of the wrong and of his need to return to the Lord and the church. This is an attempt to remove any thought on the part of the erring that someone has a grudge against him or that someone is just trying to get rid of him. The goal is to impress upon the one in sin that he has engaged in sinful activity, that he is in error and lost, that his wrong doing will not be tolerated, and that he cannot expect to keep the fellowship of the church as long as he is conducting his life in this manner. It is also to impress upon him the need to repent and to make things right with God and the church. If he will take heed to those who are urging repentance then he can be saved.

3. Should he refuse to hear those who have talked to him about repentance, that is, should he choose to ignore their pleadings and warnings, then those who have gone to him have no alternative but to take the matter to the whole church so that further action may be taken. In this case the elders or men of the particular congregation involved will discuss the matter among themselves and, from among them, some will be chosen to be sent to the unfaithful party to urge repentance. That is, they will not just represent themselves or a certain number of the church, but they will represent the church as a whole. This will let him know that no sympathy is being extended to him to encourage him to continue to live as he is. Rather, the whole church is encouraging him to repent and to return to God. If he will listen to their pleas and take heed to their advice by repenting of his sins, confessing his faults, and asking the church and God to forgive him, then he can be accepted back as a faithful Christian. In this case there will be great rejoicing.

4. But if he is full of pride, resents the church approaching him to ask that he repent, and if he refuses to come back, then there is no alternative but for the Lord's people to withdraw fellowship from him. The church as a whole should do this, that is, every faithful Christian should stand behind the decision taken,

and he should henceforth be treated as an heathen, as an infidel, as a sinner. As Paul exhorted in 1 Corinthians 5, the ungodly should be withdrawn from to the extent that all contact be cut off, that we not even eat with such a person or have any dealings with him! The idea is to take away his fellowship, to ignore him, to reject him, and to let him know that he cannot be saved in this condition. The purpose, of course, is to encourage him to repent and to return to the Lord and his church.

The church withdraws from an unfaithful member only after it has done all that it could do to encourage that person to be faithful. But since a withdrawal of fellowship was necessary, then that means that the church has no more responsibility for that soul, but if that soul is to be saved then the responsibility falls entirely upon him or her to repent, to confess the sins that he or she has been guilty of, and to return to the church to ask forgiveness both of the church and of God. Only then can that soul be accepted back into full fellowship.

Often times this part of God's will is not practiced because there are those who want to ignore the unfaithful in their midst with the hope that they will eventually correct their lives or will just simply quit altogether and be forgotten. There are some who would prefer not to take action because they are afraid that they will be criticized. There are many other reasons, or excuses, for not withdrawing fellowship, but we should realize that it is the Lord's will that we should withdraw from the ungodly. When we fail to do so, we encourage people to remain in their sins, we encourage others to follow their example, and we invite the world's criticism for condoning the actions of the ungodly. But when God's will is carried out, this is a means of purifying the church, of encouraging Christians to be faithful, and of letting the world know that we stand for Godly living.

When we fail to follow God's teaching on the matter of dis-fellowshipping, either by not doing it or else by abusing it through making our own rules, then we are the ones who have done wrong. But when we follow God's law in these matters, then the practice of withdrawing from the sinful and ungodly can be a powerful

force for good. Fellowship, acceptance, or giving approval of another, is what holds God's people together. When that fellowship is withdrawn, then it means that acceptance or one's approval of another has been withdrawn. Therefore, fellowship, or the lack of it, can make a big difference in one's life. Again, we should keep in mind that God has asked us as his people to withdraw our fellowship in extreme cases of unfaithfulness and with the aim not of destroying a soul but to save a soul and perhaps in the end to save many souls. Let us not question God's way but carry out his will in this matter as well as in all other matters.



**associate  
editorial**

## The Need of Authority

To maintain order and discipline and even life itself man needs authority. Without it we cannot survive, we would live in utter confusion and in a state of anarchy. The need for authority has necessitated man to have a President and a Prime Minister and various other ministers in the country. We need police and army. In all offices, factories and institutions there is some one who has the authority. Even in our homes father or husband is the head of the family. All such authorities are for good, we know they are necessary, because in the absence of authority utter confusion would prevail and it would make our existence miserable. We need Meters or Litres for measuring, and Kilos and Pounds for weighing. We do not want to accept feelings or ideas in these matters. A doctor is an authority about medicine. You will not accept if I tell you that you have a serious illness, because I am not a doctor. But if a doctor tells you that you are going to believe it, because you accept him to be an authority, and you

would take all precautions to follow his instructions. Then to prove our statements we would quote an authority. All of this shows the great need and importance of authority in our lives.

