

Rhode Island Christian Bulletin

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To the Law and to the Testimony! (What does the Bible say about occult practices?)

From the Sermon
Delivered
10/23/2011

By James Moriello

"And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,' should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:19-20)

Our text speaks to a topic that is in season, for Halloween is upon us. To oppose Halloween on the basis of pagan origin alone, but not Christmas and Easter, is to be inconsistent. Each one of us should determine for ourselves whether or not each day has redemptive purpose. The Bible gives us liberty to observe or not to observe any holiday. "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind" (Romans 14:5). All this being said however, the holiday does bring occult practices to the forefront of our minds. What does the Bible say about these practices? Our text gives us the answer. "To the Law and to the Testimony!" should be the rallying cry of Christians everywhere (Isaiah 8:20a)! In

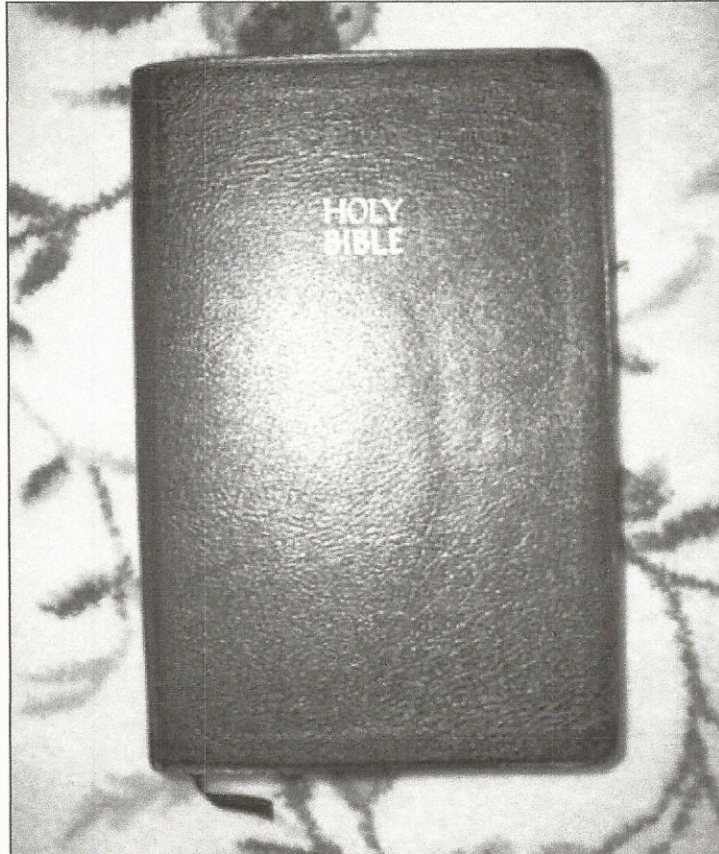


Photo Credit: RICB Staff

"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20)

other words, we are to seek authoritative answers from God's Word, and live by them. God's Word is light, and the things that line up against it are darkness.

Whether the practitioners of such evil are really doing these things or are simply charlatan deceivers is irrelevant, for both further the demonic plan whether they

know it or not. We will begin with the biblical position on occult practices. Then we will address the two types of people of which our text speaks.

(continued on page 6)

Highlights in this Issue!

Page 2: Women's Page

Page 3: Children&Family

Page 4: Prosperity Gospel

Page 5: Comforting Words

Page 8: Christian Revival

Apostasy and God's Faithful Mercy

By Gerard Lachance

One of the results of backsliding can be found in the Book of Proverbs. "The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways" (Proverbs 14:14a).

A Christian begins to isolate himself or herself from the assembly (the church), and eventually becomes self absorbed, and succumbs to fleshly lust. Then the believer begins to weaken spiritually, because he or she is no longer being encouraged by like-minded believers to persevere.

Now the second part of this proverb reads: "But a good man will be satisfied from above" (Proverbs 14:14b). If he continues to pray and read the Holy Scriptures, he will be satisfied with the Bread of Life and the Living Water, which is Jesus Christ.

Indifference is another result of backsliding. There are some Christians who fell that it is no longer important to continue in the faith, or to come worship our Lord for one hour a week.

(Continued on Page 4)



Chatham, MA, Credit: RICB Staff

"O LORD, revive your work" (Habakkuk 3:2)

The Kind of Revival We Need

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

IT IS GOOD for us to draw nigh unto God in prayer. Our minds are grieved to see so little attention given to united prayer by many churches.

