

INTEGRITY

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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

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

A CLOUDED ISSUE

The extent to which elders may legitimately exercise control over congregations is certainly one of the significant questions of our time. Far from being a new question, it has always been with us, especially when the church has been threatened either by moral laxity or an authoritarian ministry. We are confident that the readers of INTEG-

RITY will agree that this question is one of the most important we face, since hardly a week goes by without it coming up in one way or another.

That the issue arises at all should seem strange in view of Jesus' important statement in Mark 10:42-44: "You know that in the world the recognized rulers lord it over their subjects, and their great men make them feel the weight of authority. That is not the way with you; among you, whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all." Jesus makes it clear that when "recognized rulers lord it over their subjects" and make people "feel the weight of authority," such rulers are acting according to worldly standards and do not reflect the spirit of the kingdom of heaven. Against this backdrop of divine revelation many of us are seeing signs that worldliness has invaded the church in the form of an illegitimate authoritarian ministry. We view this as one of the gravest dangers facing us today.

Our suggestion that authoritarian elders are living beyond their scriptural means will undoubtedly provoke the complaint that we are against elders. It should be sufficient to remark that we have one elder on our editorial board and other elders are on the board of Integrity Publications. These men we esteem and admire for their work's sake.

The usual resort of those who wish to enforce authoritarianism is 1 Tim. 5:17: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." Does not this verse declare that elders are to rule? It certainly does; but we must be careful not to interpret it in a way that will make it contradict what Jesus said in Mark 10. It cannot mean that elders rule by "lording it over their subjects" or by making people "feel the weight of authority."

It is possible to see in 1 Tim. 5:17 four kinds of elders: elders who do not rule; elders who do rule but not necessarily well; elders who rule well; and elders who both rule well and work hard at preaching and teaching. It may be doubted that we should see so many distinctions, but the passage does raise some interesting questions about an elder's functions. Our primary concern, however, is with the word "rule." What does it mean?

The original (proistemi) occurs eight times in the New Testament, with varying meanings. It is used in three references to elders: 1 Tim. 5:17; 3:4, 5 ("manage his own household"). It is also used of deacons, who must "manage" their children and households well (1 Tim. 3:12). Another reference is to those who are "over you" in the Lord, but whose exact identity is uncertain (1 Th. 5:12). The RSV translates the participle "he who gives aid" in Rom. 12:8, while KJV renders "he who rules." The word is used twice (Tit. 3:8, 14) of those who "apply themselves" to good deeds. A cognate noun (prostatis) is used of Phoebe, "a deaconess of the church," and is translated "helper" (Rom. 16:2). Thus the word (which literally means "be at the head of") may have three different meanings in the New Testament: (1) be at the head of, rule, direct; (2) be concerned about, care for, give aid; (3) busy oneself with, engage in. (See Arndt-Gingrich, Lexicon.) It is used of elders, deacons, deaconess, and Christians in general, and its precise meaning must be determined by its context.

Since the word is used of elders managing their households, it is often assumed that they must control churches in the same way they control their children. However, if this inference is justified with regard to elders, it is also applicable to deacons, since the requirement is the same. But this would read too much into 1 Tim. 3. Elders are to "manage" their households, but they are to "CARE FOR" ("look after") the congregation. As there is a great difference between children and Christians, so is there a great difference between a father's management of his household and an elder's looking after a congregation.

The original word for "care for" (epimeleomai) is interesting, since it is used only twice elsewhere in the New Testament, in Lk. 10:34, 35. The Good Samaritan "brought him to an inn, and took care of him," and he told the innkeeper, "Take care of him." (A cognate noun occurs in Acts 27:3, where Julius gave Paul leave to go to his friends to "be cared for.") Seeing the elder's work in the light of these passages makes it consistent with Jesus' statement that "whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all." The word that describes an elder's rule is not authority, but service.

