

Integrity

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INTEGRITY seeks to encourage all believers in Christ to strive to be one, to be pure, and to be honest and sincere in word and in deed, among themselves and toward all men.

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BETWEEN THE LINES

If you are a typical reader, you have already looked over the letters before reading this page, so I might as well comment on them first. We have chosen some very long ones for inclusion this month and have had to leave out others which would make profitable reading. We hope the fact that we cannot print all we receive will not discourage people from writing but will encourage them to be as brief as possible. Please do not hold us accountable for everything said in the letters (as some tend to do). That we are still printing statements on women and homosexuality reflects the fact that these are questions about which so many continue to write.

Regarding specific writers in this issue, I confess a special fondness for Sarah Nelson's letters. She is just what we need to keep us on our toes, and I appreciate the careful way she looks at the scriptures. Verne Farmer's attitude toward the Bible will bother many of us; I hope we are equally bothered by the failures of which he reminds us. A more positive focus is provided by the letter from the ex-homosexual and his wife. In view of the widespread interest in this subject, we are happy to report that Jim Reynolds is writing a review of Pat Boone's new *Joy! A Homosexual's Search for Fulfillment*, which we hope to include next month.

It would be great if one of our Christian psychiatrists would write on homosexuality; perhaps one will yet. It would also be good if other experts would devote more time to writing. As an editor I am especially grieved that so many of our brothers who are real scholars (I could name quite a few) seldom, if ever, write for us or other publications with which we share an audience. We can only hope it is because of the press of other matters rather than that they have given up on us.

Speaking of writers, in this issue we welcome some old friends and one new one. F.L. Lemley once again seeks to improve our approach to the scriptures. He writes as "one of us" and to us makes sense, although the uninitiated might not appreciate the discussion (it is very hard to explain some of our controversies to those who have not grown up with them). Allen Holden lives in the here and now; we appreciate his ability to relate the historic faith to contemporary phenomena. Don Reece's poem not only reflects his ardent love for freedom; it also fittingly appears on the tenth anniversary of the murder of the men to whom it is dedicated. Thomas Lane is new to us, but he provides us with something we should welcome: a chance to get a new insight into a well-known text.

thority declare, "All unimmersed believers shall be damned." God will deal with these as he sees fit according to his tender mercies and justice. God is not silent on the question of baptism. We insist on immersion because it is commanded.

Several texts are held to enunciate principles of silence prohibiting. Hebrews 7:14 is such a proof text. God has not, however, been silent about the priesthood. In Num. 3:10 God not only specified who should be his priests, but imposed a death penalty upon any who would presume to occupy this office. He did not have to list all the disapproved tribes and other strangers and elect a priest by the process of elimination. His specifying that priests should be from Aaron rendered the tribe of Judah unauthorized as priests. There can be no principle of silence prohibiting in this situation, for God has spoken. The same is true of other examples used as proof of the principle of silence prohibiting. In the cases of Nadab and Abihu God had clearly specified where the fire was to come from. In the case of Korah God had clearly specified who should be the leaders of Israel. In the case of Uzzah God had clearly specified how the ark was to be moved and who should touch it. These men were not condemned for transgressing where there was no law (i.e. against silence).

It therefore becomes quite clear that when God has spoken on either side of an issue, it cannot be correctly held that he is silent on the other side. Where God or the Bible is truly silent is in those cases where *there is no pronouncement on either side of the question.*

How then do we justify unspecified expedients? The authority to execute any command comes with and inheres in the command itself. Without a command there can be no authorized expedient, but where a command is given, the authority for the necessary human judgment to carry it out is inherent in it. No specific mandate is

needed for our expedients, for the command itself authorizes every expedient possible, both ancient and modern, for implementing it. If our judgment is bad, we should learn from it. God does not leave us to use human judgment and then condemn us for our bad judgment, for he knows human judgment is both good and bad.

