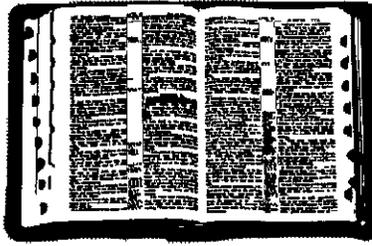


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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WILL THIS GREAT NATION FALL?

The decline and fall of the Roman Empire has been the subject of books, papers, magazine articles and lectures. The internal conditions that brought about the fall of this great empire have been compared to the situations that presently exist in America. These problems are not always reversible. However, if the people of this great nation are made aware of the consequences of the present course, and if they respond in such number and with such force as to bring about a change in the morals and attitudes of the people, this nation can be strong again. Be not deceived, this nation is not as powerful and invincible as some public officials would have us believe.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord ..." (Psa. 33:12). Every reader of the history of Israel in the Old Testament is acquainted with the fall of this nation when she left God, and the restoration to power and strength again when her people repented and returned to God and His will. This principle is true of any nation because a nation is made of people, and God deals with people.

America has abounded in an almost infinite flow of natural resources and has had an unique prosperity for its entire existence of over two centuries. Of course, not every individual or every family has enjoyed this abundance through the years. Neither has every generation known the times of plenty that have generally characterized this nation. The fact is, however, that the United States has been the richest nation on earth in resources and power. Now something has happened. We no longer enjoy this distinct

position of wealth and power. What is wrong? Who caused it? How did it happen? These are questions with which we must come to grips.

At this writing it has been three weeks since the American hostages were released from Iran. That one incident of a small nation forcefully taking the American Embassy and holding 52 Americans for 444 days while taunting and cursing this nation through the whole ordeal. Finally some form of ransom was demanded that they be released. Different terms have been used about how the release of the hostages was accomplished and what the sum of money paid was called, but the bottom line is that the United States was humiliated before the whole world. My reference at this point to the hostage issue is only to show the standing of this nation in the world at present as compared to what it once was. My question now is: does this national problem have anything to do with our relationship to God and respect for His word? Is there enough "salt" and "light" in this nation to save it? (Matt. 5:13-16).

The political, economic, social and moral change we now see has been developing for a long time. The real cause, like the swell of a giant tidal wave, could be observed by a discerning eye for many years. Many among the populace and a few in high places have cried the warning of approaching disaster, but no one would listen. The seriousness of the situation is now realized by the majority and its potential danger acknowledged by the authorities, but their approach to a solution is all wrong. The experts are bringing forth formulas for improving the whole society and re-establishing a national place in the world, but none are touching the real cause of the problem. In fairness to the present administration, the speeches, slogans and promises indicate a return to acknowledging the existence and power of God, and the necessity for a more moral and spiritual atmosphere in which to live as a nation.

The word of God says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Whatever historians may record about the decay and the possible fall of the United States as we know it, one thing is certain: the real reason for the state of affairs today and the possible fall of this once great nation is exactly the same as in every other

nation or empire that is no more. We will notice the reasons briefly.

Some of the outstanding reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire have been written in the histories covering that period in time. They are: 1) Abolishing God from all functions of government, from teaching children, and trying to stifle the free practice of religious beliefs. The substitute of idols for the one true God. 2) Freedom of sexual indulgences in all forms, including homosexual and lesbian practice by people on all levels of society, prostitution and free, easy divorce and remarriage. 3) Excessive interest and participation in sports of all kinds. Entertainment with sexual and violent emphasis takes priority over everything that contributes to wholesome living. 4) High and rising taxes that vanish in many greedy and criminal agencies that exist for that purpose. There are more, but space does not permit them to be discussed.

It is **barbaric ungodliness**, in all its ugliness on every level of society. I mean that in the full sense of the word. By "barbaric" I mean that characteristic of "an unmannerly person;... a savage, cruel person; brute" (Webster). "Ungodly" simply means "not godly or religious; impious. 2. sinful; wicked" (Webster). The original word for "ungodly" is **asebeia**. W. E. Vine says in a note following the definition of the noun form: "**anomia** is disregard for, or defiance of God's laws; **asebeia** is the same attitude toward God's person."

The most simple description of America's trouble that no legislative body, executive power, or court decision can change is that every level of society and every part of the nation is filled with that insensitive, coarse, brutish attitude that holds disregard and defiance for the Person of God and His laws. No nation can survive long with this attitude and philosophy.

Before you reply to me that America is about the most religious nation on earth, let me say that is not true. The heathen nations of the world have their gods, and they are very religious. Of course, they are very far from the true God, but their religious influence often keeps them on their accepted civil course. America has less than 42% of the people affiliated with some religious organization, and that counts ALL that are classified as religious. That means over half of the people in the United States are classified as non-religious, in the sense of not belonging to some religious group. If we consider how many of these religious people in the United States are ignorant of the true God and His word, we have a very small percent. And if we consider how many who are Christians are unfaithful or have left the truth for the doctrines of men, we have a very few who really serve God in spirit and truth.

But we are told that the United States is the most religious nation on the face of the earth. It has been called a "Christian Nation." Why have not the non-religious, godless nations of communism fallen? Why do the heathen and idol worshipping nations of the world survive?

We are not talking of the mere existence of a people under some kind of dictator. The United States may

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remain under such a condition and yet be a fallen nation. Hitler's Germany was a nation of people, but who would claim that it was a nation of free people with high standards for individual rights and the pursuit of happiness? These communist countries are people under the philosophical yoke of oppression that says the state is of more value than the individual. The people are, in effect, in prison. The heathen countries are also slaves to their superstitions so that they die of famine, disease, and war at a very early age.

If something is not changed, this is what America is coming to be. It is not too late to do something, but we will have to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). The influence of a faithful Christian and the strength of a sound, spiritual church will be the beginning place for a revival of the qualities that made this nation great from its beginning. Pray for all that are in authority; "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:2-4).

Editorial

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DANGERS WE FACE

Students of the New Testament are well aware that the early church had dangers and problems to face. Divine revelation addressed these forthrightly and in so doing provided not only the solution for their immediate problems but gave all the information needed to meet and overcome whatever contingencies the people of God might face through all time to come. "The faith once for all delivered to the saints" is all-sufficient and requires no appendages to satisfy modern needs (June 3).

Throughout the history of the Lord's people one major issue has scarcely been settled before another set of problems arises. For the last three decades the issues of church supported human enterprises, sponsoring churches and church financed recreation activities have been studied, debated and lines have been drawn and solidified. The division is now deep and wide. Attitudes and practices are poles apart. The estrangement is especially sad to those of us who remember when it was not this way. A younger generation has grown up since the division which has never known the time and circumstances before this tragedy unfolded.

Churches which withstood the spirit of digression and those which have been formed in the aftermath of it are not immune to dangers. It is a sad fact that all too many have limited soundness in the faith to opposition to what has generally come to be known as "liberalism." The word "sound" in the New Testament has to do with what is wholesome, healthy, balanced and sane. The Devil is not a one-issue enemy. He directs his attacks at the most vulnerable places in our armor. As I travel among brethren and observe the passing scene, there are several dangers which are apparent and which must be addressed soon or else much ground will be lost. Consider these dangers:

(1) There is a growing softness toward error. It is easy for churches which have gone through severe trials and heavy controversies to preserve purity of faith and practice to develop battle fatigue. Periods of peace and prosperity are certainly desirable. It is encouraging to see congregations with better buildings and larger budgets for scriptural work. But it is all too easy to settle into complacency, insist on not rocking the boat, cater to our own heroes, elevate our own educated elite, and manifest all the attitudes of denominational status. Many have lost their militancy in opposition to denominational error as well as error

among brethren. Brethren who have worked hard to equip themselves to meet advocates of error in public debate are perhaps the most scorned of all preachers. Brethren have sometimes unwittingly encouraged softness by saying "We don't need a strong pulpit man, just a good personal worker." Since when has it every been to the advantage of churches to have anything but strength in the pulpit? There is nothing wrong with preachers teaching from house to house, but the fact remains that God's assembled people need strong and able preaching on the fundamentals of the gospel and personal godliness; preaching which stirs the hearts of people to serve with diligence. Some of the preaching today is little more than warmed over sales motivational speeches, generously sprinkled with poetry and cute, catchy phrases. Some of it is a display of human wisdom pitched on such an intellectual plane that it missed many of the common people. Brethren, we need to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

(2) There is a problem of stampeding worldliness. This is evident among the people at large and increasingly apparent among elders, deacons, preachers and their families. What else could we expect from church members when those who take public places of responsibility have been seduced by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life? The vices of the unregenerate world have become the practices of would-be saints. Swearing, drinking, gambling, smoking, fornicating "saints" are found in all too many places. And in far too many instances, preachers and elders are not in a position to say anything about it that anyone would take seriously. If the Lord were to come today, I wonder how many who wear his name would be found without spot or wrinkle.