How can we expect a blessing if we are too idle to ask for it? How can we look for a Pentecost if we never meet with one another, in one place, to wait upon the Lord? Brethren, we shall never see much change for the better in

our churches till the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians.

But now that we have come together, how shall we pray? Let us not degenerate into formality, or we shall be dead while we think we live. Let us not waiver through unbelief, or we shall pray in vain. Oh, for great faith with which to offer great prayers!

We have been mingling praise and prayer together as a delicious compound of spices, fit to be presented upon the altar of incense through Christ our Lord; may we not at this time offer some special far-reaching petition? It is suggested to me that we pray for a true and genuine revival of religion throughout the world.

(continued on page 8)

Wisdom for Women: Thanking God for His Faithfulness

By Susan Moriello

September 13th, 2014 marks the 5th Anniversary of Firm Foundation Christian Church! I want to thank Al and Tanya for persevering with us. The church could not have gotten off the ground without their help and support. During these past five years, we have gone through many trials and made some errors, but the Lord guided us through. "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). He has promised, "I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18). Nothing at all could have been done without prayer. We have met many wonderful Christians. Some have come and moved on, while others have stayed with us. For

those who have stayed with us and become part of the ministry, I am truly grateful! I also want to thank the church for their cheerful service and loving friendships.

I have been so very blessed just by knowing all these people who have shared their lives with us. I have learned and grown through these last five years through the

trials, blessings, family relationships, and spiritual family relationships with other Christian men and women. It has been quite a journey, one in which I have grown in wisdom and in patience. Praise the Lord! So again, thank you, church! I pray the Lord's blessings to you now and always! May the Lord send many more people to Firm! I also pray that if you don't have a church family, may you find a Bible-believing church family, where you can share the hope and love of Jesus with others, "nor forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). Until next time, many blessings to you all! Please keep praying for one another! "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).



Thacher Island Lighthouses. Credit: RICB Staff

"I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1)

The Grace Brick

By Gerry Bettencourt

Bricks can be used for building, yet they can also be used to get our attention. In this story, the brick did get the attention of one man.

A certain man owned a Jaguar, and as he was traveling through a neighborhood, he suddenly heard a 'bang' on his door. He slammed on his brakes to stop, got out of his car, and angrily began shouting at a boy who had thrown the brick. He pushed the boy against a parked car, shouting, "What are you doing, throwing a brick in the direction of my new car? This is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?" As the young boy's lips quivered,

he said, "Please, mister! I'm sorry! But I didn't know what to do. I threw the brick to stop you, because I needed to get your attention." With tears dripping down his face, he told the man that as he was wheeling his brother in the wheelchair, his brother had fallen into the street from his wheelchair. "I couldn't pick him up, and your car was coming, and you would have run him over", said the boy. The man was so moved by this child's hurt that, with a lump in his throat, he came to the child and lifted him on the wheelchair. He watched as the boy pushed his brother in the wheelchair up the hill back home.

(continued on page 5)

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James Moriello, Editor
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Firm Foundation
Christian Church,
Woonsocket, RI
Phone: 401-765-0107
Email:
firmfoundationri
@verizon.net
Website:
www.firmfoundationri.com

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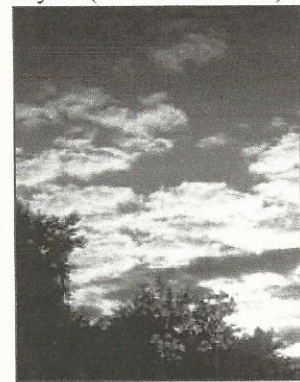
Firm Foundation Christian Church exists to proclaim and promote the life giving Gospel of Jesus Christ by any and all means possible. We are an independent Christ-Centered, Bible-Based Christian Church affirming the full

Woven into God's Tapestry

By Cindy A. Camelli

I was in time past
A loose thread on the spinning wheel of life
I was taken and woven into the tapestry
by the hands of the Creator
Beautiful--Complete
Created by the Master Artist
Who makes all things beautiful
The jeweled crown awaits
A princess of the King
No shadows--Only light
The glory of the Lord
lights my path with his un-failing love
Beautiful--Complete
Eternally His

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you" (Jeremiah 29:11-12).



Credit: RICB Staff

"He has made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11a)

inspiration of Scripture (the Bible), the deity of all three Persons of the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), that Jesus Christ became flesh and died for sinners and rose again, and that those who believe in Him in faith receive eternal life.

Please come join us Sunday morning at 10 am, or Friday evening at 7 pm. We meet at 84 Cumberland Street in Woonsocket, RI. Our TV ministry airs every Tuesday and Saturday at 10 am on Cox Channel 18 and Verizon Channel 23.

