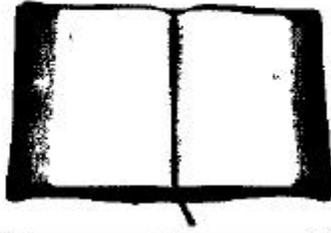


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES



Search the Scriptures; for in them ye shall find 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.

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H. E. Phillips

"And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2). This was said of Christ because the Publicans and sinners drew near to hear him. The Lord then taught a series of parables to show that his mission was to save these people.

Today a man is frequently marked because he is seen in the presence of one who is not what he should be. There are times and circumstances when we should avoid the company of sinful persons, but there are also times when we should contact them in order to try to save them from eternal damnation. Never should these contacts or associations be of such a nature as to indicate "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11). Those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ should be avoided (Rom. 16:17). We should not keep company with a brother who is "a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner" (I Cor. 6:11). This means that there should be no social contact with him. However, Galatians 6:1 shows that some contact should be made to restore him.

I have had people to completely shun me in the presence of some person who differed with me on some doctrinal point, but would be as friendly as possible on other occasions. This was obviously to avoid being marked by his association with me. I believe I can strongly disagree with anyone and at the same time have the right attitude toward him in the presence of anyone and desire the salvation of his soul. Personal enmity and malice never corrected a wrong situation. When men do wrong we should be sure that our association with them does not encourage or endorse their wrong, but we should not avoid an opportunity to teach them even if someone might "mark" us for being seen with them.

This same attitude prevails in the publication of a paper such as Searching The Scriptures. If a certain person writes an article on a given subject that does not agree with the views of another, immediately the editor is classified as holding that view. I want to make it clear that I may not endorse every position taken by every writer, but he has the right to state his position. That is the way we learn where the truth is. A journal that permits only one side of a question to be presented is not worth reading so far as learning the whole truth is concerned. I am ready to state my convictions on any subject I know

anything about, and I am open minded enough to hear the other fellow state his convictions. That does not mean that we must permit error to be taught without exposing it as error. Truth and error can be separated by examining all the evidence and comparing it with the word of God.

I was recently asked if I ever received unfavorable "comments to the editors." Yes, I do, but not many. Well, why do I not publish them? Most people who have something critical to say do not usually want it published, and I do not want to take advantage of anyone, but those who have something commendable to say do not mind if it is published. If I ever get an unfavorable statement with the request to publish it, I will do so.

Each man who writes anything we publish in this paper is responsible for what he says. It does not necessarily represent the convictions of the editors. We do not edit articles to make the writer say what we want him to say. If an article does not edify and attempt to seek truth, it serves no purpose in this publication.

We are not in the business of recommending preachers to churches or churches to preachers. We will publish whatever reports or requests concerning this matter that are sent to us, but the one sending the report is responsible for what is said. We are not a clearinghouse for preachers or churches.

CENTRALIZATION

A. C. Grider, Meridian, Miss.

All meetings of churches or officers of churches to combine more power than a single church possesses is wrong. God's power is in God's churches. He is with them to bless and strengthen their work when they are faithful to him. A Christian, one or more, may visit a church with or without an invitation and seek to stir them up to a faithful discharge of their duties. But for one or more to direct what and how all churches shall work, or to take charge of their men and money to use it, is to assume the authority God has given to each church. Each one needs the work of distributing and using its funds as well as in giving them.

In all our thoughts of united effort and congregational cooperation, let us keep the church of the Lord free from institutionalism. Let it be overshadowed by nothing; let nothing be tied to it, nor suffer it to be tied to man-made organizations of any kind for any purpose. In short, let us keep our eye

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on the New Testament pattern.

The fight against societies, organizations, centralization of authority, and all that belongs to digression in general, so valiantly made in Tennessee and Texas fifty and sixty years ago, shall be fought all over again. The Lord has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal—and shall not! From every point of the compass they shall rally to the call for truth and right.

I want to repeat, with emphasis, brethren, that we are in a fight 'against spiritual wickedness in high places.' It is no longer a tendency, a trend, or a threat. It is here. The church is being made a mere subsidy of men's organizations. We are fighting organized efforts to subsidize churches of Christ to human organizations and private enterprises, and to keep it free of institutional domination.... Before 1958, if history repeats, it will come again.

History is repeating on ecclesiastical organization. It comes now in the form of the little church working through the big church—which is centralization. It amounts to little elders turning the responsibilities of their work over to big elders—which is diocesan in principle. This heirarchical and ecclesiastical centralization is growing—elders over elders, bishops over bishops. Remember, the Pope of Rome is just an overgrown metropolitan bishop. With one eldership of one church taking over the work of many elders of many churches, and with this centralized eldership overseeing workers by the dozens who are not even members of the church where these elders are supposed to elder, what will be left of the local autonomous organization of the New Testament church?

P.S. Brethren, this "P.S." is the first word in this article that I can claim as my own. I plagiarized every word of this fine article. I took the first paragraph from an article by David Lipscomb which appeared in the Gospel Advocate on March 24, 1910 which was before I was born! Paragraph two came from an article by John D. Cox on pages 90-91 of the book entitled Church History. Paragraph three came from Foy E. Wallace writing on "Promoting a Program." The fourth paragraph also came from Wallace. It appeared in the Bible Banner in 1948. Wallace wrote the fifth paragraph also. He was then condemning "Brotherhood Elderships." The last paragraph (this one) is mine. As I have said before, I can set forth my position on every issue that troubles the church in the very words of those who are now promoting those things. I plan to plagiarize some more later.

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Editorial . . .

H. E. PHILLIPS

Only those who have actually worked at editing and publishing a journal such as Searching The Scriptures understand the various problems that arise and the endless correspondence and keeping up of the subscription files. Only the realization that eternal good is being done motivates us to keep on the job. There certainly is no financial reward; in fact, every year of publication so far has required personal funds from both brother Miller and myself to supply what was lacking from subscriptions. This is true, I suppose, of all the monthly publications among us.

Why all this work and expense? Why riot just quit and take life easier and save some money? The answer is obvious: we must preach the gospel to as many as possible while it is day for "the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). Literally thousands every month are learning some truth from God's word by reading these articles carefully prepared by dedicated men. The purpose of this journal is to stimulate Bible study. We hope that men and women will read it and search the scriptures daily "whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). If it is the truth, accept it; if false, write us an article of correction. We will publish it.

CENSORING ELDERSHIPS

A relative or friend will frequently subscribe for others in an effort to help teach and interest them in studying the Bible. In a few cases the persons to whom the paper was sent were entirely too prejudiced to receive it and requested that their names be taken from the mailing list. In such cases we "shake the dust from our feet" and make no further effort to send them the paper. But occasionally some individual will request that the paper not be sent

to others as if he were the guardian of what others should read in the search for truth.

Roman Catholicism controls its membership through a tight system of censoring the reading material. This, of course, presents the membership with no alternate but to read what is prescribed by their rulers. They have no choice in searching all the evidence to ascertain the truth of God's word.

Recently I received a request from the eldership of a congregation in Mississippi submitting "a humble and sincere request" not to send the members of that congregation Searching The Scriptures anymore. They said they hoped we would "respect the autonomy of this congregation and the authority of its eldership."

It amazes me that elders would not know "what the "autonomy" of a congregation and the "authority" of the eldership involves. What authority do elders have to decide for the flock what they shall read in the search for the truth? What verse in the New Testament directs the eldership to decide what the members shall read or what they shall not read? It is possible for elders to speak "perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

In the rule of elders they are to "feed the flock of God which is among them" (I Pet 5:2), but this does not permit them to be "lords" to censor the reading material of the flock and decide for them what truth is. The word of God tells exactly how elders are to stop the mouths of vain talkers. "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). Instead of censoring the reading material of the flock, let them use sound doctrine to expose the error and the soundness of the flock will rest in the word of God and not in the opinions of elders.

