

LET JAMES SPEAK

Are there some wise and understanding men among you? Then your lives will be an example of the humility that is born of true wisdom. But if your heart is full of rivalry and bitter jealousy, then do not boast of your wisdom - don't deny the truth that you must recognize in your inmost heart. You may acquire a certain superficial wisdom, but it does not come from God - it comes from this world, from your own lower nature, even from the devil. For wherever you find jealousy and rivalry you also find disharmony and all other kinds of evil. The wisdom that comes from God is first utterly pure, then peace-loving, gentle, approachable, full of tolerant thoughts and kindly actions, with no breath of favoritism or hint of hypocrisy. And the wise are peacemakers who go on quietly sowing for a harvest of righteousness - in other people and in themselves.

- James 3:13-18, Phillips

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# Integrity

October, 1969

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

SPEAKING OUT

It is said that, on their expulsion from the garden, Adam remarked to Eve, "My dear, we are living in an age of transition." It would seem that this age of transition has been a rather long one, for we are still in it. We are also in a time of controversy. Traditions are being questioned and issues debated. This is a very healthy sign. We agree with Robert Hutchins: "A civilization in which there is not a continuous controversy about important issues, speculative and practical, is on the way to totalitarianism and death." Those who would stifle free discussion are enemies of both democracy and religion.

While dissent may be no more than someone's psychological need to rebel, we believe much of the dissent within the church today is good. It springs from a hunger and thirst after righteousness that is not being satisfied. We see few signs that the dissenters are inferior in their love for Christ, their respect for revelation, or their devotion to their fellows. On the contrary, these are the very reasons they speak up.

This generation does not agree that "the parson knows enough who knows a duke." The preacher must have better credentials than acceptance by brotherhood influentials. He must manifest knowledge of Jesus and integrity in his teaching. Nor is our generation convinced by the fury of those who try "to prove their doctrine orthodox by apostolic blows and knocks." They know that no true apostle would lord it over another's faith, and they therefore question the standing of those who try.

We believe the articles in this issue represent considerable "grass-roots" thinking. With one exception, the writers are new to INTEGRITY, and (again with one exception) they are not preachers. They are not professional writers, but sensible and sober saints who have thought about what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong. Their number is growing rapidly, and we feel such people should be heard.

Writing for INTEGRITY is somewhat risky. At least in some quarters we are looked upon as a subversive publication. There are many people who agree with us, but doubt the expediency of doing so publicly. They know the danger of telling some people - even professing saints - what you really believe. Cowper speaks for them:

To combat may be glorious, and success

Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safe.

But fewer and fewer are "flying" now. And more and more can look you in the eye when you pose the question of Job's wife, "Do you still hold fast your integrity?" Let us thank God and take courage!

HGL

RESTORATION UNITY

Roger Anderson

Since the early days of the Restoration, the question of fellowship has been and continues to be a recurring issue within our brotherhood. However, in spite of all the obstacles to unity which arose during those early years, it was achieved. Therefore it may be of value to notice how such problems were handled then. Since many of the guidelines for the restoration of New Testament Christianity were set forth during that time, we should continually review them, if we seek to maintain such a position. Among them are the principles set forth by Thomas Campbell in his well-known Declaration and Address, which was given in 1809 and which generally marks the beginning historically of the Restoration. The address was not a creed, but as Homer Hailey states in his book "Attitudes and Consequences," "it was simply a 'declaration' of purposes and an 'address' setting forth the ground on which these purposes should be attained." Essentially there were 13 propositions contained in the Declaration, and while all are worthy of repetition, numbers 6, 7, and 8 are included here in summarized form, as an introduction to the discussion:

6. That inferences and deductions from the Scriptures, however valuable, cannot be made binding upon the consciences of Christians.

7. That differences of opinion with regard to such inferences shall not be made tests of fellowship or communion.

8. That faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is a sufficient profession to entitle a man or woman to become a member of the church of Christ.

With these in mind, let us examine a specific situation which existed in 1831 when Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell were approaching unification of their groups. Both Stone and Campbell believed that immersion was the Scriptural method of baptism and that it was for the remission of sins. Nevertheless, they differed over whether or not to fellowship the unimmersed churches of the New Testament pattern which also existed. Although Campbell opposed fellowship with such churches while Stone favored it, Campbell maintained a view of baptism which seems contradictory to his practice of fellowship. This view was fully discussed later when a Christian lady from Lunenburg, Virginia, inquired of Campbell about a statement which he had made earlier in the "Millennial Harbinger" that there were Christians in all Protestant sects.

