

**Notes on the Study by Bob Harrison—  
“Authority, Order and Motivation”**

*By Jack W. Langford, (10/5/11)*

- *I consider this a very important study with serious consequences.*

***Introduction—a little History***

Certainly proper teaching about leadership in the Church of Jesus Christ and intelligent submission to the guidance of that leadership is always needed. Therefore I initially looked forward to reading Bob Harrison’s study when it first came out in 1996.

- Though in my early years among the brethren there was never an open emphasis placed on obedience to leadership, yet Maurice Johnson, Wilbur Johnson, Ed Stevens and others (Bob Thompson, James Cox and Berl Chisum) were held in very high regard. I remember vividly that my own devotion and submission to these men was greater than any I ever gave to the sectarian clergy in the religious organizations I mingled with, and I mingled with some highly respected clergymen and scholars. But I respected these brethren I was now associated with far higher and with more spiritual intelligence because I knew they were faithfully giving the Word of God and often suffering ridicule for it. In addition, they did not neglect to study the duties and qualifications for leadership in various open men’s meetings. This was always very helpful to everyone.

- However, when the demise of these older brethren came, there seemed to be a sharp drop in appreciation for the ministry. I believe this was due for several reasons. ***First***, because of the unique and outstanding ability of the older ones who were now gone, and the proper respect they had deserved, there naturally came a tendency to look at the younger leaders among us with less appreciation. ***Second***, certainly this drop in appreciation happened because of the failures in certain of the next generation of leaders among us. Bob Thompson stepped aside in ‘68. By the time brother Wilbur died in ‘73, two other brethren had stepped down in close proximity. With Bob, James and Berl out of the picture all kinds of questions arose about the ministry. There seemed to be a large gap that opened up between the first generation and those of us younger ones who remained. Perhaps more than anyone else I bridged the gap between the older generation and the new. At first I often felt very much alone. Thankfully, I believe other brethren soon filled in. ***Third***, and perhaps foremost, when rebellion reached a climax in 1985, I remember vividly the carnal lack of respect for leadership that was manifested by those who departed in that division. They often thought nothing of castigating the leaders at the slightest whim. There followed some of the most disrespectful meetings I ever attended. And to some extent the leadership took it quietly, at least at first. There was obviously a vicious and unfair attack upon the leadership. Now, some ten or twelve years later Bob Harrison’s study first appeared.

## *Authority, Order and Motivation*

- I apprehensively received a printed edition of this study in booklet form when it was first published in **1996** (40 pages). I had never before seen a study emphasizing the subject of submission to the authority of leadership, but I anticipated that it was needed. I read through the booklet and thought that brother Harrison certainly seemed to cover all the various aspects of properly regarding and following Godly leadership. Yet, I must admit, I felt something was not quite right about the study, but I didn't know exactly what it was. As far as I could tell, at my first reading of the material, nothing seemed to contradict anything I knew about the subject. Yet, on the other hand, some of the terminology used, his manner of approach to certain aspects of the subject, and especially the *emphasis* he placed on authority, caused me to have my *first* questions or suspicions about exactly what was meant. These were clarified later when Bob Harrison came to Fort Worth and gave a series of meetings wherein he elaborated on this theme.

- Perhaps the reason for my suspicion was that under the ministry of Maurice M. Johnson the *emphasis* was the authority of the Word of God, not the authority of leaders in the Church. According to Maurice Johnson, who I believe was correct, the authority of the Word of God far overshadowed the authority of ministers who proclaimed that Word. As far as I can remember Maurice Johnson, Ed Stevens, Wilbur Johnson, Bob Thompson, James Cox, Berl Chisum, or any of the other brethren in leadership never vaunted their authority as ministers, and yet they had dedicated and conscientious followers who respected them very highly. The only assertion of authority I ever heard was from Richard Bailey in a Sunday morning meeting in Los Angeles in 1958. He was having serious problems in Tulsa, OK. When we heard Richard's strong self assertions, "*I am a minister of Jesus Christ,*" we all had a strange feeling. After the meeting brother Adair Grove walked by me and whispered—"I wonder what's wrong with Richard!" I nodded my head in agreement with Adair. Richard Bailey's assertiveness of his position only brought suspicions against himself in our minds.

