

INTEGRITY

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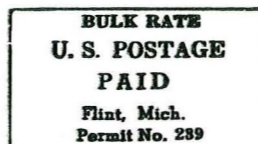
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In keeping with the connotation of its name, INTEGRITY seeks to encourage believers in Christ to strive to be one, to be pure, and to be honest and sincere in word and deed, among themselves and toward all men.

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Integrity

November, 1969

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Voice from the Past

He who walks in integrity walks securely. Prov. 10:9.

"THE HANDMAIDEN OF THE CHURCH"

A speaker recently referred to the Christian college as "the handmaiden of the church." Although this may be true in a sense, we feel it is an unhappy expression inasmuch as it tends to view the church in strictly institutional terms and implies that the functions of Christians and the church can be separated.

If the church is the body of Christ, then we as members can do nothing apart from the church. "We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Rom. 12:5). "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor. 12:27). The body of Christ (the church) is not something that we merely belong to; it is what WE ARE. The only way we can do anything apart from what WE ARE is by changing our nature. For this reason, "if one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor. 12:26).

The church, then, is not something we can hop in and out of. It is not something we can "work through." It is what we are, and therefore the church is involved in everything we do.

This important fact underlies Paul's approach to immorality in the Corinthian church. If a Christian commits immorality, he "takes the members of Christ and makes them members of a prostitute." When a Christian is immoral, he necessarily involves the church in his immorality. It was because of this fact that the Corinthians were told, "Drive out the wicked person from among you." The body of Christ should not engage in immorality.

When a group of Christians maintain a school, that is as much a function of the church as a congregational Bible school or "worship service." The only way it can be otherwise is for them to cease to be what they are; that is, cease to be Christians.

If the church is an institution, it is not an institution from which the Christian can be separated. When we meet together in one place, we are the church; and when we go home, we are still the church. The church is not a place, or a function; it is the body of Christ.

The idea that Christians can be separated from the church has bred all sorts of controversies, ranging from the sacredness of the church building to the manner in which the church is to accomplish its mission. It is time for us to get back to the New Testament concept. HGL

AN ELDER'S OFFERING

Howard Stark

As an elder, I am periodically moved to meditate on and study about just what an elder is and what he does. Over the past twenty-odd years I have known about and personally observed the performance of many elders. Some weakly hold and meekly execute the office. Others are aggressive with the supposed authority of the overseer.

Most everyone is familiar with the qualifications given in the Bible for elders. I have never known an elder who fulfilled these qualifications one hundred per cent. Yet many insist that this must be. It is my belief that the Bible picture of an elder is a perfect one, and that we must strive for perfection in this as in all other areas.

Without haughtiness, I say that I can and must be a better elder than most men that I have known in that position. It is a Bible principle to emulate the best rather than the poor or mediocre.

While I believe that it is Biblically right to have elders, I fear that today's version of the elder bears little resemblance to the scriptural one. We think of him as an unyielding, unrelenting, sober executor of God's will. He cannot be questioned or reproached without the questioner or reproacher suffering due reprisals. For some reason, we recognize terms which seem to indicate position and authority and ignore the ones denoting kindness, gentleness, and longsuffering.

We remember that Peter said (1 Pet. 5), "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." We forget that in the same breath he said, "Yea; all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." We forget that to lift ourselves up, we must stoop to give aid. We forget that in getting down on our knees, we are exalted. We should remember that Jesus told his apostles that the greatest among them would serve all.

I submit the following "elder's prayer" for your consideration:

God help me to remember that more knowledge does not give me higher position but more responsibility; more responsibility does not give me more authority but greater blessings; more blessings do not make me selfish but eager to share Jesus with all. In his name, Amen.

HONESTY AND TRUTH

Hoy Ledbetter

"Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance." (Autolycus, in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*.)