There is not one word in the New Testament about the eldership having "authority" to decide for the church what they shall read in learning the truth of God. This is Roman Catholicism! Catholics have listed forbidden books to their members, but do we refuse to try to teach Catholics God's truth in order to respect the "autonomy" of the Catholic Church and the "authority" of Catholic priests? No man has the right to think for another. This matter of autonomy of congregations is so misunderstood by many that it is ridiculous how they try to use it. The word means "self-govern" or "self-rule." This rule does not extend into the area of legislation, the making of laws. Christ is the only law giver (James 4:12). It does not extend to the judicial, because Christ is to be the judge of the eternal destiny of all of us. The only area of autonomy (self-governing) is in DOING the will of Christ without outside control. It means that each church is completely independent in doing its own work as directed by the New Testament. Some elderships will send their own funds to another eldership to control and spend for them, and cry: "We are not losing our autonomy." But when a preacher, whose divine commission is to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" sends teaching matter to members of another congregation, they cry "violating autonomy"! The very idea! Preachers are to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season" (II Tim. 4:2) ; they are to

do so with all authority (Titus 2:15) ; they are to teach what Paul taught (II Tim. 2:2). They are to rebuke even elders when they sin (I Tim. 5:20).

I certainly agree that the eldership (when scripturally qualified) has the oversight to guide the flock into all truth, and they are commended to the word of God which will build them up (Acts 20:35). But they do so not by telling the membership what they shall read and what they shall not read. They expose the error of false teachers by sound doctrine so that those under their oversight may know the difference between truth and error.

I do not intend to allow any group of men, in the church or out of the church, to tell me to whom I shall try to teach God's eternal truth. Christ has authorized me as a preacher to preach the gospel to every creature, and I shall obey Christ rather than men. Now if the individual to whom I am directing my efforts to teach the truth refuses to listen or requests that I cease my efforts toward him, I will turn to others who are interested. His blood will be upon his own head. Paul turned from the Jews to the Gentiles when they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life by refusing to listen to him preaching the word of Christ, but he did not let the leaders of the Jews tell him not to teach the gospel to the Jewish nation.

We are not violating the "autonomy" of any congregation nor the "authority" of any eldership by preaching the gospel to every creature. If some friend or relative subscribes for Searching The Scriptures to any person in the world, we will send it just as long as that person is willing to study the word with us. If you, as a reader allow someone to tell you that you cannot read such a paper as this in the search for truth, you are allowing another to think for you and he may be wrong. Find the truth for yourself.



WORDS THAT DIVIDE US

In framing the title of this article I did not mean to imply that God is to be blamed for purposely wording the Bible in ambiguous terms. I am convinced that neither God nor the Bible is to be blamed for current religious divisions.

On the other hand, however, many religious differences stem from basic misconceptions of certain key Bible words. It is the author's intent to discuss some of those terms.

"BAPTISM"

According to Webster's Dictionary, the denotation of the word "baptize" embraces the acts of sprinkling and pouring as well as the act of immersion. Webster's definition has strengthened the popular misconception that "baptize" in the New Testament is a generic term that includes sprinkling and pouring as well as immersion.

Webster's Dictionary has nothing whatever to do with the matter of determining the meaning of New Testament words; that is, the meaning of the original words of the New Testament. Webster defines English words on the basis of English usage, but he does not define the Greek terms behind the English dictionaries only. We must examine Greek dictionaries if we wish to determine the meaning of "baptize" or of any other New Testament word.

It is almost unnecessary to point out that the English word "baptize," which is transliterated from the Greek word baptize, means, according to Greek usage, "to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge," Thayer, Lexicon, p. 94. It is unnecessary to multiply lexical evidence.

It would be a misrepresentation of facts to assert that no Greek lexicon includes sprinkling and pouring in its definitions of "baptize." I do not believe, however, that any standard, universally recognized lexicon so defines the Greek verb baptizo.

I MARVEL
GAL. 1:6
James P. Miller

I am writing this column from the beautiful little city of Hillsboro, Ohio. This is in the very heart of the influence of the restoration. It was in Cincinnati that Campbell had some of his greatest triumphs. His influence lingers on. It is hard to believe, but "Christian Church," wearing the name Church of Christ, is the strongest religious body in this part of Ohio. All students of the restoration know that the Western Reserve, embracing Western Pennsylvania and Ohio, etc., was blessed with some of the greatest preaching the world has known. For example, in this little city of eight or ten thousand the "Christian Church" would have a thousand in its membership and average 600 or more in the Bible School every Lord's Day.

I marvel, that so much of the influence of the restoration is left, and at the same time marvel, that there is so little. To say that these so-called Christian churches have long ago been swallowed up in digression would be but to put the facts mildly. In looking at "The Hillsboro Christian," the weekly publication of the church, I see Swimming parties, Flag ceremonies, Memorial Day services, special contributions for the church paper and many other departures. Little of the pure gospel is left for the present generation. One by one the brethren were caught up in the innovations that seemed harmless at the time. Those who opposed them were brushed aside, called antis and made fun of before the brotherhood. Yet, strangely enough the influence of these few is here also. Small congregations that are standing for the truth, can be found in Ohio's southern hills.

Paul Nagy preaches for the church here in Hillsboro. The little congregation is respected by all who know it. Seven have been baptized as this is being written and more may come before the meeting is over. With about 60 members, the congregation is moving out with more and more confidence with the banner of truth. One of the preachers of the town was heard to remark to a complaining member, "Well if you want to be so sure you are going to heaven, go to that little church on Park Street and leave us alone." The congregation has a bright future. Brother Nagy has traveled a hard road but is a good preacher and a tireless worker in the Master's cause.

There are other men who stand against the innovations of the day. Brother Tom Ichard lives in Hillsboro and preaches for the church in Neville, Ohio. Dale Evans preaches at Wilmington where Bill Jones and others are working to advance the cause of truth. Brother Glenn Workman who came out of the "Christian" church in the maturity of his years preaches at Mt. Zion in Highland county. Old brother John Johns is 94 and still faithful to the Lord is preaching at Winchester. Owen Thomas has preached at Waynesville but is moving to Russellville, Ala.

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I wish that every man and woman in the church of our Lord could come and see what digression has done to southern Ohio. Now the front of the bulletin carries the name of the Chorister and the Organist and news of the Memorial Christian Flags given for the graves of our departed members of the Bible School and Church. Brethren, it is not too late to learn from history the fruit of the path far too many brethren are traveling.

Science and Truth

I Tim. 6:20-21

William D. Burgess

When the question of dating of materials by scientists is considered, many questions arise. In general, one of two positions is immediately taken. One says the scientist cannot be correct since the earth could not be as old as he claims the fossils to be; the second says the Bible must be false since it does not allow enough time from the recorded beginning of the world. It seems very likely that both positions are untenable. Can anyone take the Bible and give the exact age of the world or tell the date of the creation of Adam? How many years ago did God say, "let there be light"? The Bible does not give a date for the creation of the world. On the other hand, there is a great deal of differences between the scientists as to dating and the interpretation of the methods used. No method or combination of methods is considered absolutely accurate today. Scientists are seekers of truth and truth is desirable in any realm. Scientists, like men in every area of study, have often drawn conclusions which have proven to be in error. There is often a great difference between conclusions drawn and the truth as it is later revealed. No man has all truth but men are constantly seeking truth everywhere. If his efforts do not reveal truth or his conclusions are in error he needs to make a different approach or use a different method. We find strength in the fact that the Bible record has stood the tests of time and investigation. Supposed errors have been shown to be only the result of man's lack of knowledge of truth. These have disappeared as truth has been discovered. Truly, faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

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I Peter 3:15

Marshall E. Patton

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to pressing activities of late brother Patton's article for this column has been delayed. In its absence we insert a recent article from his pen in the PAR PROCLAIMER.)

LIBERAL BRETHREN AND INTERDENOMINATIONALISM

Denominationalism views the whole of Christendom as a series of related units each separated and distinguished from the others by its own peculiarities, e.g., its name, doctrine, worship and organization. Webster defines the prefix *inter* to mean "together." Hence, INTERDENOMINATIONALISM would be the bringing together of those of different faiths (denominations) into one body so that there is one universal church. It tolerates the differences yet binds all into one organization.

I am persuaded that denominationalism is wanning and interdenominationalism is becoming increasingly popular. It seems evident that the battle of tomorrow will have more to do with the latter than with the former, for the latter is fast becoming the trend of the hour. Evidence of this is seen from the progress of the "Ecumenical Movement"—a movement launched by denominational leaders to bring about one universal church; the frequent merger of denominations; the popularity of the Billy Graham Campaigns and other interdenominational meetings; the minimizing of differences on the part of denominational preachers, and their frequent exchange of pulpits.