- Then Bob Harrison gave a series of messages in Fort Worth, Texas entitled *Authority and Orderly Following*, **March 16–18, 2001**. He used some 217 slides or frames. (Robert Grove followed with some 30 frames entitled *The Sin of Presumption*, which reinforced Bob's study. Later Robert used some 81 frames entitled *Preserving and Protecting the Heritage*.) At this time Bob Harrison elaborated more surely on his previous study.

### *Now Came My Real Awareness of Danger in the Study*

- It was on this occasion of Bob Harrison's presentation that I first saw clearly what I considered either confusion or else serious error in the *emphasis* Bob was placing on the subject of authority of the ministers. In fact, I wrote notes on the first two pages of the handout material that was given to us containing duplications of each of these 217 slides or frames. I will just share with you those immediate notes that I wrote down.

- On the first introductory page with the title "**Orderly Following**," there was an area framed in with two different descriptions of what people tend to follow. On the left side was the title statement "**Some Only Walk in What They See**". On the other side

was the statement “**Some Follow Leadership**”. In the middle Bob Harrison noted that young people in our assemblies often get confused and discouraged over this division. When I looked at this closely, and thought about it for a moment, I thought it was *actually* Bob’s statements that were creating the confusion. On the one hand, I had always expected brethren to only walk in what they see as the truth. This is what I was encouraged to do when I first came among the brethren. They did not expect me to walk in something I did not honestly see or believe was the truth. This is the only thing I had ever heard preached from older leadership. In addition, this is always what I have encouraged others to do as well. It would have to be a very rare and unusual case to do otherwise. I personally believe this is what leadership today should encourage and not set it in *opposition* to “Following Leadership.” Following leadership is only to be done when you “See,” recognize and believe they were preaching the truth. Bob Harrison was seriously confusing the issue in my understanding of the Scriptural principles.

- I immediately wrote on the side of my paper the following note:

“This can be confusing because no believer is to submit to leadership unless he believes the leader is preaching the truth of the Word of God. Thus, each believer is to check up for himself to ‘See’ if the leadership is giving the truth—Acts 17:11 and 1 Thess. 5:21—and then we ‘**follow**’ what is right! (1 Thess. 5:13).”

In my mind Bob Harrison’s very first point was in serious conflict with a fundamental Biblical concept—one should never “**Follow Leadership**” unless he first “**Sees**” that they are giving the truth of the Word of God, whereas in this layout Bob places “Walking in what they See” in opposition to “Following Leadership.”

- Now just think about this for a moment! If one is now being instructed to set aside what he actually “Sees,” and follow leadership even though he doesn’t “See” it, we would have to conclude that the believer is **following blindly**, would we not? And that is the one thing we have emphatically denied ever preaching in the past. We don’t believe in “blindly following leadership.” And yet, here is that very argument to follow leadership even if you don’t “see” it that is presented as the correct thing to do. This is what we must understand if we take Bob Harrison’s statements and logic at face value.

### ***Further Danger***

- The second page of Bob Harrison’s presentation was no better than the first. Beginning on the subject of “AUTHORITY,” Bob next gave “SOME FIRST THOUGHTS”. Among other things he made this key statement that caught my eye—“*Authority, God ordained, is for the purpose of controlling the inherent badness in man to the benefit of all men*” (italics mine). I instinctively thought there was something wrong with this statement. When I thought about it again, I wrote in the margins of my paper the following—

“This Authority should be ‘The Word of God.’ It is the Word of God that is given to control the badness of man, not the ministers. The ministers are simply messengers of the Word of God. The Word of God is the Authority which must come first. Interestingly enough, historically that was the basis of the whole Protestant Reformation of conscientious Christians out of Roman Catholicism.