The enemies of Jesus never doubted that he would be straightforward. They knew they could count on him to tell unpleasant truths, no matter how much his honesty might cost him. They may have thought him mistaken, or beside himself, or even blasphemous, but they never doubted that he had the courage that makes honesty possible. In fact, they were so sure of this that they used it as a means of entrapping him. "So they watched their opportunity and sent secret agents in the guise of honest men, to seize upon some word of his as a pretext for handing him over to the authority and jurisdiction of the Governor. They put a question to him: 'Master,' they said, 'we know that what you speak and teach is sound; you pay deference to no one, but teach in all honesty the way of life that God requires. Are we or are we not permitted to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor?'" (Lk. 20:20ff, NEB.)

An honest man by definition is one who is "characterized by integrity and straightforwardness," and Jesus pre-eminently fulfills that definition. For his frankness and openness, if for no other reason, he towers mountain-high above his contemporaries. And those who profess his name today should be similarly characterized. The word the NEB renders "honesty" in the passage cited above is literally "truth," and it is unfortunate that the relationship between the two words is so often ignored. No man is justified in his claim to possess truth unless he is honest. But what is truth?

Our English "truth" comes from a Greek word (*aletheia*) which fundamentally means "non-concealment." Cremer defines it as "the unveiled reality lying at the basis of, and agreeing with, an appearance." To say a thing is true is to say that it is really as it is seen or represented. Truth is the opposite of both deception and mere appearance. Jesus told the truth because he told it like it was. He always spoke and acted in such a way that men were convinced that he was revealing his real convictions. In his case, nothing intervened between the mind of the speaker and his word or actions. It must always be that way.

The world into which Jesus came was a dishonest world, and it still is. The Pharisees and Herodians, who came "in the guise of honest men," were typical of their generation. What they appeared to be did not correspond to reality. It was for this reason that so many of them failed to respond to Christ, for, as he said, "The honest man comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that God is in all he does" (Jn. 3:21, NEB).

Among the various reasons for dishonesty there is none more widespread than that which is illustrated by Jesus' contemporaries: "Even among those in authority a number believed in him, but would not acknowledge him on account of the Pharisees, for fear of being banned from the synagogue. For they valued their reputation with men rather than the honour which comes from God." This "fear of being banned from the synagogue" is still a forceful deterrent to honest revelation of conviction. Do we not all know those who neglect to speak their convictions because of their terror of pastoral disapproval?

When what we appear to be does not correspond to what we really are, we are dishonest. When what we appear to believe does not manifest our genuine convictions, we lack integrity. When our words are not really an "incarnation of thought," we are bereft of truth.

It is easy for us to make excuses for our hypocrisy. We can tell ourselves that our good standing with the church is more important than speaking our convictions about certain matters. We can beguile ourselves to believe that our influence for good will be greater if some things are concealed. Or we can merely procrastinate, waiting for the opportune time to speak or act. But can one really have a vital relationship with him who is the truth unless his life is "characterized by integrity and straightforwardness"?

John Ruskin once said, "To make your children capable of honesty is the beginning of education." He was right; but this educational process can only be begun by those who are honest themselves. How can we expect the younger generation to respect our religion when they are so well aware of our failure to "tell it like it is"? If we have abandoned truth in this way, should they do more?

Honesty demands that our faith be our own, that we be not blind men led by blind guides. John Milton said, "A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believes things only because his pastor says so, or the assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy." The man who is too lethargic or timid to raise questions will never know the truth. For him, truth will be what Justice Holmes facetiously called it: "the majority vote of that nation that can lick all others." But the honest man is never satisfied with mere agreement with those who can provide him security. Thank God that Jesus was not like that!

With the Christian there is no pretension, no hypocritical concealment. He constantly manifests "unveiled reality." With him honesty is not a policy; it is a revelation of his life "in Christ." As Richard Whately said, "Honesty is the best policy; but he who is governed by that maxim is not an honest man." COURAGE, TRUTH, HONESTY - they cannot be divorced. Let us stop trying to tell ourselves we can have one without the others.