Authority, however, is not only a physical need of man but it is his spiritual need also. As much as he need human authority he also need divine authority for his own good and for the survival of his soul. To fulfill this urgent need of man God has always spoken to man from the beginning. The Bible says, "God, who at sundary 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." (Hebrews 1:1,2). God has never left man to speculate or walk by his own opinions or ideas, but has always revealed His will to man. He revealed his will or authority to the fathers and the prophets in the Old Testament time, and now, in these last days, in the New Testament age, He speaks to man through His Son Jesus Christ.

Some times we wonder, why are there so many religions in world and not only religions but in every religion so many denominations. All religions are trying to reach the same God and to enter the same heaven, for there is only one God and only one heaven, but are following different ways. All want to worship the same God, but their worship is not alike. Why are there seven hundred or more different churches all having different names, different modes of worship, teach different and practice different and even condemn each other. Friends; it seems we are living in a state of spiritual anarchy, and all of this is because we have rejected God's divine authority, His standard which must govern us. But we cannot hope to get well if we reject a doctor's authority, and if we want to be saved from our sins and want to go to God's heaven then we must accept God's authority revealed for us in his book. God has given us His book, the Bible, and he wants us to follow His instructions written therein. (Revelation 1:3; 22:18,19). All things found in this book were written by the inspiration or the authority of God. (2 Timothy 3:16). All men and books authored by men can be wrong, but God and His book cannot be wrong. Man-made religions can be wrong but God's



religion cannot be wrong. Man's ways of salvation can be wrong, but the way of salvation God has revealed can never be wrong. (John 14:6). Likewise churches started by men can be wrong, but the church established by His Son Christ can never be wrong. (Matthew 28:18; 16:18).

By what authority in religion are you governed? By God's or man's? Through the pages of this magazine we are pleading you to follow only God's authority. Do not follow man or man-made religion. Do not follow prejudice, feelings, opinions and ideas, but follow only God. Do what he says man must do to be saved, (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), and to become a member of the church you can read about in your Bible (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47). Worship him in the way He has authorised in the pages of His book (John 4:24; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; Ephesians 5:19). Then and only then you will be right.

## Know The Truth

Marvin Rainey

**HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY IN SALVATION.** The Bible plainly says that salvation is by grace. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory." (Eph. 2:8, 9). But, while teaching that man is incapable of saving himself and that he must rely on God's unmerited favour, the Bible also teaches that a man has a personal responsibility for his own salvation. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Mt. 7:21).

Is there a contradiction in these two ideas? Many have imagined one, but in fact there is no contradiction at all. The doctrines of the grace of God and the necessity of man's obedience to the will of God are perfectly harmonious! Salvation has

been planned, provided and published by the grace of God, but it can be received only upon one's obedience to the gospel. The divine part is certainly greater than the human part, but both must be present in order for salvation to be complete!

Man is not able to devise a method or plan by which he can be saved for "it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps." (Jer. 10:23). Salvation had to come from heaven, for "who can forgive sins but one, even God." (Mark 2:7). In the divine process through which salvation was provided, each member of the Godhead—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, played a specific and vital role.

The Father is the great architect of salvation. He is the giver of salvation. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." (James 1:17). Christ as the Son of God appears as the sacrificial factor in salvation. It has always been true that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9:22). The Holy Spirit revealed the divine plan of salvation unto men. The Word of God, as it was preached, taught and written by inspired men, became the instrument by which the Holy Spirit convicted men of sin and led them unto salvation. It is only through the written Word of God, as that message is read, studied and taught, that the Holy Spirit acts upon human hearts. The Holy Spirit does not work separately and apart from the word. Study your Bible and learn the truth. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32).

## Images of Leadership

J. V. Copeland

What do you think about when you think about leadership? Various people have different images in mind relating to leaders.

**LOOKING** at leaders whom God used in days of old, we can understand what God really had in his mind when he chose men to lead his people. Before taking a good look at those leaders, let us notice how some today look at leaders of God's people.

IT is sad that sometimes people get an erroneous view of leaders because some leaders are not the kind of men God wants them to be. They do not act in the manner God would have them act.