Those who are aware of what is going on among liberal brethren have observed the same trend among them. More and more there is evidence of a love for the praise of men; their preaching places emphasis upon avoiding offence, and they glory in recognition and favor given them of the world, e.g., witness the special issue of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE on the Herald of Truth and its success, March 23, 1961. A distinctive church with a distinctive gospel is almost a thing of the past with many of them. Further evidence is seen in the following excerpts:

"Four neighborhood churches and their ministers will join Baron-Hirsch Synagogue at the 8 P.M. worship service tomorrow at the synagogue at 1740 Vollintine.

"The service will follow the theme of 'brotherhood at work and worship' in keeping with Brotherhood Month in February. Churches to be represented are First United Lutheran, McLean Baptist, Trinity Methodist and Jackson Avenue Church of Christ" (From the Memphis Commercial Appeal, 2-6-64—Emphasis mine—M.E.P.).

"ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Reciprocal worship services have been snared by congregations of the Christian Church and the church of Christ (non-instrumental) here. Heights Christian Church re-

cently was host to the congregation of the Estancia Drive Church of Christ for an evening service. Vernon Hurst, evangelist of the visiting group, preached the sermon. In turn, the Estancia Drive church was host to the Heights church for an evening service. Erskine E. Scates, Jr., minister of the Heights church, preached" (Christian Standard, Cincinnati, Ohio, 4-4-64).

"Interesting programs, workshop sessions, careful study of the Bible, friendly competitions, sports programs, and candlelight services will highlight the Christian service camps scheduled for this summer in various parts of the United States as well as in Canada, and Japan." Among those listed in Florida is "CENTRAL FLORIDA BIBLE CAMP, Camp Rotary, Route 1, Box 745, Auburndale, Fla. Young People, (age 10-up), July 26-Aug. 1. L. B. Chastain, P. O. Box 582, Eagle Lake, Fla." (The Lookout, 5-3-64. Emphasis mine—M.E.P.). ED NOTE: The Lookout is published weekly by the Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, by those of the Christian Church; and L. B. Chastain is minister of the church of Christ in Eagle Lake and board member of Mount Dora Home and School.

What is wrong with Interdenominationalism? In the first place, it seeks oneness upon a basis of mutual agreement reached by men—this results in union and not unity. The Bible demands unity: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). The only feasible basis for unity is God's Word. In the second place, it demands a sacrifice of truth and a compromise with error. Division is awful, but union in error is worse! Truth cannot be sacrificed or compromised. "Buy the truth, and sell it not. . . ." (Prov. 23:23). Truth ought to be embraced—no matter what! Once it has been accepted, it ought never to be given up—come what may! "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable . . ." (Jas. 3:17). "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). There are times when we cannot be at peace with all men, and that time has come when a decision must be made between truth and error. (Read Lk. 12:51-53). "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

V. R. Butler, Jacksonville, Fla.

Marriage was the first institution made by God on earth (Gen. 2:21-25). He made the man and then woman, and put them together as husband and wife. His intent was one man and one woman cohabiting as husband and wife and becoming one flesh.

As time passed men have perverted God's original intent of marriage (one man and one woman) and have begun to change from one marriage partner to another by means of divorce and remarriage. The marriage of a man and a woman- who are being married for the first time is not of any great con-

cern. The great concern is the divorce, man's reason for divorce, God's only reason for divorce, and the possible remarriage of the divorced person.

Some of the reasons men give for their divorces are as follows: "I don't love her anymore." "I could not get along with her family." "She would not leave her state and come to my state with me." "I deserted her or she deserted me." "I saw another woman I liked better."

THESE REASONS EXAMINED

First, the elements that make a marriage are: (1) There must be a mutual agreement of a man and a woman to live together as husband and wife. (2) They must meet the demands of the civil authorities. (3) The bodies of the man and the woman must be joined together in cohabitation. Where these elements exist, God recognizes the marriage.

The reasons: "I don't love her anymore," or "I could not get along with her family" are very weak excuses. These are usually classed by law as the couple being "incompatible." This reason is acceptable in many of our states.

The reason used more often to try to justify a divorce is "desertion." Most states accept this as a "legal" reason for divorce. Desertion is usually charged when a man fails to support his wife and family. Desertion can also be charged by the man in claiming that his wife would not leave her home state and go to him. He leaves his wife and settles in another state or city. He has failed to show her any concern or consideration by trying to make a job in her city. The wife has failed to show the husband proper concern or consideration by failing to go with him to his state and place of employment. Most of the people, having obtained divorces for the foregoing reasons, usually remarry.

GOD'S REASON

In God's plan for marriage dissolution, only two avenues can be followed: (1) Physical death of one of the marriage partners (Rom. 7:2). (2) One or the other of the marriage partners committing the act of fornication (Matt. 19:9). You see then that if the wife or husband be dead, the partner who is left is free to marry. The marriage law does not apply only to church members but to the world as a whole. The same marriage laws apply to both saint and sinner. The only exception is if the marriage partner of the Christian dies, he can be married "only in the Lord" (I Cor. 7:39). Jesus, in Matthew 19:9, says: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." This law applies to all men, saint and sinner alike.

If a man who is not a Christian divorces (puts away) his wife for other than fornication, and married another, he commits adultery. The same would apply to a Christian. But a point to remember is this: the innocent party does not have to divorce the guilty. If the guilty one repents of his sin of fornication and asks for forgiveness, then the innocent party is obligated to forgive him.

Many people try to set up situations and say, "What if this...?" or "What if that...?" These situations DO NOT change God's word. The man or woman who is divorced for ANY cause other than

fornication and is married to another, is living in an adulterous condition. In order for that person to have the salvation of his soul, he must repent of the adulterous condition (leave the woman he is committing adultery with) and live a life acceptable to God (Col. 3:5-11).

The next statement is stock with most people, i.e., "You mean you would tell a couple that they MUST separate?" "What of the children?"

YES, these people, living in the adulterous state, would just as surely HAVE to separate in order to be pleasing to God as the drunkard would HAVE to quit his drinking, or the thief his stealing. What of the children? God's law of marriage was before children. It is not God's fault that men have flaunted His laws and brought hardships upon their children. The man and woman who have children in this unscriptural relationship are still morally obligated to support their children. The fact of children being born to such a relationship does NOT change God's law. If the man or woman has not divorced the first partner for the cause of fornication, they are living in adultery with the second marriage partner (Col. 3:5-11).

Many preachers fail to teach couples, about to enter into matrimony, of the seriousness of the contract they are about to make. Some of these preachers even fail to recognize the seriousness of it in their own lives. Many times we fail to preach from the pulpits or fail to teach proper marriage relationships in Bible classes.

The standard answer is, "We don't want to offend anyone and cause them to leave the church." If members of the church are living in this adulterous condition, then they must be taught the truth. They must be shown the error of their ways. They must "Mortify" (put to death) the unclean acts of their lives (Col. 3:5). They must clean up their own lives before they can preach to or teach others.

May preachers of the true gospel of Christ have the courage and integrity to speak out concerning THIS great sin in and out of the church as well as all the other dangers and "isms" facing the church of our Lord Jesus Christ today.

COMMENTS TO EDITORS

"It is very good reading. Keep up the good work."
—Ray Smith, Umatilla, Fla.

"Keep up the good work."—Ward Hogland, Greenville, Texas.

"Searching The Scriptures has been coming to my husband, Mr. Fred A. Shelton, who passed away in December. I enjoy every word of it and wish to continue getting it."—Annie Dee Shelton, Nashville, Tenn.

"The paper continues to improve with each edition. Keep up the good efforts."—Thomas G. O'Neal, Jasper, Ala.

"Please renew my subscription to Searching The Scriptures. It is one of the best; I enjoy it very much. The only thing wrong with it is it is not a weekly."—Walter N. Henderson, Clermont, Fla.

"I always enjoy reading the paper and believe that you are accomplishing much good through that

medium."—Harris J. Dark, Nashville, Tenn.

"Please keep my paper coming. I enjoy it so much. I pass it on to others after reading it myself. Keep up the good work."—Mrs. C. E. Luttrell, Pine Bluff, Ark.

"Keep up the good work."—Mr. and Mrs. F. S. Duke, Vinemont, Ala.

"I appreciate very much your efforts to keep erroneous practices from the church."—Mrs. Frank Stagner, Bowling Green, Ky.

"You are worthy of praise for the good job you are doing with the paper."—Rufus R. Clifford, Nashville, Tenn.

"Do keep up the good work. Christ is our guiding light."—Mrs. E. G. Gaylord, Ocala, Fla.