But what of binding examples and necessary inferences? As for examples, we have three choices: (1) all examples are binding; (2) no example in and of itself is binding; or (3) some examples are binding and some are not. To hold the first position would be the height of folly. To hold the third position necessitates a judge to separate the binding examples from those not binding. This produces books, debates, dissensions, divisions, and all sorts of evils. Number two is the logical position and the true one. Unless an example is the object of a direct mandate, it is not binding upon us. Many of the New Testament examples are nothing more than the human choices of expedients of that age.

But what of necessary inferences? Our Restoration forefathers had a true saying: "The scriptures teach in three ways: by command or plain statement, by approved example, and by necessary inference." This is true; these are avenues of learning. But somewhere along the line someone changed this statement to say: "We derive authority in exclusively three ways: by command, approved example and necessary inference." This last statement is not true and is the source of much evil division in the church. To learn is not to be equated with deriving authority, and God does not command anyone by human inference, deduction, or lone example. Human inferences and deduction, though true, *are not God's word!* It is by these avenues we form convictions which may be faith, but we cannot bind them upon our brother (Rom. 14:22). We need to learn *when God is silent.* Silence is neutral, neither prohibiting nor authorizing. □

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' BAPTISM

THOMAS LANE

Cincinnati, Ohio

For longer than I have been around (which isn't all that long) advocates of baptismal regeneration have construed the baptism of Jesus by his forerunner and cousin John as an example to believers, demonstrating that they likewise must be baptized in order to be acceptable to God. Also the phrase in the Scriptures to the effect that Jesus' baptism was intended to "fulfill all righteousness" (RSV) has been interpreted to mean that unless one is baptized he has not fulfilled or satisfied all of God's requirements for him to be clothed with the saving righteousness of Christ.

Somehow I have long felt uneasy about these interpretations. I could never understand why *Jesus*, who was sinless, had to submit to the baptism of John to be accepted by his Father. Only lately, in preparing another article on baptism for publication, have I taken the time to reflect upon my uneasiness, to see whether it was justified. I think now that it was.

What actually was the significance of Jesus' submission to baptism? To understand this we need first to ascertain the nature of the baptism administered by John. John's baptism was a baptism symbolizing repentance, for in baptism an outward

cleansing serves to emblemize inward cleansing (Matt. 3:11; Acts 19:4). In this John's baptism resembles Christian baptism. *Unlike* Christian baptism, John's baptism had no power to introduce its subjects into saving grace. The reason for this is that Christian baptism operates by the Holy Spirit, who during baptism cleanses the penitent believer of his sins, administering the washing of regeneration and renewal (Tit. 3:5). Also at baptism the Spirit comes to indwell the penitent believer (Acts 2:38), thus, inasmuch as His indwelling is the sign of acceptance by God (1 Jn. 3:24), bringing the believer into the state of grace. The Spirit was not in the world performing this saving work at the time John was baptizing. The Spirit was not given until Jesus was resurrected from the dead (Jn. 7:39). It was only after the events of the atonement had been completed that the Spirit was dispatched from the Father to bring the grace made available by the atonement to all who would believe.

John's baptism was a powerless symbol that presaged Christian baptism, and then prepared men's minds and hearts for the ultimate redemption from sin which Christ would provide. Jesus' disciples practiced baptism to some degree even before the atonement had been made (Jn. 4:1-2). Jesus himself never baptized, either before or after his death and resurrection. His disciples' baptism was essentially the baptism of John, not Christian baptism. That John's baptism was part of an inferior dispensation is evident from the fact that the believers in Christ who had been only baptized into John's baptism had to be rebaptized in order to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7).

At the beginning of his earthly ministry, Jesus came to John and asked to be baptized. John protested, "Why, it should be you baptizing me, and you come wanting me to baptize *you*?" What he meant was that Jesus

was sinless and had no need of repentance, let alone the baptism of repentance. Although John himself was an exceptionally holy man, he testified to Jesus' superior, indeed unapproachable, holiness, by his reluctance to administer baptism to him.