**SOME** think that leaders are just those fortunate men who have been selected to lead, therefore they can have things going their way, and the others in the congregation will just have to put up with it. The leaders make decisions which please them and they do not care what others think. Being leaders those men can always do things like they wish and the congregation must accept their decision because they are the leaders.

I have known leaders that appeared to have that view of leadership themselves. Their decisions were made without regard to the wishes and desires of the other members. They seemed to think that whatever decision they make must be accepted by the congregation. Therefore they were under no obligation to even consider the desires of others.

**SOME** have the idea that leaders are a group of proud and arrogant men because they have been chosen as leaders of the congregation. Some men may feel that way, and act that way. But before accusing them of such, a person should take another look; A look inward.

**REMEMBER** what Aaron and Miriam did to Moses? Read Numbers, chapter 12. They decided they were as important as Moses and God should speak to them as well as to Moses. They felt they were not getting the recognition they deserved. Because of that the Lord smote Miriam with leprosy.

**OR**, read about Korah and the group who rebelled against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16). They thought Moses and Aaron

took too much upon themselves. They were getting too much recognition and were lifting themselves up above the rest of the congregation.

WHAT did the Lord think—and what did he do because of the unrighteous judgement of these people against Moses and Aaron? God was so displeased with their attitude and conduct that he had these people separated from the rest of the congregation. Then he opened up the ground so that these people were swallowed up, and buried in the earth. What Punishment!

## Absence and Alarm

Jim Bill McInteer

There is a correlation, you know. When a Christian is absent from the worshipping assembly there *is* cause for alarm.

WHY? WHOSE BUSINESS IS IT? IT'S MY LIFE ISN'T IT?, says the absentee. IF I WANT TO MISS, LET ME BE—WHAT DOES IT HURT ANYWAY?

Glad you asked the question—it hurts a lot! *It hurts you*, first. Fellowship of the saints in the presence of Christ is a stirring experience. Sharing exhilarating emotions with those who love the Lord as together you sing, pray, teach, commune and give, is an uplifting exercise. What better could you do? The Bible states to absent yourself only if there is a matter to be straightened out with you and your brother, doesn't it? The assembly certainly takes priority over the ordinary of life.

Secondly, *you hurt those closest to you*. Helpmate or children built because you do. Your lack of zeal and interest telegraphs to them, CHURCH IS UNIMPORTANT. They love you—you are the big one in their life. You thus take from the Lord instead of to Him, those you love most.

Thirdly, the relationship between absence and alarm is further heightened by the fact the surest path to back sliding is absenteeism. There is more to being a Christian than attending services, but the attendance can never be minimized. It is a vital part of our duty.

The alarm registers also because where else better can one go? Nothing is equal to the church of the Lord—to leave is to go downhill. Nothing is clearer than the duty to REMEMBER ME. Jesus demands it. Absence lets you remember self. Why would not one be alarmed when even one member is absent. He's selling short his opportunity—he's disobeying his Lord. Be certain about your attendance. It's scary when you are gone. There is one certain fact—when one is absent willfully, he is going the wrong way! Turn around brother, come home.

## Christ and the Sabbath

Jerry R. Self

“At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn, and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue” (Matt. 12:1-9).

“And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him” (Lk. 13:10-17).

Accusations are herein levied against Jesus and His disciples for supposedly violating the Mosaic law with reference to the sabbath. There was no objection to their taking of the grain. The Law specifically stated that this was allowable. “When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn” (Deut. 23:25).

The Pharisees’ objection came from their considering the disciples’ action as a kind of reaping, thus *working* on the sabbath.

In the healing of the infirmed woman (Lk. 13), the accusation is the same. There is no indication that she had come to be healed or even expected such to happen. Jesus called her to Him and healed her.

Let’s look at the sabbath day. “And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering there-

of: This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering" (Num. 28:9-10).

The priests had much work to do on the sabbath. They baked and changed the shewbread. There were twelve loaves of shewbread to be baked on the sabbath. The old twelve were removed and eaten by the priest (Lev. 24:5-9). These old loaves were what was given to David (1 Sam. 21:6). The priests performed the sacrifices on the sabbath. Two lambs were killed plus the daily sacrifice. They were killed, skinned, cleaned. A fire was kindled to consume the sacrifices. There was incense to be burned along with other duties.

Obviously, then, the law ordered work on the sabbath rather than forbade it. The fourth commandment stated, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:8-11).