"We continue to thoroughly enjoy and profit from Searching The Scriptures. It is one of the very best periodicals teaching the plain and pure truth."—Donald R. Givens, Coalinga, Calif.

"We certainly enjoy reading the excellent articles each month."—Billy Ray Taylor, Carlisle, Pa.

"I appreciate your paper. I just wish it were a weekly."—Nellie A. Skinner, Montgomery, Ala.

"Searching The Scriptures is a very fine publication. I look forward to receiving it each month and find it filled with worthwhile material for study and meditation. I appreciate the efforts of you and brother Phillips in sending forth this paper."—Carroll W. Puckett, Montgomery, Ala.

"We continue to appreciate Searching The Scriptures and hope you will always stay with the word."—J. P. Halbrook, Jr., Belle Glade, Fla.

"I enjoy reading the paper from month to month and wish to make the volume a part of my library. I have volume I at the present time."—J. Ed Land, Columbus, Miss.

"We deeply appreciate your forthright stand on controversial questions that are plaguing the church, and feel that your paper is performing a very great service in continually pointing out the dangers of departing from the One Faith. Surely, an informed, aroused brotherhood, will return to the Truth, when they have been made aware of the fool-hardiness of their course of action."—C. A. Cornelius, Tulsa, Okla.

"Keep up your good work." Leon and Magdalene Ragsdale, Orlando, Fla.

"Enjoy Searching The Scriptures very much. I think much and lasting good is being done through this paper."—Shaw Caldwell, Dickson, Tenn.

"May God bless you in your fine work of preaching and printing Searching The Scriptures."—Roy Luttrell, Greenville, Texas.

"I had a brother to give me two copies of your paper Searching The Scriptures, and I have enjoyed them very much. I would like to receive it for a year."—C. F. Palmer, New Madrid, Maryland.

"Would you please send a year's subscription to your wonderful paper to my brother who is overseas in Vietnam."—David B. Moses, Spenard, Alaska.

"We appreciate the paper very much and know eternity only will determine the great good you brethren are doing. We hope and pray that you may be able to continue this good work." H. E. Hughes, Columbia, Tenn.

"I continue to take a personal interest in Search-

ing The Scriptures."—Jimmy Tuten, Jr., St. Louis, Mo.

"I appreciate the good work you are doing with Searching The Scriptures. The paper seems to get finer with each issue." — E. Paul Price, Borger, Texas.

"Your paper is doing a good job and I wish you all the success possible."—David L. Stevenson, Richmond, Calif.

"I think there is a great improvement in Searching The Scriptures. I am enjoying reading it more than ever."—Alton Elliott, Perry, Fla.

"I've just received my copy of Searching The Scriptures. This one number alone (June, 1964) is worth the price of a year's subscription . . . May God bless you in this great work."—Mrs. Sarah E. Patton, Bellaire, Texas.

"I appreciate the good work that you are doing through the paper and hope that the persons whose names I sent last year will also renew their subscriptions."—Lowell Blasingame, Grenada, Miss.

The Menace of Catholicism
II Thessalonians 2:3,4
Luther W. Martin

**ROMAN CATHOLIC PROPAGANDA
PUBLISHED AT THE TAXPAYERS' EXPENSE
IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD!**

In the May 4, 1964, issue of the Congressional Record, Congressman William H. Bates of the State of Massachusetts, "extended his remarks" to have included in the Appendix of the Record, some FORTY COLUMN INCHES of type which reproduced the address of "Rev. Sister M. Rose Eileen, CSC, of Dunbarton College of the Holy Cross," which was delivered by this lady at St. Peter's Hall, in Washington, D.C., on May 1st, 1964.

The title of the speech as reproduced in full in the Congressional Record, was "MARY, MOTHER OF MANKIND AND QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE." The content of the material was strictly of interest in furthering Roman Catholic teaching by means of the several-thousand-copy circulation of this tax-paid publication.

For example, we give the following excerpts:

(1) "Mary is at the summit of all created greatness." In reply we cite the New Testament . . . "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed," (spoken by an unknown woman, concerning Christ.) Then, in the very next verse Christ replied: "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it" (See Luke 11:27-28).

(2) "Though like us a mere creature, she is elevated by divine wisdom to the supreme dignity of Mother of God . . ." In reply we cite the New Testament . . . "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers! And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! For

whoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (See Matt. 12:47-50).

(3) "Though truly the mother of God, she remains forever a virgin to dedicate her chaste motherhood entirely to her Son." In reply we cite the New Testament . . . "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" (See Mark 6:3).

The above excerpts are all taken from the first paragraph following the speaker's introductory remarks.

Concerning the first excerpt, Christ himself stressed . . . "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it (Emphasis mine. L.W.M.). The New Testament nowhere instructs Christians to set Mary apart from the other mothers of the earth. However, most religions evolved by man, include both a male and female deity. This seems to be the course that Roman Catholicism is following . . . ultimately to declare Mary as a co-mediatrix and co-redemptrix WITH Christ, in the salvation of men. We repeat . . . the New Testament does not support this cult of Mary.

In excerpt two, the Catholic teaching is opposed by the words of Christ, when He emphasizes . . . "For whoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Emphasis mine. L.W.M.). Nowhere in Holy Scripture is Mary ever termed the "Mother of God." Such an expression was first defined by an ecclesiastical council convoked by Emperor Theodosius II., in the city of Ephesus, in the year 431 A.D. Thus FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AFTER CHRIST, the expression "Mother of God" was initially defined.

Since Holy Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness; and, since Scripture adequately equips man for every GOOD WORK, (See II Tim. 3:16-17), there are thousands of U.S. citizens who firmly disagree with the views set forth in the Congressional Record.

In addition to publishing this article in Searching The Scriptures, the writer is forwarding a copy of the treatise to Congressman Bates of Massachusetts. We would like to urge the Congressman to refrain from inserting doctrinal sectarian material into the Congressional Record to be circulated at the expense of all tax-payers.

REFERENCE BOOKS

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DANGERS FACING THE CHURCH

"beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness"—II Pet. 3:17.

Thomas G O'Neal

The society in which you and I live says THINK POSITIVE. This attitude is found in a great many areas. There is none where this influence is more harmful than in the service of the Master. The masses of brethren today are saying, directly or indirectly, preach positively. Another way to say it is don't be against, be for a thing. While it is always proper to be for everything that is Scriptural, it is also necessary to be against, anti, everything that is unscriptural.

This idea is a danger to the church. If this philosophy is made the thinking of the church today the consequences are sad. In some places it is already the thinking of a great many brethren. I have opportunity to hear a great amount of preaching. Through one medium that I hear nothing is condemned except the efforts of conservative brethren. There is no negative preaching, no sermons against evil, specific sins, no sermons about what is wrong with the church and the errors of the church. The danger that we want to study together in this article is the attitude of many brethren in not wanting any negative preaching.

If one does not want to hear any negative preaching then that person does not want to hear either the Bible preached or the kind of preaching that was done in New Testament times. In the whole counsel of God there is both positive and negative preaching.

Paul told Timothy "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. 4:2. Someone has suggested that the Lord wanted twice as much negative preaching as he did positive preaching in this passage. Be that as it may, this verse requires negative preaching. One cannot reprove and rebuke with positive preaching.

Paul in preaching in Athens preached that God did not dwell in temples made with hands nor was he worshipped with the hands of men. This was negative preaching. Who wants to charge Paul with preaching in the wrong way? He further pointed out that we are not to think that God is like gold, silver, or stone graven by the hand of man. This, likewise, is negative preaching by Paul. It seems that for some reason Paul had not heard of the idea that there should be no negative preaching or if he had heard of it he didn't think very much of it.

Peter no doubt thought that Paul believed in negative preaching when Paul rebuked him to his face in Antioch for his dissimulation. Gal. 2:11-12.

It would be interesting for the reader to stop and count the ten commandments and see how many of them are stated in the negative.

There is a reason why many are saying that preaching should be positive. In one instance someone does not want their pet sin exposed. How could one be rebuked and reprovved for committing adultery if the preacher could not preach a negative

sermon? In another instance if a false teacher comes into town preaching his false doctrine, how could he be answered if there were no negative sermons preached. This is why many of the brethren do not like negative sermons. If one only preaches positive sermons there would be no condemnation of such things as the Herald of Truth, benevolent organizations with church support, church supported colleges, homes for unwed mothers at church expense and soup kitchens. The attitude of brethren favoring these human promotions is that they should be allowed to make all of the speeches that they want to in favor of them, but some of us do not have the right to make any speeches against them.