Rome said the Authority is vested in the Church's appointed leaders—'just follow the Magisterium (leaders).' The Reformers said, 'No! The Authority is the Word of God!' 'Sola-Scriptura' became the banner for the Reformation."

Then I wrote further:

"Bob Harrison left out the first Authority, which is the Word of God. No one knows who the 'God ordained authority (ministers)' are unless they know the Word of God. The Word of God qualifies who is to be followed! The ministers must preach the Word of God. Therefore, the hearers must know the Word of God well enough to know who to follow. In addition, the minister must be approved in his life by the instructions in the Word of God. And again we must know the Word of God in order to see if he qualifies."

### ***Basic Difference in Approach from the Past***

- As I see the basic difference between the approach of ministers I was raised under like Maurice Johnson, etc., and then compare it to Bob Harrison's approach: Maurice Johnson *emphasized* the Authority of the Word of God in our lives, whereas Bob Harrison *emphasizes* the Authority of the ministers as the guiding principle. The truth of the matter is—the Word of God is the principle Authority, not the ministers. The ministers are merely the messengers of the Word. We should highly respect the ministers for that service and follow them in that service. However, Bob has made the ministers of the Word the Authority instead of the Word of God itself. This is basically the error that Rome followed and the Protestants originally revolted against. (Is it possible that Bob's study contains a subtle attack on the authority of the Word of God *by omission*?)

- In a sense, I came to realize why Bob's study had become sort of a "best seller" among some of the brethren—in a practical way it appeared to solve every problem, and rests them in the hands of the ministry. There comes a feeling after reading his booklet that no one who is subject to the authority of the leaders really has to worry about anything. The ministry bears all the responsibility. Bob later explains the whole picture thusly: the believers simply follow the ministry; God sets up ministry and He alone can take it down (p. 21); God has you look at the ministry and follow them even if you don't agree with them (p. 27); don't worry if they are wrong, because they bear the responsibility (p.28); and don't cause any trouble if there is a problem in the ministry (p. 30); God will somehow eventually set the preacher down (p. 21); dealing with the leader is not your job (p. 21).

- This emphasis places the entire burden, responsibility and accountability upon the ministry and the laity simply relies totally upon them. This would be what many have called "the lazy man's religion." Another old cliché would be apropos here—"My preacher said so!" When it comes to any questions the follower can simply defer to his preacher. This is basically what every man-made sect in Christendom eventually does, starting with Rome. The truth of the matter is God wants every man to be directly responsible to the Word of God, not to some ministry. We are to respect the ministers who preach the Word of God, and to follow them, but it is primarily and ultimately the Word of God that we must see and understand as the principle authority in our lives. God

is holding us responsible to this fundamental principle. At the judgment seat of Christ we will not be able to dodge accountability by deferring to our leaders.

### *Further Realizations*

- I know for sure that Jeff Grove believes that one is to follow leadership in an unqualified manner, whether they agree with them or not. Obviously, Jeff and others standing with him got their belief from the ideology manifest in Bob Harrison's study and/or from any who taught likewise.

I will repeat what I stated in my *Notes On Authority*. I had the following experience—

“A real shock in my own experience came a few years ago when I and a few others began to realize that the leadership was making expressions that would lead us to suspect they actually were teaching unqualified submission and obedience. At first, I dismissed this as merely the fact they were only emphasizing one aspect of submission. After all, when some pointedly responded to certain statements they made by quoting Paul's exhortation to ‘follow him as he followed Christ,’ and that we must ‘prove all things,’ they would answer that they believed that also.

“But then we began to hear one message after another which would touch on the subject in an unqualified manner. One time I openly tempered what this brother (Jeff Grove) was saying and it caught him by surprise, because he only remained silent for a moment, and then nodded as if in agreement and went on. He was obviously stung.

