

# Editorial Responsibility

Dub McClish

Editors and publishers of religious material have a weighty responsibility. I have in mind editors of church bulletins, periodicals, and books and publishing houses. Some brethren in the publishing business apparently have the idea that if some brother has written something and wants it published, they are under obligation to publish it, regardless of how unscriptural and erroneous it may be (especially if he has the money up front or if it appears to be material that will sell briskly). A publishing firm in Abilene and another in Fort Worth (formerly in Austin) have been especially adept at publishing material written by liberal brethren. One in Nashville has taken delight in publishing and widely advertising (even in denominational papers) a book advocating doctrinal compromise for the sake of unity. (Mind you, the brother who wrote it is the chief editor of said company.)

Some editors, themselves sound, apparently use little discretion in choosing the writers they publish, even when there is no error in the specific article printed. Such is frequently seen in church bulletins that cross my desk. Perhaps ignorance is sometimes the culprit. (When the unsoundness of one writer he was using was called to the attention of the editor of one of our major journals he pleaded ignorance. It seemed strange that scores of brethren all over the country knew of this but said editor didn't.) Of course, none of us is omniscient, but editors who have a conscience will work at being well-informed.

In my Judgment, editorial/publication responsibility requires adherence to the following principles:

1. I will not knowingly publish anything that is erroneous or anti-scriptural, regardless of how well-known or influential the brother is who wrote it or what profit potential there may be in it. Is a religious publisher who will publish false doctrine for profit less guilty than the publisher of pornography for the same motive? One may say, "Someone else will do it if I don't." If so, I will let someone else do it.
2. I will not knowingly publish an unsound, compromising writer, even when he has written an article that is truthful. To do so lends my tacit endorsement to him beyond the immediate article. To do so gives him credence in the minds of gullible brethren when he teaches error, just as I would not favor inviting such a brother into the pulpit I regularly occupy (even if he taught no error in that one sermon), I will not invite him into the publications for which I am responsible. An abundance of material is available from sound men so that I do not have to use material from men who have shown themselves to be otherwise

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