John's protest did not prevail. Jesus told him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (RSV). John consented and immersed him. In thus being baptized as though he were one needing to repent, Jesus identified himself with human sinfulness, foreshadowing his death on the cross as the type of sin: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Pet. 2:24 RSV).

As soon as Jesus was brought up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon him, empowering him for his earthly mission. Jesus' baptism was not only a sign whereby he identified with the human condition, it was his anointing as the Messiah (cf. Is. 42:1). With the Spirit came a voice from heaven, the voice of the Father claiming Christ as his own Son. Thus did the Father attest to Jesus' anointing and to his divine Sonship, even when Jesus was identifying himself with man and his spiritual condition.

The apostle John thought of Christ's baptism as a witness to his Sonship: "Jesus Christ is the one who came; he came with the water of his baptism and the blood of his death. He came not only with water, but with both the water and the blood. And the Spirit himself testifies that this is true; for the Spirit is truth" (1 Jn. 5:6 TEV). The water and the blood, in other words, are the Father's testimony to his Son, a testimony confirmed in our hearts by the Spirit who is truth. The voice of God from heaven and the descending Spirit at Jesus' baptism are the first testimony, the testimony of water. Jesus' elevation to the dual status of Savior

and Lord in view of his death is the second testimony, that of the blood.

Jesus' baptism, in summary, was his Messianic anointing and a sign of his divine nature. His baptism bears in these things no resemblance or analogy to Christian baptism. We cannot, then, consider Jesus' baptism as an example for us today.

That being true, neither can we say that Jesus' statement that his baptism was "to fulfill all righteousness" has something to do with the role of baptism in this present dispensation. Why, John's baptism, we saw, was different from what we term "Christian baptism." To draw lessons from Jesus' baptism applicable to Christian baptism is to confuse the essential nature of the baptism of John and Christian baptism, or baptism as practiced in the context of the entire Christian dispensation. Christ's baptism was decidedly not to fulfill God's requirements for righteousness. It was a special sign in his case. When Christ said it was necessary for him to be baptized to "fulfill all righteousness" (literal translation from the Greek), he did not mean his baptism was a prototype Christian baptism in which obedience to the ordinance satisfies the conditions under which God accepts men's faith as their righteousness. What Christ was *really* saying was, "John, fella, let's do things this way now, for thus it is incumbent on us to fulfill that which God considers right for me in this particular situation." To apply Christ's words to baptism in the church dispensation is, again, not a valid move.

So often we get caught up in defending what we think is the truth, to the extent that we are trapped by truth and not liberated by it. We continue to mouth threadbare arguments that hold no water for the sake of tradition, or inertia, or whatever. Here we have examined a traditional argument and have found it wanting. Let us not hesitate to move on to better things, in all issues and areas of our faith. □

Listening to Paul Simon

ALLEN HOLDEN, Jr.

San Diego, California

Listening to records is for me sometimes an escape from thinking. I put on some TJB, Roger Williams or James Taylor and go on doing whatever I want to do. But listening to Paul Simon, previously of Simon and Garfunkel, can be a profoundly thought-provoking experience. "Sounds of Silence" and "Silent Night/7 O'Clock News" are anything but background music. Paul's second solo album, *There Goes Rhymin' Simon* (Columbia KC 32280), is on a par with the best material he did with Art Garfunkel. Three singles from this album have received a significant amount of airplay, including "Kodachrome" ("Everything looks worse in black and white") and "Loves Me Like a Rock," which (despite its gospel sound, the mention of the "rock of ages," and the backup of a gospel group, The Dixie Hummingbirds) never gets any deeper than mother love. But what has this to do with *Integrity*? Hang on, and I'll let you know what went through my head as I listened to this album.

"Take Me to the Mardi Gras" is the first song that really touched me.