The Law did not forbid labor on the sabbath day. It did forbid work for worldly gain. Profaning the sabbath came not from working, but working for personal profit. Work for God was not only allowed but commanded. Tradition had distorted the Jew's concept of the sabbath day. They, in fact, had totally lost the true concept of what the day was all about.

## **"But Upon Mount Zion Shall Be Deliverance..."**

(Obadiah 1:17)

**Bob Hurd**

These words were written to comfort the now exiled, captive Israelites. They were also aimed at Edom, the high and proud

people of the hills who had conspired with the enemy of Israel, even to the point of helping in capturing them as they fled from her enemies.

Edom lies in ruin! The high and mighty, once proud people of the hills, who had the idea that no one could hurt them, or over throw them were utterly defeated.

Israel who was carried away captive, seemed to be defeated for ever, came back to her home land, rebuilt the city of Jerusalem, rebuilt the temple, rebuilt her people back again into a strong nation.

After Christ came and established His church, the kingdom of God today, which is God's Mt.Zion, we must re-read this statement over and over and help us to realize that although things look bad, although the church may be small in comparison to the worlds religious population, there is now, ever has been, and ever will be the truth that **GOD'S DELIVERANCE IS ONLY IN GOD'S MT ZION, THE CHURCH!** In this light we must view the church of Christ as more than an after thought of God, but vital, important and absolutely necessary to man, if from the world they are to have deliverance from sin and death. Sin is the scourage of all mankind in every age. (Rom. 3:23). Jesus blood is the **ONLY REMEDY** for my sins and yours (Eph. 1:7, Rev. 1:5b), and that blood is only found in the kingdom, which is the church for which our Lord died. With all this being true, have you as yet become a part of the kingdom, the church which Jesus died for, by obedience to the gospel. All can be saved when they meet the way of God into Christ, and all can enjoy this deliverance when they become children of God upon baptism into Christ and then living faithful for God. If deliverance is in the church and none other are to be saved, where do you want to be?

## God's Incomparable Book-The Bible

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

There is no book like the Bible. It takes first place among



best sellers of any month. There is no book like it from the standpoint of *age*. Its latest contents are two thousand years old; its earliest contents are thirtyfive hundred years old, or more, the book of Job bearing the date of 2,000 B. C. Thirtyfive hundred years of antiquity! Where are there such writings of man?

It is said that time is the sifter of books. An expert in the realm of publications issued the statement that the average book lives a year on the public market. If it is a good book it may live five years. If it is a rare book, it may live fifty years. That is considered the time limit on best sellers one to fifty years. Time sifts books, but time has not sifted the Bible. The ancient book has stood the test of centuries, hoary with age, weighted down with antiquity, holding the centuries in its bosom, braving the storms and bearing the criticisms, stronger today than ever in the history of the world. It is studied in colleges; access to it may be had in libraries; but the Bible is on the centre table at home, available in moments of sickness, hours of sorrow, and ready in the inevitable event of death to flash its light through the valley of shadows, to "lead kindly light, amid encircling gloom; lead thou me on." If the Bible is merely a book of history of an obscure race and nation of people on the back side of the Mediterranean, how account for the undeniable influence it holds in the world? There could be no explanation.

How has it been preserved and handed down through the ages? Somebody said concerning Plato, that he must be "handed down tenderly"—only a few people in any generation know Plato. It has been said that no more than a dozen people in one generation understand Plato. Why? Because Plato cannot be understood? Hardly. Rather because Plato holds no place in the hearts of man, and is "handed down tenderly," preserved carefully, if at all—in other words, "fragile, handle with care!". But not so with the Bible. Stamp it under your feet, burn it in piles and heaps, persecute those who believe it, resort to every means of blotting it out. It does not have to be handled tenderly, do to it what you will—the book lives. Where are the men who have "unmasked" the Bible? Dead-gone with the pale of nations of the past. Where is the Bible? It lives—a testimony to the fact that

it is invulnerable. No man, no set of men, has ever been able, by the criticism hurled against it, to even make a dent in this impregnable Gibraltar of divine revelation.

Consider the composition. It covers about 1600 to 2000 years of time. About forty different men went into the writing of it. They were men of various stations in life, who had different tongues, who did not live in the same period of time, who did not know the same language; and from the first to last, who lived sixteen hundred years apart. Yet, gather up their writings, put them into one book, and we have a book that yields one consistent whole.