There is no inherent authority (in the worldly sense) in the eldership. Proistemi, as Alfred Plummer says, "describes function rather than designates rank, activity rather than an office; and it implies protection and care." 1 Tim. 5:17 affords little comfort to those who wish to use the eldership as a means of dominating the church.

The question of the presbyterian ministry is too large for us to deal with very thoroughly in our limited space; a few observations will have to do. First, it is a ministry (in the sense of service) and is never a springboard from which men can make others "feel the weight of authority." Second,

there is much we do NOT know about any ministerial function in the New Testament, including elders. Leon Morris aptly comments: "We do not know the precise function of the elders, and indeed these functions may not have been defined with any exactness."

Third, we know of no function that had exclusive rights or responsibilities. This is an important point. It is often said that bishops must "exercise the oversight." This is true, but it is not true that bishops ALONE must exercise oversight. A quick check in an analytical concordance will reveal that the original verbs of "overseeing" (episkopeo and episkeptomai, from which comes episkopos, "bishop") are used of Christians generally. We should particularly notice Heb. 12:15, which clearly indicates that it is the responsibility of the entire Christian community to look after the spiritual welfare of its members. As Beyer (TDNT) contends, the congregation as a whole has an essential episcopal ministry and office.

Fourth, any words or phrases which seem to suggest authority should be read in the light of statements by Jesus (Mk. 10, for example, cited above), Paul ("not that we lord it over your faith," 2 Cor. 1:24), and Peter ("not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock," 1 Pet. 5:4).

We believe that many elders today have gone astray from the original purpose of their institution. While we hesitate to say that desire for power or fear of the people motivates anyone in particular, the conclusion is hard to escape that some are thus motivated. There is far too much concern for authority. If this is apostolic, it is precisely what Jesus condemned in the original apostles. We should learn from their mistake.

There is no evidence Biblical that elders have any right, in acting in behalf of the church, to do anything apart from the wishes of their congregations. They have no right to hire or fire unless that right is granted to them by the flock. And their right or obligation to excommunicate anyone is no greater than that of any other member of the congregation. They are leaders, but not lords. On the other hand, they do have the right to "work hard at preaching and teaching," to look after orphans and widows and those who have fallen on hard times or among thieves. Their right is that of taking the lead in responsible and loving service to all.

In conclusion, we would like to recommend to our readers three small volumes for further study of this important subject: Michael Green, *Called to Serve* (paperback, Hodder & Stoughton); Leon Morris, *Ministers of God* (paperback, Inter-Varsity Fellowship); and A. T. Hanson, *The Pioneer Ministry* (SCM Press). We would also welcome questions and comments from our readers. ¶¶

One Response to "A Thoughtful Comment"

Dean A. Thoroman

Readers are encouraged to re-study Gary Bassett's article - "A Thoughtful Comment" - in the November issue of INTEGRITY. Issues relating to "open fellowship" and "church discipline" were raised in this thought-provoking work. I do not propose to supply "THE ANSWER" to these topics, but to submit a few comments for further consideration.

One concept must be kept before us: INTEGRITY does not have, nor does it seek an "official" position on any topic. Rather, those who are responsible for its publication want to provide a forum for the presentation of carefully considered views on a wide variety of relevant subjects. It is hoped that such freedom of expression will openly challenge status quo and stimulate provocative, constructive responses. Under these circumstances, INTEGRITY undoubtedly has readers who feel no guilt in supporting SOME of what is published without feeling compelled to reject the ENTIRE publication because of certain disagreements.

In view of the foregoing, some of INTEGRITY'S supporters may react as I do when anyone attempts to pigeon-hole individuals and groups on that elusive continuum between arch-conservatism and ultra-liberalism. I think there is a problem greater than definition of terms (and this is admittedly a difficult problem) - the matter of where one should be on the ~~continuum~~ when he is "liberal" about some things and "conservative" about others! It is this constant "labeling" that disturbs me, because I know of no one who really fits the description of either of these terms. There is just that much inconsistency in each of us.