C'mon take me to the Mardi Gras
Where the people sing and play
Where the dancing is elite
And there's music in the street
Both night and day

We're invited to what sounds like a real blast—the joy of a wedding feast, complete with music, singing and dancing, lasting into the night. And that set me thinking. When

I try to think of my most exciting, uplifting and joyful experiences, I usually think of an occasional concert (Peter, Paul and Mary), a play (*Godspell*), a wedding, a party, square dancing, or body surfing during big surf. We have to go to Las Vegas, New Orleans, take a vacation, or fly to Hawaii before we can really have a fabulous time. Worship, on the other hand, is never associated with these thrilling, mind-blowing, happy times. Instead, it elicits feelings of somberness, seriousness, and quiet in a specific location at a specific time on a certain day. I have to learn the New Testament view of worship as a *celebration*, a time of joy and a time of dancing, not limited by geography or time. There is awe and respect and adoration—coupled with singing and smiling and happiness. I get rid of my burdens and am free—to live, to love, to serve. Paul Simon senses this connection, and has the Rev. Claude Jeter sing the third verse.

And I will lay my burden down
Rest my head upon that shore
And when I wear that starry crown
I won't be wanting any more

OK, in heaven I'll be rid of my burdens. But what about now? What do I do to relieve my boredom and get rid of my aches? To Paul Simon, only the Mardi Gras supplies the answer.

Take your burdens to the Mardi Gras
Let the music wash your soul
You can mingle in the street

You can jingle to the beat
Of Jelly Roll

May God lead us, that this Mardi Gras/Las Vegas/summertime atmosphere will be in our hearts as we live with him, and may our praise to him be more like a wedding than a funeral.

Alienation . . .

Paul Simon has pressed us before to recognize how distant we are from each other. The tragedy of two people talking to each other about trivia ("Is the theater really dead?") while each is dying inside was pointedly described in 1966 in "The Dangling Conversation." Equally disturbing, a year earlier, was "I Am a Rock."

I am shielded in my armour
Safely in my room, safe within my womb
I touch no one and no one touches me
I am a rock, I am an island

This theme is continued in his latest album. The apartment building comes under his scrutiny, for it is probably the ultimate paradox of modern society, where people can live as close as six inches away from each other, and can still be as lonely as if their nearest neighbor was twenty miles away. In fact, this close proximity only heightens our feeling of isolation, because we see all these people walking past us day after day, and yet say nothing but "HI" each time we pass. If there is an area for the church to be ministering, it is in the apartments and townhouses and condominiums, and not just out in suburban Pleasant Valley. As Paul Simon points out, "Remember, one man's ceiling is another man's floor."

"Something So Right" reflects more hope and the fact that somebody took the time and effort to get to know the song writer. His honesty is significant.

They've got a wall in China, it's a thousand miles long

To keep out the foreigners they made it strong
I've got a wall around me you can't even see
It took a little time to get next to me

Why do we erect these impenetrable walls, our "invisible shields" of safety? In my case, it's usually that I'm *scared*. Why should I let you know me? Will you like me if I tell you how selfish, mean and full of gripes I really am? I'm not convinced that you really want to see my warts and smell my odor. I only show my Sunday best to you and never let you in to see the scared, lonely, frustrated boy that is inside. And yet, as I understand the church of Jesus Christ, this is what it is really all about. It is to be the place where I can be me—ugly, cruel, lazy good-for-nothing that I am—and you will accept me as one created by God, redeemed by his Son and inhabited by the Holy Spirit, an individual of value and dignity. Like Paul Simon, I need somebody to get next to me, to love me just as I am, and to tell me in no uncertain terms that I am loved and accepted.

Some people never say the words I love you
It's not their style to be so bold
Some people never say those words I love you
But like a child they're longing to be told

I need to hear that you love me. "My mama loves me," my wife loves me, but do you love me, even when I am not related to you, and when I am, in the final analysis, quite unlovable?

In your efforts "to get next to me," I will often need chastening. I have faults that will need correcting, dents we'll have to pound out together, and rough edges that will need sandpapering. But I need more than honesty from you, more than just being told how wrong I am and how right you are. "Tenderness," a soul-flavored ballad, expresses this.

