

Chapter Ten

THE PROBLEM OF MINISTERIAL METHODS (10:1-18)

IDEAS TO INVESTIGATE:

1. Paul uses sarcasm in 10:1 — should sarcasm be used in service to the Lord?
2. Is it right to think of christian service as a “warfare”?
3. Is “frightening” people a proper ministerial method?
4. What’s wrong with human beings comparing themselves with one another?
5. When should preachers (or missionaries) “move on” to other fields?

SECTION 1

Spiritual (10:1-6)

10 I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold to you when I am away!—²I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of acting in worldly fashion. ³For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

10:1-3 Supernatural: In an age gone wild on pragmatism, relativism and situation ethics, the devil is not adverse to tempting preachers to use ministerial methods befitting these philosophies. With gimmickry, media manipulation, emotionalism, and “PR” rampant and “working” for so many institutions and individuals, the

preacher is tempted to justify the same methods for his ministry. Why? Because the church has succumbed to "measuring" itself by worldly standards of success and has brought ungodly pressure on its preachers "to produce" *numbers* in attendance, financial income, buildings, staff, and "programs." But the Lord never, in all the word of God, approves of "insincere," "underhanded," or "cunning" methods of ministering his truth to sinful men (see II Cor. 2:17; 4:2).

Some, in the Corinthian congregation, had evidently accused Paul of inadequate, and improper methodology in his ministries to them. The first thing he deals with is their accusation that he is a "phony." They were saying that when he was with them, face to face, he was "humble" (Gr. *tapeinos*, "lowly-minded"), but when he was away, writing letters to them, he was "bold" (Gr. *tharro*, "courageous, confident"). They were accusing him of being inconsistent in his methods of approach. They were (probably urged on by the Judaizers) charging him of being a pseudo apostle because of his methods.

Paul appeals to them on behalf of the "meekness" (Gr. *prautes*, same word as is used in the Sermon on the Mount — "Blessed are the meek . . .") and the "gentleness" (Gr. *epieikeias*, reasonable, suitable, fair, patient) of Christ that they not force him to come to them face to face and be as bold as he is capable! Their evaluation of his methods was — "worldly"! The Greek word is really, *kata sarka peripatountas*, "according to flesh walking." According to them, Paul was using the methods the heathen teachers and philosophers used. Thus, according to them, he was not commissioned by God — not an apostle with a spiritual ministry. Paul's *method* of appeal was to use a little sarcasm. He says, apparently quoting what he had heard some were saying of him in Corinth, "I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold to you when I am away!" The Old Testament prophets used much sarcasm; God speaks in the O.T. in the first person with sarcasm; Jesus used sarcasm; all the writers of the N.T. used it. Practically every preacher, writer, communicator, politician or person with any "cause" to proclaim uses sarcasm. The word "sarcasm" comes from the Greek word *sarkasmos* which means "to tear flesh like dogs, biting, cutting, stinging." Satire is akin to sarcasm and both are speech methods used in the scriptures to rebuke what is wrong and direct the erring to what is right. Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Job, and even Psalms are filled with sarcasms and satirisms. So sarcasm definitely

has its place in methods of ministering God's word to sinful men. Sarcasm can be spiritual! It all depends on the *motives* for using it.

J.B. Phillips translates verse 2: "I am begging you to make it unnecessary for me to be outspoken and stern in your presence. For I am afraid otherwise that I shall have to do some plain speaking to those of you who will persist in reckoning that our activities are on the purely human level." Paul was fully capable of using the sternest of methods, but he did not want to do so. Paul's *preference* for methods of edifying christians was an approach of gentleness and kindness. The Corinthians were "in his heart" (II Cor. 7:3; 6:11). He wanted to spare them any necessity to feel the sting of the apostolic tongue because he was fearful they would shut him out of their hearts (II Cor. 1:15-2:4).

The sharp words of the remainder of II Corinthians were not addressed directly to the whole church, but to a small segment of false teachers and their followers who were destroying the spiritual stability of the church by disparaging Paul's apostolic authority. Paul is fully capable of showing boldness with such "confidence" (Gr. *pepoithesei*, to be persuasive, give assurance) as was necessary to persuade them of the propriety of his methods and the authority of his apostleship. He "counted" on (Gr. *logizomai*, to reckon, to make a record, to put on account) having to put on record his boldness face to face — but he did not desire to have to do so. Some of the Corinthians had been led to "suspect" (Gr. *logizomenous*, were reckoning, were recording) Paul of "acting in a worldly fashion" (Gr. *kata sarka peripatountas*, literally, "walking around according to flesh"). Ancient Greek teachers were "peripatetics" ("walkers-around"). That was their methodology of teaching. Thus the accusation against Paul is that he uses non-spiritual, non-apostolic, non-sanctioned methods. The apostle uses two different Greek words to promise "boldness" toward those who think he is a "phony" apostle. The first word is *tharro* (verse 1) ("courageous, confident") which we have already discussed. The second word is *tolmesai* (verse 2) which means "daring" and denotes boldness in undertaking some forbidding task.

His answer is, "While it is true, we all do live and walk around in the flesh, the battle we are fighting is in the realm of the spiritual." One can be "in the flesh" but not "fleshly-minded" (worldly in mentality and motives) (see Rom. 8:9; Gal. 2:20; John 17:11-19). He

replies to their accusations by affirming that he, like all christians (and other apostles), is carrying on ("walking around in") an other-worldly war. His war is not of this world. Therefore, his methods are not carnal (worldly). The Greek word for "warfare" is *strateuometha*. It is also the word used for "soldier" and "army." *Strateuo* or *strateia* is the word from which we get the English word *strategy*. Paul claimed his "strategy" or "warfare" (or method) was *not* on the level of the world. His "strategy" was *spiritual* (gentle and meek, like that of Christ).

There is still a problem in the minds of some religious people about ministerial methods. While preachers are often tempted to *practice* worldly methods of "ramroding" or "lording" it over the flock under pressures to succeed or to stroke their own insecurity, some church members think preachers *ought to be* "pastors" (dictatorial, one-man executives), sort of arbitrary, autocratic superintendents of the congregation. They think a preacher who does not assert himself, make himself theologically and ministerially above the rest of the "flock," and "run things," is a phony. Paul refused to "lord it over" anyone's faith (see II Cor. 1:24ff). But that did not mean he was a "phony" spiritual leader. His ministry was as *supernatural* as that of any servant of God — and he would demonstrate it if necessary. He would rather they would accept the credentials he had already shown.

The office of apostle ceased with the death of the last apostle appointed by Christ. It was no longer needed when the church matured into one body from the two (Jew and Gentile) (see Eph. 4:11-16). But there is a sense in which every ministry of the gospel (whether by preacher, elder, deacon, S.S. teacher, christian neighbor or christian parent) is *supernatural*. All ministries of the word of God are "strategies" (warfares) or methods of fighting in the spiritual realm. Fundamentally and ultimately, the daily struggles of every christian are in the realm of the Spirit, "against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places" Gal. 5:16-17; Eph. 6:10-20). The church is not in a war to conquer geographical territory or to capture human bodies or to amass worldly "loot." It is aiming primarily at capturing people's hearts (minds) and spirits. It is struggling for the victory of righteousness over wickedness, for the surrender to grace by faith. The kingdom of God is entered into voluntarily, through the peace Christ has made between God and man. It is not populated by coer-

cion, by dictatorial methods. It is true, human beings are temporarily residing in "earthen vessels" (fleshly bodies). It is also true that the Lord wants his creatures to use those bodies only for his service and glory. But they cannot be coerced or manipulated into holy use. Therefore, the methods ("strategies") of the christian's warfare is spiritual (mental, rational, persuasive, evangelistic); "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6; II Chron. 32:7; Acts 26:17-18; I Tim. 1:18; James 4:1-4; I Pet. 2:11, etc.). The highly symbolized message of the book of Revelation discloses that the christian's warfare (although the wicked world wars against the flesh) is really against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the physically-invisible world of view-points and ideas.