As to its contents, men are on trial before the Bible, not the Bible on trial before men. A man once visited an art gallery who did not know paintings, and when he criticized a masterpiece of art, the host remarked to the man, "It is the visitor who is on trial." So it is with the Bible. It is the reader who is on trial, not the book. Your attitude toward the book determines what you are in heart, in character, in conduct, and in every phase of life.

Consider the range of its contents. In Hos. 8:12, God said through his prophet, "I have written unto him the great things of my law and he hath counted them as a strange thing." The "great things" of God's law—great from the standpoint of the majesty of the things it contains; great from the standpoint of their magnitude; great from the standpoint of their durability and indestructibility. "I have written unto him the ten thousand things of my law."

Consider the science and the history of the Bible, you who deny its historicity and call it unscientific, and see that it is both scientific and historical. It writes history in advance, and reveals facts of science before science was born. Before men of science lived, before the magic and mystic word "science" was coined, the Bible imparted information which modern science corroborates with the fluence and affluence of inspiration. There are matters historical, scientific, geological, biological, astronomical, zoological

—in every field, in every realm of knowledge that man has ever touched, the Bible anticipates. What a book for some puny infidel, whether a Ph.D. or an ordinary monkey-theory representative of the 4-A society to criticise. When their names are all forgotten, and the world ceases to know that they ever lived, the Bible will be here, its banners unfurled in majesty, waving in glory over the denizens of earth. When the Ph.D.'s, with their little names and big degrees, have been forgotten, and all for which their titles stand are no more, as though they had never been, the incomparable book will stand among things that remain.

## Excuses—A Curse To The Cause

Frank Faircloth

In my opinion, there is no greater curse to the cause of Christ than measley, trite and unmeaningful excuses. There is a vast difference in an excuse and a reason. A reason is justified but an excuse is not. Have you ever heard this one, "I didn't feel *too good*" as an excuse for having missed a church service? Here is the difference in giving a reason and making an excuse. If one had really been sick, he would have said so. Without hesitation he would have said, "I was sick?" But since he could not honestly say that, he said, "I didn't feel *too good*" putting the emphasis on the "too good". That is an excuse! That is only a half hearted way of saying, "I didn't want to go."

How about the one that is often heard, "The pews are too hard for me to sit through two services" when one is trying to alibi his way out of attending the Sunday morning Bible class? I knew a man once that would constantly use this as an excuse, yet he would go fishing and sit all day in a boat. It seems that one would readily see the inconsistency in this, but who cares about being consistent when the important thing at the time is getting someone off your back about attending the Bible class?

We have all heard the old "hand-me-down" excuses such as the two mentioned. But, once in awhile we hear a new one. I was talking to a lady recently about attending church and she endeavored to excuse herself with this: "I did my church going thirty years ago." Her concept of the matter is, you finish your task in attending after so long a time and when you are through, you are through.

The poignant lesson our Lord gave concerning excuses teaches us beyond any doubt that He will not accept excuses. Making excuse is a form of dishonesty. It is being dishonest with self, with others and with God. May God help us to clothe ourselves with zeal and fervor rather than hiding in the wilderness of excuses.

## Are There Saved In All Churches ?

Maxie B. Boren

The common viewpoint of people in the denominational world is "that it doesn't make any difference which church a person belongs to," because "we're all going to the same place, but just in different ways." This concept is indeed the popular thing to believe—in fact, *people want to believe it!* They want to believe it because it removes the consternation people would otherwise experience when friends and loved ones "hold to" doctrines that are diametrically opposite to their own.

For whatever reasons, there is a growing tendency, it seems to me, for more and more members of the Lord's church to imbibe such an outlook. This is a natural result, when one considers a decline in Bible knowledge within our ranks, and the inclination "to be like the others" about us. Tragically, the church, throughout the land, has so many half-converted, ill-informed members, that a draft toward denominationalism and its concepts poses a great danger. It is no real surprise, then, that many members of the church have indeed embraced the idea that "there are saved in

all churches.”