TOLERATION toward the views and actions of others does not demand that we APPROVE all or any of what they say or do. Neither does freedom of thought and expression require that we endorse or support everything that is spoken and written. Thus, we may defend the right of someone to speak while disagreeing strongly with what is spoken. We may tolerate behavior which we do not support and sharply criticize both ideas and actions without any desire or compulsion to attack a PERSON or to drive him away from us.

What are the IMPLICATIONS of such a stand? Must we automatically withdraw fellowship from all who are more liberal than we are on particular subjects? If we are able to TOLERATE those who are more CONSERVATIVE than we are, why can't we extend the same degree of tolerance in the other direction? Is it not a matter of recognizing that brotherhood is based on common Fatherhood? Someone has said that fellowship is first VERTICAL (with God, our Father), then HORIZONTAL (with all our brothers and sisters). I believe this is true and this leads me to con-

clude that we have no right nor responsibility to sever a BROTHERLY relationship as long as a FATHERLY relationship exists. If this conclusion is correct, I must be very careful about judging as to who no longer maintains a child-parent relationship with the Heavenly Father.

However, this does present a personal problem. Does the Heavenly Father ever "cut off" His children? The evidence is clear - at least to me - that He does! He has NEVER approved of deliberate wrongdoing. His forgiveness has no recipient when a sinner refuses to repent. His grace is valueless to the one who cares nothing about it. The wilfully wandering child rejects reconciliation and spurns his own sonship.

Who, then, are my spiritual sisters and brothers? I do not know very many of them, but I do know they are all children of my Father. If I love because I have first been loved - even when I was unloveable - nothing can contain or measure the depth of my feeling for each member of God's family. Where each one fits on the long line between liberalism and conservatism is of little concern to me. I am convinced that I have conscientious brethren on both sides of me on many widely-discussed topics. Accordingly, I cannot agree with the statement that "every congregation of the church of Christ lies somewhere on a continuum between extreme conservatism and extreme liberalism." Views within each congregation vary so greatly that one cannot logically place an entire group at any point on the continuum.

It would be more accurate to state that individuals - on certain topics - have ideas which fall somewhere between the extreme views on these topics. (The October, 1969, issue of INTEGRITY has a fine presentation by James Welker on methods of handling our differences.) "Church discipline" is one of the clubs used to bring about submission or expulsion. Church leaders who tend toward the conservative end of the continuum feel it is necessary to demonstrate their "authority" and to exercise some control over the minds and lives of their followers. In all good conscience, they make and try to enforce decisions about what individuals may believe and practice in the name of "TRUTH." To these, it is almost blasphemous to question their decisions, and they feel compelled - yea, duty-bound! - to take the lead in "disciplining" any member who cannot conscientiously keep quiet and go along with something he believes is wrong.

I am persuaded that a particular type of personality lends itself to the kind of situation just described. One who enjoys authority and delights in exercising it also encounters difficulty in accepting honest criticism. The authoritarian cannot accept democratic concepts. Everything is right or wrong, and there are definite answers for all conceivable problems. Rules and regulations become a form of security, and deviates are treated as outcasts. Change in routine is eyed with suspicion, and STATUS QUO is thought to be almost sacred.

Church discipline, then, will continue to be a problem anywhere that inflexibility, intolerance, legalism, and rigidity reign. It is more an individual problem than a group one. It is very DIFFICULT FOR ONE PERSON to be consistent in following through with his concept of faithfulness and fellowship. It is almost - if not altogether - IMPOSSIBLE FOR A GROUP to behave consistently in such matters.

Who can decide for me whom I shall fellowship? To whom shall I entrust the awesome responsibility of determining what I may or may not believe? I choose to be free from ALL human bondage! I voluntarily place myself in the eternal service of Jehovah through Jesus Christ. At the same time, I accept all other volunteer fellow-servants as my blood-bought brothers and sisters. Let no man, nor group of men, have the audacity to sever either of these precious, personal relationships! I shall ignore or repudiate all such efforts and continue my pilgrimage to my everlasting home where I fully expect to enjoy the eternal company of many "conservatives" and "liberals" who have been "disfellowshipped" by mortals trying to play God.

