

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XVIII

SEPTEMBER, 1977

NUMBER 9

THINK ON THESE THINGS

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THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE BIBLE

A good understanding of the Bible itself will help us to understand its nature. It is not just another book like the many books we have today. There are several traits about it that clearly distinguish it from all other literature in the world. A strong effort is being put forth in this generation to lower the influence of this book to that of other books written by men, but as long as the distinguishing characteristics of the Bible remain, it can never be classified with the rest of the literature of the world.

Various terms used to describe the Bible will help us to understand something of its nature. The most prominent of these terms are:

(1) **Bible.** This book is called the "BIBLE," from the Greek **Biblia** meaning "the books." It is the "Volume of the book" of Psa. 40:7; Heb. 10:7. This refers to all the books individually that compose what we know as the Bible.

(2) **The Scriptures.** This term is often used to refer to the same writings as the word "Bible." Scripture is a Latin term which means "The writings." By common usage it has come to mean the writings of God.

(3) **The Word of God.** The word of God signifies that which is written is from God — it is His word and not the word of man.

(4) **The Gospel.** This term signifies more directly the "good news" of Christ, but it is used also to signify any thing that God has spoken to man, especially those things in the realm of promises that bring a blessing to mankind.

The nature of the Bible is shown in these terms by putting their meanings together. It is the BOOKS of sacred instruction composed of THE WRITINGS of God that came through holy men as they were "moved by the Spirit," composing the WORD OF GOD in contrast to the word of men. Paul says his message did not come by men, nor the will of man, but of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11,12). This writing of God brings the GOSPEL or "good news" of salvation to lost mankind.

THE UNIQUE NATURE OF ITS ORIGIN

1. CAUSE —EFFECT

The unusual origin of the Bible tells of its divine origin. This divine origin of the Bible depends upon the universally accepted relation between CAUSE and EFFECT. The Bible is an EFFECT of a CAUSE. Its very nature required an unusual Creator. A clock is the result of some designer and creator. If we find some distinctly unique clock, we know that there must have been some unusual mind behind it. If we concede that there is a God, then the existence of the Bible can easily be explained. But deny the existence of God and we cannot reasonably account for the existence of the Bible.

2. EITHER FROM GOD OR MAN

Reason inquires: "Is the Bible of human or divine origin?" Reason simply deduces from evidence given what is most natural and logical. An example is: Man has a soul; Adam is a man; therefore, reason says Adam has a soul. There is no other alternative. Reason tells us that the Bible is here; it had to have some creator; it had to come from either a Divine Being or from man. There is no other alternative.

This necessarily makes the Bible the loftiest or basest piece of literature on earth. With its claims it either is very true or very false. If the Lord is in truth and fact the Son of God, he is the highest authority on the face of the earth. He can speak from the source of divine wisdom, knowing the future will not change his doctrine. If he is not the Son of God, the Bible is the greatest fake the world has ever known. The Bible as it is cannot be a good work unless it is what it claims to be; and if it is what it claims to be, it is the only book that has God for its author.

3. IT CLAIMS TO BE FROM GOD

God is the ultimate speaker in all the Old Testament. In Hebrews 1 a list is given of statements regarding Christ from several writers such as David, Moses, Samuel, but Paul says they all come from God. Sometimes the word "Scripture" is personified as God (Rom. 9:17). Modernists decry the idea of making the Bible a person, but that is the way the Book uses the term. This simply means that God speaks through the Scriptures.

4. THE HUMAN INSTRUMENTALITY FROM MANY SOURCES

Though God is said to be the author of the contents of the Bible, He used human instrumentality in the work. In this respect it came from many sources, yet it is perfectly assembled together into one book. Like the temple in I Kings 5 and 6 it was made to fit before being put together. It

was written by statesmen like Moses, fishermen like Peter, kings and warriors like David, publicans like Matthew, shepherds like Amos, scholars like Paul, and physicians like Luke. Men from many countries, different ages, and from a variety of walks of life were used in writing the Bible. This would have been impossible without some Superior Mind guiding them in the writing. This makes the Bible unique in its origin.

THE UNIQUE POWER OF THE BIBLE

The Bible claims to be the most powerful book known to man. This claim is either true or false. If false, it is the greatest fraud known to man; but if true, it is indispensable to life and happiness. Its claims to power are:

1. TOO POWERFUL TO BE BOUND

Paul writes to Timothy that the "word of God is not bound" (II Tim. 2:9). This means that no man or power can bind the powerful word of God. Men can be bound, as Paul was, but not the word of God. Men may temporarily "hold the truth in unrighteousness," but the time will come when all such will feel the power of the word and know it cannot be ignored or bound. It will live and abide forever. Other things will pass away but the word will never pass away.

2. IT IS POWERFUL TO PIERCE THE HEART

In Hebrews 4:12 the word of God is said to be "quick" (living) and "powerful." This power is to reach down into the depths of the heart and discern the motives and intents of the heart. It anticipates attitudes and motives that govern the conduct. This is an unusual power that cannot be ignored by anyone who reads the word of God. No other written matter contains such a power.

3. IT IS POWERFUL TO SAVE

No work of man can claim to have the power to save the soul from sin and spiritual death. The word of God makes men clean: "ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Paul said: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). This word of God is the POWER that God uses to save those who believe it. Paul further states to the Corinthians that he declared the gospel unto them "which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved" (I Cor. 15:1,2). The gospel or word of God is the only power God uses to lead men to salvation (Acts 11:14).

Searching The Scriptures

Volume 18 September, 1977 Number 9

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office

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Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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TWO GREAT LOSSES

Within the same week death claimed two more faithful preachers of the gospel. Luther Blackmon and CD. Plum have now crossed over. Though both had been in failing health the last few years, then-passing yet leaves us full of sadness. We counted both men among our friends. Their diligent works and faithful preachings were always true to the book.

Luther Blackmon

Though we do not have all the details as to dates and places before us, we can report many things about him. Luther was a preacher of unusual abilities. With little formal education, he applied himself and became a well educated man. He had a quick mind, an uncanny memory, a natural wit and an eloquence of expression seldom equaled in preachers. There was a poise and dignity about him unmatched by many. A tragic divorce in his early life left him determined never to re-marry, though his former companion was married twice after that. He believed there was one cause for divorce and remarriage but did not want to leave any cloud over his name which would in any way hinder his work as a gospel preacher. He took care of his mother until she died and lived alone the rest of the time.

He was in the front ranks in the early days of the institutional battle. His preaching and writing were potent forces in persuading many to stand for the truth at all costs. Through the pages of the GOSPEL GUARDIAN and TRUTH MAGAZINE he wrote material which will live on to challenge the thinking of readers. His pen was eloquent, sharp at times and often possessed of a biting wit. He had more "down home" expressions than any man we ever knew. He especially equipped himself in the field of evidences. No man ever did a better job of pointing up the wisdom of faith in God, Christ, the Bible, divine creation and the church than he. His assaults on human philosophies which arrayed themselves against the word of God were devastating.