Campbell replied in the "Harbinger" by first defining a Christian as: "Everyone that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God, repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will." He also made a distinction between a "babe in Christ" and a "perfect" Christian, pointing out the Scripture in which Paul commands imperfect Christians to "be perfect" (2 Cor.

3:11) and to be "perfect in understanding" (1 Cor. 14:20). Perhaps the best insight into his thinking on this subject is gained in his statement, "I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven." It is apparent from these and similar remarks that Alexander Campbell was more concerned with the whole of Christian duty than with a Christian's obedience to a single commandment. This led to his well-known statement: "I do not substitute obedience to one commandment, for universal or even for general obedience. And should I see a sectarian Baptist or Pedobaptist more spiritually minded, more generally conformed to the requisitions of the Messiah, than one who precisely acquiesces with me in the theory or practice of immersion as I teach, doubtless the former rather than the latter, would have my cordial approbation and love as a Christian. So I judge and so I feel. It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves; and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as known." (Millennial Harbinger, 1837, 411-414.)

Although we may not concur with Campbell's position as stated, nevertheless it remains that he was not willing to judge Christians who had ignorantly failed to be baptized or immersed. It should be noted that he continued to preach immersion and to affirm it in debate from the time of his own baptism. He believed it to be his duty to preach God's will as he understood it to be the truth, and God's right alone to judge each individual's obedience and conscience.

In reply to the many letters in opposition which he received to these statements, Campbell further explained and restated his position. In order to further clarify his view, several of his statements in response to his critics are included here: "In no case, indeed, can there be the same certainty (all things else being equal) that he who was sprinkled, poured, or immersed on some person's faith; or that he who was sprinkled or poured on his own faith, shall be saved, as there is that he that first believes and is then, on his own confession, immersed, shall be saved. In the former case, at best we have only the fallible inference or opinion of man; while in the latter we have the sure and unerring promise of our Savior and Judge." (Millennial Harbinger, 1837, 563-565.)

James DeForest Murch summarizes well Campbell's position here in his book, "Christians Only." He says, "Campbell felt that the fate of the unimmersed was in the hands of God; that it is not ours to judge whether or not they will be saved; but that if the testimony of the Restoration was to be pure and undefiled, the unimmersed must not be admitted to local congregations after the New Testament pattern." The only logical conclu-

sion we can come to concerning Campbell's views on baptism or immersion and his practice regarding the fellowship of the unimmersed is that he regarded his views as a matter of personal opinion and not as dogma or a creed to be made binding on all.

The issue here is not whether or not we should accept Campbell's views on baptism but rather the point is fellowship. Of course the followers of Campbell and Stone did merge, and unity was achieved. But how? How could the followers of Campbell have fellowshipped those of Stone who held the opinion that the unimmersed as well as the immersed should be accorded fellowship? It is doubtful that they all changed their opinions immediately after they united. What about the views of Campbell on baptism; how could he have been accepted in fellowship with these views? J.D. Murch suggests several reasons in his book. First was the spirit of unity which was so prevalent among these men. There was an urgency to their efforts for unity which transcended personal and private interpretations and deductions. They sought unity in Christ and the Scriptures alone and not in any man's views. Certainly we should let the same principle guide us today. We must not become sidetracked on anyone's opinions or views, whether popular or unpopular, to the deterioration of the body of Christ. We must seek unity wherever possible instead of seeking constantly to draw the circle of fellowship increasingly smaller and smaller.

Another reason unity was possible was their willingness to treat as secondary the views and opinions of both Stone and Campbell in favor of an independent study of the New Testament and a unanimous acceptance of it as the sole authority. In other words, they sought unity to such a degree that they were willing to accept those who had different opinions and interpretations from theirs, as long as they could agree on the essential matters of faith and salvation. They were each willing to set aside their own inferences and conclusions from the Scriptures and refrained from making them binding on all in order to make such unity possible. Unquestionably, many of the congregations now in existence would be unnecessary had such a spirit been prevalent throughout our history.