“Needless to say, it was known that I for one had firm reservations about how the ministers were using Scripture on the subject of submission and obedience. Therefore, in the last meeting they called for me (ten men were present as witnesses) I was pointedly asked the question by Jeff Grove, who carefully framed his question in the following manner, ‘Mr. Langford, can you give me just one Scripture that qualifies obedience ONLY if you see and agree with what the leader is saying?’

“I did not care how subtly he framed his question, I responded firmly that ‘It is a basic principle taught everywhere in the Scriptures, that you ONLY follow those who are preaching the Word of God. This is a fundamental truth.’ I further said, ‘The best illustration I know of is what we have always used—Acts 17:11—‘They of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.’

“I could hardly believe my ears as Jeff Grove responded, ‘But that was just the first time they met with Paul. After that they would not need to search the Scriptures.’ I did not waste any time in rebuking this perversion. I said, ‘It would not make any difference whether this was the first time or the thousandth time they heard Paul. This is encouraged in the Scripture as a “noble” principle.’ I further said, ‘Your doctrine, if it continues, is taking this assembly right back to mother Rome in their philosophy—just follow the Magisterium. A believer is never told to walk in someone else's faith—but in “The faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).” If one is preaching and demonstrating that ‘Faith’ we should follow! If they are not, we should not follow!’”

The command to “imitate the faith” of those who “lead” is prefaced upon their preaching the Word of God—“remember those who lead you, *who spoke to you the Word of God*; and consider the result of their conduct, imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7 emphasis mine).

### ***Further Evidence of Dangerous Teaching***

- So, after my experience with Jeff Grove, I knew for sure that the younger ministry was believing in the false doctrine of unqualified submission to leadership—“submission whether you agree with them or not” or “submission whether you see it or not.”

I then obtained a more recent copy of Bob Harrison’s study from the *bibletruths.org* web site on **8/20/06** (the same study, but in a 22 page format). I wanted to read it again, see if it was the same, and you might say, read it with *my new glasses on*. (It was the same.)

- To me, with my new glasses on, Bob Harrison made a questionable statement right away. On the first page, at the end of the second paragraph is the following statement:

**“The essence of disobedience is the denial of the order imposed on us by just authority. The just authority is God Himself and those duly appointed by Him to order our life”** (page 1 of booklet).

I asked myself, “Where is the authority of the Word of God in this statement?” It is not there! If one takes the Word of God out of the equation he is on very dangerous ground. (Interestingly enough, this just so happened to be the very same statement brother Jim Maurer more recently raised as questionable in his handout to the brethren in San Diego.)

- Just think about this statement again, and ask yourself the question, “If the ministry is the authority ‘*to order our life*’ then we have a very questionable, shaky, fallible, and even an apostate guidance system. Especially is this true in these last days when the vast majority of the ministry, even some among ourselves, has departed the faith and is following their own agenda. Is that what God gave ‘*to order our lives*’?—Hardly!”

In contrast to this is the solid, unshakable, infallible, unadulterated guidance system that God in heaven has specifically designated as our final, irrefutable authority here on earth, and in all matters of faith, walk and doctrine—The Word of God ! Can’t you see that the ministry is entirely helpless as leaders without the Word of God?

### ***Substantiation of the Priority of Scriptural Authority***

- This is basically what Paul tells the saints in his very first epistle—1 Thess. 2:13, “*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*” It is clear here that the Word of God is the authority which orders our lives. This Word is

infallible and will never change. We can always rely upon this guidance system. This does not leave out a proper appreciation of the ministry. In turn, the ministers were to be especially regarded as they ministered the Word—1 Thess. 5:12, 13, “*And we urge you brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are taking the lead of you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake...*” The ministers are the messengers of the Word. They not only teach the Word but also demonstrate the Word by their lives. In turn, believers who recognize the ministers’ allegiance to Christ will submit to their leading them. But, it is clearly the Word of God which was given “to order our lives.” The ministers merely guide the saints **to that authority** and not to themselves. As long as the ministers are giving this kind of a guidance system, Christ’s sheep will and should follow them!