When his health began to fail, his last few years were spent in a home for retired people in Marion, Indiana, a place he chose for himself. We visited him several times there. The last time we saw each other was during a gospel meeting in which the writer preached at Marion in 1975. He attended every service, listened intently and made comments to encourage the speaker. His funeral was conducted at Norhill in Houston, Texas by his lifetime friend, Roy E. Cogdill. We mourn his loss, but not as others who

have no hope.

C. D. Plum

This grand preacher died at his home in Parkersburg, West Virginia on June 30, 1977 at the age of 79. He obeyed the gospel in 1911. It was one of those meetings in which "one little twelve years old boy was baptized." He gave the rest of his life in the Lord's service spending 56 years preaching the gospel. He did local work with several churches in Ohio and West Virginia and preached in gospel meetings which took him to twenty states and into Canada.

For several years CD. Plum was a staff writer for the GOSPEL ADVOCATE. When that paper turned its support to church financed private enterprises, the sponsoring church and other digressive practices, he took a strong stand against these errors and the ADVOCATE ceased to publish his material resulting in his resignation. He then wrote often in the GOSPEL GUARDIAN and later TRUTH MAGAZINE. He took a stand when it cost something to do so. Many of the congregations where he had been welcomed for meetings, and some of which he had helped to establish, no longer welcomed him. This hurt him deeply. But his love for the truth was greater than his desire for popularity and there were many brethren who called for his services as long as he was able to go. We had the privilege of hearing him a number of times. He always spoke with earnestness (though he did not have a strong voice). His preaching was simple enough that children could understand him. He was a master of blackboard illustration.

Once the editor of this paper was in a meeting at North Ridgeville, Ohio the same week C. D. Plum was conducting a meeting at Medina, Ohio. We were having day services and brother Plum came every morning, sat right on the front seat and listened intently as we conducted a study through the book of Galatians. He likely never realized how much his presence, attention and words of encouragement meant to this preacher.

If other preachers near his age, who lived in the area where he did, had taken a stand for the truth when he did, we are convinced that many congregations in the Ohio Valley would have stood against the tide of error which finally engulfed many of them. We lift the following words from Bill Cavender who, along with Richard Greeson, conducted the funeral services:

"In the nineteen years I knew brother Plum well, I came to love and appreciate him as I have few other men . . . He was a deeply pious man, given to much prayer, Bible study and meditation. He always talked of the scriptures, the church, home and heaven. I never heard him discuss politics, sports, hunting, fishing, or gossip about anyone. He loved his family as much as any man I have ever known. Only to preach the gospel would he leave them, while gone he wrote them every day, and when a meeting was over, he was anxious to return home. Humble in spirit, reverent in demeanor, always moderate in all his

habits, very unassuming and quiet in his disposition, thrifty with money, undemanding and simple in his needs, accurate and meticulous in his work, kind and gentle in manner, forgiving and without rancor toward his enemies, hopeful for the best in all things, believing in God's will and providence in every facet of his life, he tried to live as much as possible at peace with all men, consistent with God's will, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this world. May God bless the memory and work of this wonderful man" (Imhoff Avenue Messenger of Truth, July, 1977).

Observations

The past two years or so have witnessed the passing of several great and good men among us. It is hard to realize that giants such as Franklin T. Puckett, Oaks Gowen, Frank Smith, Luther Blackmon and CD. Plum are no longer among us. That their works will live on hardly needs to be said. A generation is passing and a link with the past is disappearing. While there are younger men who will keep the torch of truth burning, we are convinced that we are not producing men of the same calibre as these we are losing. We once heard Luther Blackmon pay his respects to some young intellectuals who poked fun at the likes of Campbell, Lard, McGarvey and others. He said "If the mantle of Campbell or McGarvey should fall upon one of these young detractors, it would fit him about like a cowhide on a mocking bird." The soft, easy life which our affluent society offers is not calculated to discipline men such as seemed to be true of those who were linked to harder times.

These giants were not only able preachers — they were godly in character. They took heed to themselves and to the doctrine. We are passing through perilous times in which we are not only losing these great men by death, we are losing some to the Devil. It is tragic to hear of so many preachers who have lost their influence for good because of sin in their lives. The Devil rejoices and the church suffers every time this happens. If there was ever a time to call upon God's people to watch and pray, surely now is the time.

We thank God for the memories of these two preachers whose passing we sadly chronicle in this article. Only in memory now shall we see the artistic designs on the blackboard carefully drawn by our esteemed C. D. Plum. We shall miss his earnest, quiet exhortations to live godly lives. We shall never again receive one of his famous postcard messages. His words of exhortation to a younger man to "fight the good fight of faith" echo through the sacred chambers of memory. No more shall we hear the cheery greeting from Luther Blackmon — "Hello there Connery." (This was a nick-name he made up for me and he was the only man who ever called me that). No more shall we sit spellbound as he relates the distances between the planets, the dimensions of the universe and the intricate design of the human eye as an evidence for the existence of God, nor hear him quote a genealogy or a chapter without missing a

raise his knee and slap his thin American Standard Testament against it like a rifle shot, to emphasize some point of truth. Ah, what precious memories these are! They only serve to brighten the prospects of heaven. We rejoice that they have entered their rest, though we mourn for ourselves because we miss them. Let those who remain determine to be as diligent and faithful as they were in the Lord's service. Indeed, "our hearts as muffled drums are beating funeral marches to the grave."

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OUR BEST TO THE NEW EDITOR OF TRUTH MAGAZINE

Declining health and personal problems led to the resignation of our friend and brother, Cecil Willis, from the editor's chair of TRUTH MAGAZINE. We deeply regret these circumstances. But we are pleased to learn that Mike Willis has been selected to edit that good paper. He is already acquitting himself ably as an editor. He deserves the prayers, support and good wishes of all who are interested in the furtherance of the gospel. He is equipped by training, native ability, and faithfulness in life to give that paper outstanding direction. We encourage brethren to subscribe to this and other good papers which stand for the truth. If you have not done so already, write Mike Willis a note to encourage him in the task he has undertaken. His address is: 1021 Welford Drive, Xenia, Ohio 45385. The greatest encouragement of all would be to send in a list of subscriptions.

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Let No Man Despise
Thy Youth

Ralph R. Walker, Jr.
P. O. Box 97
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(Editor's note: Ralph Walker is 23 years old and grew up in Tampa, Florida where he attended MacDill Avenue congregation where his father was one of the elders. He attended Florida College for three years and then went to Louisville, Kentucky to work with Julian Snell and the Manslick Road congregation where he worked for over a year. He is married to the former Paula Robarts of Jacksonville, Florida, daughter of an elder of the South Jacksonville church. He is presently working with the church in Cleveland, Mississippi. We had occasion to be fairly close to his work while he was in Louisville and enjoyed having him as a student in one of the classes at Expressway church one winter. We commend his article to you as worthy of much consideration).