If the reader would like to read a negative sermon, turn and read one by Christ recorded in Matthew 23.

Debate Tapes

Mr. Albert Garner, president of Florida Baptist Institute & Seminary, and brother Ward Hogland of Greenville, Texas engaged in a discussion on instrumental music in worship, conditions of salvation and apostasy in the Mayhall Auditorium in Lakeland) Florida, April 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 1964.

Very clear and complete tapes are available of the entire eight nights of the discussion. New 1 1/2 mil Mylar tape will be used, recorded at 3Ya speed and can be played on any tape recorder. One 7" reel will contain the entire discussion of one night.

- Reel 1—"The Scriptures do not authorize instrumental music in the New Testament worship." Hogland affirms, Garner denies.
- Reel 2—"The Scriptures authorize instrumental music in the New Testament worship." Garner affirms, Hogland denies.
- Reel 3—"The Scriptures teach that water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is essential to the salvation of the alien from sin." Hogland affirms. Garner denies.
- Reel 4—"The Scriptures teach that the alien sinner is saved from sin at the point of faith in Christ before and, without water baptism." Garner affirms, Hogland denies.
- Reel 5—"The Scriptures teach that only a child of God, one already saved, is a fit subject for baptism and membership in a New Testament Baptist Church." Garner affirms, Hogland denies.
- Reel 6—"The Scriptures teach that a penitent believer becomes a child of God by baptism into Christ and the church of Christ." Hogland affirms. Garner denies.
- Reel 7—"The Scriptures teach that it is impossible for a child of God to go sin as to be finally lost in hell." Garner affirms, Hogland denies.
- Reel 8—"The Scriptures teach that it is possible for a child of God to go sin as to be finally lost in hell." Hogland affirms, Garner denies-

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The News Letter Reports

" . . . THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM . . ."—Acts 14:27

DEBATE IN PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA

On June 8—11 **Don R. Patton** and **Preston C. Brown** discussed the class and communion container question. The first two nights the discussion was held in the building of Panama City Beach church of Christ, and the last two nights in the building of the Michigan Avenue church of Christ. The first night Don Patton affirmed that the scriptures teach that when members of the church come together to study the word of God, they may divide into classes and some of the teaching may be done by both men and women. Preston Brown denied. The second night Brown affirmed that the assembly must remain in one undivided assembly and the teaching must be done by faithful men only. Patton denied. The third night Brown affirmed that only one cup (container) must be used in observing the Lord's Supper. Patton denied. The last night Patton affirmed that a plurality of cups (containers) may be used in observing the Lord's Supper. Brown denied. An account of this debate will appear later.

Forest Moyer will be in a gospel meeting with the North Las Vegas church of Christ, Las Vegas, Nev., August 24-30. **Robert H. West** is the local evangelist . . . **Robert Jackson** of Nashville, Tenn. was with the Shively church in Louisville, Ky. the last of May. Three were baptized and three restored. **Glenn Shaver** is the local preacher . . . **Cecil Willis** of Akron, Ohio was with the Expressway church of Christ in Louisville, Ky. June 8-17. **James P. Needham** is the local evangelist . . . **W. C. Sawyer** was in a meeting at Caneyville, Ky. June 14-20 . . . **Ferrell Jenkins** of Bowling Green, Ky. will be at Mt. Lebanon, Roundhill, Ky. in a meeting July 13-18 and at Silver St. church in New Albany, Ind., August 9-16 . . . **Robert L. McDonald** of Tyler, Texas was with **Joe D. Scarborough** and the Floral Heights church in Wichita Falls, Texas which closed May 10.

Robert C. Ewell of Globe, Arizona was in a gospel meeting with the Glendale, Arizona church of Christ June 7-14. **Robert J. LaCoste** is the local evangelist . . . **Franklin T. Puckett** was with the College View church in Florence, Ala. June 7-14 . . . **Eugene Britnell** of Little Rock, Ark. was with the Par Avenue church in Orlando, June 14-21. **Marshall Patton** is the preacher at Par Avenue. **Jim Ward** has recently moved from Dover, Florida to labor with the Holden Heights church in Orlando, Fla. **Harold Strange, Jr.** is now at Dover . . . **Guy Roberson** was with Mooresville Pike in Columbia, Tenn., June 15 . . . **Granville Tyler** of Decatur, Ala. begins a meeting with Locust St. church in Mt. Pleasant, Tenn. **Delton Porter** is the local preacher . . . **S. Leonard Tyler** of Pine Bluff, Ark. closed a meeting May 24 with the Washington St. church in Camden, Ark. **Charles Beaty** is the local preacher . . . **Roy E. Cogdill** closed a meeting with the Berney Points church in Birmingham, Ala., June 14. **Dennis L. Reed** is the local evangelist.

Marshall E. Patton of Orlando, Fla. was with the

Shelbyville Mills church in Shelbyville, Tenn. the first week in June . . . **Howard See** was in a gospel meeting with the McArthur Heights church in Jasper, Ala. June 7-14. **Thomas G. O'Neal** is the preacher . . . **Robert F. Turner** was with the East-side church in Blytheville, Ark. in a meeting which closed June 23. **Dudley Ross Spears** is the preacher at Blytheville.

John A. Thurman, Box 327, Perry, Florida—I have resigned my preaching position with the Perry Church of Christ and desire to begin work with another congregation between now and August 1, 1964. Any congregation desiring the services of an evangelist on a full-time or part-time basis should write me at the above address or call me at 457-4761 in Perry. I am qualified to teach English in junior college or grades 7-12.

Walter N. Henderson, Clemons, Fla.—It was my good pleasure to preach in a meeting at Seventh Avenue in Miami, May 10 through the 20th. One was baptized. The attendance was good considering the prevailing conditions in both the city and the churches of that area. The Southwest church gave us their moral support, and several from North Miami Avenue attended the meeting, some from other congregations were in evidence, some coming all the way from Belle Glade.

The elders and the Seventh Avenue church have stood firm against every false doctrine which has threatened the churches during the last twenty years. At the present time, against strong opposition, they are opposing liberalism in evangelism, benevolence and discipline. They are contending for the autonomy of the local church in these matters.

Brother **Henry Gilbert**, the evangelist of this faithful church, was a pleasant co-worker during the meeting. He has 209 enrolled in his correspondence Bible course. Surely, growth shall come from this effort, and the influence of this church for good will be felt in the future as it has been in the past.

H. E. Phillips, Tampa, Fla.—I was with the West Hollywood, Florida church in a gospel meeting, June 7-14. **Gene Robinson** is the preacher there and is doing a good work. Plans are being completed to erect a new auditorium on the present location. Several members and the preachers from Coral Gables and North Miami Avenue and Ft. Lauderdale were present during the meeting. These churches and preachers are standing faithfully against liberalism and digression in the Miami area.

J. T. Smith of Wauchula, Florida was with the MacDill congregation in Tampa in May. Four were baptized. **Colin Williamson** and **Harry Pickup, Sr.** are the preachers at MacDill . . . **Colin Williamson** was in a meeting with the church in St. Cloud, Florida in March. One was baptized. He was also in

a meeting with the Trilacoochee church near Dade City, Florida, June 15-24. Norman McDonald is the preacher at Trilacoochee. Brother Williamson will leave the MacDill congregation in Tampa to move to Jonesboro, Tennessee in July.

James P. Miller co-editor of Searching The Scriptures will speak in the following meetings in July and August. July 5-12 will find him with the church in Newburn, Tennessee and Jesse Kelly . . . July 19-26 with the Eastland church in Nashville where Rufus Clifford preaches and July 27-August 2 with the sound' brethren in Tompkinsville, Kentucky. Ross Spears preaches for the new congregation there. Brethren are asked to take note of these meetings and make your plans to be present.

Robert J. LaCoste, Glendale, Ariz.—The work here in Glendale is going along just fine with sixteen responses during March and April. Five of these were baptisms.

James P. Miller will be with the Eastland church, in Nashville, Tennessee, July 19-26. Rufus R. Clifford is the evangelist at Eastland. All in the Nashville area are invited to attend this meeting----- Frank Jamerson of Louisville, Kentucky will be in a gospel meeting at Spring Warrior church, Perry, Florida, June 28-July 5.