Right and wrong never helped us get along
You say you care for me
But there's no tenderness beneath your honesty

I often wonder why I am so quick to be "honest" with other people, so diligent in my efforts to point out the speck that I think I see in their eye, and so tardy in commending them on the good job they've done in reducing its original size. I always say, "You know I'm only saying this because I care about you," and then I proceed to vent all my hostility on them, using the subtlety of a sledgehammer and the grace of an ox. What I often am trying to do is to get back at them for some wisecrack (translation: sincere bit of criticism) they made about my class, my songleading, or my talk. What I'm aching for deep down is some "tenderness," some old fashioned *agape*. In the context of your real concern and a relationship of trust I am much less threatened by your criticism, and I may even act on what you tell me.

Honesty, it's such a waste of energy
No you don't have to lie to me
Just give me some tenderness beneath your
honesty

Change . . .

The progressive, change-oriented disciple of Jesus will be able to identify with "American Tune," the third and probably the best single released from this album, and reminiscent of "Bridge Over Troubled Water" in its hauntingly beautiful sound.

And I don't know a soul who's not been battered
I don't have a friend who feels at ease
I don't know a dream that's not been shattered
or driven to its knees . . .
Still, when I think of the road we're travelling on
I wonder what went wrong
I can't help it, I wonder what went wrong

When I compare the restoration churches of today with their frontier beginnings, or more markedly, with the first century ones that they claim to be descendents of, I share this feeling—"I wonder what went wrong." I see some of these contrasts so clearly, and have

committed myself to being the Spirit's instrument in correcting these deficiencies, if such is his desire. But I need to heed some deceptively simple advice from Paul Simon:

Before you learn to fly
Learn how to fall

What's that got to do with it? Simply stated, before I get on my white horse and proceed to clean everything up, I need to be prepared for failure. Such failure may come from the people I am trying to help: they may not want my advice, or they may well be offended by my pushy, egotistical, know-it-all approach ("What's a young punk like him know about restoring the (S)pirit of the New Testament church?"). But, despite my good intentions, failure may come from the Spirit of God. The changes I am in favor of may not be the changes he has in mind, or they may not be the high priority items that he wants me to work on. I've seen enough people give up completely just because their pet project wasn't approved exactly as they conceived it, or just because somebody said or did something cruel to them. As reactionary as it sounds, not only will I have to compromise often, but I am going to fail, and fail often, in many of my attempts at change. "Before you learn to fly, learn how to fall."

Conclusion . . .

Thank you, Paul, for giving me some happy songs ("Was a Sunny Day"), for a lullaby for a small boy ("St. Judy's Comet"), and for 35 minutes of good listening. But more than that, thank you for songs that made me think. Thanks for dealing with my relation to other people, my loneliness and aloofness, my need for love and for a time of celebration, and the fact that if I'm going to try to change things, I'd better be prepared for failure as well as success. Keep making me think. □

Letters

No Mindless Conformity

Thanks for your fine publication, one in which men and women are free to speak the truth (as each one understands it) without censorship or imposition of "consensus." It is good to know that being brothers or sisters in Christ does not reduce us all to a mindless conformity of opinions, especially on matters where the Scriptures do not speak exhaustively. I especially appreciate Hoy Ledbetter's thought-provoking and well-researched articles where he probes into the Greek text in an attempt to see things as God truly means them.

St. Louis, Missouri

DAVID TAO

Questioning Roberts on Order

It is a serious charge to accuse any legitimate Bible translator, male or female, of falsifying the Word of God, as Mr. J.J.M. Roberts remarked in his letter responding to Jean Salners in the March issue of *Integrity*.

The heart of Mr. Roberts' argument is in the rightful respect he gives to the context of the fall, thus revealing the weakness of the translation Jean offered as an alternative to the usual one. Mr. Roberts carried this respect for context over into the sometimes argued "that in Christ the curse is taken away, *ergo* the wife is no longer subject to her husband." And he moved to 1 Tim. 2:12-15, consistently presenting the evidence that Christ did accept the headship of the husband over his wife.