God Versus Satan

(Inspired by the Ministry and Work of Laurie Hewitt)

By Tanya Hay



Whales Feeding in the North Atlantic. Credit: RICB Staff

GOD vs. SATAN

What does God do?
What does Satan do?
Read the differences:

God:
Stills you (Psalm 46:10-11)
Reassures you (John 14:1-4)
Leads you (Psalm 23:1-3)
Enlightens you (Psalm 119:105)
Forgives you (1 John 1:9)
Calms you

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8)

(Philippians 4:6-7)
Encourages you (Joshua 1:6-9)
Comforts you (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
Loves you! (John 3:16)

Satan:
Rushes you (Proverbs 19:2)
Frightens you (Revelation 2:10)

Pushes you (1 Chronicles 21:1)
Confuses you (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)
Condemns you (Job 1:9-12)
Stresses you

(Matthew 13:22)
Discourages you (1 Peter 5:8-9)
Worries you (Matthew 6:31-32)
Does not Love you! (Matthew 10:28)

Word Search, Things God Does

F O S X R D Q C Y S L L I T S
O S N D T E O K N U R A J E Z
R M Y W A M A E C X Y Q V S V
G L G U F E T S J S H O A Y P
I A D O E H L P S L L J Q A X
V C R D G E N C O U R A G E S
E T Z I L T Q P I C R U Y D F
S Y L W F O H C G V Y E B N L
W N D Z J P U Z Y K E T S C S
E B U X T X S D K B D J J L D

CALMS
ENLIGHTENS
LOVES

COMFORTS
FORGIVES
REASSURES

ENCOURAGES
LEADS
STILLS

Apostasy and God's Faithful Mercy, Continued from Page One

By Gerard Lachance

The author of Hebrews (uncertain) tells us not to forsake the assembly, but to exhort one another. As it is written, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

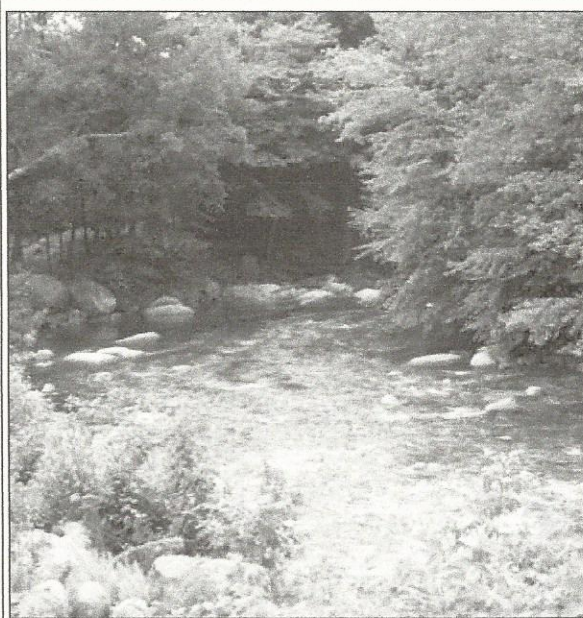
There are backsliders that have expressed their thoughts on other books they have read from other cultures and false religions, and claim that those writings are just like the Bible. Well, any book teaching, doctrine, or church that is not Christocentric--centered on Jesus Christ, and the cross--is false. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is "the power of God to salvation" (Romans 1:16). "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel" (Galatians 1:6). The backslider is now, it seems, to be looking for a way to justify living an ungodly life without feeling guilty or accountable to God. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

In the Second Epistle of Peter, Peter expounds on God's displeasure, and the apostate's deterioration. "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20).

There are several causes which tend to produce backsliding. We will note three of them.

First, there is the absence of spiritual leaders. "Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him" (Exodus 32:1).

(Continued on Page 5)



Credit: RICB Staff

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine..." (2 Timothy 4:3a)

The Prosperity Gospel (Excerpted from the Sermon on June 8, 2014)

By Brian Violette

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

We're in an age today where technology makes it easy to listen to pastors from across the country, or even around the world. There are a lot of pastors and ministers on TV that preach about Jesus, but some are using Jesus as a means of getting things, or achieving goals, or just bringing areas of their lives to a 'higher level'. This type of preaching is known as the 'prosperity gospel'. The prosperity gospel is centered on you, your needs, your desires, and your problems--making everything else seem minor, including God. I'm not saying self-improvement isn't good, because it's a great thing. However, the prosperity gospel basically makes an idol of yourself, which is a sin. The focus of the prosperity gospel is geared towards the creation, rather

than the Creator. As Christians, we need to be idol-breakers and not idol-makers. Psalm 100:3 reads, "Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." It's God's will for your life that matters. He has a plan for each of us, whether we know it or not. Colossians 1:16 reads, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." The true gospel leads us on a straight and narrow path, while the prosperity gospel leads us on a path that can be selfish--leaving us not satisfied or content with what God has blessed us with.

