

# THE ONE GROUND OF FELLOWSHIP

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## *The believer's relationship to the Scriptures*

### *FAITH IN OR FAITH FROM ?*

We who strongly affirm our faith in the Bible need to constantly examine ourselves whether we “be in the faith” (II Cor. 13:5). It is all too common a thing in these days of apostasy to see those, who loudly boast of their faith in God’s Word, but who are walking in a manner that proves they have little faith from God’s Word. The Devil and all of his demons have faith in the Bible, but none from it. By far the worst blight on the Name of our blessed Lord is the inconsistent walk of those who talk in orthodox terms— inconsistent “fundamentalists,” not the “modernists.” The devil “believes and trembles” (James 2:19) before God’s Word. The humble-minded and humble-hearted child of God believes and trembles with God’s Word. The Devil believes only with his mind but utterly disregards with his heart and life. The child of God believes with his heart (Rom. 10:8-10) and trembles with God-given awe, soberness and heartfelt obedience. “Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” we read of Christ (Luke 6:46). The true believer should say, “speak Lord, Thy servant heareth” (I Sam. 3:9).

### *The Word is Like LIVE WIRES !*

Is it really possible for us to actually “lay hold” of the “high tension” wires of God’s Word and remain unmoved? Do I really believe with my heart when it is evident that the Words which immediately lifted Lazarus out of the grave do not vitally affect the course of my life? Can I be vitally linked with the power that flung the stars out from the creative hand of God and yet walk in unmistakable independence of the laws for me of that same power? Personally, I used to think such a travesty on the effectiveness and authority of God’s Word was possible. Now I trust those thoughts are brought into captivity to this astounding verse, “...the Word of God effectually worketh in you that believe.” Read this verse again carefully—I Thess. 1:13. The Spirit of God did not say that the Word might work, or should work “in you that believe” but He declares that it does “effectually work.”

### *REDUCED BIBLES !*

Many of us joined our voices with the fundamentalist leaders in their fiery denunciation of such mutilated Bibles as “Kent’s Shorter Bible.” Should we not very seriously examine our own lives to see just how much of God’s Word is now allowed to “effectually work” in us? Can we escape the conclusion that our Bible is cut and slashed down to only those passages which are “effectually working” in us? Have we not

condemned Jehudi of old (Jer. 36) while our own “pen knives” were busy “cutting” out those verses that didn’t seem to us to be absolutely binding on us, not being “fundamental”? Is it not a fact that when our hearts have carelessly passed over or failed to “lay hold” of portions of the Word we are guilty in God’s sight of “cutting” out those portions even though our conscious minds would not dream of literally doing such a thing? How much spiritual life have we and how well nourished is that life if this is true (and it is) that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

### ***MAN-MADE BIBLE BRIEFS***

I know some “believers” who have “lived” for years on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, and others whose “favorite verses” (the only ones they knew) are the first three verses of John 14. Those are indeed blessed and wonderful passages from the Bible but may they not be to all intents and purposes a “Shorter Bible”?

I know some great leaders among the “fundamentalists” who live, work, walk and talk on only the “great fundamental doctrines of the Bible.” For them, there are many, many things in the Scriptures which are not “fundamental.” If a man will subscribe to these “fundamentals” he is received into full “fellowship” by them. Again, Christ said, “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” I am firmly convinced that this very “fundamentalist” movement is a very subtle and dangerous trend toward a “Shorter Bible,” at least so far as practice among Christians is concerned. Though the “fundamentalists” strongly affirm their unquestioning belief in “the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired in their original writings and the sufficient rule for faith AND PRACTICE” yet, at the same time, their own “statement of faith” is considered a “sufficient rule” for acceptable practice, in their conventions and, generally speaking, throughout their camp.

### ***The Believer’s relationship to the WORD !***

#### ***“Walking In The Light”***

They receive into their “fellowship” all who subscribe to their nine, ten or twelve “points of doctrine” while God the father and His Son receive into fellowship only those who “walk in the light as He is in the light” (I John 1:7). The question, then, is this: Is the “fundamentalists’ statement” about the Bible “a sufficient rule for faith and practice” (fellowship) or is the Bible in its entirety? And is the “fundamentalists’” creed the light for spiritual fellowship or is the Word of God as the “light”—the “lamp unto my feet and a light unto my pathway” after it has made an entrance into my heart where it “giveth light”? Or, more briefly, can man make the cause and condition of spiritual fellowship or has God Almighty reserved that for Himself? “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him” (Col. 2:6). Christ is the “Word” personified!

#### ***What Will Unite Christians ?***

I am more and more convinced that all of our talk about “trying to have fellowship” is fleshly and foreign to “the words which the Holy Spirit teacheth” (I Cor. 2:13). All who “walk in the light as He is in the light have fellowship.” No one else has!