TO UNDERSTAND

John Smith

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled,
as to console; to be understood, as to understand;

St. Francis appeals to God for aid in his search for understanding. The beautiful sentiment is that he is more interested in understanding those about him than in being understood himself. May God help us to surrender ourselves to so selfless a motivation. But what is involved in this matter of understanding?

One of the meanings given this word is "to accept tolerantly or sympathetically," and I believe that this is the meaning of the request made by St. Francis as well as the meaning of Christian understanding. In Mt. 9:36 it is recorded, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." But how did Jesus know they were harassed? Because he understood them. How did he know they were helpless? Because he understood them. How had he come to understand them? Through living with them and being one of them for over thirty years; by paying the taxes they paid; by enduring both the Romans and the intolerant religious leaders as they did; by eating their food and living in their houses. Yes, this is why he understood them and had compassion on them, because he had taken the time and trouble.

No single characteristic of our Lord shows more clearly his Messiahship than his complete understanding of the people who surrounded him. His understanding of the woman taken in adultery led him to show compassion for her and contempt for her accusers. His understanding of the religious leaders of his day brought his verbal and physical wrath and indignation upon their heads.

As we struggle to become as our Savior, no quality would more readily identify us with him than to be understanding. Whether or not Jesus knew the hearts of people through some supernatural power will not be decided here and is not the point. The point is that Jesus dealt justly and uprightly only because he did understand. If we hold justice and mercy to be desirable, even necessary, Christian attributes, then we must seek to understand one another.

How does one achieve understanding? How may I emulate my Lord in this regard? St. Augustine, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, says, "Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore seek not to understand that thou mayest believe, but believe that thou mayest understand." Belief, according to Augustine, is the root of understanding, and I believe

that we can see a very close link between the two. Having faith that God created all men with intellect to act upon the basis of reason or previous experience provides us with the mental machinery necessary to understanding. Every action of man is based upon either reason (no matter how twisted or perverted that reasoning may be in the sight of another) or previous experience. If then I understand the thinking, temperament, motivation, and background of another, I am well on my way to understanding him. Most understanding is a time consuming process requiring patient and careful perception as well as an open heart and ears.

At a time when far-reaching judgments are so hastily and thoughtlessly made, when innuendoes and defamatory insinuations come from pulpit and pew alike, when these things are the rule rather than the exception, understanding is vital to restore peace and tranquillity. And yet we seem absolutely unwilling to take the time and make the effort necessary to understand one another. A man is always inclined to be intolerant or hostile toward something or someone he hasn't taken the time or trouble to understand, and consequently the most incredible and irrational things get thrown in your teeth from people who don't understand. Are we really trying to get along? Will you pray with me that God will help us to seek to understand one another?

A THOUGHTFUL COMMENT

Gary Bassett

I should begin by saying that this article is not to be construed as a pledge of support or agreement with either those who choose to support or dissent from INTEGRITY, although I tend to identify more with the former than the latter. Those who support either side of the issues in question have at least some solid ground on which to base their arguments, as well as supporters who are thoughtful and sincere in upholding the beliefs to which they subscribe. I can only express the hope that I will receive the same credit with regard to what I want to say, and feel needs to be said, in this short paper. Nevertheless, I realize that my comments are neither the latest nor last word on developments that have taken place of late; and I readily admit that my opinions are deserving of no more attention than those of the next thoughtful person.

I might mention that I know three of the editorial members of INTEGRITY on more than a casual basis, and I value their association very much. I admire them, because they have chosen to put conviction and honesty before conformity to group pressure; and I feel that their present or future

(whichever the case may be on an individual level) disfellowshipping has been warranted by neither their religious views nor personal conduct. Nevertheless, it is my contention that such discipline is a necessary event if the "church of Christ" is to maintain its traditionally conservative interpretation of the Scriptures. There is an important distinction here: I have not stated that the church of Christ SHOULD or SHOULD NOT maintain its present interpretations; I have only said that church discipline is necessary IF such interpretations are to be maintained. Let me elaborate on this.