The Gospel of the Bible is the best news anyone can give or receive, because once someone realizes their spiritual condition--their need for Jesus--they come to Him with a contrite and humble heart, and make Jesus their Lord and Savior. That sense of gratitude, thankfulness towards God for providing a way--Jesus, and His love for us demonstrated through His work on the cross, taking our sins, so that when we stand in the heavenly courtroom, God the Father sees that we are washed clean because of His Son's blood.

For the believer, what was a guilty verdict is now a not guilty verdict all because of Jesus.

Give Me the Simple Life

By Anonymous

Satan called a worldwide convention. In his opening address to the evil angels, he said, "We can't keep the Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from conservative values. But we can do something else. We can keep them from forming an intimate, abiding experience in Christ. If they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to church, let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time, so they can't gain that experience in Jesus Christ."

"This is what I want you to do, angels. Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!"

"How shall we do this?" shouted his angels.

"Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent schemes to occupy their minds," he answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, then borrow, borrow, borrow. Convince the wives to go to work and the husbands to work 6 to 7 days a week, 10 - 12 hours a day, so they can afford their lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family fragments, soon their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work."

"Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still small voice. Entice them to play their radio or cassette player whenever they drive, to keep the TV, the VCR, and their CD's going constantly in their homes. And see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ."

"Fill their coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, sweepstakes, mail order catalogs, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering, free products, services and false hopes."

(continued on page 5)

The Grace Brick, Continued from Page 2



The 'Grace Brick' reminded the man not to go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick to get your attention. The reminder was "grace". Despite human mistakes and human failures, God's grace had spoken.

God's grace spoke through the donkey that needed to get Balaam's attention because he was disobeying God's plan. God needed to open the mouth of a donkey to speak to Balaam to stop him in his plan (Numbers 22:20-35).

God's grace spoke to Moses. As he was crying out for his people, God used a burning bush that did not get consumed to speak to Moses. God heard his prayer and displayed His power (Exodus 3:2-4).

God's grace spoke to the rich young ruler because God loved him. As the ruler was testifying to his own performance based righteousness, Jesus told him to sell all that he had and follow Him (Matthew 19:21).

Put Jesus first in your life and you will not experience the tyranny of sin, and its absolute power which rules over those without God. It is a harsh life when one is ruled by things. May the grace brick remind you of true treasure. Waving the white flag of surrender to God is the grace brick message.

Comfort (Words that bring Peace)

With Scriptures Called to Mind by the Artwork of Susan Kirwan

Compiled by RICB Staff

"My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwelling places, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32:18)

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

"The sun to rule by day, for His mercy endures forever; the moon and stars to rule by night, for His mercy endures forever" (Psalm 136:8-9).

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things,

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:16-18).

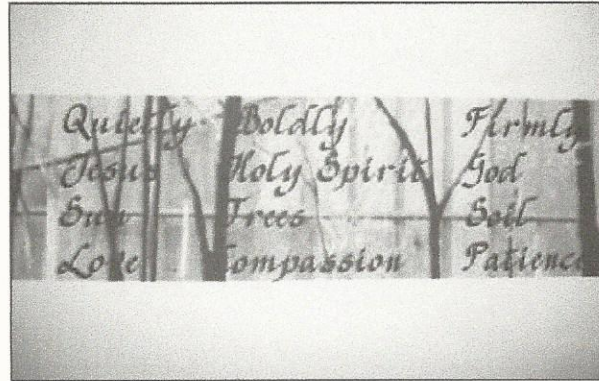
"And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (Genesis 2:9a).

"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" (Lamentations 3:22-24)

has departed for Thessalonica" (2 Timothy 4:10).

In the Book of Revelation we read: "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love" (Revelation 2:4).

It is not hopeless for the backslider to return and be restored to the flock and fold of Jesus' church. As it is written, "So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm" (Joel 2:13).



Artwork: 'Comfort', By Susan Kirwan

"...the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3)

was in all points tempted as we are, yet never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but

was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

"but Christ as a Son over His own house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end" (Hebrews 3:6)

"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

"And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and

rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how" (Mark 4:26-27).

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:4-6).