10:4-6 Strong: Paul now appeals to the *weapons* he has used as a demonstration he is carrying on a warfare that is equally spiritual to that of any other true apostle of Christ! The Greek word *hopla* is translated, "weapons," and is sometimes translated "instruments" (see Rom. 6:13). The point is that the Corinthians must think of Paul as *properly armed* by God with implements capable of fighting a true, apostolic spiritual war and winning the victory! The same is true of every christian in a non-apostolic sense. The christian's weapons are:

1. Not fleshly (Gr. *sarkika*), not oriented or aimed at worldly ends or goals which all perish with the world.
2. But have divine power (Gr. *dunata to theo*), powerful because of God
3. To destroy strongholds (Gr. *kathairesin ochuromaton*), overthrow fortresses, or that which is fortified.
4. To destroy arguments (Gr. *logismos kathairountes*), overthrow rationales or rationalizations.
5. To destroy every proud obstacle (Gr. *pan hupsoma epairomenon*), overthrow every "mountainous" thing hoisted up —
6. Against the knowledge of God (Gr. *kata tes gnoseos tou theou*)
7. Able to bring every thought captive (Gr. *aichmalotizontes pan noema*), able to make every perception a prisoner of war — imprisoned to the control of the revealed mind of Christ (the Bible).
8. To obey Christ (Gr. *eis tev hupakoen tou Christou*), unto the obedient hearing of Christ.

The instruments or weapons in the christian "strategy" for conquest are all, without exception, *mental* (spiritual). They are not made of matter. They have to do with "thought" and with "knowledge;"

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specifically, the thoughts and knowledge of God! One has only to compare this text with that of Ephesians 6:14-20; to see that the christian is to "arm" his mind with the mentality of God for his spiritual struggle (e.g. truth, righteousness, gospel, faith, salvation, word of God, prayer — all are implements of the mind and spirit). That is why there are so many exhortations for the believer to "set his mind on" the things of God (Rom. 8:5-11; 12:1-2; II Cor. 5:14-17; Phil. 4:8-9; Col. 3:1-4; I Pet. 1:13, etc.). When Christ engaged the devil in that great battle of the temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-12) he fought with his mind and spirit focused on the word of God. He used no worldly "strategies" (no human philosophy, no psychology, no emotional appeals, no material things, exaltation of self, nothing mystical or subjective); he needed only knowledge of and faith in the objective, propositional revelation of God.

The revealed word of God (the Bible), because it is an inerrant and infallible record of the ultimate Truth (the person of God), has the power (dynamic) to defeat, cast aside, conquer, depose, pull down *every* "argument" (or rationalization) that stands in the way of any one who *honestly* wants to know God and live with him forever. There is *no* argument, from any source, no matter how erudite or sophisticated, no matter who or how many propound it, that can stand up to God's word honestly studied. His word is able to take captive *every* thought of the human mind and direct it (idea, concept, precept) to the Source of all reality. Every human thought is to be taken captive to the mind of Christ, *imprisoned* to the *constraint* of Christ's grace and love (II Cor. 5:14-21).

The word of God, captured the minds of kings, philosophers, rabbis, fishermen, army officers, doctors, scientists, carpenters, financiers, merchants, murderers, homosexuals, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, slaves, freedmen, rich, poor, learned, ignorant — all kinds of people from all races, cultures, languages, geographical locations, for millenniums. It continues to this day to overthrow the proud and arrogant rationalizations of human beings. It continues to this day to confirm that all humanly "discovered" information, honestly recorded, has its origins and its meanings in a Divine Being.

There is *no philosophy* (argument) so well fortified or exalted *against* God that it cannot be overthrown and captured and brought under obedience to the control and redemptive purpose of God. There

is *no human mind* so well fortified or exalted *against* God that it (or, he) cannot be overthrown, captured and brought into obedience to the will of God and his redemptive salvation. The word of God is living and powerful, able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12-13; Isa. 55:10-11; Jer. 17:9-10; I Pet. 1:23; I Thess. 2:13; John 8:31-32).

This is one of the greatest texts in all the Bible! It promises the christian that he has at his disposal divinely powerful "weapons" with which he may conquer for Christ "every" obstacle to the knowledge of God! There really is, therefore, no excuse for an evangelistic entrenchment of the church. The church, as Paul saw it, was to be *militant*, aggressive, on the offensive, "capturing" even the strongest and highest opposition to the knowledge of God. Yes! The church should be attacking false doctrines, false ideologies, immoral ethical philosophies, and deceitful hermeneutics. Remember, however, the christian's "warfare" is *not* against human beings but against *thoughts* and *ideas* that stand in opposition to people's opportunity to know God. Christians hate falsehood, but love people. Falsehood has its origin in the devil, who is the father of lies and liars (John 8:43-47).

One of the most frustrating problems a preacher faces is that of getting the members of his congregation to believe these "weapons" are for *their* use. *Every* christian should arm himself with these weapons. *Every* christian should be drilling and practicing and sharpening his expertise in the use of the divine weapons. The moment any person becomes a christian, he has enlisted in the army of the Lord (see I Cor. 9:7; II Tim. 2:3-4; Rev. 19:19; Rom. 13:12; II Cor. 6:7; Eph. 6:11, 13; II Tim. 4:7). His life has been committed to militant assault upon falsehood. Christians are not to take a defensive position, but an offensive campaign against evil imaginations and anti-Biblical philosophies. He must speak up, speak out, debate, teach, argue (as did the early christians) from the Scriptures, until the King calls him to his reward. As he does, using the divinely powerful weapons promised here, he will overthrow every opposition to the knowledge of God.

The fact is, however, even preachers are being seduced into waging the christian warfare with weapons of the flesh. These are the weapons the world uses to try to solve the problems it recognizes in society. They are coercion, manipulation, legislation, pressure groups, com-

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promises and demonstrations that ultimately result in raised voices, clenched fists and outbreaks of violence — boycotts, pickets and strikes — all attempts to *pressure* people into doing what others want. The universal testimony of history is, these do not work. The world still has the same problems it has had since Eden. With fleshly weapons, the world will never get rid of its problems — it only rearranges them so that they seem to take another form for a little while. Vance Packard, in his frightening book, *The Hidden Persuaders*, p. 3), reveals that public-relations experts are advising churchmen how they can become more effective “manipulators” of their congregations.

The Church has no business focusing its energies, talents and funds on legislation and enforcement. Those are fleshly weapons. They are inadequate at best, and ultimately doomed to failure. Incarceration is only a temporary expediency. Bringing every thought into captivity to the mind of Christ so that people see one another no longer from a human point of view is the only divine and eternal solution. Ray C. Stedman writes:

The problem of history is not the world. It is the church. It is we who do not use the weapons at our disposal. Instead, we give way and go along with worldly approaches, using pressure-group tactics and petitions to seek to overcome with legislation the wrongs of our day. May God help us to understand the nature of spiritual warfare. The weapons of our warfare are not those worldly tactics. But, our weapons are mighty. They will destroy strongholds and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. . . . The cause is not hopeless. We are not helpless; there is much we can do. Let a Christian act along the lines of the revelation of Scripture in this regard and things will begin to change. Any one of us can change things, in our lives individually, in our homes, in our communities, where we work, in our nation itself. Let us begin to learn the truth about life from the Scriptures. . . . We will find tremendous changes beginning to occur quickly as God uses these weapons to destroy the strongholds of darkness and evil around us.

Do not forget! The mighty weapons of the Spirit overthrew fortified and exalted opposition to God in the Roman empire such as our modern world has never experienced! The book of Revelation predicted it — and it came to pass! And the history of the church has testified ever since, that when she uses the weapons God provides she conquers and captures.

SECTION 2

Sanctioned (10:7-11)

7 Look at what is before your eyes. If any one is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that as he is Christ's, so are we. ⁸For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame. ⁹I would not seem to be frightening you with letters. ¹⁰For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account." ¹¹Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present.

10:7-9 Viewed: Paul warned (10:6) that he was ready to "punish" (Gr. *ekdikesai*, "vindicate, or bring to justice") every "disobedience" of those at Corinth who refused to "complete" obedience like the majority of the church was doing. There was a minority (perhaps only one) not repenting with the rest of the church. This minority was ridiculing Paul's reputation as a preacher of the gospel, and especially as an apostle. They were saying he was a "great pretender." Paul writes, "Look at what is before your eyes." The Greek Verb, *blepete*, can be either present active indicative, or present active imperative. If it is imperative, it would be translated, "Look (a command) at what is before your eyes." If it is indicative, it would be, "You are looking at things as they are outwardly (on the face of things)." We think the context indicates the imperative translation. It might be paraphrased, "Look at things which stare you in the face!"