Is there an alternative to excommunication based on doctrinal differences? Yes! At least one - COMMUNICATION! Is there any evidence in the New Testament that any brother was ever expelled from the fellowship because of an honest "doctrinal" view? Really, isn't just the reverse true? Early Christians disagreed on many basic points, and apostolic admonitions did not solve the problems on the premise that everyone had to agree. Rather, the one message that came through most often was TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER - in spite of differences. How can we love, or learn to love, when we refuse to talk with and listen to our BROTHERS?

Rather than being overly concerned about where someone is on the line between "conservatism" and "liberalism," let's open the line of communication and love - AND KEEP IT OPEN. ¶¶¶

HARTFORD FORUM

The annual Hartford (Ill.) Forum will be held Dec. 29-30. Speakers and subjects will include: "Is The Gift of Tongues Available to Christians Today?" - Yes! Paul Logue; No! Russell Boatman. "Is The Theory of Evolution Incompatible With the Bible?" - No! Neal Buffaloe; Yes! Lynn Gardner. "Is The Use of Instrumental Music in Public Praise Scriptural?" - Yes! Dwaine Dunning; No! James D. Bales. "What Should Be Our Position on Fellowship?" - Complementary speeches and questions from the audience by Frank Rester and Hoy Ledbetter. Plus Open Forum. The first session will begin Monday at 2 p. m. at 137 E. Maple Street.

Regeneration or Rebirth?

John Smith

"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." These words, spoken by Jesus to Nicodemus, have formed one of the basic premises of Christianity. Virtually the entire thrust of the Christian mission is to achieve the new birth both in oneself and to assist it in others. However, there is a world of difference in the incident of rebirth and the "reprogramming" of the mind and emotions resulting in complete regeneration.

Too often we have confused rebirth and regeneration. While rebirth is a visible incident in the life of one who has turned to God, regeneration is a gradual process of re-evaluation and reinterpretation of the meaning of life. Regeneration has been thought of as an accomplished fact upon viewing the immersion of some individual in water. This misconception has led to some fatal errors in our attitudes toward those who put on their Lord in baptism.

Christians have failed to conceptualize themselves as just having become parents. Although we are very happy and think it's "just wonderful" that so and so has become a Christian, we have refused our parental responsibility in raising this "child." As a result the casualty rate among reborn but not regenerated Christians is appalling. If a person realizes his need for God because of his inability to cope with insurmountable family difficulties, and in seeking assistance learns that he must be born again and so is buried in baptism, will his problems disappear? Will he suddenly be able to cope with his present crises? Unfortunately, when he awakens next morning his wife still wants a divorce, his son is still in jail, his boss is still making unreasonable demands, and he still cannot resolve his problems.

Even more unfortunate is the fact that those who were responsible for making him aware of his lost condition, after immersing him left him to face these problems alone. He then discovers that Christianity is not the panacea that he thought it would be, and he becomes disenchanted with it before it has a chance to work its wonders. Does this mean he wasn't truly penitent? No, it only means that, although this man has burst into the family of God and received pardon, he is basically the same person he was yesterday, and the world he lives in was not reborn last night, just himself. Although he would very much like to make a complete change instantly, his environment and background prohibit him from such an effort, no matter how desirous it may be or how much he desires it. Unless those who have endured the torturous route of regeneration stand constantly ready to assist this one, the odds are greatly in favor of his failing to survive his infancy.

Paul writes, "My little children, for whom I am in travail until Christ be formed in you..." Paul is saying that the regeneration process has not accomplished its end in these Christians. Christ has not taken form in them.

The process of regeneration actually begins with a man's first visualization of his relationship to God. Baptism is a major step in this process, indicating this individual's decision to submit to God and to learn His ways and live by his principles. Rebirth is exactly what it implies: the setting in motion of the regeneration process. The process itself is a long tedious reprogramming of the mind, leading the recipient to look at all of life from a spiritual point of view. Learning to know and accept the will of God and to desire to please him is a progressive chain of faith building.