However, Mr. Roberts, while acknowledging in a foregoing paragraph that the woman's subjection to her husband was a direct result "of her punishment for sin in the garden," moved (for the first time in his letter) into an inconsistent position. He went on to say, "One should note, however, that 1 Tim. 2:12-15 argues for the woman's subjection on the basis of the priority of man's creation (Gen. 2), something totally unconnected with the curse or any fallen state."

The woman's subjection to her husband *cannot* be a direct result of the fall if it was in effect *before* the fall. If she was in subjection before the fall, then the fall did not *change* her position in

this regard, and one wonders that if that be so, then why God used the language He did when passing judgment on Eve after her sin by saying, "And thy desire *shall* be to thy husband and he *shall* rule over thee"?

God speaks to us within the context of human situations, and this is seen in 1 Tim. 2 by the framework around vs. 13: "And Adam was first formed, then Eve"—a *context of explanation for the preceding verses*, plus instantly—"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

The context of the priority of man (being created first) is *not* separated from the fall, as Mr. Roberts implies, but rather merges into it. It seems reasonable to me that Paul was giving an *explanation* of the factors God considered when passing judgment on their sin.

One more point needs to be made concerning Mr. Roberts' letter. He used the term *subjugation* within the context of husband-wife relationships. I reject this term within such a context. The word has the implication of unwilling servitude, a yoke, a slave mentality. This is not the Bible meaning of "desire shall be" or "rule over" or any type of personal love relationship, whether man or wife or sister or brother or friend or God relationships. When we love, we serve, each to each other, and there are no more beautiful words (uttered within and under the curse) than that a man should love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.

Christianity does not destroy a woman's personhood; only the false concepts of a secular mentality have done that. And when we really accept the restoration ideal and drop the attitudes of an earlier age, when a corrupted church reduced woman to an object that Satan used to destroy men, then perhaps we will see an increase in involvement by both men and women so like the first century intensity that Paul will have to be read loud and long to remind women that when their *wives* are speaking in public they may not interrupt them and cause a disrespect to ripple through the congregation for the relationship of marriage and the headship of the husband, by young and old alike.

Columbus, Ohio

SARAH NELSON

A Pattern of Ministry?

It should be a truism that exploration to find the Christian life is an exploration to find the meaning of ministry. Your article, "A Pattern for Ministry?", has thrown more light on more questions that I am now pondering than any other ten pages I have seen. I am very grateful.

Boulder, Colorado

JAMES KAUFMAN

Your article in the February, 1974 issue, "A Pattern for Ministry?" was excellent! The church needs to quit trying to follow a New Testament "pattern" that just doesn't exist. The early church remained "open" (flexible) to God by letting Jesus continue to serve through them. We, too, need to "open" up to God and let Him work through us.
Portales, New Mexico LARRY HASTINGS

One Point of View . . .

The responses of Lowell Head and Roy Osborne in the January issue of *Integrity* on the subject of homosexuality are typical Church of Christ reactions to a problem they do not understand. They condemn but offer no workable solution. No amount of scripture quoting and exhorting can alter the cruel fact that a homosexual, no matter how desperately he wants to be helped, is almost certain to remain a homosexual, even though he is given the most comprehensive therapy modern psychiatry has to offer.

To me, homosexuality had been something to crack squeaky-voiced jokes about until a friend I had known for ten years without suspecting that he was homosexual was arrested and charged with a homosexual offense. I went on his bond and found an attorney who reluctantly took his case, then later withdrew from it. His second attorney, for an outrageous fee, got the case dismissed. Both of these lawyers made it plain that they were repelled by such cases and didn't really want them.

This young man wanted to be helped; more than anything else on earth he wanted to rid himself of his homosexual desires, become completely heterosexual, marry, and have a family. He had, prior to his arrest, sought psychiatric help, only to be told that a "cure" was virtually impossible.

I could not accept the cruelty of his situation. I talked with one of the most prominent psychiatrists in the state. I literally begged him for hope for my friend. He was kind but firm.