Finally there was a generous and patient attitude accorded all those who held divergent views. It is not sufficient that we "allow" our brother his opinion and interpretation of the Scripture; we must also love him and not seek constantly to either convince him of our position or to disfellowship him. The placing of one's own opinion above another's is hardly a substitute for love and patience, especially when that opinion is no more than an opinion either. We have carried the principle that we can all see the Bible alike to the extreme that we must all agree on every conceivable point and that there is always a "right" and a "wrong" position. In so doing, we have accrued a body of tradition, a creed of interpretations and views. We are slipping into denominationalism when we are more con-

cerned with whether or not a given view or interpretation is "like we've always taught it," instead of honestly reappraising our position by a thorough restudy of the Scripture. We cannot afford to slip into an easy acceptance of the popular interpretation because it is the oldest, or from Nashville, or Abilene, or Searcy, or Henderson, or brother so and so.

Once again, the point of our discussion is unity and fellowship. We would miss the point entirely if it were taken to be an effort to promote agreement with and acceptance of Campbell's views on baptism. Rather, we are attempting to focus attention on that issue only to illustrate a real problem of unity and how it was solved. We should ask ourselves whether we could and would fellowship Campbell or Stone today if they held the same views, and there is ample evidence that Campbell never changed his views on this subject. We must strive to discriminate between those who hold differing opinions, who even voice them occasionally, and those who seek to divide and to bind their views on all to the destruction of unity and love between brethren. Essentially we must conscientiously decide when and at what point the holding of a belief or the stating of an opinion constitutes a party spirit and an intent to bind such upon all. We must also realize, if we hope to attain unity, that we who hold the majority opinion may also be guilty of attempting to force our view on the minority as well.

Another of the principles which came out of the early Restoration period is that which states, "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, freedom; in all things, charity." One of the central themes of the Restoration movement was to promote the unity of New Testament Christians through an acceptance of fundamental Scriptural positions on which all could agree. Campbell frequently pointed out that immersion was a form of baptism to which no one could object scripturally since all sects agreed it could not be unscriptural. It was this seeking of doctrinal positions on which all could agree which characterized the movement and not an attempt to establish the exclusively "right" position on every issue. While it is to be expected that there is more agreement on most fundamental issues of faith within the brotherhood today than in Campbell's time, it is doubtful if we will ever see a time when there is complete agreement on all issues, since that would mean equal understanding on the part of all. When we begin to catechize candidates for baptism in one way or another about their views on our favorite issues as well as to demand agreement on all points from Christians in order to maintain their fellowship, we are developing a creed.

The apostle Paul gave us not only a beautiful piece of literature in 1 Cor. 13, but a very useful guide to unity and love between brethren. Before there can be any real unity, there must be a genuine Christian love felt and demonstrated for even those brethren with whom we disagree. Surely there can be agreement here.

## INTEGRITY IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Noel E. Lemon

A look at church history reveals that from the very earliest times the prophet of God has been treated by his kinsmen with anything but tender loving care. He has had, because of his strong convictions and message from God, to face every kind of perilous threat from his countrymen that we can imagine. Some were thrown to lions, some were burned, some were beheaded, some were impaled, and at least one, Jesus Himself, was crucified. Following these days of physical torture, the man who dared to cross swords with the church about her traditional methods has done so at the threat of being "labeled" socially, shamed publicly, and tortured mentally so that "he might see the error of his ways and repent."

Not one generation in the history of man can boast of its freedom from the sin of persecuting its prophets. Today it is no different. It would seem that, having had the greatest Teacher the world has ever known and 2,000 years in which to learn His ways, we could have come to know God well enough to treat His messengers with a bit more respect; but the truth is, for the most part, we still haven't even learned to recognize them, let alone respect them. Consequently, today's "prophet" is labeled as a "dissenter," "trouble maker," "false teacher," "blasphemer," just like Jesus said he would be and is made an "outcast," all in the name of God, just as all his spiritual ancestors have been dealt with.

Why do we yet see this sin against those who would lead us in the way of truth? Perhaps there are many reasons, but the most obvious is that the same ATTITUDE and PHILOSOPHY exists in the church today that existed when Jesus came. That is: we BELIEVE we are right, therefore, we ARE right, and if WE are right, anyone who questions us or differs from us is in error and must be "put away" lest he should destroy us.