(3) We face a serious danger from unqualified elders and deacons. While every qualification given by the Lord is important and none should be minimized, some brethren have spent so much time arguing about whether "children" includes one or more, that they have ignored other qualifications such as "apt to teach", able to "stop the mouths of gainsayers", "not soon angry", "not covetous" and on we could go. The most common yard stick has been to select a man with children who are all members of the church and who are successful in the business world. Over the last few years we have met and talked with men who serve as elders who have not the faintest notion what it means to shepherd a flock. The teaching program of many congregations is a joke, and not a very funny one. What of the divine mandate to "feed the flock of God"? Do elders know what is being taught and whether or not those who teach under their oversight are really qualified to teach? If all elders had been alert to their duties then some of the errors advocated from the pulpits would have been halted. Much of the friction and bickering that goes on in some congregations would cease if elders would perform their God-given duty and stop the mouths of gainsayers. Brethren, we must do a better job in instructing people on this subject. We need to plant the desire early in young men to

so direct their lives that one day they may be able to wisely oversee the flock of God.

(4) The danger of fragmenting into a multiplicity of wrangling sects is very real. If division arises because truth has been insistently preached, then so be it. We are not in favor of having peace at any price. But neither are we in favor of elevating every matter of private conviction into an issue of major proportion and establishing a human creed before which all men must bow. I would not deny any faithful brother the right to state his conviction on any subject so long as he does not begin to insert his opinion between the lines of scripture and insist that all be able to do the same reading between the lines as he. Some of the mail we receive, some of the conversations and questions which are heard at various places to say nothing of many of the battles which rage through some of the papers at times make me wonder if some don't stay awake nights trying to think up something new or novel to dispute about. Everyone who has heard me preach very much or read what I have written over the last three decades knows good and well where I stand with regard to the church and human organizations and the attendant issues which have surfaced in the wake of that confrontation. But frankly, I would not turn around for the difference between liberalism and crankism. They are opposite ends of the same basic problem. Liberalism exalts human wisdom by ignoring what God authorized. Crankism exalts human wisdom by reading into the word of God more than he said. It equates human opinion with the divine oracles. Liberalism ignores what is written on the line. Crankism insists on reading between the lines. Both are wrong. Both are presumptuous. Both are haughty and arrogant. Both are divisive. Liberalism has crystallized into a respectable denominational movement (respectable in the eyes of the world, that is). Crankism opens the door to a thousand warring sects each contending for its own special tenet. There are many excellent preachers and many very fine congregations and I do not write this to discourage them. But unless dangers and problems are recognized and identified, they can never be resolved. This fourth danger is very real and is becoming more wide-spread with each passing day.

The cure for all of this is a simple adherence to the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." Let us preach and practice only that for which we have a "thus saith the Lord." Everyone has private opinions and scruples. But we must recognize the difference between divine and human wisdom. My private judgment is not scripture and neither is yours. What God says we must believe. What he commands we must do. We have the right to get everything out of his word which he put into it but we also have the responsibility to stop right there!

UNMASKING MORMONISM (NO. 1)

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The Mormon Myth

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, known as the Mormons, has in recent years developed into a major world-wide organization, and has been converting people to their sect in record numbers. Their Madison Avenue image is that of a clean cut, morally superior, industrious, and joyful people who center their lives upon the family. This image, however, is only a mask. Like the whitewashed appearance of the Pharisees (Matt. 23:27), the Mormon Church has created this facade to attract the naive. Whether in the television spots of the Mormon mother hugging her children, the Reader's Digest insert which sensationalizes their "Mr. Clean" doctrine, or the Donnie and Marie smiles of their young missionaries, the public is shown a mask. Seldom do we see the ungodliness and irreverent beliefs behind the mask. We should be reminded that Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:15-16). Inasmuch as we have the responsibility to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 Jn. 4:1), we will examine the facts behind the Mormon mask. There is no question that the Mormon people are good people and good neighbors. But they are religiously mistaken and have been deceived and used by the Mormon Church to perpetuate the myths of their faith. Newsweek reports in their September 1, 1980 issue that "Mormons today are known for their fierce devotion to monogamy, the family and free enterprise. But underneath their Reader's Digest image, the Mormons espouse a radical, anthropomorphic conception of God that sets them far apart from other religions." Brigham Young University historian, Marvin Hill, is quoted as saying, "The leadership is trying to present the church as a seamless society and all their energies are organized to perpetuate that myth." In this first article, we will look at the basic claims of the righteousness, morality, and joyful family life of the Mormons, remembering the words of Jesus, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Mormons are not the happiest people on earth, as they claim. Mental depression is a great problem among Mormons. The wife and mother is pressured to have as many children as she can, to be a loving mother, a submissive wife, and to still have time to work many hours each week for her church. When she fails to live up to the Mormon image of "super mom" she often suffers from depression. The single woman is greatly pressured to marry, since Mormons view womanhood as producing offspring on this earth and in eternity. The Utah Bureau of Health Statistics

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reported that the suicide rate for females nearly doubled from 1960 to 1970, and the rate of suicide for single women nearly tripled. During 1970 to 1979, Utah's suicide mortality rate was higher than the national rate in every year but one. An AP story, appearing in the Ogden Standard-Examiner November 3, 1980 reported that depression among teen-agers is "particularly acute in Utah" and that "statistics show a 60 percent increase in teen suicides in the last 14 years with an 80 percent hike among adolescent girls in that period." And Utah Holiday's June, 1980 issue said that the national suicide rate has increased 15 percent over the last 10 years while Utah's rate has increased 27 percent. If Mormonism makes happier people, we should see less depression and suicide in Utah than in other communities.

Mormons are not the strict-moral led people they claim to be. In a Mormon tract entitled "What of the Mormons?" we read, "There is no principle on which The Latter-day Saints lay greater emphasis than the sacredness of the marriage covenant. Adultery is next to murder in gravity in Mormon theology. Strict morality is taught, and the Church has used its means and facilities to teach its youth the necessity for moral cleanliness and the blessings of happy marriage." Behind this mask, we find the exact opposite. Need we remind our Mormon friends that their early leaders were polygamous adulterers? Or should we even mention the fact that Mormonism still teaches that faithful men will be given more wives in the next life? Their facilities (church buildings) are used for singles parties and disco dances, among other things. Are we to believe that these lascivious dances teach moral cleanliness to their youth? Mormons will claim that Utah's rate of illegitimacy is lower than the national average. But that is explained by the fact that most pregnant girls in Utah marry before giving birth. The Utah Bureau of Health Statistics reveals that 70 percent of all teenage first births in Utah are premarital conceptions. In other words, of every 10 teenagers who have their first baby, only 3 were married when they conceived. Are we to conclude that Mormon teens are of higher morals than other teens? While they may be no worse, Mormon children are certainly not morally superior to other children.

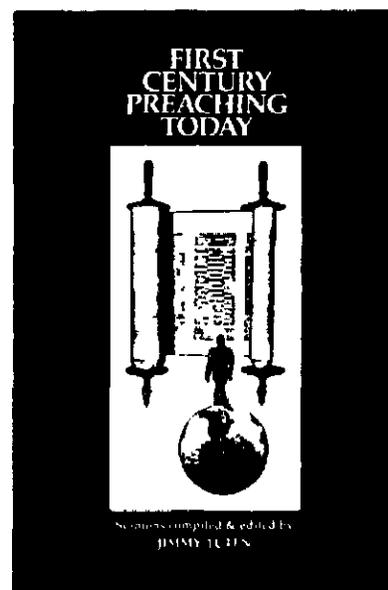
Concerning family life, Mormons have no better marriages than others in this country. Utah's divorce rate is equal to the national average. Mormon parents are not "super parents" and the lack of discipline of their children is evident in many cases. In 1979 the superintendent of Salt Lake City schools appealed to the religious leaders to help discipline the students. He stated that the teachers could not handle them, and that his appeal to their parents had not helped. Are we to believe that Mormon family life is superior to that of other families?