Personally, I agree with INTEGRITY that much of traditional church of Christ thinking is either unscriptural or unrealistic, or both; however, I am not sure that the supporters of INTEGRITY are aware of the logical conclusions which one may draw from the views on freedom of religious thinking which they are advocating. For example, a primary contention (see "Handling the Problem" by Hoy Ledbetter; INTEGRITY, August, '69) seems to be that Christians may disagree with one another on doctrinal issues yet still retain the common fellowship and love for one another that are to be found in Christ (with which I agree). However, the IMPLICATIONS of such a statement must be considered along with the statement itself.

To explain, every congregation of the church of Christ lies somewhere on a continuum between extreme conservatism and extreme liberalism (whatever the terms "conservative" and "liberal" mean); correspondingly, we label those who disagree with our own religious conclusions (which we identify as "truth" or "Scriptural truth") as being too conservative ("antis") or too liberal (usually individual Christians or other denominations). Those who PERSIST in opinions other than our own are subsequently disfellowshipped and/or consigned to God's judgment (by which we mean they are going to hell).

The point is that regardless of where we lie on this continuum of conservatism-liberalism, there is always someone else who lies above or below us - that is, someone else whom we would label as more conservative or liberal than we are. This situation may be equally applied to the supporters of INTEGRITY and their pleas for religious tolerance and freedom. The question is, how far are they willing to go themselves in exercising such tolerance toward others more liberal than themselves? If they say that their guide in this matter is the Bible, one might point out that their interpretation of the Bible is only an extension of their position on our continuum (after all, the congregations which disfellowshipped them were only reacting to their own interpretation of Scripture also).

Church discipline, then, will always be an existing problem no matter where one is located on the conservative-liberal continuum; for a pro-

gressively liberal congregation will always have a member or two who are more liberal than the majority of the members involved. Thus, in order to maintain its position on the continuum as a static one, that congregation must still discipline those members who are considered too radically different in their views from the norm.

If the supporters of INTEGRITY wish to be consistent in their beliefs, there is one alternative: one must fellowship all individuals who seek such fellowship regardless of their religious convictions. The logical outcome of such a policy would be a church, not unlike that of the Unitarians, whose members are drawn together by a spirit of love and common interest in religious matters; it would be a church in which all are offered fellowship whether their basic orientation be that of a Protestant, Catholic, Jew, Agnostic, or Atheist. The supporters of INTEGRITY are subscribing to a policy, then, of whose implications I am not certain they are fully aware. Anything short of what they advocate, however, would serve to justify (if one extends one's thinking to its ultimate conclusions) the fact that they themselves have been disfellowshipped in an effort to preserve church unity and maintain a static position on the conservative-liberal continuum.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The preceding perceptive article raises two questions which deserve more attention. Do pleas for tolerance and freedom inevitably result in a church ("not unlike that of the Unitarians") which offers fellowship to all, even unbelievers? And is the policy of disfellowshipping dissenters the only way churches of Christ can maintain their position on the conservative-liberal continuum? We believe these are legitimate questions, and a response to them by Dean Thoroman will be printed in the next issue.

PATCHING THE HOLE

David Hyde

My dear Christian brother or sister, the ship is sinking! Suppose you are on a ship, crossing the ocean. As you walk along the deck and look out into the darkness of the night engulfing this "floating city," there is a dreamlike feeling of safety and security that pervades your innermost being. Suddenly you are jarred back to reality as a darting figure charges past you and you hear a scream, "Captain! Captain!" Near the captain's quarters a terrible commotion can be heard. The person who darted by you so quickly seems to be saying something to the captain about a hole in

the ship. A hole in the ship? Impossible! Your mind races back to the day you boarded the vessel and all the signs you saw around the dock saying this ship was, without a doubt, the safest, fastest ship afloat.