This philosophy of disfellowshipping dissenters may in some instances, being justly applied, be good. But when it is used as an excuse for ridding ourselves of anyone who disagrees with us, it puts us on an equal, in this respect, with the scribes and Pharisees and becomes a transparent facade behind which we hope to hide our unadmitted fears that our theological house of cards just might be brought down around us. When it is so used it magnifies its own weakest point and that of its user: our lack of faith in God.

It would seem that if our "righteousness" is so ill at ease in the presence of a "stranger" that we dare not hear him out, perhaps this same "righteousness" is built on a rather flimsy foundation. Why should the man who lives and moves and has his very being by faith in God be afraid to listen to someone's ideas, unless he isn't really positive about his own faith - unless he doesn't know FOR SURE in Whom he has believed?

A second reason this persecution continues today is that we have not learned the lesson of FREEDOM - the freedom which Christ purchased for all. Christ bought freedom for each of us, freedom to find God personally and serve Him individually. When a man accepts Christ as his Lord and Savior, this freedom becomes his personal charge to keep (Gal. 5). The problem, common with us as with the scribes and Pharisees, is that we haven't learned that "unity of the Spirit" does NOT mean "pots of the same mold," but rather "pots of the same Potter." The difference is like that between life and death.

Another lesson we haven't learned in 2,000 years is the lesson of love. Christ told those gathered on the mount not to expect God to reward them if they loved only the people who loved them; even the tax collectors did this much. "And if you speak only to your friends, what have you done out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that!" Today our standard of fellowship is that we agree in every detail. Or if we don't agree, we must agree to keep quiet about it. Some of the most insignificant issues have severed fellowships. Many times it's only a matter of phraseology that causes the church to withdraw its fellowship from some individual. And the occasion is rare when enough time is spent together in love to clearly define the issue, if there is an issue! What is so extraordinary about this kind of love?

There is no question that withdrawing fellowship is a scripturally sanctioned discipline. But such action must be done with integrity which also is prescribed in the scripture. In the first place, such action is never sanctioned as a method of whipping into subjection the heart and mind and soul of one who questions our traditionally accepted ways. It is not recommended as a tool for robbing a man of his blood-bought freedom to be an individual and to think for himself.

Here are three scriptural reasons for disfellowshipping a brother: pride in sexual immorality, slothfulness, causing division and upsetting people's faith. Many other reasons can be supposed from some of the scriptures commonly referred to in support of this action, but these are enough to illustrate what integrity in church discipline means.

In 1 Cor. 5 a situation had developed where a man was committing sexual immorality without the slightest shame and with no thought of discontinuing it. Paul reprimands the man for his sin, but the greater condemnation was sent to the church for being PROUD of having it in its camp. The disfellowship recommendation was not because someone in the church had committed adultery, but because of his attitude toward it. It's not the one who commits sin that deserves to be disfellowshipped, but the one who, having done so, shows no sign of remorse or no intention of trying to do better. The woman taken in adultery to Jesus was judged and condemned to die. Everyone knew of her guilt. Yet when Jesus finished writing on

ground, there was no one left to perform the execution but him alone, and by his grace he reversed the decision of her former judges and pronounced her "not guilty."

This same love is seen in the judgment story in Mt. 25:31-40. Those who were saved had no righteousness to plead, made no claim on God about their good deeds, but were justified because of their ATTITUDE toward their fellowman. The condemned ones were confident of their good works, had no doubt followed every law, and according to their tally sheet, hadn't failed once, but they were lost because of their ATTITUDE toward their fellowman. "He who through FAITH is righteous shall live," said Paul. Ro. 1:17. In 2 Th. 3 again the condemnation is of an attitude. One whose life is continually without production is like a cancer and must be cut out. But the admonition here, as always, is "do not treat him as an enemy; but warn him as a brother."

In Rom. 16 Paul said to stay away from those who "cause division and upset people's faith" (v. 17). This is usually our authorization to eliminate unwanted "characters" from among us. We are very adept at imagining the great rifts being caused by someone with whom we have had a disagreement. And, if we aren't really sure he is teaching false doctrine, it doesn't matter - the difference is enough to label him a dissenter.

Integrity, however, demands: "My brothers, if someone is caught in any kind of wrong doing, those of you who are spiritual should set him right; but you must do it in a gentle way...help carry one another's burdens..." Gal. 6:1-2. Integrity says, "Come let us REASON together." Integrity made Bereans study the scriptures to see if what Paul was teaching was true or not. They could have stoned him and driven him out of their presence because he taught something different, but apparently they didn't believe that the truth they already knew was all the truth there was.