Paul then begins to cite *visible* credentials for his prior ministry among the Corinthians, which they had seen and might continue to see if they would compare his credentials with the slanderous insinuations of "the one" stirring up the church against him. First, he reminds the Corinthians that if the troublemaker among them has persuaded himself he has authority because he in some special way belongs to Christ, so does Paul! And Paul had proved it to the Corinthian church. And his detractor should "remind himself" (Gr. *logizestho*, reckon, reason, think through) of the facts of Paul's special relationship to Christ. Paul is not referring here to the ordinary manifesta-

tions of being "in Christ" — he refers to a relationship involving "authority" to give apostolic direction to the church. What Paul's opponent was "persuading himself" (Gr. *pepoithen heauto*, perfect tense verb) about his own authority from Christ, Paul *really* was authorized to do, and had done before the very eyes of the Corinthians (see II Cor. 12:12). And it was not only miraculous evidence Paul gave of his apostleship, he also wielded the "weapons" of christian warfare with special Christlike effectiveness overthrowing the fortresses and strongholds of Greek philosophy as well as Judaizing legalism. Had his slanderer done that? No! He was tearing down the church!

And that is Paul's second vindication of his ministerial methodology. He says, "The Lord gave us *our* authority for building you up and not for tearing you down. So if I should appear to be boasting too much about it, I have done nothing for which I should be ashamed as if I were a pretentious bully seeking only to scare people."

Certainly, Paul had spoken authoritatively (and sternly) in his letters to the Corinthians. Evidently he had not felt it necessary to speak with such direct authority when he had been among them in person. But the "authority" (Gr. *exousias*) he had expressed in his letters was geared toward the spiritual maturation of the christians. He exercised his apostolic office and issued commands to direct their lives into paths of righteousness. He waged a warfare with authoritative words of truth in order to overthrow all obstacles to their knowing God. It was not his intention to merely "frighten" (Gr. *ekphobein*, lit. fear-away, "terrify"). There was no threat to his own self-esteem if they did not obey him. He was *warning* them — and doing so authoritatively!

Preaching the *fear* of God and the fear of eternal damnation *is* a scripturally sanctioned method! There is a difference between "frightening" people and *warning* people. Some people need to learn that distinction. The difference is in the motive, or in the end sought. Preachers who "frighten" people as a method to obtain decisions for the sake of building their own ego or glorifying themselves should repent. But *warning* people about hell by the authority of the Scriptures for the glory of God and the salvation of their souls is a method used in every book of the Bible, by every man of God, as well as the Lord Jesus Christ.

Authority is an indispensable method of preaching and teaching.

The authority is *never* that of the preacher, but is *always* the Scriptures. The apostle Paul clearly disclaims any *personal* authority as he says, “. . . our authority, which *the Lord* gave for building you up. . . .” All authority belongs to Christ (Matt. 28:18; Matt. 11:27; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9-11). Christ delegated some of his authority to the apostles (Matt. 16:19-20; 18:18; 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-53; John 20:22-23; Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:1; I Cor. 1:1; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; 1:11,12,15,16,17). The apostles exhorted evangelists and teachers of the churches to preach authoritatively from the Scriptures (I Tim. 4:11; 5:20; 6:2b; 6:17; II Tim. 2:14-15; 3:15-17; 4:2-5; Titus 2:1; 2:15; 3:8, etc.). The use of authority from the Scriptures as a method of ministry is to be tempered with kindness, purity of life, forbearance, gentleness, and patience, but the authoritativeness of the Scriptures must never be undervalued or underemphasized.

It hardly needs to be mentioned that the goal for ministry is edification or building up, or growth (Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:24-29). While Paul's opposition in Corinth was methodically “tearing down” the church, Paul was trying to “build it up.” The problem stemmed from the spiritual immaturity of the christians who could not comprehend that Paul's “severe” words and insistence on “repentance” were methods of *building*. Those among them who gloried in the flesh, Judaizers and others, were trying to seduce the congregation to rebel against Paul's “severity.” So, Paul cited the divine sanction for his methods as a method itself.

Churches today must recognize that *authoritative* preaching and teaching by preachers, elders and teachers is an imperative method for the building up (spiritual maturing) of the individual and the corporate “body” unto the fulness of the stature of Christ (see Eph. 4:11-16). It is sanctioned by the Lord. It must be made operative in the church.

10:10-11 Vowed: Paul not only reminded them that he had expressed the word of God with authority to them earlier (in his letters) but he *vowed* he would do so again, if necessary, when face to face with them. His promise confirms the importance of authority as a method of edification. All teaching which seeks to instruct, to communicate, to educate, to produce growth, *must* exercise some form of authoritativeness. Authority, in teaching, is inescapable! Discipline is an imperative of learning. And discipline is possible only from a basis

of some kind of authority. The uninstructed minds of children seek authority in the home. They want to learn. If authority is not there, they will seek it elsewhere. The same is true of the family of God. Even those who decry authority, do so with authority!

Some Greek manuscripts (Vaticanus, some Latin mss. and some Syriac mss.) have the plural verb *phasin* ("they") in verse 10, while the best and oldest manuscripts have the singular verb *phesin* ("he"). The fact that Paul uses the singular pronoun *toioutos* ("such a one") in verse 11 should confirm the propriety of the singular verb in verse 10. In other words, Paul seems to be focusing his warning toward a *single* opponent at Corinth rather than a group. The RSV translates, "For *they say . . .*" but it should be translated, "For *he says* 'His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of *no account.*'" The Greek word *exouthenemenous* is a present participle, a combination of *ex* and *outhen*, literally, "being from nothing." It is often translated, "despicable, contemptible, worthless." The RSV translates it "of no account" which does not seem to be strong enough to express what Paul's opponents were saying of his "speech" (Gr. *ho logos*, "his word"). It was probably not the delivery but the power and authority of Paul's "word" they were disparaging. His method of communication was plain, straightforward, and economical — he did not waste words or "beat around the bush." His letters are not saturated with sophisticated philosophical rambles. He is not pendantic or verbose. He does not write like a rabbi or a pedagogue. He would probably be snubbed in erudite theological circles today! So the trouble-maker at Corinth dismissed his "word" as "contemptible."

Just what Paul's bodily weakness was we are not told anywhere. He refers to his "thorn in the flesh" (II Cor. 12:7ff). Some think it was impaired eyesight (see Gal. 6:11) from the fact that he had to write "with large letters." Some think he may have been crippled by some of the beatings he had already suffered. Others speculate that he was small and frail in body or that he had an incurable disease. Whatever caused his opponent to say he was physically weak, it did not deter Paul from promising that what he said by letter when absent, he would do when present! His weakness would not keep him from exercising his God-given authority upon his arrival at Corinth should it be necessary to do so. Paul writes, "Let such a one reckon (Gr.

logizestho, reason it out) that what we are in *word* (Gr. *to logo*) through *epistles* (Gr. *epistolon*) being absent, such also we are in our *work* (Gr. *to ergo*) being present." This was no idle threat. It was a warning. They must have this warning if they are to be built up in the Lord. Warnings are methods of ministry!

SECTION 3

Sane (10:12-18)

¹²Not that we venture to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.

13 But we will not boast beyond limit, but will keep to the limits God has apportioned us, to reach even to you. ¹⁴For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ. ¹⁵We do not boast beyond limit, in other men's labors; but our hope is that as your faith increases, our field among you may be greatly enlarged, ¹⁶so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's field. ¹⁷"Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."
¹⁸For it is not the man who commends himself that is accepted, but the man whom the Lord commends.

10:12 In Standards: A minister's methods must be sane and sensible. They must conform to divine standards. Of course, the world's standard of what is sane and sensible is usually quite different from what the word of God categorizes as sane. In verse 12 Paul definitely says that human beings comparing themselves by other human beings in order to boast about themselves are "without understanding."

Paul would *not dare* (Gr. *ou polmomen*, "be so bold") to *class* (Gr. *engkrinai*) or *compare* (Gr. *sungkrinai*, judge-with) himself with some of the ones who played the game of "self-comparing." In order to *commend* (Gr. *sunistanonton*, stand oneself with another to get favorable attention) themselves, some of the Corinthians had been

practicing the art of human comparison. It is sometimes called "competition."

Competition, or comparing oneself with others, is a very subtle, but damning, method some preachers use in their ministry. It is really a "dodge" or, in modern vernacular, "a cop-out." It is a well-used practice of many christians in order to justify their past sins or their anticipated ones. It goes, "Well, I'm not like so-and-so, who. . . ." Christians (including preachers) are to compare themselves with Christ.