THE EVIL EYE

Last week we had some unusual and interesting visitors in our home. Early in the week we sat with a woman who was clad in a belly dancer's outfit and who even performed some for us. Some time later we watched in amazement as a troupe of bikini clad beauties paraded before our wide eyes. Later in the week we had to listen to the foul language used by various guests as they freely cursed in our home, which, by the way, is normally immune from such filth. And finally we watched in horror the unfolding of an adulterous affair with two of our companions, as well as a prostitute soliciting men in her trade, and a few homosexuals discussed their actions and thoughts openly. All of this took place in our living room. Can you imagine such?

I hasten to assure you that the above paragraph is not fact with our family, but it most assuredly did take place in the homes of many Christian families. All of the above incidents were noted from advertisements of local television shows. All of them! And most of them, sadly, were observed in full by "godly men and women", unless I am mistaken.

For too long, our only objection to the television has been the amount of time it takes away from decent and wholesome activities. In recent years the devil has supplied us with an abundance of new material to attack on grounds of morality, yet we have been strangely silent on this. Why? We have preached against the evil influences of modern movies. We have condemned the trashy novels and

sex-oriented books. Rock music and its preoccupation with sex, drugs and revolution have been severely criticized. But our guns have remained largely dormant on the subject of sex, violence, immorality, indecency and cursing that is now an intrinsic part of television. Why? We can only guess, but a major factor has to be the number of preachers, teachers, elders, deacons and other leaders in the church who are actively or passively condoning such viewing. It is hard to condemn what you yourself are doing, or are allowing your family to do.

T.V. is a powerful medium. Figures confirm that 96% of the families in America have a least one T.V. set. For the child, T.V. will exceed the amount of time consumed in any and every other conscious activity. It is the favorite pastime of adults. If ever Satan could use a tool for his work, it is the T.V. And old Satan has done just that.

Television shows reflect an increasing desire for the things of the world. Cursing and filthy language are as common as canned laughter. Nudity, or near-nudity is becoming so frequent that an evening without it is rare indeed. Homosexuality, adultery, lesbianism, prostitution, sex-changes, rape, child molesting, and fornication of every kind saturate the screen, reflecting the one track mind of the producers and the average American (can you believe that such a mind is "average"?) Violence, which is the only aspect of television to draw fire, is a steady diet for all of us.

The infatuation with sex used to be confined to afternoon soap operas. Wives and husbands (yes, a recent survey showed the increasing number of men now tuning in to the sex scene) and daughters and all others who are avid fans of these shows ought to consider the effect that prolonged viewing cannot help but have on them. One begins to rationalize, to sympathize with the characters as they run from adulterous affairs to killing, to abortions and back to affairs again. One finally gets used to behavior and actions that should shock us with their filthiness. Truly one becomes in the end, a person of the world, liberated from the scruples and restraints that once made you shun these sins, at least in mind. (Understand that I am not implying that anyone is tempted to actively commit the things they see, but rather, they suppress the natural revulsion they should feel.)

But the worst wasn't over there. Not satisfied with adulterating (what an apt word) our minds in the afternoon, producers have now made a bold move to also work their influence on us at night. The rage has become the "mini-series", an effort to put on the tube the best selling books of today. I have yet to watch a full episode of one of these productions, but I speak with the knowledge gained from seeing previews and reading articles about these shows. T.V. Guide stated that the drawing card for all of these shows is lust and gore. Every single one of the "mini-series" has carried with it a recommendation of parental guidance and discretion. Isn't that enough for us who are called to be "as little children"? Which one of these shows doesn't have an adulterous or unlawful affair going on? Which doesn't frequently use foul

language? Which one would the Lord Jesus be watching were He here now? NONE; not a single one I know of!

Brethren, it is fast reaching the point at which no true child of God can continue to watch these shows and other regular serials which are just as bad (one newer, highly popular weekly was called in T.V. Guide, the first girlie magazine to appear on T.V.). As they continue to become more explicit in projecting the sins of the world, we will no longer be able to smirk and shrug our shoulders as if to say "Well, I can't help it". You can help it. The excuse that "I know it's bad, but it goes on every day where I work" won't hold water. I've never known anyone who had to watch a couple in bed, or witness a slow strip-tease, or watch a child molester at work. You are not forced to sit in front of that machine and watch it. Remember, it cannot show it's filth unless you first switch it on. Who controls what?

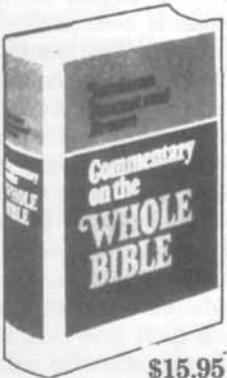
I honestly believe that most of us haven't really considered the consequences of this activity. And this is the real evil of the "evil eye". It creeps upon us so slowly, so subtly that we never realize what we are doing until we are trapped.

I probably haven't pleased many of you with this. I realize the harshness of my article, but I feel the situation calls for harshness. We are in a desperate condition when we cannot even see the potential results of our avid habit. I pray that all will overlook the "fanaticism" and see the concern and love that prompts the writing of these words. Pray about it, think about it, study it, and decide what to do as a Christian.

If we all would print up a sign and place it over our sets, I am convinced our consciences would prevent us from much of our viewing. What should the sign say? Just this:

"... whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." (Phi. 4:8, NAS)

As one television program mistakenly said "The following program may not be suitable for viewers whose sensibilities can still be offended." Amen and Thank You, Lord for sensibilities that can still be offended. May we cultivate them.



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ASTROLOGY

The word 'occult' comes from the Latin word 'occultus' and means "covered over, concealed." Included in the broad term of occultism are the specifics astrology, fortune telling, the psychics, spiritualism, witchcraft, Satanism, and demon possession. The word 'witchcraft' in Gal. 5:20 and 'sorcerers' in Rev. 21:8 embrace the practice of the occult.

What Is Astrology?

In an article in U. S. News and World Report, May 24, 1976, page 74, astrology is defined as "a system of forecasting events by studying the influence of heavenly bodies on human activities. It contends the position of the sun, moon, planets and stars at the moment of a child's birth have a direct impact on his or her character and that charting their positions will reveal an individual's destiny." The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, page 300 says, "Astrology is an attempt to ascertain the will of God by other means than those which He has appointed In Greek hands, astrology was changed from its character of an oriental religion into the appearance of science." Webster in his collegiate dictionary, page 55, says "the pseudo science which treats of the influence of the stars upon human affairs, and of foretelling terrestrial events by their positions and aspects." The word 'horoscope' is from hora, meaning hour and skolos meaning watcher. The twelve signs of the Zodiac were refined in ancient Babylon. According to Reader's Digest, May, 1969, page 244, in 1962 half of India sat up waiting for the end of time based upon astrological predictions. It should be pointed out that there is a difference in astrology, a false science, and in astronomy, the true study of heavenly bodies.