The "Mr. Clean" concept of Mormons is also a mask. Even faithful Mormons use profanities in common speech. And if the Mormon church is successful in keeping their people from the use of alcohol and drugs, the Utah Bureau of Health Statistics does not know it. They report that alcoholism is the fourth leading cause

of death in Utah. This Bureau estimates that Utah contains 60,000 alcoholics and problem drinkers. In a 1980 study of teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18, 13.2 percent admitted using marijuana within the past 30 days, and 20.7 percent had consumed alcoholic beverage in the same period.

The point of this article is not to state that Mormons are worse sinners than others in the world. We applaud their appeal for strict morals and a family-oriented life. But their appeal is only a mask, and does not describe their lives, in reality. Simply stated, if Mormonism is designed to make people happier, more godly and morally supreme, then Mormonism is not working! The fruits of their doctrine show a paper-thin mask and an hypocritical image. In our next article, we will examine the Mormon views of the Bible and of God.

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EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

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THE BEATITUDES—No. 2

We continue our study of the Beatitudes. In this brief article we will deal with the third and fourth beatitudes in the order in which they appear in Matthew's account.

Blessed Are the Meek

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Mt. 5:5). We sometimes think of a meek person as timid, shy or fearful. But this cannot be the meaning Jesus had in mind. Jesus said of himself: "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Mt. 11:29). Was Jesus timid? Certainly not! "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). Who is ready to say that Moses was a weakling?

The Greek word for "meek" is *praus*. It describes a condition of the mind and heart. "It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His (God, WEW) dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting" (*Wuest Word Studies*). Lenski wrote: "The word refers to an inward virtue exercised toward persons. When they are wronged or abused they show no resentment and do not threaten or avenge themselves" (*Commentary on Matthew*).

Hence, meekness is an equanimity of spirit, a temperament that properly reflects itself toward God and man under all circumstances. It is the opposite of bitterness, vehemence and violence.

The "inheritance of the earth" is a proverbial expression, suggesting bountiful blessings. It was used by the Jews to denote any great blessing. It originally meant the land of Canaan, but later came to mean the sum of all blessings. The expression is found, or similar ones, several times in Psalms 37. It has nothing to do with a future inheritance of this mundane earth. This earth will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10).

Jesus used the saying to mean that the meek would be those in his kingdom who receive God's blessings here, and the heavenly Canaan hereafter.

Blessed Are They Who Hunger / Thirst

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mt. 5:6). Paraphrased, this beatitude reads: "Blessed are they who desire to be right with God for they shall obtain it." Righteousness is a state of justification because of the forgiveness of sins.

Sinners can only be righteous by God's forgiveness

that is affected through the gospel. Paul wrote: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . . For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (Rom. 1:16-17). The "righteousness of God" in the text is not the character of God but the righteousness imparted to man by forgiveness.

Paul further said: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. . . Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3:21-22). Righteousness is without the law because to be right with God by law requires perfect obedience to the law. But man transgressed law and thereby became a sinner. (All men are lawbreakers and, therefore, sinners, Rom. 3:9-20, 23). He must depend on God's forgiveness for righteousness. This is made possible through obedience to the gospel of Christ. This does not mean we are without law, but it means we need God's forgiveness when we violate law.

Hungering and thirsting after righteousness shows that the gospel is not coercive but persuasive in character. God does not force people to come to Him. Man must want to come, and when he comes, he is filled. He receives the full measure of the promise.

—to be continued

The Rader-Polk Debate

on "Limited Benevolence"

This is a written debate between Donnie Rader of Louisville, Kentucky and John T. Polk, II of Cornersville, Tennessee. There are 12 articles contained in the debate with extensive use of charts. This is a book which you will want to study in your home and keep as a reference book. The book is well bound in plastic comb binding, so that all the material may be easily referenced.

Proposition 1: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that in benevolence, Churches of Christ may relieve only saints from their treasures."

Affirm: Donnie Rader

Deny: John T. Polk

Proposition 2: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that the local congregation as directed and overseen by its elders (Phil. 1:1), is obligated in benevolence to saints and non-saints."

Affirm: John T. Polk II

Deny: Donnie V. Rader

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I AM A PREACHER'S KID

—Name withheld by request

I guess you know all about preachers' kids, don't you? They are the ones who are always so bad, and the ones who always get the precious members' kids in so much trouble. And, yes, they are often the ones who cause embarrassment to their parents and often hinder the cause of Christ, which their fathers have worked so hard to build up. While all of these things about preachers' kids are often true, let me tell you a little about what it means to be a preacher's kid. We hear an awful lot about the hardships of being in a preacher's family and how hard it is on the children, but we seldom hear about those families who are proud they are doing the work they are doing. Let me try to show you a different picture.

Many, who are children of preachers, somehow get the idea that they must live up to the "legend" that brethren have created for and about them. It is admitted readily that the pressures of being a preacher's kid are great at times, but I believe that the good things far outweigh the bad. I am glad that I am privileged to be a preacher's kid and I am thankful to God for this blessing. I am also upset, tremendously, by those who make being in a preacher's family seem like a "curse" from Satan.

I am a preacher's kid. I started off in this making problems for my parents. I made my father late for college when I was born in 1952. He gave up a promising job as a chemist after eight years in order to go to college and prepare himself to preach "full-time." It was no easy decision for him and my mother to "pull up and go," with two children and another on the way. But, it was a decision they made together and one which they have neither one regretted. I could relate a number of stories about the sacrifices they made, but paper would not hold them all. I will, however, relate a few instances.

You can really appreciate a man who does not complain about his state, however bad it is for him. I remember that my father, while in college, had only one suit (well-worn) and two white shirts, which he saved for Sunday. The reason he did not have more was because of the plenteous provisions he and Mom had made for their kids, at their expense. It seems, when it came to a choice of whom to buy something for, it was always one of us kids. Mom and Dad were not selfish. Dad preached on Sundays, often driving 100 miles, and getting paid with the change from the collection, or maybe poultry. However, he never complained about this and often turned this into a joke. He never became wealthy from preaching. He would play music on Saturday night in order to have grocery money for his family. He and Mom had it hard, but, you know, we kids never felt much of that hardship. It seems we always had enough, although we often wondered how in the world they did it.

We moved a lot. I enjoyed it immensely, but my brothers and sister hated it at times. We moved from one place because of physical danger to Dad and to us. I will admit that we kids often felt sorry for ourselves because we had to leave friends behind. But, one thing our young hard heads never considered was that Mom and Dad had friends also that they were leaving. We were unthinking when we complained and put them through the guilt of hurting their children. Looking back, we are all glad we moved around as we did because of the many permanent friendships we made, which would never have come if we had not moved. The Lord was first at all times around our house. This we were taught from the beginning.

We had a happy home. It seemed as if Mom and Dad never forgot what it was like to be young. We laughed together, wept together, and worked together. As we grew older, we began to be more demanding. We also started noticing the worried looks on our parent's faces. This was during a time when brethren thought a preacher was a subject of benevolence and that he should be willing to live on the poverty level, in order for him to be recognized as devoted. We children got jobs selling cards and papers and earned our own spending money in this manner. One precious memory was our "family night." This night was one in which everyone stayed home and enjoyed one another's company. We talked, laughed, played, and loved together. We had a glorious home relationship, but often felt as if we were suffering because we weren't like the other kids (whose homes were split and who were allowed to roam free).

Dad was always there when he was needed. He was gone on a few meetings each year, but he never let his family suffer by his absence. He heeded the advice given to him by one of his teachers that "if you lose your own, no matter how many others you convert, you have lost the world."

We enjoyed the company of other preachers and their families throughout the years. We have had the opportunity to become close friends with some of the finest people God ever put on this earth. The glorious opportunities afforded us of talking and visiting with men who cared about God's Word and who lived it is a blessing, often unique to preachers' families.

Words could never express the joy to be had from being a preacher's kid. I have many friends (also preachers' kids) who will agree with me that if it had not been for the strength made dominate in their lives, because our fathers were preachers, most of us would have probably not been as faithful to Christ as we now are. When you watch and listen to your parents shedding tears over the conduct of some brethren, when you overhear prayers offered in private for the well-being of those who are enemies of truth, until they can come back to God, and when you hear parents expressing their love and hopes for you, when you see Christianity in action, then is when you can really appreciate what true Christianity is all about. This is what helps mold you into wanting to be a Christian.

I can remember my father, sternly telling me my

wrong-doings and punishing me for it, and telling me to always face my problems head-on, no matter how hard it seems. I remember him lovingly embracing me and shedding tears with me when I had lost one of the closest friends I had ever had. These attributes are not the traits of the average man. These things come from an abiding love for things which are right and through growth spiritually, by devoting oneself to learning God's Word. These attributes come by experience with many different kinds of people.