But can one substantiate such a philosophy from the Scriptures ? Doesn't it matter any longer what the Bible teaches ? Do keep in mind, that *the Bible IS THE WORD OF GOD !* Read *II Timothy 3:16-17.*

The Bible teaches that “all spiritual blessings are *in Christ.*” *Ephesians 1:3.* To be “in Christ” is to be “in the church” over which Christ has been made the head, and of which He is the Savior ! *Ephesians 1:20-23; 5:23* and *I Corinthians 12:12-14, 27.* The apostle Paul declared that there is but “*one body ?*” Since there is only *ONE* body, and since the body is the church, then there is only *ONE* church ! *Ephesians 4:4.*

The Scriptures plainly teach that those who hear the gospel message, believe it, and render submissive obedience to the terms of pardon the Lord gave, “enter Christ.” Christ adds these that are being saved to the church. See *Acts 2:41, 47.* Thus, the process by which penitent believers are saved from sin is the same process by which they become members of the church. *The Lord's church is the spiritual body of the saved.*

There's no such thing as being saved, yet being outside the Lord's church. *The Lord adds the saved to the church ; Apart from Christ people are lost...*and those of responsible mind and age who have not obeyed the gospel are apart from Christ. *To be apart from Christ is the same as being outside His church, thus, those outside His church are lost.*

If a person really believes the Bible is the word of God, this is what he must believe, because this is what the Bible plainly teaches. We must preach it as it is !

## On Being Accountable

Christianity is a unique situation in which we find ourselves

walking an independent course while being accountable to all those around us. On first look this seems to be such an incongruous arrangement that it would be impossible to achieve. How can one be independent of and accountable to others all at the same time?

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul gave us some instructions which can help us to understand this problem. "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*" (Gal. 6:2). "*For every man shall bear his own burden*" (Gal. 6:5).

Would it not seem that Paul is saying to us, help your brother in his needs, but do not rob him of the character building experience of shouldering his responsibilities by just taking over completely for him?

There is a sense in which we are answerable to God and to God only in our lives. We must not let the dearest tie on the earth come between us and our duty toward God. "*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of Me* (Matt. 10:37). But, below that highest and ultimate accountability which is to God, there is a relationship which must be maintained with those around us, a relationship which will not jeopardize our soul's welfare nor become a stumbling block to our fellows. This fine line of Christian conduct is expressed well by the apostle Peter, "*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may be your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*"

—Selected—

## Keeping And Sharing The Faith

Gene A. Ellmore

There are certain essentials in sharing the faith. The first

essential is to possess it, viz., to be converted.

The second essential is to have conviction. The soul-winner must be convinced of what it means to be lost! If a child were lost in the forest and you were asked to be a part of the search party what would be your attitude? Would you beg off to watching a sporting event on TV when a child's life was at stake? Would you refuse upon any basis except an emergency equal to the emergency in question? No! You would immediately join in the search. Yet, the same child and the parents can live next to us day in and day out who are lost spiritually and we never say anything to them. Why? We are not convinced they are lost.

We live in a day of peaceful co-existence with our denominational friends. We practice a "hands-off" policy with them as if what we had to present was offensive. Have we been accused so often of "you think you are the only ones who are going to be saved" that we believe the accusation is correct and so we never help the person who is lost? If so, then we have retreated to the position that "as long as a man is religious, all is well with his soul." On the other hand, if you believe that he is lost and do not impress that upon him, it amounts to the same thing.

Every man outside of Christ is listed among the lost—those who are "disobedient and know not God" (2 Tess. 1:7-9). It is absurd to be forced in to the position of agreeing that "they are just as good as we are." For our morality or theirs is not the criterion for salvation. Everyone is saved by being in the body, the church (Eph. 5:23; 1:22, 23). The only way to gain admission into the body—into Christ is by being baptized (Gal. 3:26, 27) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). If he gains admission in any other way, he is the same as a "thief and a robber" (Jn. 10:1).

Are you keeping the faith yourself (1 Cor. 9:27)? Are you keeping the faith to yourself (1 Cor. 9:16,17) or sharing it with others (Rom. 1:16,17).

# The Lord's Last Plea For Unity

Pat McGee

In the agony of approaching crucifixion Christ prayed for the unity of his followers. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:20-21).

In America today there are more than 350 distinct parties, denominations, sects and cults. Most of these groups recognize the tragedy of division and many of them are increasingly seeking means and ways of effecting the unity of all who profess to be followers of Christ. The tragedy is that none of them know the one basic remedy to the religious division they profess to disdain.

It is utterly impossible to unite all of these groups on any single human (1) creed; (2) name; (3) organization; (4) worship. Human attempts at "union" instead of unity on Bible terms are doomed to failure. Unity is impossible on any other basis other than a Biblical one.