A man is not truly regenerated, that is, the process is not complete until he can truly say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ, who lives in me." When every aspect of a man's existence emulates the life of Christ, when his entire self is motivated solely by Christian desire, the regeneration process has worked its end. ¶¶

The Communion of Love

James Cockrill

Heaven on earth is: when we as Christians meet in fellowship in our homes to study God's word; when we gather together for an intensified, zealous study of a certain scripture or scriptures; when we meet in a park on a beautiful summer morning to have breakfast with one another; and our joy knows no bounds when we witness a baptism into Christ Jesus our Lord; and we are joyful whenever we are just with fellow Christians.

Why are we so happy when we experience these things? What is it that makes us experience such feelings of joy? It is love. The love that Jesus left for us as illustrated by the parable of the vine in John 15:1-10 and further explained in verse 11, where he says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full," and in verse 12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you."

What Christ left for us is the richest treasure we have on earth. It is something that we could break down doors to obtain. But we aren't.

We all have this fellowship available to us, this "way of life." Then why aren't we taking advantage of it? The answer is obvious. If we somehow miss the joys of true fellowship, it is because the spirit of love that our Master left for us is missing. Why is it missing? Because we are so hung up on petty, man-made issues. And if you don't think our problems are petty, look at the problems the Corinthians had; for example, a man living in incest with his step-mother. Or the fact that some Corinthians held Paul, Apollos and Cephas in such esteem that they built parties around them.

You don't read about Paul cautioning the first Christians on whether they can have musical instruments in their "service." And you don't see any letters written about the only correct way to observe the Lord's supper. And on the latter, the only explicit instructions we have are from Christ, who said, "Do this in my memory." In fact, our Christ didn't concern himself with these things. His main concern was to get us to learn to love each other from the bottoms of our hearts and to obey God the Father.

Jesus gives us just a few simple instructions, such as: going out into the world and spreading the good news that God loved us so much that he sent his son to die for us that we might be saved; loving each other as he first loved us; and believing on his name and being baptized into his death, emerging as a new creature in Christ.

A great insight can be gained into the problems we are experiencing, if we will just review our history. The Corinthians had such problems that, if they existed today, they would be cast out of any known fellowship. Even as little as one hundred fifty years ago, Christians were trying to shake off the strangling chains of dogmatism and creedalism in order to find their way through to the true love of Christ.

When are we going to start considering the weightier matters of life? When are we going to get back on the path, the "way" that Christ so clearly left for us? When are we going to stop squabbling over something that the first century Christians would probably have laughed at? When are we going to practice what we preach, speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent on the things that are not dealt with or even mentioned? When are we going to enter into the communion of love? ¶¶

Vinet once wrote: "Most friends of truth love it as Frederick the Great loved music. It used to be said of him that, strictly speaking, he was not fond of music but of the flute, and not indeed fond of the flute but of his flute."

Under Penalty of Perjury Peter Peregrine

I attended a service recently that was unusual if not unique. As I entered the sanctuary 3 or 4 minutes before 11:00, the congregation was seated in almost total silence. I took my seat near the rear and looked around quickly at the other worshippers. Their faces seemed to be saying, "It's about to happen."

At precisely 11 o'clock the minister arose and headed for the pulpit, followed by another man (an elder, as I later learned) carrying a big Bible. The minister laid one hand on the Bible, raised the other, and the elder asked, "Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

"I do," he replied. Whereupon the elder took his seat.

The minister immediately began a soul-stirring sermon, to which the audience gave rapt attention for about 35 minutes (I became so engrossed in the sermon I forgot to check my watch). After this came one of the most enthusiastic devotionals I have ever seen.

Immediately after the dismissal I approached the elder. "Say, I never saw a church swear in the minister before," I said in a half-declarative, half-interrogatory tone.