- Now let us look at the last book the apostle Paul was inspired to write on the subject of the guiding authority for every believer on the face of the earth, no matter where they are or under what system or organization they operate—2 Tim. 3:16, 17, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” Can it be stated any more emphatically than this, as to what God has ordained as the authority on earth to guide and “order our lives” in Christ? So it is that the minister of Jesus Christ, even the one who lives in the very last days, will be serving God and God’s people by—“*Preaching the Word. Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . .*” (2 Tim. 4:2, 3).

### **“My Sheep Hear My Voice!”**

- Just here, let us note again Christ’s excellent words as recorded in John 10:27 —“*Mt sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”*

Now every believer loves this passage. It is amazingly simple and unbelievably beautiful. In these few words we have authority (Christ’s voice) and following (submission). God has placed in each of His sheep the **innate ability** to recognize the Shepherd’s voice so that they can follow Him. Christ had said earlier in this chapter that the Shepherd “goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, FOR THEY KNOW HIS VOICE. And they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers” (10:4 and 5).

Now we might ask, “How can sheep follow Christ today—after all, Christ is not here personally?” The answer is clear. We now have the completed Scriptures giving us Christ’s directives and counsel. In addition, Christ has shepherds through whom He still speaks. When the sheep today hear the words of Christ spoken through the voice of the shepherds they will instinctively follow. When they do NOT hear the truths of Christ in the voice of the shepherds they should **NOT follow**. This is the only deduction one can make from this clear truth.

This is undoubtedly what the apostle Paul meant when he stated—“Follow (lit., imitate) me, just as I also follow (imitate) Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). When our new nature recognizes the truths of Jesus Christ that are ministered to us, we will instinctively want to follow that shepherd, because in so doing we are following Christ. When any

shepherd does not give the truths of Jesus Christ, the sheep obviously and instinctively are NOT TO FOLLOW that teaching or ministry! That is what Christ is telling us! That is also what Paul is admonishing! And that is the spiritual instinct God has placed in every child of His. It is instinctive in God's sheep to be "followers"—but only followers of those shepherds giving the truths of Jesus Christ. This is for our safety and preservation!

- Now amazing as it may seem, Bob Harrison's ideology actually becomes a very subtle attack on this basic and fundamental truth—

### ***“Unauthorized Exceptions From Carnal Minds”***

Under this section in Bob Harrison's study (page 17 of booklet), he lists four arguments carnal Christians give in order to not follow the ministry. He said he will "expose the falseness of these arguments." The second argument (**B.**) he lists as "**We can follow another man ONLY when that man is following Christ**" (page 27 of booklet). And he even stated that "1 Co 11:1 is usually offered as scriptural support."

- Now just imagine the subtlety of the Devil in inspiring Bob to reverse the positive truth of these Scriptural statements and make it a "false argument" used by "carnal Christians." In fact, Bob says, "this is just another 'cloak' for rebellion" (same page). The fundamental truth is, of course, this is *originally* a spiritual argument made by spiritual Christians!

Apparently, Bob Harrison either has his throttle stuck on "following leadership," or else he doesn't know when to take his foot off the gas pedal and put his on the brakes. Does Bob Harrison want us to follow leadership when they are not following Christ? If so, he and all his are about to go over a cliff into spiritual catastrophe!

- It just so happens, this exhortation to only follow the ministry as they follow Christ, was repeated in a great many messages Maurice Johnson gave. Was this "just a cloak for rebellion"? If it is, then Maurice Johnson taught it well. I actually never remember hearing a carnal Christian give this as an argument against the principle of following leadership. Apparently Bob Harrison has. I know it has been given many times in my hearing as a positive truth to caution Christians in what and who they follow. But if carnal Christians were to use it, and I don't doubt that this is possible, to justify their "rebellion," then the clearest response is **to establish just exactly what Christ does teach on a given issue**. Then, and only then, will we know who is following Christ!