We earnestly plead therefore for the unity of all who would serve the Lord on the following Biblical platform:

## NO CREED BUT THE BIBLE

Human creeds are nearly always occasions and often even the cause of discord, division and strife. Human creeds are what they say: Creeds that came from human beings. In spite of this, all religious people can agree to accept the Bible and most professing religious people say that they are following the Bible. But the devil has deluded their minds and deceived their hearts. Indeed the Bible is sufficient for all of our spiritual needs (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1.3).



## NO NAME BUT CHRIST

Human names in religion are marks of distinction and differences. They denominate people to various and sundry groups. Yet all believers of Christ are willing to be known by the simple name of "Christian." "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). On this name we can unite. Why not therefore eliminate the distinctive and denominating party names? Why not do away with that which is responsible for religious division?

## NO RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION BUT THE CHURCH

Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). It would be a hopeless task to seek agreement on the multitude of guilds, societies, clubs, and other ecclesiastical organizations of the modern religious world. But in the days of the church's greatest power and glory, the local congregation was the highest and the only organization known. This was the church Jesus promised to build and did establish on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ from the dead (See Acts 2). The church as such can do all the work God wants the church to do (Eph. 3:10 and 21).

## NO WORSHIP BUT THAT AUTHORIZED BY CHRIST

The essence of New Testament worship is simplicity—a worship that is spiritual and not material. The great emphasis given to religious pageantry, ritualism and elaborate forms in many religious organizations today cannot but destroy the purpose intended by God for worship. The appeal in human worship is to the senses rather than to the spirit. By following *strictly* the plan of worship given by Christ and the apostles, we can occupy a position broad enough for all sincere people. Jesus said, "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Acceptable worship to the Lord must be qualified by: 1) proper attitude, "in spirit"; 2) proper doctrine or teaching, "in truth". Back to the simplicity of New Testament worship! Let us return to God's will and God's way of worship.

The unity for which Christ prayed is possible. We gladly plead for this unity—upon the basis of New Testament teaching. There is no other basis by which men may achieve true unity except the Bible way.

Religious division is of the devil. God is not a God of confusion but a God of peace (I Cor. 14:33). Let us all live under and be guided by the influence of Christ's plea for unity.

## Commercial Religion And Oral Roberts

Max Patterson

Rarely has anyone been more successful in raising money than Oral Roberts. One might claim correctly that he is an expert at mass-media marketing, using the best known techniques of money-raising and psychology. But what is Oral Roberts like on a personal level? Is he off camera like he is on camera? These and many other questions are answered in a new book entitled *Prime Time Religion* by Jerry Sholes. Sholes worked very closely with Roberts for three and one-half years.

Following are some observations from Sholes that gives several interesting insights into this person and the type of psychology he uses.

1. Roberts' book, *Seed-Faith*, is based upon one principle—give independently from your need—and except a miracle back from God. This book, along with others, generally contain examples of people who gave Roberts money and *then* got their miracles. In all of his books he advises, "you give *first* and then expect miracles in your life."

2. Roberts' miracles are exposed as fakes. Sholes writes about those who came to Roberts for healing: "If faith *could* have

brought them up out of those wheelchairs, they would have come out and been ready to run a 50-yard dash on the spot! It *never* happend."

"Oh, once in a while someone would get up out of a wheelchair and limp off the stage. But I'd seen them a day or two before get out of their wheelchairs to get into cars or go into the restroom. They weren't total and incurable wheelchair cases. They merely needed the wheelchairs for comfort because of the particular illness they had. They *could*, however, get up and walk short distances if they had to, or if they *really wanted* to. "They really wanted to for Oral, so they'd do it and then return to their wheelchairs backstage. It was a dog and pony show."

3. Sholes tells of a faculty member at Oral Roberts University that had a young baby to become seriously ill. The faculty member apparently decided to really put prayer to the test and prayed for the child, while at the same time refusing to take the baby to the hospital. Well, the baby died, right in the home.

The story gets worse. Through fasting and praying the couple tried to bring the infant back to life. They requested Oral Roberts to also pray for the child. A certain ORU Vice-President described Oral's reaction as, "He wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole."

I think you must agree, given what Roberts has always claimed to be and able to do, that his reaction is, to say the least, shocking. The same Vice-President that reported Roberts "wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole" related, "A story like that would ruin Oral. The press would crucify him." Oral would not even go near the faculty member's home.