Origin

Astrology began over 5,000 years ago in Babylon and Assyria in the worship to the sun, moon, and stars. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, page 300, says, "The original source of all astrology in the ancient world lay in the system of planetary idolatry prevalent in the Euphrates valley, and in the fact that this idolatry was practiced chiefly for the purpose of divination." During New Testament times Mesopotamia, Palestine and Asia Minor practiced it, with the Arabs reviving

it in Europe in the Middle Ages. John Godwin said in *Occult America*, page 1, "It has become difficult to venture anywhere in contemporary America without being informed that the 'Age of Aquarius' is upon us." The Broadway rock musical, "Hair" opened with these words, "When the moon is in the seventh house . . . And Jupiter aligns with Mars . . . Then peace will guide the planets . . . And love will steer the stars . . . This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius " (Gospel Advocate, 1975, page 740).

Today's Acceptance of Astrology

In 1974 it was estimated 20 million people spent 200 million dollars on personal horoscopes (Ibid.). There are at least 20 magazines published monthly for the sole purpose of predicting man's destiny by the stars. It has been estimated there are 175,000 part time and 10,000 professional astrologers in the United States. Astrology is a \$200,000,000 a year business with between 2 1/2 and 3 million books sold in America. Twenty years ago 100 daily newspapers had horoscopes; in 1970, 1,200 daily papers had them. Bantam Books on astrology sell higher in the South, which has been called "the Bible Belt." As estimated 10,000,000 practice the occult. According to U.S. News and World Report, May 24, 1976, page 74, a Gallup Poll showed 32 million take it seriously, which is double the estimate in the early 1970's; 22% of the adult population in the United States believed in astrology and 24% read their horoscope regularly. Of those involved, 4 to 1 are women.

Why Popular?

Why is the occult so popular today? There could be several reasons given: (1) Man today lives in an age of fear and anxiety. (2) In society there is a great amount of mental and emotion instability. (3) There is much religious ignorance and superstition today. (4) The religious faith of many has collapsed for they no longer regard the Bible as authoritative. (5) Many let curiosity lead them into such. (6) We are living in an age of computers where there is de-personalization, with people being a number in a computer and not a person created by God.

Bible and Astrology

The practice of the occult and astrology is nothing new. It was practiced in ancient times and God said something about it—he always condemned it.

(1) Deut. 18:9-14 (see also 4:15-19 and 17:2-5). In Deut. 18, Moses set forth a number of terms by which God condemned the practice, all of them related to the occult.

a. pass through the fire — see Lev. 18:21 where some sacrificed their children to the idol, Molech.

b. divination — fortuneteller; to know secret matters.

c. observer of times — used planets, etc. to tell the future.

d. enchanter — one who does things which are covered and concealed from the knowledge of others. To whisper, to observe the clouds to charm, to use magic arts and spells; sometimes inspecting the entrails of beasts, observing the flight of birds, and

divining by serpents.

e. witch — one who is supposed to have a pact with evil spirits and by this means operate supernaturally, using drugs, herbs, perfumes pretending to bring celestial influence to their aid.

f. charmer — one who charms, enchants and allures, who uses spells, sometimes tying knots to divine.

g. consulter — one who inquires of one spirit to learn from another.

h. wizard — a sorcerer, an enchanter, one knowing wise woman, a white witch.

i. necromancer — one who inquires of the dead.

(For some of these definitions I am indebted to Brother Raymond Harris in his excellent work, *Demonology*, page 10, and for other material in this series of articles. The reader may wish to order a copy of his booklet from him at P. O. Box 915, Florence, Ala. 35630, price I think is \$1.50.)

(2) In Isa. 47:9-15 the prophet named a number of those practicing the occult and said let them "save thee from these things that shall come upon thee" and then said "none shall save thee."

(3) Jer. 10:1-15 — the prophet forbid Israel to practice the way of the heathens.

(4) Daniel — In such passages from Daniel as 1:17, 20; 2:2, 10-11, 19, 27, 28, 30, 45, 47; 4:7 God showed the astrologers of Babylon could not reveal truth or save but rather truth and salvation comes from Jehovah.

(5) Amos 5:26 — Israel served Moloch and Chiun and Stephen refers to such false worship with all that was a part of idol worship in Acts 7:42-43.

(6) Acts 7:41 — Stephen said Israel made a calf and worshipped it. By way of comparison see also 2 Kgs. 17:16-17 and 23:4-6, 24.

(7) Zech. 10:2 — idols speak vanity, those who divine have seen a "lie" telling false dreams and giving vain comfort.

Why Is Such Condemned?

God has always forbidden man to seek to worship idols of any kind in both the Old and New Testaments. Such undermines faith in God for one turns to astrology rather than God. Astrology leads one to worship the creature (see Rom. 1:22-25) rather than God. Astrology says nature controls and determines events while the Bible shows Deity controls even nature (Mk. 4:35-41). Astrology denies God is active in human affairs, which the Bible teaches (Acts 17:28). Astrology seeks to justify man in sin because his activity in sin is predetermined by the stars. It claims to give man something pertaining to life in addition or in the place of the word of God, yet Peter said God provided all we need (2 Peter 1:3). Last, God condemns such (Gal. 5:20 and Rev. 21; 8).

Astrology Is Unscientific

Astrology is not based upon nine planets but five; in time man may learn of even more planets. Webster defines it as a "pseudo science" (page 55), that is, a false science (see 1 Tim. 6:20). Webster, further calls the Zodiac, upon which astrology is based "an imaginary belt in the heavens" (page 996). "Astrology in spite of attempts to establish itself as

a science, must be considered a pseudo-science and divinatory art" (Encyclopedia Americana, 1969 edition, Vol. 2, page 557). "Astrology, says the astronomer, is not a science at all but a superstition. What we have learned about the stars and planets in the last 500 years completely destroys any possibility that astrology contains a grain of truth" (Science Digest, Feb. 1967, page 30).

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STEWARDSHIP—TIME

INTRODUCTION

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"In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy." (1 Cor. 4:2). The word steward comes from the Greek word OIKONOMOS. Commenting on the word W. E. Vine writes, "primarily denoted the manager of a household or estate (OIKOS, a house, NEMO, to arrange)." He is one who "manages his master's property." (Arndt & Gingrich). A steward is "a kind of chief slave who superintended the household and even the whole property of his master." (Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament).

Jesus used the steward in teaching some spiritual lessons in some of his parables. In the parable of the talents (Mt. 25:14-30), though the word "steward" is not used, we find the idea of entrusting "his possessions to them" (v. 14). These servants had been given certain amounts of money to use for their master's well being. Later there came a time of "settling the accounts" with their lord (v. 19). The one who had not been faithful in his responsibility as a steward was called a "wicked, lazy slave." (v. 26). We also find a steward in the parable of the shrewd steward (Lk. 16:1-13). This steward had squandered his master's possessions (v. 1) and was called in to give an account (v. 2). Due to his shrewdness he was able to salvage his position (vs. 3-8).