"I thought you might find that interesting," he replied. "Let me tell you about it. You see, some time ago we began to realize we were having a problem with our preacher. It wasn't that he wasn't preaching the truth; it was our feeling that he wasn't preaching the WHOLE truth. We talked with him about it, and he agreed that he was neglecting to discuss some things that needed to be talked about. He thought they should be discussed, but he felt the brethren were not ready for it yet. So he was waiting until they got ready. Since we felt that the brethren would never get ready for unpleasant truths, and that the truth is always better than anything else at any time, we sought a way to overcome our preacher's timidity. So we came up with the idea of swearing him in."

"But doesn't he think it insulting to have to be sworn in?"

"If he does, he hasn't given us any indication of it. On the contrary, he seems to like it. It gives him a sense of security. In case the congregation doesn't like what he says, he can say to himself, 'After all, I am under oath. I must tell the truth.' Like I say, he seems to be quite happy."

"But doesn't this raise some theological questions?" I asked. "Should not a preacher's speech be Yea and Nay, without having to be sworn in?"

"Yes, ordinarily," he replied. "But these are not ordinary times. And just as the state has found it necessary to require witnesses to answer under oath, because so many would not tell the truth otherwise, so we have found it necessary to take the same approach with preachers. Besides, should there be so much difference between the church and state in a Christian nation?"

"How does the congregation as a whole feel about it?" I asked.

"Well, some of them thought it a little odd at first, but after a couple of weeks a number asked - almost demanded - that the sermon be the first part of the service. Now that is our standard practice. We did have a couple of families to leave because the preacher was 'plowing too close to the corn,' but our attendance has actually increased about 25%, so we really haven't lost anything."

At this point his attention was taken by another querist, and I walked away. It certainly was an unusual day. And the more I think about it, the more I wonder if it wouldn't be a good idea to swear in all our preachers. It just might be. But I wonder, too, if the brethren are ready for it yet.

We, the Colorless Arthur Leslie, Jr.

NOTE: Art Leslie, a member of the Shiloh Inner-City team in Brooklyn, told a story in one of his recent reports which we think will provide our readers with a blessing. The story follows:

Recently we were having our regular Bible classes, and we were all teaching a lesson on Luke 14 where Jesus presents his teaching that we should attempt to do good to those who will not likely return the favor, knowing that we gain our reward from God. We decided in our preparation that a good way of approaching the idea for the kids would be for us to pretend we were giving a birthday party and ask the kids whom they would want to invite.

I was teaching my class of 11 and 12 year old boys and asked the question of whom they would invite to the party. My class consisted of 8 black boys and 1 Spanish boy. When I asked the question, one of the black boys said, "I don't know who I would invite, but I know who I wouldn't." I asked him to explain what he meant. He said, "Well! I wouldn't invite any white

or Spanish people." I asked him why. He said, "Well, you just can't trust any of those white or Spanish people. Oh, it's all right to have them for friends, but you shouldn't ever really trust them because they just aren't any good, and they will always try to hurt you in some way."

I continued around the class and asked each of the other black boys how they felt about it. They all said something similar, and none of them demonstrated any trust in white or Spanish people. Then I asked the Spanish boy whom he would invite. He said he would not invite any black or white people. Well, I just couldn't understand the answers the kids were giving me, so I asked them, "Well, what about Bryan, wouldn't you want him to come at all?" (Bryan is the director here in Brooklyn, and he is white.) Then one of the black boys said, "Oh, Bryan is not white, his skin just kind of looks that way, he's not really white." Then I asked about all the other counselors and got the same reply. Then I asked the Spanish boy why he would not let me come to the party. Then the boy said I could. I told him that he said he wouldn't invite anyone that was black, and that I was black. The boy said, "You aren't a black person, you are just kind of dark brown."

It's very evident that there is no hostility between the blacks in the class and the one Spanish boy. They thought of each other as friends and could not really conceive of the others as being in different races.