Apostasy and God's Mercy, Continued from Page 4



The second cause which tends to produce backsliding is evil associations. "For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David" (1 Kings 11:4).

A third cause which tends to produce backsliding is the love of the world. "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and

Give Me the Simple Life, Continued from Page 4

By Anonymous

"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted and unprepared for the coming week.

Don't let them go out in nature. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts and movies instead. And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotion."

"Let them be involved in soul-win-

ning. But crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Christ. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause."

It was quite a convention in the end. And the evil angels went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get busy, busy, busy, and rush here and there.

Has the devil been successful in his scheme?

You be the judge.

To the Law and to the Testimony! (continued from page one)

First, let us define the biblical position. "To the Law and to the Testimony" (Isaiah 8:20a)! "Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:31). "And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people" (Leviticus 20:6). "A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:27). "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you" (Deuteronomy 18:10-14). "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then Saul, who also is

called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:8-10)? "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). These are only a few of the many texts and passages on this subject in support of our text, and they are all very clear that divination, magic, mediums, necromancy (calling up of the dead), sorcery, and witchcraft/wizardry are forbidden by Almighty God.

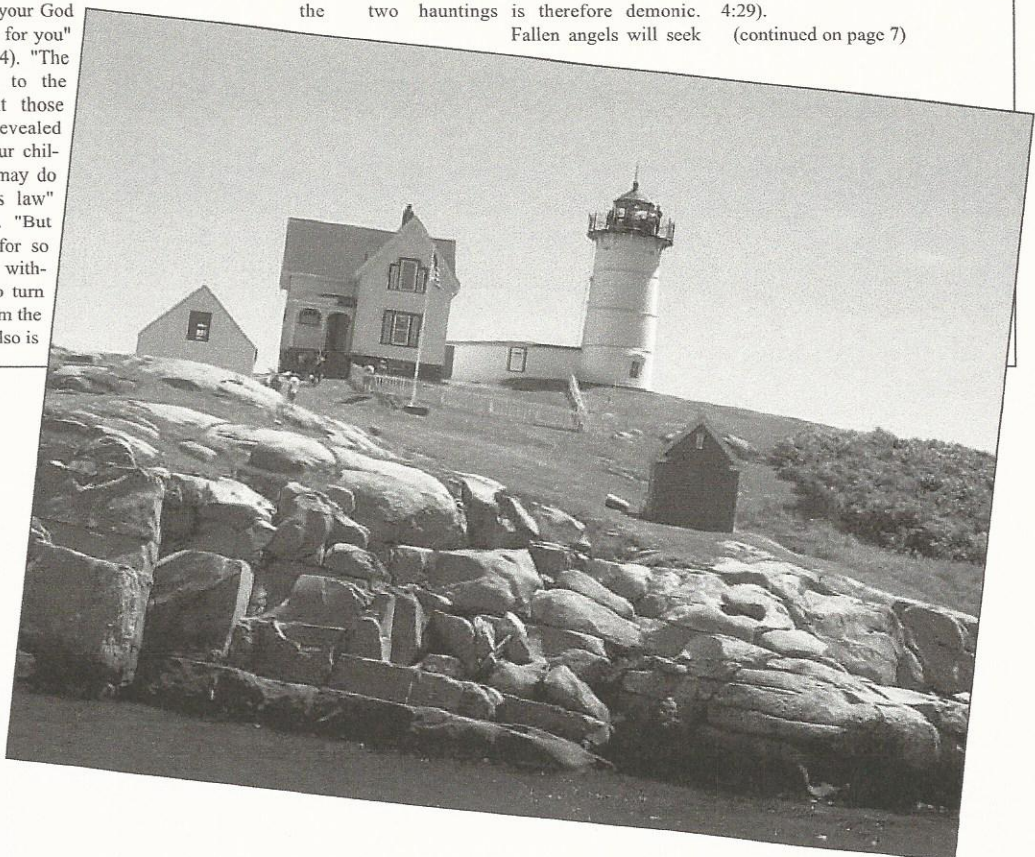
Now we turn to the first of the two categories of people and practices specifically addressed in our text; that of mediums. A medium is someone who claims to be able to contact supernatural beings or deceased human beings. Seances, Ouija boards, and necromancy fall into this category. Necromancy is the English term that arises out of the two