But these memories seem very vague now as your mind races back to the situation at hand. The captain has been notified of the crisis and is trying to calm down the bearer of bad news. Surely the situation will be well in hand very soon. But to your horror and complete astonishment, the captain and his officers gather around and begin to lament over what a terrible thing has happened. They all seem to agree that something surely does need to be done, but no one seems to know just where to begin. The ship continues to sink.

This, of course, would never happen on a real ocean liner. But to my horror and complete astonishment, it seems to be happening today in the Lord's church. We are losing a great percentage of our new converts back into the world. Some of the "older" members are only Sunday-morning Christians. It has been said that we "lose them out the back door about as quick as we bring them in the front." The terrible thing is, the tragedy of the whole matter, we don't seem to be willing to do anything about it.

A lot of people are alarmed today by the number of young persons that are leaving the church, or are just never becoming a part of it in the first place. I'm alarmed too, but I'm not surprised. This situation exists because we have become too interested in the form and not the spirit of true Christianity.

In my experiences (which may be relatively few but they are all I have to go on) I have found that a number of Christians today are not converted to Christ at all, but to a particular way of thinking, to "church attendance" (which is not bad in itself but which has become the center of our religious world today), and to a creed, unwritten though it may be. The standard procedure seems to be falling all over ourselves getting a person baptized and attending church, and then dropping him, spiritually speaking. By doing so, we have added another spiritless Christian to the church roll and have left a void within that person so ready to be filled with the true spirit of Christianity, completely empty except for a cold "pattern of worship." This void, which should be filled with spiritual qualities, often becomes only a clean and garnished house for the devil, the world, and discouragement. Treating a new Christian in this way is like giving someone an oral lecture on swimming and then saying, "Here's the Atlantic Ocean, my friend. With what I've taught you, you should have no trouble getting to the other side."

So what can be done about the problem? If I had all the answers, I'd be the happiest man alive. I do know that after just so long, a person gets

tired of seeing apathy at work and tries to do something to improve things himself. That's what THINKING Christians today should be and are trying to do. They are trying to restore New Testament Christianity AND New Testament spirituality. Unfortunately, many of our brethren who become victims of the spiritlessness in the church today abandon ship, so to speak, and they don't even have the necessary life jacket of personal spirituality to sustain them. It's easy to sit back and rationalize our weaknesses and mistakes away, but it takes a mature man to do something about them.

Yes, the ship is sinking. But, brethren, we'll never make any progress toward patching the hole by sitting with our chins on our hands, saying how much we regret the situation. Let's try to love each other as the early Christians did, and the hole will take care of itself.

COMMENT

"Not that we lord it over your faith." (2 Cor. 1:24.)

Those who have received the Gospel have all the responsibilities of mature men; they have come to their majority as spiritual beings; they are not, in their character and standing as Christians, subject to arbitrary and irresponsible interference on the part of others. Paul himself was the great preacher of this spiritual emancipation: he gloried in the liberty with which Christ made men free. For him the days of bondage were over; there was no subjection for the Christian to any custom or tradition of men, no enslavement of his conscience to the judgment or the will of others, no coercion of the spirit except by itself. He had great confidence in this Gospel and in its power to produce generous and beautiful characters. That it was capable of perversion also he knew very well. It was open to the infusion of self-will; in the intoxication of freedom from arbitrary and unspiritual restraint, men might forget that the believer was bound to be a law to himself, that he was free, not in lawless self-will, but only in the Lord. Nevertheless, the principle of freedom was too sacred to be tampered with; it was necessary both for the education of the conscience and for the enrichment of spiritual life with the most various and independent types of goodness; and the Apostle took all the risks, and all the inconveniences even, rather than limit it in the least.