Evidently there were people in Corinth "comparing themselves with one another and measuring (Gr. *metrountes*, metric, meter, etc.) themselves with one another in order to commend themselves." There is a difference between using other human beings for "comparison to commend oneself" and using them to "illustrate" proper behavior.

When people play the "game" of "measuring oneself by others" they always select "others" who are, in their estimation, less than themselves. That makes the measurer come out ahead. The devil seduces preachers through the temptation to compete and be more "successful" than their peers. There is *no status in the kingdom of God for any human being except servant!* Why, then, should christians compete? Christian "measurements" for faithful service are not one another, but Christ Jesus. Since none of us ever measure up to that standard, we must trust in grace. Every servant of God is approved by God because of Christ's grace.

Surely, we are to "examine ourselves" and "test ourselves" (I Cor. 11:28; II Cor. 13:5; Gal. 6:4), but always by the *divine* standard. Human comparisons have no place as methods of ministry! Churches must not get in the game of "competitiveness." In too many people's minds the calling of a preacher or elder or teacher to serve the congregation is done by comparing people with people, instead of the Biblical standard. Jesus never *rated* people by comparing them to other people. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican is Christ's piercing denunciation of this "game" (Luke 18:9-16).

Those who "measure themselves with themselves" are *without understanding*. The Greek words are *ou suniasin*, might be translated in modern vernacular, "do not have their act together." Such people are playing a fool's game and are only fooling themselves. This game *never* fools God, and seldom fools other people! It is insanity!

10:13-18 In Scope: Some in Corinth were either measuring themselves by themselves to commend themselves, or were accusing Paul of doing so. Someone there was accusing Paul of bragging about exercising authority over a territory where he had *done* nothing, and should be *doing* nothing! They were boastfully declaring themselves as the only leaders or "apostles" (II Cor. 11:12-15) with rightful authority in the Corinthian church. They were contending that Paul had no right to "meddle" in the affairs of the Corinthian church.

Paul contends he has every right to exhort and instruct the Corinthians because he was the *first* to come to them with the Gospel (Acts 18:1ff). Paul will not brag or boast or meddle in territories where the Lord has not assigned ("limited" Gr. *kanon*, "canon, rule, standard, limits") him. God had *ordered* Paul to the territory of Corinth to evangelize (for a year and six months, initially, Acts 18:9-11). Where were all these "pseudo apostles" (II Cor. 11:13) when Corinth was being evangelized? Where were they when all the persecution was being handed out (Acts 18:1-17)? Where were they when Paul and his co-workers were supporting themselves, taking no support from the Corinthians, in order to establish the church there?

The trouble-maker in Corinth was "bragging" about all he had done for the church at Corinth, when all along its beginning and present stature in Christ (which still left much to be desired) was due to Paul's ministrations (in person, through co-workers, and through letters). This was Paul's rightful territory. He was ministering where God had assigned him. They were Paul's spiritual "field." One commentator has suggested that the word "overextending" (Gr. *huperekteinomen*, "overstretch ourselves") is a figure of speech from the Isthmian Games for which Corinth was famed throughout the Roman world. In these contests, as in modern track events, runners were required to keep to the lane which had been marked off for them (see II Tim. 2:5). Paul's "lane" (or "limit") had been Corinth (and the Gentiles beyond) assigned to him by God. His opponents were "running in his lane" and disobeying the "rules" set forth by God.

Had these "pseudo-apostles" (probably Judaizers) been building up the congregation in Corinth in faith and love in Jesus, Paul would not have written these "boasts" about his own work there. But they were not. They were tearing down. They were leading people "astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (11:3-4). God is the one

who sets the "limits" (Gr. *kanon*, rules). Those who minister according to God's "limits" are those who really care for the Church and her members. Those who stay within the "lane" God has marked off and do not "stretch" themselves into other lanes are those who will endure hardship and sacrifice themselves for what is right! Others are only pretenders, "pseudo" ministers.

Having settled the issue whether he is in his rightful "lane" or not as he writes corrective admonitions to the Corinthians, Paul expresses his hope that his edifying of them will increase their faith and thus "enlarge" his "field" among them. Actually, the RSV has not translated verse 15b well. The Greek phrase is, . . . *elpida de echontes auxanomenes tes pisteos humon en humin megalunthenai kata ton kanona hemon eis perisseian*, literally translated, ". . . but hope we are having, while growing the faith of you is, in you we will be magnified, according to the sphere ("limits") of us, in abundance. . . ." In other words, Paul was hoping that as his ministry to them increased their faith, his esteem ("magnification") would be enlarged in their hearts. Thus the problems in Corinth would be put to rest and he would be freed to "preach the gospel" in lands *beyond* them, and not have to spend his energies "boasting of work" he would have to do in Corinth. Paul's opportunity to preach in "lands beyond" hinged upon whether the Corinthians repented and restored him to the right honor and obedience he should have in their hearts. The disruption, divisiveness, and disobedience in the congregation at Corinth, caused by the trouble-maker(s), was hindering world evangelism.

Paul knew that the *method* of a true servant of Christ and edifier of the church would necessitate healing and restorative work upon an ailing "body" of christians *before* he could go on to enlarge the "body" world-wide. He was not the kind of evangelist or missionary whose *methodology* was limited *only* to *enlarging* while disregarding the healing and edifying; and he was an apostle with an undeniable mandate for urgency in world-wide evangelism! Paul's *modus operandi* covered every aspect of the ministry (exhorting, edifying, evangelizing, instructing; polemics, apologetics, hermeneutics; administrative, pastoral, practical). He was, at the same time, doing cross-cultural missionary work, ministerial training work, and christian writing and publishing work. He did it all! Can you imagine what Paul could do for the Lord in today's global society through jet air travel, video and

audio techniques, printing presses, computers, political freedoms and economic affluence of the U.S.???

The former Jewish rabbi (Paul) had a "magnificent obsession" — to "preach the gospel in lands beyond" (see Acts 19:21; Rom. 15:18-29). In a world of 4.5 billion people there are 1653 Christian Church missionaries; 972 of those are on the North American continent. That means there are 681 Christian Church missionaries trying to preach the New Testament message to almost four billion people. And of the 972 in North America, 829 are "missionaries" in the U.S.A.! There is one soldier for every eighty-three persons in the world; one doctor for every 1080 persons in the world; one evangelical missionary for every 90,000 persons in the world; one Christian Church missionary for every 2,722,324 persons in the world! The Christian Churches had 200 fewer missionaries in 1985 than they had in 1977! Did you know that 96% of christian finances are spent in the USA which comprises only 5% of the earth's population? Did you know the average American *misplaces* more money each year than the per-member contributions to a majority of U.S. church denominations? According to the IRS, Americans who itemize their deductions give less than 3% of their adjusted gross incomes to church and charity? It costs \$256,000 per year to train a West Point cadet. It cost approximately \$3500 per year to train a missionary at our loyal Bible colleges! About one out of every one thousand Christian Church members is a missionary. Five hundred church members each giving \$20 more per week to missions would make available \$520,000 more per year for missions. If a husband-wife missionary team received \$15,000 per year for missions, that would be about 70 more missionaries supported right now. If one thousand church members increased their missions giving by \$20 per week more to missions, that would double newly supported missionaries to 140 per thousand church members! One million membership of the Christian Church, giving \$20 per week more to missions, could support a staggering number of 140,000 missionaries right now! Christians in the USA spend \$20 per week on "junk food" that is not needed and probably harmful. There are 5103 languages in the world — 3418 of these have no portion of the Bible in their language. Can you imagine living and dying without ever having had the opportunity to read God's word in your own language? God help us to go with the gospel or send it "to

the lands beyond”!

The first three chapters of I Corinthians are the best commentary on II Corinthians 10:17-18! The words of I Corinthians 1:31 are exactly those of II Corinthians 10:17 (and both paraphrase Jer. 9:24). The *Lord* is the *source* of all that any man, believer or unbeliever, is, has, accomplishes, or retains eternally. Man has no right to boast in himself or any other human being.

In verse 18 a basic principle of the christian life is asserted by the apostle as a summation of his defense for his methods of ministering to the Corinthians. It is *not* the one who brags about his own accomplishments and virtues to gain some advantage over others who is “accepted” (Gr. *dokimos*, “approved, sanctioned, sustained, certified). The true servant of the Lord has his ministry and its methods approved (vindicated) by the *Lord’s* word. The genuine servant of the Lord is willing to have his ministerial methodology examined and certified by the divine standard — the Bible. Paul’s ministry to the Corinthians was clearly proved to be commended by the Lord. The church itself, the converted people, was his “letter” of commendation (II Cor. 3:1ff). Thus the Corinthian church should “look at what was before its eyes” (II Cor. 10:7) — they would not be seduced by “pseudo” leaders.