words in the Greek (nekros manteia) meaning 'dead body divination'. This is the specific practice of mediums of raising up the 'spirit of the deceased' in either 'ghost form' or bodily form. We see an example of this in the encounter of Saul with the medium at En Dor (1 Samuel 28:6-20). In that particular case, God allows the practice. However, the practice is condemned and Saul would face judgment on the basis of his sin in seeking the medium to begin with. The Bible does not teach the concept of ghosts of the deceased, or the hauntings that are often associated with them. Rather, Scripture states that "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). The soul and spirit go either to be in the presence of God, or in torment awaiting the final judgment (Luke 16:19-31). What then is the explanation for such occurrences? The Bible is very clear that angels and demons (fallen angels) can and do intervene in human affairs in a variety of ways. Heavenly angels will always glorify God, and so they intervene not to bring attention to themselves or the spectacular, but the Creator God (Hebrews 1:13-14). The origin of valid ghosts and hauntings is therefore demonic.

Fallen angels will seek

to destroy or undermine anything that glorifies God. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). What about instances when people feel a sense of peace or some other positive result from a communication of a departed loved one, for instance? The Bible answers that question quite clearly. "And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). If it is deception and false peace that will lead the inquirer away from God, then evil will offer them. Very often, the faith of the seeker will be in the medium and a fascination with the unseen realm of darkness will result. That is a trap! Do not fall for it! There are times in life when we do not have all the answers to our questions. God has not given you any other recourse in His Word other than to seek Him with your whole heart and soul (Deuteronomy 4:29).

(continued on page 7)



Nubble Lighthouse,
York, Maine, Photo
Credit: RICB Staff

To the Law and to the Testimony! (continued from page 6)

The second category of people and practices warned against in our text is wizards. Under this heading, we will include sorcery, black magic, and witchcraft. All of these things are ways in which someone tries to influence people, things, or events through occult means. Sorcery has been made popular by the Harry Potter movies, and is feeding the souls of children in place of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Black magic includes practices such as voodoo, and is popular in many pagan ancestral religions in what we would call the 'Third World', but do not think that it is not practiced here as well. We will spend the most time on witchcraft, and specifically the religion known as Wicca. Wicca has become so widespread that it has received recognition as a religion by the United States military. It is essentially a humanistic religion which denies the existence of the Christian God and offers a works salvation. Since Wicca teaches that divinity can be found in various manifestations, including oneself, it follows that its followers can earn salvation in the form of a 'better reincarnation'. In between lives, so the teaching goes, the individual gets to go to Summerland. Contrary to popular belief, adherents are encouraged to only use magical powers in 'good ways' and do not even believe in the existence of the devil or absolute evil. Wiccan sure sounds like a fairy tale, but folks so want to escape being account-

able to God, they will try just about anything. A similar movement, often closely connected to Wiccan, is the Goddess movement. This is a movement that is matriarchal in nature and is borne out of the modern day feminist rebellion against what is seen to be the patriarchal Christian God. This thinking has even invaded Christianity itself. For instance, although all three Persons of the Trinity are always identified with male pronouns in the Bible, some have endeavored to create a 'gender neutral' God by adulterating the translation of the Scriptures from the Hebrew and the Greek.

Let us now turn briefly to other practices which relate to but do not fall neatly into the two categories in our text, but are forbidden in Scriptures quoted earlier. We will place them under the heading of divination, and we will deal specifically with astrology and tarot reading. Divination is seeking to know the future through occult means. Astrology seeks to read celestial signs and bodies to determine the future. The believer is forbidden to wor-