All Christians are stewards (1 Pet. 4:10). God has entrusted certain things to us that we must use to His honor. In the passage quoted above (1 Cor. 4:2) we see that Paul as an apostle had the gospel entrusted to him. We want to study some things that we all have in common. We all have time, money, and physical bodies entrusted to us. Let us remember that as a steward we must be faithful or trustworthy to the charge we have been given for we will have to give account to God. In this first article we notice the subject of TIME.

I. "REDEEMING THE TIME"

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16). "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time." The word "redeem" (EXAGORAZO) is a combination of the word AGORAZO, to buy, and the preposition EK, meaning out. Being in the middle voice in the above passage it means "to buy up for oneself, . . . 'buying up the opportunity' (R. V. marg.; text, 'redeeming the time,' where 'time' is KAIROS, a season, a time in which something is

seasonable), i.e., making the most of every opportunity, turning each to the best advantage since none can be recalled if missed" (W. E. Vine). Noticing some other translations might also help to understand the meaning. The New American Standard says, "making the most of your time." Alford's translation reads, "buying up opportunities." Thus we can conclude that to redeem the time means "to rescue or recover our time from waste; to improve it for great and important purposes" (Barnes).

How Do We Redeem the Time?

We are given 168 hours a week by God. How do we use this time that has been entrusted to us? We cannot redeem the time by regaining a part of the past. We cannot redeem it by being overly sorrowful over the wrongs of the past to the point that it causes us to be inoperative. Time will not be redeemed by simply a sentimental wish for a better future. Yet many resort to these methods.

How then do we redeem the time? We must first of all learn to budget our time. Time needs to be spent working (1 Tim. 5:8). We need to give time to sleep, eating, and the care of the body (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We even need time for recreation (1 Tim. 4:8). We all need that little bit of "bodily exercise." Our family needs a part of our time (Eph. 6:4; Tit. 2:4-5). We must also have time to work for God (1 Cor. 15:58).

Our trouble comes when these things get out of their proper proportions. We can give too much time to working, too much time to eating and sleeping, too much time to recreation, or too much time to our families. One can even spend too much time working for God in that he neglects his family or other responsibilities.

We must learn to set priorities. Jesus said in Mt. 6:33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." God must come first before all else. We should also recognize the importance of the spiritual well-being of our families over our physical jobs. Work should take precedence over play. Let's learn to budget our time and give proper proportions to proper things.

It Costs

The meaning of "redeem" has the idea of something being paid. We must recognize the high value of time. As someone once said, "Time once gone is gone forever." We have to pay the cost in redeeming the time. SPEND thought in how we can best use our time. SACRIFICE our own pleasure for the service of God. PUT OUT greater energy in MAKING time for the Lord. The man who says he is too busy, is indeed TOO BUSY! He needs to drop something of less importance and make time for those things of greater value.

The Lord's Day

While talking about redeeming the time, let me suggest some "food for thought" regarding the first day of the week. While we are not commanded to refrain from work as the Jews did on the Sabbath, do we give proper respect to the Lord's day? Does it

become the Los Angeles Rams' day? Does it become the Cincinnati Reds' day or the Philadelphia 76ers' day? Have we turned The Lord's day into our vacation day? Why not use the LORD'S day for the LORD'S work?

II. "Because the Days Are Evil"

There are evil influences in our day as well as in Paul's which cause us to waste time. There are the allurements to amusement and pleasure. There is the temptation of ambition to gain prestige in the business world which is so characteristic of our materialistic society. Some give their time to indulgence in the luxuries and fineries of this life. And I suppose that the number one time killer of all has to be television.

We might also suggest some other reasons why we ought to redeem the time. We have already lost a lot of time which we can not regain (1 Pet. 4:3). Also we do not know how much time we have left, so we ought to use the present to the best of our abilities (Jas. 4:14). Then remember also that as a steward we will have to give an account to our Master (Lk. 12:42-48).

"In this case, moreover it is required in stewards that one be found trustworthy." (1 Cor. 4:2). "Making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16).

Using Great Plainness
of Speech

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SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH #2

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

Many have the mistaken idea that "faith" in the above passage is "the gift of God." However as A. T. Robertson points out in his Word Pictures of the New Testament Volume IV, Page 525, "This phrase he adds in repeating what he said in verse 5 to make it plainer. 'Grace' is God's part, 'faith' ours. And that (kai touto). Neuter, not feminine taute, and so refers not to pistis (feminine) or to charis (feminine also), but to the act of being saved by grace conditioned on faith on our part. Paul shows that salvation does not have its source (ex humon, out of you) in men, but from God. Besides, it is God's gift (doron) and not the result of our work."

Salvation has been extended, by the grace of God, unto all men, according to Titus 2:11-12. This does not, however, suggest that all will be saved—it simply shows that all could be saved. For though God's grace is extended to all men, Paul said that we have access by faith into this grace (our justification) through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:2).

God's grace has been extended to man in various ways since Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden. We see His favor bestowed on man in providing a means for him to be able to continue to live upon this earth and earn his living by the sweat of his face (Gen. 3:19). Throughout the Old Testament God's grace was extended in every command and in the blessings that come in obedience to those commands. Many such cases could be cited, Noah, the children of Israel being brought out of Egypt, the giving of Jericho, Naaman's healing of leprosy, and hundreds of other cases. However, the ultimate of God's grace is seen in the giving of his Son (John 1:17).

We recognize that even though God's grace was extended in the Old Testament, that grace had not provided a remedy for sin that man might be justified. The blood of Christ is the only remedy for sin; and even though men were said to be justified in the Old Testament, it was because God speaks of things that have not yet happened as though they had already happened (Rom. 4:17).

According to Heb. 9:11-12, the blood of goats and calves could not provide redemption for man. The blood of Christ was the only thing that could provide that; and this sacrifice was offered, not only for those who had sinned this side of the cross, but was offered for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant (Heb. 9:14-15). Thus, the fullness of God's grace was shown forth in the giving of His Son.

God promised that grace (redemption through His Son) when he made the promise to Abraham that through his seed, all nations of the earth would be blessed. The Jews, because they were the chosen of God through whom the Messiah was to come, believed they were that seed that had been promised, and thus in the first few chapters of the Roman letter, they argued that they were the circumcised according to the Law of God and were entitled to the blessings of justification. However, Paul points out a number of things wrong with their argument.

First of all, God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). Secondly, the "seed" through whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed was not the Jew per se, but Christ (Gal. 3:16). And, Paul says, if we belong to Christ, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:29). So, he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is not outwardly but of the heart (Rom. 2:28-29). Today Paul said we put off the body of sin in a circumcision not made with hands when we are baptized (Col. 2:11-12). Thus, all who have put off the body of sins are the elect of God and are heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:29). (To be continued).

Restoration Footnotes

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"THE LORD WILL PROVIDE"

V. M. Metcalfe was a faithful gospel preacher of Tennessee and Kentucky during the nineteenth century. His mother, whose maiden name was Jane Baylor Chilton, was a woman of no ordinary ability. F. B. Srygley said of her, "She was deeply and earnestly religious, and carefully trained all her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Jane's father was a well-known Kentucky Baptist preacher. So she was reared in the Baptist faith, but she had strong convictions and a good knowledge of the Bible which led her to conclude that the Baptists were wrong about many things. She eventually left the church of her father to unite with "a people known as disciples of Christ."