The prophet of God has always been a man against tradition, a man with a message, one who fears and loves God and would preserve His relationship, rather than surrender it to the narrow-minded hypocrisy of men. Consequently he has always been accused of, and usually has been responsible for, causing division. Jesus prophesied it would be this way, and we can be thankful that it is. We are a church born out of the chaos and division caused by such men, both in the restoration age and in the first century. Our place in the religious world has been bought and paid for by the men of God who dared to challenge the traditions of their religious societies.

Tomorrow's church will look with thanksgiving at today's prophets who now are sacrificing themselves for the cause of truth as did their spiritual ancestors. Perhaps, however, the next generation will have learned the lesson of LOVE, and the lesson of FREEDOM and have developed a better attitude and philosophy so that they can accept the word of their prophets as Nineveh heard Jonah. If so, theirs is truly the Kingdom of Heaven.

## THE "WORSHIP SERVICE"

Amos Ponder

As we look at the restoration movement today we see it divided into many factions warring among themselves and having little impact on the world or community. The misunderstanding of just a few words or phrases in common usage today lies at the foundation of our troubled brotherhood. One such phrase is "worship service." From this come other words and slogans which indicate a thorough misunderstanding of our worship to God.

We will consider three Greek words in the New Testament which can be translated worship. The word translated worship in Jn. 4:23 (worship in spirit and truth) means to bow before, to prostrate oneself, or more literally, to blow a kiss towards one. How is one to "blow a kiss towards one" in "spirit and truth"? How can one bow before God "according to God's pattern of worship"? Do we really prostrate ourselves before God in harmony with his "divinely appointed worship"? These last two phrases are common in the pulpits today but are foreign to the New Testament. To worship God in spirit and truth is to become emotionally involved. When a man gets this involved in worship, he is truly worshipping God. The Jews had many rituals to follow and could go through the motions without really worshipping. This is exactly the type of worshipper we produce today with the legalistic approach. When it is insisted that worship consists of only five items (prayer, teaching, Lord's supper, singing, and giving) and certain pronouns (thee and thou) be used in prayer, we tend to reduce the corporate worship to a cold ritualistic form with no heart. Hence, the canned prayers with their beautiful sounding but meaningless phrases. We might as well have our missal to follow. To worship in spirit and truth is to have a natural response from the heart. This was the way people responded in the public assemblies we read about in the New Testament (1 Cor. 14:26). The only way to participate in today's assembly is to be programmed in advance.

The word translated worship in Phil. 3:3 (which worship God in the spirit) is usually translated service. This word means: (1) service rendered for hire; the service of God; (2) the service or worship of God according to requirement of the levitical law. If God has a pattern of worship today, if there is liturgy to adhere to, then this word would describe our worship more accurately than any other in the New Testament. One phrase used on many bulletins and inside sanctuaries shows our ignorance here. The phrase "enter to worship; depart to serve" may sound good on the surface, but causes us to try to separate worship and service into two categories. Too many people feel that worship is something that can take place only within the confines of the four walls of a building that is designated as a "church building auditorium." An elder of the church put it this way: A group of Christians singing "My Jesus I Love Thee" in the church

building are worshipping, and it would be a sin to use an instrument of music while so doing. The same people could move to a private home and sing the same song but wouldn't be worshipping, so they could use the instrument. This time it would only be for fun and entertainment, only playing.

From the word service I get the idea that everything a Christian might do as a Christian is worship. Hb. 9:14 illustrates the point: "How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Some seem to have the idea that God stands ready to condemn anyone who might have a view differing from the brotherhood concerning the items of worship, and that we must cut them off lest we lose our identity. They feel that God is more concerned about the hour we spend in public worship than he is about the remaining 167 hours in the week. God is probably more concerned with how you treat your wife or husband, children, parents, employee or employer, neighbors, and how you conduct your life, than in strict adherence to a ritualistic form of worship. The four gospels are full of Christ's teaching and admonition of how to live and treatment of others. Not once does he discuss liturgy. Neither do the apostles discuss it. The fact that worship is our every act cannot be denied. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him," Col. 3:17. The public assembly is only a small part of our total worship to God.