I have heard much, of late, about mothers and fathers telling their children not to become preachers, or preachers' wives, because of all the hardships. I think this is a sorry day for the church when people have descended to this attitude. If you only knew the glorious blessings you are missing!

Those of you reading this, who are preachers' kids: Think you have it tough? Instead of feeling sorry for yourself and seeing how much you can "get into to ruin your folks," why don't you get down on your knees and thank God for the blessed opportunity you have been afforded. And while you are at it, why don't you thank your mother and father for all they have done for you. Count your blessings.

Being the child of a preacher is a blessing to be cherished. It is past time for us to realize it. It is not a curse, brethren! I will grant that many a preacher has made an unholy mess out of things in his personal life, but I maintain that this is the abuse. I have tried to relate to how good and pleasant things can be, if all work together. I was no angel, and I caused my share of heartache to my godly parents, but I know for a fact that I am as strong as I am today because of their lasting, godly influence on my life. For those things which I have done which have been wrong, I am sincerely sorry.

Let me offer some suggestions as I close this article. I believe that I can state, without reservation, that being the child of a preacher can be the greatest lot in life for a young person. But only when preachers care as much about their own as they do about others. Only when preachers realize that they are to practice what they preach, only when preachers' wives support their husbands in the work being done for truth and quit nagging and complaining about the negative and only when children appreciate the work that they and their parents are doing. It is a special honor to be a "preacher's kid." Do not waste that honor by trying to live up to the seamy picture some brethren have painted and come to expect of you.

In closing, I quote a verse my father has often quoted and which has become a favorite of mine. "CHOOSE YE THIS DAY WHOM YE SHALL SERVE, BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE SHALL SERVE THE LORD" (Josh. 24:15).

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REDEMPTION (4) For Even Me

A study of the grand central theme of the Bible, Redemption, would be incomplete without personal application. We have chosen the title to pay compliment to this and devote this entire concluding lesson. We often express the fullness of our hearts with the song "I'm Redeemed." The chorus goes, "I have been redeemed—Glory, glory, Christ is mine." One is able to sing these sentiments with any sense of appreciation contingent only upon having obeyed His will. The Gnostic philosophy, rampant in New Testament times advocated that salvation is intellectual, knowledge is salvation within itself. Colossians is the divine answer to this fallacy. Here salvation is redemption and forgiveness of sin. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14). The availability of such redemption and forgiveness is to every man, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:27-28). Paul's aim, here noted, warn every man, teach every man, present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. "Perfect" has to do with attaining of full purpose, namely redemption. Thus, present every man redeemed.

Analysis of Col. 1:15-23 results in a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ and His part in the scheme of redemption. His preeminence is shown in the relationship he sustains. His relationship to God is depicted in verse 15, "the image of the invisible God." This comports with "who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-4). Jesus is presented as the perfect manifestation of God the Father.

The word "image" is challenging when we allow it to remind us of creation. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"

(Genesis 1:26-27). Man was made that he might be the image of God. God's intent was interrupted by sin, thus man never achieved his destiny. Jesus shows what God is and what man was meant to be. In Christ is manhood as God designed it. Jesus is nothing less than the personal characteristics, the distinguishing marks of God. To see God one has but to look at Jesus Christ as he is presented in the purity of righteousness within the New Testament. Man attains to what God intended when he becomes the image of Christ, presenting himself in the purity of righteousness. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, By the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

In His relationship to creation, Christ is "firstborn" (Col. 1:15). "Firstborn" not in the sense of time but honor. Such was commonly a title of honor as with Israel, "firstborn of God" (Ex. 4:22), denoting favored, chosen, highly honored. Such is used as a title of Messiah, "I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Psa. 89:27). Thus, the highest honor creation holds belongs to the Son of God. God the Father has given him that place of honor, completely unique. The passage continues, all things were created by him and for him (Col. 1:16), visible and invisible. He, Christ, is the word force in creation. Not only is he the agent in creation but he is also the goal and the end of creation, "created unto him." The creation was to be his and was to glorify him (v. 17). In Him all things consist, that is, cohere, hold together. The idea is, the one who is the beginning and goal of creation is the one who is between, holding it together.

In his relationship to the church, Christ is the head of the body (Col. 1:18). The church as the body of Christ over which He is head is the organism through which He acts. Jesus Christ is the guiding, directing, dominating spirit of the church. Every act and word must be governed by him. As man can neglect and abuse his body by prostituting its purity, so the church. "He is the beginning" in the sense of time, the originating power. He is the source of its life, the director of her continuing activities. "Firstborn from the dead" punctuates the center and heart in the consummation of God's plan for redemption. Jesus Christ is a living presence and not a dead hero or a past founder. The result is that he has the supremacy in all. Resurrection demonstrated His conquest of every enemy and that triumph gives Him right to be Lord of all.

In his relation to sin and sinner (Col. 1:20). The very object of his coming was reconciliation, redemption. The chasm between man and God needed to be bridged. The initiative was with God, man needed to be reconciled, the need was with man. The medium of reconciliation is the blood of Christ. "Spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9). In the death of Jesus, God is saying: I love you like that; I love you enough to see my son

suffer and die for you; enough to bear the cross on my heart if only it will win you. The cross is proof there is no length to which God will not go to win the human heart. If the cross will not stir to love and wonder-then my friend, what?

The scope of reconciliation is "all things". All things that need redemption, sinners. Those alienated by sin, through the blood of His cross, can be reconciled and restored to holiness (v. 22). The gospel is the message of reconciliation, the message of salvation, the basis of hope for every man who will submit to its requirements (v. 23). Every soul thus redeemed is in the church, the body of Christ (v.24). Redeemed, yes, even me. Even you. In Christ, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7), when found and accepted by the obedience of faith. God be thanked.

27 DAYS ON PALAWAN; 138 BAPTIZED

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During the last two weeks of February and the first two weeks of March, 1981, I was involved in an extensive preaching and teaching tour on the island of Palawan in the Philippines. I was accompanied by brother John McCort, who preaches for the church in Greencastle, Indiana. The effort was financed by two churches, the Mulvane church of Christ, in Mulvane, Kansas, where I labor; and the church in Greencastle.

The island of Palawan is sometimes called "the last frontier" in the Philippines. It is the western most island in the Philippine group; it is bordered to the east by the Sulu Sea, and to the west by the South China Sea. Palawan is directly east of Viet Nam, about 800 miles. Life on the island is very primitive. There is no electricity except in three of the major cities; just a few miles of paved roads on the island, and many other signs of primitive culture and lack of development. All of that is changing, though, due to the discovery of oil off the coast of the island. Rapid industrialization and development is expected on Palawan over the next ten years.

The Lord's church was planted on the island about 20 years ago, in the city of Narra. From there the gospel spread south, and then north, due largely to the efforts of brother Alfredo Agbisit. Over the past eight years, there has been rapid growth on Palawan. At present, there are a little over twenty congregations on the island. In some of the remote villages, the church of Christ is the only established religion.

Our trip to the Philippines was limited to this one area, the island of Palawan. We arrived on the island Feb. 17 and stayed there until Mar. 16. Most of the time, we stayed with the brethren in their primitive huts; our accommodations were drastically different

from what we are adjusted to in this country, but their hospitality was more than generous. We were taken back into remote areas in the Philippine "jungle" where American preachers had not ventured before.

Results indicate that this approach was effective; 138 SOULS WERE BAPTIZED DURING THIS 27 DAY TRIP! In addition, lectureships for church members were conducted and training sessions were given for gospel preachers. It was as successful as we had prayed for, reminiscent of Acts 11:21, "... And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord."

The work on Palawan went through **FOUR PHASES**. First, the **Salagon phase**: we stayed in the village of Salagon in the home of brother Teddy Beltran. We conducted lectureships and gospel meetings in Salagon and went out to some of the little villages in the area. We spent twelve days in Salagon. Next, the **Brooke's Point phase**: we stayed in the home of brother Platon Mabunga, who preaches for the Seaside church of Christ. We conducted a two day lectureship on the work of the local church, and we went out to Lada and Caramay. Third, the **Narra phase**: we stayed in Narra five days. A lectureship on Christian living was given at the Narra church building, and we went out to Tagda-o, Aramaywan, Plaridel and San-doval. Fourth, the **Puerto Princessa City phase**: we conducted a lectureship on Religious Error and had a meeting with the Palawan preachers.