PREMILLENNIALISM
(No. 6)

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus will come again. He said "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). At the scene of his ascension the **angel** said he would come again. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11). The **Hebrew writer** said he would "appear the second time" (Heb. 9:28). But while the fact of his coming is made plain, the time of it is not revealed. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).

It seems that the premillennialist has allowed his imagination to run wild when it comes to the second coming of Christ. He has concocted all kinds of theories and speculations about it. For one thing, he tells us that the New Testament taught the imminent coming of Christ. The word "imminent" means impending, as ripened fruit ready to fall at any time. Rather than teaching the "imminent" return of Christ, the New Testament revealed that certain things would take place after the apostolic period. Paul said to the Ephesian elders "For I know this,

that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). He evidently did not think it would happen at any moment then, for he predicted that departure. Peter knew what death he would die in his old age, and therefore could not have taught the imminent return of Christ (John 21:18-19). Paul said that before the Lord should return there would be a "falling away first" and that the "man of sin" would be revealed (II Thes. 2:1-4). The question of imminence did not enter into the New Testament teaching and premillennial teachers misrepresent inspired men when they teach such. It is true that we do not know when the time is, but there were certain things which were to precede the second coming.

Many premillennialists hold to what they call the "pretribulation theory." They teach that Christ will come in the clouds, catch up the righteous with him in what they call the "rapture" and that while they are in that state, that great tribulation will take place down here on the earth. Some of them, though not all, associate this with the "battle of Armageddon," the regathering of the Jews to Palestine, the conquering of the nations, and such like. Then, after all the conflict is over and the earth has been cleansed, Jesus will come with the righteous back to the earth, set up his headquarters in Jerusalem and the millennium will commence. Then at the end of that time, the rest of the dead shall be raised, the general judgment shall take place and the wicked and righteous shall be assigned to eternal abode. I propose to show from the teaching of the New Testament that such a view is nothing more than the fabrication of human minds which are not content with what the Bible teaches.

THE EVENTS OF THE SECOND COMING

(1) That will be the **end of preparation**. In Mt. 25:1-13 Jesus taught that when the master of the house should return that the door would be shut. The time of preparation would be over. The premillennialist would like to keep the door cracked open wide enough for the unbelieving Jews to have a chance to get in. The time when men are to use their talents is when the man who delivered them unto men is in the "far country" (Heaven). When he comes back from the far country, he requires an accounting. There is no room left for a thousand years between the time he returns from the far country and the accounting.

(2) That will be the end of the world. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Pet. 3:10). This passage deals with "the promise of his coming" (Verse 4). Now the world is "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment" (Verse 7). The "day of the Lord" of verse 10 is the day that fulfills the "promise of his coming." It is the day when all that pertains to this earth will be destroyed. This is sufficient evidence to show that Jesus will not set foot on this earth again. The reason is obvious. At his coming, it will be burned up. This passage stands in the way of all the speculations about what will take place on this earth after Jesus returns to it. He is not going to return to it, it is going to be burned up. That in-

eludes Palestine. He left in clouds, will come in the clouds, we will meet him in the clouds, and this earth will be no more. "Well, what about the 'new heaven and new earth'? Whatever it will be, this present earth will not be associated with it. The heaven and the earth are used to describe the bounds of our present habitation, our dwelling place. The expression "new heaven and a new earth" is used to describe a new dwelling place which God is preparing for the righteous. The coming of the Lord is the end (I Cor. 1:7-8):

(3) All the dead shall be raised at his coming. Premillennialists think there will be a thousand years between the raising of the righteous and the wicked. They sometimes base this on a misapplication of I Thes. 4:13-18. That passage deals only with the righteous. The question under discussion was whether the righteous living at the time Jesus returns would have any advantage over the righteous who had departed this life. Paul showed that the righteous living would not have any advantage over those dead, for the righteous dead would be raised first, and then they, together with the righteous living at the time, would be caught up together to "meet the Lord in the air." Such passages as John 5:28-29 concern all the dead, whether righteous or wicked. "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." Note that Jesus said "the hour is coming" when this would be done. That denotes a single time. In that hour all are going to be raised. There is no room here for a thousand years between the raising of the righteous and the wicked.

(4) At his coming the judgment will be instituted. Mt. 25:31-46 shows that when he comes he will sit on the throne of his glory and shall separate the wicked from the righteous. Note the order of the passage: he comes in his glory, then he shall sit upon this throne, before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them. This passage leaves no room for a thousand years between his coming and the judgment.

(5) Then he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father. "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Cor. 15:23-24). Rather than taking up power and rule at his coming, he will deliver it up to the Father. Note the order here: his coming, then cometh the end. The word "then" connects the end with his coming. There is no room left here for a thousand year reign.

Why Bring Jesus Back to Earth? I have believed for a long time that premillennialists do not have complete faith in God's eternal purpose through Christ. They ignore all that God has already accomplished through Christ. His mission of redemption is complete (Eph. 1:7-10). His revelation is complete (Jude 3). His authority is now complete. He has "all authority in heaven and on earth (Mat. 28:18). God has given him to be "far above all principality and power" and "head over all things to the

church" (Eph. 1:20-23). His kingdom is complete in that it has a king, a law, subjects and territory. The Colossians were in it (Col. 1:13). John was in it (Rev. 1:9). It cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28). His throne is complete (Rev. 3:21). His glory is complete (I Pet. 1:20-21; Lk. 24:25-26). Further, Jesus said that he accomplished what he came to do the first time and that he would be "no more in this world." "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). Then in verse 11 he said, "I am no more in the world." But the millennial teacher presumes to know more about that than the Lord did and would have us believe there is still some unfinished business for the Lord to take care of in the world, and that instead of being "no more in the world" he will spend one thousand more years in it. Yes, Premillennialism lacks faith in the all-sufficiency of God's arrangement through Christ and the church for the salvation of mankind. He said he finished what he came to do, but they do not believe him and have conjured up more for him to do.

It is the goal of every faithful child of God to so live that whether his coming be soon or long delayed, he may be ready for it. This life is the only time we have to make our preparation. When he comes, the door will be shut, we shall be judged and ushered into an eternal state of either joy or misery. The next article will deal with Matthew 24.

Matters of Controversy

"Earnestly Contend for the Faith"—Jude 3

Ward Hogland

"SPECIAL COLLECTIONS"

Several weeks ago I received a letter from a sister in Christ who lives in Florida. Her letter had to do with an article I had written earlier in *Searching the Scriptures*.

Dear Mr. Hogland:

In your article "Sending Bibles to another Church", *Searching the Scriptures*, volume 1, January 1964, under "Matters of Controversy," on page 12, last QUOTE:

"If they still insist that it makes no difference they have lost every ounce of respect for the scriptures. They will likely say that Acts 20:7 doesn't mean we have to observe the Lord's Supper on Sunday. If they reject the approved examples of the Bible with so little concern, you might as well shake the dust off your feet. Remember, YOU can be sure if it is in the Bible"

Mr. Gerald D. Robinson, Minister, St. Andrew Church of Christ, (cooperating and in fellowship), Beck Avenue at 17th Street, Panama City, Florida said and uses for one of his "key arguments," that collections in the Bible were special certain collections — not binding — can be taken up on

Wednesday night, Sundays or not at all.
Please answer this in your column. Thank you.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Hazel Kermel

First, I want to thank Mrs. Kermel for the letter. I apologize for the delay in answering her letter; but due to a busy Spring, I have not had the time. May I say that this so called "key argument" will not stand the Bible test. I am fully cognizant that it has been used for many years.

Before I answer the questions, let us notice the consequences of such a position. First, he says the collections in the Bible were special. I agree; it depends on what he means by special. They were special in the sense that they were to be used by the church! However, I presume he means that they were for benevolence only. This is the argument usually made. If this be true, then the church either had three TREASURIES or took up the collection THREE TIMES. I read in the Bible where the Church spent money for preaching, benevolence and edification (II Cor. 11:8; I Cor. 16:1,2; Phil. 4:15-16). Now the big question is, where did the church get this money? He says next that these collections are not binding. If not, we could raise money for the church any way that is normally right. The denominations have raised money for years by having pie suppers, rummage sales and leg shows. I wonder if our friend is ready to accept this? If, as he says, they are not binding, he is compelled to accept them. Next, he says, the collections may be taken up on Wednesday night, Sunday or not at all. If the church decided, as he says, not to take a collection at all where would he get his pay check? I venture to say, in most cases, I Cor. 16: would become binding pretty quick! If one can give on Wednesday night just as scriptural as on Sunday, I wonder why he couldn't observe the Lord's Supper then? The expression "First day of the week" is the same in both Greek and English as found in Acts 20:7 and I Cor. 16:1,2. If one may be changed, why not the other?