4. Sholes described at length the personal aspects of the man. He wears \$500 plus Brioni suits and drives \$25,000 cars that are replaced every six months. He enjoys a million-Dollar home in Palm Springs, California, in addition to his very expensive home in Tulsa and his farm near Tulsa complete with cattle. He is a member of an ultra-posh Thunderbird Country

Club which both he and his son joined when memberships were only \$20,000. Artist have used an air brush on his photographs to hide the diamond rings and solid gold bracelets he's taken to wearing. When you step into his plush office, you have to look up at him seated behind a desk on a raised, dais-like area.

5. On the sordid side, Sholes describes the drinking done by staff members at ORU, including Roberts' Son, Richard. He tells of Oral's temper tantrums that he throws. His wife sometimes hides his car keys when he throws a tantrum, afraid of what he might do while in such a state, either to himself or to others. Sholes describes at length Roberts' ego that must be constantly fed, and no one is to cross him. He describes how the plans for the City of Faith were discussed and worked out seven months before Roberts got on National TV and said the Lord had just given him a vision on what to build and the name it was to be called.

The purpose of Sholes' book is not only to expose Oral Roberts, but to warn all of the little people who send in their dollars and five dollars where their money is going. He points out that it would be much better if the money were kept locally. Also Sholes thinks some kind of regulation is in order to prevent this kind of fleecing of the public.

(Incidentally, after the book was published, Mr. Sholes was so savagely beaten, but not robbed, in a Tulsa parking lot that plastic surgery was required to repair his face.)

## **Jezebel—A Wicked Woman**

**Ernest S. Underwood**

In chapters sixteen through twenty-one of the book of First Kings we find recorded the deeds of perhaps the most wicked woman in the Bible. Her name was Jezebel. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Phoenicia, and was married to Ahab, king

of Israel. She seemed to have only one real goal in life. She made persistent effort to oust the worship of Jehovah, and to establish that of Baal-Melkart. It mattered not to her how much blood was shed to accomplish her evil aims.

Elijah was God's prophet in those days. He challenged every false way, a thing which Jezebel could not tolerate. In First Kings, chapter eighteen, we have the account to the contest on Mt. Carmel between the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and Elijah. It should be noted that those prophets of Baal found refuge and hospitality at the table of Jezebel. When Elijah's God was successful in the contest, and when the false prophets were slaughtered, Jezebel was furious. In her fury she sent a message to Elijah containing an earnest threat upon his life. Concerning her actions at this time James Hastings says, "The very fires of hell were kindled in her fanatical heart; and a famishing thirst for blood in revenge for the blood of the priests of Baal. Rather would she that the whole kingdom should have perished by the famine than have witnessed such a triumph for Jehovah. The very thought of Elijah enjoying his proud triumph was to her insupportable; and that he should quietly sleep upon it was maddening... She refused to acknowledge the sovereignty of Jehovah, even when proved by such convincing signs as those which Elijah had given, and she vainly imagined that, if she could only destroy the prophet's life, she would also annihilate the cause with which he was identified... Her rage knew no bounds. She was committed against the truth by upbringing, by prejudice, by disposition, by the interests of a wicked life, by the determination to rule Israel according to her own mind and liking. And moreover, that this Elijah should have presumed to slay the prophets of the divinity she worshipped was an offence of so audacious a character that, instead of breaking her will into submission to the righteous God, whose act of judgement it really was, it aroused all the hostility of her nature, and concentrated her purpose of vengeance upon him."

Her instigation of the murder of Naboth showed her true character. It mattered not that the vineyard which her pouting husband wanted belonged to another. There was no wounding of

conscience for her when she had false witness borne against Naboth, with his subsequent murder. Hastings again comments, "Jezebel received the news of Naboth's death with undisguised satisfaction. It was nothing to her that God's name had been profaned; that religion had been dishonoured; that justice had been outraged; or that innocent blood had been shed. She had obtained her object." Such was the character of this despicable woman.

The wickedness of Jezebel was not without its dire influence. Her daughter Athaliah was following in her very footsteps. Down in Judah this wicked daughter had introduced Baal worship. When her son was killed in battle, her mother's influence had so permeated her own character that she attempted to kill all of her grandsons. Except for Joash, a one year old baby, she was successful.

This evil woman Jezebel, and those influenced by her, wreaked havoc among the people of God. However, when she was killed there is no record of a single tear being shed for her. And so it should have been for such a hateful and ungodly woman. How much of this evil could have been avoided if the people of Israel had only heeded God's commandments as they related to marriage, idolatry, and murder.

May we learn many lessons from this account.

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