Except for the routine difficulties, we remained in good health throughout the journey. We arrived back home on the 18th of March, thankful to God for His protection and for the opportunity on Palawan.

Economics

We only visited the island of Palawan on this trip, so I cannot give a report about the economic situation in the Manila area or on Luzon. I can tell what we saw on Palawan.

We didn't see any rich preachers! We saw some preachers who existed on a "hand-to-mouth" basis; we spent two weeks with a faithful preacher whose jeepney literally falls apart as he drives over the rough roads of Palawan; others have sick children without funds to seek medical attention; and some have recently lost all their support. But we didn't see any rich preachers.

How much support should Filipino preachers get? This has been the subject of controversy in recent months, and the figure of \$150 per month has been suggested. We saw evidence that in some cases \$150 per month isn't enough. Many of the preachers on Palawan need to travel around to visit various places, so the cost of transportation must be allowed for. We checked prices of basic commodities in the market places, and some of them were about the same as price levels here. We saw daily inflation, and exorbitant educational expenses for preachers with children in high school. Then, when we came back through Manila on our return trip, we contacted the U.S. Embassy. We discussed the economic situation on Palawan with a Mr. Stone, assistant to the Labor Attache. We gave

him this situation: A man with a wife and three children (one in high school), who must travel through southern Palawan to meet preaching appointments. Would a total of \$200 be too much support for this man? "Certainly not," he said. We gave him the figures which have been used to prove that the \$150 level is adequate, and this was his response: "These figures look about right, but you have to remember something. In the Philippines, the rule is **EVERYBODY SUPPLEMENTS HIS INCOME!**" So a jeepney driver who makes (net, after expenses) \$100 per month, probably does some farming to make another \$50 and his wife probably works to bring in another \$60. Also, he explained that living expenses varied considerably from place to place; so what might be a fair salary on Luzon could be inadequate on Palawan. Given these facts, it looks like each man's individual circumstance, work and location must be taken into account in setting the support level.

Our Approach

In the past, when American preachers have gone to the Philippines, several different places have been visited within a few weeks. Perhaps a three or four day stay in one area would be the average. I'm certainly not going to say that this isn't a good approach. Much good has been accomplished by men who have used this approach. Our approach was different, and the results seem to suggest that it has value.

We spent all of our time in one area, on one island. We arrived on the island of Palawan on Feb. 17 and we stayed there until our Mar. 16 departure day. This approach has some definite advantages:

First, it is very cost-effective. Less money is spent traveling from island to island. Second, it gives more time to spend teaching and preaching. Third, it gives you a better opportunity to get acquainted with the brethren and learn about the preachers, the conditions and the problems in a given area.

One more point concerning our approach. Where possible, we lived with the brethren. Of the 27 days we spent on Palawan, only five were spent in a hotel. The rest of the time we stayed with the brethren in their primitive huts; we ate with them and slept in some pretty uncivilized conditions. This gave us a real understanding of their way of life, and they really appreciated our "getting down to their level" if only for a few weeks. (We also saved a lot of money in hotel bills.)

Conclusion

I hope this information will be of some value to those involved in or interested in the Lord's cause in the Philippines, Palawan in particular. There are obstacles there, but much good is being done through the hands of faithful men.

Please Renew Promptly!

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

Rodney Miller

15 W. Par St.
Orlando, FL 32804



LET US RISE UP AND BUILD Leadership — Nehemiah's Serious Commitment To Teaching, Nehemiah 8.

Once the walls were rebuilt and the temple restored, Nehemiah saw the need to move from the tangibles to the intangibles. While his feat of rebuilding the walls was one of staggering proportions, he knew the job was not yet finished. He saw beyond the needs founded on stone, mortar and muscle. He saw the needs of the heart and soul. Therefore, here lies the power of Nehemiah as a teacher and a leader for God's people. The real test of his leadership was in his ability to shift from the tangible work of rebuilding the walls to the renewing of the minds and hearts of the people spiritually. The proof of the difficulty of this shift in emphasis is clearly seen in our world today. How many times have God's people done the impossible to meet their physical needs, such as building a meeting house. They scraped, saved, gave, and worked beyond belief, to be able to construct a meeting house. People would give of their time night after night in back-breaking work of painting, hanging dry wall or laying blocks. Brethren have borrowed money at the bank and given it to the work, and made monthly payments to the bank, so that we might have a house in which the church could assemble. All of this is wonderful and as it should be. Still, there is another step necessary to the work in God's kingdom.

The next step is Nehemiah's commitment to spiritual renewal. How many times have we, after this great sacrifice to build a building (equivalent to building the walls), then simply sat down, congratulated ourselves, and forgotten about the spiritual work necessary to teach, study, and work to fill that building with souls who want to confess His name. After the physical work, Nehemiah demonstrated his all-out commitment to teaching. In Chapter 8 Ezra stood on a wooden platform before the Water Gate (v. 3) "from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand and ALL THE PEOPLE were attentive to the Book of the Law. Then in Verse 8, ' they read from the Book, from the LAW OF GOD, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading."

Nehemiah was seriously committed to teaching God's Word. You see, teaching doesn't take place until learning is accomplished. Nehemiah knew that Israel had to learn God's will if they were to survive in the city of Jerusalem. He knew and understood the need of

teaching in order to complete the task of restoration. It was not enough just to build a building or restore the walls! It was not until there was spiritual rebirth or renewal that Israel could truly be the children of God. We must be the children of God. We must see the need today for spiritual renewal in the church. Of course we must be doctrinally sound. However, one could be doctrinally sound and still miss the heart of my Lord. Therefore, the leaders today must be committed to teaching God's truth so that the people might understand. As observations are made, we can't help but wonder. Do we just give lip service as our form of "commitment" to teaching? Are we really serious about teaching? There are evidences that seem to point to the fact that maybe we are only "going through the motions."

Are We Serious?

Leaders, are we serious about teaching? The Scriptures let us know we must be serious. Matt. 28:18-20: "Go make disciples (teach them to become) and baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things.

Notice the emphasis placed on teaching in the Great Commission. First, we must teach to make disciples. The Book of Acts is an historical account of how the New Testament church went about to do this teaching. It tells us what the divinely directed message was: the resurrection. It tells who the appointed messengers were: the believers. And it also tells us how the message is to be presented. For example, in Acts 17:30, 31 Paul shows the outline that ought to be used in teaching others: (1) You need to repent. (2) Why? Because of a universal judgment. (3) Prove it! Because God resurrected His Son. Therefore, when the New Testament instructs us to teach the unbeliever, it furnishes the what, the who, and the HOW!

But notice again in this great commission passage that once the unbeliever is baptized we are not finished teaching. We are to start again, "teaching them to observe all things." This emphasis on teaching by the Lord is not a new development that on the spur of the moment He decided to introduce. This teaching mission of His kingdom is seen over and over again in the Old Testament kingdom prophecies. For example, Micah 4:2 talks about going up to the mountain of the Lord. . . that He may TEACH us about His ways. Also, in Isaiah 11:9 the prophecy is made that the "earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA." These are just two of many Old Testament scriptures which speak of the function of teaching in the New Testament. Then, because we find the Lord placing this stamp of divine direction upon them, we know of their importance.

We all know how important teaching really is in the church. We all know that evangelism is reaching the lost and making disciples. We all know that edification is the maturation of the saints. The teaching of ALL things was commanded after the disciples were baptized. So the real question is if we all KNOW IT, WHY AREN'T WE DOING IT? How can we as preachers, elders, and Bible class teachers live with ourselves?

How can we look in the mirror and know that in so many cases we are failing on this point with no attempt to improve?

What About Where I Worship?

Do we think that church is a game that we play by changing the rules over and over again to suit our conveniences? A recent survey in CHRISTIAN BIBLE TEACHER quotes from a bulletin on teaching, published by Sweet Publication, which shows that "AS FEW AS FIVE PERCENT OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST make any SERIOUS EFFORT AT ONGOING TRAINING."

Stop with me for a moment and reflect on this statement. First of all, both publications mentioned are published by our "institutional" brethren, and the statistics compiled are from institutional churches. However, what is significant concerning this is one pertinent fact. These institutional brethren in many cases have exceeded us in zeal and dedication to teaching. While we feel there are basic principles that need correction, few can question the dedication and fervor with which they have applied themselves to the task. As a matter of fact, it has been the case too often that it was this zeal to teach the lost that gave birth to the "end justifies the means." Yet, if they see "only FIVE PERCENT growth in "ongoing teacher training", where do we appear?