In studying any SUBJECT, we must take all the scriptures on that SUBJECT and not the ones we like. For example, in a study of the PLAN OF SALVATION we do not have the entire plan in one verse. We read of FAITH, REPENTANCE, CONFESSION AND BAPTISM, BUT NOT IN ONE VERSE OF THE BIBLE. We take up such scriptures as Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:17; Lk. 13:3, and then summarize the plan. We do the same with reference to the Lord's Supper. For example, we teach that the elements are unleaven bread and fruit of the vine, the time is on Sunday, the purpose to commemorate the death of Christ, etc.; that one must be in the Kingdom and each person must examine himself. Do we find all this in one scripture? Certainly not! We study and find all the Bible says on the subject. These passages are found in Matt. 26: 1 Cor. 11: Acts 20:7, etc.

Now, let us apply the same rule to giving and spending the Lord's money. The Bible teaches that (1) Christians are to give (I Cor. 16:1-2); (2) As prospered (I Cor. 16:2); (3) Lay by him in store, or sold land and laid money at apostles feet (Acts 4:37; I Cor. 16:12). (4) Didn't give real estate or land to church but sold it and gave money (Acts

5:4). (5) Gave according to ability (Acts 11:29). (6) They spent the money for preaching and edification (I Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:15,16). (7) They also spent it for benevolence among saints (Acts 11:29; I Cor. 16:1,2).

It may be readily observed that all of these things are given in the scriptures about collecting and spending money in the church of the Lord. Why not accept them as we do scriptures on the plan of salvation?

My friend in the above letter makes the same mistakes as Baptist preachers. Baptist preachers have told me that baptism is not essential because it is not mentioned in John 3:16, only faith is mentioned here. They say, "Therefore baptism could not be essential!" In Acts 16:31 Paul said, "Believe on the Lord and thou shalt be saved." Baptist say there is no baptism mentioned in this verse! Yes, but it is mentioned in others. A Free Will Baptist told me that Mk. 16:16 was Holy Ghost baptism. He said, "There is not a drop of water in it." Well, that is true but in Acts 10:47-48 and Acts 8:36 there is plenty of water! We must take ALL the Bible says on the SUBJECT..

Liberals will say, "There is nothing in I Cor. 16: about paying a preacher." True indeed, but please read II Cor. 11:8 and you will see there is some more scripture on this business of collecting and spending the Lord's money! Don't take the verses you want and leave others. A Sabbatarian told me, "Acts 20:7 doesn't mention fruit of the vine, therefore it can't refer to the Lord's Supper." Well, the Sabbatarian is right about the fruit of the vine, but wrong about his application. The context, plus other scriptures on the subject, show that it refers to the Lord's Supper. Now, it is true that Paul stressed in many passages that their giving was to help poor saints, but he never said their giving was for poor saints ONLY! Paul, in many passages, stressed we are saved by faith, but never by faith ONLY! See the point?

Now, let us notice some other objections. Some say, "Yes, but that collection over in Acts 4 and 5 was just a group of individuals giving." Yes, I agree, but giving to what? Peter said to Ananias, "Why hath satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own?" Notice before he gave it, it belonged to him. To whom did it belong after he gave it? Certainly not Peter! The answer is obvious; it belonged to the church. When we give we do it as individuals, but after it is given it is not OURS but the Lord's. When we observe the Lord's Supper, we also do it as individuals.

Another objection is that in such passages as Acts 4, 5, and 11, Sunday is not mentioned as the time. Yes, that is true. Have you considered that faith, repentance, confession, and baptism are not all mentioned together? Does this mean they are not essential? Then remember too, that the TIME of the Lord's Supper has not been mentioned any place except Acts 20:7. Does this mean we may eat it anytime? The Lord has to say a thing only one time to make it so. WE MUST TAKE EVERY THING GOD HAS SAID ON A GIVEN SUBJECT!

Another objection is that only benevolent work is mentioned in such passages as I Cor. 16: Acts 4,5, and 11. Yes, that is true, but remember that **ONLY BREAD** is mentioned in Acts 20:7. The fruit of the vine is not mentioned. Could we leave it off because it is not mentioned? Someone says, "Yes, but fruit of the vine is mentioned in other scriptures." Yes, that is right and so it is with **SPENDING** the Lord's money. It doesn't have to be mentioned in but one text. I read where churches spent money to support Paul. Where did they get that money? Did they have rummage sales and pie suppers to raise it? Did they have two treasuries, one for benevolence and another for evangelism? Certainly not! Take **ALL** of the above scriptures and you have the answer. Remember, gentle reader, that I Cor. 16 does **NOT** set an exclusive pattern on how the churches **SPENT** money but it does set one on the **TIME** it is to be raised!

Friend, please take **ALL** the Bible says on the **PLAN OF SALVATION, THE COMMUNION, THE COLLECTION AND SPENDING OF MONEY** and you won't have to worry about pie suppers, rummage sales, or Wednesday night collections.

A POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION INTO THE DISEASES THAT KILLED A NATION Roy E. Stephens, Monahans, Texas

"**How did it all happen?**" seem to be the words of weeping Jeremiah (Lamentations) as in the distance the spiraling dust of Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar and his army ascends heavenward, while the suffocating smoke of the beloved but burning Jerusalem billows into hanging clouds. Jeremiah seeks a reason for the calamity.

"How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people. How is she become a widow, she that was great among the nations and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! Among all her lovers (**the nations whose love she had courted RES**) she hath none to comfort her . . . Judah is gone into captivity . . . Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow . . . all that pass by clap their hands at thee, they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem saying 'is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth'?"

Today when we see congregations of God's people who one time were towers of strength, whose strength has now become weakness, whose opposition to sin and error has turned into condoning and tolerating the same; when brethren are seen to fraternize with denominationalism rather than destroy it with the sword of the spirit; when churches no longer stand for the firm uncompromising straightforward preaching of the gospel that characterized the great men of God just 50 years ago, but churches are seen partaking in every form of denominational foolishness, traveling the anemic trail of sectarianism that led to the "death" of the Christian church not many years ago, we ask with Jeremiah "How did it all happen?"

That members of Christ are traveling this anemic trail, no observant person can deny, and brethren, anemia will eventually result in death.

It sometimes seems that churches are so intent on departure, each day's mail points out that the only reason they do not go faster, is, they just can't think of anything else unscriptural to do! Attend a gospel meeting of most any of the "great preachers of today" and you will not hear as much Bible in the entire meeting as a gospel preacher preached in five minutes, a few years ago. You will hear denominational phrases which at best indicate a lack of respect for scriptural authority, and why is it brethren that when **we** depart from the faith, we out-sect the sects and stop at nothing in our mad race? Perhaps the reason can be seen by looking at the Christian church of today. Once, with us, they repudiated all human creeds and declared the word of God to be divine authority, but then they introduced every fashion of human institution along with instrumental music in the worship and sought to defend these with Scripture. When they were unable to do so, they repudiated the Scriptures rather than the human institution! They would not give up the human invention for the Bible, but gave up the Bible for the human invention! Even the Baptists have the manual to stop them in their departures and the Methodists have a discipline, but when brethren who have declared the **Bible is authority**, when they give it up saying, "we have no need for authority" there are no brakes to slow them down in their mad race to Babylon.

What has this attitude brought about in our practice in **recent** years? The "church of Christ hospital" will soon be a reality. A Texas publication tells of the "**church of Christ clinic in Seoul, Korea**" and that is mighty close to the church of Christ hospital. When a brother wamed 15 years ago that we would some day have "church of Christ hospitals" I did not believe him, but apparently he was right. We have church sponsored baseball teams, basketball teams, boy scouts, summer camps, recreational facilities, and a host of other things that have no relation whatsoever to the work of the church. The popular "sponsoring" practice looks dangerously like a miniature missionary society and woe to the church that goes along intent upon doing its own work and ignores the brotherhood projects! The Mormons have a railroad, and a huge cattle feeding business. Perhaps some church will take on such projects before too long. No one so far, has begun sponsoring a "Home for Unwed Fathers" or "Donkeys for China" but no doubt someone will give birth to such a child soon and call upon all for help and style those who choose not to support them, as "antis" and other prejudicial names. Congregations have exploited celebrities in the church, in the field of sports, entertainment, and finance, **not** for their spirituality necessarily, but pride in human accomplishments.