The solution for problems with twentieth-century methods of ministry is the same as it was in the first century — let them be examined and certified only by the divine standard!

APPREHENSION:

1. What were some in the Corinthian church saying about Paul’s different expressions toward them? Why were they saying this?
2. What is the meaning of the word “sarcasm”? Who uses it?
3. Did Paul threaten to be “bold” toward the Corinthians? Why?
4. If christians are not carrying on a worldly war, where is their war?
5. Where are the other references in the Bible to the believer’s “warfare”?
6. What are “worldly” weapons of warfare?
7. What are “spiritual” weapons of warfare?
8. Who are to use the “spiritual” weapons? When? On whom?

THE PROBLEM OF MINISTERIAL METHODS

9. What power is in the christian's spiritual weapons?
10. How did Paul prove that his ministerial methods were sanctioned by God?
11. Why did Paul "boast" of his authority?
12. Does the Bible tell preachers (other than apostles) to preach with "authority"? Where? Who?
13. What were Paul's detractors saying about his "speech"?
14. What did Paul mean when he wrote, "... they measure themselves by one another"?
15. Why is such "measuring" said to be, "without understanding"?
16. What was the "limit" beyond which Paul would not boast?
17. What were the "lands beyond" where Paul planned to preach?

APPLICATION:

1. Do you ever use sarcasm, irony, satire, when you want to get across some helpful information to someone? Where? Would you ever use it in teaching a Sunday School lesson? How do you *respond* to the use of sarcasm?
2. In your experience, is living the christian life like a war?
3. Do you think christians ought to be made more aware of the "war-like" nature of the christian struggle? Or is being a christian *not* a struggle?
4. Should teen-age christians be taught that being a christian is fighting a war? Who should teach them? How often?
5. Do you think preachers and teachers are seriously, and expertly, waging the christian battle for the minds of people today? Why?
6. What could be done to improve the war for the mind of man by the church?
7. Do you really believe the Bible (the sword of the Spirit) is sufficient to overthrow *every* "fortified" and "exalted" argument which stands as an obstacle to man's knowing God today?
8. Will the Bible *overthrow* the theory of evolution? Eastern mysticism? Mormonism, "Moonies," indifference, materialism, humanism?
9. Could you use the Bible to do so? Have you?
10. What other "spiritual" weapons might be used with the Bible to

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overthrow *obstacles* to *knowing* God?

11. Does Christ really expect *every* thought of a human being to be “taken captive” and imprisoned to the direction of God? Do we have to think *every* thought like God tells us to think?
12. Is it right to “frighten” people into obeying Christ? How do you respond to the preaching of judgment, hell, the fear of God?
13. Do you know people who play the game of “measuring themselves by themselves” to commend themselves? Have you ever played this game?
14. How does one quit the game of “measuring self with others” to commend oneself?
15. Do you think there is a “competitive” spirit in Christianity? Should there be?
16. Do you have any opportunities to extend your “ministry” into the “lands beyond” the USA? How? Are you? Will you?

Special Study

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Introduction

I. WHAT AN ASSIGNMENT!

A. What is the Restoration Movement? This is like being asked to teach American History in 30 minutes! The two are, after all, chronological contemporaries, and to a great extent, philosophical brothers.

B. I would love to go into the history of the Movement. It is inspiring. And I love history anyway. Besides, I have a family heritage in this movement. My great grandfather and one of my great uncles were preachers in the Movement in the early days of the State of Missouri. My grandfather was a leader in the Christian Church in Dallas County, Mo., at the turn of the century, and my father and mother have been instrumental in starting several new Christian churches in Missouri.

The history of the Restoration Movement takes 64 hours of classroom lectures at OBC to teach. I know you don't want to stay here that long!

C. I have reproduced a one-page chart showing the persons, circumstances and principles of the Movement's origins. Perhaps that will whet your appetite to buy a book or two on the history and learn more about it.

Let me recommend some books on the history of the Movement:

1. *The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, by Robert Richardson, pub. Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, Tenn.
2. *The Stone Campbell Movement*, by Leroy Garrett, pub. College Press
3. *Christians Only*, by James DeForest Murch, pub. Standard Pub. Co.
4. *Concerning the Disciples*, by P.H. Welshimer, Standard Pub. Co.

D. I have chosen not to deal with history, but with *TWO* fundamental principles. I believe that all who believe in Christ can, if they will, relate to these principles and seek to restore them

in the church whether they believe and relate to the history of the movement or not.

II. WHAT THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IS *NOT*!

A. It is not a Reformation movement

In a series of articles in the *Christian Baptist* beginning in 1825, Alexander Campbell, writing under the title "Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things," said *human systems* are properly subjects of *reform* — they may be formed, reformed and re-reformed, but Christianity is not subject to *reformation*.

Christianity was given by the authority of Jesus Christ. It cannot be reformed because it was given in the beginning in the way in which Christ wanted it given. Christianity can only be *restored*.

B. It is not a Church or a Denomination

The Restoration Movement is not a new denomination — it is not a new church. The church of Christ existed long before this movement to return to apostolic Christianity began.

It is a conviction that modern Christianity has deviated drastically from the pattern of worship, doctrine and polity of the church as outlined in the divine Word of God; it is a conviction that Christianity as outlined in the Word ought to be and can be practiced by believers of this age or any age, and an attempt to do so!

C. It is not Ecumenism — it is not a unity-at-any-price-movement. It is not an attempt to be interdenominational.

This seems to be the limits of Christendom's categories. The religious world apparently does not believe the church can be restored to N.T. purity and practice and so we are constantly placed in one of the foregoing categories or another — **BUT THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IS NONE OF THE ABOVE.**

III. MY DEFINITION OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

A. I think of it as a Repentance Movement

1. The Repentance (or, if you prefer, Restoration) Movement began long before Alexander and Thomas Campbell.

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2. It began with the writers of the N.T. epistles
 3. It was being carried on in the last of the first century A.D. when Paul wrote to the Corinth, and when John wrote to the seven churches of Asia Minor and his epistles.
- B. The Epistles are exhortations to restore apostolic pattern and doctrine which had been proclaimed earlier through preaching
1. There is a concept (rather superficial, I think) which says that since the N.T. scriptures were written *after* the church had existed for some 20-30 years, we cannot claim there is an apostolic pattern in the N.T.
 2. This view claims the N.T. was written only for correcting abuses.
 3. First, this view makes a difference between oral apostolic word and written apostolic word — and there is no difference, in content or authority.
 4. Second, it would seem to me that if the written apostolic word was for the correction of abuses of apostolic pattern, we should expect to find the pattern in these corrections.
We certainly won't find the pattern in the O.T. or in extra-Biblical writings, nor in the practice (at least not the divinely inspired pattern) of the church of the 2nd century.
 5. And that is just the point of this misconceived concept — it says there is no divinely inspired and recorded pattern for the N.T. church, especially in worship and polity.
- C. I believe there is a pattern for the church to follow in every age in the N.T.
1. Pattern for prayer
 2. Pattern for stewardship
 3. Pattern for church discipline
 4. Pattern for observing the Lord's Supper
 5. Pattern for singing
 6. Pattern for evangelism
 7. Pattern for political and social relationships
 8. Pattern for church government
 9. Even a pattern for sermon content and delivery! (Reason-

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ing from the scriptures about the Messiahship, Lordship, Deity of Christ)

10. Pattern for membership in the church
11. Pattern for training and support of a ministry (evangelists)

I believe this pattern can be deduced from clear and unequivocal apostolic commands and/or precedents.

- D. It is not the fault of the New Testament that all who profess to believe in Christ have not tried to return to the apostolic pattern —
1. It is the fault of those who profess to believe Christ!
 2. They have been unwilling to exert the hard effort to study the N.T.
They have been unwilling to make the sacrifice necessary to give up preconceived and traditional notions
Or some have been unwilling to surrender to the arbitrary pattern of the apostles.