Where are we in the area of personal evangelism? What about this area of making disciples in the first place? As a preacher or member, do you dare ask all present in the Lord's Day morning assembly to raise their hands if they have not been a member of the church for more than a year? How many new souls are we baptizing per year? As one brother said, "New souls? We can't even reach our own children." Can we look in the mirror and say to ourselves, • "YES, I AM serious about teaching the lost?" If we were really serious about it, as serious as the Lord is, we would have seen the harvest long before now. Instead, we have chosen to blame the times and the society. But who really believes that things are worse today than in the cesspools of Ephesus and Corinth? It is time to quit blaming the sinner because he doesn't want to be saved. It is time to blame ourselves because we stopped wanting to find him.

Secondly, in the realm of teaching the disciples to observe all things, are we really serious? "Well, we once had a teacher training session on Friday night and Saturday. Nobody came or showed much interest, so we haven't done it again." EXACTLY! However, most congregations have never even had one single teacher training study. Many congregations have absolutely no plan at all as to what ought to be taught, who is to teach it, how it ought to be taught, and what results they want when it is taught. How many congregations have seen entire generations of teenagers bolt for the door the minute they have the freedom to break away from parental supervision? The church cannot replace the teaching in the home, but it can equip the home to do the job it ought to do. Our Bible classes can and should be a refreshing and up-lifting experience in-

stead of an exercise in boredom! We can both live our own lives and teach in such a way as to prepare our young minds for living in a crooked and perverse world.

"Oh, we think teaching is important," is a feeble cry often heard. Let us see how important it is. We, generally speaking, spend our money on what we consider most important. When the air-conditioning system in the auditorium breaks down, we will somehow turn up with \$5,000 or \$6,000 to get a new system put in. When the lawnmower breaks down, we will spend several hundred dollars to get the grass cut. Some brethren even spend money to have a gospel meeting twice a year. But, how much money, during the history of the church, has been spent on teacher training? Why don't we get out the old check books and add it all up? How much money has been spent on equipment and material necessary to teach? How many congregations have a room set aside as a library or research center so the teachers can use the materials they need to prepare a class? How many classrooms are dull, drab, and filled in the corners with mops, brooms, or old mimeographed outlines of sermons that were left behind by some preacher in the past? Often times the teenage girls or new converts are put into the 3-year old class to "baby sit, because these little ones are too young to learn anything yet any way." As leaders of the flock, men find themselves as Spiritual Educators, and yet they may not have the foggiest idea of what it takes to be a good first thru third grade Bible teacher!

Are we really serious? Needless to say, we can't know the heart of another, but the fruit we bear is a dead give-away that in too many places we are just playing church and making up the rules as we go. With this kind of attitude there will never be a true spiritual renewal.

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THREE MISUNDERSTOOD MEN

Some things seem to come in threes. Three in the Godhead; three on the mountain of transfiguration and some have been led to believe three wise men visited the infant Jesus. I want to discuss three well known preachers who say they were misunderstood. There is a striking analogy between certain men of the second and third apostasies. They have one thing in common and that is they claim they were misunderstood. The real question is were these men really misunderstood or did they acquiesce to error and then become too obdurate to admit it? You will have to be the judge.

Man number one is that great preacher of a by-gone era, Alexander Campbell. According to history. Jacob Creath Jr., the so-called "Iron Duke" of the restoration, was Campbell's friend and colleague. It was in April of 1828 that these two met on a road between Wellsburg and Bethany, West Virginia. Campbell was hauling logs and Creath was riding his famous white horse. They became close friends and later went on a preaching tour which led them as far south as Nashville, Tennessee. It was but natural that they would discuss the work and organization of the church. Campbell had denounced both the Missionary and Bible Societies in his paper, *The Christian Baptist*. Creath was firmly convinced by both the writings and conversations of Campbell that he would oppose any kind of society within the confines of the church.

However, he was in for the surprise of his life. In 1849 when the American Christian Missionary Society got off the ground, Campbell threw his support behind the society. What really happened? Did Creath and others really misunderstand Campbell and the position he espoused or did he change? These are important questions which possibly only eternity will settle. When Creath and others asked Campbell why he had changed, he denied that he had changed but argued that he had only opposed the abuse of the societies. However, he failed to convince the "Iron Duke" and others that he had never changed. It was the conviction of Creath and others that Campbell had surrounded himself with young, liberal preachers such as Isaac Errett, F. S. Burnett, Robert Richardson and W. K. Pendleton. They felt these men had a tremendous influence on Campbell in his latter years. Campbell died in 1866 and Robert Richardson was busy writing his memoirs. Some have said that if that book had been written twenty years earlier that it would

have been much different! Men change but God remains the same. The liberal brethren who wrote the memoirs of Campbell snubbed Creath and hardly mentioned his name in the book. Creath was hurt by this and wrote a letter to Richardson in 1871 asking for an explanation. Richardson ignored his letter and Creath died January 9, 1886 exactly twenty years after the death of Campbell. They both await the resurrection and the Lord who will settle the question as to whether Campbell was really misunderstood.

Now let us drop down the stream of time about one hundred years. I moved to Ft. Smith, Arkansas in the early fifties. About that time, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. used his potent pen to editorialize a fine little paper called Torch. Foy said, "It would fit the pocket or purse". I helped Foy get subscriptions for his paper because I thought I understood what he stood for and believed he was teaching the truth. He wrote me a note of appreciation. As a lad, I had heard him defeat Dr. Webber in a debate in Oklahoma City. I listened to him preach and like Creath, I felt he took a firm stand against the Orphan Homes, sponsoring churches, and colleges dipping their hands into the church treasuries. As a matter of fact, as a young preacher, I learned much of what I now preach from the lips and life of Foy E. Wallace. For example, my conviction on the stand of brother Wallace was based on articles such as this one which appeared in the Gospel Advocate in May 14, 1931, which reads: "For one church to help another church bear its own burdens, therefore, has scriptural precedent. But for one church to solicit funds from other churches for general distribution in other fields or places thus becoming the treasury of other churches, is quite a different question. Such procedure makes a sort of society out of the elders of a local church, and for there is no scriptural precedent or example."

As gospel preachers by the dozens read such articles, they came to the conclusion that Foy E. Wallace was opposed to these innovations. Well, we were in for the surprise of our lives. In his latter years, brother Wallace came out strong denying that he ever opposed these innovations. He, like Campbell, said, "he only opposed the ABUSE of them". You can imagine the dismay on the part of many of us when we read this report. Now for the big question—Were we as young preachers so crass that we did not understand what this man was saying? Or as many felt about Campbell, did he surround himself with men and circumstances which caused a change? It is not my purpose to speak disparagingly of these men. Again, we await the judgment to settle this big question.

Man number three takes me back to the hills of Oklahoma. As a boy, I listened to Guy N. Woods as he preached in my home town of Tuttle, Oklahoma. I always considered Guy as a good preacher. He was not dynamic, like Foy, but a good solid preacher. Brother Woods did not come out as forcefully against the orphan asylums and sponsoring churches as brother Wallace but he did speak his peace. As a matter of fact, he spoke so firmly that I thought he would oppose these innovations if they ever raised their ugly heads

in the church. Here again, I was in for the surprise of my life. For example, he made his famous (or should I say infamous) speech at Abilene Christian College in 1946 when he said, "The ship of Zion has floundered more than once on the sandbar of institutionalism. The tendency to organize is a characteristic of the age. On the theory that the end justifies the means, brethren have not scrupled to form organizations in the church to do the work the church itself was designed to do. All such organizations usurp the work of the church, and are unnecessary and sinful."

Now, kind friend, if you had read the above as a young, fair-minded preacher, what conclusion would you have drawn? Well, scads of them believed brother Woods would oppose any innovations in the church. Again, we were in for the surprise of our lives. When the chips were down and the church was baptized with encroachments, brother Woods threw his support behind them. When asked about his former position, he opined that he intended to oppose only the abuse of the institutions and that he was misunderstood.

Kind neighbor, isn't it strange that here are three men who all claim the same thing? Did their colleagues really misunderstand them? Was their writing on these subjects so euphemistic that the average person could not understand? I cannot believe these men were nebulous when they wrote on these vital subjects. The big question is were these men really misunderstood? Judgment day will the real story!