Jane's watchword through life, in good times and bad, was, "The Lord will provide, if I try to do just as he directs, and trust alone in him." Her husband, Charles Metcalfe, often said in later years that he never saw her grow faint-hearted but once and that was during the Civil War. Their children were all scattered, some in the Confederate army. Two daughters, their youngest, were in the deep South where they had been sent as refugees from the terrible conflict that raged in the borderland by the opposing forces.

"The home place had been foraged by both armies. Every living animal had been taken except a little, old jack. The smokehouse had been robbed, the chickens all stolen, all grain and hay appropriated or destroyed, even the bee-gums robbed of their sweetness, and bedclothes taken from the beds. The carpets were torn from the floors, all rails and fences around the yard were burned, and all the outhouses destroyed. They were alone and lonely—almost nothing to eat, winter coming on, and but little to wear."

Charles, reflecting on their state of near destitution, said, "Well, good wife, what shall we do? Your motto is about to fail us—'The Lord will provide!'"

"No, no, never!" she replied, and laughing through her tears, repeated her faith with confidence, "God will provide."

Even as they were discussing their lot, a stranger drove up to their porch with a wagon loaded with boxes of supplies for them. They quickly opened the largest box first and out came a much-needed roll of flannels. "The Lord sent it. I told you so," Jane said.

Then they unpacked blankets and, one by one, all their other immediate needs. "The Lord even sent tea and coffee."

At last, a large sack of tobacco and pipes were pulled out. Jane, like many pioneer women, smoked a clay pipe, a habit she was deeply ashamed of. She once had a picture made, forgetfully holding her pipe in her lap. The picture caused her much embarrassment. "It always mortified her to think she would show to the world that she smoked tobacco." When she saw the tobacco and pipes among the welcomed supplies, she hesitated, but Charles, amused by her apparent dilemma, said, "Who sent that?"

"Minor sent them," she said.

While Jane Metcalfe believed in the special providence of God and saw his hand in that wagon load of goods, she knew that God works through human agency and that the human element frequently adds something of its own. She used tobacco and was no doubt glad to get a batch at that critical time, but she couldn't bring herself to believe that tobacco and pipes fell within the scope of God's providential care. Her son Minor, not God, added those. (Quotations from, V. M. Metcalfe, **Uncle Minor's Stories**, pp. 238, 244-245.)

Using the
**SWORD OF
THE SPIRIT**

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SALUTE!

While I remain pessimistic that the scales of justice will ever be balanced in this nation, I still tip my hat to every indication of a return to good judgment in government.

In one of our newest states, the governor has proposed some of the nation's harshest anti-alcohol laws. According to an A.P. release from Juneau, Alaska, dated Feb. 20, 1977, Gov. Jay Hammond says he has "quit counting" the number of people he knows who have murdered or been murdered during drinking binges.

The residents of Alaska drink 57 percent more booze than the national average. Hammond said the per capita alcohol consumption there is a 3.86 gallons for every man, woman, and child above the age of 15. This is 80 percent more per person than they drank in 1958. The national increase over the same period was 36 percent.

Researchers blamed drinking for 45 percent of all reported cases of child neglect, 25 percent of all reported cases of child abuse, 45 percent of all traffic deaths, 60 percent of all boating accidents and 30

percent of all fire deaths.

Gov. Hammond said that while the state takes in \$7 million a year in alcohol taxes, it spends \$17 million a year for treatment, social service programs, welfare and criminal justice related to alcohol abuse.

The Alaskan governor has proposed possession limits on alcohol as well as unlimited sales taxes and a two-week time lag between purchase and pick-up. The proposals also would prohibit liquor price advertising, make bootlegging a felony, and hike alcohol taxes by \$10 million.

That's not enough, but at least it's a step in the right direction. Gov. Hammond is a non-drinker. Possibly most of our government leaders cannot discern the grave problems that alcohol is responsible for because their own minds are muddled by the devil's brew.

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Prov. 31:4, 5).

AND AGAIN!

We will even tip our editorial hat to Gov. Rubin Askew of Florida, and the State House of Representatives and Senate. The Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer reported on June 1, 1977, that legislation outlawing marriages between members of the same sex and banning homosexuals' adoption of children cleared the Florida legislature. Gov. Rubin Askew's press secretary said the governor would sign both measures.

State Sen. Curtis Peterson, who sponsored both bills, said the legislative action was a strong message to homosexuals.

"I would hope they would take this as a message that we are tired of you and wish you would go back in the closet," Peterson said.

The Florida Senate approved the bill outlawing marriages between homosexuals 37-0. I say that is a strong message indeed!

We also applaud the State of Florida for voting down ratification of the ERA. Proponents of this amendment had their heart, set on winning in that state. In fact it was one of the very few victories they expected in 1977.

Florida legislators apparently realize, though their governor apparently does not, that if you're against homosexual marriages and homosexuals adopting children, you must (if consistent) be against the Equal Rights Amendment. Laws against such practices will undoubtedly be ruled unconstitutional if the proposed amendment is ratified by six more states (three, if the courts rule that a state cannot rescind its ratification of a constitutional amendment!).

We encourage Christians to join the fight against this amendment. For further information, address letters to Barbara Pagan, President of Concerned Women of Kentucky, 4006 Hawthorn Drive, Owensboro, Kentucky, 42301.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. . ." (Eccl. 9:10).

Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God

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PRAYING FOR REAL PEOPLE

The results of prayer are sometimes quite surprising. Especially when one person prays for another. Last year, after considerable indecision, I moved two thousand miles to accept a job in the publishing business. Christians in the city where I was going had heard of the possibility of my moving there and, because of their desperate need for help in the Lord's work, had been praying that I might, in fact, move their way. On the day of my arrival, one of these Christians lent a hand in unpacking my things and, as I began to explain to him how hard it had been for me to decide to move, said, "Oh, we have known for some time you would come to be with us! We all had been hoping and wishing you would, but awhile back I came into the house one day and found my wife down on her knees PRAYING that you would, and from then on we knew we had you!" Who was I, I thought wryly, to fight that kind of influence?

Most of our praying is not nearly so specific and concrete. When we pray for other people at all, we do it in vague generalities that just about cover everybody with any need, rather than making definite, particular requests for real people whom we can name. It is true that we have a responsibility to pray "on behalf of all men" (1 Tim. 2:1), but the New Testament is quite filled with examples of the early Christians making clear-cut supplications for the specific needs of people in their personal acquaintance.

To mention only a few examples from the letters of Paul, there are statements like the apostle's to Philemon: "Prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be granted to you" (Phm. 22). To the Corinthians Paul wrote concerning his predicament in Asia, "And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers" (2 Cor. 1:10f). And about one of his several imprisonments, Paul wrote to the Philippians, "I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance" (Phil. 1:19).