The last word in our study is a word translated offer. We find it in such passages as Mt. 2:11, where the wise men offered gifts to the babe Jesus, and in Hb. 5:3, the priest offering sacrifices for sins. The definition of the Greek word used here is to offer sacrifices, gifts and prayers to God. Also, to behave oneself towards one, to deal with one. Can you imagine a devout follower of Christ, a stalwart of the faith and a defender of the truth, "dealing with God" (in respect to worship) only on Sundays and Wednesdays? This is the case if we only worship God when we assemble in the church building.

I believe that most people realize that we can offer praises and adoration to God at any time. It is only those who are tangled up in legalism that separate their lives into compartments and cannot separate the worship from the building. Hb. 13:15,16 indicates when we should praise God: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God CONTINUALLY, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." To worship is to sacrifice and the sacrifice here is praise, to do good and to communicate. With this worship or sacrifice God is well pleased.

I believe that the apostle Paul sums up our worship in Rom. 12:1, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Today's English Version translates reasonable service, "true worship." Until we completely prostrate ourselves to God, until we assemble to praise God and communicate with the saints, until we learn to do good to all men, we have not completely worshipped God.

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## SOLVING THE PROBLEM

James Welker

For as long as I can remember the church has been very "exclusive." We have prided ourselves that we are different. We are unique in that we are a church "united" on the Word of God. At least that is what we have told many people. I used to think it was a tremendous selling point to remind people that "wherever you happen into the church of Christ, whether in Detroit, Nashville, or South Africa, they will be worshipping and teaching exactly the same. Why? Because WE go by the Bible only." This is a very telling argument, for, after all, if groups all over the world independently come to the same conclusion with only the Bible as their guide, this must prove that we can agree if we'll simply use the Bible.

However, the argument loses much of its strength when we learn that congregations all over the world are NOT saying the same thing - a point that most any foreign missionary can affirm. In fact, all congregations in this country do not worship exactly the same. This creates a problem for a brotherhood which, through a misunderstanding of what it means to be "of the same mind and the same judgment," pretends that everyone, but just everyone, agrees on every essential point. When differences arise, it creates problems. These problems are usually attacked in two ways:

1. The points that we can't seem to agree upon, even with our closest brothers, are simply called "non-essentials." Just why they are non-essentials no one seems to know. The non-essentials, to name a few, are such matters as whether the Spirit dwells in man independent of the word, carnal warfare, certain aspects of marriage and divorce, and whether certain works can be supported out of the "church treasury." Since these are labeled "non-essentials," we can believe either way and still be in complete Bible harmony (?), for it matters little anyway.

But this doesn't completely solve the problem because a "non-essential" has been known to suddenly become an "essential." We came very close to seeing this very thing happen in this generation. We're all aware of

how close one's belief about the Holy Spirit came to becoming an "essential" matter. I've personally heard more than one preacher predict that "the Holy Spirit question will split the church." I thank God that reason on the subject prevailed, and the worse did not happen. Of course, had this happened, each faction would claim that it is "essential" to hold their view in regard to the Holy Spirit. Naturally, anyone who differs could not be fellowshipped. Of course, this did not happen, but it can, and has in the past. If it happens again, undoubtedly we will approach the problem like we have in the past, which brings us to the second point.

2. We can maintain unity in matters considered "essential" by merely "excluding" all dissenters from our communion. The "one cup" brethren are no problem because we have excluded them. The no-class brethren pose no problem because we ignore them. Not only do we exclude them, but we don't even want to think about them. Thus, the boast that we all agree is quite true, because the one who disagreed isn't one of us anymore. And what is to become of these brethren who are outcasts? If you really want to start a furor, just begin asking some questions publicly. Are they really Christians? After all, are they not baptized believers? Are they really our brethren after all?

What does a member of the "In-Group" think about a congregation who disagrees on some "essential"? Answer: He thinks nothing at all. Does he consider them as saved individuals, although in error? Does he think they will all be lost? Answer: He doesn't consider them either lost or saved, because he just doesn't consider them at all. It is as if they did not exist. They could not be more remote if they were meeting on the planet Mars.

The way we solve (?) our problems reminds me of the father who was bragging that he had absolutely no problems with his children. I asked him about his son John. He answered, "I don't have any trouble with John." I reminded him that John was not even living with him but staying with his grandmother. "I know," he said. "He would not accept my rules, so I threw him out of the house. He is no longer my responsibility." And so it is with the church. If we have a problem child, we put him out. End of problem! We will begin to answer the problem when we realize the problem lies not in honest, healthy dissent, but in improper un-Christ-like attitudes; when men quit legislating; when men quit lording it over another man's faith.