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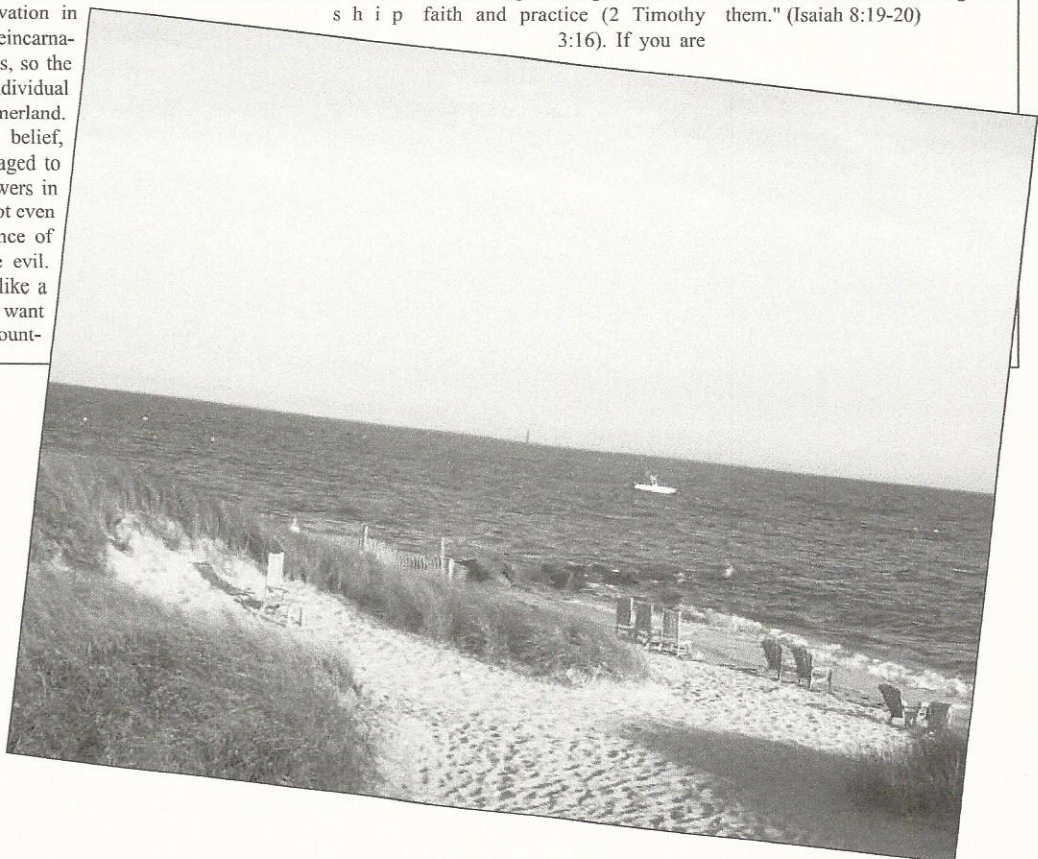
anything in the heavens, including the sun, moon, and stars (Deuteronomy 4:19). Instead, our faith should be in God alone. Let one try to excuse himself and say that it is not worship, the Lord categorically forbids the interpretation of omens of any kind (Deuteronomy 18:10). It is out of bounds for the Christian, and God does not take such sin lightly. Astrologers, stargazers, and monthly prognosticators—and those who participate in them—face certain judgment for their heinous sin (Isaiah 47:13-14). Tarot reading is simple fortune telling, at best a scam, and at worst a road to perdition, and represents distrust that the Lord your God has your future in His hands. Would you rather your future be found in the hands of a tarot card reader or in the hands of Almighty God?

In closing, I will once again declare to you the Christian response to these things. "To the Law and to the Testimony" (Isaiah 8:20a)! Your God and His Word to you is the authority for all matters pertaining to Christian faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16). If you are

mixed up with any of these sinful practices, forsake them. They are not harmless. Although many of the practices we have covered are simple human foolishness, there are powers at work that you do not want to expose yourself to. Do not play games with them. Again I say, forsake evil! Warn others of the danger as well, that they may not fall into, or further into, the trap of occult practice. The best defense against the wiles of evil is to live close to the Lord Jesus Christ and cultivate your relationship with Him. Focus on Christ, and do not focus on evil—evil will find you anyhow. May we be found continually "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2a)!

"And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,' should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:19-20)

Forest Beach,
Chatham,
Massachusetts, Photo
Credit: RICB Staff



Vigorous, Consecrated Strength



We want also a revival of vigorous, consecrated strength. I have pleaded for true piety; I now beg for one of the highest results of it. We need saints. We need gracious minds trained to a high form of

spiritual life by much converse with God in solitude.

Saints acquire nobility from their constant resort to the place where the Lord meets with them. There they also acquire that power in prayer which we so greatly need. Oh, that we had more men like John Knox, whose prayers were more terrible to Queen Mary than 10,000 men! Oh, that we had more Elijahs by whose faith the windows of heavens should be shut or opened!

This power comes not by a sudden effort; it is the outcome of a life devoted to the God of Israel! If our life is all in public, it will be a frothy, vapoury ineffectual existence; but if we hold high converse with God in secret, we shall be mighty for good. He that is a prince with God will take high rank with men, after the true measure of nobility.

Beware of being a lean-to; endeavour to rest on your own walls of real faith in the Lord Jesus. May none of us fall into a mean, poverty-stricken dependence on man! We want among us believers like those solid, substantial family mansions which stand from generation to generation as landmarks of the country; no lath-and-plaster fabrics, but edifices solidly constructed to bear all weathers, and defy time itself.

Given a host of men who are steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, the glory of God's grace will be clearly manifested, not only in them, but in those round about them. The Lord send us a revival of consecrated strength, and heavenly energy!