"If you want an analogy," he said, "It's about like trying to cure an advanced case of cancer. If I treated him my objective would be to make him more comfortable as a homosexual."

Further investigation revealed that this negative prognosis prevailed in the psychiatric profession, even for those who were willing to spend many years and thousands of dollars in an effort to find help.

Roy Osborne generously pontificates that "it is not wrong to have a sickness" but believes it is wrong "to make no attempt to have the sickness treated." Is it possible that Mr. Osborne, after thirty years of counseling, is unaware of the incredible odds against the homosexual?

It is true that homosexuality is condemned in a book that fundamentalists claim is infallible; a book in which the killing of "witches" is commanded; a book of dubious origin, shot through with absurdities, contradictions, and acceptance of perverted concepts such as original sin, blood sacrifice, and rejoicing in suffering. The beliefs upon which fundamentalist religion depends for identity are at least as sick as many of the practices it condemns.

Yes, the same book tells of Christ the healer who taught his followers to love each other. But so few of his followers understood him and much of what was written about him reflects that misunderstanding. Just loving each other was much too simple. Or perhaps too hard. Somebody had to obscure his teaching with explanations based upon Semitic superstitions involving the vicarious atonement and devious taboos and rituals. In the battle cry, "Believe or be damned" the Galilean's teaching about love and treatment of one's fellow human beings is drowned out. Fundamentalist religion emphasizes Paul rather than Christ. Paul, a legalist, a Pharisee, a paranoid sado-masochist, was the founder of that body of belief which distinguishes "doctrinal" Christianity.

No, there is no infallible book to lead us to Christ, and no One True Church to which his followers must belong. But the wheat can be winnowed from the chaff. In spite of all the confusion people of good will often experience the spirit of Christ the loving, Christ the healer in their lives, and their lives are transformed. And when this happens many of them have to separate themselves from the ranks of organized religion in order to find an emotional climate in which they can grow and thrive.

I do not know whether homosexuality is a sin or not; neither does anyone else. Treating it as such has not relieved the problem. Throughout the ages organized religion has caused and condoned far more suffering than it has cured.

What did nineteen centuries of hysterical pulpiteering do to relieve alcoholism? It remained for a group of people who were themselves alcoholics to provide the only dependable help ever devised for alcoholism. This happened in the third decade of this century. People who had long been treated as pariahs by smug clergymen found an answer to a problem long and loudly denounced as "sin." In a world full of unanswered prayers and unfulfilled hopes and promises, Alcoholics Anonymous really works. Seventy-five percent of those who seek lasting sobriety through the help of AA find it. Religion and psychiatry combined help about two and a half percent. Yet, you can still find pulpiteers who are dubious about AA because it does

THE FOOLS FOR GOD

To Mike Schwerner, Andy Goodman,
and Jim Chaney

Men say that they were fools, these three who came	Go ask of History! Let her witness bear!
To Mississippi, dark and bloody state, In hopes that they might help their fellowmen	Go ask of faithful Time and let her speak!
Throw off the shackles of an ancient wrong;	The Kingdom which He gave His life to build
Live free, as God intended men to live—	Now spreads its borders into all the earth.
And "got their fool selves killed" for all their pains	In Lapland, China, darkest Africa, Australia's "Never-land," o'er far-flung isles,
One night in June.	Its light now shines to bless the lives of men, And will shine 'till He comes!
Men said He, too, was fool, this Son of Heaven, Who left his bright celestial throne, and came	The truth for which they died shall triumph, too!
To earth to build a Kingdom of the Truth (Which men would not receive, and did not want)—	As long as there are men like Andy, Mike, and Jim, Who dare to risk, if need be, give, their lives
And "only got his fool self crucified" One April day outside Jerusalem.	For Freedom's cause that cause shall overcome.
But was it all for naught they played the fool?	In darkest Mississippi, yet, THE LIGHT WILL SHINE!
And was it all in vain He bore the Cross?	—DON REECE