"A Second Putting Away" — A Review

**Daniel P. May
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In the January, 1981, edition of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*, pp. 15, 16, bro. J. T. Smith wrote, "A Second Putting Away." He dealt with the subject of divorce and remarriage, as it applies to those who were divorced for a reason other than fornication, and one partner remarries. Specifically he dealt with the question, "Do the Scriptures authorize the other partner to NOW "put away" the other and be in a position to remarry without committing sin? I agree with much of what bro. Smith said. I feel, however, that he did not go far enough. Let me say at the outset that I do not claim to be an expert on the subject of divorce and remarriage. I do believe that the Bible is written in such a way that it can be understood by all. Therefore, if we can all rid ourselves of preconceived opinions and emotions, and approach this subject of divorce and remarriage in a common-sense manner, we will all be able to understand it too. The purpose, then, of this article is to respond to his concluding question, "What do you say?" (It would be good for the reader to go back and re-read bro. Smith's article before continuing.)

Before we begin, let us lay some very simple ground-

work. First, that the only marriage or divorce that God will sanction is one that is legal and scriptural in His sight. Therefore the only persons God recognizes as being candidates for marriage are those who, 1. Fulfill the legal requirements of the civil government, AND 2. Fulfill the scriptural requirements, namely, one who has never married, one whose mate has died, or one who was the "innocent party" in an adulterated marriage and "put away" the mate for that cause. On the other hand, the only persons God recognizes as being candidates for divorce are those who, 1. Fulfill the legal requirements of the civil government, AND 2. Fulfill the scriptural requirements, namely, being a member of an adulterated marriage.

Now let us look at this subject of a "second putting away". As the case was stated in the above mentioned article, husband #1 and wife #1 were married, "bound in the sight of God." This means, I take it, that they had fulfilled both the legal and scriptural requirements of that union in God's sight. "They decide they are incompatible. . . by mutual consent or by one being the aggressor in the matter, a "putting away" resulting in a civil declaration of the same as the situation ends in a divorce."

We want to note here that a "putting away" did NOT take place in God's sight. The reason being that they did not fulfill the scriptural requirement as set forth in Mt. 5:32, and 19:9. They only fulfilled the legal requirements of the "putting away". They are now neither married legally nor divorced scripturally. For civil government to recognize them as married they would have to fulfill the legal requirements of marriage. For God to recognize them as divorced they would have to fulfill the scriptural requirements as stated above.

Bro. Smith's Article now shows that wife #1 marries husband #2. The condition of this last relationship is expressed correctly, they are committing adultery. Why? Because she has not been divorced from her husband, both legally and scripturally. If she had been, there would be no relationship left to adulterate or corrupt.

He goes on to remark, "Now comes the difficult part. Do the Scriptures authorize husband #1 to NOW "put away "his wife for adultery and be in a position to remarry without committing sin? He further states that many would "immediately" answer "Yes". On the other hand, we would have to note, many would immediately answer "No". Neither group is correct in immediately giving an unqualified answer.

If husband #1 was "innocent" in the case of the divorce in the civil courts (In other words, he was NOT the aggressor, did NOT want the divorce, or, as can so often happen, his spouse ran to Reno for a "quackie" divorce and beat him to it) and he can see NO cause on his part for the divorce, would not his wife's "remarriage" constitute adultery? If not, why not? the "putting away" of his wife for adultery is not a "second" putting away, but rather a God-recognized "putting away".

If, as bro. Smith states, both parties desire the divorce, are mutually pushing and working towards it,

then 1 Cor. 7:10-11, is the correct scripture to be applied.

The argument concerning the husband being a "ruthless, drunkard" stands here because he "caused" the divorce, and "caused" his wife to commit adultery, and therefore became an "accessory to the crime". In no way could he now "put her away" and re-marry, claiming to be the "innocent party".

The Bible does not teach a "second putting away". It does, however, teach one God-recognized "putting away" and when the requirements of it are fulfilled it may be done and the "innocent" party may marry again without committing sin.

Using Great Plainness
of Speech

J. T. Smith

3433 Studebaker Road
Long Beach, CA 90808



DANIEL P. MAY'S REVIEW OF "A SECOND PUTTING AWAY"

Found elsewhere in this issue of *Searching the Scriptures* is an article by brother Daniel P. May reviewing an article of mine in the January issue of *Searching The Scriptures* on a "Second Putting Away." I am in perfect agreement with the majority of what brother May says. However, as is the case much of the time, he, along with others, wants to depend on human reasoning rather than the Scriptures for their conclusions. Please read his article and compare what he has said with my reply.

It seems to me that the only difference we have is whether or not God recognizes "a putting away" that is not for fornication. I believe brother May's mistake is with the fact that even though God does recognize the "putting away" where no fornication is involved, He does not authorize remarriage as a result of it. However, according to the last paragraph of brother May's article, he says that the "second putting away" is not a second putting away at all. Instead, brother May wants the last one to be right because the one now doing the putting away did not want the first "putting away" which he says God did not recognize.

I believe many are missing the point of what the Bible says because they want to interject motives (the husband or wife not wanting the divorce and begging the other not to go through with the divorce). However, I find nothing like that in the Scriptures. To me this seems comparable to the case of the man on his way to be baptized and a tree limb falls on him and kills him. Whatever the judge of all the earth wants to do about the situation is left up to Him. That is His business, not mine. All I can do is tell the person who

asks about this situation what Jesus said in His Word. Jesus said that one must be baptized before he can be saved. I can guess what the Lord may do because of the man's attitude and his desire to obey the truth. But when all is said and done, all I can do is tell the person what the Lord said in His Word about salvation and when one receives it.

The same thing is true with the divorce and remarriage situation. For it is not as if God has left us with neither "chart nor compass" on this subject, for His Word is very clear.

Luke 16:18

"Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery:..."

Let's stop just here and make a few observations. Jesus said the husband "put her away" thus Jesus recognized the "putting away." Did the wife want or not want to be "put away"? I do not know, for Jesus did not say. However, now that we can all agree, according to what Jesus said, that the husband is committing adultery, why didn't He tell us that the wife may now put the adulterous husband away, and that she could remarry without committing sin? Instead, note what He did say.

". . .and whosoever marrieth her which is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

My friends, if you are going to have a situation where God does not recognize the first "putting away" but only after the remarriage recognizes the "putting away," then you will have to find another passage that authorizes such. And I do not know of such a passage. Otherwise, just stay with what the Scriptures say, and when you do that, you will say with the Lord. "Whosoever marrieth her which is put away from her husband (even though Jesus said he had remarried and was committing adultery) committeth adultery" — Period! And trying to change what Jesus said about it because of someone's motives does not change at all what Jesus actually said.

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IS THE RETURN OF CHRIST IMMINENT?

Matthew 24 (Part 1)

Greg Litmer
334 Muntz St.
Hillsboro, OH 45133

As we all know, we live in a time when the majority of the religious world is caught up in the whirlwind of Premillennialism. One particular aspect of this teaching is currently getting a tremendous amount of attention and that is that the return of Christ is imminent. Many of the more publicized preachers in the world have adopted this idea and have made it an integral part of their teaching. Men like Morris Cerullo, Billy Graham, Hal Lindsay, and many others have had a vast influence upon the thinking of the masses. The cry is that the return of Christ is just around the corner, that it is imminent, and for proof these men point to what they call the "signs of the times". Their primary source for this teaching is the 24th chapter of the gospel according to Matthew. Here, we are told, are the signs of the times. Here, we are told, is the proof that the return of our Lord is imminent.

Matthew 24 is in many respects a most difficult passage to understand, but it contains a few statements that will make the matter much clearer when properly understood. In order to grasp the meaning of this passage, we need to notice the circumstances surrounding the teaching of Jesus in this chapter. Verses 1 / 2 supplies that for us. That passage says, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Notice now, that the statement Jesus made in verse 2 was in reference to the temple, and that statement prompted the questions of the apostles recorded in verse 3. Understanding verse 3 is essential if we are to understand the remainder of the chapter. Verse 3 reads as follows, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

By reading the parallel passages in Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7, we can see that the apostles wanted to know essentially two things. They wanted to know when the things spoken of by Jesus in verse 2 would take place and they wanted to know what signs would tell them that it was coming. Obviously in the minds of the apostles the destruction of the temple of God would be such a tremendous occurrence that it would be at the end of the world, that it would be part of the cessation

of all things as they presently existed. Considering the emphasis placed upon the temple in Judaism their reaction is quite understandable. In the remainder of the chapter, however, Jesus shows that the destruction of the temple and the end of the world are not one and the same. Jesus answers their questions by speaking first of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, telling when it would occur and the signs that would accompany it. Secondly, Jesus spoke of the end of the world, His return, and He makes it clear that no one knows when that will happen and that no signs will be given as a warning. That leads us to the next of the verses essential to our understanding of this chapter, that is verse 34.