I should like to draw attention to one of the reasons we shy away from making such concrete prayers ourselves. It is because we fear to lose our own faith in "the power of prayer." We suppose if our prayers are for circumstances to be altered in any specific, visible, objective way and the prayer is not "answered", we shall have no choice but to conclude prayer does not "work". And so we leave our requests general and vague enough that, no matter

what happens, we may interpret the events as an appropriate answer to prayer.

Two incidents will show what I mean. In a recent Bible study on James chapter 5, concerning James' instruction for elders to be called to pray over the sick, one brother was heard to say, "This cannot mean physical sickness. If the elders prayed for the sick and they did not get well, where would that leave our faith?" In another Bible study, a brother defended the proposition that we only have the right to pray for the sick when doctors have not yet diagnosed the ailment. He apparently felt that a "miracle" would be involved if the Lord were to restore a sick person from a known disease.

It may be that we are losing sight of just what prayer is. We are confusing prayer with "magic." By that I mean, we forget that prayer is a mere "request" made of an Intelligent Being and we think it is a means of producing an unalterable result by a certain cause. Prayer was never promised to be a means of allowing us to command God to do this or that, with no choice on His part. And it should not be a blow to our faith in Him or prayer itself when He chooses not to "obey" us. If we are afraid to pray for the special needs of real people because we are not certain the rabbit will pop out of the hat when we say hocus-pocus, let us pause to remember that prayer does not operate like that. It is not cause-and-effect. It is request, always with the possibility of denial.

We ought to get rid of the notion that when we pray we are calling God's attention to needs which have escaped His notice and that we are going to quit believing in "the power of prayer" if He does not meet our wishes. But, when we have learned that prayer is a child's request to his Father, we ought to summon the courage to pray for particular, real things. We do not have to leave God an "out" by praying so vaguely that, come what may, no one will ever know if the prayer was granted or not. Paul prayed to be allowed to visit Philemon. It would be obvious to everybody if he were not granted that prayer. He prayed to be released from persecution in Asia. The results were there for all to observe. And he prayed to be released from prison, never fearing that, if he were not released, he would have to give up his faith in prayer.

It is a fine thing to entreat the Lord on behalf of "all for whom it is our duty and privilege to pray." But if our faith is what it needs to be, we can add to that by making a definite list of real people with particular needs (spiritual AND material, mind you) and making it a point privately to pray for them. And not only privately. How long has it been since any of us met together in a private home for the express purpose of praying for somebody? And how long has it been since the entire congregation of which we are members has been called together for the purpose of spending an hour or two in prayer for one of its members? In Acts 12:5, 12 we are told that the entire church in Jerusalem, as well as gatherings of individuals in homes, prayed fervently for the release of Peter from prison. And James reminds us, "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects" (Jas. 5:16).

TIDAL WAVE ONE YEAR OVERDUE!

Vernon Love

It was in February a year ago that we received word that a tidal wave was going to come and cover the entire state of Florida. Mrs. Dulce Garcia, a member of the Calvario Evangelical Church, Guatemala City, Guatemala was supposed to have received a vision of earthquakes causing catastrophes in Alaska, California, Mexico and Peru. She also saw in this vision a "big wave covering the entire state of Florida." The "tidal wave" was supposed to come in April, 1976.

The series of events following her prophecy was unbelievable. This prophecy spread over Florida like wildfire. It was the main topic of discussion on many of the talk shows. Many sermons were preached about it on the radio and many private discussions went on about the tidal wave until April had passed. It was believed by many so that they left their homes in Florida and moved north to live until the tidal wave has passed over. One entire church of 75 members in Miami closed its doors and went north. Many families gathered a few of their belongings and fled for northern states. Some sold out and moved north. Even here in central Florida, we know of families who left their homes, jobs, and took their children out of school and moved north. One group went to a state park in Georgia and camped out. They were asked to leave after they had stayed the limit allotted them so they petitioned the Governor to let them stay until April was over. It was amazing to hear the attempts of the pentecostal preachers to try to prove this was a false prophecy. One preacher said on his radio program, "God never used a woman to prophesy any major event." That remark got all the women preachers after him and he had to get off that subject in a hurry.

Rev. (?) Bob W. Walker, picked up this prophecy and printed it and circulated it all over Florida. He called it an "Urgent Message, Earthquake for Guatemala—It Happened! Tidalwave For Florida—April!" The "Urgent Message" told the story how Sis. Dulce Garcia had received a vision and made this prophecy of earthquakes and a tidal wave. This prophecy also said there would be strange movements in the water three days before the tidal wave came to Florida.

Rev. (?) Walker told the vision just as he received it then offered this suggestion: "We are not saying to you a "Thus saith the Lord," in this matter. We are saying this message is worthy of your absolute attention in prayer and preparation. We felt responsible to you to give this message. It is your responsibility to make decisions. You must decide:

- (1) Did this come from God?
- (2) Do I have a right relationship with God through a salvation experience?
- (3) Do I have the witness of the Holy Spirit in

my life now?

(4) Am I in tune with the Lord so that I can hear His voice?"

Can you imagine any prophet of the Bible making such a prophecy and then asking such questions and urging the people to decide if this is so or not? No one who lived around the prophets had to make any such decisions as the above and they did not have to sit around wondering if these things were from God. It is also true today. We knew this was a hoax when we heard it in February, 1976. We openly said so on the radio, wrote articles about it, and were not afraid of this prophecy (cf. Deut. 18:15-22).

We are commanded to "try the spirits" (1 Jn. 4:1), so we offered the following facts that proves this "prophet" was a fraud and the "prophecy" was a hoax!

I. THE LADY PROPHET HAD NO CREDENTIALS OF A PROPHET.

All we had was the word of the lady that she had received a vision. This is all that any latter day prophet has to offer. You believe them because they say so. Let them prophesy something that comes to pass. Let them speak the same language of the Bible. Let them be willing to be investigated, but they will not stand for that. Therefore, the "lady prophet" did not speak like a prophet, and the tidal wave, is one year overdue!

II. THE VISION WAS FILLED WITH DENOMINATIONAL JARGON.

It is very strange that God would speak through one who does not "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11); and uses denominational jargon. Preachers were called "Rev." and "pastors"; Mrs. Garcia's church had an unscriptural name, the church had a "head"; to mention just a few of the many things the Bible does not say anything about. Had God forgotten what He had said 1900 years ago? I think not, and also think God was not speaking to Mrs. Garcia. Therefore, the tidal wave, is one year overdue!

III. NO ONE CAN PERFORM MIRACLES TODAY.

The apostles had to lay their hands upon a Christian before they could receive "gifts" (1 Cor. 12:8-10; Acts 8:17-24; 19:1-6; 2 Tim. 1:6). The apostles had no successors, nor are they alive today, and the ones with the gifts could not pass them on, so no one today has the power to perform miracles (Acts 8:18-24). We just have to believe they are performing miracles because they say so! Mrs. Garcia was trying to prophesy without the "gift of prophecy." Therefore, the tidal wave is one year overdue!

