

## The Offended

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I am sorry when anyone is offended at the plain teaching of the Scriptures, but I can not alter the word of God to please myself or anyone else. I am concerned, not because the truth offended someone, but because one was offended at what inspiration teaches. It is generally expected that most people will violently oppose anyone who attacks their *faith*. I am sure that many do not appraise me very highly in these efforts of exposing sin. I am accused of opposing everyone who believes differently from what I believe. I am also accused of classifying everyone else, who belongs to "another church," as ignorant. These bitter statements are expected from religious fanatics.

You know and I know that many opinions about a fact can not all be true. Someone is wrong! Now when I point to the plain doctrine of the Holy Spirit and let it speak for itself, I am sometimes told to "mind my own business." Is this the attitude taken in other matters of life? If you started on a long trip, and got on the wrong road, and that certainly has happened to us all, would you become angry at one who pointed to the signs and showed you the right road? Certainly not; you would thank him kindly. *But religion is a different matter!* YOU could not possibly be wrong in religion! YOU have always believed what you now believe, and that seems to be the evidence that you are right. The public will reason on anything but religion. With religion they will not even consider new evidence.

I am not writing these things to you to make an enemy. I do not cast aspersions upon your ability to reason and understand. By inspiration Paul once used these words in answer to those who opposed his teaching: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal 4:16). It is a lamentable condition when good moral people will not reason on the word of God, but reject every effort made to show what the Bible says as religious authority. The plea that I make to you is not an unreasonable one. I only ask that you read the Bible and try to pattern your religious life after the examples of the early Christians, and forget the commandments and the old traditions of uninspired men.

Some doctrines are founded on one or two passages of Scripture that are misquoted or taken out of their context. These interpretations are at variance with other Scriptures on the same subject. As an example: the conditions of salvation. One continually quotes from Acts 16:31 or John 3:16 to prove that faith is the only condition of forgiveness of sins. They will not even consider the answer Peter gave to those on Pentecost to repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). They will not take the great commission of the Lord: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16). They reject and argue away what Peter said in 1 Peter 3:21 that "whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." Now, I am sure that Peter stated the truth just as John did in John 3:16; Peter told the truth and the will of Christ just as Paul did in Acts 16:31. I do not contend in any way that faith is not a means of our salvation. I am aware that "with out faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). But the Bible faith is not faith that does not show works. James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY" (James 2:24). In verse 26 he said, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." The writer of the Hebrew letter said that obedience is necessary to salvation. Hear him. "And being made perfect, he (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation

unto ALL them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9).

I point this out not to belittle faith, - I insist that it is important in salvation - but to show that faith alone, as some teach, is not the only means to procure salvation. Now, even as I show these things from the word of God, some people will become my enemy because I show them their error. If this were a matter of traveling I would be thanked for my effort, but as it is a matter that involves the eternal destiny of the soul, I am rebuked for making the effort.

Religious division is sinful. Paul taught this lesson in 1 Corinthians 1:10: "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 have been asked why I do not compromise with some who teach "nearly" what I teach. I contend that I hold only to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (2 John 10). There is no room in the gospel for compromise.

"But why do you bother me with religious matters?" inquires one. Friends, I am under the commission of the Lord to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Your soul is precious in the sight of God. He wants you to know the truth that you may have opportunity to be saved. I can not be saved myself unless I teach as many as possible during my lifetime the unsearchable riches of Christ. You have a right to know what the Bible teaches. I do not want anyone to believe me, but believe the inspired words of the New Testament. Do not follow me, but follow Christ. I have made this offer over and over again: If someone will show me wherein I have taught error, by the Bible, I will correct it publicly at once. You see if I have not stated the truth of the New Testament in this article or any other. Christianity is important to you whether you realize it or not. Eternity looms before you. Your destination depends upon what you do in this life. Discard the doctrines of men and cling to the doctrine of Christ. Return to the teachings of the apostles and you are on safe ground.