- After reading Bob Harrison's study, every Christian who hears one say "we should only follow those who are following Christ," they would automatically think this is an act of rebellion. Bob Harrison further says of this statement about only following Christ—"It is used to support the contention that *we should only follow those that we agree with* at any moment in time regardless of their position relative to us" (emphasis mine). So now we know that Bob is equating this statement "follow me as I follow Christ" with the contention that "we should only follow those we agree with." And indeed, this is how Jeff Grove framed the question to me—"Mr. Langford, can you give me just one Scripture that qualifies obedience ONLY if you see and agree with what the leader is saying?" Jeff could have asked me, "Mr. Langford, can you give me just one

Scripture that qualifies obedience ONLY if you see and agree with the leader that it would be following Christ?" I think he instinctively knew I would have given John 10:27.

### ***“Follow Leadership Right or Wrong”***

So it becomes obvious that Bob Harrison’s study is permeated in a very subtle way with the false ideology of “following leadership blindly,” or “following leadership whether you agree with them or not.” The only difference is that Bob Harrison just doesn’t come out and say plainly—“we must follow leadership *right or wrong*.”

- Now in this regard, it is John Morey’s testimony that the original manuscript, which Bob Harrison sent to John to proofread in California, did have that exact statement —“*we must obey the leadership right or wrong*.” John insisted that this statement be taken out of the manuscript. This just so happened to be the very thing John had been falsely charged with preaching and to him it stunk. It should stink to anyone. I can’t imagine how Bob Harrison came to believe it. This situation is like walking into your kitchen and detecting a funny odor. Indeed, you find a dead fish. You may take the dead fish out of the kitchen and throw it into the garbage can outside, but when one goes back into the kitchen, he finds that the odor has permeated everything. So it is with Bob Harrison’s study. The stark statement was obviously taken out, and yet now we realize the manuscript remains permeated with the innuendo.

If that statement was plainly in there in the first place, then we know Bob Harrison believed it. I, likewise, came to realize Jeff Grove believed exactly that. Indeed, other leaders in the room when Jeff made his clear declaration seemed to not be disturbed by Jeff’s position. Where did these brethren get this teaching? Are we to understand that it originated with Bob Harrison? Is it possible that this is an extrapolation upon things believed and expressed to those brethren by brother Robert Grove himself? Some have now properly asked the question “Why was it that Robert Grove never saw and caught these errors?”

### ***“Sincere Conscientious Objections”***

- It is just after this that Bob Harrison admits to the fact that there are those who raise “sincere conscientious objections” by “spiritual Christians” to following leadership (starting on page 28). Bob says, “decisions” by the leadership in an assembly “may at times leave one unable to comply with a clear conscience before God” (pg. 29).

- On the same page brother Harrison says these Christians can “appeal”—“**But** appeals must be made to those that God has commanded and have been recognized as having authority in the Body of Christ.” And then Bob gives as reference “**1 Co 5:11-6:8**.” Now this sounds like a dead-end circular route that takes you right back to where you started. Is Bob Harrison saying that the *only ones* you can appeal to are the very ones you are having the problem with? This, I believe, can be a very important point. In fact, it may represent another error in this ideology.