Verse 34 has been called by various writers the "time text" and that is a fitting name for it clearly identifies when the events recorded in the first part of chapter 24 were to occur. Jesus said in verse 34, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." What did Jesus mean by the word "generation"? According to Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* He meant, "-----the whole multitude of men living at the same time." By using the adjective, "this", to modify generation, Jesus showed that He meant the generation living when He spoke those words. The events of Matthew 24:5-34 were to occur before the present generation, the one living when Jesus spoke those words, passed away. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 70 A.D. and the first part of Matthew 24 was fulfilled with that destruction.

Verse 35 of Matthew 24 acts as an assurance that the things that Jesus said concerning the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, as well as the signs that would accompany it, were a certainty. They would come to pass.

Let's turn our attention now to verse 36, another of the essential verses to our understanding this chapter. This verse marks a change in the subject matter and Jesus begins on the second part of His response to the apostles. Jesus has spoken concerning the destruction of the temple, He has told the apostles when it would happen and what the signs would be leading up to it. Now the attention of our Lord is turned to something else. Verse 36 says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." The terms "that day and hour" are used numerous times in the New Testament to refer to the return of the Lord in final judgment. Consider Matt. 7:22 where we read, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" The reference here is obviously to the return of Jesus and final judgment. Consider John 5:28-29 which says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." These are just two of many such usages in the New Testament. Others are Matt. 11:22, 1 Thess. 5:2, 2 Thess. 1:10, 2 Tim. 1:18, and 2 Tim. 4:8.

It is interesting and important to note that these passages we have mentioned deal with the second coming and refer to it as "that day", or "the day", or "the hour". It is always singular, it is always the word day or hour, just as it is used in verses 36-51 of Matthew 24. It is not the word days, plural, as used in Matt. 24:5-34. It is obvious that Jesus has turned His attention from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple with the signs accompanying it, to His return in final judgment.

Perhaps it would be good to look at a few more points of contrast between the first section of chapter 24, the part that deals with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (v. 5-34), and the second section that deals with the return of our Lord in final judgment (v. 36-51). In the first section we find that definite signs were to precede the event, the time is identifiable. On the other hand the second section tells us "but of that day and hour knoweth no man," the time of it's occurrence is unidentifiable. In the first section, the time preceding the destruction of Jerusalem would be filled with unusual events such as wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. In the second section the return of our Lord would be heralded by no unusual events, times would be normal with people marrying, eating and drinking just as they always do. Also in the first section there would be time for flight when the signs

were recognized. In the second section there would be no time for flight. These are just a few of the many contrasts between the two events discussed in Matthew 24.

In the next article we will discuss the specific signs spoken about by Jesus in the first section of Matthew 24.

Attention—Nashville Area Readers

Issues That Divide Us

New Shackle Island Rd.
Church of Christ
Hendersonville, Tennessee

**August 3-7
7:30 P.M.**

Speaker: Connie W. Adams

This meeting has been planned to provide a study of the issues over which brethren have divided in the last 30 years. We hope brethren from throughout middle Tennessee will support this effort.

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

"... They rehearsed all that God had done with them ..."—Acts 14:27

Send all News Items to: Wilson Adams, 317 Trinkle Ave., N.E., Roanoke, VA 24012

SOUTHSIDE LECTURESHIP

MT. PLEASANT, TX—The church located at 815 S. Jefferson in Mt. Pleasant is planning a lectureship June 14-18 on the theme of "Jesus, Savior." Homer Hailey, Leon Goff, Harry Pickup, Jr., and James L. Sloan will be the speakers. Monday through Thursday there will be three lessons in the mornings. The evening service begins at 7:30 each night. R. J. Stevens will direct the song service.

Reconciliation

T. ALAN BENEDICT, 7054 Winnetka Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91306. It is with gratitude and praise to God that we share with you the following. On Sunday, March 28, 1981 there was a joint meeting of the Winnetka Ave. church of Canoga Park and the Valley Circle congregation of Woodland Hills. The meeting was conducted at the Winnetka Ave. building. Because of excellent attitudes on the part of both congregations and confession of wrong doing with forgiveness requested from God and one another, a planned reconciliation became a reality. Both congregations realized the problem had been too long a plague on the Lord's work in this area, and all expressed great joy when the burden was lifted. When in the San Fernando Valley, worship with the three congregations that are standing for the Lord: Winnetka Ave., Valley Circle, and Lassen St.

New Congregations

WICHITA, KS—A new work has begun in Wichita. This congregation is made up mostly of young married Christians with attendance in the mid-forties. At the present we are renting the IOOF hall located in south Wichita at Hydraulic and Wassail. Anyone wishing to make contact with this new congregation can call Gene Valdois at 524-3849, or Walt Schreiner at 945-9260. Or

write to 2726 Crawford, Wichita, KS 67217. The times of services are 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. If you know of anyone in this area please contact us that we might meet and encourage them.

HOUSTON, TX—A new congregation began meeting January 27, 1980 in the Spring Branch area west of Houston. We are meeting at the Creative Care Children's School at 9709 Long Point. We welcome brethren traveling through Houston or moving to this area to meet with us. Our services are at 10 / 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sundays and 7:30 on Wednesdays. For directions or information call (713) 492-0566 or 465-1383. I have served as preacher for this group since its beginning. Kent Ellis, 1346 Park Meadow Dr., Katy, TX 77450.

Preachers Needed

OCEAN SPRINGS, MS—The church here is in need of a full-time preacher. The congregation is one year old; having started with 12 members and now averaging 30 in attendance. We have a fine meeting place and are able to support a man \$200 per week. We are interested in a preacher who is interested in working. Conservative works are few in southern Mississippi but we aim to change that. Contact Leo Hastings, Hwy 90 E. Ocean Springs, MS 39564.

WESLACO, TX—The church here is in need of a gospel preacher. If interested contact Bob Dodd at 310 S. Texas, Weslaco, TX 78596. Or phone (512) 968-9525 or (512) 565-1874.

TOM MOODY, P.O. Box 2, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Since January Bro. Murphy Priestly has been working with us helping with some

of our needs in preaching and teaching while gaining experience as a gospel preacher. He is being supported by the 77th St. church in Birmingham, AL where he was a member prior to coming to Jacksonville. Murphy is scheduled to be with us through August. At that time he would like to begin several more months on a training basis with another congregation. He has been glad to receive instruction and has also been a hard worker, preaching frequently, teaching a regular class, doing door to door work, and setting up and teaching in home studies. If you are looking for a young man to help develop as a preacher who can also be of help to you, contact Murphy Priestly, Rt. 4, Box 115, Trailer 9, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Phone (205) 435-3836.

The church at Jacksonville will be needing a full-time preacher when I move later this summer. The church is small, the work difficult; but Jacksonville is a growing community and I am convinced much good can be done here. Full support is available. We have recently moved into a new building which provides plenty of room for growth. If interested write us at P.O. Box 2, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Or call (205) 435-9479 or (205) 820-9548.

CLARENCE F. HOUGHLAND, 2115 10th Ave., Safford, AZ 85546 I am writing to let you know of the work here in eastern Arizona. This work began in 1978 and is the only sound church within an 80 mile radius. Having begun in my home we are now meeting in a rented school cafeteria for Sunday services. We do not have a preacher. If interested in working with the church here in Safford please contact us. Attendance averages 8 to 10. There is much work to do and we encourage anyone visiting this area or planning to move here, to worship with us at 1100 10th Ave., Safford, AZ 85546. Or contact me at (602) 428-5396.

JIMMY TUTEN, 7911 Country Dr., Mobile, AL 36609. For several years three faithful members of the church living in Lucedale, MS have been driving 25 miles one way to Mobile for services. Others from across the state line have visited with us from time to time. Three weeks ago two sisters from this same area identified with us. As a result plans are underway to begin a faithful church in Lucedale. We have decided to first start a Thursday night class in that area until there is sufficient evidence of strength to begin permanently meeting on Sundays. Since our last report there have been several responses to the invitation. Fruit continues to come from personal work in Mobile. At present I am in need of some extra support.

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C.C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America. I am certainly happy to be able to let you know of our activities for the cause of Christ in this place. The work here continues to prosper. On February 24 Bro. Carlos Capelli arrived here for two weeks to preach. During our gospel meeting with Carlos we were greatly edified and a number of visitors attended each night. We rejoiced to see two men obey the gospel during this effort. I continue to have Bible studies in different homes. Recently we had Bro. Nestor Sanchez from Chile to speak for us on two occasions. We request your prayers.

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)