This experience pointed out to me a couple of major observations. First, although it was yet unknown to the kids, they were becoming aware of inconsistencies between what they had been taught all their lives and what they had seen in those who had come in with no more selfish motive than to be a friend to them. They are at the point in their lives where they just know what their mothers say must be right, and that when they are warned that other races are not to be trusted, they naturally know that it is true. At the same time they see something different in the real situation around them. The only acceptable rationalization they can employ is that those who are being trustworthy just can't really be whites, they just have some sort of skin condition. The incident also points out very well just what we have to battle in regard to racial feelings which are taught from the time a child can hear. Maybe we should stop to consider whether we as parents and teachers are causing our own children to have some of these same attitudes toward other races. It's something to think about.

Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes
Error a fault and truth discourtesy.

- George Herbert.

comments

FROM CHATTANOOGA

"I don't know to whom we owe 'thanks' for putting our name on your mailing list! And yet... maybe I do, too, because I stand more in awe than ever before of God's hand in our lives, answering our prayers (our 'asking' and 'seeking') for many personal burdens and problems. Truly His hand leads you and in turn has 'led' us to much spiritual strength and some of the wisdom and knowledge we've prayed for regarding certain issues that touch the lives of some of our loved ones! Thank you as well as our heavenly Father for putting INTEGRITY in our hands!

"We hope the enclosed check will help defray your expenses somewhat, and hope to send more at a later date."

FROM DETROIT

"Many of the questions you have been raising in the magazine, I had raised (and answered for myself) years before. It is good to see others raising these questions in a public manner. It is mainly because I felt I had to play the role of a hypocrite (and suppress these questions, and 'liberal' beliefs), and preach things expected of me that I did not so wholeheartedly endorse, that I left the full-time ministry and went into education. I felt the church had her hierarchy of values deformed, stressing so many little insignificant things, and minoring in major things. I am working with a congregation on a part-time basis now, but they have allowed me an amazing degree of freedom of conscience and expression. Many would call me a 'liberal,' and I proudly accept that name and attach no opprobrium to it, although considering the entire religious spectrum I would be a 'conservative' to most oth-

er religious people in this country. One of our problems in the church is that we are quick to label someone we don't agree with with some kind of name or label; we discuss him publicly using that label, assuming that everyone else means by that word what we do."

FROM NEW YORK

"It is my hope that you will be able to direct the publication in a definite positive direction and prevent it from being a 'Gospel Guardian' in reverse. It would be so easy to let it become no more than a sounding board for knocking other Christians who have a different opinion from yours. That would certainly be an unfortunate misuse of the potential of a publication such as yours. I hope the tone can contain love and not bitterness or doctrinal conceit. May God bless you in your efforts to serve Him."

FROM TORONTO

"Congratulations. We thank the Lord for such Free and Open publications. The Spirit of the Lord is surely moving among us. We praise and thank Him. May the Lord bless you all."

FROM THE EDITOR

Our thanks to those who have sent contributions. Although they are never enough to pay expenses, they are a great help.

David Elkins has moved to Bridgeport, Conn., to resume his full-time ministry. His new work is depriving us of a valuable member of the editorial board.

We have had some requests to expand our letter page and to provide a section for questions and answers. How do you feel about it?

VOICE FROM THE PAST

Is not the sin of a censorious temper in a very real sense diabolical? It is Satan's special delight to be "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. xii.10). His names, Satan ("adversary") and devil ("malicious accuser"), bear witness to this characteristic, which is brought prominently forward in the opening chapters of the Book of Job. It is of the essence of censoriousness that its activity is displayed with a sinister motive. The charges are commonly uttered, not to the person who is blamed, but to others, who will thereby be prejudiced against him; or if they are made to the man's own face, it is with the object of inflicting pain, rather than with the hope of thereby inducing him to amend. It is no "speaking truth in love" (Eph. iv.15), but reckless or malevolent speaking evil, without much caring whether it be true or false. It is the poisoning of the wells out of which respect and affection for our fellow-men flow. Thus the presumption which grasps at functions that belong to God alone leads to a fall and a course of action which is indeed Satanical.

- Alfred Plummer.