- Let us investigate it very carefully. When one takes a careful look at the verses brother Harrison has given to us as proof of his statement they will find that they do not

at all support his statement. The passage in 1 Cor. is not at all talking about going to the ministry leadership for decisions. Let us look at the various verses in this passage—

- (1.) **1 Cor. 5:11–13** (esp. v.12) “For what do I have to do with judging those also who are outside (the unsaved)? Do not YOU judge those who are inside (their fellow believers)? In other words, in this particular passage Paul is stating that it is the CHURCH itself that judges among their brethren. This is not speaking of leaders.
- (2.) **1 Cor. 6:1** “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not BEFORE THE SAINTS? Here again, Paul is stressing the judgment of the congregation and not the judgment of leadership.
- (3.) **1 Cor. 6:2** “Do you not know that the SAINTS will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by YOU, are YOU unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” Here again, Paul is clearly talking about the Church, not the leaders.
- (4.) **1 Cor. 6:3** “Do you not know that WE (all saints collectively) shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? This is the collective judgment of all believers not merely leadership.
- (5.) **1 Cor. 6:5** “I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not A WISE MAN among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? Once again Paul expresses confidence that there are brethren among them with the spiritual intelligence to make good judgment.
- (6.) In other words, all these verses actually draw our attention back to the principle that Christ Himself instructed that the CHURCH is often, as it were, “the final court of appeals”—**Matt. 18:17**.

- I think we all feel that one should first “appeal” to the problem brother in leadership. But to legislate, as Bob Harrison does in this section, “leadership” as the only ones where “appeal” can be made is more false teaching, as the above Scriptures clearly demonstrate. In fact, as I stated before, one could find that being limited to only appealing to the very ones causing the problem, can be a circular route that may get you nowhere. We should remember that even in the very important decision as recorded in Acts 15, the judgment was not only from the “apostles and elders,” but from “the whole church” as well—**Acts 15:22**. Brother Harrison virtually admits that the “Second Protection” for any saint, next to God (Christ and the Holy Spirit) is the “Body of Christ” (pg.38). By the Body of Christ he means the whole church, not just the ministers!

- Most every group that becomes sectarian in nature will be characterized by “protecting their congregations” from any exposure to opposing views. Brother Maurice Johnson hated this sectarian tendency, and would characteristically allow anyone challenging his position the right to speak before all the men or even before the congregation in some cases. And I never saw the congregation judge wrongly. Of course, brother Johnson carefully followed and dealt with that person’s arguments. It is obvious from the above Scriptures in I Corinthians 5 that the apostle Paul believed there is a high potential which God has ordained within the general congregation. Quite often I have found that older men and conscientious brethren sometimes had better judgment than those in leadership.

In my own case, on two different occasions I was absolutely prohibited from appealing to a larger company of men by the leadership here in the Fort Worth area. I sensed that attitude as being one symptom of a sectarian spirit. As a result of this false idea about limiting judgment only to the leadership, any false teaching the leaders may perform cannot be challenged and tested before all.

### ***“Protection” against “Potential Self-Deception”***

- In discussing God’s protection for His children against potential self-deception, Bob gives as the “**First Protection**,” the personal protection promised by God and Christ and the Holy Spirit directly in their lives. Then as a “**Second Protection**” he gives “the Body of Christ.” Bob did not list a third protection. If I were counseling brother Harrison in making this list, I would ask, “Brother Harrison, *where is the Word of God* in this list? You seem to have left it out again.”

Perhaps one would answer that the very next point brings out the power of the Word of God—“Acknowledging the Truth Brings Recovery.” And truly under these words Bob quotes about the power of the Scriptures. However, in this section Bob only uses the Scriptures for the purpose of the believer obtaining “forgiveness” and “recovery.” I think we all realize “forgiveness and “recovery” are after the fact—not “Protection From Deception.” So, once again Bob Harrison left out the primary way God prevents self- deception in His children.

It is the faithful Word of God’s grace that prevents false teachers even from among ourselves to lead us astray—

“For I know this that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

So now, brethren, I commend you to GOD and to the WORD OF HIS GRACE, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

Footnote: I am deeply saddened by the liberalism, compromising and defection of the ministering brethren in Southern California and Visalia. But I am also deeply grieved by the pharisaical, dictatorial overlordship of the ministering brethren in Virginia and Texas.

*THE END*