Preach by your hands if you cannot preach by your tongues. When our church members show the fruits of true godliness, we shall soon have inquiries for the tree which bears such a crop.

Oh the coming together of the saints is the first part of Pentecost, and the ingathering of sinners is the second. It began with "only a prayer meeting", but it ended with a grand baptism of thousands of converts. Oh that the prayers of believers may act as lode stones to sinners! Oh that every gathering of faithful men might be a lure to attract others to Jesus! May many souls fly to Him because they see others speeding in that direction.

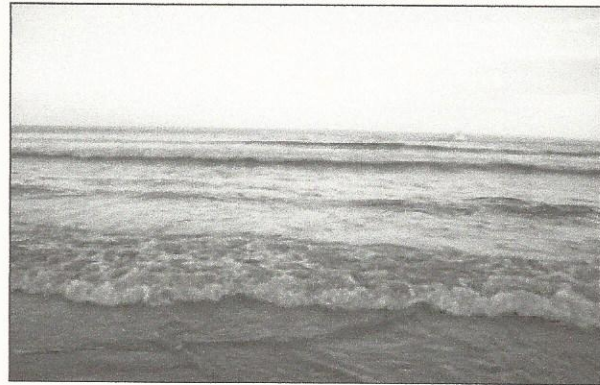
"Lord, we turn from these poor foolish procrastinators to thyself, and we plead for them with thine all-wise and gracious spirit! Lord, turn them and they shall be turned! By their conversion, pray that a true revival has commenced tonight! Let it spread through all our households, and then run from church to church till the whole of christendom shall be ablaze with a heaven-descended fire!"

The Kind of Revival We Need, Continued from Page One, By C.H. Spurgeon A Real and Lasting Revival

I am glad of any signs of life, even if they should be feverish and transient, and I am slow to judge any well intended movement, but I am very fearful that many so called revivals in the long run wrought more harm than good. A species of religious gambling has fascinated many men, and given them a distaste for the sober business of true godliness.

But if I would nail down counterfeits upon the counter, I do not therefore undervalue true gold. Far from it. It is to be desired beyond measure that the Lord would send a real and lasting revival of spiritual life.

We need a work of the Holy Spirit of a supernatural kind, putting power into the preaching of the Word, inspiring all believers with heavenly energy, and solemnly affecting the hearts of the careless, so that they turn to God and live.



York Beach, Credit: RIBC Staff

"Here am I! Send Me" (Isaiah 6:8)

We would not be drunk with the wine of carnal excitement, but we would be filled with the Spirit. We would behold the fire descending from heaven in answer to the effectual fervent prayers of

righteous men. Can we not entreat the Lord our God to make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the people in this day of declension and vanity?

Old Fashioned Doctrine and Personal Godliness

We want a revival of old-fashioned doctrine. I know not a single doctrine which is not at this hour studiously undermined by those who ought to be its defenders. There is not a truth that is precious to the soul which is not now denied by those whose profession it is to proclaim it. To me it is clear that we need a revival of old-fashioned gospel preaching like that of Whitefield and Wesley.

The Scriptures must be made the infallible foundation of all teaching; the ruin, redemption and regeneration of mankind must be set forth in unmistakable terms.

Urgently do we need a revival of personal godliness. This is, indeed, the secret of church prosperity. When individuals fall from their steadfastness, the church is tossed to and fro; when personal faith is steadfast, the church abides true to her Lord.

It is upon the truly godly and spiritual that the future of religion depends in the hand of God. Oh, for more truly holy men, quickened and filled with the Holy Spirit, consecrated to the Lord and sanctified by His truth.

Brethren, we must each one live if the church is to be alive; we must live unto God if we expect to see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in our hands. Sanctified men are the salt of society and the saviours of the race.

Domestic Religion

We deeply want a revival of domestic religion. The Christian family was the bulwark of godliness in the days of the puritans, but in these evil times hundreds of families of so-called Christians have no family worship, no restraint upon growing sons, and no wholesome instruction or discipline. How can we hope to see the kingdom of our Lord advance when His own disciples do not teach His gospel to their

own children?

Oh, Christian men and women, be thorough in what you do and know and teach! Let your families be trained in the fear of God and be yourselves "holiness unto the Lord"; so shall you stand like a rock amid the surging waves of error and ungodliness which rage around us.

"O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid;

O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years!

In the midst of the years make it known;

In wrath remember mercy."
(Habakkuk 3:2, NKJV)

"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,

And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,

And sinners shall be converted to You."

(Psalm 51:12-13, NKJV)