Therefore, when we walk in different fellowships” or different “faiths” (referring to denominations) we are consciously or unconsciously recognizing that there are other rules for “faith and practice” beside the Word of God, for we all know that the Bible is not responsible for the divisions among Christians.

In the earliest days of the Church “all...were together” (Acts 2:44). How were they brought together and what was the basis of the true fellowship in those days of simple faith and grateful love? We are not left to guess or imagine, nor do we have to take down some profound “commentary.” We have the sure answer contained in the simple statement that “All that believed were together.” In other words, since all those early Christians believed all they received from God, they were together. They were together not only in the mystical body but were together in walk, talk and worship. May I be permitted to make a staggering statement? Here it is: ALL WHO BELIEVE ARE TOGETHER TODAY !

### ***DEMONSTRATED UNITY !***

Unbelief of the simple Word of God caused the division in the garden of Eden where Satan first deceived Eve. (Read in this connection II Cor. 11:1-3. Have you thought me “jealous” or writing “folly” as was Paul the apostle?) Unbelief always separates us from God and one another. True belief—heart yieldedness to God—unites us to God and to all godly people, people who are also true believers. Let it not be forgotten that this union is not only inward, heart union but is positively and inevitably expressed by outward unity of walk, talk and worship. Was it not the outward manifestation of unity for which our Lord was praying rather than the inward fact of unity when He said: “I pray for them...that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be made one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 17:20,21). The Holy Spirit is entirely responsible for the inward mystical unity—the true church which is Christ’s body, but we are responsible for the presenting of the Divine unity to the Christ-rejecting world. Our Lord has already united all children of God by the baptism of the Holy Spirit—I Corinthians 12:13. In the light of that glorious fact—that we are all one in Christ’s own Church—we are obligated by gratitude and lovingly urged by God our father and our Lord Jesus Christ to demonstrate to the unbelieving world just what it means to believe on Christ—an unnatural, super-natural, harmonious union with Him as Head.

### ***UNITED IN THE LIGHT !***

Since there is only “one body (church), and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one Father” (Eph. 4:1-6) we can easily see that all who believe are “together.” Though I cannot “walk in the light as He is in the light” and at the same time walk with carnal Christians, nevertheless, thank God, I can “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit.” I can steadfastly refuse to recognize any “Shorter Bible” whether it be a modernist or a “fundamentalist” work and I can humbly and obediently take my stand at the place where the Holy Spirit is uniting all true believers.

That “place” is where the undimmed, undeflected and undoctored light from heaven strikes the earth in this, the Church age. Yes, His place is “outside the camp” (Heb. 13:12,13) for in every “camp,” no matter how “fundamental,” the light must come through the stained glass windows of some creed, or confession and “membership” of

men's making and is thereby changed to something less than "the light...He is in." In order to have spiritual fellowship we must "walk (not merely talk) in the light...He is in." I can (God helping me I must) "come out from among" all the "camps," social, moral and religious and walk with Him in the light.

### ***RAINBOW HARMONY AND UNITY***

If you refuse to come there to be practically united with me, then, it is your fault that we are not walking together and not mine. We must walk in God's light in order to have Scriptural spiritual fellowship. Light is composed of the seven colors of the rainbow. It takes all seven to make light. No combination of the six of them make light. God's light for the spiritual walk also has seven colors. You are walking in the light if you are walking in the light composed of these seven "colors:" one Church, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one Father. If you are trying to have two churches you are destroying the light combination and are walking in spiritual darkness. The same conclusion obtains in the case of two baptisms and etc. Read and believe Isaiah 8:20, "To the Law and to the Testimony: If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."

### ***PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER***

Is the Bible your sufficient rule for faith and practice? Do you dare to "prove all things" by the Word? Are you prepared to say a hearty "Amen!" when you read "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" while you remember that this means "whatsoever is not of the Bible is sin" for we know that "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"? When you and I shall have faithfully proven all things that we have been believing and doing we will be brought to God's standard for our lives, and since He does not have a double standard, we will be brought together. "All that believed were together."

We shall not be irritated then as we hear the great apostle pleading with Divine love; "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). Though we are living in days of awful apostasy, let us not forget that our Lord knew all about its coming and gave us the entire Bible in order that we might be, in this very apostate day, "a vessel unto honor sanctified (separated), and meet for the Master's use"—"perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:19-21 & 3:16,17). "Now we (all children of God) have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor. 2:12). We can freely know whether we are just where our Lord wants us to be and whether we are "walking in the light as He is in the light." We therefore have no possible reason, or excuse for not joyously obeying this loving command: "This is the way; walk ye in it."

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