IV. DIVISION TODAY AMONG THE "MIRACLES WORKERS."

There are all kinds of churches, wearing all kinds of names not found in the Bible, practicing all kinds of doctrines which contradict each other. They still claim the Lord is working miracles today and it is so because they say so. They say they know there are false workers among them but they cannot tell you

how to determine when one is false and one is true. The Bible condemns division (1 Cor. 1:10) but we are supposed to believe all these modern day miracle workers, who are divided over hundreds of doctrines, which are supposed to come direct from the Lord, and not be concerned about division. Therefore, this division has a tidal wave that is one year overdue.

This "Urgent Message" is not so urgent after all. In fact it is one of the worst hoaxes ever perpetrated upon the people of Florida. It has done untold harm to many people. Many will never be the same toward God and the Bible. Many will keep on trying to have the Lord speak to them rather than go to the Bible and let God speak to them through the word (Heb. 1:1-2). We only hope and pray that all of these who were deceived will realize the error of their way and turn to the truth. Those who promoted it need to repent and stop such foolishness because the tidal wave is one year overdue.

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FIRST STUDY - THEN STAND

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Bakersfield, CA 93308

It has been said that it is "better to trust the man who is frequently in error than the one who is never in doubt." The one who is frequently in error is at least cognizant of his fallibility. The one who is never in doubt sees no need to investigate issues because he has unwavering faith in his own wisdom; consequently, he is in grave danger of being misled. Sometimes one is never in doubt because he bases the strength of his faith on another man's wisdom, on someone he believes to be strong and knowledgeable, therefore, (he feels) incapable of leading him astray.

Blind faith in self or others puts one in a precarious position. Most of us at one time or another have been in the position of trying to defend a certain teaching and realized (shamefully so) that we had nothing to back it up with, except that Brother So-and-So said it was that way (and we trusted Brother So-and-So).

It frightens me and saddens me to think about how many of us are complacent in our acceptance of teachings without proper study on our part; hence rendering us incapable of providing by the scriptures those things we say we most surely believe.

I tremble when I think of how many of us reason with the logic of emotions rather than by the hearing of faith. Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). No matter what we've been taught or how right it sounds, if it can't measure up to God's Word, if it is doesn't have a scriptural basis, then it must be abandoned. We must be able to "prove what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:10).

Throughout the years, different issues have confronted the body of Christ. Premillennialism, Institutionalism, Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit, Marriage/Divorce/Remarriage and numerous other issues have been responsible for forcing some to study diligently and take a steadfast position. Others have just followed along the line of least resistance, not willing to delve into the scriptures to learn what God has taught on the subject. Only when one searches the scriptures with an open and unprejudiced mind and prayerful attitude will he be able to distinguish between truth an error and "hold fast that which is good."

In teaching denominational followers, we reason that beliefs that are "better felt than told" are without scriptural foundation, therefore, erroneous. Let us keep this in mind as we face any issue that confronts the church. I pray that none of us be guilty of accepting a position or forming a conclusion on any issue without first studying what God has revealed on the subject. Emotional resistance notwithstanding — God's will be done.

The true test of a Christian is when he is obedient in those things he would rather not do, but does so because the love of Christ constrains him (2 Cor. 5:14). To do those things that are convenient requires no sacrifice on our part; but the Christian has been told, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29). Since we must suffer for Jesus' sake, let us be sure we are on His side and on scriptural ground — and then stand firmly, no matter what the consequences.

The "Oneness" Doctrine of Pentecostalism and the Bible Doctrine of the Godhead

by Gene Frost

Here is help to meet the troublesome error of a militant sect from one experienced in debating on this subject. This book has 56 pages of charts which clearly expose this system of error. **\$1.50**

Manners and Customs of Bible Lands

by Fred H. Wight

This book reveals new depth and shades of meaning in many Bible passages—meanings we often miss because the manners and customs referred or alluded to are common to the lands of the Bible, but foreign to us. 336 pages—well illustrated; general index and Scripture index. **\$5.95**

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

DOUGLAS K. SEATON, Route 1 Box 147, Concord, NC 28026 — In the last 10 months 8 have been baptized and 2 restored here. We are definitely not pleased with this number and plan to intensify our efforts to reach more people in this community. We have a weekly newspaper article in the Concord Tribune which is getting quite a bit of attention. We conduct Bible classes in the homes of all new members and have several studies going with some who are not Christians. The church here, has been able to pick up all of my support and we are thankful to be entirely self-supporting.

MACKAY W. HARDEN, 118 W. Brandywine Circle, Wilmington, NC — We are in our first full time work as a gospel preacher. My wife is conducting a class for women and I have a class for men each Thursday night. We have a lot of talent among the 40-45 who regularly attend here. We are having many visitors and have some good prospects for home studies. The church here was without a full time preacher for two and a half years but seems to be reviving in spirit.

New Congregation

H. L. BRUCE, Onatrio, CA — A new congregation met in Riverside, California for the first time on June 12, 1977. They are currently meeting at 4158 St. George Pl. For further information call Alan Doll at 714-689-6048. This is the only conservative group in a city of over 150,000.

BARRY MAXWELL, HHD, 210th Avn Bn, Box H, Albrook AFB, Canal Zone, APO NY 09825 — I plan to terminate my enlistment in June, 1980 and would like to engage in full time preaching after that time. I have done part time preaching for sometime. In the meantime I would like to make contact with strong Christians coming to the Canal Zone. We have found the work here to be given to compromise in doctrine, morals and practice. Please help us get in touch with those who want to stand for the truth without compromise. **RICHARD MERKIN**, 122 4th Ave., Orchard Valley, Cheyenne,

Wyoming 82001 — My family and myself recently moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming from Miami, Florida where we worshipped at North Miami Ave. We hope to begin a faithful church here. At present there are two which support institutions and one with an organ. In the event any brethren will be passing through this area, the church will be listed as the Orchard Valley Church of Christ, 122 4th Ave., Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001. For the time being we will be meeting in our home. Phone is 307-635-1982.

Preacher's Needed

WAIPAHU, HAWAII — The Leeward church in Waipahu is seeking an evangelist to work with it on a full time basis. The work here is challenging and rewarding. Full support can be arranged by the church here. For more information about the work here, please write to Leeward Church of Christ, P.O. Box 94, Waipahu, Hawaii 96797 or call Ernest Bautista at 808-455-7259.

OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA — The church at Okeechobee which meets at 912 N. W. 2nd St. needs a full time preacher. Anyone who might be interested should address inquiries to: Westside Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1023, Okeechobee, FL 33472 or call 813-763-3462.

GALLATIN, TENNESSEE — A full time preacher is needed for a small congregation in Gallatin, Tennessee. The work is approximately two years old and is not yet self-supporting. A lot of personal work can be done and the area is developing to allow good growth. For further information, please contact: Southeast Church of Christ, 165 Witherspoon Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066. Phone 615-452-9598, 452-9713 or 452-5123.

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