We cannot travel a road leading to a place without eventually getting there, if we keep on. These things made the Christian church what it is. I don't want to be where they are, do you?

In this introductory article let us note some things about Jeremiah and one or two observations before noticing the particular things that brought death to the nation. Jeremiah was the most viciously perse-

cuted prophet of the Old Testament. Apart from Christ, no doubt he was the man of sorrows and most acquainted with grief, but though unpopular with many, and suffering terrible treatment, he never changed his message to the people. If you are growing tired in battle, read Jeremiah. It will do you good. He was banished from the temple (36:5) imprisoned and family taken from him and home confiscated (10:20) charged with treason and his writings destroyed (36) Jeremiah's "visible results" or success cannot be the standard by which we determine his approval in God's sight. Often there is a late harvest which the sower does not live to see. Like Samson who slew more in his death than in his life, real results may come later. Jeremiah still lives and blesses the faint hearted by his courage. He was against (anti) some things done in Judah during that day. He would have been exceedingly unpopular today too.

The divided kingdom came about upon the rebellion of Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:29-33) and Israel. When the break came, Rehoboam saw the rebellion and raised an army of 180,000 warriors to subdue the rebellion but God's word came to him through Samuel forbidding him. "This thing is from me," said God. (1 Kings 12:24) Israel did not find their strength in God, so God designed that they would not be strong. This division was of God, in some sense. What? It demonstrated God's displeasure upon the sin and idolatry of Solomon's court and it gave the northern section a challenge and an opportunity to return to God and faithfulness to him, though the kings of the northern kingdom never did have such faith to accept the opportunity. They continued to trust in their own ways and their political devices and attempts to be popular and went down the road of idolatry to complete destruction. The division allowed the more faithful kings of Judah in the south, an opportunity to attempt some sweeping reforms and try to save a remnant of God's people. When people demonstrate their unwillingness to follow God, division is usually the result. The entire world lay in the evil one (1 Jn. 5:19) Jesus came with a gospel that would save (Rom. 1:16) by taking out a people from the evil world of Satan (Acts 15:14). I suppose in a sense Jesus "split" the world, but if it had not been for this split the entire world would have been lost.

When the institutional people in the church 100 years ago adopted their unscriptural practices, the missionary society and instrumental music, 80% went the way of the Christian church. 20% stood against these departures and maintained New Testament Christianity. Had it not been for this split there would not be a New Testament church on earth today.

Division is always the result of sin, one way or another, either the sin of those who separate themselves when they should not, or the separation of those who are righteous from those who have sinned, and from which righteous men must separate. Division usually for a time brings about shame and weakness but it breaks the powers of evil to corrupt the whole body and it gives the more righteous part a challenge to reform and a chance to survive. Where there is a departure there must be division, unless those in error will turn. When the leaders, such as Jeroboam, and the institutional leaders of 100 years

ago in the church, are hardened in heart and apostate, there is nothing left for the righteous except to separate and such division is from the Lord. (1 Kings 12:14) (See also Romans 16:17,18; 1 Cor. 11:17-19; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 1:8; 2 Jn.7-11; Rev. 18:4-5.)

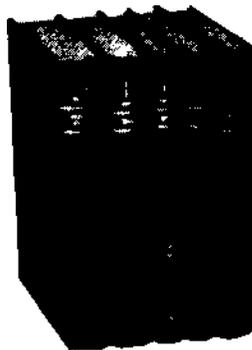
Here however, is something that ought to be noted most carefully by all, including those who are seeking to walk in the old paths . . . too often divisions are like that of Israel and Judah whose pride and self will brought about the shame of a house divided against itself without bringing out a people of pure faith and true righteousness on either side. It is most difficult to maintain the proper spirit when men slander and misrepresent you and your efforts, and when some even lie, but Jeremiah endured these things.

In connection with the above let us observe a tragic mistake, usually made by brethren who are seeking to be neutral. They say, "Yes but both sides have made mistakes and displayed bad spirits." Notice that both sides. That is where the colossal fallacy lies. There are two sides but they happen to be a right side and a wrong side and there is all the difference in the world in the two. One "side" in the church today is taking many good people straight toward denominationalism, destruction and perdition and the other "side" is seeking to stay in the old paths and keep the mission of the church spiritual and the diet of the church strong with Bible teaching. The fact that they both have made mistakes does not make them equal. The Christian who opposes error ought to maintain a good spirit if he can, but" if he does not, it is a small matter compared to him who is teaching false doctrine with a bad spirit.

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PLACING MEMBERSHIP

Jimmy Tuten, St. Louis, Mo.

One of the grave problems facing the Church today, is that of individuals who claim to be members of the body of Christ, but who at the same time, are not actively associated with the local Church in their community. They generally come under three classifications. There are those who hasten to have their names placed on the directory, but from then on seldom darken the doors of the Church building. Another class is made up of those who move into a community and attend spasmodically, never making any effort to identify themselves with the Saints in the area. The last are those who move into a new area and neither attend nor identify themselves with the Saints. Some do not understand that when they move from place to place, their membership with the local Church changes, or moves with them. Upon moving into a new community they should immediately identify themselves with the Church in that area. By such action, they place themselves in a position to fulfill personal obligations to the Lord. If one is not identified with the Church in a given community, then that one is a "floating member," wandering aimlessly and listlessly along the highway of life.

The idea behind the expression "placing membership" is abused and misunderstood. However, I am using the term "placing membership" in an accommodative sense, as applying to the action of Christians who move into a community where the Church exists, and who associate or identify themselves with that congregation.

THE USE OF THE TERM "CHURCH" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

To help with the understanding of this problem, note that the New Testament uses the term "Church" in two senses. It is used in a limited and unlimited sense, or simply the local and universal. The Church in the universal sense is made of all those who have been born again, or simply, all the redeemed of the earth (Matt. 16:16-18; Eph. 5:25-26). This is what is referred to by the term "general assembly" (Heb. 12:33). All the saved of the earth are added to the Church when they obey the gospel (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-47). The Church, known as the Church in the aggregate, is not limited to a part of the saved, but includes all of them.

On the other hand, the saved in a local or restricted area, constitute the local Church in that community. Such expressions as "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth" refer to the various congregations of God's people (I Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Acts 13:1). The Divinely prescribed organization for the local Church is seen in Philippians 1:1, "to all the Saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." The local Church is limited to place and is dependent upon fellowship or association with other Christians. As in the case of

the Eunuch, one can have fellowship with Christ in a desolate place, after obeying the gospel, but his fellowship with other Christians is dependent upon his being located where other Christians are, working together in joint participation as a congregation. There is a vast difference, therefore, between the Church locally, and the Church universally.

CLEARING AWAY MISUNDERSTANDINGS

The term "placing membership" is a misnomer. One cannot "place membership" in the Lord's Church, due to the fact that when one obeys the gospel he already holds membership in the body of the saved. The term "identify" would be a much better expression to use with reference to joining oneself to the disciples in a given area (Acts 9:26). By this, one simply makes known the fact that he or she is a member of the Church and desires to work and worship with the local Church.

Another prevalent idea is the belief that a Christian has to go through some formal process of "moving his letter" before his membership is changed from one local Church to another. Some draw the conclusion that if they move away from a congregation and do not move "their letter," and they later move, back, membership in the local Church from which they removed remains the same. Oftentimes, people are heard saying, "Oh, my membership is still here. I never did move it when I moved away several years ago." All of God's people need to know that as far as the local Church is concerned, membership moves when they move. When a person ceases to work and worship with a congregation, his membership in that congregation terminates, whether he takes any formal action or not. When you move into a new location, it is not necessary to have a "Church letter" before you identify yourself with a new congregation. You must, however, be a working part of another congregation. When you move away, you are no longer a member of the Church where you once worshipped and worked. If you fail to identify yourself with the local Church within the community into which you have moved, you are an unfaithful Christian in that area. The idea that a Christian as no obligations in this connection if there is no Church in a given area, is false! One cannot sit idly at home or worship with a denomination. If there is no Church in the area into which you have moved, then you constitute the only member of the Church in that area, and you must work and worship to the extent of your ability. Many churches have begun as a result of individuals accepting responsibilities in this respect. *(continued next month)*

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