He may appeal to them on spiritual grounds; he may enlighten their consciences by interpreting to them the law of Christ; he may try to reach them by praise or blame; but simple compulsion is not one of his resources. If St. Paul says this, occupying as he does a position which contains in itself a natural authority which most ministers can never have, ought not all official persons and classes in the Church to beware of the claims they make for themselves?

-- James Denney.

CAMELITE FLOPS

Peter Peregrine

We dropped in at the Reformation Repertory Theater the other night to see the new Learner-in-low Production of "Camelite." It was awful. In fact, it is doubtful that a greater collection of discords has ever been brought under one roof.

The story is built upon the competition of doughty old King Elder and sword-wielding young Rancelot (His Majesty's Minister) for the affections of charming but fickle Nevrebeer (prematurely called Her Lord's Bride). Whoever gets Nevrebeer also gets the castle, which never seems to be out of the control of King Elder, despite Rancelot's occasional threats. In the end the tension is left unresolved.

Despite its utter lack of harmony, the opening scene is the best. In a stage setting of anachronistic Old English and Modern props, Rancelot stands on a paved parking lot with yellow stripes and looks up at a fluorescent-lighted window of the castle. Through the window King Elder can faintly be seen sitting at the end of a long table, his back to the audience. (One gets the impression that others are seated around the table, but they are not visible.) Rancelot sings poignantly, "I Wonder What King Elder Is Doing Tonight." This is the only scene in the whole show where one undergoes a "willing suspension of disbelief."

A new low in acting is reached in the duet - really a sort of shouting battle - between King Elder and Rancelot. King Elder's strongest discordant thrust is made with an oft-repeated line from the theme song: "With Camelites those are the legal laws." Rancelot valiantly tries to drown this out with his self-defensive refrain, "So Am I," which, because of poor enunciation, comes out "same-wah."

In all of this Nevrebeer is not unmoved, although she never seems to be quite sure which way to move. But there is never any doubt about her fickleness. At one time she pledges her fidelity to King Elder with "If Ever I Would Leave You, It Would Never Be on Sunday." Then, in the same scene, she promises Rancelot, "I'll Love You Once You're Silent." Only an occasional outcropping of insincerity keeps her from convincing us that she really means it.

Nevrebeer's fickleness reaches its peak in the Fair Scene. A booth has been rented at the Fair in which her charms are to be displayed to the public. Apparently it is a great honor to be in charge of this display. Although Rancelot seems to have a claim upon this honor because of his cleverness with the Sword, Nevrebeer challenges the Three Ministers of King Elder to compete with Rancelot, and to each she sings, "You May Take Me to the Fair."

We never learn how this four-way contest comes out, for there is a very abrupt change of scenes, and King Elder is shown instructing the Three Ministers on "How To Handle A Woman." But his singing at this point is so muffled that we never get in on the advice. Meanwhile, at the other end of the stage, this lack of power is more than made up for by Rancelot's ear-splitting, frantic rendition of "What Should the Simple Folks Do?" So a sort of cacophonous balance is achieved, which is something.

This production is supposed to be Off Broad Way, but it may not be as far off as is supposed. We think it is one of the biggest put-ons of all time. And, while we don't want to accuse anyone of plagiarism, we are nagged by the feeling that somewhere we have heard it all before.

As we left the theater, we heard someone remark that this show has a message, a sort of spiritual point, with strong religious overtones. Maybe so, but all we got out of it was a bad case of sore ears and a sleepless night. As we see it, "Camelite" should be done over or else forgotten.

ANONYMOUSNESS

The editors of INTEGRITY have received various communications from those who wish to remain anonymous. Sometimes the reasons for this are clearly stated, but usually they are only hinted at. We think it is a striking sign of the times when those who feel compelled to speak also are constrained to speak incognito. Perhaps if more of us had spoken openly in the past, there might not be so much to be afraid of today.