Let all who profess to believe in Christ and trust him for salvation, whether they have strayed away from the structure of the N.T. pattern or whether they have never admitted there is a N.T. pattern — let them focus their minds on the New Testament *alone* and surrender to its arbitrary authority, and they will find the apostolic pattern. **TAKE HEED HOW YOU HEAR — THE RESPONSIBILITY IS WITH THE HEARER!**

Discussion

- I. **FIRST PRINCIPLE, THE ARBITRARY AND EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE**
- A. The Bible all the way through, and especially the N.T., is emphatic in its declaration that God's Word through his messengers is the only rule of faith and practice for believers.
1. It is the Word, not men's traditions or opinions, which produces the life of the Holy Spirit, gives new birth, and

matures people in Christ (Luke 8:11; John 6:63)

2. Jesus made it plain to his apostles that they should proclaim and bind on believers nothing more and nothing less than what the Holy Spirit would reveal to them. *They* would be led into *all truth*.
3. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that false teachers would arise from among the believers attempting to lead the church astray, but as shepherds they should feed the flock of God on the Word. Paul *commended* them to God and the *word* of his grace which alone is able to build them up and give them an inheritance among the saints, Acts 20:29-32.
4. Paul said preachers and teachers are *not to tamper* with God's Word (Gr. *dolountes*, means to mix or adulterate or "water down") II Cor. 4:2.
5. Paul pronounced the curse of God upon any man or angel who should preach or teach any message other than the apostolic gospel (Gal. 1:8-9). THAT IS SERIOUS . . . ETERNALLY SERIOUS!
6. Jude wrote that the faith was once for all delivered unto the saints, Jude 3, *faith* here has to mean doctrine-to-be-believed.
If it was delivered *once for all* when Jude wrote (before 80 A.D.) whatever gave theologians and denominations the authority to change it centuries afterward?
7. The apostle John wrote clearly that every teacher should be tested against the apostolic doctrine, for many false teachers would go out, and whoever did not *listen to the apostles* was not of God (I John 4:1-6).
8. John closed the last book of the whole Bible (Revelation) with these words. . . ." Anyone who adds or takes away from these words . . ." Rev. 2:18 will receive the judgment of God as it is pictured in the Revelation.
9. It is the Word that is:
 - a. to judge men in the last day (John 12:48; Rom. 2:16)
 - b. to be obeyed (II Thess. 1:8)
 - c. instrumental in the new birth (I Pet. 1:20-23)
 - d. equips the man of God for every good work (II Tim.

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3:16-17)

- e. to be preached in season and out — all the time (II Tim. 4:2)
- 10. It is by keeping Christ's commandments that we; (I John)
 - a. love God
 - b. know we are in Christ and are born anew
 - c. know Christ is in us
 - d. know the spirit of truth vs. the spirit of error.
- 11. Paul makes it clear in I Cor. 2:1-16 that *only* the apostles received the mind of the Spirit in revelation and the apostles communicated it to men in human language. What therefore is not in the words of the apostles is not acceptable as a rule of faith and practice for the apostolic church.

But, you see, this is precisely where the church (in its majority, anyway) deviated. Most of post-apostolic Christianity began to think it could not survive unless it broke out of the arbitrary exclusiveness of apostolic revelation. The church, to survive, thought it had to accommodate its doctrine and practices to those who preferred less discipline, less sacrifice, less sanctification and thereby it would gain more adherents. **MOST DECLARED THE CHURCH SHOULD, IN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE, MODERNIZE, PROGRESS, LIBERALIZE TO KEEP UP WITH MAN'S EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESSION AND LIBERALIZATION.**

The ironic thing about this view, besides its perverseness, is it inevitably polarizes Christendom! Accommodation of the Gospel to the world polarizes rather than unifies!

B. The Movement to Restore Biblical Authority

- 1. One may trace attempts to accomplish this from the earliest days of post-apostolic Christianity down to today in the history of Christendom. There is a constant golden thread of individuals and small, persecuted, oppressed groups of restorationists through the centuries. Even in the Dark Ages there were people laying down their lives to restore the Bible as authoritative in the life of the

church.

2. The Movement to Restore the church to apostolic pattern really began in America with James O'Kelly in 1792 in an attempt of his to gain some religious freedom from Methodist hierarchicalism. He held his N.T. aloft and said, "Brethren, hearken unto me, put away all other books and forms, and let this be the only criterion and that will satisfy me." (*The Stone-Campbell Movement*, p. 78, by Garrett). In Surry County, Va., August, 1794, at a meeting of people who could no longer conscientiously abide Methodism, the Christian Church was formed with 5 "Cardinal Principles" (*Ibid*, p. 81). No. 3 being: "The Holy Bible . . . our only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice." Rice Haggard joined O'Kelly at this time and became one of the Movement's leaders.

THIS WAS A DECADE BEFORE AMERICA EVER HEARD OF STONE-CAMPBELL MOVEMENT. THIS WAS WHEN ALEXANDER CAMPBELL WAS STILL IN ENGLAND, A BOY OF 10.

3. Barton W. Stone, also a leader in Restorationism long before the Campbells, told the Kentucky Presbytery at his ordination he would believe and practice the Westminster Confession ". . . as far as I see it consistent with the word of God." As a result, later, he had to withdraw from the Presbyterian church and form the Christian Church in Kentucky. (*Ibid*, p. 99)
4. It was the practice of Thomas Campbell, even when a preacher in the Presbyterian church in Ireland, to consult only the Bible. (*Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, by Robert Richardson, p. i. 39).
5. Alexander Campbell wrote in his personal diary, Jan. 29, 1809, "The word of God, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." (*Ibid*, p. 143).
6. After Thomas Campbell had seceded from the Seceders (Presby. branch) he held a meeting near Washington, Pa. with those who were interested in his preaching, 1808, he

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announced to the gathering the basic rule upon which he and those joining him would henceforth act — “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

Upon this announcement a solemn silence pervaded the assembly. Never before (acc. to Richardson) had religious duty been presented to them in so simple a form. (*Ibid*, p. i. 236)

7. A. Campbell said in a sermon before the Washington Association, 1 Nov. 1810: “Do not the Scriptures of truth furnish the only established law or way for Christians, whether in an individual or church capacity, to walk to heaven in?” (*Ibid*, p. i. 340)
8. Samuel Rogers (Restoration preacher) born in Virginia, 1789, said that all the preaching he ever heard until he was a grown man was the reading of the Bible by his mother to her children, was converted by Barton W. Stone, who “invited all to lay aside their creeds and take the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. I was pleased with his preaching; it sounded like the truth — like the religion I had read of. He then gave me a Bible, saying, ‘Preach its facts, obey its commands and enjoy its promises,’ ” (*Ibid*, ii. 332).
9. As late as 1842, A. Campbell said, “The Bible alone must always decide every question involving the nature, the character or the designs of the Christian institution.”

THIS IS *THE* FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE. ALL THE REST OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT REVOLVES UPON THIS HUB, THIS FULCRUM!

- C. The Reason for Declaring this as an Emphatic Principle
 1. First, because it is the revealed truth of God.
 2. As a safeguard against *Theologianism*
 - a. The Campbell’s abhorred the clergy-laity system of the denominations (not because they did not believe in a trained ministry) because of its prideful attempts to make clergymen exclusive interpreters of the Scrip-

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- tures. Keeping the laity ignorant helped perpetuate sectarianism.
- b. Thomas Campbell put after his name, V.D.M. (Verbi Divini Minister or "minister of the Word of God.") A. Campbell used, V.D.S. (Verbi Divini Servus, or Servant of the Word of God). They preferred, "Brother."
 - c. Campbell found the clergy in both Europe and America "opposed to reforms; ever on the alert to repress inquiry; ever seeking to exercise complete control over men's opinions, and ever ready to employ against opposition to their authority the unchristian weapons of detraction and persecution." *Richardson*, p. ii, 28.
 - d. The clergy of each denomination arrogated to themselves the claim of being the Bible's divinely-authorized expounders.

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT MUST BE CONSTANTLY ON GUARD IN THIS AREA. LET US NOT SAY IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE — IT *HAS* HAPPENED HERE, RIGHT WITHIN THE MOVEMENT! LEADERS IN OUR BIBLE COLLEGES, IN OUR BROTHERHOOD PERIODICALS AND CONVENTIONS MUST FERVENTLY EXAMINE THEMSELVES AND PURGE OUT ANY TENDENCY TOWARD THIS.

- e. The membership of the churches have a responsibility in this. Their responsibility is to not be Biblical illiterates but to be *students* of the Word.
 - f. Here is where the Campus Ministry must shine. You should be impressing this fundamental upon the hearts of a future leadership from the pews and Sunday School classes of our brotherhood.
3. As a safeguard against *Experientialism*
- a. Experientialism is the theology of Main Street, USA. It is flooding our christian music; it is flooding our christian books; it is permeating our preaching. It is the same old Calvisim that the Restoration Move-

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ment leaders came out of and had to struggle mightily to call others out of.