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## COMMENTS FROM EDITORS AND READERS

### STAFF

The editorial staff of INTEGRITY consists of Hoy Ledbetter, editor-in-chief, David Elkins, Frank Rester, and Dean Thoroman. Articles and correspondence for the editor may be sent to 8494 Bush Hill Court, Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439.

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### KETCHERSIDE IN FLINT

Carl Ketcherside will speak at the Genesee church of Christ, 4381 East Stanley Road (just west of Genesee Road), Nov. 3-7, 7:30 p.m. Genesee is a Flint suburb on the northeast.

Whether or not you agree with Carl, you should hear him. For more information call Frank Rester at 313-653-5951.

We find Carl's monthly paper, MISSION MESSENGER, stimulating reading and a real bargain at \$1 per year. The address: 139 Signal Hill Drive, St. Louis, Mo. 63121.

### FROM OREGON

"I try to read as many different publications as I can to try to understand how brothers & sisters in Christ think and so better understand why there are so many different groups."

### FROM WEST VIRGINIA

"Raise your right hand and repeat after me. I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

"I wish to subscribe to Integrity. I have a deep hunger for probity. Honestly, I can't wait to get my first copy.

"He who keeps back the truth, or withholds it from men, from motives of expediency, is either a coward or a criminal, or both." (Max Muller)

"P.S. 'Peace, if possible, but the truth at any rate.' (Luther)"

### FROM ARKANSAS

"What is the NEW stuff 'Integrity' claims? It's old, old stuff. Sommerites, Ketcherside, anti-cooperation used your same plea. Now what do you advocate?"

### FROM MICHIGAN

"I have been a member of the True Church of Christ for 54 years, and I do not see how anyone that ever has been a member could go along with the Liberal, Modern Views you people have."

NOTE: Some put us on the right, some on the left, while others are bemused that they can't figure out which "faction" we belong to. We don't intend to promote any faction, to make a party out of Christ. We are not concerned with whether we are called liberal, conservative, or moderate, but rather with whether what we say is Biblical, honest and relevant.

We are greatly encouraged by the large number of commendatory notes we receive, and the critical ones, although few, are read carefully. Keep them coming!

## VOICE FROM THE PAST

The following decision of a Dutch Judge, on the right of opinion, is so much in unison with the sectarian judges of this proscribing age, as to merit a place in some independent and extensively circulating periodical.

In a case before him, in which the right of opinion was brought in question, it was argued for the party whose right was questioned, that in this country every man had a right to express freely his opinions. To this the Judge, who it seems was determined against the man, replied with great complacency, "O yah! Every man haf a right, by the law, in this free Republic, to dink for himself, PROVIDED HE DINKS WITH THE COURT." (M'Duffie's Speech.)

This reminds me of an argument once used by a disciple with the Moderator of the Dover Decrees. The question was asked, "Was it the right of every disciple, as a member of the church of Jesus Christ, to read the Bible?" He answered, "O yes!" "Was it his right to form his own opinion of what God had revealed?" "O yes!" he replied. "Was it his right, as a Christian, to speak freely the conviction of his own judgment?" "O yes!" said he, "PROVIDED HE SPEAK ACCORDING TO THE VIEWS OF THE CHURCH. If he did not, the church had rights too; and one of those rights was to cut off such as they believed were in serious error." The question was asked, "If disciples had a right to read, form their own judgment of the truth, and speak it freely; was not this admitted right a warning to him, as a man of righteousness, not to molest them in the enjoyment of their rights? Or was not the man that molested the disciples in the enjoyment of these admitted rights an unrighteous man?"

No answer has ever been given, but by his enforcing the decrees upon those that differed in opinion with him. In such conduct we have a true picture of the life, spirit, righteousness, and consummation of the religion of sectarianism.

-- Millennial Harbinger, 1834

EDITOR'S NOTE: We hope none of our readers will be offended by this historical fragment, and, although we know it sounds awfully current, we have two excuses to offer: first, it was published by one of our great spiritual forefathers, Alexander Campbell; second, the incident happened over 135 years ago. If anyone thinks history has repeated itself, we are sorry.