To illustrate, one poignant, three-page letter began: "I can't spell worth a hoot, but I can think, if I don't think out loud." The writer went on to express some of his thoughts, pausing to interject: "I am still thinking, but not too loud." He wrote more, and then concluded: "I can drive myself nuts sometimes just thinking. I must not think too loud or it would be just like in the shop 40 years ago. If a man talked or even began to think about a labor union, he got the ax quick. So you see I dare not sign this letter. I am still in the process of thinking and wondering. We will understand better by and by."

Such letters are enough to move one to tears. We have no idea which church this man belongs to, but there is an obvious lack of real fellowship in it. Fellowship means sharing, and it involves sharing thoughts as well as other aspects of life. Fear and fellowship cannot coexist. Incidentally, our policy is not to print anonymous articles.

COMMENTS FROM EDITORS AND READERS

A MISSIONARY WRITES

"I was delighted and thankful to our Lord to know that in our home state there are those who are striving for greater freedom in Christ.

"We pray for you power and direction from God's Holy Spirit in your efforts to communicate Christ in our day. May He see fit to use INTEGRITY for the awakening and blessing of many. We ask to be mentioned in your prayers as well."

AN EDITOR WRITES

"Thanks for sending INTEGRITY to me. It is excellent! The articles are very timely and thought-provoking. Such plain, positive teaching is certain to do a lot of good - more than you can ever know. Your readers are definitely going to be helped to a better understanding of and appreciation for the simple truth as it is in Christ. Keep up the good work.

"You apparently have a fine corp of men to assist you. Keep on 'telling it like it is.'"

A PROFESSOR WRITES

"PLEASE get me started on INTEGRITY. I keep waiting to hear from you, and I am already several issues behind. Can you begin my subscription with the very first issue? I don't want to miss a word!

"Can you bill me for the amount, or perhaps let me know how much to send?"

"I want to read what everybody's talking about. PLEASE?"

NOTE: Somebody must have goofed, but we promise to take care of this mistake immediately. We have had so many requests for back issues that some numbers are almost gone.

A WOMAN WRITES

"Thanks for sending INTEGRITY to us. Reading these comments has helped to clear some confusion in our minds. We feel that you have spoken truth and pray for your good influence among our young people.

"We have two sons (names and ages given). Their reactions to certain situations in the church today has caused us to open our minds to a better understanding of the real truth, and kept us from shutting ourselves in a shell surrounded by traditions and stubborn attitudes.

"I have wondered for years why we insist on educating our preachers and putting them under elders with grade school education. I hope the day will soon come when elders must be better trained.

"There's a great difference in maintaining an issue and really believing it. It's every Christian's duty to search the scriptures and find for himself the real answers.

"Too many today believe what they believe just because it's been handed down from generation to generation - yet we scorn Catholics because they hold to tradition. Whether we admit it or not, there's a lot of customs and traditions in the church today.

"God is Love and when we put more emphasis on programs than we do on Christianity, we are missing the point and disregarding the Great Commandment."

ANOTHER WOMAN

"I have enjoyed it very much, especially the articles by Dean Thorman, John Smith and Hoy Ledbetter.

"I trust the reading will always be kept inspiring, and void of personal, petty bickering."

VOICE FROM THE PAST

If we are brethren, it is because we have one Father, because in us all there is one life. The name is often regarded as sentimental and metaphorical. The obligation of mutual love is supposed to be the main idea in it, and there is a melancholy hollowness and unreality in the very sound of it as applied to the usual average Christians of to-day.

But the name leads straight to the doctrine of regeneration, and proclaims that all Christians are born again through their faith in Jesus Christ, and thereby partake of a common new life, which makes all its possessors children of the Highest, and therefore brethren one of another.

If regarded as an expression of the affection of Christians for one another, "brethren" is an exaggeration, ludicrous or tragic, as we view it; but if we regard it as the expression of the real bond which gathers all believers into one family, it declares the deepest mystery and mightiest privilege of the gospel that "to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God."

-- Alexander Maclaren.