- b. The first century church “*reasoned* from the Scriptures” with their audiences!
- c. The Restoration fathers had a mania for expository preaching and deductive logic from the Scriptures.
- d. Articles in the *Christian Baptist* by Campbell and Stone were constantly calculated to show that faith comes through testimony of the facts rather than through some subjective or mystical experience.
- e. In a sermon delivered on April 7, 1811, A. Campbell said, “All the promises in the sacred Scriptures are addressed to the understanding, and through it to the will. They appear to the *understanding* true, to the *will* as good.” (Richardson, p. i. 377).
- f. Faith is not a “mysterious and undefined spiritual operation, or an instantaneous and miraculous illumination; it is simply a trusting in Christ, a sincere belief in the testimony and truth of God . . . revealing itself in a willingness to keep God’s commandments, and a readiness to make before the world the acknowledgment of the Messiahship of Jesus . . .” (*Ibid*, p. i. 408).
- g. A case in point was good old brother Samuel Rogers. One of the sweetest, humblest, most sacrificing of all the early preachers. He had joined the Stone movement. Born in 1789, he was christened a Methodist, but was immersed into Christ in 1812. He began to preach, but he was still leaving hundreds of mourners at the bench, as perplexed as they were by the subjective nature of his approach to religion. He heard A. Campbell preach a 2 hour sermon in 1825 when he was 37 years old and old Sam said as he spoke, “cloud after cloud rolled away from my mind . . . letting in upon my soul light and joy and hope that no tongue can express,” (Garrett, p. 300). Sam told Robert Richardson that he thought he might have gone crazy but for A. Campbell . . .”

who taught him how to read it (Bible) in its connection," (*Ibid*, 300).

- h. Now there is a literal flood of existential, experientialism about to sweep away true faith and replace the content of the Biblical message and practice with the autonomy of human *feelings*. It's sources are human preoccupation with "fadism" — what is religiously chic is what attracts people; faulty hermeneutics — Bible teachers and preachers are simply too lazy or pre-occupied to take the time or make the effort necessary to produce sound reasoning from the Scriptures; and a spiritual schizophrenia that doesn't want to face the hard realities of personal responsibility to do right but wants to make some subjective, outside agent (like the Holy Spirit) culpable for one's disobediences.
4. As a safeguard against *Pragmatism*.
 - a. There is also a pernicious cancer creeping into the Restoration Movement today that says, "If it works, it must be Biblical." I do not know whether the early Restorationists had to contend with it or not — I suspect they did. Later one's certainly did in connection with missionary organizations, evangelistic methods, etc.
 - b. I do know it is a philosophy practiced today in practically every area of the life of the church: evangelistic methods which are unethical and not in harmony with precepts and principles taught in Scripture; methods in fund raising; music; attendance; etc. (Let us read II Cor. 2:17 about "peddlers of God's word" and II Cor. 4:2 about "disgraceful, underhanded ways, practicing cunning and tamper with God's word. . . .")
 5. As a safeguard against *Latitudinarianism*.
 - a. Proposition 1 of the Declaration and Address reads: "That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in

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Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct; *and of none else can be truly and properly called Christians.*

- b. Early Restorationists knew Christian union could be accomplished only in one of two ways — either in and through the truth and upon principle, or by compromise and accomodation.
- c. Thomas Campbell said, “Let us do as we are there expressly told they did (the apostles), say as they said; that is, profess and practice as therein expressly enjoined by precept and precedent, in every possible instance, after their approved example.”
- d. But there is a contagion of compromise infecting the Movement today. Clear commands and practices of the N.T. church are being either disregarded or disarranged for the sake of numerical growth or the favor of those opposed to Restoration principles.

Brethren, the Bible alone as the sufficient rule of faith and practice for christians is not just a principle of the Restoration Movement — IT IS A DIVINE IMPERATIVE — It is incontrovertible and inescapable!

AND WE HAVE NOT YET ATTAINED! YOU ARE IN A CRUCIAL POSITION TO PASS THE TORCH TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHRISTIAN THINKERS AND LEADERS... MAKE SURE THIS LIGHT OF THE BIBLE ALONE IS BURNING BRIGHTLY!

II. SECOND PRINCIPLE, THE UNITY OF ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST

- A. The New Testament *commands* the unity of all believers (as a matter of fact, even the O.T. forbids division within the brotherhood of believers — Psa. 133:1; Gen. 13:8).
 1. Christ poured out his deepest feelings and longings in prayer for such unity. John 17:1ff
ONENESS, such as Christ and the Father manifested is the goal our Lord seeks in His church.

It is not simply cooperation, toleration, or agreeableness the Lord desires, but ONENESS.

Man's proper relationship to Christ is portrayed in both O.T. and N.T. as a *marriage*, the *joining* of two into one!

2. Informed of quarreling and partyism in the church at Corinth, Paul wrote by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ that there be no dissensions among them, but that they be united (Gr. *katartizo*, jointed, fitted together) completely in the same mentality and same knowledge (opinion), (I Cor. 1).

IS CHRIST DIVIDED? WOULD CHRIST FIGHT OR QUARREL WITH HIMSELF?

Spiritual, mental oneness in the body of Christ is not optional — it is demanded!

3. Paul wrote the Ephesian Church that *unity* was their *calling* as the body of Christ. To answer this call would take *all* lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance and love. The Ephesians are instructed to *give diligence* (Gr. *spoudazo*, "see to it; take care of it; be eager; do it now"), to keep the unity (Gr. *henotes*, oneness) of the Spirit in the bond (Gr. *desmos*, string, rope, chain, band or binding) of peace.

The peace which Christ *obtained* for us from God (reconciliation to God) is that which *binds* us to every other reconciled brother.

WE ARE NOT TO BE BOUND TOGETHER BECAUSE WE DESERVE IT, OR BECAUSE WE ARE INNATELY CAPABLE OF IT, BUT BECAUSE WE *ARE BOUND* IN THE MERIT OF CHRIST.

We are to receive (Gr. *proslambano*, take to oneself) one another as Christ has received us — by grace and forgiveness, Rom. 15:1ff. Paul told the Ephesians, there *is* one body and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. THE PRIMARY FUNCTIONING OF THE SEVERAL PARTS OF THE BODY IS TO DEVELOP (GROW IN) THIS ONENESS! *Spiritual coordination* must be developed — it is there but it must be exercised to grow.

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IT REQUIRES: TEACHING, MINISTRY, KNOWLEDGE, MATURATION, STATURE, SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, AND THE *WORKING OF EVERY PART* OF THE BODY OF CHRIST — NOT JUST A FEW!

When honest-hearted and spiritually-minded people get disgusted with the frustrations, contradictions and insecurities of religious sectarianism — and when they decide to turn to the Bible and the Bible alone for the answer — **THEY ARE FORCED TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE ONENESS OF ALL MEN IN CHRIST IS *THE ONE GREAT MISSION* OF THE CHURCH!** It was God's plan that in Christ He would unite all things in heaven and earth in Him (Eph. 1:9-10).

UNITY IS EVANGELISM, MISSIONS, STEWARDSHIP, WORSHIP, EDIFICATION.

B. The Restoration Movement is dedicated to proclaiming and practicing this command of Christ for the oneness of all men who shall believe in Him.

1. Thomas Campbell found that when he wanted to restore the authority of God's word in faith and practice for believers, sectarian jealousy was bitter in opposition and protective of divisions.
2. T. Campbell decided to do something about that. He wrote his Declaration and Address for the Washington Association. Its objective, described in the first article, was "for the sole purpose of promoting simple, evangelical Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men."

The Address concerns itself first with pointing out that the "grand design" and "native tendency" of the Christian religion is *toward unity*. That is what Paul said in Eph. 1:9-10!

If the church is *essentially* one, then to speak of a divided church is a contradiction of terms. If it is *intentionally* one, to divide it is to disobey the intentions of Christ. If it

is *constitutionally* one, it implies conformity to a plan or constitutional (Biblical) organization which must be inherent in it.

3. Robert Richardson says in *Memoirs of A. Campbell*: “. . . it is not upon any general principle, or even by the adoption of a few particular truths, that a real Christian union can be established . . . that alone which unites the human soul to Christ can unite Christians to one another . . . a sincere determination to follow the truth whithersoever it would lead,” (p. i. 401).

THREE FUNDAMENTALS TO UNITY

In matters of faith (that which is clearly commanded by Christ or practiced by the church in the divine record as a matter necessary to be joined to Christ and his church) — the Bible and the Bible alone!

In matters of opinion (that which is *not* commanded by Christ or clearly practiced by the church in the divine record as a matter necessary to be joined to Christ and his church) — liberty!

In all things love (even the love that would give up one's own liberties and opinions for the sake of a brother's edification).

4. It was in 1832 when Campbell and Stone agreed to unite their movements that Raccoon John Smith stood up to speak at Lexington, Ky. He spoke concerning the desirability and practicality of unity. Desirable because Jesus prayed for it and the apostles enjoined it. Practical in that God has but one family upon earth and that family is to be united upon the one Book. But union in Jesus is not an amalgamation of sects, and a union of sects would never bless either the church or the world. Since unity upon any system of human inventions is both impossible and undesirable, the only union that is practical and desirable must be based upon the Word of God as the only rule of faith and practice.

Raccoon Smith said he was willing to surrender any opinion for the sake of unity, but he would not surrender one fact, commandment, or promise of the gospel for the

whole world.

5. The Restoration Movement leaders believed that people (sincerely believing in Christ) can all agree on the general truths and facts of Christianity, and it is only here that unity is possible. "That alone which saves men can unite them."
- C. Clearly, the Restoration Movement made spectacular progress in calling sincere believers to oneness on these themes 150 years ago. But in the last 70-80 years the Movement to bring oneness to all believers has settled into a rut and is actually losing ground. Why?

1. Christian church people generally speaking are Biblically illiterate.
 - a. There are some happy exceptions to this. And, by and large, Christian church people are better students of the Bible than many other church people.
 - b. But compared with people of olden days of the Movement, we are illiterate.
 - c. There are many forces contributing to this illiteracy — materialistic affluence and gadgets that occupy the time people used to devote to reading their Bibles. The Uniform Lesson practice of jerking scriptures out of context and churches and Sunday Schools not studying the Bible properly. Hermeneutically lazy preachers and Sunday School teachers.

Richardson says: "To put an end to religious controversy had been one of the chief aims of the Restoration proposed by Thomas Campbell. It was his conviction that, if men would adopt the Bible as the only standard of religious truth, and accept the meaning of its words as determined simply by the rules of language, its true sense would be sufficiently obvious, and there would be universal agreement in relation to the things which is revealed."

A. Campbell in his debate with McCalla said: "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself . . . and there is but one meaning in every passage of Scripture, and that one meaning must

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be always found from its context." Campbell believed that by means of these two principles, that Scripture is comprehensible even by the unlearned, and that its sense is always One, all believers could be united in One body in Christ.

BUT FOR SOME REASON MANY CHRISTIAN CHURCH PEOPLE TODAY HAVE BEEN SEDUCED WITH THE MODERN CALVINSIM THAT ANY SCRIPTURE MAY MEAN ONE THING TO ONE PERSON AND ANOTHER THING TO ANOTHER PERSON, DEPENDING UPON THEIR EMOTIONS OR NEEDS OR BACKGROUNDS.

THUS THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT, TO WHICH PROPER HERMENEUTICS AND EXPOSITORY PREACHING ARE LIFE-BLOOD, IS LOSING ITS LIFE!

2. Christian church people are almost totally ignorant (except for its trained ministry) of the *heritage* and *history* of the Restoration Movement.
 - a. Not that our salvation comes from the Restoration Movement
 - b. But those fundamental principles which are so uniquely appealing to a denominational world frustrated and enslaved by division are not being proclaimed.
 - c. Christians are being seduced by a *laissez faire* attitude toward denominationalism. Do not interfere; let them alone; they are alright to keep on setting themselves apart by their distinctive names, structures, non-Biblical doctrines and practices.
 - d. Of course, most people trying to follow Christ in denominational structures are not enemies, but, as Carl Ketcherside says, "they are hostages needing to be freed — not enemies to be destroyed."

BRETHREN, THIS IS A CHALLENGE TO YOU AND TO US (HERE AT THE BIBLE COLLEGE). IT IS A CHALLENGE TO OUR CHURCHES, ESPECIALLY, THAT MORE TEACHING AND PREACHING NEEDS TO BE DONE EMPHASIZING

THESE GREAT PRINCIPLES AND THE HERITAGE OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT.

SOMETHING PRACTICAL SHOULD BE DONE IN EVERY CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WORLD . . . A CLASS, OR A SERIES OF SERMONS OR LESSONS, EVERY YEAR, OUGHT TO BE GIVEN TO ALL AGES OF CHRISTIANS, FROM HIGH SCHOOL UP, ON THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT AND ITS PRINCIPLES.

3. Then there is the division within this Movement itself which presents to the world and to denominationalists an easy source of ammunition by which to disparage the cause of Christian oneness.
 - a. One part of the division has its roots in liberalism, modernism and unbelief.

Christian oneness with those who disavow the deity of Christ and the Scriptures as the arbitrary and final authority is impossible until they become believers.
 - b. Another part of the division is over a matter of opinion. W.K. Pendleton said that error alone, however gross, is not heresy; but heresy is rather malignity or perverseness of disposition. Heresy is more of a behavioral problem than a doctrinal one.

Heresy is the tyranny of opinionism, the attitude that you must accept my opinion and swear by it as your faith. It is not the error of the opinion that is heresy, but what you seek to make of it — a test of fellowship, and faith.
 - c. How can the Restoration Movement ever hope to convince the denominational world that a return to the Bible alone will produce the oneness of all believers Christ prayed for unless the Movement itself practices what it professes?! **IN SOME PLACES THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT HAS BECOME A DENOMINATIONAL RETRENCHMENT!**
THERE IS MUCH FOR US TO DO WITHIN OUR OWN BACKYARD!

Conclusion

Alexander Campbell, *Address to Reformers*, in *Millennial Harbinger*, Sept. 1831

“The ground assumed in the proposed reformation (restoration) is the highest ground which can be assumed at any time or under any circumstances, and it is the only rational and lawful ground which human ingenuity and Christian integrity can propose. It is not a restoration of primitive Methodism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, Quakerism; but a restoration of primitive Christianity in faith, sentiment, and practice — in religion, morality, economy, manners, and customs. If we fail it cannot be in the object proposed; for in this no people can excel us — none can claim higher, more rational, or more Scriptural ground.”

The gospel we preach is not that which is defined by the Campbells, or even that which was practiced in evangelism by Walter Scott, *except* as they were restoring divine truth. The gospel is that message and action delivered and declared by apostolic and prophetic messengers. We are restoring Scriptural truths, not some nineteenth-century theory or theology. We should love the brotherhood of believers — not simply a movement.

Restoration is more than a movement. It is the Scriptural means of producing spiritual unity among men. It is the basis of returning the sinner to God. It is the means of reinstating the wayward Christian. It is a way of life, a Christian commitment, a Spirit-guided devotion that moved men in the 19th century and is still moving men in the 20th century.

The Restoration Movement is a calling of all who take the name of Christ to constant repentance — to a discipleship of learning and returning in heart and mind to the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

The Restoration movement does not have a monopoly on truth. It does profess that the movement is doing its best to restore divine names and Scriptural practice. The ideal is still needed today and we must commit our lives and our churches to the privilege of restoration. A. Campbell had one theme which, it is said, continually consumed

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his thinking processes: "Christianity — its foundation is facts, not theory; its design, the conversion of the world; and its great moving principles, faith and love."

Walter Scott wrote in his book, *The Messiahship, or Great Demonstration*, pp. 13-14.

"In Christianity, the two great generalizations are Christ and His religion. His Messiahship rests on power, and His religion on authority. The former is, of course, the problem; the latter, the dogma. In the Scriptures, the Messiahship is never placed on authority, but on proof; and the doctrine, on the contrary, is never placed on proof, but on authority; the reason for which is this: It being there proved that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, it is consequently assumed that nothing He teaches can possibly be false. The strongest argument which can possibly be offered for the truth of His doctrine is, therefore, this: *Magister dixit* — Christ taught it."

John Oxenham's *Bees In Amber*

Not what, but WHOM, I do believe,
That in my darkest hour of need,
Hath comfort that no mortal creed to mortal man may give—
Not what, but WHOM!
For Christ is more than all the creeds
And His full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds outlive.
Not what I do believe, but WHOM!